The Exercise of Authority in Early Christianity from about 170 to about 270

This study examines the changing patterns of authority both within and between the local Christian communities at the end of the second century and during the third. Amid the general tightening of Church discipline, the most significant development is the expansion and consolidation of a "monarchical" episcopate rather than the monepiscopate. A monarchical bishop is distinguished from one of the latter type by a greater control over the local congregation, a universal acceptance within his community of his position as chief teacher, having the last word on questions of orthodoxy, and the ability to act without the approval of his clergy and laity.

The activities and writings of the chief Christian writers during the period under review are considered separately, and there is a section devoted to the relationships between the local Churches.

The period commences as the Church begins to emerge from the crisis the variegated and largely heretical movement called Gnosticism inflicted upon her. Among the Gnostics, only the Valentinians and the Marcionites formed Churches, as the remainder were gathered (around their teachers) in little groups, usually compared to the philosophical schools, but also having some similarities with the mystery religion groupings. The general aim was the acquisition of saving knowledge, and the movement was generally characterised by rigid internal divisions,

a passionate subjectivity and objection to community discipline, and a belief in secret traditions. Eventually the orthodox communities rejected this entire authority pattern, although the process took longer in Alexandria, where a more refined philosophical Gnosticism exerted considerable influence on Clement, and to some extent on Origen. The organization of the Marcionites was roughly the same as that in the orthodox community at Rome around the middle of the second century, and was quickly bypassed and rejected.

A more significant product of the Gnostic crisis was the clarification of the norms by which the Church articulated her belief in the Christian message; this provided a necessary foundation for the development of stricter organization. Everywhere there was a common appeal to the one true faith transmitted by all the Apostles, and based first of all on a "fixed" canon of Scripture, rather than the Old Testament and a more generic oral tradition. Here the Marcionite rejection of the Old Testament, and their drastic pruning of the New, must have hastened the clarification of the orthodox lists, wherever the origin of the idea of a New Testament canon lies.

We know next to nothing about the "official" processes (if any) by which the Church arrived at this list. While there was a fundamental unity on the heart of the Canon (the Gospels and Paul), the edges remained blurred. In the case of Clement of Alexandria, and even Irenaeus and Origen, it is somewhat misleading to speak of a closed New Testament list (equalling that of the Old). Also the device of

apostolic authorship adopted in the Didascalia can scarcely be reconciled with it.

Apart from Gregory Thaumaturgus, and probably the Didascalia, there is a universal appeal to the rule of truth, which is normative; distinct from the baptismal creeds which were never professedly anti-heretical except for Cyprian, (their content being recognized as insufficient to distinguish orthodoxy and heresy); and an articulation of the content of belief which varies for various purposes. In Clement and Origen there was less interest in this device than elsewhere, and a further complication is Clement's belief in a secret tradition transmitted by the teachers. For him secret tradition lies beyond, but does not contradict the Church's public tradition; the rule is not to be identified with saving knowledge or the secret tradition, and is a norm for the "gnostic's" (i.e. Clement's ideal Christian) search after truth. Its content is unsure, but it must have involved some specification of Christian belief. Though there are references to the rule in Origen (sometimes in the original Greek, more frequently in translation), its role is limited by Origen's belief in a double type of truth; the perfect man transcends the rule of faith of the majority of Christians.

As orthodox and heretical teachers began to develop a Christian theology during the second century, the teaching role of the clergy (bishop and presbyters) was brought under severe pressure. The bishops

led the fight for orthodoxy, characterised their opponents as intellectuals, and channelled popular feeling for their position by appealing to the simple, traditional, oneness of faith against the speculations and extravagances of their opponents. But traces of the earlier ambiguities over their teaching role remain. There is no explicit recognition of it in the consecration prayers of the "Apostolic Tradition"; for Clement the "gnostic" was the teacher not the bishop, while Origen's life shows that he was the last one to recognize an episcopal teaching monopoly. Even as a Catholic, Tertullian had serious reservations on the bishop's teaching role.

The tension was greatest in the intellectual centres, as there is less difficulty in seeing the bishop as chief preacher than in seeing him as having the last word on theology proper. By the middle of the third century there is still opposition to episcopal decisions, but not to the bishop as chief teacher. Cyprian, Stephen, Firmilian, Dionysius of Alexandria, and the author of the Didascalia show this. This was accompanied by the temporary disappearance of prominent lay theologians. Clement and Tertullian were lay teachers, as was Origen for many years. But the uproar provoked when he preached as a layman, and his subsequent ordination, show that teaching was increasingly seen as a clerical, if not an episcopal preserve. Both his appointment to head the catechetical school and his later trouble with Demetrius are evidence of the bishop's determination to supervise the teaching function.

The theology of the bishop in the Didascalia is more monarchical than Cyprian's, directly descended from that of Ignatius of Antioch, although concerned only with the bishop's position within the local community. Hence it is reasonable to conclude to an unbroken tradition of monarchical bishops in Syria, from where this style of Church government spread to the other Churches. Similarly it was the theology of the Eastern-born Irenaeus, which most influenced the Western concept of the episcopate, especially through the adoption of the apostolic succession theory. The bishop of Lyons was not the first to use this, although the belief that the link up between apostolic tradition and succession derived from the Gnostics cannot be substantiated, based as it is on the false premise that Ptolemaeus wrote his letter to Flora before Hegesippus put together the Roman succession list. For Irenaeus the truth of apostolic tradition preserved in the local Churches is to be recognized by the unbroken line of bishops going back to the Apostles themselves. The bishops have inherited the Apostles' "locum magisterii", and have a charism of truth. Later, Hippolytus unlike Irenaeus believed the high priesthood was one of the gifts of the succession. While it is important to distinguish between the Catholic and Montanist views on authority which Tertullian held, even as a Catholic he never believed the bishops inherited the teaching power of the Apostles, or received a charism of truth. The connection between his theory and the succession lists of the Roman law schools is tenuous at best. For Cyprian it is not the unity of

doctrine which is entrusted to the bishops, but the unity of the Church itself. For Clement and Origen the situation was different, as Clement believed the secret traditions were transmitted through the teachers and Origen avoided the Catholic and Gnostic extremes, asserting the continuity of the apostolic teaching function in the Church, in which both bishops and clergy played an important part. The Didascalia and Gregory do not use the theory. When the word πρεσβύτερος is used of former Christian teachers, it should be translated as elder rather than clerical presbyter. There is considerable ambiguity over the identity and status of these elders, as Irenaeus believed they were bishops, and Clement simply thought of them as teachers, who might or might not be clerics.

There were similarly mixed feelings about ordination. Irenaeus mentions no such ceremony, while Clement and Origen recognize the existence of such a rite, although neither esteems it highly. Probably in Gaul and Alexandria at this time presbyters consecrated the new bishop. The fundamental anti-clericalism which Tertullian finally adopted prevented his attaching any real importance to ordination. On this point the main source of information is Hippolytus. Here in episcopal consecration, only the bishops say the ordination prayer and one bishop imposes hands. God's choice is expressed through the choice of the whole community. Special confessors do not need ordination to the diaconate or presbyterate, but ordination is always needed to the episcopate. The procedure is similar in Cyprian, although the confessors' privilege has disappeared, and the local bishops probably

play a greater part in the choice of candidates (at the expense of the local congregation) than they did in Rome.

Official appointment by the Church was considered more important than the actual form of commissioning employed, although there was an increasing realization that this should be expressed in an ordination ceremony, with the laying on of hands. The reported consecration of Gregory Thaumaturgus to the episcopate, although he was absent, and later underwent the requisite forms, is a further example of this.

A few examples of the monepiscopate must be given, and there is none better than Clement of Alexandria's concept of the bishop. Although he recognizes the position of an individual bishop, comparing him to the father of a family, he often writes as though there were only two basic orders, presbyters and deacons. The loose relationship between his group and the wider Christian community in Alexandria, and the absence of any recorded tension between himself and his bishop, are evidence that episcopal control in the city was anything but complete. Irenaeus was monepiscopal, rather than monarchical, as was the system of government in the Roman Church earlier in the second century. Cyprian himself, with his early appeals to decide always with his local congregation, and the early challenges from the confessors on readmission, is an example of the monepiscopate. While it is impossible to reconcile fully his theory and his practice, his claim that bishops are responsible to God alone (a privilege that had been accorded previously to the "saints", rather than the bishops cf. St. Paul

and Irenaeus), and that the Church is built on the bishops, are symptomatic of his move towards a monarchical form of episcopate. His decision to reconcile penitent lapsi at their hour of death is the first recorded decision of a bishop taking an important decision independently of his clergy and people. From either necessity or force of circumstances, he did move in such a direction; the rebaptism councils confirm this episcopal superiority. In Cyprian's case this was accompanied by a loose appeal to traditional norms, and a confidence in the episcopate's power to reach "divine" decisions on new problems. Earlier Tertullian had clarified the alternatives very well, distinguishing the different strands of tradition and stressing the part played by reason; at a technical level, Cyprian was a regression from this.

The transition from monepiscopate to monarchical bishop naturally lessened the influence of the presbyters, although their special position seems to have survived longer in Alexandria than elsewhere. Only in the Didascalia do they lose their second ranking to the deacons, although their is no reason to connect this fact with the disappearance of the monepiscopate, as there had been a tradition of monarchy in the area since Ignatius of Antioch.

The mass of the laity never dominated the life of the Church, but individual charismatics, be they teachers, prophets or confessors played important parts at times. We have mentioned the eclipse of

lay teachers. Similarly the appeals of the confessors to reconcile the lapsed are brought under episcopal control. The rejection of prophecy, following on the Montanist crisis, closed another avenue of lay expression. That their influence diminished the further we move into the third century is shown in the part they played in the election of clerics, and in conciliar gatherings. They were still quasi-official witnesses, but their role came to be more and more dominated by the provincial bishops.

The ecclesiology of the time always stressed the activity of the Spirit, and the necessity of mutual love and concord within the one true Church. Eventually even in Alexandria there was a rejection of the overemphasis on intellectualism, with its attendant divisions within the Church. In North Africa and Syria there was a sharper realization of the visible historical Church, and everywhere an increasing realization of the organic unity of the Church throughout the world. The councils demonstrate this. In particular the African appeal to the concept of "Mother Church" did much to intensify that group loyalty so necessary for any exercise of authority.

While none of the Christian writers in our period believed in salvation outside the Church, the place of sinners within the Church aroused strong disagreement, as there was a current of rigorism which took various forms. Hippolytus, the Montanist Tertullian and the Novatianists refused reconciliation to serious sinners. Following

Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and the Catholic Tertullian believed in only one post-baptismal reconciliation. Initially Cyprian was a rigorist. Only in the East, in the Didascalia and Gregory is there an uncomplicated belief in the reconciliation of all serious sinners, who show genuine repentance. The evidence of the nature and significance of the official part in reconciliation varies; we hear nothing about it from Irenaeus or Clement, while the sacramental nature of the bishop's role is clearest in the Didascalia.

The councils of the third century are a confirmation of the dominant position of the bishop in his local community, but they are also an effective check on episcopal power, being able to judge and condemn bishops. This power was also claimed by the Roman bishops outside their diocese, as the interventions of Victor and Stephen amply demonstrate. Whatever his theoretical position, Cyprian also exercised this power outside Carthage in North Africa and Gaul. The Roman position is paralleled by the emergence of de facto metropolitan bishops in most areas.

The history of the period is dominated by the rise of the bishop as he establishes a strict control over his community. There was an increasing demand for uniformity in doctrine, as well as in practice, in which the Roman Church after Victor played a prominent part. Except in the East, the episcopate came more and more to be identified with the popular party in the Church rather than the intellectuals, while the harsh anti-Gnostic attitudes were carried over against the

schismatics. Nowhere however was there a codified system of canon law; only a loose set of constitutional precedents which were not regarded as prescriptions for every situation.

An increasing emphasis on community discipline was accompanied by a disinterest in theories of authority, and little respect for the freedom of the individual conscience. But everywhere authority was linked to charism and not put forward as the primary datum.

The Exercise of Authority in early Christianity from about 170 to about 270

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Chapter One.

INTRODUCTION

In one of his letters Gregory of Nyssa urges us: "Recall the holy Fathers to mind, those whose tradition we too by the grace of God have been judged worthy to preserve. Walk in the ancient rule of faith".[1] Christians have always appealed to the ancient faith; but for most of Christian history there has been considerable ignorance of the Fathers. The Renaissance saw a revival of interest in the first times of the Church; especially in the Scriptures, and to a lesser extent in the Fathers. The Reformation focused this interest on certain areas e.g. the relationship of freedom and law, nature and grace; and as a consequence of this on the reality of ecclesiastical organization, pa t and present. The changes in Western society since that time, especially the Industrial Revolution, and the great political revolutions in France and then in Russia which have so challenged the place of organized Christianity, have ensured a continued interest, both Christian and otherwise, in the primary sources of Christ's life and teaching.

These factors also ensured a similar interest in Church organization, even if this has manifested itself in complete rejection, as well as the more usual conservative or reforming tendencies.

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1 Epistle 3.

In more recent times, these preoccupations have been sharpened even further. In the West, some students and many radicals are impatient, if not contemptuous, of structures. In Catholic circles, the Second Vatican Council has been a powerful catalyst for change; some unexpected.

There are many new elements in the problematic, but much that is old and recurrent. As always the past does have something to say to us.

THE NATURE AND AIMS OF THIS STUDY.

This work reviews the exercise of authority in the Christian communities from about the year 170 A.D. through to about 270 A.D. The evidence begins with the literature of the anti-gnostic bishop and pastor Irenaeus, continues through the high points of episcopal theory in Cyprian and the Didascalia, and closes with the synods in Antioch against Paul of Samosata. The other principal writers considered are Hippolytus, Clement and Origen from Alexandria, Tertullian and the Pseudo-Clementines. Writers who might be considered less than orthodox by some standards are not excluded. Such an exclusion would give a distorted view of the situation. "Heresy is a dogmatic category, not a useful tool for historical research".[2] The same could be said of schism.

The New Testament has obvious relevance for this study; for

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2 G. Quispel in Vigiliae Christianae (18) 1964, p. 234.

the historian, because it immediately precedes the period under review; and for most Christians because of its normative value. As our aim is to chart the variations and developments during the years 170 to 270, and not a direct demonstration of the continuity (or otherwise) between this period and early Christian history, there is no outline of the New Testament teaching on authority. This is presumed. The only background information outlined in some detail concerns the gnostic movement.

The Christian evidence available for the period 170-270 forms some sort of a whole. While such divisions must remain artificial, they can be useful, and should not be misleading.[3] This period saw the birth of a serious Christian academic tradition in Alexandria. Its principal characteristic is the measure of agreement on the composition of the New Testament canon, the creed, and the hierarchy; which combination is first manifest in Irenaeus.

Large-scale evidence peters out with Cyprian and the Didascalia, to be renewed only with the landmarks of Constantine and Arius.

The concept of "authority" in the title of this study is not used in any restricted sense; our purpose is to note the varieties of authority, and their interaction. Authority can mean the evidence of a proposition's truth, or something more. It can be exercised in

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3 R.P.C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church", 1962; p. 176 states that he uses the evidence from about 170 to 270 "roughly" speaking, as the basis for his study on tradition.

the region of belief, as well as the sphere of action.[4] It can inhere in written or oral teaching, and can be exercised by any person, whether as a private or public person, whether he be with, or without office. Authority can imply the right and power to enforce obedience. While a useful pastoral distinction (especially for Christians) can be drawn between the "rights" of authority, and the "power" of authority (which might exceed these rights),[5] we have not accepted the suggestion that through the use of force or moral coercion, authority automatically ceases to be itself, and degenerates into naked power. For our present purposes, power is a possible synonym for authority. We shall be interested to see if power is exercised well, and in accordance with New Testament teachings.[6]

METHODOLOGY.

We do not suggest that the early Church regarded Revelation as a set of concepts. Through Revelation God was revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Similarly there is no suggestion that the theory and exercise of authority were major preoccupations of the New Testament, although Christ stressed the necessity of service, and

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4 Cf. C. Butler, "Authority in the New Testament" in the Downside Review (57) 1939, p. 505.

5 Cf. J. McKenzie, "Authority in the Church", London 1966, p. 6.

6 On the insufficiencies of Father McKenzie's distinction (his book remains essential reading for modern catholics) cf. J. Drane, "Authority and Institution. A Study in Church Crisis", Milwaukee 1969, pp. 13-32; and in passing Y. Congar, "Power and Poverty in the Church", London 1964, p. 96.

the dangers of authoritarianism.[7] Neither was it of central interest to the second and third century Christians. One difficulty is that we have so little evidence for Church administration similar to Cyprian's correspondence. At a wider level, we have almost no evidence at all of the Church in some areas during these years, e.g. Asia Minor after the Montanists (except for Gregory), and Spain.

It is a truism that society with its aims and purposes exists before authority, and that authority exists as a means for society to reach these ends. The fact that a religious society is differentiated from others by a special view of man, and a concern with the transcendental and eschatological, has important consequences for the exercise of authority in that group. It explains the New Testament emphasis on authority as service, and the early Church's requirement that authority be saintly. Even among a group of writers sharing a similar approach, small differences about the nature of the church can have important practical repercussions, e.g. Hippolytus' belief in a sinless church. Each writer's concept of the church is examined. The imagery used here is also noted as an expression of, and possible stimulant to, that group loyalty so necessary to the exercise of any authority.

The nature of the local churches is also examined, and the relationship between them. Are a writer's views typical of his church? Is the local church one coherent whole, or are there semi-

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7 Cf. Congar, op. cit., pp. 21-39.

autonomous groups within it? Are the beliefs and practices of one church typical of the others? These need to be investigated, because there can be no a priori assumption of a common organizational pattern or theory; not even an assumption of a uniform development. Not only may the Roman situation of 170 differ from the situation there in 270 (and a fortiori from the situation in Alexandria in 270), but the situation in Rome in 170 may differ from that in Alexandria, or Carthage, or East Jordan at that same time. These differences may be found in both theology and practice.

Not only must the geographical origin of the evidence be considered; so too must the literary forms of the evidence. Polemic, for example, differs (usually) from exegesis. The evidence of a bishop's administration is of a different importance for us from that of a philosopher. Silence need not mean absence; but one fills a silence at one's peril. The evidence of a pastor, an intellectual, a fanatic or a "political" leader must be weighed differently.

All Christians appeal in some way to the teachings of Christ. The problem arises when we try to identify this teaching. What are the norms for doing this? In the late second century, a new situation had arisen as the generation who had known the Apostles died out. We examine the various Christian reactions to this situation, in the face of persistent attack from the heretical gnostics. Was Christ's teaching found in the Old Testament? Was there a New Testament, of equal importance with the Old? What was the importance of oral and non-scriptural tradition? Who were the teachers in the community?

Were they also community leaders, and Christ's representatives? What place does reason have in this process? What was essential, and where could one agree to differ? The answers to these questions were not unanimous.

Finally we examine the actual exercise of authority by the Church leaders, remembering the basic distinctions between office and function, and between constitutional and administrative history. Continuity of title need not mean a continuity of function, e.g. of the πρεσβύτερος ; and the same function (and perhaps office) can be performed under different titles, e.g. some apostles were leaders of the first century churches as the bishops were in the third century.[8]

The relationship between the local churches is also discussed with special reference to the role of synods, and the bishop and church of Rome. In this context the positions of Peter and James, the brother of the Lord, are assessed.

The key to the whole period is the bishop, and in particular the clarification of his teaching powers.

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8 For a further discussion of these distinctions, cf. G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church", pp. 187-89 in the "Apostolic Ministry", ed. K.E. Kirk, 1946.

Chapter Two.

GNOSTICISM.

There can be no understanding of the history of the Church in the second and third centuries without an understanding of the loose and variegated movement, known as "Gnosticism". If anything, some knowledge of this movement becomes more important the closer we move towards the end of the second century (and diminishes as we move into the third). Most of the extant writings of Irenaeus were directed against it; as was much of the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Hippolytus. Origen was also an opponent.

This section is not a detailed study of the organizational forms of the Gnostics, or of their attitudes towards, or exercise of authority. Apart from any other consideration, we are not over-burdened with evidence on any of these related points, even if we include Marcion. Also many of the important Gnostic teachers lived and taught during the first two-thirds of the second century, and so are outside the time limits of this study. Nonetheless they remain for us an essential piece of background information, somewhat akin to the writings of the New Testament, or those of the Apostolic Fathers or apologists, with the added difference that the Gnostic movement continued through the third century.

Gnosticism was very much a part of the intellectual and religious atmosphere of the Roman Empire in the first centuries of

the Christian era.[1] It was an age of spiritual unrest, and rampant syncretism.[2] The attempts of Augustus to revive the old official religions, which had suffered at the hands of the philosophers, had not been successful. On the other hand, as early as Philo 20 B.C. - 40 A.D. we can see the influence of Eastern, or more precisely, Jewish thought on Greek philosophy. Men turned more and more towards the East in an attempt to satisfy their religious aspirations. Many forces struggled to fill the vacuum. Christianity and Gnosticism were two of these; as well, especially in the second and third centuries, many Oriental cults invaded the Latin world. Exotic sanctuaries multiplied on the Aventine, and temples to Mithra spread throughout the Empire.[3] Men drew as little or as much as they chose, from one (or many) of these religions. Often the gods of other peoples were regarded as being the "old" gods under different names. It is said that the Emperor Alexander Severus had in his private chapel statues of Abraham, Orpheus, Christ and Apollonius of Tyana.

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1 For the general background conditions then prevailing cf. A. Harnack, "The Mission and Expansion of Christianity", Book I, c. II, pp. 19-23. English translation of vol. 1 of 2nd German edition of 1908.

2 Cf. E.R. Dodds' "Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety". Cambridge 1965. The subtitle of this work explains that it discusses "some aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Augustine".

3 Cf. A.D. Nock, "Conversion" (1933), pp. 133-7. For a more general treatment of the spread of the Eastern cults, pp. 77-98.

DEFINITION.

There has been a lively debate about the definition of Gnosticism, going back almost to the eighteenth century, which saw the first revival of interest in the subject. Until recently these studies suffered from one major defect; much of our evidence came from the opponents of the movement, and very little from the movement itself. Even the fifth century papyrus codex containing three Gnostic works, The Gospel of Mary, the Apocryphon of John and the Sophia of Jesus Christ and bought by the Berlin Museum in 1896, was not published until 1955.[4] But the discovery of over seven hundred pages of Gnostic writing in 1945 at Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt has radically changed this situation. The discoveries of Qumran have also thrown considerable light on the subject. Most scholars believe that these new finds vindicate the fundamental reliability of Irenaeus'[5] and Hippolytus'[6] descriptions of their opponents.

From the time of Irenaeus to Harnack, Gnosticism was always

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4 Editor W. Till, "Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502".

5 R. McL. Wilson, "Gnosis and the New Testament", 1968, p. 16; 86. P. Sagnard, "La Gnose Valentinienne et le Témoinage de Saint Irénée", 1947, pp. 90-1.

6 J. Doresse, "The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics", 1960. Doresse rejects the title "Philosophoumena" for that of "Elenchos", and denies that this work was written by Hippolytus (p. 6). However he accepts the accuracy of the account of the Brahmins (p. 6), and believes that the Nag Hammadi finds confirm its general reliability (p. 249). Sagnard, op. cit., p. 135 is less certain of the reliability of Hippolytus.

regarded as "the acute secularising or hellenising of Christianity".[7] At the end of the nineteenth century another view arose, which regarded Gnosticism as a reactionary movement; a resurgence of ancient Oriental religion, and the last resistance of the old world-view to the triumph of Christianity, e.g. Reitzenstein, Bousset, Bultmann and his pupils belong to this school of thought.[8]

The problem of definition is complicated by the enormous differences between different forms of Gnosticism, and by the fact that these forms underwent considerable changes in the course of their development. The term "Gnosticism" as a blanket description is a much later development than the second or third centuries. For Clement of Alexandria, the "gnostic" was the model Christian; Irenaeus only battled against false "gnosis".

Wilson has drawn a very useful distinction between Gnosticism and Gnosis.[9] Gnosticism is defined as "the specifically Christian heresy of the second century A.D."; while Gnosis is "the whole complex of ideas belonging to the Gnostic movement and related trends of thought". What were the main doctrines common to the different forms of Gnosticism? There appears to be wide-spread agreement that the movement was characterised by an emphasis on saving knowledge, which

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7 A. Harnack, "The History of Dogma". Book I, p. 227 (Eng. trans. of 3rd German edition).

8 For much of this and following information about the views of contemporary scholars on Gnosticism, I am much indebted to R. McL. Wilson's book "Gnosis and the New Testament".

9 Op. cit., p. 9; also p. 22.

might be crude magical knowledge, or high mystical experience. There was a distinction drawn between an unknown transcendent God, and a Demiurge or Creator (as well as many lesser beings). There was a variety of beliefs too in some sort of ontological dualism, so that man was believed to possess a divine spark imprisoned in his material body, and there was the belief in the myth of a pre-cosmic fall to explain the misery of man's condition.[10]

Beyond these common doctrines, and the fact that the same myths and writings underlie many of the systems,[11] there were bewildering differences in the final developed doctrines, and in ethical practice which varied between the extremes of rigid asceticism and licentiousness. The elements which predominate depend on whatever brand of the movement is being discussed.

Wilson also tells us[12] that at the Messina Colloqium of 1966, there were basically two schools of thought about the nature of the movement he defined as "gnosis". The first of these, the "pre-gnostic" school believed that there were only elements of later Gnosticism in the pre-Christian and pre-Gnostic period; while the "proto-gnostic" school believed that the essence of Gnosticism is found before the second century A.D., and outside the Christian

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10 Cf. Wilson, op. cit., p. 4; H. Chadwick, "The Early Church" (1967), pp. 35-6; Sagnard, op. cit., p. 114 who includes the figure of the mother among the essentials.

11 Doresse, op. cit., p. 36.

12 Op. cit., p. 17.

Gnosticism of the second century.[13] At Messina many participants also stressed the Jewish contribution to the gnostic movement.[14]

GNOSTIC ORGANIZATION.

We have recognized the doctrinal differences in Gnosticism; was there some sort of common organizational pattern among these groups? One is tempted to answer that little was common on this point, except their refusal to be organized. To some extent the Valentinians, and certainly the Marcionites were exceptions to this rule; these two groups are discussed separately.

One vital preliminary to this discussion of Gnostic organization is to note a peculiarity which runs through nearly all their writings, i.e. their flight from history. This characteristic has often been noted,[15] and rarely better explained than by H.C. Puech.[16]

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13 G.C. Stead in his review of this book of Wilson (in J.T.S. (XX) 1969, pp. 626-7) has some reservations as to whether the terminology "gnosis, gnosticism, pre- and proto-gnostic" etc. is adequate to cover all the facts. He suggests that "there are exceptions to almost every generalisation" (p. 627). However this does not seem to impair the basic usefulness of these distinctions.

14 Op. cit., pp. 20-2; 26-7. For variations on this theme, stressing Jewish influence cf. Hegesippus in Eusebius E.H.IV.22.5; R.M. Grant, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity" (1959) pp. 30-38; G. Quispel, "The Jung Codex and its significance" in "The Jung Codex" ed. F.L. Cross, 1955, p. 78.

15 E.g. Dodds, op. cit., p. 18; Wilson, op. cit., p. 66; H.E.W. Turner, "The Pattern of Christian Truth", 1954, p. 237.

16 In an article "La Gnose et le Temps" in Eranos Jahrbuch no. (XX) 1952, pp. 110-11 quoted by Doresse, op. cit., p. 14, n. 41.

He explains that Gnosticism is "incapable of rational thinking by concepts, or of concretely apprehending the persons or events of history"; concepts become schemata i.e. "entities which are half-abstract, half-concrete, semi-personal, semi-impersonal"; in other words, aeons. Besides these, "historic persons and facts are sublimated halfway between the real and the symbolic." They had no interest in sociological descriptions of their groups, or of the Church. When they did speak of the Church, it was a reality completely outside the historical order, one of the previously mentioned aeons.[17]

It is generally considered that the sociological structures of the gnostics resembled those of a philosophical school, rather than a church.[18] This is a very old opinion, as even Justin told us that the Gnostics resembled the philosophical schools, naming their groups after their leader-teachers.[19] Hippolytus mentions the

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17 E.g. Irenaeus Adversus Haereses I.1.1. (p. 10); I.6.2. (pp. 111-12), all A.H. refs. Harvey 1857 edition. Cf. Sagnard, op. cit., p. 304; G. Bardy, "La Théologie de l'Église de saint Clément de Rome à saint Irénée", pp. 167-9.

18 H. von Campenhausen, "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", 1969, p. 194; W.H.C. Frend, "The Gnostic Sects and the Roman Empire" in The Journal of Ecclesiastical History (V) 1954, p. 29; L. Cerfaux, "La Gnose, essai théologique manqué" in Irenikon (XVII) 1940, p. 20 and G. Koffmane, "Die Gnosis nach ihrer Tendenz und Organisation", p. 12, subscribe, but with reservations, to this opinion. Cerfaux speaks only of "petites associations fermées", while Koffmane also stresses the similarity with the mystery-religion groups. Also A. Hamel, "Die Kirche bei Hippolyt", pp. 90-1.

19 Justin. Dialogue with Trypho c.35. (P.G. vol. 6)

Valentinian σχολή i.e. a group to whom lectures are given,[20] and the Marcionite σχολή.[21]

There certainly was the teacher-pupils relationship among the Gnostics. We also know that, at least in earlier times, many philosophical groups, e.g. of the Platonists and the Pythagoreans, were in fact religious groupings.[22] Philosophy was not so much studied, as lived. Some of the Pythagoreans even had rites.[23] Despite the "religious" nature of these philosophical schools, the possibility remains that typing the Gnostics under this heading is a left-over from the period when Gnosticism was seen as a radical hellenisation of Christianity.

There was a considerable Eastern contribution to Gnosticism. Did this affect their structures, so that they sometimes resembled that of the mystery cults? As early as 1881, an affirmative answer to this query had been one of the principal themes of Koffmane's small work on Gnostic organization.[24] A similar opinion is also implied in Frend's article.[25]

Moreover there is evidence that from about the end of the

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20 Philosophoumena VI.29.1; X.13.1.

21 Ibid., VII.29.1. He also used similar terms of the followers of Callistus, and Noetus' sect.

22 Cf. Nock, op. cit., p. 166.

23 Ibid., p. 168.

24 Op. cit., esp. pp. 11-13.

25 Op. cit., p. 29. A. Harnack, "The Constitution and Law of the Church", 1910, p. 149 and H.E. Turner, "The Pattern of Christian Truth", p. 149, mention the similarity in passing.

first century A.D. there was a decrease in interest in philosophy, and a turning towards religion of an un-intellectual stamp, especially Eastern varieties.[26] Philosophy would always have been the preserve of the educated classes; now they too moved towards religion. There would therefore have been many more groups of this kind in the second and third centuries than philosophical groups.

If we grant the prevalence of these mystery-religion groups, a) how did they differ from the philosophical schools and b) how were they similar to the Gnostic groups?

The mystery-religion groups differed from those of the philosophical schools in as much as their membership was not limited to the educated classes; there was an emphasis on salvation through ritual, rather than through knowledge. Also while the philosophers divided mankind up into classes, there were no "class-divisions" within the school; on the other hand, there were rigid divisions within the mystery-religion groups based on their belief in secret doctrines-practices.[27]

While it is difficult to establish the exact relationship between them, there were two types of Gnosticism; the first, a more sophisticated type which was quite philosophic; the second was more vulgar and "religious".[28] This division was often paralleled by

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26 Cf. Nock, pp. 120-1; and pp. 122-27.

27 For information re the mystery religions cf. The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 1949: "Mysteries", pp. 593-4.

28 Sagnard, op. cit., p. 115.

their attitude to matter, and therefore to religious rites. The philosopher-dualist type often had no rites. The vulgar type of Gnosticism often had grotesque rites.[29] It was this second variety which resembled the mystern-religion groups. Koffmane has pointed out these similarities, especially in the rites of initiation of e.g. the Naasenes.[30] The vulgar Gnostic was also anti-intellectual; he was not usually drawn from the educated classes. Finally all the Gnostic groups resembled the mystery religions in their division of members into classes, and in their belief in secret doctrines or practices.

These facts do not eliminate the similarities between the Gnostics and the philosophy schools. They complement the original picture. For purposes of convenience, we shall continue to refer to the Gnostic groups as schools. How did these schools differ from the Christian Churches?

They were less organized than the Churches. Tertullian saw it as something much worse; they did not have respect for even their own leaders; perpetual schism was their norm, and they mocked the Catholic desire for order as the ornament of a bawd (lenocinium).[31]

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29 J. Ochagavia, "Visible Patris Filius. A Study of Irenaeus' Teaching on Revelation and Tradition", 1964, p. 135; e.g. Irenaeus A.H. I.16.3 (p. 194).

30 Op. cit., pp. 4-6; p. 10. For details of similarities in other rites, pp. 14-17. Also Clementine Homilies II. 23; John, whom Simon the Samaritan followed, baptised daily! (presumably the same people).

31 De Praesc. Haeret. XLI. 1-8; XLII. 5-8. This is a work from Tertullian's Catholic period.

Irenaeus makes much the same point, in a more restrained fashion.[32] Grant has pointed out this "passionate subjectivity", and even claimed that they were devoted ultimately "not to mythology, but to freedom".[33] Certainly the gnostic considered himself above the law;[34] at best this resulted in the loosest sort of organisation, and at worst it provided fuel for Tertullian's attacks. Obviously the many different gnostic sects made no pretence at a common doctrine; within one school e.g. the Valentinians, there could be many different doctrines (and even sub-schools). So too there was no international organisation; in short there was much less consciousness of a group-identity transcending national, or even local groups, than in the Church.

The Gnostic schools' passion for secrecy also distinguished them from the churches. Irenaeus[35] and Eusebius[36] mentioned this trait, but both probably underestimated its significance. Not only did the Gnostics believe in secret traditions whose authenticity was guaranteed by a succession of teachers reaching back to the Apostles, but they maintained a rigorous secrecy about the inner activities, as well as beliefs of their groups. This determination to maintain secrecy

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32 A.H.II. c17. (p. 286); II c.40. 1-3 (pp. 347-9).

33 Op. cit., p. 12; 9.

34 R. McL. Wilson, "The Gnostic Problem", 1958, p. 105. Cf. H. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 36.

35 A.H.III. XV. 2. Also Tertullian Adv. Val. I.1.

36 E.H. IV. VII. 4.

was no mere fiction; it was an extremely successful policy,[37] which consistently saved them from persecution. This escape was also helped by their acceptance of some elements of paganism, and their willingness to sacrifice to idols;[38] but Frend claims that their attitude "towards the authorities and towards surrounding society seems to have been conditioned by one object alone, the protection of [their] mystery".[39] All this should not be confused with the "disciplina arcani" of the Christians; apart from a general prudence in a hostile society, the evidence for the existence of a disciplina arcani among the Churches in the first two centures is tenuous.[40] It is found in the third century.

A necessary sequel to this secrecy was that the Gnostics divided mankind generally, and their own members, into fixed classes. Although Origen, and especially Clement of Alexandria, to some extent adopted this belief (with important differences), the remainder of the Church rejected it emphatically.[41] The division of mankind into classes, according to their capacity for knowledge goes back to Plato's "Republic"; there are traces of something similar in the New Testament

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37 Cf. Doresse, op. cit., p. 61; 257. R.P.C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church" (1962), pp. 22-3.

38 For the Gnostics and martyrdom, cf. Frend, op. cit., pp. 29-32.

39 Ibid., p. 29.

40 Cf. Hanson, op. cit., pp. 27-35; esp. 29; 35.

41 For details of the viewpoints of the Christian authors on this division of mankind cf. the relevant sections in the individual chapters describing their general theological positions.

e.g. Christ explaining the parables to the Apostles. But the Gnostics developed this into a permanent principle. There are three classes of people i) the material (ὑλικοί), who are destined for Hell, ii) the psychics (ψυχικοί), or middle group, and iii) the spiritual (πνευματικοί) who are saved.[42] Only the psychics can affect their destination to Heaven or Hell through their actions. The hylics (or material ones), and the spiritual are predestined to their different ends.[43] This in turn meant that the forgiveness of sins disappeared,[44] so that the absence of any official penitential orders or rites of reconciliation also distinguished them from the Church.

THE VALENTINIANS.

The Gnostic group known as the Valentinians was founded by a man named, not unnaturally, Valentinus. Not a great deal is known about him except that he taught at Rome, arriving some time during the episcopate of Hyginus (c.136 to 140 A.D.), and staying during the reign of Pius, until the time of Aniscetus (c.155-160 A.D.).[45] Tertullian also tells us that he wanted to be Pope, and broke with the Church when he was passed over in the election.[46] This is not

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42 Cf. Irenaeus, I. ol. 16. (pp. 70-1).

43 Cf. Bardy, op. cit., pp. 170-71 where he explains Heracleon's doctrine on this point. Cf. also Irenaeus, A.H.I.1.11. (pp. 53-4).

44 Wilson, "The Gnostic Problem", p. 208.

45 Ironaeus, A.H.III.4.2. (II. p.17).

46 Adversus Valentinianos IV.1.

impossible.

Origen referred to the Valentinians as a "robustissima secta".[47] They were the principal adversaries of Irenaeus, and according to Tertullian the biggest group among the Gnostics.[48] However to talk of Valentinian gnosticism is to risk imprecision.[49] The movement soon divided into two basic groups; the Italian school, under Ptolemaeus and Heracleon, and the Oriental school under Theodotus. The relationship between the doctrines of these groups, and more particularly their relationship with the original doctrine of Valentinus is not altogether clear.[50] The authorship of the Gospel of Truth, and its place in the development of Valentinian doctrine is also not clear.[51] The Gospel, whoever the author might be, is very close to Christian orthodoxy.

We know very little about Valentinian organisation; much less about the organizational differences (if any) between the different Valentinian schools. Since the Valentinians described by Irenaeus

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47 Hom. II in Ezechiel, c.5.

48 Adversus Valentinianos I.1.

49 Grant, op. cit., p. 142; R. McL. Wilson, "Gnosis and the New Testament, p. 91.

50 Cf. Sagnard, op. cit., pp. 523-5; 547. G. Quispel, "The Original doctrine of Valentine" in Vigiliae Christianae (I) 1947, pp. 44-7.

51 G. Quispel, "The Jung Codex and its Significance" in "The Jung Codex", ed. F.L. Cross. p. 50 says the work probably came from Valentinus himself, before the movement divided into two schools; on p. 54 Quispel suggests the possibility that Valentinus wrote it before he left the Church. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 89-92 points out the difficulties of ascribing the work to the Valentinian school.

called the Christians "ecclesiastici",[52] it seems very probable that they did not regard themselves as a church. In this same passage Irenaeus also complained bitterly about their duplicity in seeking to lure away simple Christians, by claiming that their doctrines were the same as the Church's. Tertullian makes a similar point.[53] Evidently the secrecy of "secret" doctrines had other advantages, beside preventing persecution. The Valentinians believed in the division of mankind into three fixed or pre-ordained classes i.e. the hylics, psychics and spirituals.[54] Sagnard thinks that the group would have possessed rites, especially as the original group were members of the Church.[55] Later "Valentinians" did have rites e.g. Marcus, who taught in Asia Minor,[56] or perhaps in Gaul.[57] From Irenaeus, we have evidence of his group's prophesying, and celebration of the Eucharist, Baptism and Extreme Unction.[58] The followers of Theodotus also celebrated baptism, and a eucharist of sorts.[59]

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52 A.H.III.15.2 (II.79); also I.1.11 (p. 54); I.1.16 (72-3) where Christians are called the psychic church.

53 Adversus Valentinianos I.1-3.

54 Irenaeus A.H.I.1.16 (pp. 70-1). This refers to Ptolemaeus' school.

55 Op. cit., p. 420.

56 Doresse, op. cit., p. 32.

57 Cf. "Gnosticism. An Anthology", ed. R.M. Grant (1961), p. 191.

58 The relevant texts have been collected by Grant. Ibid., pp.191-94.

59 Cf. Clement of Alexandria: Excerpta ex Scriptis Theodoti 76-86; 13.

Another important piece of evidence is the letter of Ptolemaeus (who succeeded Valentinus as head of the Western Valentinians) to Flora.[60] Its principal interest lies in its claim to have received the apostolic tradition by succession.[61] This tradition is secret, and will be learnt by Flora when she is worthy. Although not expressly stated, it is transmitted through teachers such as Valentinus and Ptolemaeus. The purpose of the letter is to explain the nature of the law of Moses; to this end the Law is divided into three parts i.e. from God, from Moses, and from the elders. The Law's references to offerings, circumcision, sabbath, fasting etc. are only images and symbols, for their present inner spiritual meaning. External fasting is practised.[62] The letter portrays a very moderate form of Gnosticism; probably the secrecy principle is again at work.

The rapid disintegration of the Valentinians into different groups, and their other-worldly concerns i.e. cosmology, numerical symbolism, show that there was little community consciousness, and very little organization. There is no evidence of a concept of office, or of a hierarchy of officers. Only the Marcosians and Theodotians can be said to have certainly used rites. By their own estimation, and it was a just one, the Valentinians did not constitute a church.

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60 In Epiphanius' "Panarion", XXXIII. 3-7.

61 Ibid., XXXIII. 7.

62 Ibid., XXXIII. 5.

MARCION.

Except for a few certain landmarks, the life story of Marcion is shrouded in uncertainty. We do know that he was born at Sinope in Pontus, on the Black Sea; and that about the year 140 A.D. he came to Rome. Later authorities claim that before he left Pontus, his father (a bishop) had excommunicated him because he dishonoured a virgin.[63] While Turner states that most moderns accept the tradition of a Pontic excommunication, he also urges that a "metaphorical interpretation" is to be preferred for the story of the virgin.[64] Neither Tertullian nor Hippolytus, both of whom were keenly interested in the morals of their opponents ever mention this story. Marcion was accepted as a member of the Roman church for some years; then in 144 A.D. he was expelled by the Roman presbyters, after a confrontation which he himself seems to have provoked.[65]

Opinion is still very much divided as to whether he should or should not be classed with the Gnostics. Blackman,[66] Bianchi[67] and Grant[68] place him in a Gnostic context. Doresse[69] is not sure,

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63 Epiphanius, "Panarion", XLII.1. Pseudo-Tertullian. Adversus Omnes Haereses 6.

64 "The Pattern of Christian Truth", p. 81.

65 Epiphanius, "Panarion", XLII.2.

66 E.C. Blackman, "Marcion and His Influence", 1948, p. 82.

67 U. Bianchi, "Marcion: Theologien biblique ou Docteur gnostique?" in Vigiliae Christianae (21), 1967, p. 141.

68 R.M. Grant, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity", pp. 125-8.

69 Op. cit., pp. 24-5.

although he believes that secondary forms of Marcionitism certainly belong there. According to Stirnimann,[70] Marcion is not a Gnostic in the strict sense of the word. The first and greatest opponent of this gnostic classification was of course Harnack himself.[71] Even those who class him among the Gnostics admit that he was a Gnostic of a very special type.

His theology was dualist, distinguishing between the "good" God of the New Testament, and the "just" God of the Old Testament who created the world. The writings of the Old Testament were rejected, and those of the New purged of all elements not conforming to Marcion's understanding of St. Paul. Works eliminated included the Gospels of Mathew, Mark and John, the pastoral epistles and Hebrews.

He himself never claimed to be anything more than a good Christian teacher, who wanted to purify Christianity.[72] He was also distinguished from the gnostics by a lack of speculative interest, and a capacity for organisation.[73] He alone among the Gnostics founded a church.

Even his opponents recognised his group as a church. The well-known phrase from Tertullian: "just as the wasps make honeycombs, so

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70 J.K. Stirnimann, "Die Praescriptio Tertullians im Lichte des Römischen Rechts und der Theologie", 1949, pp. 6-7.

71 Esp. in "Marcion: Das Evangelium von fremden Gott", 1921 (T.u.U.45).

72 Cf. A. d'Alès, "Marcion: La réforme chrétienne au deuxième siècle" in Rech. Sc. Rel. 1922, p. 141; 143. Also Blackman, op. cit., p. 9.

73 Blackman, op. cit., p. 86.

the Marcionites make churches"[74] shows this. Origen tells us that they called their building "churches",[75] although he referred to their group as a school.[76] They were a serious long-term opponent to the church. Justin[77] and Tertullian[78] tell us that they were all over the world. Celsus knew of only two Christian communities, the Catholics and the Marcionites. Many of the latter survived in the East, especially in Syria, until the middle of the fifth century, while a few survived until the Middle Ages. In the West, their decline began as early as the third century. Similarly, splits developed within the movement, as a disciple of Marcion called Apelles formed his own sect. Unlike his teacher, Apelles was not a dualist. Yet another sect within the larger Marcionite family, headed by Syrenos, believed in the existence of three principles.[79]

Harnack's view that Marcion gave the decisive impulse in the creation of the old Catholic Church, and left the model for its development,[80] is now generally regarded as an overstatement.[81]

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74 Adv. Marcion IV. c5.3.

75 Frag. 13 in Jeremiah (G.C.S.III. 204); also Comm. Series in Mt 43. These probably refer to Marcionite churches.

76 Comm. I. c18 on Romans.

77 Apology, I.26.

78 Adv. Marcion V. c19.2.

79 Eusebius, E.H.V.13. 2-4.

80 Op. cit., e.g. 242 sq.

81 Cf. Blackman, op. cit., e.g. p. 12; G. Bardy, "La Théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au concile de Nicée (1947), pp. 38-39.

The closer Marcion is moved to the Gnostics the more difficult (but not impossible) it becomes to support Harnack's thesis; moreover the period in which this decisive influence occurred must have been around the middle of the second century, a period which does not give us much information on these relevant points.

Commentators are agreed that the Marcionite communities were united in a loose confederation, and that the organization within the local communities was also loose and fluid.[82] Certainly Tertullian's strictures provide ample evidence for this conclusion, even when his descriptions are taken with a very liberal dash of salt.[83] Hardy believes that these loose organisational forms were those prevalent in the church generally at the time of Justin;[84] the evidence of Irenaeus and later orthodox writers show that the church, unlike the Marcionites, quickly moved beyond this situation to one of much stricter internal and inter-community organisation. At this precise level of organizational forms, Marcionite influence on the Church was negligible.

However, this group did make a very significant impact on the Church, and on the idea of authority within the Church by clearly defining the norms which they accepted. The Old Testament books were rejected, so removing (among many other things) any ambiguities about the position of the Old Testament Law. Most important of all there

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82 Harnack, op. cit., e.g. pp. 184-5;/ 190. Turner, op. cit., p. 159; Blackman, pp. 5-6; et alii.

83 Cf. Tertullian esp. De Praesc. Haer. XLI. 1-8.

84 Op. cit., p. 45.

was a clear-cut decision about the contents of the New Testament canon. If the Marcionites still differed among themselves, and were sometimes loathe to clarify their beliefs, they certainly did know what books they might or might not appeal to in these disputes. A similar sort of recognition, tacit or expressed, is fundamental to the cohesion of any religious group, especially in the long term. The personality of a founder as a unitive factor can be very powerful during his lifetime only. The acceptance of a basic literature, or a basic set of beliefs (and preferably both of these) is also fundamental to the exercise of any sort of authority within a religious group. The exact nature of the Marcionite contribution on this point is not exactly our concern, occurring as it did before the time span of this study.

The rejection of the Old Testament was certainly an innovation, although it might have been claimed that it did not differ too much from the allegorization of the Old Testament, as practised by a writer such as Barnabas. The wholesale rejection of many New Testament books was also an innovation. However the reality of a list of accepted New Testament books before that of Marcion is a problem of a different order. Churches had used these books before that time; had they been accepted as possessing a binding authority equal to the Old Testament? Opinion is still divided. Blackman has a long review of the evidence,[85] which he prefaces with the useful distinction between

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85 Op. cit., pp. 24-41.

the idea of canonicity, and the reality of a closed canon of books. Harnack stressed Marcion's originality on both counts.[86] A leading opponent of his was Zahn,[87] who claimed that the New Testament canon existed at the beginning of the second century. The broad lines of Harnack's thesis have been accepted by von Campenhausen, who claims that both the idea and reality of a Christian bible originated with Marcion; no Christian or gnostic preceded him in this.[88] Bardy thinks that this view is an exaggeration,[89] as does Blackman, who says that the idea of canonicity was as familiar in the Church as that of revelation.[90] But it remains as an unescapable fact that the first closed list of New Testament books for which we have direct evidence is Marcion's list of one Gospel and the Pauline epistles.[91] We have no evidence of any individual church, or of any group of leaders from various local churches meeting together during the 2nd or 3rd centuries to fix an "official" list in opposition to Marcion's. The evidence assembled by von Campenhausen[92] and Blackman[93] shows

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86 Op. cit., e.g. 33 sq.

87 Th. Zahn "Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons", vols. 1, 2, 1888-91.

88 "Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel", 1968, pp. 174-5.

89 Op. cit., pp. 38-9.

90 Op. cit., p. 32.

91 Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church", pp. 168-90 believes that Marcion's canon was not in fact the first one.

92 Op. cit., pp. 201 sq.

93 Op. cit., pp. 27-37 sq.

that differences remained for a long time among the churches, and that final unity was not reached on this point until the sixth century. However, from the time of Irenaeus at the very latest a fundamental unity did start to emerge.[94] This final product emerged by a kind of osmosis; determined partly no doubt by the choice of texts used in the liturgy (a choice probably decided by the clergy, rather than the laity), but also by the attitude of the whole local community, and by that of the intellectual leaders of the community i.e. the teachers.[95] Marcion certainly hastened this general process, even if he did not begin it.

Another peculiarity of Marcion's was that he did not formulate a rule of truth, or creed. Harnack explains this by his anti-philosophical bias.[96] If Apelles is typical of the whole movement on this point, it would also seem that they were not very interested in saying what they meant, or even (according to Rhodo) in meaning what they said.[97] Tertullian also tells us that there were variations in their rule of faith.[98] So on this point too, as Harnack points

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94 Cf. Blackman, op. cit., p. 34; von Campenhausen, op. cit., p. 201 sq; Hanson, op. cit., p. 194 stresses Irenaeus' role as a landmark in the acceptance of the Fourth Gospel; on p. 192 he gives the years 170-180 A.D. as the time when Paul's epistles and the four Gospels were recognised as "exclusively authoritative".

95 The teachers might be clerics, but clerical status was not necessary to be a teacher.

96 Op. cit., p. 190.

97 Eusebius, H.E.V.13. 5-7.

98 De Praeser. Haeret. XLII. 7. "etiam a regulis suis variant inter se"; cf. ibid., XLII. 8.

out,[99] they enjoyed greater freedom than the Catholic communities.

It remains only to give a little more detail about the community life, and actual organizational forms of the Marcionite communities. They celebrated baptism, and the Eucharist.[100] We do not know if Marcion himself was called "bishop" in his own lifetime,[101] but there were bishops, presbyters, deacons and lectors in their communities.[102] Tertullian also complains that priestly duties (sacerdotalia munera) were given to the laity; that the people chosen to be ordained as clerics were often unsuitable, and that these clerical states were not permanent.[103] We do not know how much truth there is in these accusations. They seem to have abolished the distinction between catechumens and faithful; at least, both of these groups could attend the Eucharist.[104] This last fact is of course just one step further than the rejection of secret traditions, which rejection Marcion also taught.[105] They also had women office holders, who, according to Tertullian, taught, argued, exorcised, promised cures, and even baptised (perhaps).[106]

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99 Op. cit., p. 190; cf. p. 199.

100 Cf. Tertullian, Adv. Marcion I.14.3. IV. 34.5.

101 Cf. Blackman, op. cit., p. 5.

102 Tertullian, op. cit., XLI. 8.

103 Ibid., XLI. 7-8.

104 Ibid., XLI. 2.

105 Cf. Bardy, op. cit., p. 40.

106 Ibid., XLI. 5.

The practice of a common asceticism contributed much to the cohesion and stability of the group.[107] Marcion's rejection of marriage probably had the same effect among those who accepted the directive.[108] This community spirit had little of the prophetic "enthusiasm", associated with Montanism.[109] Such a lack brought few long-term disadvantages.

All this is very similar to what we know of the Roman church about the middle of the second century cf. Justin, Hermas. It is a typical product of the time and situation of its birth. Except for the prohibition of marriage, much of it is surprisingly "liberal". It was precisely these "liberal" elements which the Church rejected increasingly during the third century. Marcion had influenced the Church at a slightly deeper level, especially in his formulation of a New Testament canon.

The Churches each reacted differently to the gnostic threat. Especially in Alexandria its influence on orthodox intellectual circles was considerable. Elsewhere the wholesale rejection of gnostic values was more complete. Because of their other-worldly interests, their organization had little influence on the Church, which steadily introduced a tighter and more comprehensive discipline. As a preliminary to this, and in direct opposition to the gnostics, the Church had to clarify the nature of her norms i.e. the place of

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107 Cf. Blackman, op. cit., p. 9; Harnack, op. cit., p. 199.

108 Cf. Tertullian, Adv. Marcion I. c29.1; IV. c34.5.

109 Cf. Tertullian, ibid. V. c15. 5.

Scripture and tradition, and the identity of their custodians. It was the Gnostic struggle which saw the predominance of the bishop become a universal feature of Church life.

Chapter Three.

IRENAEUS.

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons embodies the Church's response to the Gnostic crisis. In the Adversus Haereses, all his energies are devoted to the refutation of these opponents, and all his theology is developed for this polemical purpose. But we cannot thereby conclude that his theories on e.g. the Church, tradition, authority were only weapons to be used against the heretics, were not held sincerely or were divorced from the everyday life of the Church. The Gnostic struggle forced him to answer certain questions, and the nature of his answers was determined by a variety of factors.

He was born in Asia Minor, probably in Smyrna, where as a youth he had listened to bishop Polycarp preaching.[1] He later went to Gaul, and in 177 (or 178) as a presbyter of the Church of Lyons he was sent to Pope Eleutherus in Rome to seek toleration for the Montanists of Asia Minor. During this absence, Pothinus, bishop of Lyons was martyred; when peace was restored, Irenaeus succeeded him. The details of his episcopate are unknown, although he did intercede with Pope Victor, urging moderation, in the Quartodeciman quarrel.[2] The tradition that he died a martyr is of doubtful authenticity, and was not known to Eusebius.

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1 Eusebius E.H. V. 20. 5-8.

2 Ibid., V. 24. 18.

Irenaeus was no intellectual; nor was he a churchman in quite the same "political" sense as Cyprian. He was a pastor, who saw the damage inflicted on his people by the various exotic teachings of the heretics; and he reacted vigorously. Those who leave the Church, and especially those who cause others to leave, are followers of the prince of devils.[3] John's treatment of Cerinthus, and Polycarp's notorious rebuke for Marcion are quoted with approval.[4] These were his norms against the Gnostics. Others had to assimilate their insights, as he was intent only on defending and preserving. His semitic cast of mind, concrete and unspeculative, and especially his anti-intellectualism ensured that he was well cast for this role. "Are not there as many heresies as philosophies?", he exclaims impatiently; then adding immediately that both groups were condemned to seeking and never finding.[5] In this same unsympathetic vein, he had to admit that some heretics did get beyond a perpetual and fruitless search; some claim to discover a new doctrine a day,[6] while others went one better than even the Apostles and discovered another God![7]

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3 Adversus Haereses IV. 68. 1. (II. p. 306). Both section and page references are from W. Harvey's two volume 1857 edition. Second volume page references are prefaced by the prefix "II".

4 A.H. III. 3. 4. (II. 13-14).

5 A.H. II. 40. 1. (348).

6 A.H. I. 14. 4. (188).

7 A.H. III. 12. 15. (II. 67).

None of the early Fathers were Ecumenists, and Irenaeus was no exception. However his two interventions in internal Church affairs (for which we do have evidence) i.e. the Quartodeciman and Montanist controversies, show moderation and sympathy somewhat at variance with his doctrinal intransigence vis-à-vis the Gnostics. The comment of Eusebius that his irenical activities fittingly bore testimony to his name[8] is significant. There were other sides to Irenaeus' character, beside that of the anti-gnostic polemicist.

THE CHURCH.

The reality of the local churches, and their unity in the one universal Church are central to Irenaeus' refutation of the Gnostics. Within the Church there is the life of the Spirit, the rule of truth, the apostolic tradition; in short, truth and life. Outside her, there are only thieves and robbers.[9]

The various local Churches are ports of safety for those in danger; islands in the midst of turbulence, exposed as they are to the tempests of blasphemy.[10] One should flee from the heretics into these Churches to be nourished there by the Scripture; indeed the Church is like Paradise, where we can eat from the tree of life (i.e. the Scriptures of Our Lord).[11] This emphasis on the Church (as a

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8 E.H. V. 24. 18.

9 A.H. III. 4. 1. (II.15).

10 A.H. V. 34. 3. (II.421).

11 A.H. V. 20. 2. (II.379).

community of persons) which forms the essential context for all life of the Spirit, and all attainment of truth is in direct opposition to the mainstream of Gnostic thought. Even among the Valentinians, the Gnostics' disdain for historical reality and their disinclination to organize ensured that there was nothing resembling this insistence. The Churches combine to be the salt of the earth; the pillar of salt which always strengthens the sons of the Father, even when whole members fall away from her.[12]

The churches are united into a real and historical unity, not so much by organization, or ritual, or common origins, as by the fact that they all teach one and the same faith.[13] This derives from the Gnostic emphasis on saving knowledge, and their many interpretations of its nature. But for Irenaeus, common doctrine is only one aspect of the whole; it is on this ground that the Church is attacked, and here she must be defended. The Church's unity is also found at a richer and deeper level than a common adherence to a set of doctrines. It is rooted in the Holy Spirit, and so transcends history as well as participating in it. "Where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God, and where there is the Spirit of God, there is the Church and every grace".[14] She possesses the gift of

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12 A.H. IV. 46. 2. (II.254).

13 A.H. I. °4. (97) etc.

14 A.H. III. 38. 1. (II.132). G. Blum, "Tradition und Sukzession" 1963, pp. 219 sq. discusses Irenaeus' conception of the role of the Spirit in the Church.

love, the greatest of the charisms,[15] together with all other charisms.[16] In fact she has one soul and one heart, and preaches as though she had only one mouth.[17]

Two other features of Irenaeus' concept of the Church should be noted. The Church united in Spirit and in truth is recognized as such by its apostolic foundations, and by the lists of official witnesses (i.e. bishops) going back to those times.[18] It is the official Church which has a monopoly of the Spirit; he never considered the possibility that the life of the Spirit might grow cold within her. On the other hand, while he believed that church officials were holy (rather than that they should be such), there was never any suggestion that the officer class had a monopoly of the Spirit in the Church, to the exclusion of the laity. He did not think in these terms.

None of the Fathers or the New Testament writers imagined that the life of grace was to be found outside the organized Christian communities. In this sense Irenaeus' conjunction of the official and

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15 A.H. IV. 53. 2. (II.263).

16 A.H. II. 49. 3. (375).

17 A.H. I. °3. (92).

18 A.H. IV. 53. 2. (II.262) shows this very clearly, as does IV. °42. 1. (II.238) "Ubi igitur charismata Domini posita sunt, ibi discere oportet veritatem, apud quos est ea quae est ab Apostolis Ecclesiae successio, et id quod est sanum et irreprobabile conversationis, ..."; also "duodecastylum firmamentum Ecclesiae" i.e. apostles. A.H. IV. 35. 3.(II.227).

charismatic is only another expression of a universal Christian belief. However, his emphasis on the charismatic and on the bishops reflects his Eastern birth. Ignatius of Antioch is the obvious model; but Blum rightly localises this tradition further to Asia Minor itself,[19] quoting the anti-Montanist source in Eusebius. That the Montanist movement itself arose there and achieved considerable success is further evidence for their more-than-Western enthusiasm for the charismatic. Polycarp shows that the area was a centre for monepiscopacy.[20]

NORMS.

Since the Reformation, Irenaeus has been a primary source for the debate about Scripture and oral tradition. Naturally these later difficulties were no concern of his. When he did speak of tradition, he usually did not restrict its meaning to the oral variety. In fact, his defence of the Church was very much an appeal to the Scriptures.

Many of the Gnostic sects used Scripture as a quarry (among others) for props to their particular doctrines. Marcion, although he rejected the Old Testament and many New Testament books, made his

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19 Blum, op. cit., pp. 222-24. Cf. Eusebius E.H. V. 16.7; 17.2-4.

20 Cf. Ignatius' letter to Polycarp, bishop of the Smyrnaeans. Intro.

principal appeal to his own list of Scriptures. Sagnard,[21] followed by Benoit,[22] has shown that the appeal to Scripture was also a notable characteristic of the Valentinians. They were Irenaeus' chief opponents, and he answered them on their own ground.

von Campenhausen demonstrated that Irenaeus is a symbol of the transition in the Church from a belief in tradition (nature unspecified) to acceptance of the norm of a list of books,[23] i.e. the Old and New Testaments. This is a landmark in Christian history, and adherence to the Scriptures (in some form at least) has been a characteristic of all Christianity ever since. It is very possible that this natural process of recognising the importance of the New Testament books, to which Irenaeus bears witness, was speeded up by the Valentinian enthusiasm for them.[24]

For Irenaeus, the apostolic writings are the material expression of the apostolic tradition. These terms are united in a basic unity, which he accepted unquestioningly, never investigating its presuppositions or consequences.[25] It is only in this sense that he can be described as a Scriptural theologian. However the

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21 F. Sagnard, "La Gnose Valentinienne et le Témoinage de Saint Irénée," in Études de Philosophie Médiévale. (XXXVI). 1947 Paris, p. 604.

22 A. Benoit, "Saint Irénée. Introduction à l'étude de sa Théologie." 1960, p. 77.

23 "Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel". 1968, p. 213.

24 Benoit, op. cit., p. 77.

25 Cf. Blum, op. cit., p. 170; 180.

accuracy of this description is strikingly confirmed by the fact that there are 629 references to the Old Testament in the Adversus Haereses and 100 in the Demonstration; and 1065 references to the New Testament in the Adversus Haereses. The term "tradition" is used only 21 times for Christian tradition.[26]

He accepted the special status of the four gospels from tradition, and never felt required to offer a serious defence of their normative value.[27] Paul's epistles, including the Pastorals,[28] and Acts enjoy a similar standing.[29] There is no evidence in Irenaeus for a reaction against Paul in orthodox circles, due to Marcion's misuse. While the epistles are only once described as αἱ γραφαὶ,[30] this should be set beside the complementary facts that the terms "Scripture" or "Scriptures" are only applied twice to the New Testament writings alone. Most frequently the terms are applied to the Old and New Testaments together.[31] This is evidence of the

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26 A. Benoit, "Écriture et Tradition chez saint Irénée" in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses" (40) 1960, p. 33.

27 A.H. III. 11. 11. (II.46-7).

28 The Adversus Haereses begins with a quotation from "The Apostle", i.e. 1 Tim. 1.4. Irenaeus knew Hebrews, though probably did not attribute it to Paul. Cf. Eusebius E.H. V. 26.

29 Re Luke's Gospel and Acts, and the necessity of accepting both or neither. A.H. III. 14. 3-4. (II.77-8).

30 A.H. I. 1. 12. (55).

31 H. von Campenhausen, op. cit., n 201, p. 220, quoting J. Hoh, "Die lehre des Hl. Irenäus über das Neue Testament". (1919), p. 62.

changing status of the New Testament books in general, rather than that of Paul's epistles alone.

The reluctance to apply the term "Scripture" to the New Testament alone also indicates that there is as yet no fixed and closed canon of New Testament books to equal those of the Old.[32] The "Catholic" epistles are rarely quoted; likewise the Apocalypse,[33] and Irenaeus has no term to designate the unity of the New Testament books, and distinguish them from the Old.[34]

The Gospels, Acts and Paul's epistles possess their status because they express the teaching committed to the Apostles by Christ himself.[35] Their apostolic origin is the first proof of their reliability.[36]

Apostolicity is also an important criterion for recognizing the truth of all Christian teaching, as well as its written Scriptural form. But another characteristic, subsequent upon this apostolicity, would have made a more immediate impact on the general run of people i.e. the claim that only one and the same faith is taught throughout all the Churches. By any standards this is an impressive claim. As it is one and the same sun which shines in the whole world, so the

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32 Cf. Blum, op. cit., p. 176; von Campenhausen op. cit., pp. 243-4.

33 von Campenhausen, op. cit., pp. 227-8.

34 Ibid., p. 220.

35 Cf. A.H. III. Preface (II.1); III. cl. 1. (II.2) etc.

36 Cf. Blum, op. cit., pp. 176-7.

preaching of the truth illuminates all men who wish to receive it; whether the Church leader be a competent teacher or less than that, the faith remains one and the same.[37] The growth of the Churches in the first two centuries was a necessary prerequisite for these statements. Unanimity of doctrine among a few small Christian communities, even if scattered, would arouse little interest. A similar claim for a large number of Churches, many of them very different and some with nearly one hundred and fifty years of history, is a very different matter. Born in Asia Minor, a visitor to Rome, and a bishop in Gaul, Irenaeus was ideally suited by his background to draw attention to this unity. While Paul and the author of the Apocalypse had stressed the need for doctrinal unity within local churches (and by implication, within the wider community), he was the first to speak of the doctrinal unity of all the churches as a norm against which other groups could be judged. This is a logical development of earlier Christian history; indeed it could be said that the basic New Testament doctrines of the People of God and the Mystical Body of Christ require such a development. It was the Gnostic divisions which focussed attention on this unanimity. Their "personification" of the Church (i.e. one aeon, rather than a number of groups) also made it easier for him to view the Church in these global terms.

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37 A.H. I. °3. (93-4).

The validity of Irenaeus' appeal to a world-wide unanimity of faith cannot be accepted without some reservations. Differences of belief among orthodox communities towards the end of the second century should not be exaggerated; but the teaching of Clement of Alexandria, and indeed Origen, is different in many respects from that of Irenaeus. His claim presupposes at least a clearer distinction between "the essentials" of faith common to all, and the less essential; something only hinted at in the references to creeds and rules of faith made at that time. The verification of his appeal is not the only difficulty; subsequent Church history soon showed that the norm itself was not suitable for every occasion. Athanasius could make no appeal to the unanimity of the Church!

Before concluding this outline of Irenaeus' norms with a section on the rule of truth, we must return to the concept of tradition. To the rule that this is usually a generic term, not restricted to oral tradition, there is one exception in Adversus Haereses III. $^{o}2$-$^{o}5$. 1. This passage was prompted by the Gnostic appeal to their own oral tradition. It was a digression, as is shown by the author's remark at its conclusion that he will now return to the Scriptures for his proofs that Christ is truth.[38] Its purpose

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38 A.H. III. $^{o}5$. 1 (II.18). This digression has been identified by many scholars e.g. J. Ochagavia, "Visibile Patris Filius. A Study of Irenaeus' Teaching on Revelation and Tradition" in Orientalia Christiana Analecta (171) 1964, p. 193, quoting Reynders and Benoit's 1960 article. H. Holstein, "La Tradition des Apôtres chez Saint Irénée," in Recherches de Science Religieuse (36) 1949, p. 230.

was not to examine the relationship between written and oral tradition, but to authenticate both forms, and especially the oral, through their Apostolic origins.[39]

Also tradition is ecclesiastical, conserved only in the Church. This is not merely a logical consequence of his theory of the Church, but a belief which he himself held and stated. While Reynders was correct in pointing out Irenaeus' emphasis on apostolicity, his further claim that tradition is always apostolic, and not from Christ or the Church is misleading.[40] It is not true that "Tradere" or παραδιδόναι is reserved exclusively for the Apostles;[41] they usually are the agents who handed on the faith, but so are God, Christ, the Gospel, the Church, the presbyters (or elders), Polycarp and Irenaeus himself.[42] Even when the Apostles are the agents, they always received the true teaching from Christ, and passed it on to the Church to be conserved by her.[43]

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39 Blum, op. cit., p. 184.

40 D.B. Reynders, "Paradosis. Le progrès de l'idée de tradition jusqu' à saint Irénée" in Recherches de Theologie ancienne et mediévale. (5) 1933, pp. 178-9.

41 As Reynders op. cit., p. 184 claims.

42 Holstein in his 1949 article points this out. Op. cit., p. 238 "Dominus". A.H. IV. 18 (II.169); Christ. A.H. III. 9. 1. (II. 30); the Gospel. III. 10. 6. (II.40); the Church. III. 3. 4. (II.12); the presbyters. "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching". 3. (J. Armitage Robinson's translation, London 1920); Polycarp, A.H. III. 3. 4. (II.13); Irenaeus. IV. preface. 1 (II.145) "transmittens".

43 E.g. The Apostolic Preaching par. 98; A.H. V. preface (II.313) etc. Holstein in another article "Les Témoins de la Révélation d'après saint Irénée" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (41). 1953, p. 411, has pointed out the five stages in the economy of salvation (according to Irenaeus) i.e. Law, Prophets, Christ, Apostles, Church.

There are a number of references to the rule of truth,[44] the the rule of faith[45] and the kerygma of truth.[46] There is now a wide measure of agreement that the rule of truth signifies "the doctrinal content of the Christian faith as handed down in the Catholic Church".[47] On merely logical grounds, this doctrinal content must be delineated in some fashion. There is "no single universally accepted creed"[48] in Irenaeus' writing, but the rules of faith are various summaries of doctrine; different because of their various purposes e.g. anti-heretical, or the necessity of emphasising some particular truth. It was one such that John set up in the Church against Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans. Irenaeus can hardly have claimed that he instituted the doctrinal content of faith.[49]

There are a number of these summaries in his writings, whose formulae and contents differ;[50] but the "rule of truth" remains as

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44 A.H. III. 11. 7. (II.41) et alii.

45 The Apostolic Preaching 3; 6.

46 A.H. III. 3. 3. (II. 12); I. °3. (93-4).

47 J.N.D. Kelly, "Early Christian Creeds" 1960, p. 76; D. van den Eynde, "Les Norms de l'Enseignement Chrétien" 1933, p.286; von Campenhausen, op. cit., p. 214; Blum, op. cit., p. 172; V. Ammundsen, "The rule of truth in Irenaeus" J.T.S. (13) 1912, p. 576.

48 Kelly, op. cit., p. 76.

49 A.H. III. 11. 7. (II.40-1) "Omnia igitur talia conscribere volens discipulus Domini, et regulam veritatis constituere in Ecclesia, quia est unus Deus omnipotens, qui per Verbum suum omnia fecit," etc.

50 A.H. I. °2 (90-1) is the most notable of these. Also III. 4. 1. (II.16); III. 17. 6. (II. 87); III. 1. 2. (II.6).

doctrine expressed in this form. On one occasion Irenaeus speaks of the necessity of adhering to the rule of truth which is received through baptism.[51] This is not to be confused with the baptismal creed or interrogations, as it contains more truths than the latter.[52] Hanson suggests, as is very probable, that the rule of truth refers to the doctrine taught during instruction for baptism, rather than a creed at the rite itself.[53] The difference between the rule of truth and the baptismal creed is emphasised by Irenaeus' use of the rule as a test of orthodoxy against heretics.[54] There is no evidence that the baptismal formulae served this purpose. Their content was too summary to be an effective safeguard against heresy, and there is some evidence that heretics sometimes used the same formulae as orthodox Christians.[55]

The basic appeal was to the unity of faith, which had been committed to the Churches by Christ, and then the Apostles. The foremost expression of this faith is found in the Scriptures; occasionally it is found in oral tradition, or summarised in the rules. But the significant development, which is followed by all

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51 I. 1. 20 (88).

52 H. Holstein, "Les formules du symbole dans l'oeuvre de saint Irénée" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (34) 1947, pp. 454-5; van den Eynde, op. cit., pp. 287-89.

53 R.P.C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church" 1962, p. 65. Cf. Kelly, op. cit., p. 51.

54 E.g. III. II. 7. (II.40-1); III. 12. 7. (II.59).

55 Hanson, op. cit., pp. 65-6; Holstein, 1947, art. p. 455.

later writers, is the recognition of the New Testament writings as the primary source of doctrine, and the emerging recognition of a fixed list, although still blurred at the edges, of these Books.

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

All the Apostles taught one and the same faith, which was not transmitted to a section or class of people within the local Churches, but to all the faithful. The suggestion that each Apostle preached according to his personal whims and fancy is ridiculous; for then no one would have the rule of faith, and Christ's coming would have been a waste of time.[56] The truth is available for all who desire it, and its content, everywhere the same, is unaffected by the skill or ignorance of the teacher.[57] One can be sure of this because of the succession lists of bishops, which return unbroken to the bishops created by the Apostles themselves; even if, per impossibile, these Apostles did have a special reserved teaching, this would certainly have been committed to those placed over the local Churches by them.[58] Polycarp is the prime example of this; not only was he taught by the Apostles, but they appointed him bishop of Smyrna.[59] Irenaeus knows of many episcopal lists for local

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56 Cf. A.H. III. 12. 7-8. (II.59-61).

57 A.H. I. °3 (92-4); III. 38. 1. (II.131-2).

58 A.H. III. 3. 1. (II.8-9).

59 A.H. III. 3. 4. (II.12).

Churches; but rather than enumerate all of them, puts forward the list of the most ancient and greatest of the Churches i.e. Rome, founded by both Peter and Paul.[60]

This linking of the bishop and teacher must have been a commonplace belief in many Eastern Churches. Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp are examples of it. Irenaeus certainly believed that the elders of former times were bishops; but in Rome and Alexandria, there was considerable ambiguity over the status of the elders (i.e. clerical or otherwise), and a studied disinclination to link the teaching function too closely to the episcopal office.[61] Because of his Eastern origins, Irenaeus stated that the bishop was the guarantee for the faith of the local Church as though it was the most natural and uncontested belief in Christendom. Already at this time most Christians shared this view; but he went a little further. Despite the doubts of certain orthodox circles in the great intellectual centres of Rome and Alexandria, he regarded the teaching function of the bishop not as a useful extra, or byproduct of the anti-Gnostic struggle, but as an essential characteristic of the true Church, instituted by the Apostles.[62] The Apostles not only placed

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60 A.H. III. 3. 1. (II.9). The role Irenaeus envisaged for the Roman Church is discussed in a later chapter. (i.e. chapter 10).

61 For the Roman situation cf. chapter 4, sections c and d; for Alexandria c5, section e.

62 Cf. Blum, op. cit., p. 215.

the bishops over the Churches, but handed over to their successors their "locum magisterii".[63]

Linking the teaching bishop with the notion of succession and apostolic tradition is a further step. From where did Irenaeus receive this doctrine? Hegesippus had certainly used it earlier,[64] but there is a wide body of opinion that the link-up of apostolicity, tradition and succession (but not episcopacy) was taken over from the Gnostics. What Reynders put forward in 1933 as a provisory hypothesis (provisory because of the lack of primary sources),[65] Dix defended as a fact in 1946,[66] and von Campenhausen bluntly asserted in 1953.[67] This opinion has not won universal acceptance. Sagnard refused it,[68] and Ochagavia argued against it, perhaps too enthusiastically.[69]

The evidence for a Gnostic source is the letter of Ptolemaeus, the successor of Valentinus, to a Roman matron, Flora.[70] This letter cannot be dated exactly, but sometime around 165 A.D. is a common estimate. Dix suggests that it could even be ten to fifteen years'

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63 A.H. III. 3. 1. (II.9).

64 Eusebius E.H. IV. 22. 1-3.

65 Op. cit., p. 191.

66 In the article "Ministry in the Early Church" in "The Apostolic Ministry", ed. K.E. Kirk, p. 202 sq.

67 "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", pp. 158-9.

68 Op. cit., p. 473.

69 Op. cit., pp. 169-70.

70 Epiphanius. Panarion XXXIII. 3-7.

earlier.[71] On the other hand, there is also general agreement that Hegesippus wrote his "Memories" when he returned to the East around 180.[72] However it was earlier than this, during his visit to Rome in the episcopate of Pope Anicetus (155-64) that he pieced together the Roman succession list,[73] a date more or less contemporary with Ptolemaeus' letter. This evidence is not sufficient to justify Ochagavia's claim that Hegesippus elaborated his doctrine before Ptolemaeus;[74] but it certainly is sufficient to prevent the letter being cited as the first extant evidence on this point.

Valentinus wished to demonstrate to Flora the truth of his system. In this attempt at conversion it is unlikely that he would have stressed a Gnostic innovation, being content to concentrate rather on what was common. If Flora was the Roman Church, rather than an individual (a possibility, rather than a probability), this is even more likely to be the case.[75] In any event there are two important differences from Hegesippus; there is no identification of the teachers as bishops in the Gnostic succession, and the Gnostic tradition is a secret one, to which Flora will be introduced when

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71 Op. cit., nl. p. 202.

72 J. Quasten, "Patrology" vol. 1. 1962, p. 285; B. Altaner, "Patrologia" Italian edition, 1960, p. 92.

73 Eusebius IV. 22. 3.

74 Op. cit., p. 171. For some reason, Ochagavia suggests the year 160. So does Altaner, op. cit., p. 93.

75 This is a suggestion of R.M. Grant, "Notes on Gnosis", in Vigiliae Christianae (XI) 1957, esp. pp. 147-8.

she is worthy.[76] The situation remains obscure; even if we did discover which writing was earlier, this would be insufficient in itself to prove a mutual dependence, or the dependence of either on any other group.

Many of the elements, which were combined later to form the theory of an apostolic and episcopal succession as a guarantee of the Church's tradition, are found in Christian writers before Ptolemaeus and Hegesippus. The idea of tradition can be found as early as Jude's epistle.[77] As early as Clement of Rome, there was considerable emphasis on the criterion of apostolicity.[78] Ignatius of Antioch is the earliest certain example of a monarchical-type bishop; his insistence that the faithful rally round the bishop and only act with him, is also a demand for unity in the local Church.[79]

All this falls far short of the developed doctrine of Irenaeus. The insertion of the bishop into this scheme depended on the widespread acceptance by the Church of monepiscopacy i.e. a president or spokesman for the presbytery, who acted with them and in their name and that of the whole community. Where the bishop was more monarchical than monepiscopal i.e. able to act alone on behalf

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76 Epiphanius. Panarion XXXIII. 7.

77 v3. This epistle could have been written as early as the years 70 - 80 A.D.

78 1 Clement, 42. 1-5; 44. 1-3.

79 E.g. Magnesians, 6. 1; 7. 1; 13. 2.

of the community, the recognition of his position as guarantee of tradition was even more likely. That this last prerogative should be episcopal, rather than the teacher's, is a specifically Christian contribution. In fact and in theory, this doctrine of bishops as leaders and teachers comes from the East. The four earliest witnesses are all Eastern i.e. Ignatius, Polycarp, Hegesippus and Irenaeus. We cannot be sure when this institution was accepted by the Western Churches; but it was introduced into Western theology by Irenaeus, and exerted enormous influence on his immediate successors i.e. especially Hippolytus and Cyprian. Even in his Montanist days Tertullian never completely broke loose from it.

From what quarter the Church accepted the full doctrine of succession we do not know. The suggestion that it is to be found in Clement's first epistle is misleading.[80] The belief that the Apostles instituted the first bishops is not the same thing as a belief in a continuing series of bishops guaranteeing the Apostolic tradition; and the text usually adduced as proof for the second of the statements is insufficient because of its ambiguity.[81] The attempt to link the whole development of the idea of apostolic succession with the Judaeo-Christian idea of a succession of priesthood is also misleading.[82] Clement has already been ruled out

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80 A. Ehrhardt, "The Apostolic Succession" 1953, pp. 76-79.

81 i.e. 1 Clement 44. 2. Dix, op. cit., p. 258 sq. explains the possible interpretations of this passage; von Campenhausen, op. cit., pp. 156-7.

82 As Ehrhardt suggests op. cit., pp.158-9.

as there is no certain doctrine of succession. In the pseudo-Clementine literature there is no explicit linking-up of the priesthood with the apostolic origins of the episcopate.[83] Hegesippus did believe that James the Just took the see of Jerusalem after the Ascension,[84] and that he was the true successor of the High Priest, as "he alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary".[85] But it was on precisely these points that Irenaeus did not follow Hegesippus. James the Just has no special place in his theology; also there is no express statement that the bishops and presbyters continued the Old Testament priesthood,[86] and no incorporation of their priesthood into the apostolic succession theory.[87]

The use of the idea of succession was a natural development in a community gradually being deprived, through death, of its contacts with its founding members. About this time the Greek mystery religions, the rabbinic tradition in Judaism, and the

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83 This is obvious in Ehrhardt's examination of the Pseudo-Clementine evidence, pp. 71-5. To say that James is bishop is not the same as saying that he succeeded to Christ's priesthood; or that he continued the Jewish high priesthood. As well, there are the further questions of the transference of these prerogatives to later successors, and their relationship to tradition. Cf. von Campenhausen, op. cit., n98, p. 168.

84 Eusebius E.H. III. 5. 2.

85 Ibid., II. 23. 6.

86 Ehrhardt, op. cit., p. 122.

87 For a fuller examination of Irenaeus' theory of priesthood cf. the next section of this chapter i.e. "Bishops".

philosophical schools all proved the authenticity of their teaching through succession lists.[88] A little earlier, this same appeal had been used to justify the teachings of the Roman law schools.[89] Because of Ptolemaeus' intellectualism, it is probable that he borrowed his doctrine on this point from the philosophical schools (or the Church). The origin of the Church's theory must remain an open question; Hegesippus could have taken it from the Gnostics, or direct from the philosophical schools, or built on the basis of some Eastern Christian tradition. It is probable that the final product of the episcopal succession as a guarantee of apostolic tradition was first elaborated in Rome. Ptolemaeus was Roman, and Hegesippus worked out his succession list in Rome. In Corinth he merely discovered that the Church there remained in the true faith until the time of bishop Primus.[90]

BISHOPS.

With the exception of the apostolic succession doctrine, Irenaeus never developed his views on the hierarchy. As with most

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88 Cf. A. Hamel, "Die Kirche bei Hippolyt" 1951, n2, p. 103, quoting J. Ranft, "Der Ursprung des katholischen Traditionsprinzips" (1931) pp. 143 sq. 179 sq; von Campenhausen, op. cit., p. 167.

89 J. Stirnimann, "Die Praescriptio Tertullians im Lichte des Römischen Rechts und der Theologie" 1949, pp. 164 sq.

90 Eusebius IV. 22. 2-3. The martyrs "commended" him to the Bishop of Rome.

of his writing, this unbalance was a direct response to the pastoral difficulties created by the Gnostic crisis. As he was not a constitutional theorist, or a systematic theologian, he did not spell out many consequences of his pneumatic and institutionalist way of thinking. Neither do we have any worthwhile amount of his personal correspondence to supply this deficiency.

There is sufficient evidence to show that he regarded the bishop as much more than a useful anti-Gnostic teacher. There is no significance in his silence about the hierarchy and institutional Church in his "Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching". As the work is not polemical, and was written for orthodox Christians (rather than against some body of doctrine), there was no point in stressing what was not doubted, and what served only as necessary props for the life of the Spirit and the preservation of truth.

The bishops were the leaders of their Churches, and their teaching power was one part of this general authority.[91] Irenaeus was some sort of monarchical bishop in Lyons; it is difficult to tell whether his rule tended towards a monarchical or monepiscopal form of government. One passing reference of Eusebius, typical of a loosely organized Church, rather than a heavily centralized community controlled by monarchical bishop inclines us to the second possibility. There is no suggestion that Irenaeus was sent by his

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91 Blum, op. cit., p. 203.

bishop to Rome over the Montanist issue; he was the clerical representative, as presbyter, of the martyrs of Lyons.[92]

The bishop is in charge of the Church;[93] he is to be obeyed by the faithful.[94] He is compared to Moses and Samuel, and described as a prince.[95] Most importantly of all, the bishops had been placed over the Churches by the Apostles themselves.[96] Irenaeus acted as spokesman for his church in the discussion with Rome over the date of the Easter celebration, and there is no suggestion that bishops did not have competence to decide in such matters.[97]

Despite all this, the bishop's role is defined most of all in relation to doctrine. Although truth is conserved in the local churches,[98] and the truly spiritual man will judge all men and be judged by no man,[99] it is the bishop above all who is this spiritual man. The bishop has the "charism of truth".[100]

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92 Eusebius E.H. V. 4. 1-2.

93 A.H. I. °3. (94). ἐν τοῖς ἐκκλησίαις προεστώτων ; ex iis qui praesunt ecclesiis.

94 A.H. IV. 40. 2. (II.236). While it is the presbyters who must be obeyed they are described as having "the succession of the episcopate".

95 A.H. IV. 41. 2. (II.237-8).

96 A.H. III. 3. 1-2. (II.8-9) III. 3. 4. (II.12); V. 20. 1 (II.377).

97 Eusebius E.H. V. 23-24.

98 E.g. A.H. III. 38. 1. (II.131-2); V. 20. 2. (II.378-9).

99 A.H. IV. °50 (II.256); IV. 53. 1. (II.261-2).

100 A.H. IV. 40. 2. (II.236) "Qua propter eis in Ecclesia sunt presbyteris obaudire oportet, his qui successionem habent ab Apostolis, sicut ostendimus; qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum secundum placitum Patris acceperunt:"

As with "the rule of truth", many lines have been written on the meaning of this phrase, so that the question has become related closely to Irenaeus' theory of priesthood and ordination. Dix believed the charism to be sacramental, received at ordination; "a supernatural guarantee of authentic apostolic teaching";[101] some have thought it a power to teach infallibly.[102] Irenaeus believed the bishops taught the truth; but it is anachronistic to speak of infallibility. Also he never connected sacramental theory, or the ordination rite with the charism.[103]

A more plausible suggestion is that it is the truth itself which is meant; the charism is not used to judge, as it is the truth.[104] Such an interpretation would be better suited to the phrase "charisma veritatis certae"; in the text "certum" refers to the charism, not the truth. In fact charism and truth are closely connected, but they are not identical. This charism is a competence

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101 Op. cit., p. 209.

102 van den Eynde op. cit., p. 187 quotes K. Adam, "Der Kirchenbegriff Tertullians", p. 33-4.

103 Blum, op. cit., p. 205.

104 K. Müller, "Das Charisma Veritatis und der Episkopat bei Irenaeus" in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (23) 1924, pp. 216 sq; von Campenhausen op. cit., p. 172, following Müller. Also E. Molland, (i) "Irenaeus of Lugdunum and the Apostolic Succession" in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History (1) 1950 p. 26, and (ii) "Le Développement de l'idée de succession apostolique" in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses" (34) 1954, p. 22.

and authorisation from the Spirit to the bishop for the preservation of true teaching.[105] This becomes more obvious when we consider Irenaeus' own activity as a teaching bishop. The succession of bishops guaranteed the truth, and the individual bishop preserved this by refuting errors as well as proclaiming its positive content. Blum has also shown that not just a doctrinal competence is involved; in the paragraph following the quotation under discussion[106] we see that moral suitability (sermonem sanum et conversationem sine offensa) is also required by the bishops, here referred to as presbyters, for the moulding and correction of Christians.[107]

There is no reason to connect this charism with an ordination ceremony; but it does belong to the person and office of bishop. The fact that Irenaeus intended bishops to be chosen from the charismatics (or holy men) can be recognized;[108] all the early Fathers intended as much. It still remains that the certain charism of truth is given only to the bishops, and not to other holy men or teachers. Office is a requirement as well as holiness and competence.[109]

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105 Cf. N. Brox, "Charisma veritatis certum" in Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (75) 1964, p. 330. Hanson, op. cit., p. 162 has a similar view, as does Blum, op. cit., esp. n12, p. 206.

106 A.H. IV. 41. 1. (II.237).

107 Blum, op. cit., p. 206.

108 Hanson insists on this op. cit., p. 162, quoting E. Flesseman-van Leer, "Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church" 1954, pp. 119-22.

109 Cf. Blum, op. cit., p. 207; Dix op. cit., p. 210.

The question whether there were ordination ceremonies in Gaul at this time, despite Irenaeus' silence, focuses attention on the more basic question of his theory of the ministerial priesthood. On this we have only a few references to paste together. The Apostles are called priests (sacerdotes);[110] a statement which must be juxtaposed with the assertion which it immediately follows: all just men have the priestly order (sacerdotalem ordinem).[111] So too all the disciples of Our Lord were priests and Levites.[112] That these statements were not intended in an anti-ministerial sense can be seen from his references to bishops e.g. Polycarp and Anicetus celebrating the Eucharist.[113] The theology of the ministerial priesthood is completely undeveloped; the special role of bishops in the liturgy is not in doubt. It is not a big step to join theory and reality and describe the bishop as a high-priest, perhaps even starting from the priesthood of the Apostles. But this was a step which Irenaeus himself never made.[114]

We cannot be sure that Irenaeus was consecrated (or"ordained") to the episcopate; the existence of such a rite is probable. From

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110 A.H. IV. °17. (II.167); cf. IV. 29. 5. (II.199).

111 A.H. IV. °17. (II.167).

112 A.H. V. 34. 3. (II.422).

113 Eusebius E.H. V. 24. 17.

114 Cf. G. Blum, "Apostolische Tradition und Sukzession bei Hippolyt" in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (55) 1964, p. 109; Hamel, op. cit., p. 179.

Hippolytus' "Apostolic Tradition" we know that it existed in Rome about this time. As there was only one bishop in Gaul then,[115] and there is no evidence for a Roman consecration,[116] if such an ordination occurred, it must have been performed by the presbyters of Lyons after his return there.[117] This is another reason against exaggerating the differences between bishop and presbyter.

The bishop functions as leader and teacher; facts reflected in Irenaeus' theology, but not related to the theories of priesthood or ordination. The teaching function is stressed above the others, through the doctrines of the Apostolic succession and the charism of truth. The last reference proved to be very significant for later Christian history.

ELDERS AND PRESBYTERS.

The presbyter or elder enjoys great authority in Irenaeus' scheme of things. However, serious confusion surrounds his use of the words πρεσβύτερος , πρεσβύτης , and even προβεβηκότος , translated as either "presbyter" or "senior". The references to

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115 Cf. E. Molland, 1950 J.E.H. article, op. cit., p. 27; also Eusebius E.H. V. 23. 4. Irenaeus, "bishop of the dioceses of Gaul"; Ehrhardt, op. cit., pp. 130-1.

116 Cf. Eusebius V. 5. 8; Jerome, "De Viris Illustribus" 35. (P.L.23).

117 Molland, op. cit., p. 27.

Jewish "elders" do not concern us immediately.[118] Otherwise there seem to be two basic groups; revered teachers from the past, and clerical presbyters.

The former teachers include disciples of the Apostles,[119] and those who had known and spoken with the disciples of Our Lord.[120] At other times there is no indication that they were ever connected with the Apostles, or their disciples.[121] Usually the appeal is to a group; sometimes a single elder is invoked.[122] The identity of these individuals is of as little concern to us as it was to Irenaeus. He believed himself to be in contact with the Apostolic Age through Polycarp and John.[123] What is more important is to discover whether they were clerics i.e. bishops or presbyters, or laymen.

Irenaeus believed they were bishops.[124] The tradition of the elders, who knew the Apostles or their disciples, has been joined to that of the bishops placed over the Church by the Apostles; and the teaching function of the elder has been absorbed by the presbyter-bishop. The lack of a clear distinction between bishop and presbyter

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118 E.g. A.H. III. 12. 4. (II.57).
119 A.H. V. 5. 1. (II.331); V. 36. 1. (II.428).
120 A.H. II. 33. 3. (331); V. 33. 3. (II.417).
121 E.g. A.H. IV. 44. 1. (II.244); IV. 49. 2. (II.255).
122 A.H. IV. 49. 1. (II.254).
123 A.H. III. 3. 4. (II.12). Cf. Blum, op. cit., pp.191-2.
124 A.H. IV. 40. 2. (II.236); III. 3. 1. (II.8).

enabled this to be taken one step further i.e. elder equals bishop. This identification was not a fabrication; Irenaeus' teacher Polycarp was its embodiment, but it is very doubtful if these roles were combined in this way in Rome and Alexandria until the late second century. He inherited a belief in the tradition of the elders (πρεσβυτερῶν), who, he believed, were presbyter-bishops.[125]

The plausible suggestion of d'Alès, who attempted to introduce a little more order into this mixture, founders from lack of evidence. He suggested that πρεσβύτης (senior) meant a revered elder; while πρεσβύτερος meant the clerical presbyter.[126] There are some instances where presbyteri and πρεσβύτερου do clearly imply clerical rank.[127] Against this the Jewish elders are πρεσβύτερου τοῦ Ισραήλ ,[128] seniors and presbyteri.[129] The references to the Jews are not exactly relevant to the status of the Christian teachers, but the looseness of the Latin translator's references to them, and the scanty Greek text available leave d'Alès' case unproven.

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125 Cf. Ehrhardt, op. cit., p. 112.

126 A. d'Alès, "Le ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΗΣ de Saint Irénée" in Revue des Etudes Grecs (42) 1929, p. 408.

127 A.H. IV. 14. 2. (II.76); IV. 41. 1. (II.236-7) cf. reference to "cum presbyterii ordine"; probably IV. 41. 2. (II.238) is another such reference.

128 A.H. IV. 12. 4. (II.57) cf. nl. p. 57, Harvey vol. II.

129 A.H. IV. 22. 1. (II.177) seniorum; IV. 23. 1. (II.179) presbyterorum. Harvey vol. II. p. 179, n2, points out these are the same teachers as the previous chapter's.

The contemporary presbyters are a more mixed bag than their charismatic predecessors. Irenaeus finds it necessary to remind those, who leave the Church on the grounds that the holy presbyters are ignorant, that a simple religious person is much better than an impertinent and blasphemous sophist.[130] Ignorance is one thing; evil is another. All are urged to shun sinful and proud presbyters.[131]

This form of excommunication shows the charismatic emphasis of his thought. Office was sometimes necessary; but it was no substitute for holiness or correct doctrine (ignorance was less damaging). Without orthodox belief and holiness - and in his black and white world they tended to be present or absent together -[132] a bishop was no longer a bishop. Although the charism of truth was received with succession to the episcopate,[133] office did not so much bestow charisms as presuppose them. Just how effective the community's excommunication of the sinful presbyters might be would depend very much on the support of the local, and/or neighbouring bishops. Yet there is no mention of the necessity for official approval before such action; it would be anachronistic to presume such. Its absence should not be seen as an invitation to anarchy,

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130 A.H. V. 20. 2. (II.379).

131 A.H. IV. 41. 1. (II.236-7).

132 A.H. ibid. The faithful are told to follow the holy presbyters, who teach true doctrine.

133 A.H. IV. 40. 2. (II.236).

but as a confidence in the life of the Spirit within the general community. Obviously this optimism was born of Irenaeus' happy experiences with clerics. The bad presbyters (i.e. morally or doctrinally) must have been a rarity.

PENANCE.

Irenaeus' general silence on the workings of the institutional Church extends to his treatment of the penitential processes. The references are scattered and at first glance contradictory. This has led to a conflict of opinion over his teaching, some casting him as a rigorist.[134] Whatever the contemporary practice, it aroused little opposition within the community, and provoked little comment from the Gnostics.

It is explicitly stated that only God forgives sins.[135] This cannot mean that serious post-baptismal sin involves permanent excommunication from the Church, as the women who fell into heresy are received back into the Church,[136] together with the adulterous

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134 B. Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" 1964, n71, p. 50, gives a list of those supporting and opposing this point of view.

135 A.H. V. 17. 1-3. (II.369-71). The other texts adduced as evidence for no post-baptismal forgiveness for sins (cf. Hamel op. cit., p. 85) are insufficient. Re A.H. IV 42. 4. (II.241-2) i.e. IV. 27. 1-2. Migne P.G. cf. Poschmann op. cit., p.50: A.H. IV. °65 (II.301) i.e. IV. 40. 1. Migne. This text explicitly promises peace to those who repent.

136 A.H. I. 1. 12. (56), also I. 7. 6. (126-7) and Cerdon III. 4. 2. (II.17).

and heretical wife of the deacon.[137]

There were excommunications.[138] As in the case of the sinful presbyters, we have seen that this could be very much a community affair.[139] A further specification of this process lies in the description of the presbyters as those responsible for the correction of other Christians.[140] Church leaders would have taken a prominent part in ordering and enforcing excommunications.

He often mentioned exomologesis i.e. the lengthy penance performed in the Church,[141] but he never stated explicitly that this was under the control of the Church leaders, and he never spoke of an official act of reconciliation. Poschmann has suggested that the presbyters' power to correct others also involved supervision of the penance performed.[142] As there is no proof of an official act of reconciliation (although Irenaeus never spoke against it),[143] a presbyteral supervision of penance, except in the most general terms, must remain equally uncertain.

Their limited prerogatives in this regard would be exercised a fortiori by the bishop. It is difficult to prove even the general

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137 A.H. I. 7. 4. (121-2).

138 A.H. II. 48. 4. (372).

139 A.H. IV. 41. 1. (II.236-7).

140 A.H. IV. 41. 1. (II.236-7).

141 E.g. A.H. I. 7. 4. (122); III. 4. 2. (II.17).

142 "Paenitentia secunda" 1940, p. 226.

143 Cf. Poschmann, ibid., pp. 223-4.

supervisory role of the major clerics over the whole process, and there is absolutely no evidence for an important episcopal role, as distinct from a lesser variety exercised by the presbyters. The bishop's part in the penitential processes did not play a significant role in the development of the theory or practice of the episcopacy in Gaul; and episcopal theory and practice were thriving under Irenaeus.

CONCLUSION.

As Irenaeus shows no awareness of opposition among orthodox circles in Lyons, it can be presumed that his general views received almost unanimous acceptance there. He was not a martinet. His "mild" interventions in Church life outside Lyons, the closely related status of bishop and presbyter, the scarcity of evidence for episcopal supervision of penance, and the whole emphasis on a shared life of the Spirit are evidence of a loosely organized and happy community, united under effective leadership against the Gnostics.

He represented the almost instinctive appeal to community, which must have characterised the reactions of the general body of Christians to the Gnostics. He also shared their anti-intellectualism, and their healthy distrust of pretentiousness. It was he who pointed out that beggars, the blind and deaf followed Christ, not the famous or the high priests.[144]

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144 A.H. II. 31. 2. (320).

But his significance for the history of Church organization is enormous. He was the first Western writer to speak in unambiguous terms of the teaching function of the bishop.[145] For him the bishop was the chief teacher in the community, and the guarantee of tradition. This represents the consolidation of the first stage in the development of the episcopate; but something far beyond the first steps. The bishop would have presided over the liturgy, been in charge of administration, and perhaps even regarded as a "shepherd" before his effective control over doctrine was recognized. Rome and Alexandria will show this. But once this teaching power was recognized, the next stage becomes a possibility i.e. to lessen his dependence on the presbyters, to centralize the organization around himself, and exercise effective personal control over those semi-doctrinal, semi-practical issues so important in later Church history i.e. excommunication and reconciliation. This development is not a necessary process; I am not sure it is even desirable. But Irenaeus means that the prerequisites for this second stage were to hand in Gaul.

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145 Hegesippus was only a visitor to the West.

CHAPTER FOUR

HIPPOLYTUS

Hippolytus might have been many things; bishop of Rome, or a man of action who united his congregation, or a theologian who influenced posterity greatly, or even (to strike a much less exalted note) a source for the study of early church organization of equal importance with Cyprian.

In fact, he was none of these, although his writings and his personal history are significant for our purposes. It has even been suggested that the works commonly assigned to him should be divided between a Josipus, who lived at Rome at the time of Zephyrinus and Callistus, and the real Hippolytus who lived somewhere in the East about the middle of the third century.[1] Neither Altaner[2] nor Quasten[3] accept this division, and the theory has failed to win general acceptance.[4]

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1 P. Nautin, "Notes sur le catalogue des oeuvres d'Hippolyte" in Recherches de Science Religieuse (34) 1947 pp.99-107; 347-59.

2 B. Altaner, "Patrologia" 1960 Italian ed. p.113-4; nl. p.116.

3 J. Quasten, "Patrology" vol. II 1964, p. 166.

4 Cf. G. Bardy, "L'Énigme d'Hippolyte" in Mélanges de Science Religieuse (5) 1948, pp.63 sq; 69; 82 sq. H. von Campenhausen, Ecc.Auth. n 157, p.175; Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel, 1968 n 5, p.314. B.Botte in intro. to "La Tradition Apostolique", Münster 1963, pp.XIV-XV. A. Grillmeier, "Christ in Christian Tradition", London 1965, n 1, p.134. E. Doresse, "The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics", London 1960, believes that the Philosophoumena is not Hippolytus' p.3; 6. We have followed Quasten op.cit.,pp.178-9 in rejecting "On the Passover".

The details of his early life are unknown, even his nationality being uncertain. So too the facts about his later years and his death lie in a similar, though perhaps lesser, obscurity.[5] The main facts about his Roman ecclesiastical career are known, and these are the important ones for our purposes. The passage in Photius[6] stating that he was a pupil of St. Irenaeus is somewhat ambiguous. However, if he did not study with Irenaeus personally, he knew the latter's writings well, and often quoted from them.[7]

As well as being a man of letters with a considerable number of exegetical works to his credit, he was also a deeply committed and deeply involved churchman, who wrote on a variety of less academic topics, ranging from a global refutation of all heresies to a manual for liturgical practice. He was deeply involved in the Christological controversies of his day; being violently opposed to any form of Sabellianism. As a result of this he himself became suspected of Subordinationism. He eventually left the Church because he believed his opponents had compromised the true faith on this point. The exact date of his official breach is not known; while Zephyrinus never excommunicated him, the ground was well prepared during this

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5 Cf. Altaner op. cit., pp. 113-4; Quasten op. cit., pp. 163-5.

6 Bibliotheca cod. 121.

7 Cf. A. Donini, "Ippolito di Roma" Rome 1925, p. 18; Dix-Chadwick edition of "The Apostolic Tradition" 1968 London p. XIII, and the slightly "maximalist" view of A. Hamel, "Kirche bei Hippolyt von Rom". Gütersloh 1951, p. 2.

time for the official break which seems to have occurred with the accession of Callistus.[8] The schism continued through the time of Pope Urban (223-30) and Pope Pontianus (230-235). Tradition tells us that he died as a martyr in Sardinia.

In the Philosophoumena, Hippolytus referred to himself as a successor of the Apostles.[9] That this implied episcopal status, rather than presbyteral (which he also believed to share in the apostolic succession), is clear from the reference to the high priesthood (which presbyters do not share). He was not the bishop of Portus, a town at the mouth of the Tiber; the first document to give him this honour is the seventh century and Eastern Chronicon Paschale.[10] He was therefore an anti-Pope, in charge of his own small group in Rome itself.

Naturally with this small group, there are no records of Hippolytus' administration either within his own church, or of its relations with other churches. Neither is there any specific treatment of ecclesiology; for us his main interest lies in the "Apostolic Tradition" with its description of the ordination ceremonies then used at Rome. His remarks on the position of the teachers within the

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8 Dix-Chadwick op. cit., pp. XXV-XXVI; K. Müller, "Der Ursprung des Schismas Zwischen Kallist und Hippolyt", in Z.N.W. (23) 1924, p. 234.

9 Philosophoumena Book 1, intro. 6 (G.C.S. vol. 3).

10 Dix-Chadwick op. cit., note p. XXXI-XXXII where the evidence for this is set out briefly and clearly.

Christian community are also important, as are his concepts of a church of the just, and his emphasis on apostolicity.

NORMS.

Like the other orthodox Christian writers about the turn of the century, and like them prompted by a desire to distinguish the orthodox communities from their Gnostic opponents, Hippolytus attaches a unique importance to Scripture i.e. both the Old and New Testaments. In his commentary on the Canticle of Canticles he explains that the "breasts" of Christ are the two Testaments, and the milk is their Commandments;[11] the meaning of Christ is manifested through both the Testaments i.e. through the Law and the Gospel.[12] Hamel is not overstating the case when he claims that for Hippolytus the Scriptures possessed absolute authority.[13] In the introduction to the first book of the Philosophoumena, he stressed that the heretics are wrong, because their teaching derives not from the Scriptures, but from the Greek world of philosophers, astrologers and mystery religions.[14] The whole work is a development of this theme. He also pointed out that when the heretics did use the Scriptures, they chose only those parts

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11 Slavic fragments, comm. on c1. 2. (G.C.S. vol. 1, p. 344).

12 Slavic fragments, comm. on c 2. 8. (p. 348); comm. on c1. 13. (346).

13 Op. cit., p. 7.

14 Philosophoumena Book 1, intro. 8 sq.

suitable for their designs.[15]

The quotations from the commentary on the Canticle of Canticles show that he held both Testaments in equal respect, although he usually reserves the terms "Scripture" or "Scriptures" to the Old Testament.[16] The use of the term "Gospel" for the New Testament writings seems to leave a question mark about the status of the epistles. However, as well as the four Gospels, Hippolytus knew of Acts and the thirteen epistles of St. Paul, which he uses in exactly the same way as the Gospels, the Prophets and the Law.[17] The other books of the present New Testament canon are also quoted, but there is no trace of John's epistles, or those of Jude.[18] Some writers e.g. J.B. Lightfoot, Th. Zahn, M.J. Lagrange, etc., have ascribed the Muratorian Canon to him. This is possible. What is important is that Harnack's view of it as an official document from the Roman Church has been universally abandoned.[19] In this period,

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15 E.g. Philosophoumena Book 7 c31 where Hippolytus appeals to Paul and Mark against Marcion. The quotation in Eusebius E.H. V.28, 13-19 which very possibly belongs to Hippolytus is a classic exposition of this point of view. Also the Apostolic Tradition XXXVIII 3a and 3b (Dix-Chadwick edition pp. 71-2).

16 A. d'Alès, "La Theologie de saint Hippolyte" (1906) p. 113 and H.von Campenhausen, "Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel" p. 315.

17 D'Alès op. cit., p. 114. For similar conclusions on this whole question cf. von Campenhausen op. cit., pp. 315-318.

18 D'Alès op. cit., p. 115.

19 Cf. Quasten op. cit., pp. 207-9; von Campenhausen op. cit., pp. 283-4.

we have no evidence of "official" lists, or "official" decisions about the contents of the New Testament. Hippolytus nowhere explains why he accepts some books as canonical. The importance he attaches to the Apostles suggests that apostolicity would be an important criterion; so would Church usage.

The unique place of the Scriptures is again vividly demonstrated in his refutation of Noetus. "There is one God whom we do not know from any other source, brethren, except the Scriptures"; this is categoric enough.[20] However, it does not exclude more convenient clarifications, based on the teachings of both Testaments; and the contents of this rule of truth are in fact outlined at the end of this same work against Noetus.[21] This basic outline is known as the word (λόγος) of truth;[22] or as a definition (ὅρος),[23] or rule (κάνων).[24] There is no suggestion that this rule of faith is for him superior to Scripture; it is a convenient paraphrase of Scriptural teaching. Its relationship to the baptismal creed is unclear.

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20 C9 Migne. Patrologia Greca vol. X 1857, P. Nautin entitled his 1949 Paris edition, "Contre les Hérésies".

21 C17-18; also Philosophoumena X. 32-3.

22 Philosophoumena IX. 31. 2; X. 6. 1; X. 34. 1, etc.

23 Ibid. X. 5. 1.

24 Ibid. X. 5. 2. cf. Hamel, op. cit., pp. 94-5. For Hippolytus "dogma" always meant an heretical doctrine opposed to truth! (cf. Hamel, p. 90).

Hippolytus realised that neither Scripture nor the rule of truth can give immediate and undisputed answers to contemporary problems. His controversies about Christology and penance show this. To answer these problems, he appealed to tradition. He speaks of apostolicity, succession and especially of the role of the Holy Spirit. However it is better to discuss all this within the context of his doctrine on the Church, and more particularly under the heading of episcopal and teaching activity.

THE CHURCH.

Hippolytus' best known description of the church is "a holy society made up of those who live in justice".[25] Whatever we think of this high ideal (and the possibility of its existence), an exclusive emphasis on this arid and rigorist description, is unfair to its author, with his rich and evocative images of the Church.

One common factor in many of these images is the person of Christ. Indeed the commentary on the Canticle of Canticles deals almost exclusively with the union between Christ and his church, rather than the union between Christ and the individual person (an idea developed much more by Origen, although he does speak of the union of Christ and the Church).[26] The Church is like a ship tossed

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25 Commentary on Daniel 1. 17. 5-7. (G.C.S. vol. I.).

26 Cf. G. Bardy, "La Théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au concile de Nicée", p. 104; A. Hamel op cit., pp. 20-1. cf. Origen Chapter; section on the church in this work.

about on the sea, with Christ as its skilled pilot;[27] she is the bedroom of the King, who is Christ;[28] the house which Christ in his wisdom has built,[29] and to return once again to the theme used in the Canticle of Canticles, Susanna is a figure of the Church, while her husband Joachim is the figure of Christ.[30]

This emphasis on the union of Christ and the Church shows the importance Hippolytus gives to the spiritual dimension of the Church; an importance which is also evident in the role he assigns to the Holy Spirit. The Church is not restricted to this life; much less is it limited to or described by legal terms. It is a mystical reality, not a shadowy ideal, in which Christ and his teaching are the cornerstones.

The organization of the Church i.e. her officials have a part in this imagery; but the life story of our author shows that these were never regarded by him as "infallible" touchstones of orthodoxy. For him, the apostolic succession of bishops was not an allpurpose guarantee; as Callistus had shown. Fidelity to Christ's teaching is the touchstone; and where persons are mentioned it is the giants of former times, especially prophets and the Apostles who are given

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27 On the AntiChrist c59. (G.C.S. vol. 1).

28 Comm. on Canticle of Canticles cl. v4. Slavic frags. (G.C.S. vol. 1, p. 344).

29 Comm. on Canticle of Canticles cl. v5-17. Armenian frag. (G.C.S. vol. 1, pp. 362-3).

30 Comm. on Daniel cl. v14. 5.

prominence, while the contemporary charismatics i.e. martyrs and virgins have at least an equal importance with the bishops, presbyters and deacons, and are on occasion ranked before them.[31] The beams and pillars of the house built by Christ (i.e. the Church) are the word of God, while the Apostles and their preaching are the panelling; he then mixes the metaphor slightly by explaining that while the prophets used to be the supports of the house, now the Apostles are.[32] In other places the supports and walls of the house are the Laws, which, he adds significantly, are not to be destroyed but brought to fruition.[33] Elsewhere we are told that while the prophets used to lead people into the Church, this is now done by the Apostles.[34] In the passage where Christ is described as piloting the ship, which is the Church, the top sails are the prophets, martyrs and Apostles.[35] So too just as an apple on a tree, Christ exists among the prophets, patriarchs, apostles and angels.[36] Finally in the magnificent comparison of the Church to the garden of Eden, where the river of sparkling water (Christ) divides into four streams (the Gospels) to water the earth, it is the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs

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31 Ibid. cI. 17. 8.

32 Comm. on Canticle of Canticles cl. v5-17. Armenian frag. (G.C.S. vol. 1, pp. 362-3).

33 Ibid. re. c2. Armenian frag. (p. 366).

34 Ibid. re. c2. Armenian frag. (p. 364).

35 On the AntiChrist c59.

36 Comm. on Canticle of Canticles. re c2. Armenian frag.(p. 363).

and virgins who are mentioned in that order, to be followed by the teachers, and then the order of bishops, presbyters and deacons.[37] The mention of the "order" of bishops, etc., shows that their special clerical status was recognized in this work, as in the "Apostolic Tradition". These orders are necessary for the Church, but not as necessary as the life of the Spirit manifested especially in the charismatics, nor as necessary as correct teaching. In this respect, Hippolytus stands in the mainstream of second and third century thought, apart from Ignatius of Antioch and then Cyprian. There are profound similarities between his position and that of Irenaeus, although the new element introduced into his world by Callistus' "defection", and his range of theological interests (much wider than those of Irenaeus) prevent us from identifying their positions too closely. In the last resort, in his stress on the life of the Spirit and on correct teaching; in the subordinate place he assigns to officials in the whole life of the Church and his willingness to break with these officials when it appeared necessary (and the consequent, if unexpressed reliance on his own judgement), Hippolytus' position is not far removed from Tertullian's; as well both were rigorists, more intelligent than their opponents, and struggling in a situation where the anti-Gnostic norms were no longer adequate to the new situations.

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37 Comm. on Daniel I. 17. 8.

This image of the Church dominated by the person of Christ, spanning the past, present and the future, emphasising so much the giants of past times, and even excluding sinners from the visible Church; all this must have served as an ideal focus of loyalty for its members. This loyalty is of course a prerequisite for the exercise of any sort of authority or leadership. In typically Roman fashion, and unlike Irenaeus, he never appealed to the image most suited to arousing this sort of loyalty i.e. the image of mother Church. Why Roman writers always avoided this term up to the time of Pope Damasus (368-84 A.D.) is not clear.[38] One possibility is that it had too many Gnostic overtones for a church such as Rome, where the struggle with these groups had been so fierce.

A final couple of characteristics emerge from the list of images quoted above to describe the Church. From the references to the patriarchs and prophets, it is clear that the Church is seen as the continuation of the Jewish religion; the church drawn from the pagans has replaced the Jews as the bride of Christ.[39] This basic idea is commonplace among Christian writers; Hippolytus uses it as a base for his theories of the ministry and the priesthood. The other characteristic which emerges is that the Church is seen, more

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38 J.C. Plumpe, "Mater Ecclesia", 1943, p. 128. For the Roman use of this term (inc. Hippolytus' avoidance of it), ibid., pp. 126-129.

39 Comm. on Daniel II. 33. 2-5. Cf. Hamel op.cit., p. 17; 28.

often than not, as a unity spreading all over the world. This universal, trans-historical reality is the starting point, rather than the individual local churches which had formed the starting point for Irenaeus.[40] The literary form of many of his works (e.g. the commentary on the Canticle of Canticles) facilitates, and almost demands, the adoption of this starting point. It very probably also reflects the developing awareness of the universality and basic unity of the different Christian communities.

BISHOPS AND TEACHERS.

The importance Hippolytus attached to the Apostles is apparent from his images of the Church. This is strikingly confirmed in a passage from his work "On the Anti-Christ". Here the Church is described as a woman clothed with the sun, and having a crown of twelve stars i.e. the Apostles by whom the Church was founded.[41]

As a consequence of this, the criterion of apostolicity had a continued relevance in the life of the contemporary Church. His appeal to this criterion, as e.g. in the conclusion of the "Apostolic Tradition" shows his theological sophistication, and also accords well with his continued emphasis on the spiritual, rather than the

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40 L. Welserheimb, "Das Kirchenbild der griechischen Vaterkommentare zum Hohen Lied". Zeitschift fur Katholische Theologie (70) 1948 pp. 400-1. Cf. von Campenhausen, "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", n 161 p. 176.

41 C61.

human elements as the really important ones in his theory of the Church. First of all his work "The Apostolic Tradition" is not a pseudepigraph like the Didascalia and many Church Orders. It does not claim to be written personally by the Apostles.[42] Walls also points out the "dynamic, not static" nature of the concept of tradition; so that apostolic tradition is not so much customs instituted in apostolic times (although it includes this idea), as that which accords with the witness and teaching of the Apostles. This places a stress on the activity of the Spirit, which Walls suggests derives from the defection of bishop Callistus, the supposed guarantor of tradition.[43]

This is not to deny the role of the bishop as a teacher of tradition. Before returning to examine this however, we will examine the other episcopal functions, outlined by Hippolytus i.e. as priest, leader and even judge. These receive much more prominence, at least in the ordination prayers of the Apostolic Tradition than the bishop's teaching function.

In the most unequivocal terms, Hippolytus describes the bishop

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42 Cf. A.F. Walls, "A Note on the Apostolic Claim in the Church Order Literature" in Texte und Untersuchungen (64) 1957 p. 85.

43 Op. cit., pp. 84-6. He gives three texts from the Apostolic Tradition to show the dynamic nature of tradition, i.e. I.5; XVI.25; XXXVIII.4. However the Dix-Chadwick edition regards XVI.25 as a probable interpolation.(cf. p.28). Botte XVI., (p.39) includes it, but gives a slightly different translation. Significant differences between Botte and Dix-Chadwick are indicated when relevant.

as high priest.[44] This is very much in contrast to Irenaeus who spoke little of the ministerial priesthood. What is also significant is that this description occurs once in the prayers for the consecration of a bishop i.e. "Father .... grant upon this Thy servant whom Thou hast chosen for the episcopate to feed Thy holy flock and serve as Thine high priest, that he may minister blamelessly by night and day, that he may unceasingly propitiate Thy countenance and offer to Thee the gifts of Thy holy Church".[45] While it is true that bishops had considerable freedom in arranging the liturgy at that time,[46] it is also very probable that the conservative Hippolytus with his opposition to innovation was in fact doing what he claimed[47] i.e. setting out the old Roman traditions.[48] In this case, the substance of the ordination prayers would have a special claim to antiquity. We cannot be sure how old they are, but they are pre-Hippolytan. It follows then that the references to the bishop as high-priest are also pre-Hippolytan.

These prayers state that this high priest is also a ruler; but the terms are not as clear cut as those referring to the

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44 Apostolic Tradition III. 4-5; Philosophoumena Book 1, intro., also e.g. Apostolic Tradition XXVIII. 1-3.

45 A.T. III. 4-5. Translation from Dix-Chadwick edition p. 5.

46 Cf. Chadwick's preface to the second edition of Dix-Chadwick edition of A.T., pp. i-j, esp., n 23 p. i.

47 A.T. I. 2-4.

48 Cf. Dix-Chadwick edition, pp. XXXVII-XXXVIII.

priesthood. They refer to "Thy servant whom Thou hast chosen for the episcopate to feed Thy holy flock",[49] and a little later to the bishop's powers to forgive sin, to assign lots and to loose every bond.[50] To set this properly in context, we should remember that the ordination prayer for the presbyter asks that he may be given the spirit of grace and counsel so that he may "govern Thy people in a pure heart";[51] even the reference in the consecration prayers for the bishop to the power of the princely Spirit (δύναμιν τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ πνεύματος),[52] refers to a person's power of self control (following on from Psalm 50 ᵛ14 and the Stoics' belief about the superior part of the soul), as well as to the power of ruling others.[53]

These consecration prayers show up the clear parallel between the Old Testament institutions and those of Christianity; they also bear out Lécuyer's observation that the priesthood and kingship which had been separate in the Old Testament had been brought together in the person of Christ, then transmitted to the Apostles, and then to the bishops.[54] The bishop is in theory both priest and

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49 A.T. III. 4.

50 A.T. III. 5.

51 A.T. VIII. 2. καὶ κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν σου ἐν καθαρᾷ καρδίᾳ ; cf. pp. 81-2, Dix-Chadwick edition.

52 A.T. III. 3.

53 J. Lécuyer, "Épiscopat et Presbytérat dans les écrits d'Hippolyte de Rome" in Recherches de Science Religieuse (41) 1953, pp. 34-5.

54 Op. cit., p. 32-3; 48 cf. A.T. III. 2-5.

leader; and in fact Hippolytus recognizes that the bishop exercises these roles. He refers to Pope Zephyrinus, who administered the affairs of the Roman Church;[55] so too in his lengthy attack on Pope Callistus, he never objects that a bishop cannot take this type of decision, merely that in this case the wrong solutions were given.[56] There is confirmation of his acceptance of the leadership role of the bishop in his reference to Callistus' ambition for the episcopal throne,[57] and in his acceptance of Pope Victor, who had "excommunicated" the Easterners.[58] It would be interesting to discover Hippolytus' views on this particular incident! The exact relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate in this decision-making cannot be ascertained.

Hippolytus also regarded the bishop as a teacher, and as belonging to the Apostolic Succession. Any person described as a follower of St. Irenaeus would be expected to teach as much. Naturally he emphasised the role of the Spirit in the conservation and recognition of true doctrine.[59] The passage from the introduction to the first book of the Philosophoumena sets this out quite clearly. "No one will refute them (i.e. the heretics) except the Holy Spirit handed down in the Church, whom the Apostles first

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55 Philosophoumena 9. c7. 1.

56 Ibid., 9. c7 sq.

57 Ibid., 9. c11. 1.

58 E.g. "the blessed Victor" ibid., 9. c12. 10.

59 Cf. d'Alès op. cit., p. 118; cf. Hamel op. cit., p. 163.

received and passed on to men of orthodox belief. We are their successors ....". Once again, there is no exclusive emphasis on the bishops as the vehicles of the Holy Spirit, as the introduction to the Apostolic Tradition speaks of the grace which the Holy Spirit bestows on right believers to enable them to recognize true doctrine and the real worth of the activities of Church leaders.[60] As stated earlier, this mystical emphasis on the role of the Spirit, which extends so obviously to all the faithful is prompted in part by Hippolytus' dissatisfaction with Zephyrinus and Callistus. The inclusion of the faithful is not remarkable, as Irenaeus himself believed that true doctrine was preserved first of all by the Churches, whose authenticity is guaranteed by the lists of bishops.

The idea of succession is accepted as a common starting point. The heretics are described as not possessing a proper succession;[61] so too a succession from Pythagoras is mentioned;[62] the successors of Noetus are brusquely dismissed,[63] and the succession of Zephyrinus and Callistus is also described.[64] Similarly the idea of an apostolic succession of bishops requires no proving; it is mentioned in passing as an accepted starting point. The idea of apostolic

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60 A.T. I. 5 cf. XXXVIII. 1-4 cf. G. Blum, "Apostolische Tradition und Sukzession bei Hippolyt", ZNW (55) 1964, p. 98.

61 Philosophoumena Book 1, intro. 8.

62 Ibid., Book 1, c5.

63 Ibid., X. 27. 1-4.

64 Ibid., Book 9, c7.1 - 8.1.

tradition is also taken for granted; the term only being mentioned a couple of times.[65]

The grace of the Spirit, the charism of all the faithful and the special role of the bishop must be seen as complementing one another in the defence of true doctrine; they were not in opposition. Moreover among the earthly guarantors of doctrine, the main role is that of the bishops; and their special position is proved by their succession from the Apostles.[66]

One difference from Irenaeus' doctrine of apostolic succession is apparent in that same and often quoted passage from the introduction to the first Book of the Philosophoumena i.e. Hippolytus incorporates the highpriesthood of the bishop into the gifts inherited by the apostolic succession.[67] This is paralleled by his emphasis on the ordination of the bishop; a factor which, Blum points out quite correctly,[68] now comes to the forefront, while the historical-linear aspect of episcopal succession slips into the background. While we should not make too much of it, one passing reference of his does have some significance in this connection.

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65 A.T. XXXVIII. 2; Against Noetus 17. cf. Hamel op. cit., p. 102; von Campenhausen op.cit., n 159, p. 175.

66 Philos. Book 1, intro., where Hippolytus emphasises his own episcopacy, and the apostolic succession cf. Hamel op. cit., p. 99-100; 163-4. Blum op. cit., p. 102.

67 Philos. Book 1, intro. 6.

68 Op. cit., p. 107.

The Apostles first of all passed on the Holy Spirit to "men of orthodox belief";[69] there is no ambiguous reference here to the presbyters or ancients of earlier times, much less to bishops. The contemporary successors of the Apostles are the bishops, but the identity of the interim successors is not specified. Remembering the Roman episcopal lists of Hegesippus and Irenaeus, the most probable explanation of this slip must remain simple carelessness. However the conscious choice of such a phrase remains a tantalising possibility, especially when we remember the probability that the Roman Church was ruled by a presbyteral college much longer than some other Churches.[70]

Another factor is that Clement of Alexandria never spoke of a succession of bishops as a guarantee of orthodox belief. Origen mentioned an episcopal succession, but it is highly doubtful whether he confined this succession to bishops alone. Whether this disinclination was caused by simple ignorance (a highly unlikely possibility, as Clement knew Irenaeus' writings), or by mixed feelings towards their own bishops is a question discussed elsewhere. Another possible explanation of their attitudes, and of Hippolytus' slip (mentioned above) is that the position of the bishop as the ultimate guarantee of correct teaching, at least on fundamental

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69 Philos. Book 1, intro. 6.

70 Cf. von Campenhausen op.cit., p. 166.

points, was not accepted until some time in the second half of the second century by the Churches of Rome and Alexandria. Whatever the generally admitted position of contemporary bishops, if their teaching function had not been recognized as more important than that of any other teacher earlier in the century, then we have a good reason for Clement's not using the episcopal succession theory; and for Hippolytus' blurring the identity of the interim characters - while accepting present bishops as teachers.

There is some evidence in the consecration prayers for a situation in the Roman Church where the bishop was not seen as THE teacher for the congregation. The consecration prayers for the bishop are pre-Hippolytan; and it has been pointed out that the notion of apostolic succession has not penetrated them.[71] Similarly the fact that there is no explicit mention in these prayers of the teaching function of the bishop has been noted.[72] The reference to the bishop chosen to "feed Thy (i.e. God's) holy flock"[73] no doubt implies some function, even if nothing more was involved than his regular preaching; what, if anything, was intended beyond this we cannot guess. Dix claims that these prayers represent the Roman view of the bishop before the debates about "apostolic succession" began

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71 Von Campenhausen n 103, p. 169.

72 Blum, op. cit., p. 108; G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church" in "The Apostolic Ministry" editor K.E. Kirk, p. 210; 213.

73 A.T. III. 4.

sometime no later than 170 A.D.,[74] but he never states quite clearly whether the teaching function of the bishop was a reality shrouded in silence before 170 A.D.; or whether the recognition of the bishop as the most important teacher in each congregation, having the last word on questions of orthodoxy, was a new development. There is evidence that Dix accepted the first alternative, for he suggests that the third century church's concern with the bishop's function as the pastor and liturgical minister of the faithful was "a return to the normal conception of the bishop's function", after the Gnostic crisis had directed attention on his teaching activities.[75] For Rome at least, this goes beyond the facts. The doubts concerning the existence of even a stable monepiscopal system in Rome, much less a monarchical episcopate during the first half of the second century seriously weaken, if not destroy such a theory before it is launched. Second century Rome with its large number of Christian teachers, orthodox and unorthodox, gives little background support. Positive evidence in favour of Dix, in the consecration prayers, would be sufficient, but it is precisely this which is lacking. In Rome, the third century emphases on the bishop were not a return but a development, because they included the universally recognized status of the bishop as the ultimate personal norm of

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74 Dix, op. cit., pp. 213-4.

75 Dix, op. cit., p. 211.

orthodoxy (as distinct from the role of the Spirit, Scripture or Tradition). Our examination of Hippolytus' references to "the teachers" will do nothing to weaken this point of view.

If these prayers describe the situation about 170-80 A.D., or even earlier (cf. Hippolytus' claim to be recounting the old Roman traditions), it must be true that ordination ceremonies existed and played an important part in church life at that date. This increases the significance of the Apostolic Tradition, as it places the main body of this evidence (as distinct from possible changes in details introduced by the author) in a different and earlier context.

The ordination ceremonies are closely connected with priesthood; indeed it is pointed out that the clergy, unlike e.g. widows, are ordained because of their liturgical ministry.[76] They must have strengthened the position of the clergy very much; and in particular this Roman form strengthened the position of the bishop. The ordinations are clearly regarded as sacramental; it is God who chooses the bishop at the consecration,[77] and it is the Spirit Himself who descends upon the bishop.[78] The ordination certainly puts the

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76 A.T. XI. 5. The word used for ministry is λειτουργία however the context, and especially the contrast with the widows who are appointed to pray, shows that it is a liturgical ministry which is intended. The word λειτουργία is in itself somewhat ambiguous. In the Dix-Chadwick version the adjective "liturgical" has been joined to the noun "ministry" to assist the sense.

77 A.T. III. 4.

78 A.T. II. 4.

seal of God's approval on the office, and is an effective means of grace.[79] Moreover as von Campenhausen points out, the graces bestowed are different for each office. This is the first record we have of this development.[80]

The position of the bishop is very much emphasised vis-à-vis the presbyters, and especially the deacons. Although Dix claims that the ordination prayers of the bishop and the presbyter have three paragraphs in common,[81] the fulness of the highpriesthood and the power to forgive sins, assign lots, etc., which the bishop receives[82] still contrast strongly with the lesser attributes of the presbyter, who shares in the presbyterate and governs the people.[83] Only a bishop can ordain a fellow bishop; all the bishops lay hands upon the candidate and one of the bishops says the ordination prayer, while the presbytery stands by in silence.[84] A confessor who has suffered in prison for Christ's name does not need to be ordained to the diaconate or the presbyterate; but he does need ordination to the episcopate.[85]

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79 Cf. Dix, op. cit., p. 210 sq.

80 Von Campenhausen, ibid., p. 176.

81 A.T.VIII. 1-2 cf. A.T. III. 1-3 Botte XII nl. p. 21 denies that III. 1-3 should be inserted here, cf. Dix-Chadwick version, note on pp. 80-1. If Botte is correct it increases the difference between bishop and presbyter; but his case is not conclusive. In either case, the differences remain considerable.

82 A.T. III. 4-5.

83 A.T. VIII. 2.

84 A.T. II. 3 and 5.

85 A.T. X. 1.

While the ordination ceremony holds the centre of the stage in "The Apostolic Tradition", the correct election of the bishop is a necessary prerequisite. The bishop is to be without fault and chosen by all the people.[86] At this stage, in theory at least, the emphasis is on the election by the local community, (no doubt including the clerics) because only after this, when the candidate has been proposed and found acceptable, are other bishops mentioned as attending the consecration.[87] As with Cyprian, the emphasis on God's choice of these ministers is coupled with the emphasis on popular election.[88]

The function of the bishop as the watchman, or guard over his flock will be discussed in the section on penance.

Hippolytus' references to contemporary teachers give some support to our theory of the late recognition of episcopal teaching authority in Rome. On one occasion the group of teachers is mentioned before the bishops, presbyters and deacons.[89] However there is only this reference to the group (apart from the slightly bewildering evidence in "The Apostolic Tradition"), and it only survives in translation.

In The Apostolic Tradition we read of the new converts, who are interrogated by the teacher, (i.e. instructor) about their

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86 A.T. II. 1.

87 A.T. II. 2.

88 Cf. Dix, op. cit., pp. 198-9.

89 Comm. on Dan. I. 17. 8.

motives for becoming Christians.[90] As catechumens, this same person instructs them, and when after a concluding prayer he dismisses them, he then blesses them by the laying on of hands, whether he be a layman or a cleric.[91] A little later, we are told that the presbyters and deacons instruct those of the faithful who attend their (i.e. clerics') daily assemblies.[92] However, in the daily assemblies of the laity, it is the teacher who gives the instruction.[93] His status, whether lay or clerical is left unmentioned. As the presbyters and deacons gathered together daily, (so limiting their availability for other places) it is very probable that there were daily gatherings of the laity for prayer, without the presence of the city's principal clerics. The instruction was not always a part of these gatherings;[94] whether its occurrence depended on the presence of presbyters and/or deacons we do not know.

The only certain evidence we have about lay teachers is that they instructed catechumens. Their role in the prayer meetings of the faithful is uncertain. Indeed we cannot even be certain that these instructors are the teachers referred to in the Commentary on Daniel.[95] This last group might well have been teachers of theology,

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90 XVI. 1-2. Cf. note in Dix-Chadwick pp. 81-2.

91 XIX. 1.

92 XXXIII. 1-2.

93 XXXV. 1-3.

94 E.g. XXXV. 2; XXXVI. 1.

95 Cf. Hamel, op. cit., p. 161.

having no relation as teachers to the Church's liturgical life, rather than catechists or homilists at (quasi-) official gatherings for the Eucharist, or for prayers.

The brief, but important reference to the teachers is difficult to reconcile with the teachers' position, and even the teaching function, as outlined in the Apostolic Tradition. We cannot even be sure that the boundaries between the teacher, instructor and lector[96] were as fluid as Hamel suggests.[97] It is the evidence which is ambiguous. As the Commentary on Daniel was written early in Hippolytus' career[98] around 204-5 A.D., was the reference a semi-conscious witness to a past (or passing) situation, which dovetails with the situation in which the ordination prayers arose i.e. where different Christian Theology teachers were important figures, and where the bishop's role as teacher and the defender of orthodoxy had not yet been universally recognized? Unfortunately this can be no more then a possibility; the evidence is insufficient for proof.

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96 A.T. XII.

97 Op. cit., p. 161.

98 Quasten, op. cit., vol. II, p. 171.

PRESBYTERS, DEACONS AND FUNCTIONARIES.

The word πρεσβύτερος is used in a couple of senses by Hippolytus. In the first of these, he is a contemporary cleric, ranking behind the bishop and before the deacon. We shall refer to this class as presbyter (as we have done up to this point). In the second sense, the word is used to refer to teachers or witnesses to tradition from past ages. We shall refer to these as elders; their position in the Christian community is slightly enigmatic.

The presbyters share in some way in all the functions of the bishop.[99] We have seen that they taught at the assemblies of the faithful,[100] they receive a special grace to govern with the bishop,[101] and they also share in his priesthood.[102] However their position is clearly a subordinate one; they form a group around the bishop to share his duties and assist him. Evidence of this subordination can be seen in their minor role at the ordination ceremonies, and the fact that a confessor need not be ordained to the presbyterate.[103]

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99 As Hamel points out, p. 173.

100 A.T. XXXIII. 1-2.

101 A.T. VIII. 2.

102 Cf. A.T. IV. 2, where the presbyters and the bishop join in the offertory. In the ordination of the deacon, unlike that of the presbyter, only the bishop lays on hands, because the deacon is not being ordained to the priesthood, but to the service of the bishop, A.T. IX. 2; also XI. 4-5 which explains that the widow, unlike the clergy, is not ordained because she does not offer the oblation, or have any liturgical ministry. These last two examples show negatively that presbyters share the priesthood.

103 Both these facts were explained a little earlier in the chapter. Cf. A.T. II 3 & 5; X. 1.

The ordination prayers of the presbyter show a slightly less specific emphasis. They are compared to the elders chosen by Moses,[104] and receive the spirit of grace and counsel to share in the presbyterate and govern the people.[105] Lécuyer has rightly pointed out the similarity between this and the doctrine of Ignatius of Antioch, for whom the presbyters form a college around the bishop.[106] The duty of governing could be one embracing all facets of Church life; but once again, as in the case of the bishop, there is no specific reference to teaching. It seems safe to assume that when these prayers were composed, neither the bishop alone, nor the bishop with his presbyters was regarded as having a teaching monopoly; they probably even had to fight to have the last word.

This contrasts strongly with the role of the elders (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) of past ages, always defined in terms of teaching. As the presbyteral ordination prayers contain no reference to teaching, elder cannot mean presbyter. The elder exercised a teaching function; it was not an office, although as von Campenhausen pointed out this function could be exercised by a presbyter or bishop. Whether these people were always the leaders of their Churches, as he also claims, is a moot point.[107]

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104 A.T. VIII. 3.

105 A.T. VIII. 2.

106 Op. cit., p. 43, cf. Epistle to the Magnesians VI. 1; Trallians III. 1.

107 Von Campenhausen, p. 162; cf. Hamel's view, op. cit., p.137.

Hamel[108] and Blum[109] have both noted that in the few scattered references to the elders in the writings of Hippolytus, they are witnesses to single beliefs or practices, rather than to the whole body of tradition.[110] This certainly provides no evidence that such men were the leaders of their congregations.

On the other hand, there are references to elders, who were also in fact the leaders e.g. Irenaeus is twice referred to as an elder.[111] There are the "elders" who condemned Noetus in Smyrna for teaching Patripassianism.[112] These were clearly leaders of the Asia Minor churches; the problem is whether Hippolytus meant to describe them as (clerical) presbyters, or elders. C.H. Turner has argued successfully that "elders" was intended; and that the elders were in this case bishops.[113] Turner dates the condemnation between 180-90 A.D., and adduces the letter of Polycrates of Ephesus to Victor of Rome[114] as evidence that this Asian province was a well known

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108 Ibid., p. 137, n2, quoting and accepting the opinion of Spikowski, "La doctrine de l'Eglise dans saint Irénée" 1926, p. 69.

109 Op. cit., p. 96.

110 Cf. A.T. XXXVI. 12 where the elders "of happy memory" handed on the practice of praying at midnight.

111 Philosophoumena VI. 42. 1; VI. 55. 2.

112 Against Noetus cI.

113 C.H. Turner, "The 'blessed presbyters' who condemned Noetus" in J.T.S. (23) 1921-2, p. 31. Hamel, ibid., n3, p. 172 is of the same opinion.

114 Eusebius E.H. V. 24. 1, who also explains that the "bishops" of Asia were led by Polycrates in this controversy.

centre of episcopacy. The fact that there were two meetings with a considerable interval between them, rules out the possibility of a vacancy in the episcopate at the time of the condemnation. The strong probability that Noetus was himself a bishop makes it even more unlikely that the local bishops would have left the condemnation of such a person to a group of presbyters.[115]

The similarity between the bishop and the presbyter, only serves to emphasise further the distance between the presbyter and the deacon.[116] This is obvious in the Apostolic Tradition, which bluntly states that the deacon is not ordained to the priesthood, nor to be a fellow counsellor of the clergy, but to serve the bishop by taking charge of any property and reporting to him whatever is necessary.[117] As the wealth of the Church increased, this last duty explains how a capable deacon could be a person of great influence (especially in a situation where there was a difference of opinion between bishop and presbyters). However, all this is in the future; at this time the deacon was an administrative assistant (and cleric) of the bishop. His liturgical functions were also minor

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115 C.H. Turner, op. cit., pp. 29-31.

116 Hamel, op. cit., p. 174.

117 A.T. IX. 2-4. The different versions of verse four all agree that the deacon does not receive the same Spirit as the presbyters, and that the deacon is to assist the bishop.

ones;[118] although his function at the offertory is the only one specified in his ordination prayers[119] under the general heading of ministering to the church. Is this also evidence that the differentiation and stabilisation of extra-liturgical functions only occurred towards the end of the second century?

There was also an official group, into which suitable widows could be enrolled, if they fulfilled the requisite conditions.[120] Such an enrolment involved accepting office, because widows were "appointed". However there was no ordination, because there was no liturgical ministry. They were appointed to pray; a function of all Christians. Men were similarly appointed to be readers; but there was once again no ordination.[121] Similarly a subdeacon is not ordained.[122]

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118 E.g. A.T. IV. 2, where the deacons bring up the oblation, which is then offered by bishops and presbyters. Cf. IX. 11 and XXIII. 1. The different versions of the verses XXVI. v14-32 show ambiguities in the role of the deacon in treating the sick, and at the community meal. XXXIII. 1-2 has a reference to presbyters and deacons instructing the faithful. XXI. 11 describes the minor (and uncomfortable) role of the deacon at baptism, while XXIII. 7 is a reference to the deacons (only if there is an insufficient number of presbyters) distributing the water, milk and wine at the Eucharist. XXIV. 1-2 give different versions of the deacon's role in the distribution of bread. Cf. Botte XXII. p. 61.

119 I.e. A.T. IX. 10-12.

120 A.T. XI. 1-5.

121 A.T. XII. This much seems clear, although one version i.e.the Apostolic Constitutions does have a laying-on of hands.

122 A.T. XIV.

Virgins and lay-healers are not official groups i.e. people are not appointed to these "posts".[123] A virgin is not appointed; nor is there an imposition of hands, because personal choice alone is that which makes a virgin.[124] There is a similar situation, and similar ambiguities, in the position of the lay-healer,[125] although it is not so much a question of personal choice, as the possession of this type of charism.

The confessor similarly is not an official, at least qua-confessor. Indeed so highly was this charism regarded, any confessor who had been imprisoned or enchained for Christ's sake, did not need ordination to the diaconate or presbyterate. Ordination was required for a confessor to become a bishop.[126]

PENANCE AND BAPTISM.

So far nothing has been said about the bishop's function as guardian over the community, mentioned by Hippolytus in the

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123 "Office" is a position with duties attached to it. A person needs to be appointed (in some way) in order to hold office.

124 A.T. XIII. Once again the texts differ at this point. The Canons of Hippolytus is the only version to speak of an imposition of hands; and only then at a mature age. There is no reference even to "voluntary separation and naming" in the Arabic, Ethiopic and Sahidic versions. Our interpretation follows that of Dix, cf. note p. 21. Botte's version XII (p.33) implies that there was no church ceremony of any kind; "sa décision seule la fait vierge".

125 A.T. XV.

126 A.T. X. 1-2.

Philosophoumena.[127] That this power, which ultimately involved the power of excommunicating, was exercised by his own group is clear from his discussion of Callistus' attitude to reconciliation and his own attitude.[128] That this power was also exercised by the Church at Rome generally is clear from Eusebius' account of Victor excommunicating Theodotus.[129]

The attitude of Hippolytus himself to the penitential processes is clear enough; for him the Church was a holy society made up of those who live in justice.[130] This meant that those guilty of serious sin were expelled from the Church, and could not be readmitted. Common sense suggests that this was limited to grievous sinners; and a passing reference to "sins unto death" would seem to imply that he also recognized a category of less serious sins.[131]

Poschmann points out quite correctly that the idea of the Church as a holy society need not prevent the readmission of sinners who have expiated their guilt. To go on from this (as he does) to suggest that Hippolytus' frenzied opposition to Callistus might have

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127 Philosophoumena Book I, intro. 6, where the bishops are described as φρουροὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

128 Philosophoumena IX. c12 sq.

129 E.H. V. 28. 6, 9.

130 Comm. on Daniel I, 17. 5-7.

131 Philos. IX. 12. 21, claims that Callistus did not depose a bishop guilty of a "sin unto death", cf. Hamel, ibid., p.77.

been prompted by Callistus' omitting the penitential practices, is to go beyond the evidence.[132] He opposed Callistus not because of a too hasty reconciliation, but because the Pope forgave sins.[133] Poschmann also suggests that the ordination prayer of the bishop in the Apostolic Tradition shows that Hippolytus admitted in principle forgiveness of sins through the Church.[134] However the high-priestly Spirit, by which the bishop has authority "to forgive sins", according to Christ's command "to assign lots" and "loosen every bond"[135] could refer to the forgiveness of sin at baptism, rather than any post-baptismal forgiveness.[136]

The attitude of Callistus on all these points is known only through the writings of Hippolytus; any attempt to ascertain these attitudes is dependent of how we judge Hippolytus' reliability as a witness. Whatever we might think of his general reliability, his evidence about Zephyrinus and Callistus must be treated sceptically, because of his violent personal prejudices against them. However it is unlikely that he would lie blatantly, if only because such foolishness would play into the hands of his opponents.[137] In most,

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132 B. Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick", p.51.

133 Philos. IX. 12. 20.

134 Poschmann, op. cit., p. 52.

135 A.T. III. 5.

136 Cf. the wording of the confirmation prayer of the bishop in the baptismal ceremony A.T. XXII. 1, where the "forgiveness of sins" is given through the "laver of regeneration"; also Comm. on Song of Songs re c4. Armenian frag. (p.370).

137 D'Alès, op. cit., p 5, and Domini, op. cit., p. 175-6 agree with these general statements.

if not all of his accusations, there was a grain of truth. On some points, we do have independent evidence. It is highly unlikely that Callistus practised rebaptism, when we remember Stephen's confident appeal to an unbroken tradition against rebaptism some thirty years later.[138] On the question of reconciliation, Eusebius tells us how Zephyrinus reconciled a confessor Natalius, who had been a bishop in the sect of Theodotus, and had then repented.[139] Since Hippolytus was very hostile towards this Pope, Zephyrinus' action tells us nothing about Hippolytus' attitude, even if they were still formally within the same communion. The question demanded by this piece of evidence is not whether Hippolytus regarded heresy as the same as idolatory,[140] but whether Zephyrinus and the Roman Church thought that each was a sin unto death. There is no evidence to show that they distinguished between the gravity of these two actions; if they had done so it would be unique in early church history.

We cannot be sure how Callistus innovated; but the Zephyrinus evidence shows that there were no important changes.[141] D'Alès suggests that the novelty lay in the regular reconciliation of "big"

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138 Cf. Cyprianic correspondance ep. 74. 1. Cf. Hamel, ibid., pp. 67-70.

139 E.H. V. 28. 8-12.

140 As Hamel, op. cit., p. 79, seems to suggest, despite his reservations about the nature of the evidence, p. 77.

141 Hamel thinks there was an important change, pp. 62 sq.

sinners.[142] Dix suggests that an earlier sporadic practice was systematized.[143] Callistus might have lessened the severity of the penitential processes, or abolished Hermas' limitation to one post-baptismal penance, All this does not deny that there were segments in the Roman Church who advocated a much more rigorist policy, even before Hippolytus' break.

The exact situation behind the claim that Callistus allowed bishops guilty of a sin unto death to remain in office, is so problematic as to preclude all attempts at identification; much less to attach significance to this fact, whatever its nature.[144]

Baptism is of fundamental importance in the life of the Christian. Through it a person becomes one of Christ's sheep;[145] he renounces Satan,[146] and asserts his belief in Father, Son and Holy Ghost.[147] On a number of occasions, it is stated that baptism cleanses away sin.[148]

The preparation for baptism and the actual rite as described in the Apostolic Tradition show considerable developments in Roman

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142 Op. cit., p. 48.

143 Dix-Chadwick version of A.T. intro. p. XVI.

144 Against von Campenhausen, op. cit., n115, p. 235 and d'Alès' op. cit., p. 49.

145 Comm. on Song of Songs, re c4. Armenian frag. (p.370).

146 A.T. XXI. 9.

147 A.T. XXI. 12, 15, 17.

148 Comm. on Song of Songs. Armenian frags. re c2. (pp. 365-6); re c4. (p.370). A.T. XXII. 1.

practice since the time of Justin, who died in Rome around 165 A.D. These are significant for us, because some show a tightening of discipline with the Roman church.[149]

In Justin's time, there were three conditions for baptism; belief in the Church's teaching, undertaking to live as a good Christian, and repenting of past sins.[150] There was no common official teaching for the catechumens, and the moral and intellectual preparation given varied accordingly.[151] By the time of the Apostolic Tradition there was a three year catechumenate[152] which is officially organized, during which the catechumens are segregated,[153] and subject to a series of exorcisms and instruction. As Capelle suggests, all this was probably a reaction against the very easy entry of former times.[154] The dangers of continuing the old and freer system are obvious in a time of increasing numbers and active rival sects.

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149 For much of the matter in the next section, I am indebted to D. Capelle's article "L'Introduction du catéchuménat à Rome" in "Recherches de Theologie ancienne et médiévale", (5) 1933, pp. 129-54.

150 Justin's, "First Apology" 61; 65; 66. (P.G. vol. VI).

151 Cf. Capelle, op. cit., p. 132.

152 A.T. XVII. 1.

153 A.T. XVIII. 1, 3; XIX. 1.

154 Op. cit., p. 144-5.

CONCLUSION.

The story of Hippolytus is the story of a very capable thinker, who was a rigorist and schismatic. At times, he was capable of violent prejudice. He was never excommunicated, but withdrew from communion when Callistus became Pope.[155] Doctrinal differences, i.e. his Christology, cannot have been the formal cause of the schism, at least as far as Zephyrinus and Callistus were concerned. Intellectual and social snobbery (Callistus had been a slave) also played a part.[156] All together they formed a volatile mixture.

We have abundant evidence of bishops at the head of their communities as leaders, teachers and priests. Whatever the earlier Roman situation, the predominant position of the bishop is now accepted without question. Hippolytus' mysterious elevation to the episcopate at the head of his own schismatic group demonstrates this.

The accent on office, coupled as it was with tighter internal organization (e.g. re. catechumenate and baptism) and a more developed awareness of the world-wide unity of the Church, should not be taken to imply a lessened appreciation for the role of the Spirit. Officials were to be charismatic, but there was no suggestion that they enjoyed a monopoly; or that office had displaced this same Spirit at the heart of Christian life.

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155 S.L. Greenslade, "Schism in the Early Church", p. 48; intro. of Dix-Chadwick version of A.T. XXVI; XXXIII; K. Müller, "Der Ursprung des Schismas zwischen Kallist und Hippolyt", in Z. N. W. (23) 1924, p. 234.

156 Greenslade, op. cit., p. 49.

The bishop was clearly superior to the presbyter, as well as deacons and laity. Hippolytus' accusations against Callistus are proof of the bishop's importance in both excommunication and reconciliation. The latter's "laxism" channelled popular support to his Church rather than to his rigorist opponents, but Zephyrinus, and especially Victor show that the bishop's position was well established beforehand. Callistus changes in the penitential practices, which were not revolutionary, did not bring the monarchical episcopate to Rome. On the contrary, it is much more likely that Hippolytus took episcopal orders (with the dignity and position these implied) to bolster his attempts to impose his views on the Church. Nor is there any earlier Roman evidence that the bishop rose to pre-eminence as the advocate and director of a (lax) penitential process.

The "Apostolic Tradition" has vast significance. There we have the doctrine of the bishop's priesthood (linked elsewhere with the apostolic succession), and evidence of ordination ceremonies well before the end of the second century. The content of the ordination prayers, with no reference to the apostolic succession and their ambiguity over the teaching function, betray the existence of an earlier and different situation at Rome, when the bishop's teaching powers were not recognized by all.

It is more difficult to assess the elevation of distinguished confessors to the presbyterate without ordination. This might have been a special provision motivated by the Montanist crisis;[157] more

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157 A. Ehrhardt, "The Apostolic Succession" 1953, p. 98.

probably it is a left-over from an earlier and looser situation, and it is certainly another example of the close links between office and charism. Every confessor was not automatically a presbyter or deacon; Church authorisation was needed to recognize the confessor's choice of presbyterate or diaconate, and to separate the confessors "enchained" for Christ from those less privileged.[158]

The confessor's privilege shows the continuing freedom within the Roman community. So does Callistus' "laxism", and the fact that Hippolytus was not excommunicated, but left of his own accord. Rome did reject his rigorism, as she later rejected Novatian's, and as North Africa rejected Tertullian's. The concept of official episcopal authority was being strengthened in the orthodox communities; but authoritarianism was ruled out emphatically.

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158 A.H. X. 1-2.

CHAPTER FIVE

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

The life and writings of Clement of Alexandria give us brief and tantalizing glimpses into the nature of the Alexandrian church at the end of the second century. At first glance his writings seem an unpromising source for our investigations. Although devoted to the Church, and very much opposed to the heretical gnostics, he was a teacher, rather than a pastor. He had little interest in the sociology of the Christian community, and consequently little interest in its organizational forms. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons are mentioned in passing. He concerned himself almost entirely with an intellectual and moral elite; the lesser breed of Christian receives little attention and little sympathy. Nonetheless his writings on the norms which governed his little group are significant. His attitude to Scripture, to the rule of faith, to secret traditions; his writings on the relationship between faith and saving knowledge, and his division of the Christian community into "gnostics" and simple faithful provide us with much basic information, preliminary but still fundamental to any discussion of authority. Finally the relationship between his type of Christianity and that of the rest of the Alexandrian church is a question which must be examined; the answer is not at all crystal clear.

LIFE AND BACKGROUND.

Clement was not born a Christian; neither was he born in Alexandria. The motives and circumstances of his conversion are unknown. After this conversion, he travelled extensively in Southern Italy, Syria and Palestine seeking instruction from famous Christian teachers, and finally settled in Alexandria to be with his last and greatest master, Pantaenus.[1]

Alexandria was then the second city of the Empire, second only to Rome herself. It was large and cosmopolitan, with a higher than average percentage of educated and sophisticated people. As the intellectual centre of the Greek speaking world every type of philosophy flourished there, as well as astrology, mystery cults and every type of religion. The city's great library, whose supposed destruction in 638 A.D. provoked one of Gibbon's purple passages, contained either four hundred thousand, or seven hundred thousand volumes at the time of the Ptolemies.

Not unnaturally, the city was also the centre of Hellenistic Judaism, and of Greco-Jewish literature. Philo was the greatest exponent of this tradition, which was taken over by Christian writers, such as Clement and Origen. The Jews who had been in Alexandria since the sixth century B.C. at the latest, constituted two-fifths of the city's population at the time of Philo. This presence was

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1 Eusebius E.H. VI. 13. 2.

one of the causes of the political turmoil and civil strife which recurred there during the first and second centuries. There was an anti-Jewish pogrom in 38 A.D., and more trouble in 53 A.D.; again during the years 60-70 A.D., and in the year 110 A.D., culminating in the revolt of the Egyptian Jews against the Emperor in 115 A.D., when they suffered heavy losses.[2] After 135 A.D. the Jewish communities declined in influence.

It was in this city that Clement wrote most of the literature extant in his name i.e. before he fled the city in the so-called "persecution of Septimius Severus", sometime during 202 or 203 A.D.

A question of some importance for us is to decide whether Clement was a cleric or a layman. Eusebius identified him with the Clement described by bishop Alexander as a "holy presbyter";[3] many later writers accepted this identification, and assumed that μακάριος πρεσβύτερος meant a blessed clerical presbyter.[4] In another reference of Alexander's also recorded by Eusebius,[5] Clement is not described as a presbyter. H. Koch seems to have been the first modern scholar to deny that he was a cleric.[6] Most modern scholars

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2 Cf. article "Judaism in Egypt A.D. 70-135" esp. pp. 41-45 in L.W. Barnard's "Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and their Background" Oxford 1966.

3 Eusebius E.H. VI. 11. 6.

4 Cf. Patrologia Graeca (Migne) vol. VIII, pp. 33 sq. for a series of quotations.

5 Op. cit., VI. 14. 9.

6 "War Klemens von Alexandrien Priester?" in Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (XX) 1921 pp. 43-8.

have accepted this opinion,[7] but this is not unanimous.[8] There is little doubt that he was not a presbyter. The attempt to prove his clerical status from Paedagogus I. 6. 37. 3. has now been abandoned, largely as a result of Koch's article.[9] Even Quatember admits that the Paedagogus passage is uncertain, and bases his case for Clement's presbyterate on Alexander's evidence in Eusebius.[10] This is insufficient on two counts: (a) there is no certainty that the Clement who carried the letter is Clement of Alexandria,[11] and (b) the term πρεσβύτερος need not mean clerical presbyter. Often in Clement, Hippolytus and Alexander himself,[12] it means a revered former teacher, who often had been in contact with the apostolic era. It describes a function, which could be exercised by a layman or

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7 E.g. H. von Campenhausen, "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" p. 201, who states explicitly that he was a layman. G. Bardy, "La Théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au concile de Nicée" n2, p. 111, doubts that he was a presbyter. H. Chadwick, "Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition" pp. 64-5, says that he was not "a formally accredited and ordained priest".

8 E.g. F.L. Cross, "The Early Christian Fathers" London 1960 p. 118; also F. Quatember, "Die Christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandrien nach seinem Pädagogus", pp.14-17.

9 Op. cit., p. 43. B. Altaner, "Patrologia" (1960 Italian edition) p. 135, says the passage is an interpolation.

10 Op. cit., pp. 14-15.

11 Cf. Bardy op. cit., n2, p. 111. This view of Bardy's represents a change from his article "Aux origines de l'école d'Alexandrie", Rech. Sc. Rel. (XXVII) 1937, p. 82 n57, where he accepts that Clement was a presbyter.

12 Re. Alexander's use of the term Koch op. cit., pp. 45-6.

cleric, rather than an office. The translation in this case should be "elder", rather than presbyter.

Clement taught as a layman. Such Christian lay teachers were not unusual in the second century e.g. Justin, Pantaenus; or even in the early third century. A little later in Alexandria, Origen taught for many years as a layman, with a formal authorization from his bishop. Origen's subsequent ordination and his differences with Demetrius might indicate episcopal opposition to lay-teaching, or simply to independent teaching (i.e. independent of episcopal control). Although Demetrius was already bishop during Clement's stay in the city, we have no evidence of any tension between them.

Just as there is no tension evident between bishop and teacher, so there is no evidence that his was an official school of the Alexandrian Church, despite Eusebius' claim that he followed Pantaenus as the head of this body.[13] In Clement's own writings, we find no evidence that he was in charge of a catechetical school for catechumens, such as Origen managed for a time after the persecution of 202 A.D. Clement was interested in advanced Christians.[14] Nor is there any evidence of a formal commission from the local church to

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13 Eusebius E.H. VI. 6. 1. Bardy in the Rech. Sc. Rel. article of 1937, pp. 71-2, even claims that Eusebius' identification of Clement's last teacher (mentioned in Stromateis I. 1. 11. 2.) with Pantaenus is a conjecture, rather than a fact. However Eusebius' hypothesis remains "extrêmement vraisemblable".

14 Bardy, 1937 art., cit., n56, p. 82.

him to run any sort of school. There is a similar absence of hard facts about Pantaenus' activities. We cannot even be sure that Clement formally succeeded Pantaenus as the head of the latter's private school.[15] Both however were private teachers with their groups of followers; as such they were accepted by the Christian communities as a normal part of the Church scene in Alexandria and in Rome, just as Justin's group had been accepted some fifty years earlier. Bardy explains Eusebius' statement in terms of the Church's later preoccupation with the idea of succession, and Eusebius' own view of church history as a regular series of successions.[16] It is misleading to speak of Clement's school as the official catechetical school of Alexandria.[17] This began when Demetrius commissioned Origen to teach the catechumens;[18] but more of this later.

THE CHURCH.

Clement was not a religious individualist. Much less anti-clerical than Origen, he was also much less interested in the Church's ministers. However as the Church is not coterminous with

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15 Ibid., p. 90.

16 Ibid., pp. 78-9.

17 Von Campenhausen, op. cit., 197 and C. Lazzati, "Introduzione allo Studio di Clemente Alessandrino" 1939, p. 8, are also of this opinion.

18 Cf. J. Munck, "Untersuchungen uber Klemens von Alexandria" 1933, n1, p. 228.

her earthly ministers, it comes as no surprise to find that he spoke of her with the warmest affection, and described her in a series of rich images.

The Church is not just a this-world reality; it spans both Heaven and earth. Indeed it is often difficult to know whether Clement is describing the heavenly Church, its earthly counterpart, or a reality which embraces both of these.[19] The heavenly Church is not some shadowy ideal; it is very much a reality, of which the earthly church is an image. It is a place where the will of God is completely followed.[20] Christ our teacher leads us to this church in the heavens;[21] on earth we prepare to enter the holy assembly of love, which is once again the heavenly Church.[22]

There is much indirect evidence that Clement believed in an organized earthly church, fundamentally similar to the contemporary orthodox communities. This evidence abounds e.g. in references to bishops, presbyters, deacons; to Baptism and the Eucharist, etc. We also have direct evidence on this point (cf. above); but two of the quotations which Hofmann adduces[23] to show that Clement called

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19 J. Bernard, "Die Apologetische Methode bei Klemens von Alexandrien", 1968, p. 187; Bardy, op. cit., p. 120-1.

20 E.g. Stromateis IV. 8. 66. 1.

21 Paedagogus I. °9. 84. 3.

22 Paedagogus II. °1. 6. 2.

23 F. Hofmann, "Die Kirche bei Klemens von Alexandrien" in "Vitae et Veritati". Festgabe für Karl Adam. 1956, p. 18.

the earthly church a "state", are ambiguous,[24] as πολιτεία can be translated "way of life", as well as the "political constitution of a city". If the second meaning is preferred, we still do not know whether the church, or his own group of followers is meant.[25]

In contrast to the divisions among the heretics, we are told that nothing equals the Church in its unity or its excellence.[26] Following on from the epistle to the Ephesians,[27] he firmly believed in "the unity in one faith"; which unity did not belong to each local community separately. He explicitly tells us of the churches (plural) which joined together to form one body and one coherent group.[28] Just as there is one race of men, so there is one church,[29] which does not contain heretics.[30]

This unity is not merely horizontal i.e. of earthly members united in one faith and one hope,[31] but also has a vertical dimension of unity between these members and Christ himself. Christ is the

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24 I.e. Paed. I. $^{c}8.$ 65. 3; II $^{c}5.$ 45. 1.

25 H. Marrou's note on Paed. II. $^{c}5.$ 45. 1., in the 1965 French translation of Paed. Book II ("Sources Chrétiennes" series) n1, p. 98, believes that Clement consciously plays on this ambiguity.

26 Strom. VII. $^{c}17.$ 107. 6.

27 $^{c}4.$ $^{v}13.$

28 Strom. V. $^{c}6.$ 35. 3-4.

29 Strom. III. $^{c}10.$ 70. 1.

30 Strom. VII. $^{c}17.$ 107. 5-6.

31 Paed. I. $^{c}6.$ 38. 3.

head of the Church,[32] and her bridegroom.[33] The Church then is his bride;[34] she is also the school where, after baptism, Christians are taught by Christ, the Word.[35] While it is noted that Christ offered his flesh and his blood in order to nourish Christians[36] (so relating Christ's humanity to the Church), this fundamental unity is more frequently described as a union of the Word and Christians, rather than a union of Christ and his brothers.[37]

In the Paedagogus, which is for the instruction of the neophyte, the Church is often described as "mother". The term never occurs in the Protrepticus, and only once in the Stromateis.[38] The Church is a virgin-mother; a virgin because she is pure and undefiled (i.e. free of false doctrines), and a mother because of her loving care for her children.[39] One isolated statement on this subject which will be important for our portrait of Clement's orthodox "gnostic"[40] (i.e. ideal Christian) is that while the gnostic must honour his father

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32 Paed. II. ^{c}8. 73. 3.

33 Paed. III. ^{c}12. 98. 1.

34 Strom. III. ^{c}6. 49. 3; III. ^{c}11. 74. 2; III. ^{c}12. 80. 2.

35 Paed. III. ^{c}12. 98. 1.

36 Paed. I. ^{c}6. 42. 3.

37 Hofmann, op. cit., p. 23.

38 Cf. J.C. Plumpe, "Mater Ecclesia", 1943, p. 63.

39 Paed. I. ^{c}6. 42. 1. Cf. Plumpe, op. cit., p. 67.

40 In this chapter the term "gnostic" will refer to the orthodox gnostic, the highest type of Christian for Clement. Heretical gnostics will be specified as such to avoid ambiguity.

(i.e. God) and his mother, the latter is not his human mother, and not the Church, but divine knowledge and wisdom.[41] The idea of "holy mother church" clearly was intended for beginners, rather than advanced Christians.

Clement believed in the possibility of repentance and ecclesiastical reconciliation (of some form or other) for serious sinners belonging to the Christian Church. At times though he came close to limiting the church to the "saints". He certainly distinguished ἡ ἐκκλησία κυρίου, ὁ πνευματικὸς καὶ ἅγιος χόρος, from those who merely bear the name (of Christian), and do not follow the teaching.[42] While he at one moment seemed to limit the church to the perfect ones,[43] he follows this up almost immediately with a passage where all believers are included.[44] This reflects the perennial problem about the holiness of the church; church members should be holy, but so many are not. This was a special preoccupation at the end of the second century, when many orthodox Christians taught that at least some serious sinners should be perpetually excluded. These passages reflect this tension, and the author's wish (or even insistence) that Christians be holy.[45]

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41 Strom. VI. ^{c}16. 146. 2.

42 Strom. VII. ^{c}14. 87. 3 sq.

43 Strom. VII. ^{c}5. 29. 4.

44 Strom. VII. ^{c}5. 29. 7-8.

45 On the significance of these passages about the "holy church" cf. Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 19-21, and W. Völker, "Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus" 1952, p. 160.

His division of Christians into gnostics and simple faithful is another reflection of this same basic problematic.

NORMS.

The social cohesion basic to any church implies the acceptance of some common norms. For Clement, the most fundamental of these is Scripture. Following the "classical" anti-Gnostic line, he gives a complete loyalty to all the Scripture i.e. the Old Testament as well as the New. Through the Scriptures, Christians are taught by the Son of God himself.[46] God speaks through the Scriptures.[47] All true gnosis is based on them.

According to Turner,[48] Clement was the first Eastern writer to use the terms "Old" and "New Testament" of the Scriptures. While all the writings of the New Testament do not possess equal authority for him, he does apply the word "Scripture" to the writings of Mathew, Luke, John and Paul at least ten times.[49] Quatember shows that at least in the Paedagogus, the divine origin of the New Testament books, especially the Gospels, is stressed more than in his references to the Jewish books.[50] In former times, Christ taught through

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46 Strom. I. ^{c}20. 98. 4.

47 E.g. Strom. V. ^{c}1. 5. 4.

48 Op. cit., p. 246.

49 F. Quatember, "Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandrien nach seinem Pädagogus", pp. 58-9. In addition he also uses the word of two quotations from Our Lord, op. cit., p. 59.

50 Ibid., pp. 57-8, cf. p. 53.

intermediaries; now Christ teaches and leads his new people in person.[51]

What books were included in Clement's New Testament canon? There is no doubt that the four Gospels and Paul's writings hold pride of place; most of the other books of our New Testament are also quoted. So are Hermas, Barnabas and 1 Clement many times,[52] together with less frequent references to the Didache and the apocalypse of Peter. Other apocryphal literature is quoted rarely. From this it is not difficult to see why von Campenhausen claims that our author's canon is still an "open" one.[53] His references to Plato as one who taught as though inspired,[54] and in an almost prophetic way[55] show the difficulty in attempting to decide what is, or is not "inspired" or "revealed", once we move away from the commonly accepted hard core of books. It is not suggested that Plato was a serious contender for inclusion, at least in the New Testament. While the fact that Clement quoted an author does not automatically imply a belief on his part that God was speaking directly through

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51 Paed. I. ^{c}7. 58. 3. While Christ's teaching is not confined to Scripture alone according to Clement, Scripture is for him its most important component.

52 Cf. H. von Campenhausen, "Die Entstehung der Christlichen Bibel" 1968, pp. 341-2.

53 Op. cit., p. 342; as R.P.C. Hanson, "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition" 1954 p. 133 points out, Clement has no concept of the canon of Scripture like our own; but he does believe that the canon of Gospels is closed.

54 Strom. I. ^{c}8. 42. 1.

55 Strom. V. ^{c}14. 108. 2.

that author, it is not insignificant that his quotations of New Testament and other ecclesiastical writers (including heretics) fill fifty-six columns of Stählin's index of references, while his quotations of secular authors fill ninety columns.[56]

Clement is a Scriptural theologian, but not in quite the same sense as Irenaeus or Tertullian. The truth could not be gathered from Scripture by any Christian at a first reading, or even by a continued study which remained at the level of literal understanding. It has been written that every study of his works must begin with his allegorical exegegis;[57] and this allegorization is not limited to the study of the Old Testament, but applied to the New Testament as well.[58] It is this fact, which provides the most important foundation for Hanson's claim[59] that the Alexandrian's arguments are not based on Scripture, but on "Scripture rightly interpreted". Similarly it is this allegorization which helps to explain his concern for secret traditions, for the rule of faith, and even for his division of Christians into gnostics and the lesser breed, while at the same time ensuring his continued classification as a biblical theologian.

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56 Cf. von Campenhausen, op. cit., n.154, p. 342.

57 C. Mondésert, "Le Symbolisme chez Clément d'Alexandrie" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (XXVI) 1936, p. 178, quoting J. Munck, "Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria", p. 212.

58 Cf. von Campenhausen, op. cit., pp. 349-51, and R.P.C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church" 1962, p. 209.

59 "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition", p. 48.

When we come to examine the norms other than Scripture, we are confronted with a bewildering set of concepts, each of which seems to have been used at some time as a synonym for each of the others. These elastic concepts betray only a minimum of method, and an inexactitude complicated by the author's habit of moving at different levels of meaning, and switching from one to the other. The biggest complication comes from his distinction between gnostics and simple faithful. Each group (or certainly the gnostics) has its own tradition, and rule. We would have been more fully informed, and probably better informed too, if his book the "Ecclesiastical Rule" had survived.[60]

The public tradition of the church is described in terms such as "holy tradition",[61] "ecclesiastical tradition",[62] or "the tradition of Christ".[63] If we use saving knowledge (γνῶσις) as the connecting link, we find that there is an intimate connection between this public tradition and the secret (i.e. gnostic) tradition. One does not escape into saving knowledge by abandoning or denying the ecclesiastical tradition; the heretics are rebuked for doing just this.[64] Our examination of the relationship of faith (with which the public tradition of the church is primarily concerned) and

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60 It is mentioned among his works by Eusebius E.H. VI. 13. 3.

61 Strom. I. ^{c}11. 52. 2.

62 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 95. 1.

63 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 99. 5; ^{c}16. 104. 1; ^{c}17, 106, 2.

64 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 95. 1.

saving knowledge will confirm the intimate relationship of the two traditions. Fundamentally their content is the same.[65]

There are also frequent references to the rule (κανών) of the church. This is concerned with both belief and conduct, and is certainly binding on any true gnostic.[66] Once again, it too is closely tied up with saving knowledge.[67] There is a wide measure of agreement that this rule is not the Scriptures themselves,[68] nor a fixed formula or creed.[69] Turner writes that the nearest definition might be "Christian teaching derived from Scripture and formulated in the tradition of the Church".[70] The unanimity of these judgements is well founded on Clement's own descriptions of the rule as the glorious and holy rule of tradition,[71] and the tradition of Our Lord.[72] For him the content of this rule is the synthesis of the Law and the Prophets, and the teaching of Our Lord.[73]

Hanson goes one step further than this established position, when he writes that the rule of the church is not the norm of faith

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65 Cf. Völker, op. cit., p. 364.

66 E.g. Strom. VII. ^{c}7. 41. 3.

67 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 105. 1-5.

68 Völker, op. cit., p. 357, n2.

69 Völker, op. cit., p. 357, n2, quoting R.B. Tollinton, "Clement of Alexandria" vol. 2, p. 206. J. Bernard, op. cit., p. 109, follows Völker's opinion, as does Hofmann, op.cit., n5, p. 15.

70 Op. cit., p. 352.

71 Strom. I. ^{c}1. 15. 2.

72 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 104. 2.

73 Strom. VI. ^{c}15. 125. 2-3.

and saving knowledge, because it is saving knowledge.[74] As direct evidence for this claim, he adduces two quotations from the Stromateis.[75] There is no reference to the rule of the Church in the first of these, although perfect saving knowledge is said to be found only in the ancient Church.[76] In the second quotation also there is no reference to the rule of the Church, although this term is used a little afterwards.[77] However from the fact that terms such as "truth", "rule of the Church" and "saving knowledge from the Scriptures" are each used in turn as norms from which the heretics depart, we cannot conclude automatically that these first three terms are synonymous. Because each of the terms a, b and c does not equal x, we cannot conclude that a equals b equals c.

Although there was no short, commonly accepted formula for the rule of the Church, this rule must have involved some specification of saving knowledge and secret tradition (which Hanson believes to be identical), and therefore some normative function towards these.

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74 Op. cit., pp. 57-58; 61.

75 I.e. Strom. VII. ^{c}15. 92. 3. and VII. ^{c}16. 105. 1. as specified in Hanson's later Book "Tradition in the Early Church", p. 26, where he writes: "Clement identifies it (i.e. the secret tradition or γνῶσις) or rather confuses it with the Church's rule of faith".

76 Strom. VII. 15. 92. 3. ὅπως δὲ ἐν μόνῃ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἥ τε ἀκριβεστάτη γνῶσις καὶ ἡ τῷ ὄντι ἀρίστη αἵρεσις.

77 I.e. in Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 105. 5.

Clement himself says as much, "the enquiry (inherent in) the gnostic tradition must be in accordance with the rule of truth".[78]

All these norms are to be used against the heretics, and as a yardstick by which the gnostic can measure his belief and conduct. This reflects our author's preoccupation with the intellectual and spiritual elite. His use of the rule of the church against the heretics was a commonplace among third century writers; it was always a more sophisticated instrument than the baptismal creed.[79] He was unusual in connecting it so closely with secret tradition.

The question now arises as to whether Clement ever mentioned a baptismal creed, which would have been used as an initial yardstick for converts, or for the simple faithful generally. There is one passage in which we have a passing reference to such a simple "creed". We are told that no Christian can transgress the rule of the church, and especially that profession of the essentials (τῶν μεγίστων ὁμολογίαν) which the heretics also transgress.[80] From

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78 Strom. IV. °1. 3. 2. ἡ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας κανόνα γνωστικὴ παράδοσις φυσιολογία; cf. Strom. VI. °18. 165. 1.(quoted by H. Chadwick op. cit., n.115, p. 53) i.e. saving knowledge goes beyond catechesis but abides by the Church rule.

On this point as on many others concerning Alexandrian Christianity, I am much indebted to Father A. Meredith S.J. of Campion Hall, Oxford. However I would not want him to be held responsible for my conclusions.

79 Cf. R.P.C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church", pp. 92 sq.

80 Strom. VII. °15. 90. 2.

the quotation itself we can see that this profession of faith is distinguished from, and simpler than the rule of the Church. It is quite probable that it was used at baptism, as in other contemporary churches.[81]

At this point we must return to the doctrine of a secret tradition, and examine its nature in a little more detail. Clement was the only one of the pre-Nicene fathers who "claimed to possess an esoteric, unwritten authentic tradition of doctrine independent of Scripture".[82] Hanson believes that his conviction about the existence of such a tradition came from Philo, and probably from Barnabas.[83] While such a notion would have been common in intellectual circles in Alexandria, Clement's ideas on this point bear a strong resemblance to those of the Valentinians.[84]

He believed that this secret tradition went back to Our Lord himself (a belief which Turner described as "over optimistic",[85] and scholars are united in rejecting),[86] who handed it on to James the Just, John and Peter. These gave it to the other Apostles, who in

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81 Cf. Völker, op. cit., n2, p. 357; J. Lebreton, "La Théorie de la connaissance religieuse chez Clément d'Alexandrie" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (XVII), 1928, pp. 471-2.

82 Hanson, op. cit., p. 26.

83 "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition", p. 68.

84 Cf. H. von Campenhausen, "Die Entstehung der Christlichen Bibel", p. 348.

85 Op. cit., p. 316.

86 Cf. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church", pp. 26-7 quoting Mondésert, van den Eynde and Daniélou.

turn passed it on to the seventy, which included Barnabas.[87]

It is generally considered that this tradition was unwritten. Clement was not at all convinced that more important doctrines should be consigned to writing, as the opening passages of the Stromateis show.[88] A teacher is needed to explain the hidden mysteries of the Scripture; indeed the elders of former times did not write, because they were too busy teaching.[89]

These texts speak for themselves. However there is evidence that Clement also believed in a secret version of at least one Gospel. In a letter discovered by Professor Morton Smith in the library of the Syrian monastery of Mar Saba and ascribed to Clement, the author admits that a secret version of Mark does exist, but claims the one circulated by the heretical Carpocratians is a mixture of truth and heretical errors.[90] If this does belong to Clement, it will be an important piece of evidence for those attempting to situate the place of his group in Alexandrian Christianity, and Christianity generally. It would place him much closer to the heretical gnostics.

Because of the intimate connection between these secret traditions and saving knowledge, we can hazard some plausible

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87 Eusebius II. 1. 4.

88 Esp. Strom. I. ^{c}1. 13. 4; cf. V. ^{c}10. 64. 5.

89 Eclogae Propheticae 27. 1 sq.

90 This information is taken from W. Jaeger's, "Early Christianity and Greek Paideia", Oxford 1969, pp. 56-57, esp. n22, p. 57.

conjectures as to the content of the former. If Strom. IV. $^{c}1$. is any indication the contents would be made up of a lot of Alexandrian speculations, based on a very enthusiastic allegorization.[91] This would seem to be another reason for not identifying the rule of the Church and the secret traditions.

All this demonstrates Clement's eclecticism, his originality, and his unique position on the borders of orthodoxy, even by late second century standards. He combined the succession theory of the philosophers, the idea of a secret tradition used by the heretical gnostics, and the Church's theory of apostolic tradition[92] into a coherent theory around the Bible teaching of his masters. As we shall see, this has little to do with an apostolic succession of teaching bishops.

THE GNOSTICS AND THE LESSER BREED.

Societies need many things to be viable e.g. norms, leeders, discipline. They also need some sort of ideal member or model, whom their members can admire and perhaps imitate. There is no doubt that Clement believed his gnostic to be such a person; the writings are built around his needs. He is the shining example of lived Christianity.

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91 Cf. Völker, op. cit., p. 363-4; Hanson, "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition", pp. 63-4.

92 Cf. J. Bernard, op. cit., p. 103.

That his ideal Christian should be called the "gnostic" is significant; he is so called because he possesses saving knowledge (γνῶσις). It clearly demonstrates Clement's intellectual preoccupations; his function was above all that of a Christian teacher, and his followers were students, although the lessons taught were not confined to academics. His fundamentally unecclesial train of thought is also manifest. The model is not defined by his function in the church, or by any sort of relationship to the church. Qua model, he is not bishop, or teacher, or martyr, but someone who knows God and himself, and lives out the consequences of this knowledge. Intellectualism in this sense is much opposed to the teachings of the Gospels and of St. Paul; it was ultimately rejected by the Christian Church, even in Alexandria. So complete was this rejection that the term "gnostic" is now always taken to imply heresy or paganism.

As a preliminary to a fuller description of the orthodox gnostic, some attempt must be made to clarify the relationship (according to Clement) between faith (πίστις) and saving knowledge. Some of this discussion runs parallel to that on the relationship between public and secret tradition, and once again it is difficult to bring all his statements into a rigid consistency.

Saving knowledge is not opposed to faith, and does not leave faith behind as an irrelevant preliminary. The two are always closely combined; just as the Father is never without the Son, so

there is no saving knowledge without faith.[93] No more than this is intended in the early passage in the Paedagogus, where baptism seems to bring illumination and even perfection.[94] Usually the two terms are considered as closely related stages by which the person ascends; from an initial unbelief to faith, which is the foundation of all further progress; from here to saving knowledge, and ultimately to love (ἀγάπη).[95]

Völker has pointed out successfully that faith and saving knowledge should not be seen as (irrational) belief and science (Glauben und Wissen).[96] Saving knowledge is not merely intellectual; it is not just "eine Sache der blossen Spekulationen",[97] for the aim of the gnostic is not only contemplation, but action too. In this sense, it is rightly described as a "habitus practicus animi"[98] i.e.

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93 Strom. V. ^{c}1. 1. 4.

94 Paed. I. ^{c}6. 21. 1. cf. Völker's comments on the significance of this passage, op. cit., p. 371.

95 For the difference between faith and saving knowledge e.g. Strom. VI. ^{c}14. 109. 2. Clement explains that love is the crown of the process; in Strom. VII. ^{c}10. 57. 4; VII. ^{c}10. 55. 6; Ecl. Proph. 19. 1 sq. J. Moingt describes the first part of this development in "La Gnose de Clément d'Alexandrie dans ses rapports avec la Foi et la Philosophie" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (XXXVII) 1950 pp. 230-51; the second stage is described in op. cit., (XXXVIII) 1951, pp. 97-101.

96 Op. cit., pp. 375-81, esp. p. 379.

97 Ibid., p. 377.

98 A. Neander, "Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche" I. 3. Hamburg 1890 pp. 603; 605, quoted by Völker op. cit., p. 377. For a discussion of the gnostic teacher's activity, and an explanation of how this is more than theoretical, or academic cf. von Campenhausen, "Ecc. Auth.", p. 210.

that disposition of the soul which enables us to act. Intellectual knowledge is included; but so too is a religious understanding fed on the Scriptures, and a moral conversion and penetration into the Godhead itself.[99]

While the simple faithful do not participate in this distinguished condition, there is no preselection of the gnostics by a divine command. The Church's insistence that mankind is not divided irrevocably into two classes is explicitly recognized in principle[100] even if Clement's elitism blurs this in practice. This fundamental equality of all Christians, based on the sacrament of baptism, is stressed in the Paedagogus,[101] and was meant to imply that any Christian who did not become a gnostic failed through his own fault. This was not a viable proposition, as Clement's ideal depended so much on an intellectual attainment beyond the possibilities of many Christians. There is a real difference between his teaching and that of the heretical gnostics, as he would be the last to deny human freedom and responsibility; but his teaching remains unattractive and less than Christian. At its worst it could be dangerous and misleading, as when he suggests that gnostics' actions are perfect, those of lesser Christians are only "so-so", while the pagans' are

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99 Cf. Turner op. cit., pp. 400-1; Völker op. cit., p. 379, and the similar view of E. de Faye "Clément d'Alexandrie" (1906) p. 287-313.

100 Strom. V. ^{c}1. 3-4.

101 Paed. I. ^{c}6. 26-30.

sinful.[102] At its best it remains priggish and slightly ludicrous e.g. the human body leads the gnostic to admire God, but for the plebs it is only an enticement to sin.[103] One feels that in the last resort, he was pleased that the gnostics were to be separated from the rest in Heaven.[104] If his doctrine was followed too closely, a situation could easily arise where the number of perfect Christians was severely limited, not because the others could not understand, but because the teachers refused to teach.

This ideal man is the gnostic, not the teacher. On occasion he is described as a teacher i.e. someone who reveals in a suitable manner those things which are hidden.[105] The lists of his qualities vary. Sometimes there is no mention of teaching,[106] and sometimes an emphasis which is postively hostile to it. Those who are "more elect than the elect", "the salt of the earth", are "more elect in proportion as they are less conspicuous"; "they hide in the depth of their mind the unutterable mysteries".[107] Are these two divergent emphases mirrored in his remark that the gnostic by teaching increases his dignity in the best possible way?[108] Perhaps his

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102 Strom. VI. ^{c}14. 111. 3.
103 Strom. IV. ^{c}18. 116-17; VII. ^{c}13. 76.
104 Strom. VI. ^{c}14. 108. 1-2.
105 Strom. II. ^{c}10. 46. 1; VII. ^{c}1. 4. 2; VII. ^{c}1. 3. 4.
106 Strom. IV. ^{c}26. 163. 3-4.
107 "The Rich Man's Salvation", p. 36.
108 Strom. VII. 9. 52. 1.

gnostics friends did not all share his enthusiasm for this work; perhaps he at times was tempted to weaken. In any event, he himself chose to describe his model as the gnostic, rather than the teacher; and for this gnostic the really important task is the imitation of God himself.[109]

Teacher or no teacher, the gnostic remains a very grand person. He acquires a new vision, a new ear, a new heart,[110] equals the angels,[111] and becomes similar to Christ,[112] and God himself.[113] At a scarcely less exalted level, he is a true king and holy priest (ἱερεύς) of God.[114] He is the perfect martyr, because he always bears witness to the truth.[115] Clement never tied up the Judaeo-Christian notion of sacrifice with the idea of martyrdom. The truly holy man is not the martyr, but the true gnostic who lives according to the Gospel for the love of God.[116] It is not surprising that he chose to flee, and so live to fight (or bear witness) another day, when persecution did arrive; and it is scarcely less surprising that we have no evidence of popular clamour by the non-gnostics for his

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109 Strom. II. °19. 97-102.
110 Strom. II. °4. 15. 3.
111 Strom. VI. 13. 105. 1.
112 Strom. VII. 9. 52. 2.
113 Strom. II. °19. 97.
114 Strom. VII. °7. 36. 2.
115 Strom. IV. °9. 70. 1; II. °20. 104. 1.
116 Strom. IV. °4. 15. 5.

return afterwards.

The gnostic could never abandon the teachings of the Scriptures and the rule of the Church. But there is evidence that the higher he ascended, the more independent he became of teachers and institutions. The true gnostic's mother is not the Church, but divine knowledge and wisdom.[117] He is able to do without not just earthly teachers, but even without the ministrations of the angels, as he is taught by Christ himself.[118] All this does not imply an official rupture with the Church, if only because it is not entirely certain that the true or perfect gnostic exists.[119] Yet the general direction is clear enough. Development takes place within the Church, and her sacrament of baptism is a necessary starting point. The celebration of the Eucharist, commemorating Christ's death for us is accepted without comment, even as it does not play an important part in Clement's theology. Many of his references to the Body and Blood of Christ are used as starting points to allegorize on the life of the Spirit, or the necessity of faith,[120] and he remains uncommunicative on the nature and importance of the gnostic's participation in these celebrations.[121] The ministerial hierarchy

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117 Strom. VI. ^{c}16. 146. 2.

118 Strom. VII. ^{c}13. 81. 3. Meignt, op.cit.,(XXXVII) 1950 pp. 232-36, discusses the role of the angels in the development of the gnostic.

119 Strom. IV. ^{c}21. 130. 2. cf. Plumpe, op.cit., p. 68.

120 Paed. I. ^{c}6. 38. 2; I. ^{c}6. 43. 2; II. 2. 19. 4 and I. 6.42.1-3.

121 E.g. Strom. VII.^{c}7. 49. 2-6, discussed by Hofmann op.cit. p.26.

would have nothing to say to such a gnostic, unless by chance one of them also happened to possess a similar gift. Therefore any talk of an official ministerial teaching authority over the gnostic would have been rejected by Clement as irrelevant.

The teaching gnostic did enjoy some such authority because he had the task of passing on the secret traditions, of teaching the path of duty, and ensuring that what is holy is not given to dogs.[122] This is done so much better by oral teaching than by the written word.[123] As such a functionary, he enjoyed a double relationship with the Apostles; he inherits the secret traditions first given to some of the Apostles,[124] and through his fidelity to God and the Gospel he becomes worthy to be ascribed in their number.[125] He takes their place in their absence.[126] The teaching gnostic's authority is that of the expert, open to rational examination from an agreed set of premises. These premises are the claim to possess and teach the very core of the Christian message transmitted by Scripture and tradition, and understood through prayer and study. These teachers have no supernatural charism, and make no appeal to blind faith or

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122 Strom. I. ^{c}12. 55. 3.

123 Von Campenhausen, op.cit., pp. 204-5, discusses the relationship of oral and written teaching for Clement.

124 Eus. E.H. II. ^{c}1. 4; also Strom. VI. ^{c}8. 68. 2-3 re. the revelations made to the Apostles.

125 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 105. 1-2; 106. 1; IV. ^{c}9. 75. 1-2; I. ^{c}1. 11. 3.

126 Strom. VII. ^{c}12. 77. 4.

blind obedience.

Their function was much more than a catechist's. In some ways it resembled that of later "spiritual directors" i.e. men who directed, or advised their "clients" on the steps necessary for growth in spiritual perfection. These spiritual directors, like the earlier gnostics, did not impose themselves on their followers, who freely elected to join them. The well known passages in "The Rich Man's Salvation"[127] bear out this comparison. Von Campenhausen has pointed out the novelty of this relationship for Clement's time, noting especially the "voluntary submission of the 'penitent' to a director of his own choice".[128] While the Christian was free to choose any gnostic as a teacher, Clement seems to have anticipated the spirit of the later Counter-Reformation, or even of Pascal and the seventeenth century Jansenists, in his general insistence that Christians, especially the rich and powerful, must have a director. It is an absolute necessity that such men have "a trainer and pilot", whom they honour as "an angel of God", and who will in his turn act as an ambassador for them with God himself.[129]

The teaching gnostic differed from these later spiritual directors in as much as he was usually the leader of a group; he also taught the group as a whole, rather than confining himself to

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127 E.g. 13 sq; 35; 41.

128 Op. cit., n146, p. 200, cf. Chadwick op. cit., p. 64.

129 R.M's. S., 41. 1-6.

individual spiritual "dialogues". There was also more emphasis on intellectual training than was always the case in later history. The groups were very similar to the philosophical schools and to the groups of the heretical gnostics.

The authority of the teaching gnostic in his own group, with the important exception of his work of individual spiritual direction, was not new in Christian history. He was anticipated by orthodox teachers such as Justin, and by many heretics. More unusual by the standards of later church history is his relationship with the Church at large. Von Campenhausen is again correct in claiming that the teaching gnostic's authority "has virtually nothing to do with an ecclesiastical call or authorisation".[130] This also was not new; second century Rome knew of many such groups which functioned within the Christian community, except when they proved to be openly heretical and were expelled e.g. the Valentinians and the Marcionites. At that early stage in Rome, and in Clement's time in Alexandria, official Church approval (by the bishop, or by the bishop and presbyters) was not necessary before one began to teach; official intervention only came when it was obvious that such teaching was erroneous. Demetrius' appointment of Origen to teach the catechumens was something new to Alexandria, and significant.

These groups were introspective, middle class or higher, and

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130 Op. cit., p. 201.

puritan. They professed a complete loyalty to Christian teaching and the "Church" spanning heaven and earth, and strong opposition to heretics; while maintaining in fact an ambiguous attitude to Church officials. They were strongly preoccupied with their own problems, and in some ways bear a striking resemblance to the groups which constitute the "underground church" in the United States today. These twentieth century groups are also intellectual, at least middle class, and introspective, if not always puritan. No more than with Clement is their model the ministerial priesthood, although they are more articulate than he was in their enthusiasm for the liturgy. One important difference is that many of them are explicitly opposed to the organization of the Church, and to Church structures; while Clement was not. We shall see from his passing references to clerics, and especially the penitential processes, that he accepted this wider aspect of Church life; it was just that all this had little to do with the gnostic.

The gnostic is nowhere urged to preach at the liturgical assemblies. None, except Clement, committed his thoughts to writing. They can hardly have been influential public figures in the Christian community, and we are not even aware how well known Clement was in Alexandria. His tart references to the "simpliciores" show that if he was well known, he was not the object of universal enthusiasm. It remains significant that for this limited and "aristocratic" milieu the decisive formative influences were not the Eucharist communities,

or the whole of the local Church under the bishop and presbyters, but the sub-group of the unofficial teacher and his followers.

Clement's was the first significant attempt of an orthodox Christian to reconcile Christianity and Greek culture. Previous efforts were sketchy or had been marred by a professed anti-Hellenism (or anti-intellectualism), which the Christians had inherited from the Jews (especially after the struggle in the time of the Machabees), and which found its great and most forthright champion in Tertullian. Such a reconciliation was an absolute necessity for the history of the Church; it is only a pity that Clement, who did so much to initiate this tradition was so unsympathetic towards the simpliciores. They were not only excluded from the secret traditions, but were excluded by being compared to e.g. dogs, or children.[131] He was not merely unsympathetic, but often hostile.[132] Apart from his references to baptism, he never developed a theology of the people of God, nor explained their role in the conservation of tradition, or any other Church procedure. Without doubt, the opposition or lack of sympathy he encountered was coloured by class differences and (anti-) intellectual considerations; he never showed any awareness that the conservatism of his opponents had been sharpened (and rightly so) by the antics of the heretics, or that there were any reasonable grounds

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131 Strom. I. ^{c}12. 55. 3; V. ^{c}1. 7. 3; I. ^{c}1. 13. 3; I. ^{c}1. 14. 3.

132 Strom. I. ^{c}9. 45.

for the suspicion that he might be in error. He believed himself to be faithful to the teachings of Christ, and the Apostles. For him this was enough; and it was not an unreasonable assumption, granted the theological areas as yet uncharted, the lack of theological expertise among his opponents, and the ambiguity about the nature of the teaching function in the community. What was unpardonable was the suggestion, implicit but very real, that the religion of the son of a carpenter could only really be practised by the literati. In his own words, a person can be both virtuous and ignorant, but an educated person does have the advantage.[133] Unlike the Gospels, Clement thought the educated had every advantage. His view was hotly opposed then and later.

THE ELDERS, THE BISHOPS AND THE PRESBYTERS.

As a preliminary to examining Clement's few but important references to the bishops, presbyters and deacons, some attempt must be made to disentangle his references to οἱ πρεσβύτεροι . Were these men always clerical presbyters, or sometimes revered (former) teachers? Was this second group always formed of clerics, or did it include laymen?

There are some occasions when the term definitely refers to former teachers, whether they were writers or confined themselves to

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133 Strom. I. [c]6. 35. 2-3.

oral teaching. Eusebius tells us of Clement's decision to write down the traditions of the elders of former times (τῶν ἀρχαίων πρεσβυτέρων), for the sake of future generations.[134] Elsewhere he explains that these elders did not write because they were too busy teaching.[135] On the other hand the author of the first epistle of John is also described as an elder,[136] and in the Eclogae Propheticae he speaks of the written confirmation of the elders' teaching.[137] Twice the term is used of teachers;[138] teachers, probably - but not certainly - from former times.

There is no reason to think that these elders were being described as clerical presbyters. This conclusion is also valid for a middle group of references (with one possible exception), where we cannot be sure whether presbyters or teaching elders are referred to. In two such cases, we are asked to honour these persons (whatever their function).[139] In the third and last of these examples, we are told of Scripture's teaching about the πρεσβυτέρους , the bishops, deacons and widows.[140] At first glance, because of the close

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134 E.H. VI. ^{c}13. 9. cf. VI. ^{c}14. 5., for another reference to Clement and the tradition of the elders (πρεσβυτέρων) about the order of the Gospels.

135 Eclogae Propheticae 27. 1.

136 Fragment on 1 John ^{c}1.^{v}1.(G.C.S. vol.3. 1909 pp. 209-10).

137 27. 4.

138 Prot. ^{c}XI. 113. 1; Ec. Proph. 11. 1.

139 Strom. IV. ^{c}17. 108. 1; VII. ^{c}1. 2. 2.

140 Paed. III. ^{c}12. 97. 2.

proximity of the bishops and deacons, it seems that clerical presbyter should be the translation. On the other hand, they are mentioned before the bishops; a fact difficult to reconcile with Clement's belief in a monepiscopate, and a reversal of the order he uses on other occasions.[141]

This last and unique quotation is the only tenuous ground for believing that Clement identified the teaching elders and the clerical presbyters, i.e. that the former elders were ipso facto clerics, (the reverse side of the coin i.e. that all former presbyters were teaching elders certainly is not a possible interpretation of his thought), and this evidence is insufficient. De Faye is correct,[142] when he says that they are called elders, because they are teachers and witnesses to tradition. Lazzati is also on strong ground in pointing to the ambiguous meaning of the term; his next assertions that the elders had hierarchical authority (autorita gerarchica), and are to be connected with the rise of written, rather than oral teaching, are misleading. The elders were intimately connected with oral tradition. Their function was not incompatible with holding presbyteral or episcopal office,[143] but it could be exercised by a layman. A final proof that the function of the teaching elders was not the preserve

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141 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 2.

142 E. de Faye, "Clément d'Alexandrie", p. 29.

143 Von Campenhausen, op. cit., p. 162.

of the clerical office is the fact that Clement says so little about the teaching function of contemporary bishops and presbyters. Rather, the elders had been the teaching gnostics, and these same gnostics were the contemporary teachers.

Just as certainly, Clement recognized and accepted the existence of bishops, presbyters, deacons. He had hoped to write at greater length on these personages (and the widows);[144] if this wish was fulfilled, the final product did not survive. He recognized the bishops in the New Testament;[145] more than this he explicitly accepted the existence of a monepiscopate, and the episcopate's apostolic origin. Just as a father is in charge of the family unit, so a bishop should preside over the Church.[146] The apostolic origin is shown by his statements that Peter, James and John chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem,[147] and that John journeyed from Ephesus to appoint bishops.[148] That these traditions should have been mentioned in his writings (without also receiving a developed position in his theology), shows that the theology of the episcopate must have been flourishing in some circles with which he came into contact.

Clement might have believed in the apostolic succession of

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144 Paed. III. ^{c}12. 97. 2.

145 Strom. III. ^{c}18. 108. 2., where he quotes 1 Tim. ^{c}3. ^{v}2-4 on the qualities of a bishop.

146 Strom. III. ^{c}12. 79. 6; cf. III. ^{c}18. 108. 2.

147 Eusebius E.H. II. 1. 3.

148 R. M's. S. 42. 2.

bishops (he never disavowed it),[149] but he never used it as a guarantee of correct teaching. The truth had been given to the Apostles, and transmitted by the elders i.e. the teaching gnostics.[150] He did not believe that the succession of bishops guaranteed the truth of the common faith (πίστις), while the teachers guaranteed the tradition of saving knowledge; a theory suggested by Lazzati[151] and Bardy.[152] There is no suggestion of this in his writing, and his belief in the fundamental unity of faith and saving knowledge makes it even more unlikely.

However, there is evidence that some circles of the Alexandrian Church, and especially the ruling bishop and presbyters did see themselves as responsible for at least the basic teaching. There was the fixed duration of the catechumenate i.e. four years.[153] This would have been decided by the bishop and presbyters, as the gnostic's authority was limited to his own group, and he had no official position from which he could legislate for the whole community. These same officials would have supervised the baptismal interrogations.[154] The bishops, presbyters and deacons are judges

149 Cf. Bernard, op. cit., p. 105.

150 Cf. Turner, op.cit.,pp.329-30; Hofmann, op.cit., pp.15-16.

151 Op. cit., p. 34.

152 "La Théologie de l'Église de Saint Irénée au Concile de Nicée", p. 127.

153 Strom. II. ^{c}18. 96. 2.

154 These interrogations were probably very closely connected with the profession of the essentials (τῶν μεγίστων ὁμολογιῶν) Strom. VII. ^{c}15. 90. 2. (cf. notes 80, and 81 of this chapter.

(κριτάι) as well as administrators;[155] the presbyter, even if he is not honoured with "the first seat" in this life, will be seated on one of the twenty four thrones mentioned in the Apocalypse to judge the people in the next.[156] Even if this pre-eminence is exercised in the penitential processes and at baptism, rather than in the direct teaching of doctrine, the recognition that clerics are judges on these occasions presupposes some recognized teaching capacity. They had to judge the faith as well as the morals of candidates for baptism (and probably they did the same to those seeking reconciliation with the Church). Unless a man is recognized as a teacher, he cannot teach on baptism and penance.

The bishop also preached at the liturgical assemblies; but the final confirmation of the bishop's claim is the appointment of Origen by Demetrius to be head of the school for catechumens.[157] Such an appointment would have been impossible, if the bishop did not regard himself as responsible for at least basic teaching.

Two things remain to be said on this point. The episcopacy's awareness of its teaching powers is no guarantee that it appealed to the apostolic succession of bishops to bolster this claim. Secondly

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155 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 2.

156 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 106. 2.

157 Eusebius E.H. VI. 3. 8. Demetrius was bishop of Alexandria during Clement's stay in the city cf. Eusebius E.H. V. 22. 1.

Demetrius' later history, and his differences with Origen, show that it is extremely unlikely that he believed his supervisory powers were limited to basic catechesis. Was Clement's use of the term ὁι πρεσβύτεροι for both elders and clerics (although traditional in some sense,)[158] a studied ambiguity to avoid provoking a confrontation with Demetrius?

Clement recognized clerical presbyters with functions in the local Church.[159] While he also accepted the monepiscopate (the bishop is compared to the head of a family),[160] he often writes as though there were only two essential orders in the ministry, the presbyters and the deacons.[161] The person to whom John entrusts the care of the young man is described as both bishop and presbyter.[162] After mentioning the earthly bishop, presbyter and deacon, only the latter two flourish in Heaven.[163] It is the presbyter, deacon and layman alone who are limited to one wife.[164] The gnostic who does

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158 Cf. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen; and Clement of Rome 1 Ep. 1. 3; 21. 6.

159 Where the πρεσβύτεροι are mentioned after the bishops and before the deacons, it is safe to assume that presbyter is meant, e.g. Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 2. They are also included among the judges and administrators.

160 Strom. III. ^{c}12. 79. 6.

161 Cf. Hofmann, op. cit., p. 15. Bardy, "La Théol.", p. 119.

162 R. M's. S. 42. 3-4. It is possible that Clement is transcribing here direct from an older written authority.

163 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 3.

164 Strom. III. ^{c}12. 90. 1.

God's will is the true presbyter and deacon; not those who happen to have been ordained by men.[165]

From this we can conclude that the bishop was much closer to being a "primus inter pares", rather than a monarchical bishop i.e. one who could act independently of his presbyterate.[166] Indeed, nowhere at this time did a bishop act independently of his presbyterate. We do not know when the power of ordination, or consecration to the episcopate was reserved to the bishop in Alexandria.[167] This probably began after Clement. The presbyters shared a basic dignity and importance with the bishop; with him they "ran" the Alexandrian Church. This situation was open to development in at least a couple of directions. A gnostic group such as Clement's could come close to a de facto independence within the community, so limiting the power (or preventing the development) of a monarchical episcopate. The second possibility is that a capable, forceful bishop would be elected, who would dominate the presbyterate and the whole community, and move imperceptibly but truly towards a more monarchical style. There is no great chasm in practice or theory between the monepiscopate (i.e. one person designated as bishop among the presbyters, and ruling with them), and the monarchical episcopate i.e. a bishop able to legislate

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165 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 106. 2.

166 Cf. de Faye, op. cit., p. 20.

167 Cf. appendix "Episcopal Consecration in Alexandria" at the conclusion of Chapter 6.

alone. It is possible that Demetrius, like Cyprian, became more monarchical and less monepiscopal as he extended his effective control over all the Church. Yet the Arian struggle in the fourth century showed that the Alexandrian presbyters were still far from being rubber stamps.[168]

For Clement, membership of the ministerial hierarchy presupposes a certain dignity. These orders are imitations of the glory of the angels;[169] but this dignity comes less from the office than from the purity of life required in such a person, as he immediately hastens to add that all those who follow the Apostles and live according to the Gospels will share in this same angelic glory.[170] The disparaging reference to the presbyters and deacons ordained by men (ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων χειροτονούμενος) confirms this emphasis.[171] Holiness is the really important factor, and only just men should be made presbyters.[172] Charism is not opposed to office,

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168 H. Hauschildt, "Πρεσβύτερος in Ägypten im I-III Jahrhundert nach Christus" in Z. N. W. (IV) 1903, pp. 235-42 has shown that the term presbyter was also used in Egypt about these times outside the Christian communities. The presbyters were the members of the committee, which represented the clergy of the God Soknopaios (p.237); the term was also used of the financial representatives of the villages (p.240).

169 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 2.

170 Ibid.

171 Strom. VI. ^{o}13. 106. 2.

172 Ibid.

but office holders must be charismatic.[173] They also received ordination; for Clement this was secondary.

PENANCE.

Neither did Clement have any great enthusiasm for the messy business of the penitential processes. Typically his writings tell us little about the role of the hierarchy in it. He and his friends were absorbed in the struggle towards spiritual perfection, and his aristocratic disdain for those otherwise employed sometimes bubbles to the surface. There certainly is joy in Heaven over the repentant sinner; but how much greater is the joy over men such as Abraham, who always did as the Lord ordered him.[174] Sometimes he seems more concerned to persuade the gnostics to forgive their enemies (seventy times seven times if necessary),[175] than in pursuing lost sheep himself.

The sinner must repent. Sincerity is absolutely necessary.[176] The healing process of personal renewal is at the heart of the matter.[177] Even the interventions of God are seen principally in this light; He does not exact vengeance (οὐ τιμωρεῖται), but chastises (κολάζει) the sinner in a useful way[178] i.e. useful

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173 Cf. Bernard, op.cit., p. 106.
174 Strom. II. ^{c}15. 70. 3.
175 Strom.VII.^{c}14.85.3; also VII.^{c}12.74.5; ^{c}13.81.1; ^{c}14.88.4.
176 Paed. I. ^{c}2. 4. 3; I. ^{c}6. 32. 1.
177 E.g. Strom. II. ^{c}15. 70. 3.
178 Strom. VII. ^{c}16. 102. 5; IV. ^{c}24. 154. 1-3.

both to the individual concerned, and the community at large. An important part of this healing process is the help given by fellow Christians, and especially by the gnostics.[179] It is the initial concern of the previously mentioned "spiritual directors"; their real work is more concerned with perfecting than healing.

Converts should be baptised; not just because baptism is the foundation of all further progress, but because it removes our previous sins.[180] If a person sins after this, baptism cannot be repeated.[181] While he knew the writings of Hermas, quoting him at one point to distinguish the free remission of sins (ἄφεσις) from other repentances,[182] he did not limit this type of remission (ἄφεσις) to baptism. The gnostic must seek remission from the judges for those who offend him;[183] in fact he obtains (κομίζεται) this pardon for sinners, presumably by asking God for it.[184] The angels seek this remission for all of us.[185]

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179 E.g. R. M's. S. 41. 1-6 etc.; Ec. Proph. 15. 2; the angels also intercede for sinners. Excerpta ex Theodoto 35. 3.

180 E.g. Paed. I. ^{c}6. 50. 4; I. ^{c}6. 32. 1.

181 Strom. II. ^{c}13. 58. 1, II. ^{c}13. 56. 1.

182 Strom. II. ^{c}12. 55. 6 quoting Hermas. Mandatum 4. 3; II. ^{c}15. 70. 3.

183 Strom. VII. ^{c}14. 85. 3.

184 Ec. Proph. 15. 2.

185 Excerpta ex Theodoto 35. 3. Also the verb is used twice; the gnostic must forgive his enemies: " ἀφίησι " Strom. VII. 13. 81. 1; " ἀφιέντες " Strom. VII. ^{c}14. 88. 4.

Hermas' influence is again evident in the belief that only one remission is possible after baptism,[186] although Hebrews $^{c}10\ ^{v}26$ is immediately quoted to exclude deliberate sins. From other references, we can see that Poschmann is correct in assuming that this is because they presuppose an impenitent state of mind.[187] In fact no sin is excluded from this one remission. The robber chief has no trouble with St. John;[188] the adultress is forgiven,[189] and so is the heretic.[190] However, this penance cannot be repeated, because further grave sin can only be followed by a sham repentance.[191] A second penance is a spiritual and moral impossibility, which the Church's prohibition reflects.

Prayer and fasting were the necessary expression of repentance for sins, especially sins unto death.[192] Whether there was an official category in the Church for those guilty of serious sin; whether there was an obligatory reconciliation ceremony at the end of these penances, and what part the clergy played in this reconciliation, we do not know. However the importance of the first public penance at

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186 Strom. II. $^{c}13.\ 56\text{-}7.$

187 B. Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" (1964) p. 63. Also J. Hoh, "Die Busse bei Klemens von Alexandrien" in Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie (56) 1932, p. 179.

188 R. M's. S. 42. 1 sq. Clement quotes this story to give confidence to penitents.

189 Strom. II. $^{c}23.\ 147.\ 2$ sq.

190 Strom. VII. $^{c}16.\ 102.\ 2.$

191 Strom. II. $^{c}13.\ 57.\ 3\text{-}4;\ 59.\ 1.$

192 Strom. II. $^{c}15.\ 66.\ 4\text{-}5.$

baptism, and the reconciliation of the robber chief by St. John imply that the clerics probably did preside at a reconciliation ceremony. Their description as judges enhances this probability.[193] The uncertainty over the nature and very existence of this official intervention shows the difficulty in ascribing to Clement a notion of "sacramental" forgiveness by the Church. God forgives; while the sinner purifies himself within the Church and with the help of the Church.[194]

CONCLUSION.

Clement was not a presbyter, and was not the head of an official catechetical school. The existence of an independent lay-teacher and his group of followers shows the loose organization of the Alexandrian Church. His minimalist conception of the bishop as teacher, and his refusal to accept the apostolic succession of bishops as a guarantee of truth show that the bishop's teaching function was somewhat obscured, at least in Clement's circle. On the exact relationship between this circle and the other Alexandrian Christians, we have no hard evidence. He described his opponents as simpliciores, but we do not know even how many "intellectual" Christians followed his brand of Christianity. There is no evidence

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193 Strom. VI. ^{c}13. 107. 2.

194 Cf. von Campenhausen, op. cit., n 219, p. 210-11.

of a clash with Demetrius. However, his emphasis on the retiring gnostic does give a distorted and dream-like quality to his portrait of the Church. At best the gnostic taught his small group of followers; they were not the leaders or administrators of the general Church, although they were its theological pace-setters.

For Clement, they were the models for all Christians. They were the teachers of secret tradition, and they, rather than the bishops, took the place of the Apostles in the community. They did not hold office, as gnostic circles saw little need for office in general, much less for themselves. Their authority derived from their holiness and competence, and made no appeal to blind faith. They were Christian philosophers, each with a group of followers.

His sympathy for contemporary culture and willingness to "dialogue" with the world (to use a more modern turn of phrase) represent the Church's coming of age for literate society. The same qualities, with their attendant divisions among baptised Christians, secret traditions, and closed, introverted little groups, also show the danger of a sellout, inherent in any dialogue; just as surely as the history of a man such as Tertullian shows the dangers of a blind reaction to civilized values.

He is especially sensitive to the difficulties of an educated Christian, when confronted with less "enlightened" Church officials. The loose organization of the time enabled him to avoid this problem by ignoring the hierarchy on all matters he considered important.

Origen was not as fortunate, and his personal history was less happy as a result. But Clement's Christianity had to be changed, if the Christian message was to become a mass religion. Fewer divisions, no secret traditions, less exaltation of the intellectual type of faith, and a greater emphasis on the sacramental life were all necessary if Christianity was to prosper, and remain true to its origins. This gnostic world with "no serious interest in the intrusions of an alleged authority" and little concern for "professional office"[195] was too rarified for late second century Alexandria. Simple people need more than allegory and intellectuals; they need the Gospels, and teaching pastors interested in their welfare. They also need "officers" to provide that basic social cohesion, which even the orthodox gnostic groups presupposed.

These tensions remained unresolved, and perhaps unsuspected, until his flight from Alexandria. Origen's approach was brusquer and more biblical. So too was that of Demetrius and the simple faithful. They did not want condescension, and they wanted more than an ambiguous silence on the pieties dear to them. With all this, the scene is set for further developments.

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195 Von Campenhausen, op. cit., p. 211.

CHAPTER SIX

ORIGEN

Unlike Clement, Origen played out his role at the centre of organized Church life. A rigorist, a churchman, and above all a theologian, his academic achievement is rivalled only by Tertullian in the pre-Nicene period. To the service of an uncompromising affirmation of faith, more characteristic of the simpliciores in the anti-gnostic struggle, he brought a prodigious learning and a formidable intelligence. No city, and no Christian community except Alexandria could have produced such a figure, except perhaps Rome herself.

Although he gave us no systematic treatment of the Church, or of authority within the Church, his writings and his personal history are a rich and explicit source of information, just as surely as several factors impede an exact assessment of their significance. While a great volume of his work has survived, too much remains only in Latin translation. Some of his appeals to Christian norms e.g. the rule of faith, and references to teachers have been changed in translation. Whether, and to what extent these changes are also deformations of his thought are questions which must be examined. His enthusiasms for allegory and all things spiritual and eternal aid his exegesis and spiritual progress, but divert his attention from an accurate description of many matters of interest to us. Also his life story is by no means complete, and has been "mythologised" to a greater or less extent.

However, it is clear that the theory and exercise of Church authority differs from that of Clement's portrait. Some of the earlier tensions bubble to the surface, as the organizational patterns in Alexandria become clearer and firmer.

HIS LIFE.

As Origen was so deeply involved in the ecclesiastical life of Alexandria and Caesarea, several incidents in his life are significant for the study of authority in the Church. His own letters have been lost, and so has most of Pamphilus' defence of his life and work. The primary source remains Eusebius' "Ecclesiastical History", where most of the sixth Book is devoted to his story.

Recently the accuracy of much of this material has been questioned,[1] and this demythologizing has thrown some interesting light on the three incidents in his life which do concern us i.e. his appointment as head of the catechetical school, the motives behind his ordination to the presbyterate and Demetrius' opposition to this; the nature of the sentences passed against him by the two synods.

As the evidence is so scanty, we are often dealing with probabilities, rather than established truths. This remains true of the conclusions drawn up at the end of the demythologising process.

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1 M.Hornschuh, "Das Leben des Origenes und die Entstehung der alexandrineschen Schule" in Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (71) 1960 pp.1-25; 193-214. Hornschuh n12, p.4, claims that the only writer who had demythologized this account previously was H.Koch in his article, "Origenes" in Pauly-Wissowa "Real-EncyclopÄdie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaften" 18.1/1839 sp.1036 ff.

Such a method entails real limitations. It is always a risky business (if often a necessary evil) to conjecture motives for an historian's choice of materials; and even more risky to conjecture incompetence on the part of the historian to explain inconvenient facts which cannot be fitted into a pattern based on the conjectured "motives". Finally a logical sequence of events deduced from a mass of conflicting evidence is no infallible guarantee of historical accuracy.

Apart from these general considerations, Hornschuh's demythologizing is based on the premise that Eusebius' account is legendary,[2] and on a preference for Porphyry as a more contemporary and reliable witness.[3] His first premise is generally acceptable; the problem is to discover how far this legendary account is historically inaccurate. Secondly the anti-Christian polemic of Porphyry is hardly a source worthy of complete confidence, any more than Eusebius' reverential portrait.

We have seen that Clement of Alexandria was never at the head of a catechetical school. He taught advanced Christians in a private school, which was not an official organ of the Alexandrian Church.[4] The official catechetical school there began when Demetrius appointed Origen as its head.[5] This information taken from Eusebius (i.e.Origen's

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2 Ibid., p. 4.

3 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

4 Cf. Chapter 5, section a. of this work.

5 Eusebius E.H. VI. 3.8.

appointment by Demetrius) has been accepted by all. In one sense, the date of this appointment is irrelevant for our purposes. But Hornschuh has given some good reasons why this did not occur immediately after the so-called persecution of Septimius Severus. Whoever instigated this persecution, it is difficult to see how a special school for Christian converts could have existed then.[6] Origen's age at the time, seventeen years, also makes such an appointment less probable, but by no means impossible. Eusebius was concerned to establish an historical continuity or succession between the heads of an official catechetical school i.e. Pantaenus, Clement and then Origen. That Origen should have assumed this appointment almost immediately after Clement fled the city fits this pattern. As Clement never headed an official catechetical school, and it is highly doubtful that Origen was ever his pupil (Origen never mentions him), the last link in Eusebius' account on this point (i.e. the date of Origen's appointment) must also fall under suspicion. As an alternative date, Hornschuh suggests 217.[7] Until then, Origen had taught privately at a more advanced level than catechesis, and had pagan as well as Christian pupils. After his appointment he reverted to a similar task, when he gave Heraclas charge of the catechetical instruction.[8] Presumably this higher education remained under Demetrius' official protection. It also appears that his school in Caesarea had

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6 Cf. Hornschuh op.cit., p. 13.

7 Op.cit., p. 203, n.88.

8 Eusebius E.H. VI. 15.1.

pagan as well as Christian students, and that the training given was largely philosophical. By it, he hoped to win over his pagan hearers to Christianity, or at least predispose them towards it, and perhaps give a philosophic training to would-be Christian missioners. These conclusions have been deduced from the silences in Gregory the Wonderworker's Panegyric to Origen about the Incarnation, the Church, the sacraments and even specifically Christian motivations for the spiritual life.[9] The further conclusion that this school was not an official church institution is unwarranted, although it was not a catechetical centre, nor a purely theological school.[10] We simply do not know of its relationship with the local episcopate, but it must have enjoyed at least a semi-official approval.

Demetrius' appointment of Origen shows the extension of episcopal supervision to the teaching function within the Church, while the tension between the two of them shows that this episcopal supervision was sometimes resisted in practice, if not in principle.

According to Eusebius, Origen received ordination to the presbyterate from the bishops at Caesarea, sometime during the episcopate of Zebenus at Antioch, and Pontianus at Rome.[11] Why did he accept this ordination after such a long period as a lay teacher, and

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9 H.Crouzel, "L'École d'Origène à Césarée" in Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique (LXXI) 1970 pp. 15-16; 19.

10 Ibid., p. 17.

11 E.H. VI. 23.3-4.

outside his own Church? There is a wide range of possible answers to this question. There is the first and unlikely possibility that his decision was taken rashly, and that he had not wished for ordination in Alexandria. If this is untrue (and it probably is), had Demetrius refused to ordain him because of suspected heresy, or because he was a castrate? Or were the bishop's later objections and earlier refusal motivated by simple envy, as Eusebius had suggested?[12] Had Origen come to believe that a Christian teacher usually should be a cleric?

What we know of his character makes it improbable that such an important step was taken on impulse; or that it was a merely political gesture to strengthen his hand against Demetrius. It was a considered act involving more than just a political manouvre, although these last considerations must have been present to some degree.

While there are good reasons to believe that much of Origen's trouble derived from the suspicion of doctrinal unorthodoxy,[13] and some inconclusive evidence for rejecting the tradition of Origen's self-imposed castration,[14] the relationship of these factors, and especially the second, to his ordination is a slightly different question. Jourjon,

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12 E.H. VI. 8.4.

13 H.Chadwick in "Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition" (1966) pp. 99-100; n.17, pp. 158-159.

14 H.Chadwick ibid., pp. 66-67. Eusebius, a devoted admirer of Origen would not have included this story if he had any doubt about its authenticity. R.P.C.Hanson, "A note on Origen's self-mutilation" in Vigiliae Christianae (20) 1966 p. 82 claims that it is "captious" to doubt that he did not perform this act in his youth.

who also does not doubt the reality of the self-mutilation,[15] has proven that there was no church law then on this point, and that while Demetrius was shocked, it is also an exaggeration to speak of a common practice against ordaining eunuchs.[16] The castration was a secondary motive for Demetrius' opposition, and a convenient peg for it. The differences were doctrinal.

If this goes some way towards explaining his bishop's position, Origen's motivation remains obscure. One other incident is relevant here. It is usually held that he was ordained around the year 231, and that it was some fifteen years earlier when he preached, while still a layman, in the presence of the Christian communities in Caesarea. Demetrius was horrified by this unheard of procedure. Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus bishop of Caesarea came to his defence, and denied any lack of precedent. However as von Campenhausen justly noted,[17] they can only produce three far-fetched examples to support their claim; they conclude by affirming the probability of many other examples unknown to them![18]

Hornschuh has suggested that these two incidents (i.e. his preaching in Caesarea and his ordination) were not separated by fifteen years, but that the ordination was the immediate Palestinian reaction

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15 M.Jourjon, "À propos du 'dossier d'ordination' d'Origene" in Mélanges de Science Religieuse (xv) 1958 p. 46.

16 Ibid., pp. 45-47.

17 "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", n.85, p. 250.

18 Eusebius E.H. VI. 19.18.

to Demetrius' protests.[19] This offers a very tidy solution, but it does not explain why Eusebius introduced the long gap into his narrative. It serves no devotional or apologetic purpose, and can only be explained away by the historian's incompetence. However, even if Eusebius' account is true as it stands, the action of the Palestinian bishops is still best explained by their desire to render Demetrius' objections worthless, and to respond to Origen's own wish for ordination.

At this stage, he must have sincerely wanted to be a presbyter; and it remains very probable that he had been refused this by Demetrius.[20] In both Palestine and Alexandria, lay teachers rarely preached at the liturgy. Demetrius insisted that this was unheard of; a statement which is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the earlier presence of lay teachers such as Clement and Pantaenus in the community. As the teachers were so obviously the leaders of their circles (in Clement's portrait), and together made up the theological experts for the wider community, the natural situation, in an age not much bothered by lay-clerical differences, would have been for them to preach at the liturgy. But Demetrius' claim for the Alexandrian community was never refuted; neither by Origen or his friends, and for this reason must be accepted. Part of the explanation might lie with the indifference of some lay teachers towards the liturgy, and it certainly does presuppose

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19 Op.cit., pp. 198; 209-211.

20 Von Campenhausen, op.cit., p. 249, asserts this refusal as accepted fact.

a strong clerical self-awareness, and a determination that the liturgy is their preserve. From this, there is only a small step to an accepted situation where theological teachers are usually clerics.

Karl Rahner has accepted this premise in suggesting that Origen received ordination so that he could teach in a regular or correct way.[21] Such a motivation would not be inconsistent with Origen's own writings on the teaching function in the Church. He probably did come to the belief that teachers usually should be clerics.

It would be a mistake to view the differences between Demetrius and Origen as essentially a struggle between clergy and laity. If this had been the case, ordination would have solved all problems; but it is just this to which Demetrius objected. The situation is to be explained by the bishop's determination to exercise effective control over all teaching in his community, either of clergy or laity. Even if most teachers then were clerics, Origen's status as layman or otherwise and his physical condition are secondary considerations. The differences were doctrinal. One immediate objection to this theory arises. If the fundamental differences were doctrinal, why should the bishop appoint him head of the catechetical school, and then deny him ordination? Theory and difficulty are not irreconcilable. Perhaps Demetrius hoped to establish effective episcopal control over teaching, by bringing Origen more fully into the organized life of the community,

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21 "La doctrine d'Origène sur la pénitence" in Recherches de Science Religieuse (37) 1950 p. 51, n.7.

and placing him in charge of catechesis where he could do little harm. If this was the plan, it did not succeed as Origen soon handed over the elementary teaching to Heraclas.

The refusal to ordain is explained on two grounds. By it, Demetrius would have sanctioned Origen's teachings, and made him "an accredited representative of the Gospel";[22] secondly ordination to the presbyterate would have increased his independence of the bishop, rather than decreased it, and been contrary to Demetrius' purposes.[23] Clement believed that presbyters shared a basic dignity and importance with the bishop, and acknowledged their quasi-episcopal status,[24] while Arius showed considerable independence of Athanasius. The only evidence we have for the intervening period concerns episcopal consecrations in Alexandria, and this too is not inconsistent with a powerful and quasi-independent presbyterate. Origen's ordination would have reinforced the older Clementine situation, and ran counter to the bishop's reforming and centralizing endeavours.

The motivations of the three parties i.e. Origen, Demetrius, and the Palestinian bishops in this struggle are different and obscure. But Demetrius' exalted notion of the episcopal functions is clear enough.

Our third and final task in this section is to examine the nature of the two sentences passed upon Origen in his lifetime.

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22 R.Cadiou, "Origen, His Life at Alexandria" 1944, p. 303 suggests this. However the work is marred by its uncritical acceptance of Eusebius' account.

23 Hornschuh, op.cit., p. 212.

24 Chapter 5, section e. of this work.

There is considerable doubt about the circumstances in which he finally left Alexandria, and a shortage of information about the nature of the sentences. Eusebius gives no details of an expulsion, and does not mention the two synods. He merely tells that Origen left the city.[25] Both these omissions are not conclusive, as such events would be inconvenient for the author's purposes. Origen himself left no reference to an expulsion, telling us that he was rescued from Egypt by God.[26] The fact that he left Heraclas in charge of the catechetical school,[27] (the implication being that he chose his successor) is a strong argument against expulsion. Very probably after his ordination, he never returned home owing to Demetrius' opposition.

Our principal source for these events is the ninth century writer Photius, who professes to have derived his account from the Apology for Origen. According to him a synod of bishops and presbyters ordered Origen to leave Alexandria (so displacing him as head of the school), while a second synod of Egyptian bishops deprived him of the presbyterate.[28] Jerome's account goes even further and suggests that he was excommunicated by Demetrius, and that the bishops of Palestine,

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25 E.H. VI. 26.

26 Comm. on John 6.2. Except when otherwise stated, all chapter and section headings are taken from the G.C.S. series. Otherwise page references are only given when paragraph references are missing or insufficient e.g. in the homilies on Luke.

27 Eusebius E.H. VI. 26. The case against expulsion is outlined in H.J.Lawlor and J.E.Oulton's, "Eusebius" Vol.ii. (1928) pp. 214-215; 218-219.

28 Bibliotheca cod. 118 (P.G. 103. 398 b.).

Arabia, Phoenicia and Achaia refused to accept the sentence.[29]

The situation raises important questions for inter-church relations. That Origen was ordained outside his own diocese and against the wishes of his own bishop was contrary to custom, and Demetrius had every reason to be upset. If the sentences only dismissed him from leadership of the school (leaving aside the question of expulsion from the city), and demoted him from the presbyterate, they were not unduly severe. This was probably due to popular support for him, as much as to any kindliness on the part of Demetrius. A more usual course would have been excommunication, as Jerome, also an admirer of Origen's, reports. We have no way of choosing between the two accounts, although the probability must lie with Photius because of his greater detail.

While there had been cases of a Church accepting a person excommunicated in some other community, e.g. the Roman acceptance of Marcion, these arose in all probability through ignorance of the earlier situation. It would have been unprecedented for a community to receive into full communion someone known to be excommunicated by another orthodox Church; the acceptance of someone "depriested" elsewhere was another matter, though potentially as offensive as the former.

This incident, with Origen's journeys to the synods of other Churches (and indeed his whole personal history), shows the increase of

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29 Ep. 33.5 (CSEL LIV. 259) 'Damnatur a Demetrio episcopo; exceptis Palaestinae et Arabiae et Phoenices atque Achaiae sacerdotibus in damnationem eius consentit orbis.'

official contacts between the distant Christian communities. It emphasises the independence of the local churches, even as the disciplinary dispute over the ordination contrasts with the desire among the Churches for some sort of doctrinal unity, at least on the ill-defined "essentials" marked out tentatively by the rules of faith and baptismal confessions.

It has overtones of deeper significance also. The supporters of Origen implied that they did not share Demetrius' doubts about his orthodoxy. The dispute was never seen as sufficient ground for an official rupture between the differing Churches. There was no mechanism for dealing with these lesser differences, although a more serious difficulty on a doctrinal level could have been referred to an episcopal synod representative of the different Churches. The incident also highlights the fallible nature of official pronouncements; a theme which Origen mentions. Excommunication was seen as expulsion not just from the local community, but from the Church itself. Is the excommunicate free to search for another Church willing to receive him? Origen would have replied that this depended on whether the sentence was just or otherwise; he himself had no second thoughts about the legitimacy of his deliverance from Egypt.[30]

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30 Cf. Comm. on John 6.2.

NORMS.

Any examination of Origen's writings must begin with a previous examination of the reliability of the Latin translations in which most of his works survive. Rufinus explained that in his translations he followed Jerome in smoothing over statements likely to cause offence,[31] because these had been corrupted by heretics and evil persons. He balanced this with the claim that any corrections were based on other statements of Origen's, rather than being simply interpolations of his own.[32] The difficulty is that the presuppositions of a fourth century writer from the West are very different from those of an Alexandrian who began teaching nearly one hundred and fifty years before Rufinus' birth. The possibility for innocent misinterpretation and "correction" is considerable. Jerome is generally considered more reliable,[33] although Rufinus' claim that he was following him in correcting Origen gives us reason for caution. To some extent, this will be confirmed by our studies.

There is no ground for abandoning Rufinus as fundamentally inaccurate,[34] although none of the Latin translations can be taken at

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31 De Principiis 1. Rufinus' preface 2. For information on this point; cf. M.M.Wagner, "Rufinus the Translator" (1945) Washington, and for further bibliography V.V.Buchheit, "Tyrannii Rufini Librorum Adamantii Origenis Adversus Haereticos Interpretatio" (1966) Munich n.7, p. XI.

32 Ibid., pref. 3.

33 R.P.C.Hanson, "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition" (1954) pp. 42-43.

34 R.C.Baud, "Les règles de la théologie d'Origène" in R.S.R.(55) 1967, p. 164, n.9, lists six authors who are inclined to accept Rufinus' "basic accuracy".

their face value. Hanson is a little too sceptical of their worth, but the Greek must remain our primary authority.[35] As the translators' zeal for correction varied from topic to topic, so the reliability of their translations varies similarly, and must be examined point by point.

Origen is distinguished from Clement by his almost complete dependence on the Bible as the source of doctrine. While Clement quotes non-biblical sources more frequently than the New Testament itself,[36] his compatriot never quotes any non-biblical source as his authority for doctrine.[37] Unwritten tradition is sometimes used to justify certain practices. A Greek fragment of his commentary on the book of Proverbs demonstrates this dependence on the Bible, and the occasional and limited appeal to unwritten tradition.[38] This fundamental difference is further exemplified by the immense volume of Origen's exegesis of the Old Testament, and more significantly of the New. Only his contemporary, Hippolytus, might have anticipated his New Testament exegesis; but little of this survives and it was on a much smaller scale i.e. on Matthew; the Two Thieves; John's Gospel and Lazarus' Resurrection; the Two Talents and the Apocalypse. His Old Testament exegesis was founded

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35 Hanson, op.cit., p. 47.

36 Cf. Stahlin's index in Vol. 4. G.C.S.

37 Hanson, op.cit., p. 49.

38 Fragment on Proverbs P.G.17. 157 a. "Πατρὸς μὲν ἀκούομεν λόγους, τῆς Γραφῆς· Μητρὸς δὲ τὰς ἀγράφους παραδόσεις τῆς Ἐκκλησίας· οἷον τὸ νηστεύειν ἐν παρασκευαῖς, καὶ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα..." Γραφαι means Old and New Testament.

on his massive work, the Hexapla comparing the differing available editions.

This appeal to the Bible does not imply an absolutely fixed and closed list of books comprising the New Testament. The reference to "canonicas scripturas" might be some rough equivalent for the original, but it would be anachronistic to suggest that κανών or κανονικός was used in this sense.[39] The Gospels are limited to the four we now know,[40] and he had no doubts about the inspiration of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Jude. He became progressively more sceptical about Hermas, and was possibly a little uncertain over Barnabas.[41] His criterion for inclusion was not apostolicity, but whether the Book had been accepted for use in the Church.[42] No more than any other criterion at the time could this one provide clear answers; nor is there any indication that a hard and fast decision for, or against, the inclusion of every pious book in an official list was felt to be necessary. Hanson is probably near the truth, at least for marginal cases, in suggesting that Origen like Clement accepts "as Christian evidence any material he finds convincing or appealing".[43]

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39 Hanson, p. 46; D.van den Eynde, "Les Normes de l'Enseignement Chrétien" (1933) p. 230.

40 Eusebius E.H. VI. 25. 3-6.

41 Cf. J.Ruwet, "Les antilegomena dans les oeuvres d'Origène" in Biblica (23) 1942 p. 42; H.von Campenhausen, "Die Enstehung der christlichen Bibel" (1968) pp. 369-370.

42 Against Celsus 6.20. Cf. Baud, op.cit., p. 176.

43 Op.cit., p. 143.

Origen believed the Christian faith to derive from Scripture, and Scripture always remained for him as much a source of doctrine as a standard. The whole Bible, especially the Old Testament, was a sea of mysteries which had to be decoded by spiritual men. He had very little sense of history himself, and little interest in the literal meaning of the sacred books, except as a starting point for his untiring allegorization. Through this we arrive at a spiritual understanding of Scripture, and are snatched up beyond the law, the prophets and the apostles to Christ himself.[44] The spiritual meaning is better than, and distinguished from, the psychic and physical or material senses.[45]

Several consequences follow from this difficulty in attaining the true meaning of Scripture. As well as the Bible, ecclesiastical tradition in the form of preaching and teaching is necessary for the attainment of truth. His own life and work bear this out. It follows also that there are two types of faith; the higher based on the spiritual understanding of Scripture, and the lower not reaching these heights.[46] This explains his division of the Church into two separated classes of adherents.

Origen often appeals explicitly to tradition. But there are no extant Greek references to the ecclesiastical or apostolic variety, while most of the others which do survive are about Jewish or rabbinic

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44 Comm. on i Thess. 4, 17 (P.G. 14. 1302).

45 Cf. H.von Campenhausen, "The Fathers of the Greek Church" (1963) pp. 48-49.

46 E.g. Comm. on John 10.37 (21).

tradition.[47] To demonstrate that his theory was not entirely at variance with his practice (which did show his belief in ecclesiastical tradition) we must quote one passage which puts the absence of Greek evidence into perspective i.e. his appeal to "the rule of Jesus Christ based on (κατὰ) the tradition of the Apostles of the heavenly Church".[48] This exemplifies his other-worldly ecclesiology, and the tradition mentioned must be tied up with the spiritual understanding of the Bible derived by allegorization.[49]

This same spiritual understanding achieved by an elite from the Bible is the subject matter for his secret traditions.[50] He never appeals to an oral and secret tradition, transmitted by the teachers, and independent of Scripture, and on one occasion he emphatically rejects the secret traditions of the gnostics.[51] With equal emphasis, he explained that his profound truths are not to be imparted to those incapable of receiving them.[52] So some truths are not to be written down, because the subject is too solemn or because they might stir up opposition.[53] This is not dictated by a prudent fear that pagans will

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47 Hanson, op.cit., p. 73. There are Latin references to ecclesiastical tradition, cf. Comm. series in Mt. 39; 46.

48 De Principiis, 4. 2.

49 Van den Eynde, op.cit., pp. 307-308 lists the three principal interpretations of this passage.

50 De Principiis 1. 0's pref. 3.

51 Frag. 19 on 1 Cor. (J.T.S. 9. 1908 p. 357) cf. van den Eynde op. cit., pp. 231-232; Hanson, op.cit., pp. 74-75.

52 Comm. on Romans. 6.8. (P.G.14 1078 a); 8.12 (P.G.14. 1195 c.).

53 Against Celsus 6.6.

misuse these truths, but is employed within the church itself. The similarity with Clement, the heretical gnostics and the philosophers is obvious.

The rule (κανών) and rule of the Church are also norms for him. However while "regula" appears more frequently in the translations (and more frequently in Rufinus than the other translators) than κανών does in the original which we possess,[54] there are a number of instances where κανών is used, and means norm or standard.[55]

The rule is sometimes used as a synonym for Church teaching,[56] and it is very probable that it did not have a fixed credal form.[57] Naturally it was based on Scripture, and yet had an independent authority.[58] There is no reason to doubt that Origen believed that orthodox Christians should adhere to the brief credal summaries, evolved in the anti-Gnostic struggle, and occasionally found in his works.[59]

The anti-heretical role of the rule is a slightly different matter,

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54 Cf. Hanson, op.cit., pp. 44-47.

55 E.g. Comm. on Jn. 13.16; Homily 5.14 on Jeremiah; De Principiis 4.2; Frag. 74 on 1 Cor.(J.T.S.10. 1909 p. 42) etc. These examples make it unnecessary for our purposes to examine in detail Rufinus' use of the term "regula". The Greek fragments of the De Principiis do show that Rufinus introduced the term when there was no literal equivalent.

56 E.g. Hom. 5. 14 on Jer.

57 Hanson, op.cit., p. 95 where he also quotes Bardy and Cadiou. It cannot be proved that the brief credal summaries which do occur in Origen's writings e.g. De Principiis, Origen's Preface 4-10 are what he meant by the ecclesiastical rule.

58 E.g. the Dialogue with Heraclides c10. p.76 (Scherer,1960 edition).

59 E.g. De Princ. Origen's preface 4-10.

although there is one Latin text where the heretics are rejected because they do not adhere to the rule of apostolic truth in their allegorization of Scripture.[60] Whatever the accuracy of this translation, the function of the rule is severely limited by his belief in a double type of truth,[61] The holy and perfect man transcends the rule of faith of the majority of Christians.[62]

Origen was content with traditional anti-Gnostic norms i.e. a professed loyalty to the Scriptures, and adherence to the traditional (if variable) summaries of belief.[63] His real interests were in exegesis and doctrinal synthesis; in finding the hidden meanings of Scripture for the chosen few, and explaining it for their spiritual development. The summaries and the rule were accepted, but unemphasised,[64] as his first preference was not for the mass of Christians, much less for clarifying formulae to distinguish them from the less orthodox. He did not believe that Scripture was over the rule, or vice-versa; they were different aspects of the same Christian teaching.[65] His whole life showed that ecclesiastical teaching is a necessary complement to the

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60 Hom. 4.1. on Psalm 36 (P.G.12. 1351) "In ipso autem spiritali intellectu apostolicae non teneant regulam veritatis".

61 G.Bardy, "La règle de foi d'Origène" in R.S.R.(9) 1919 p. 196.

62 Comm. on John 13.16.

63 Ibid., 32.16(9); Frg. 4 on 1 Cor. (J.T.S.9 1908 p. 234).

64 H.E.W.Turner, "The Pattern of Christian Truth" (1954) p. 354.

65 Cf. Bardy, op.cit., p. 193.

Bible, if the truth is to be reached. In fact, a whole host of presuppositions, religious and philosophical, were needed to arrive at the end-product of his allegorical exegesis. These presuppositions and his intellectual ability were not shared by all his fellow churchmen; and significantly not by the Church officer, i.e. Demetrius his bishop, who claimed a supervision over Christian teaching.

THE CHURCH.

Origen was fascinated by the Church; but this Church was a heavenly reality, or at least trans-historical i.e. embracing heaven and earth. The nature and organization of the earthly Church receive only incidental treatment. The functionaries of the Church receive a more adequate coverage, although it is much less sympathetic. His frantic allegorizing further bedevils the situation, as e.g. when he sets out to apply all the details of Solomon's Temple to the Church.[66]

Naturally the biblical scholar derives many of his images of the Church from this source. We have seen her compared to Solomon's Temple; she was also the city of God,[67] the virgin wife of Christ,[68] as well as His Mystical Body,[69] and the spiritual dwelling place for the holy

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66 Comm. on Jn. 10.39 (23).

67 Against Celsus 3.30.

68 Hom. 12.5 on Lev.

69 Comm. on Jn. 10.35 (20).

priesthood.[70] In his less sanguine moments, and these were not infrequent, he confessed that she was also a den of thieves, which caused Christ's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles.[71]

One aspect of Origen's supra-historical approach, which he shares with Clement, was his belief that the Church had existed from the beginning of the world, founded upon the Old Testament prophets of whom Adam was the first.[72] This same approach has interesting repercussions in his use of the concept mother-church. Most examples exist only in Latin translation, and again there is reason to suspect Rufinus of interpolation.[73] Generally it is the heavenly Church, which is described as such;[74] sometimes the earthly Church is both daughter[75] and mother.[76]

Origen recognized that there were people of varying spiritual accomplishment inside and outside the Church. What sort of divisions did this imply within the Church? Were the "saints" i.e. the perfect Christians still within the Church? Were sinners still within the Church, and was there salvation only within the Church?

For him, there was a clear distinction between the spiritual Christians (roughly equivalent to Clement's gnostics) and the lesser breed who fear God but do not love him.[77] This division is closely

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70 Ibid., 10. 39 (23).

71 Comm. on Mt. 16. 21-23.

72 Comm. on Cant. Cant. Book 2 (GCS Vol.8 157).

73 J.C.Plumpe, "Mater Ecclesia" (1943) p. 79.

74 Comm. on Mt. 11. 17; 14. 13; Hom. 12. 4 on Lev.

75 Frag. on Prov. (P.G. 17. 157).

76 Hom. 6. 3 on Gen.; Hom. 11. 3 on Levit.

77 Hom. 7. 4 on Gen.; Comm. on Mt. 13. 26.

connected with his belief in the different levels of Scriptural understanding, and that certain doctrines should not be taught to the simple faithful.[78] He was frankly elitist, although admission to the select few was - in theory at least - always open to the humblest.[79] While the differences among Christians in their ability to assimilate doctrine, as well as in their general religious sensibility and moral attainment, must be recognized by any pastor, Origen was inclined to overemphasise these distinctions, and tempted to base them on intellectual ability rather than piety. But we should not paint too black a picture. If the primary work of the Word is to save the more understanding people, as they are more appropriate to him than the less intelligent,[80] and philosophical training is needed to be able to understand the profounder truths,[81] an uneducated believer still remains superior to the well educated pagan.[82]

We shall see that while the elite can become independent of teachers and Church ministers (or at least have no need for them), they still remain within the Church. Indeed those without spot or wrinkle make up the true Church;[83] yet it remained a source of puzzlement for

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78 Against Celsus 1.7; Hom. 9. 10 on Levit.

79 Hom. 16. 4 on Gen.; Against Celsus 6.14.

80 Comm. on Mt. 11. 17; cf. Hom. 1. 3 on Ezechiel.

81 Against Celsus 3.58.

82 Hom. 3. 6 on Ps. 36 (P.G. 12. 1340-1). Plato and the wise men of the Greeks are also condemned for confining their instruction and attention to the so-called better class of society and despising the multitude. Against Celsus 7.60.

83 Hom. 1.6 on Gen.

him that the dividing line between good men and evil was not the same as the division between the Church and those outside.[84] He certainly wrote that there is no salvation outside the Church. "No one is saved outside the Church; whoever goes out is guilty of his own death".[85] This could be due to Rufinus, and perhaps refers only to Christians who leave the Church, rather than those born outside. But another text of the homilies on Jeremiah[86] is more emphatic on this point, with no possibility of an interpretation limiting the condemnation to ex-Christians. On the other hand Christ died for the whole world not just believers,[87] as the Father gave up his Son to death for the wicked also.[88]

Yet if being outside the Church remained a hazard to salvation, if not an insuperable barrier, membership did not bring with it automatic entry to Heaven. The "so-called brother"[89] and the "Church members who are thought to be believers",[90] do remain within the Church. This is

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84 H.von Balthasar, "Le mysterion d'Origène" in R.S.R. (27) 1937, pp. 40-42, has discussed this unresolved tension.

85 Hom. 3. 5 on Joshua "extra hanc domum, id est extra ecclesiam nemo salvatur; si quis foras exierit, mortis suae ipse fit reus."

86 Hom. 3. 6 on Jeremiah.

87 Comm. on Rom. 3. 8. (P.G. 14. 946).

88 Ibid., 4. 10 (P.G. 14. 998). He does recognize that the guilt of those who are outside the Church is much less than sinners inside. Neither do they equal good Christians. They are not golden or silver vessels; neither are they clean, being made of common clay. But they are necessary for the future household (i.e. heaven?) Hom. 20. 3 on Jer. (P.G. 13. 530). This text exists only in Latin.

89 Comm. on Mt. 13. 20. ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος

90 Comm. on Mt. 12. 12. πιστεύειν νομιζόμενον ἐκκλησιαστικά

explicitly stated; but it avails little, lasting as it does only until the day of judgement, when there will be a definitive separation of the wheat from the chaff.[91] On other occasion it seems as though he even excluded second class Christians (not out and out sinners) from the Church, while not denying them salvation through Christ's name.[92] Obviously he is here referring to the Church without spot or wrinkle, rather than the earthly Church.

It will become abundantly clear later that the Church did have sociological dimensions and organization. At this stage it is enough to cite his remarks in the Against Celsus that within each state there is a somewhat similar sociological reality i.e. the local Church community,[93] which has its own leaders.[94] The unity of the Church is presumed, and the theme is less developed than in Clement. Schism and heresy occur where there is sin.[95]

The similarity of much of this doctrine to Clement's is clear. For both writers the Church is sometimes heavenly, sometimes on earth,

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91 Hom. 20. 3 on Jer. (P.G. 13. 530). This survives only in the Latin; but the theme is developed at such length, that it could scarcely be an interpolation. (Cf. note 88).

92 Hom. 17 on Lucam (G.C.S. 9. 110) "eum vero, qui sit digamus, licet bonam habuerit conversationem et ceteris virtutibus polleat, tamen non esse de ecclesia ... sed esse de secundo gradu et de his qui invocant nomen domini et qui salvantur quiden in nomine Jesu Christi" cf. Comm. on Rom. 8. 5. (P.G. 14. 1168).

93 Against Celsus 8. 75.

94 Ibid., 3. 3.

95 Hom. 9. 1 on Ezech.

and sometimes it spans both. It transcends and at the same time exists through all history. There is a shared belief in fundamental divisions among Christians, based on intellectual capacity, and a shared ambiguity about the relationship between Church membership and salvation. The differences between the authors will be clearer when we examine Origen's view of the Church's ministers.

A final point to notice is that Origen has no unambiguous belief in the sinlessness of the earthly Church, which could be used as a justification to deny ecclesiastical reconciliation for serious sinners.

TEACHERS AND PROPHETS.

Origen was a teacher during the whole of his adult life, and as Daniélou wrote "All his works converge more on the sacrament of Scripture than on the sacrament of worship".[96] For him, the teachers were without doubt the most important figures in the community, and teaching the most important function. The identity of the teachers i.e. lay or clerical, episcopal or otherwise, and the type of authority they exercise, are the central issues of this chapter.

The teacher is Origen's ideal. This represents a significant shift of emphasis from Clement, where the gnostic held this position. The gnostic is not defined by any ecclesial function, whereas the teacher is by definition an ecclesial figure. He unfolds the mysteries of Scripture to Christians within the Church. But even in his own

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96 In "Origen" E.T. 1955, p. 45.

lifetime, the actual situation moved beyond Origen's position. He had moved beyond Clement, but not far enough to please Demetrius. He represents the earlier tradition of Roman and Alexandrian Christianity, where teachers (lay or clerical) taught their own groups of followers, with only a minimum of interference from the official leaders of the community i.e. bishop, or more probably bishop and presbyters. Elsewhere the bishop had not only moved to effective leadership over all important functions within the community; there was a strong tendency to see him as the "best" Christian e.g. in Antioch, and Hippolytan Rome. There is no reason to doubt that Demetrius saw himself in this role. The ideal of the Christian teacher, as a speculative thinker and exegete and (hopefully) fortified by a strong spiritual life was soon to be amalgamated to the office of bishop. Hereclas, Origen's successor and bishop after Demetrius is the first Alexandrian example of a theologian-bishop.

There is little danger that the references in translation to the teachers have been exaggerated beyond the original text. The increased emphasis on the sacramental life and the tendency to see teaching as a clerical monopoly make such exaggerations unlikely. Indeed these developments imply that the possibility of distortion lay in the opposite direction i.e. any original suggestion of lay or independent teachers would be "corrected". There is also some internal evidence for this.

Despite the fact that the teacher ("διδάσκαλος"; "doctor" or "magister" in translation) enjoys a remarkable versatility, his first

duties are inevitably to unravel the meaning of Scripture for the people.[97] To this end, he cannot be ignorant,[98] and must be devoted to the pursuit of wisdom as well as the study of the Scriptures.[99] So exalted is his calling, he can sometimes be described as the lips of Christ.[100]

But teachers were not mere academics, or even intellectuals whose only task was to expose the failings of organized Christianity. They themselves had positive ecclesiastical functions, being the "eyes" of the Church,[101] who construct her upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets.[102] With the priests (sacerdotes) they must beget sons as St. Paul did.[103] Debtors to all men, they must help all men;[104] a task which cannot be achieved unless allowance is made for the different levels of religious understanding in the community.[105] Since they are to defend the community against pagan and heretical attacks, they are compared to the beams of Noah's Ark which support the "animals" within, and repel the waves without.[106]

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97 Hom. 20. 5 on Josh.

98 Comm. on Cant. Cant. Book 2 (G.C.S.8. 149).

99 Hom. 13. 4 on Gen.; Hom. 17. 2 on Joshua.

100 Sel. in Psalmos Ps. 39.10 (P.G. 12. 1412).

101 Comm. on Cant. Cant. Book 2 (G.C.S.8. 154-155).

102 Hom.2. 3 on Gen.; Hom.9. 3 on Exod.; ibid., 13. 4; Hom.1. 4 on Lev.

103 Hom. 6. 6 on Lev.

104 Hom. 13. 4 on Gen.

105 Hom. 6. 1 on Num.; Hom. 12. 7 on Levit.

106 Hom. 2. 4 on Gen. They are described as "doctores" and "magistros atque aemulatores fidei". Cf. Hom. 10. 4 on Ex.

Their authority extends far beyond the preaching of the Gospel. As there were Old Testament officials to judge offences, so the Church now has Christ, or his representative the teacher of souls for this purpose.[107] While judgement is seen as teaching justice (a power given to Peter and Paul and other teachers through the ages),[108] Origen was none too fussy over the methods used to impart these lessons. The teachers are to oppose the demons and every form of vice; and notorious sinners are to be expelled.[109] There is one especially exuberant development of this theme, which demonstrates beyond doubt his zeal for the purity of the faith, and his determination to defend it in every possible way. Origen would have been a hard-line bishop. The teachers share the duty of catching the young foxes, of destroying the scorpions and serpents, of crushing the heads of the young Babylonian children; all of which duties were to be executed before the victims were old enough and strong enough to resist.[110] It is due only to metaphorical

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107 Hom. 10. 4 on Ex.

108 Expos. in Prov. chap. 29 (P.G. 17. 248).

109 Hom. 8. 7 on Josh. The nature of the expulsion depends to some extent on the identity of the teachers. There is no reason to believe that non-clerical teachers could themselves excommunicate.

110 Comm. on Cant. Cant. Book 3(4) (G.C.S.8. 240-1). In a similar passage Rufinus speaks of this power being given to the "sodales"; the Greek text of Procopius has
ταῦτα τοῖς φίλοις ὁ νυμφίος ἤτοι ἀγγέλοις ἢ ἀνδράσιν ἁγίοις, ὅσον τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκαλοι i.e. these things the spouse spoke to his friends, either angels, or holy men, just so long as they are teachers in the Church (G.C.S.8. 235).

excess that these enormities seem to be heaped on young heretics rather than incipient heresies, but it amply demonstrates the hardness of spirit produced by the persecutions and the anti-Gnostic struggle and the ferocity with which each group defended its concept of truth. Origen had every reason to compare the teachers and bishops to the faithful servants whom God will place over his possessions.[111]

The teaching function was not confined to his contemporaries. The other-worldly dimension to the Church is apparent, when the angels are described as our teachers,[112] while of course God is the true and perfect teacher.[113]

The Apostles and especially St. Paul are often described as teachers,[114] although the latter are sometimes mentioned with the Apostles,[115] and with the evangelists.[116] The fact that Paul had included them among the groups of the New Testament Church is recognized by Origen. Both 1 Cor. $^{c}12.^{v}28$[117] and Ephesians $^{c}4.^{v}11$[118] are mentioned by him.

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111 Scholia in Mt. 24. 45. (P.G. 17. 301).

112 Selecta in Psalmos on Ps. 67. 35. (P.G. 12. 1512).

113 Enarr. in Job. on chapter 22. 2. (P.G. 17. 80).

114 Hom. 3. 4 on Gen.; Hom. 9. 3 on Ex.; Hom. 3. 3 on Numbers.

115 Hom. 11. 7 on Num.; Selecta in Psal. Ps. 126. 1. (P.G. 12. 1641); Comm. Ser. in Mt. 61.

116 Sel. in Psal. on Ps. 39. 10. (P.G. 12. 1412).

117 Comm. in Rom. 7. 5. (P.G. 14. 1116).

118 Comm. on John 1. 3(5); Hom. 12 on Lk. (G.C.S. 9. 73).

Was there a somewhat similar group of teachers in the contemporary Churches, distinct from the clergy? Before the evidence of his writings is examined on this point, a couple of preliminary observations should be made. Clement had taught as a layman, as did Origen for many years. They could not preach at liturgical ceremonies (or at least Origen could not), and this practice also was not common in Palestine. This internal evidence would suggest that there were individual layteachers, whose freedom of action was increasingly limited as they came under episcopal control. Their functions in large measure were being absorbed by the clergy, as Origen's ordination shows. Do his writings also reflect this situation?

It is difficult to find references to a group of contemporary teachers, as distinct from the New Testament grouping. Von Campenhausen has pointed out that they are not mentioned with the other groups worthy of respect and special maintenance i.e. widows, martyrs and ascetics.[119] Neither do they figure in the lists enumerating the different grades of clerics.[120] On top of this, some of the teachers' most important activities belong very much to the bishop, who must be a teacher;[121] the episcopal role in expulsions and reconciliations is also very pronounced.

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119 "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", p. 250, n. 85.

120 Hom. 2. 1 on Num.; Comm. on Rom. 8. 10. (P.G. 14. 1188-1189); On Prayer 28. 4. There is an ambiguous reference in Comm. Ser. in Mt. 24.

121 Hom. 10. 4 on Ex.; Against Celsus 3. 3.

Before we hasten on to identify these two roles into one office, we must consider the occasions when the teachers are named with the bishops. In the Greek fragment of the thirty-fourth homily on Luke's Gospel,[122] the hotel keeper in the parable of the Good Samaritan is the type of the Apostles and their successors the bishops and teachers.[123] In the Greek text both the last two nouns are used without the definitive article; an ambiguity which Jerome neatly removes by identifying the Apostles' successors as "ecclesiae praesidem".[124] There are many similar references. The faithful and wise servant whom God sets over His possessions is seen to be the bishops and teachers.[125] The sins of the people are imputed to their leaders (principes) and teachers, and the priests (sacerdotes) and teachers beget children for the Church.[126][127]

Harnack interpreted these passages as evidence for a group of teachers "in juxtaposition with the episcopal organization of the Churches",[128] and so did de Faye,[129] while von Campenhausen has gone to

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122 G.C.S.9., p. 296, frag. 168.

123 καὶ τοὺς τούτων διαδόχους ἐπισκόπους καὶ διδασκάλους.

124 G.C.S.9. 191, where yet another Greek text is given, or P.G.13.1887.

125 Comm. Ser. in Mt. 61; Schol. in Mt. 24. 45. (P.G.17. 301).

126 Hom. 20. 4. on Num.

127 Hom. 6. 6 on Lev.

128 "The Mission and Expansion of Christianity" (E.T. of 1908 German Edition) p. 360; History of Dogma, Vol. 2. (E.T. of third German Ed.) pp. 70-2, n. 3.

129 E. de Faye, "Origène. Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre, Sa Pensée" (1928) vol. 3, p. 277 has a view similar to Harnack's.

the opposite pole and written that "Origen nowhere envisages a 'teaching profession' independent of the clergy".[130] As not even Clement, and certainly not Origen, ever denied explicitly the general leadership role of the bishop, no teaching profession was envisaged as being independent in this sense. However von Campenhausen's statement cannot imply a clerical monopoly of teaching, much less an episcopal monopoly.

One possible solution must be put forward, only to be rejected. This would see teaching as a permanent function in the Church, rather than an office; a description to be applied to any competent person. In time, these came more and more to be clerics. Such people would resemble the Old Testament prophets, who arose spontaneously and required no ordination, or even appointment. Unlike the prophets, these teachers would have been a permanent phenomenon. In the strictest sense, this theory of a teaching function is seriously embarrassed by the frequent repetition of the noun "teacher" (rather than its use as an adjective), and especially by the references to bad teachers i.e. morally or doctrinally.[131] However the strongest argument against a purely functional viewpoint is Demetrius' appointment of an official catechist.

Origen's use of the term is fluid, sometimes signifying an office, and sometimes an indeterminate position, not requiring ordination or even appointment, but more permanent than a temporary function. It

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130 Op.cit., p. 250. D.van den Eynde, "Les Normes d'Enseignement" (1933) pp.232-3, and K.Rahner, op.cit., p. 51 hold similar views.

131 "Bad" teachers e.g. Hom. 2. 4 on Ezechiel; Comm. Series in Mt. 14; Hom. 3. 3 on Ezechiel.

is possible that his views were never the same on this point as those of his episcopal superiors in Alexandria or Palestine, and that the ambiguity is exemplified in the Greek fragment quoted.[132] "Bishops" and "teachers" are used without any article, definite or indefinite. A similar usage occurs in the title of C.P. Snow's sequence "Strangers and Brothers".[133] The terms are not necessarily synonymous; nor mutually exclusive as the term "the strangers and the brothers" probably would be. A person could be both of these things, either of them (or none). Von Campenhausen is correct in his claim that "there is hardly one passage where they (teachers) can be clearly distinguished from the clergy".[134]

Just as teaching is an important function of the bishop, so it is with the presbyter, a position Origen held for over twenty years of his teaching life in Caesarea. The presbyter is charged with preaching God's word,[135] and only once does he explicitly distinguish between presbyters and teachers,[136] where von Campenhausen insists (perhaps too plausibly) "the biblical text compels him to do so."[137] In any case the connection between presbyters and teachers is not weakened, and there can

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132 Hom. 34 on Luke. (G.C.S.9. frag. 168, p. 296).

133 A similar usage also occurs in the title of E.Waugh's second volume of his wartime trilogy, i.e. "Officers and Gentlemen".

134 Op.cit., p. 250.

135 Hom. 7. 6 on Joshua; Hom. 1. 4 on Lev.

136 Hom. 3. 7 on Ezech.

137 N. 86, p. 250.

be no attempt to establish a presbyteral teaching monopoly (apart from laymen, there are the episcopal teachers). There is also other indirect testimony for the connection. While the teachers are the successors of the Apostles in interpreting Scripture,[138] the contemporary counterparts of the Apostles are not the bishops, of whom Christ is the type, but the presbyters.[139] A similar end-product is achieved by another example of his wonderfully fluid typology, because the New Testament bishop who had to be a teacher [140] is also compared to the presbyter.[141] While Origen never intended these passing references to be systematized into a link between the New Testament Apostles and bishops on one hand, and on the other hand the presbyter-teachers of the contemporary Church,[142] they do serve to emphasise the teaching role of the presbyters.

From this it would seem that a rough parallel occurs between the evidence internal to his works and what we know otherwise of the contemporary scene. Bishops are teachers; there is strong textual evidence that there was no episcopal monopoly, and that most of the non-episcopal teaching was done by the presbyters. There is much less testimony urging a separation between presbyters and teachers. He is silent on just who among the teachers is to have the last word on

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138 Hom. 20. 5 on Joshua.

139 Comm. Series on Mt. 10.

140 Against Celsus 3. 48, cf. Ep. to Titus 1. 9.

141 Selecta in Psalmos. Ps. 11. 6 (P.G. 12. 1201).

142 E.g. the contemporary bishops have to be fitted into the scheme.

contentious points of doctrine, although he would have been the last to demand that teachers must be clerics. All who are devoted to studying the word of God can be teachers[143] i.e. just men who have received the appropriate grace.[144]

The identity of the teachers is important in charting the types of authority exercised. As most were bishops or presbyters the question becomes marginal, except that the lay teachers never had an important role in the penitential processes (not in this capacity at least; the role of the lay confessors is a different matter), and never more than an ambiguous role in questions of doctrine.

As the position of the teacher and intellectual changed considerably in Alexandria during Origen's lifetime i.e. from Clement's semi-autonomous position to the predominance of Demetrius' point of view following Origen's departure, it is not surprising that his terminology is a little bewildering. This language always remained that of a particular theology i.e. stressing the word rather than worship, and of a slightly earlier and different situation when the community was dominated by the struggle with the Gnostics over the nature of saving knowledge, and the teachers with their followers enjoyed much less episcopal supervision.

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143 Hom. 10. 1 on Jer.; Hom. 13. 4 on Gen.

144 Enarr. in Job c22. v2. (P.G. 17. 80). Daniélou op.cit., pp.45-50 has an excellent discussion on the role and identity of the teachers, although he probably draws too sharp a distinction between the two earlier types of authority i.e. presbyteral (worship, and martyrdom as sacrifice) and teachers' (Scripture, and martyrdom as true knowledge) (p. 50).

His writings as they survive in translation prevent us from concluding that a separate group of lay-teachers existed under the bishop in the community, but this judgement depends on our accepting the fundamental accuracy of these translations. Both Rufinus and Jerome were nervous of Origen's references to teachers, and each on at least one occasion amended them to remove this ambiguity.[145] The possibility must remain that they indulged in a very considerable touching-up; not least because in the middle of the third century bishop Dionysius of Alexandria called together the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages to consider the strange doctrines of Nepos![146]

While the Old Testament prophets shared a position of first importance as historical religious personalities with the Apostles, Origen was much less enthusiastic about contemporary prophets.

Many were false prophets, who were in fact anti-Christs,[147] did not teach the message of the Holy Spirit,[148] or the word of God, but the falseness of their own heart.[149] More cannot be expected of them because they have not risen through baptism.[150] We cannot be sure what

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145 Hom. 34 on Luke (G.C.S.9. p. 296; p. 191); Comm. on Cant. of Canticles 3(4) (G.C.S. vol.8. 235).

146 Eusebius E.H. VII. 24. 6.

147 Comm. Series in Mt. 47.

148 Hom. 2. 1-2 on Ezechiel.

149 Selecta in Ezech. c13. (P.G. 13. 804).

150 Hom. 2. 5 on Ezech.

exactly constituted a false prophet for him, or what distinguished them from a false teacher. In fact many so described were probably only pagan or heretical teachers, whom the rigorist Scripture scholar rejoiced to condemn as false prophets, rather than under more pedestrian titles. Once he did describe the pseudo-teachers under this heading.[151] Others seem to have been Montanists, who indulged in ecstatic utterances. His reference to the shameful antics of the false prophetesses in chapter thirteen of Ezechiel[152] is an example of this. He never showed any sympathy for this movement, no doubt being repelled by their fundamental anti-intellectualism and emotionalism, although sharing their desire for a purified Christianity and (to some extent) their rigorism.

The Old Testament prophets share a special place with the Apostles in the foundations of the Church,[153] but his attitude is ambivalent towards the contemporary prophetic scene. On one hand he seems to suggest that prophecy stopped with Christ; the Church no longer needs the rain showers of the prophets because Christ the river has come to us.[154] This in turn is a cause for lament; the absence of prophets being, he fears, due to the community's sinfulness.[155] On the other

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151 Selecta in Ezech. c13. (P.G. 13. 804).

152 Hom. 3. 2 on Ezech., cf. the other references on this point collected by P.de Labriolle, "Les Sources de l'histoire du Montanisme" (1913), nos. 52-57, pp. 52-56.

153 Comm. on Cant. of Cant. Book 2. (G.C.S.8. 157).

154 Ibid., Book 3(4). (G.C.S.8. 226).

155 Selecta in Psalmos Hom. 3. 10. on Ps. 36 (P.G. 12. 1545).

hand, he sometimes admits that contemporary prophecy (the true variety) is a fact,[156] even claiming in a moment of weakness that he and his fellow scholars are similar to the prophets: without honour in their own country. A finding to which Greek history also witnesses![157] Such prophecy still remains inferior to the Old Testament variety, as the former need to work and study before God grants the grace, while the earlier prophets received the gift directly from God.[158]

Not unusually many of Origen's first premises show through quite clearly in this discussion; his respect for the Bible, and especially his intellectualism. He is convinced of the second-class quality of Christian prophecy, which he (perhaps unconsciously) limits to teachers and scholars. These remain his ideal, and while he showed little sympathy for his uneducated fellow churchmen, he has considerably less for those outside the Church, especially if they happened to be ecstatics.

CLERGY AND LAITY.

Origen was obsessed with the ministerial hierarchy, criticising fiercely the shortcomings of the office holders while developing an exalted theology of office itself. A couple of points should be recalled as preliminaries. He eventually chose to become an ordained presbyter, so that his anti-clericalism is not based on any fundamental

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156 Selecta in Threnos Jeremiae c4. v20. (P.G. 13. 660).

157 Comm. on John 13. 55(54).

158 Comm. on Rom. 9. 3. (P.G. 14. 1215).

objections, as the position of the latter-day Tertullian was. Secondly, much of his writing on the teachers refers to the bishops and clergy. The ambiguities in this situation will be examined further in his writings on the Apostolic succession, and on the penitential processes.

Origen was a formidable personality, who knew nothing of the dogma of impartiality and had no interest in the flatteries and "white-lies" which facilitate all social contacts. He did not share Clement's preference for polite dinner-party society, but breathed a little of the spirit of John the Baptist while looking back to the former times of the Church, when she was more truly the bride of Christ. Obviously this personality and his background explain many of his strictures against the clergy; the struggle with Demetrius is especially significant. However more is involved than a clash of personalities, because many of his anti-clerical attacks were made during his time in Caesarea and after the bishop's death.

His high theology of office was partly responsible for his criticism. More is demanded of the clergy than the laity,[159] because the offices of deacon, presbyter and bishop (while entailing greater responsibilities, and demanding a greater spirit of service to the community) also bring the office-holders closer to God.[160] As von Campenhausen has pointed out he has applied the (orthodox) gnostic's

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159 Hom. 9. 2 on Ezech.

160 Hom. 11. 3 on Jeremiah.

ideal of perfection to the clergy and demanded it from all of them.[161] This is typical, as he believed the ideal could be attained and must be attained. Like many a rigorist, he was determined to outlaw human weakness in himself and others, and the result was not always pleasant. Any criticisms from a writer who claimed that the truly wise man, like God, does not need to repent[162] cannot be taken at face value. Clement might have lacked the common touch, but Origen certainly lacked a touch of common sense.

This was not always the case, as many of his demands flowed directly from the Gospel, and were eminently practical. We can understand his belief that bishops should have only one wife,[163] and should be imbued with the spirit of service rather than acting like princes[164] as they are responsible for the wellbeing of the Church, Christ's mystical Body.[165] Granted his premises there is no special difficulty in understanding that the higher the rank the greater the punishment for misdemeanours.[166] This insistence begins to take on another dimension when he emphasises the point that a bishop sins who does not minister as a servant to his fellow servants, with no fewer than ten Scriptural quotations.[167] All ambitious men are to be excluded from the

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161 Op.cit., pp. 253-4.

162 Hom. 18. 6 on Jeremiah.

163 Comm. on Mt. 14. 22.

164 Comm. on Mt. 16. 8, cf. Hom. 6. 3 on Isaiah; Hom. 8. 4 on Jer.

165 Hom. 7. 6 on Joshua.

166 Hom. 5. 4 on Ezech.

167 Comm. Series in Mt. 61.

episcopacy,[168] and we wonder at the versatility of bishops described as immoral, sinful, ignorant and dishonest.[169]

It is difficult to judge the general moral condition of the clergy from these references. With the increase in numbers of both clergy and Christians, moral indifferentism and self-importance must have increased among Church leaders. We should remember that at all times Origen remained the teacher, and many of these passages were written to increase popular support for holy leaders, and perhaps to induce a repentance and conversion among the guilty. There is another brighter side to this grim picture drawn largely for home consumption which we see in the Against Celsus where the Church leaders are described as generally superior in morals to their secular counterparts.[170]

Many of the clergy were not just morally indifferent; a good percentage seem to have been untutored in either Christian or profane studies,[171] and this produced a delicate situation in their relationship with the theologians. Origen's thoughts on this point move simultaneously in a number of directions. Just as Jesus was obedient to St. Joseph, we are told, so must the superior man obey his inferior bishop;[172] while on a broader, but less specific, approach to the same

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168 Against Celsus 8. 75.

169 Comm. on Mt. 16. 25; cf. list of quotations collected by A.Harnack "Kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag" II in Texte und Untersuchungen, xlii (3). 1919, pp. 129-141.

170 Against Celsus 3. 30.

171 E.g. Hom. 9. 2 on Ezech.

172 Hom. 20 on Luke (G.C.S.9. 122).

problem the leaders of the Church (principes) must examine all teachers, and decide what doctrines should be destroyed.[173] Neither of these two statements is irreconciliable with Origen's conduct during his differences with Demetrius, but a process of reasoning is required to arrive at this reconciliation. The key to this process lies in the proviso (which concludes the second reference) that man's judgements are not always those of God.[174] Elsewhere he develops this theme further. Those fortunate enough to have been kissed by the lips of Christ i.e. directly illuminated by Christ himself, no longer need any human teachers,[175] or even the Apostles, prophets or angels.[176] There is a fundamental similarity here (at least in the second branch of the development) with Clement's position, in as much as the "gnostic" elite needed teachers and supervisors hardly at all; although contradiction was avoided by the fact that he found bishops who did support him against Demetrius.[177] The principle of obedience to the episcopacy was upheld, as it always must be when the bishop was not sinful.

We now return again to his theology of the episcopacy and presbyterate to examine it in more depth. Typically this ranges over

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173 Hom. 9. 1 on Numbers.

174 Ibid.

175 Comm. on Cant. of Cant. Book 1. (G.C.S.8. 90-1).

176 Comm. on Jn. 1. 25(24).

177 A.Ehrhardt, "The Apostolic Succession" (1953) p. 154, writes "it is clear that he (Origen) saw himself as a gnostic who was superior to any institutional ministry". This is true, but he did not see himself as being independent of them.

heaven and earth for its comparisons, and equally typically the matter is complicated by Origen's belief in an internal hierarchy of spiritual men. These holy enlightened people are the true priests and Levites of the new people of God.[178] The spiritual demands he makes on the ministerial clergy demonstrate his belief that the inner and external hierarchies should coincide. It is incorrect to view the internal and really important hierarchy as one composed of a group of human teachers, distinct from the clergy. The saints and scholars should be clergy. In a similar way, the ministerial hierarchy must not be seen just as a reflection of its internal counterpart.[179] It has an importance in its own right,[180] and performs essential functions as e.g. the whole Church rests on the bishops.[181] However, while these offices demand sanctity[182] they are neither substitutes for it, nor automatic sanctifiers, and no cleric whatever his rank should imagine that an exalted position will ensure salvation.[183] Even the angel which each Church has as its bishop must be faithful to his duties.[184]

These angels are not the only heavenly type of the bishop. Christ

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178 Hom. 17. 2 on Joshua.

179 Cf. von Balthasar, op.cit., p. 45.

180 Von Campenhausen, op.cit., pp. 254-6, has a full discussion of the nature of Origen's "double hierarchy".

181 Comm. on Cant. of Cant. Book 3 (G.C.S.8. 177).

182 E.g. Hom. 11. 3 on Jeremiah.

183 Ibid.

184 Hom. 13 on Luke (G.C.S.9. 80).

himself is the true bishop, just as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the New Testament times the Apostles are the real presbyters, while the seven archangels are the type of the deacons.[185] This exaltation of the episcopacy through connecting it with Christ goes back to Ignatius of Antioch, who spoke of the bishop presiding in the place of God,[186] and being similar to Christ.[187]

As Origen had little concept of development or change in the history of the Church and a full respect for the Law and Prophets as well as the New Testament,[188] it causes little surprise when he draws on Jewish institutions in his theology of the Christian Church. This is an obvious source for such comparisons. Greek secular culture had little to say on religious organization, although his intellectualism and the teaching-ideal derived from it. Neither is the New Testament, much less the Apologists, a very fertile source. From this process of elimination, the Old Testament emerges strongly as potentially useful, although the Alexandrian's loose allegorical exegesis, his concern with the inner hierarchy, his unpolitical other-worldliness and his many references to the teachers all combine to weaken the connection between the Jewish and Christian ministries, even if many passing references show that it is presupposed.[189] Christ transferred the sacred offices from the Jews to

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185 Comm. Series in Mt. 10.

186 Ep. to the Magnesians 6. 1.

187 Ep. to the Trallians 2. 1.

188 Comm. on Cant. of Cant. Book 2. (G.C.S.8. 132).

189 Cf. von Balthasar op.cit., pp. 45 sq.; Ehrhardt, op.cit., p. 150.

the Christian community,[190] as the Apostles combined in themselves the rulership with the priesthood, i.e. the roles of Joshua and Eleazar.[191] The Church leaders are to judge offences as their Jewish counterparts did,[192] and the sins of the Christian people will be imputed to them, as Jewish sins were imputed to their leaders.[193]

While these themes are undeveloped, the relationship between the clergy and the New Testament personalities is an area of special confusion. To an already fluid situation (i.e. the New Testament evidence), Origen brought an added measure of complexity. Some of his references are only pastorally useful analogies, and are entirely without theological significance e.g. pastors are like the shepherds at Bethlehem[194] and the hotel-keeper in the parable of the Good Samaritan,[195] while the bishops are also compared to the cypress rafters of the house.[196]

The role of the Apostles is one source of ambiguity, as the term is not limited to the Twelve. The other seventy-two whom Christ chose for the ministry are Apostles,[197] as in fact is anyone who is "sent".

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190 Comm. on John 10. 23(16).

191 Hom. 18. 1 on Joshua. This idea is similar to that of Hippolytus (The Apostolic Tradition 3. 2-5) where the princely spirit and the priesthood are combined not only in the Apostles, but in the bishops. Unlike Origen, the idea is developed in the context of the ordination ceremonies.

192 Hom. 10. 4 on Ex.

193 Hom. 20. 4 on Numbers.

194 Hom. 12 on Luke (G.C.S.9. 73).

195 Hom. 34 on Luke (G.C.S.9. 191).

196 Against Celsus 3. 3.

197 Hom. 27. 11 on Numbers, cf. Comm. on Rom. 10. 21 (P.G. 14. 1286).

Following this reasoning, Christ is an Apostle of the Father.[198] As already stated, the dignity of the Apostles is not in question. They are the light of the world,[199] being the first to unravel the inner meanings of Scripture,[200] and those who bring the whole Church of God into the house of wine.[201] The ambiguity arises when we attempt to chart the relationship between them and the latter-day clergy, and to identify precisely their successors. Once again, the reliability of our Latin translations must be doubted; although even when we include the Latin references to succession and the Apostles there still remains a reluctance (as Ehrhardt has noted)[202] to link the Apostles exclusively, or even too closely, to the bishops. They are the type of the contemporary presbyters, not the bishops,[203] although in one Greek fragment the bishops and teachers are named as successors to the Apostles,[204] and Ignatius is named as the second bishop of Antioch after St. Peter.[205] Origen believed in the continuity of the Apostolic teaching function within the community, and his life and writings show

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198 Comm. on John 32. 17(10). For our immediate purposes this meaning can be ignored.

199 Hom. 1. 6 on Gen.

200 Hom. 20. 5 on Joshua.

201 Comm. on Cant. of Cant. Book 3. (G.C.S.8. 191).

202 Op.cit., pp. 136-7.

203 Comm. Series in Mt. 10.

204 Hom. 34. on Lk. (G.C.S.9. f.168, p. 296).

205 Hom. 6. on Lk. (G.C.S.9. 34).

that the bishops shared in this, just as surely as he refused to explicitly identify these successors as the bishops alone. His thought is best explained by saying that if the teaching function is the preserve of anyone within the Church, these would be the spiritual and moral elite, who usually are the clergy.[206] Beyond this he was not prepared to go, because it was the teachers (identity unspecified) who continued the Apostles' teaching function.[207] The significance of this is two-fold; not only did he refuse to give an unequivocal endorsement to the teaching authority of the bishop as embodied in the Apostolic succession theories then current elsewhere, he also refused to move in the direction of Clement and the (heretical) Gnostics with their belief in secret traditions of doctrine independent of the Bible, and preserved by a succession of teachers from the Apostles. There is even a remote possibility that he was wary of the succession theory, because it had been used so much in unorthodox circles, as well as because it was now being used to bolster (excessive) claims for episcopacy.

Origen wrote next to nothing on the relationship between the bishop and the presbyters except to express his belief that the presbyters are also priests,[208] and the general admonition that presbyters should

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206 Cf. his reference to the succession of the Apostles of the heavenly Church. De Principiis 4. 2. A similar thought probably underlies his frequently equating the Apostles with the "ecclesiastical men". Comm. Rom. 3. 1. (P.G. 14. 924) ; 2. 2. (876).

207 Hom. 20. 5 on Joshua.

208 Hom. 12. 3 on Jeremiah.

submit to their bishops.[209] He gives no information, one way or the other, whether the position of the presbyters in Alexandria differed from that of Caesarea.

To conclude from Origen's antipathy towards some clerics that he was a champion of the great mass of the laity against an expanding episcopal power would be a misreading of the situation. He was certainly no populist in this sense; neither was he a democrat, but a strong believer in the first importance of a spiritual and intellectual elite. These were the people who counted, and the moral and intellectual attainments required for membership debarred the majority of Christians. Entirely unaware in any "political" sense, he had no interest in regulating the sociological stresses within the Christian communities by any system of counter-vailing powers, or by using the laity as a counter-weight to the episcopacy or the clergy. His concern was to foster a competent elite and hope that they would in fact be the Church leaders.

He was aware that all Church members constituted "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation",[210] and that the laity's priesthood demanded the ornamentation of holy life and behaviour.[211] Those who hear the word of God are kings, because Christ rules in them,[212]

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209 Hom. 20 on Lk. (G.C.S.9. 122). This text should not be overemphasised; it presumes Origen is speaking as a presbyter.

210 E.g. Hom. 1. 5 on Joshua; Hom. 12. 2 on Numbers.

211 Hom. 6. 9 on Lev.

212 Hom. 6. 3 on Judges.

while any person with the requisite qualifications of faith and knowledge is a priest and levite.[213]

It is anachronistic to imagine that these dignities should have found expression in the day-to-day running of the Church, as indeed most Christian theology today would demand. For him the inner life of the Spirit was his primary concern, and he left others to worry about who precisely should be leaders and administrators. Such positive disinterest has long term disadvantages as dangerous as an excessive preoccupation with the dignity of office, or legalism.

Yet while he never developed his theology of the laity at a theoretical or practical level, he did recognize that they exercised real, if limited, sociological functions in the community. They had to take a regular part in the assemblies, although what this means beyond participation in the Eucharist is not clear.[214] They should take part in the election of presbyters and bishops because they know who is holier and more learned among the candidates, and can also help to prevent the candidates retracting or becoming scrupulous,[215] although they should never accept bribes to clamour for a particular candidate.[216]

In the actual "juridical" processes of penance the laity played no more than the role of witness, albeit sometimes vocal ones, as they

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213 E.g. Hom. 4. 6 on Levit.; Hom. 9. 5 on Joshua.

214 Cf. Dialogue with Heraclides c5, p. 64.

215 Hom. 6. 3 on Levit.

216 Hom. 22. 4 on Numbers; Hom. 9. 1 on Numbers.

did in the discussions about Heraclides' possible heresy. The power to bind and loose given to all people meant personal advice, reproaches etc.,[217] and perhaps the necessity of denouncing public sinners to the Church leaders.[218] The martyrs or confessors did not pardon the lapsed (or other serious sinners) then, as they did later in Alexandria in one recorded instance under Dionysius,[219] but they did have a special place in the work of expiation.[220]

The consequences that can be drawn from this, including his concept of office, can be better seen when we have considered in our next section what he had to say on the penitential processes. But several preliminary observations can be made. His insistence that there is no dignity of office entirely independent of sanctity and spiritual understanding, is paralleled by a reluctance to glorify the position of the general run of Christians, and is based on the same principle i.e. to be really effective Christians the gnostic ideal of perfection must be attained; and too many clergy and most of the laity failed to make the grade. Furthermore the effectiveness of office is severely limited by ignorance and moral indifference in the office holder, and by the superior intellectual or moral attainments of any other Christian inside

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217 E.g. Comm. on John 32. 10-12(7).

218 Hom. 3. 2 on Levit.

219 Eusebius E.H. VI. 42. 5-6. They did not grant full reconciliation to the penitents, who could attend services but not receive Communion.

220 Hom. 10. 2 on Numbers.

or outside office. We shall also see that serious sin in the office holder absolutely destroys his effectiveness, but that Origen's lack of political consciousness prevented him from drawing the political consequences of his beliefs, or from advocating the mechanisms needed to translate them into action.

PENANCE.

Origen is one of the foremost theologians of penance in the early Church, and his doctrines on this subject have produced a number of conflicting interpretations,[221] with some casting him as a rigorist, who denied that some sins could be forgiven in this life.[222] However, since the writings of B. Poschmann there has been a wide measure of agreement that for Origen all post-baptismal sins could be forgiven at least once. This is also von Campenhausen's view, who explicitly acknowledges Poschmann's contribution.[223]

In this view, the immediate pardon granted at baptism (ἄφεσις) is distinguished from other forms of pardon i.e. it "had the meaning of an absolutely gratuitous condonation of guilt, as opposed to expiation of sins by penance".[224] Since baptism is unique, this type of

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221 B.Poschmann, "Paenitentia secunda" (1940) pp. 425-26 outlines these different views.

222 E.g. O.D.Watkins, "A History of Penance" vol.1 (1920) pp. 140-1.

223 Op.cit., n 126, p. 258.

224 B.Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" (1964) p. 66.

forgiveness could not be repeated, except in martyrdom. Such a remission is denied in the Greek text of the Exhortation to Martyrdom, where we read that "there is no receiving of remission of sins without baptism,"[225] while nothing is said of the other types of forgiveness, obtainable by some form of penance. While such an explanation prevents this text being used as a proof of Origen's rigorism, by itself it is also insufficient to disprove the charge. His belief in the powers for forgiveness is proved from many other references.[226] Clement also knew of this free remission of sins, distinguishing it from other types of forgiveness, but not limiting it exclusively to baptism.[227]

In contrast to ἄφεσις , there is the remission described as ἀπολαμβάνειν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα , a process in which sins are taken away, in serious cases through excommunication, the performance of

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225 Exh. to Mart. 30 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων χωρὶς βαπτίσματος λαβεῖν.
Baptism does grant this type of forgiveness. Comm. on Mt. 16. 6. K.Rahner, "La doctrine d'Origène sur la pénitence" in Rech. Sc. Rel. (37) 1950. n 77, p. 64 discusses the possible textual difficulties against Poschmann's ἄφεσις theory. If this theory could be disproved, there would be no alternative to believing that Origen was a rigorist, at least initially.

226 Other passages sometimes used to prove his rigorism are also insufficient e.g. the passage in "On Prayer" 28. 9, where the priest, like his Old Testament counterpart, cannot offer sacrifice for some sins, does not make it clear whether the impossibility derives from the sin, or from the dispositions remaining in the sinner. So too with sins "against the Holy Ghost" e.g. Comm. on Jn. 28. 15(13). (On this last point cf. Poschmann, "Paen. sec." p. 428).

227 Clement of Alexandria. Strom. II. c12. 55. 6; II. c15. 70. 3; and Strom. VII. c14. 85. 3. (Cf. Chapter 5, section f. of this work.)

the requisite penance and then readmission.[228] It also contrasts with the Seven types of remission for sins described in the Latin text of the homilies on Leviticus.[229] There is no need to doubt the accuracy of this translation as "remissio" could be a translation of συγγνώμη, rather than ἄφεσις, for the remission granted by the ecclesiastical processes.[230]

However these must not be seen as something like expulsion from a modern political party - an entirely legalistic procedure. Rather the heart of the matter is the progress of all mankind towards salvation, under the leadership of Christ who penetrates into the Heavens.[231] The first emphasis is not upon the validity of the Church minister's action (and Origen does have some interest in this), but in the interior renewal of the penitent, and the resumption of his interrupted progress towards salvation. This was not achieved by the ex-sinner's performance of some extrinsic sentence, but was viewed as a washing away of the stains and sores of sin.[232] Penance was a medicine which only became unnecessary when the patient was cured.[233]

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228 Hom. 16. 5-7 on Jeremiah.

229 Hom. 2. 4 on Levit.

230 For examples of how the Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, used συγγνώμη cf. G.W.H.Lampe, "A Patristic Greek Lexicon" Oxford (1961) p. 1266. ἐπικάλυψις is also a possibility, ibid., p. 525. There are too many references in translation to the penitential processes, as well as some in the original Greek, for a belief in his rigorism to be retained.

231 Hom. 10. 2 on Numbers.

232 E.g. Hom. 6. 2 on Levit.; Hom. 17 on Lk. (G.C.S.9. 108).

233 Hom. 2. 4 on Levit., cf. references to physician who take away sin. Hom. 1. 1 on Psalm 37. (P.G. 12. 1369).

While this penance was not regarded as retribution, it also had a deterrent value. The right balance between severity and laxity had to be struck, so that the weaker brethren might be helped,[234] and the wheat might not be pulled out with the tares.[235]

Above all else it was a requirement that the patient i.e. the sinner wished to be cured, but during his cure the help of Christ and the saints was absolutely essential. Christ and His sons, the Apostles and martyrs have taken away the sins of those saved,[236] and Origen even fears that a scarcity of martyrs will prevent his own generation being healed of its sins.[237] Similarly the Old Testament prophets, Peter and Paul, and those placed in the Church to cure wounds are the physicians of souls, because God does not want the death of the sinner, but his repentance.[238]

Some sins were regarded as being more serious than others, and as such were described as sin unto death,[239] mortal sin,[240] or sin against the Holy Ghost.[241] These serious sins are not limited to the trio of idolatry, murder and adultery, as they include immorality and

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234 Comm. on Rom. 10. 6 (P.G. 14. 1219).
235 Hom. 21. 1 on Joshua.
236 Hom. 10. 2 on Numbers.
237 Ibid.
238 Hom. 1. 1 on Ps. 37. (P.G. 12. 1369).
239 E.g. Hom. 11. 2 on Levit.
240 E.g. Hom. 2. 2 on Jer.
241 Comm. on Jn. 28. 15(13).

"other serious sins".[242] In every case they must be very serious offences, as they are compared to the sins which merited death in the Old Testament times,[243] and now, unlike the lesser sins, merit excommunication. Origen protested very strongly against priests who forgave serious sinners without obliging them to undergo the penitential processes.[244]

He recognized the difficulty of distinguishing the greater from the lesser,[245] and the added complication that such sins could be either public or secret. At one stage he seemed to suggest that only public and serious misdemeanours warranted excommunication,[246] and common practice would have largely followed this, despite his insistence that even our secret thoughts should be revealed.[247] That he was concerned with something more than appearances and the common good of the community is obvious from the detailed instructions he gives to any penitent in doubt about the gravity of his fault. Such a person should consult a "physician" to discover whether his sin should be confessed before the whole congregation,[248] and act on the recommendation either for or against this.[249] The identity of the physicians is disputed, and is, I

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242 On Prayer 28. 9-10.

243 Hom. 11. 2 on Levit.

244 On Prayer 28. 10.

245 Hom. 10. 3 on Exodus.

246 Hom. 21. 1 on Joshua.

247 Hom. 3. 4 on Levit.

248 Hom. 2. 6 on Ps. 37. (P.G. 12. 1386).

249 Ibid.

believe, paralleled by the dispute over the identity of the teachers. The physicians were usually clerics, but not necessarily so.

A public sinner needed no such advice from a physician, and the bishop would have been able to decide through public knowledge, and no doubt with the enthusiastic help of the community, if a public sin was of sufficient gravity to merit excommunication.[250] The formal act of excommunication performed by the Church leaders in the presence of the community[251] must not be confused with the private advice of the physician, or the corrections which all good Christians can administer.

Excommunication meant not only exclusion from common prayer and assemblies,[252] but expulsion from the Church,[253] and separation from the Body of Christ.[254] For him, these terms were synonymous. The entire process of expulsion and reconciliation could take place only once after baptism,[255](a limitation to which Clement of Alexandria also witnesses), and left some permanent disabilities, in as much as a person after it could not resume any ministerial functions in the Church, or be advanced to them.[256] This is somewhat at variance with his "medicinal" concept of penance, but it emphasises the stringent demands

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250 Against Celsus 4. 27.
251 Hom. 14. 14 on Jeremiah.
252 Against Celsus 4. 27.
253 Hom. 21. 1 on Joshua.
254 Hom. 2. 5 on Judges.
255 Hom. 15. 2 on Lev.
256 Against Celsus 3. 51.

he made on the clergy and his underlying rigorism. This is the earliest evidence we have for reconciled penitents keeping an inferior standing in the Church.[257] The length of the penance to be performed varies with the severity of the sin, and the degree of repentance shown by the sinner, but is longer than the period of probation required before baptism.[258] Only when this was successfully completed did the rite of reconciliation occur; once again a public ceremony performed by the bishops[259] assisted (we do not know how exactly) probably by the presbyters.[260] The position of the "paenitentes" in relation to the Church is similar to the catechumens '. In other words they were then partially, not totally excommunicated.

It now remains to examine the significance of the ministerial interventions at the different stages in the process; the nature of erroneous decisions by a good bishop, and any sort of decision by a bad bishop. As an initial clarification, the previously mentioned consultation between a sinner and his physician is not the equivalent of

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257 Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" pp. 68-9.

258 Against Celsus 3. 51.

259 Hom. 1. 1 on Ps. 37 (P.G. 12. 1369); Hom. 2. 4 on Levit. where James 5. 14-15 (re. anointing of sick) is mentioned in this context.

260 E.g. Comm. on Rom. 2. 2 (P.G. 14. 873); Hom. 5. 3 on Levit., von Campenhausen op.cit., n 135, p. 260 speaks of "the act of reconciliation, which only the bishops can perform". As the term "sacerdotes" is not limited to bishops (this is the term used in the homily on Leviticus), von Campenhausen's conclusion is a bit too sweeping. We have no details of the part the presbyters played in the actual rite, or the accompanying official decision making. Formal ecclesiastical reconciliation cannot be granted by laymen, cf. von Campenhausen op.cit., n 139, pp. 260-1.

the modern Catholic practice of sacramental private confession.[261] There is no mention of a priest, and it is a private preliminary to the processes, or a type of spiritual direction.

Since excommunication excludes sinners from the Mystical Body of Christ as well as the earthly Church, the bishop's actions do not concern just the external realities, but are related to the life of grace and heavenly realities. Official reconciliation, and the previous expulsion and imposition of penance, are necessary conditions for the return of the sinner to the Church and the life of grace, and Rahner's application (following Harnack) of the term τῦπος or σῦμβολον to explain their relationship to spiritual realities is an enlightening one.[262] Origen's writings give no further clarification on this point, and whether we define the so-described ministerial interventions as "sacramental" depends very much on our notion of sacrament. In normal circumstances they were necessary if grace was to be given, but there was no "ex opere operato" guarantee attached to the bishop's activity.

Demetrius' quarrel with Origen highlighted the fallibility of the hierarchy's disciplinary activities, and this is reflected in Origen's own writings. The man unjustly excommunicated is still within the Church,[263] while the grievous sinner avails himself little by avoiding a

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261 Cf. Poschmann, op.cit., p. 70; K.Rahner, op.cit., pp. 452-4.

262 Op.cit., p. 448.

263 Hom. 14. 3 on Levit.

public excommunication.[264] Ultimately justice is always done. Problems arise from this on a couple of fronts; (i) if the unjustly treated Christian seeks redress in the Church, and (ii) when Origen strikes further at one of the roots of the trouble by directly attacking sinful bishops, and not merely their sinful or unjust actions.

The ideal solution to the first problem would be to discover episcopal or clerical support elsewhere for one's grievance, as he himself did. If this was not forthcoming, he mentions no alternative; and to suffer in silence would seem the only solution. He did display some awareness of the dangers inherent in those who imagined themselves unjustly expelled, acting on their convictions, as he threatened dire consequences on excommunicates who start schisms against Church leaders.[265]

Origen in his statements was completely uncompromising on the efficacy of clerical activity, stating that it depended on the sanctity of the office holder. When the bishop is like St. Peter his activity is effective;[266] otherwise any bishop, presbyter or deacon guilty of self seeking cannot give the true teaching of the Church.[267] Such unworthy leaders are bad yeast which corrupts the whole body; they should depart (presumably from their official positions to take their place among the penitents).[268] Political mechanisms needed to translate these

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264 Ibid.

265 Hom. 10. 1 on Ezech.

266 Comm. on Mt. 12. 14.

267 Ibid., 11. 15.

268 Selecta in Jeremiam 38. 19 (P.G. 13. 585); ibid., 29. 21 (13. 580); Hom. 10. 1 on Ezech.

prescriptions into effect were never advocated by Origen. His approach to the problem aimed at achieving the election of saintly office holders, and at their avoiding serious sin while in office. It is also safe to assume that he never considered some of the further spiritual consequences of his position. Rahner has argued at some length that he was primarily interested in guarding against unjust excommunications; what of just excommunications and reconciliations performed by a sinful bishop?[269] The most we can say is that if he did consider this particular aspect of the problem while possessing our modern Christian sensibilities, he might have reconsidered his position. We cannot conclude from it in the face of his explicit contrary affirmations, that he believed episcopal and clerical authority was independent of the moral suitability of the office holders.

CONCLUSION.

Origen's life and writings spanned a period of considerable development in the Church, and his theology was deeply influenced by his personality and background. His concept of office shows this. He exalted the office of the episcopate, but almost exclusively in terms better suited to a purely functionalist approach; and functions that need not be the preserve of the episcopacy. The bishops were important because of their teaching (an emphasis he absorbed from contemporary culture), and because of their sanctity (this at least is thoroughly

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269 Op.cit., pp. 261-2.

biblical); and they were required to be saintly and scholarly not so much because they were appointed to their office, but because they performed the function of leaders of the Christian community, and as such should be pre-eminent. He shows no great enthusiasm for their liturgical functions.[270] This peculiar understanding of office is mirrored in his approach to ordination. He recognizes that a bishop must be elected and consecrated, but any man who has the qualifications Paul outlined to Timothy is a bishop in the sight of God, even without the ordination of men.[271]

Clement's ideal of perfection for the gnostic was demanded of the clergy, and if this was not attained their capabilities were severely limited. Stupid and easygoing bishops were of little service to saints and scholars, although he went further than Clement, at least in principle, in urging that the elite does have to obey such indifferent clerics. Serious sin destroys the clergy's effectiveness altogether. He makes no apologies for this viewpoint, although it is much better suited to preventing trouble arising, than to dealing with erring office-holders.

The ambiguity in Clement about the relationship between the bishop and the presbyter has been removed, and the bishop is now clearly distinguished in theory, despite the absence of information on his day-to-day working relationship with his presbytery. A theoretical

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270 E.g. Hom. 7. 5 on Levit.

271 Comm. Series in Mt. 12.

ambiguity also remains. Caught between the demands of expanding episcopal control, at least in Alexandria, and those of a serious academic tradition not confined to episcopacy or clergy, Origen refused to designate the bishops as the only successors of the Apostles, and only guardians of the truth. The teaching function remained undifferentiated i.e. no clear distinction was drawn between the defence of a primitive and essential kerygma, and the development of religious theory; and the identity of the teachers was not specified beyond admitting the important role here of the bishops and clergy.

It would be misleading to conclude from this that Origen had any great interest in sociological theory, or the theory of authority. The De Principiis has no chapter on the Church, and his interests always remained with the work of the Spirit, especially as carried out by the inner hierarchy of the moral and intellectual elite. He shared this snobbery with Clement, and it explains his disinterest in the political life of the Church, involving (as it would have) intimate and sustained involvement in the affairs of the mass of Christians. He drew few practical consequences from his refusal to accept an episcopal teaching monopoly, or his convictions about the effects of sin on office, or his acceptance of the priesthood of the faithful. These problems were worked out largely in the West.

His norms were those of the Church at the end of the Gnostic struggle: a complete loyalty to Scripture, and a fundamental disinterest in oral tradition independent of the Bible as a source of

doctrine.[272] But his passion for allegory and the limited importance he gave to the rule of faith and doctrinal summaries are more typical of the Alexandrian tradition, than that of the whole Church.

As a non-episcopal teacher, Origen suffered from all the tensions which Clement managed to avoid, as he brought his academic prowess to bear at the heart of organized Church life. Little of this tension rests with the penitential processes, as its broad outlines are commonly accepted. Rather it centers on the perennial problem of the intellectual pathfinder's position in the Christian Church, and his relationship with an episcopacy claiming a pre-dominant teaching role. He was ill equipped to contribute much to the practical solution of this problem, and while he might have overstressed the necessity of scholarship he was certainly correct in insisting that Church leaders must not be sinners.

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272 Hanson, "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition" p. 189; 192, writes that Origen marks the final stage in the disappearance of such oral tradition.

CHAPTER SIX - APPENDIX

EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION IN ALEXANDRIA

The nature of ordination ceremonies in Alexandria before the Council of Nicaea has been the subject of recurrent debate in the English speaking world since the first years of this century. Episcopal consecration rather than ordination to the presbyterate or diaconate[1] has been the centre of interest, because most of our evidence is on the former point, and because the nature of the episcopacy has been, and is, an important concern of much post-Reformation theology.

As the main point at issue is whether the Alexandrian presbyters themselves consecrated their bishop by the laying on of hands, we shall begin by briefly restating the teachings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen on the episcopate and presbyterate, and then examining their evidence on ordination-consecration ceremonies.

Clement accepted the monepiscopate[2] with its implied differentiation from the presbyterate, but he often wrote as though there were only two essential orders in the ministry, presbyters and deacons.[3] Origen had

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1 The terms "consecration" and "ordination" are used only to distinguish between the rites for ordaining bishops, and rites used for other clerics.

2 Strom. III. 12. 79. 6. where the bishop is compared to the head of a family.

3 e.g. The Rich Man's Salvation 42. 3-4; Strom. VI. 13. 107. 3; III. 12. 90. 1; VI. 13. 106. 2.

little interest in explaining the practical or theological relationship between types of clerics, but he differentiated between bishops and presbyters more clearly than his predecessor.[4] This development is paralleled, and perhaps partly explained by the episcopate of Demetrius, but the writings of neither theologian, and especially Clement, provide any reason to eliminate presbyteral consecrators on a priori theological grounds.

Clement knew of an ordination ceremony, but showed little respect for it in one slighting reference to "presbyters and deacons ordained by men" (ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων χειροτονούμενος).[5] Origen again gives fuller information, which unfortunately survives only in Latin translation. He wishes to prevent the wrong type of person aspiring to the clergy[6] and then achieving their ambition through nepotism or bribery[7]. While he stresses that the people should be present at the ordination of priests (in ordinando sacerdote) because they know the virtues and defects of the candidates, and because their presence stops retractions and scruples, as I Tim. 3. 7. suggests[8], he emphasises even further the necessity of prayer and the preferability of a situation where God and

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4 e.g. Comm. Series in Mt. 10.

5 Strom VI. 13. 106. 2.

6 e.g. Comm. Series in Mt. 10.

7 Hom. 22. 4. on Numbers.

8 Hom. 6. 3. on Leviticus.

not man does the choosing[9]. The nature of the ceremony[10], and the identity of those who ordain remains unclear.

The three principal sources of the theory that the Alexandrian Church had a different consecration rite are the letter of Jerome to Evangelus (written between 366-384 A.D.), the letter from exile of Severus of Antioch to the orthodox of Emessa (written between 518-538 A.D.), and the Annales of Eutychius in the tenth century. The writings of Ambrosiaster, a contemporary of Jerome provide no secure foundation for presbyteral consecration. The reading Telfer used as a basis for this claim "si desit episcopus, consecrat presbyter"[11] is unsupported in many manuscripts which read "si desit episcopus, consignat presbiter"[12]. The historical reliability of Epiphanius is so much open to doubt[13] that his theory of immediate episcopal

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9 Hom. 22. 4. on Numbers; Hom. 23. 2. on Joshua.

10 The use of the word "ordinare" (Hom. 6. 3. on Lev; Hom. 23. 2. on Joshua) is ambiguous, and could refer to the whole election process, rather than the rite used for bishops and/or presbyters. In either case, we learn nothing about the identity of the "consecrators".

11 P.L. 35. 2302. Quoted by W. Telfer "Episcopal Succession in Egypt" in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History (3) 1952 p.6.

12 cf. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum vol 50. p.196. This was pointed out by J. Lécuyer in "La succession des évêques d'Alexandrie aux premiers siècles" in Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique (70) 1969. p.88.

13 cf. E. W. Kemp "Bishops and Presbyters in Alexandria" in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History (6) 1955. p.132, who shows that Achillas was bishop before Alexander, and did not have a three month episcopate after him and before Athanasius, as Epiphanius suggests in Penarion Haer. 69. 11. (P.G. 42. 220.)

succession (so preventing neighbouring bishops having time to arrive and participate in the election) at the very least needs independent support before acceptance. In any event, this need not preclude later consecration[14].

Of our three principal sources Jerome, Severus and Eutychius only the last one certainly speaks of the presbyters' imposition of hands[15] as distinct from presbyteral nomination. Also Eutychius is the only one certain when the custom ceased ascribing the change to Alexander;[16] although the most natural explanation of Jerome is that it continued until Dionysius and Heraclas, and then ceased[17]. Certainly Athanasius expressly denied that a presbyter can ordain[18].

A new dimension is added to the debate by Eutychius' claim that until Demetrius appointed three bishops, and his successor Heraclas twenty, there had been only one bishop at a time in Egypt[19]. Eutychius' unreliability is notorious, but attempts to prove the existence of a plurality of Egyptian bishops before Demetrius have been

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14 Lécuyer 1969 art. p. 87 points this out.

15 cf. Kemp op. cit. p.138.

16 Annales (P.G. 111. 982)

17 Ep. 146. 1. (C.S.E.L. 56. 310.)

18 "Apology against the Arians" 2. 12 and 75-6. (P.G. 25. 269 and 385).

19 Annales (P.G. 111. 982)

unsuccessful[20]. Also the existence of these earlier bishops would imply nothing about their role in consecration rites; on the other hand, if there had been only one bishop in Egypt there can be little possibility of the episcopal consecration of his successor after his death.

As a final ingredient there is the account of certain heretics visiting the monk Poemen, and attacking the bishop of Alexandria as being consecrated by presbyters[21]. Gore has shown that Poemen was an established anchorite by 375 A.D., so that the heretics could be Arians, and the bishop Athanasius[22]. However as this is not conclusively proved, attempts to dismiss the story of presbyteral

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20 Lécuyer "Le problème des consecrations épiscopales dans l'Église d'Alexandrie" in B. L. Ecc. (65) 1964. p. 244. quotes the letter of the emperor Hadrian (138 A.D.) to the consul Servianus speaking of the Christian followers of Serapis, "qui se Christi episcopos dicunt". Flavius Vopiscus. Firmus Saturninus VIII in the Scriptores Historiae Augustae II., (Leipsig 1927) p. 227. The ambiguities in this phrase, and the author's obvious ignorance of exact Christian terminology make this statement worthless. In his 1969 article p. 83, Lécuyer quotes Severus, a contemporary of Eutychius who claims that Alexandria had suffragan bishops from 85 A.D. (Patrologia Orientalis I. pp. 149-150). This is anachronistic.

21 Apothegmata Patrum (Patrologia Graeca 65. 341.).

22 C. Gore, "On the ordination of the early bishops in Alexandria" in the Journal of Theological Studies (3) 1902 p. 280.

consecrators as an Arian slander (attempts which are in fact based on this story) also remain insecurely founded.

Athanasius certainly was consecrated by bishops[23], and Kemp and Lécuyer have demonstrated the inconsistencies in the accounts suggesting presbyteral consecration. We rely on Eutychius, an erratic tenth century source for the first explicit evidence that presbyters consecrated (rather than nominated), and that there was only one bishop at a time in Egypt before Demetrius. There are considerable differences over the date when the custom ceased.

Against this we have a complete dearth of information about the identity and episcopacy of consecrators in Alexandria before Athanasius. The unreliability and the inconsistencies in the writers favouring the presbyteral interpretation remain, but the combined evidence of Jerome, Severus, Eutychius and even Epiphanius and the Apothegmata Patrum cannot be reduced to a common source. All these accounts taken together have a credibility which each taken separately does not warrant. The Arian slander theory is insufficient to counteract this, because of the uncertainty over the identification of the bishop and heretics in the incident with Poeman, and because Jerome is likely to have known of, and therefore rejected, any Arian source for

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23 His episcopal consecrators defend their choice of him; cf. Athanasius, "Apology against the Arians" 6. (P.G. 257d and 260 a b).

his information[24].

Therefore we accept as a strong probability the theory that presbyters did consecrate the new bishop in Alexandria; a practice which ceased some time before Athanasius. This is in accord with Clement's conception of the bishop and presbyters, and does not contradict Origen.

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24 cf. Kemp op. cit. p. 140.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TERTULLIAN

LIFE AND BACKGROUND

The theologians of North Africa dominated the early history of the Western Church, and their influence, especially that of Augustine, remained predominant there until the time of Aquinas. The first, if not the greatest of these was Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, probably born in Carthage a little before 160 A.D. He was learned in the law, although it is improbable that he was the jurist of the same name. Converted to Christianity some time shortly before 195 A.D., he later broke with the Church to follow the teachings of Montanism. He died after 220.

The Church had not seen his like previously. Even Irenaeus and especially his contemporary Clement of Alexandria were products of different worlds. Nor was he content to be only an apologist, always on the defensive about his faith. All his opponents, both pagan and Christian were attacked with vigour and great skill; he also outlined in some detail what he considered the Christian attitude should be in many of life's practical problems.

Tertullian knew both Greek and Latin. At least five of his works were first published in Greek (De Spectaculis, De Baptismo, De Virginibus Velandis, De Corona Militis, and De Ecstasi); the remainder were in Latin, and the texts which do survive are all Latin.

His style is unique; to a large extent he created ecclesiastical Latin borrowing terms from all spheres of secular life, but especially the courts, to suit his purposes. His language was never pretty, and often appallingly difficult. Its vigour was matched only by its spleen.

We are often told that "the style is the man"; this was certainly true in his case. His strange, tortured personality searching with so little success for perfection emerges only too clearly. His striving for effect, personal abuse e.g. "Your belly is God, your lungs a temple, your paunch a sacrificial altar,... and your belching prophecy",[1] his priggishness "obesity is not conducive to wisdom"[2] and fanaticism make up the underside of this perfectionist. Of the first rank intellectually, he often acted as an intellectual bully, or the very caricature of a barrister as he scores up one foolish debating point after another. However, these characteristics were not as rare as one might imagine in the rawboned society of contemporary North Africa, or in the early Church; nor indeed were they regarded as insuperable obstacles to sanctity, or canonization. St. Jerome is

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1 De Ieiunio 16. 8. References are from the two volumes of the Corpus Christianorum Series. The first volume contains his Catholic writings; the second contains those influenced by Montanism. Differences still remain over the dating of some of these works.

2 De Anima 20. 4.

witness to this.[3]

Yet even by these standards, his personality with its virtues and defects was larger than life. A few more of his sayings will, I think, bring us closer to the heart of the man, and provide some sort of key to his development. This key is certainly not to be found in any abstruse, quasi-philosophical arguments; nor in his doctrine on the Trinity. Although he was an intellectual (if an intellectual of a somewhat special sort), he sincerely believed that these matters were of secondary importance. "It is better to be ignorant", he wrote, "rather than know what one should not"[4]. The key to the riddle is the fact that Tertullian was a perfectionist and rigorist. That he would make no concessions is shown time and time again; in his attitude to public penance, monogamy, the work and dress of Christians, his refusal to admit that heretics even have a right to discuss the Scriptures. And he was prepared to use many means to induce this perfection; "Where there is no fear, there is no emendation; and where there is no emendation, repentance is vain"[5]. When he did break with the Church, his concepts of the Church and of Church authority were different from his own earlier views and the views of those he left behind. These

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3 Jerome received his distinction before the "canonization" processes were regularized.

4 De Praescriptione Haereticorum 14. 2.

5 De Paenitentia 2. 2.

new theories, though, were necessary adjuncts, and not the motor behind the transition. If the institution and its rationale could not absorb the demands for moral perfection, which he believed to be mandatory, then this institution and its rationale must be at fault. He himself, as early as the De Praescriptione Haereticorum expressed this beautifully: "doctrinae index disciplina est".[6] As well as being a perfectionist, Tertullian was tempted to elitism. He delighted in opposition, and the fewer his companions the better. His contempt for public opinion helps to explain the vigour of his attacks on pagan institutions, and the absence of any embarrassment arising from his transition to Montanism. There was always a great danger of going astray with the crowd, he wrote in one of his last works, "since truth is loved in company with the few"[7].

The question whether Tertullian was a presbyter or a layman is one with interesting repercussions for the Church life of the times. The principal reason for believing him to be a presbyter is a statement by St. Jerome[8]. While Jerome is hardly a "tainted source", there is some ground for holding him suspect with his pro-presbyteral sympathies,

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6 43. 2. "Disciplina" in this case means "l'ensemble des règles et des rites qui constitue l'unité de l'Église et separe les fidèles des hérétiques et des paiens; toute idée de doctrine est absente de ces emplois, in "Deus Christianorum" by R. Braun 1962. p. 424.

7 De Pudicitia 1. 10.

8 De Viris Illustribus 53 (P.L. 23. 661-3.)

on this point. Eusebius knows little of Tertullian, and never mentions his being a cleric[9]. Separated as Jerome is by nearly two hundred years from Tertullian, other evidence would be needed before his statement could be accepted as true. Tertullian himself nowhere refers to his clerical status. Nor do we know enough about the Carthaginian Church of this time to claim that his special position as a teacher, and the homily (or instruction) form of some of his works e.g. De Oratione, De Baptismo, De Paenitentia can only be explained if he was a presbyter. We must allow for the possibility of an influential lay teacher in Carthage, just as there were such people in contemporary Alexandria and there had been a little earlier in Rome. The much quoted text from De Exhortatione Castitatis[10] can be translated in either sense i.e. "are not we lay people also priests?"; or "are not we, with the lay people, priests?", and is not conclusive proof that he was a layman. His case forms an interesting parallel with that of Clement of Alexandria, who was thought by many later historians to have

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9 Eusebius E.H. II. 2. 4. As Eusebius thought Tertullian was Roman, his few references count for little. A more important argument is the silence of all other writers before Jerome on this point.

10 De Exhortatione Castitatis 7. 3. "Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus?" cf. H. Koch "Nochmals: War Tertullian Priester?" in Theologische Studien und Kritiken (103) 1931. p. 108. There is a parallel text in De Monogamia 7. 9. "certe sacerdotes sumus a Christo vocati". As this second quotation is from his Montanist period, it says nothing about his presbyterate.

been a cleric and a presbyter, although he always remained a layman. Origen's personal history forms another, yet different parallel, as he eventually accepted ordination to the presbyterate. All three writers exemplify in different ways the ambiguity then existing over the teaching function within the Church. As the bishops struggled to establish episcopal control in this area, one temporary casualty was lay teaching. This movement towards a clerical monopoly of teaching, buttressed in many places by the theory of an apostolic succession of teaching bishops, was one outcome of the struggle with the Gnostics and the Montanists. The rise of the monks, and the activities of lay-teachers such as Pelagius, the Donatist exegete Tyconius, and Marius Victorinus the convert African who translated many Neo-Platonic writings into Latin, show that this clerical monopoly remained incomplete even in the late fourth century; but the tendency was clear enough: teacher equals cleric, which explains why many historians regarded earlier Christian teachers as clerics, unless there was clear evidence to the contrary. There can be little doubt that Tertullian remained a layman.[11]

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11 Opinion is still divided, e.g. Koch op. cit. p. 108 sq and H. von Campenhausen "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" p. 175 call him a layman. Catholic scholars have been more reluctant to accept this view e.g. G. Bardy "La Théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au concile de Nicée". (1947) p. 54; P. Labriolle "Tertullien; était-il prêtre?" in Bulletin d'ancienne Littérature et d'Archéologie chrétienne (3) 1913. pp 161 sq; J. Quasten "Patrology" vol. 2 (1964) pp. 246-7. But B. Altaner "Patrologia" (1960) p. 103. thinks it unlikely that he was a presbyter.

The dating of his works still presents some difficulties, although the general outline, and especially the division between his Catholic, pro-Montanist, and Montanist works is clear enough[12]. Three works from the twilight between the two periods do not survive i.e. De Ecstasi, De Spe Fidelium, and De Paradiso. Parts of Adversus Marcionem were reworked by him as a Montanist, and there is doubt about the period to which some works should be assigned[13].

Tertullian said many different things at different times, and he was never one to sacrifice the advantage of the moment in the interests of consistency. As mentioned earlier, his conversion to Montanism did entail a different type of ecclesiology, and a different attitude to authority. This is not to claim that his new views constituted a complete about-turn; the development was in many senses quite logical.

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12 cf. The index and divisions outlined at the end of volume 2 of Tertullian's works in the Corpus Christianorum edition pp. 1627-28; also R. Braun op. cit. pp. 563-77. The basic distinction between the Catholic and (pro-) Montanist works is also borne out by the five criteria devised by T. D. Barnes "Tertullian's Scorpiace" in the Journal of Theological Studies (20) N.S. 1969. pp. 113-14. This writer's rigorous defence of an earlier (and Catholic) dating for "Scorpiace" has been accepted, although this work provides next to nothing relevant to our purposes (e.g. op. cit. pp. 128-131). It has not been our concern to date particular works to particular years within this triple division.

13 esp. "De Pallio", cf. Braun op. cit. p. 577. "De Corne Christi", cf. E. Evans' translation (1956) p. VII which suggests a pre-Montanist origin for this work, and is supported in this, against the opinion of most scholars, by Braun op. cit. pp. 268-9; 573, and Barnes op. cit. n 9. p. 115.

But it is misleading to claim without some kind of proof that his Montanist views were those of the Catholic Church, or even of himself when a Catholic. To clarify the relationship between the views of the earlier and later Tertullian, and the further relationship of these views to Catholic theology generally, and the theology of the general Montanist group, we have devided this chapter into two sections; the first one dealing with his Catholic opinions, and the second dealing with those of his Montanist period.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE BISHOPS

As a Catholic, Tertullian devoted little space in his writings to ecclesiology. When one considers the similarly small amounts in the writings of his contemporaries in Alexandria, and even the limited attention Irenaeus devoted to those ecclesiological doctrines under attack by the Gnostics, then one realises that there is nothing unusual in this comparative silence. He devoted much more time to these questions in his Montanist period, precisely because his principal differences with the Church lay in these areas.

At first glance, one is struck by the "traditional" nature of the arguments used in this Catholic period. In fact, many of these theories were just this; and many others derived from Irenaeus. Such a situation would explain how a recent convert came to accept and expound these views, without at first examining them in any great depth, or even in considerable detail. The Church in Carthage was only

founded in the middle of the second century, and we have absolutely no evidence of previous theological activity. However there are already several features and omissions in his early doctrines which are quite significant in view of his later Montanist teaching. Also some doctrines are based more on Irenaeus than on Scripture and were heavily influenced by current legal theory. All this should be seen against the strong rationalist element in his thinking, his general irreverence, and of course his considerable intellectual powers. Any institution would have needed leaders of great tact, a highly developed rationale for the institution's then form, and a great deal of luck in order to retain the services of such a man. Certainly the last two qualities were lacking.

The extent, and to some degree the nature of his writings also give us new details of many aspects of Church life e.g. the existence of Church buildings, celibate clergy, the catechumenate. No writer had yet written as much on Christian life in the world.

At this stage, Tertullian used few if any of the New Testament figures for the Church. He does call her the Body of the Trinity;[14] in another simple but beautiful passage he explains that when a Christian bows to his bretheren, he prays to Christ, because the Church is in each person, and Christ is the Church.[15] There is no mention of

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14 De Baptismo 6. 2.

15 De Paenitentia 10. 6.

the Church as the People of God, and significantly only one Montanist reference to the Church as the Body of Christ.[16] He never invested the functionaries of the Church with divine sanctions - qua functionaries; as far as any person enjoyed these they were personal charisms.

He did use other images. The Church is like a ship in which Christ and the Apostles are tossed about.[17] In an early moment of weakness, he even compared it to a sect of philosophers,[18] defending it with heavy sarcasm against accusations of immorality,[19] and sometimes describing it as "mother".[20] Even in the use of this figure which has some sort of New Testament roots, the passage in Galatians $^{c}4.\ ^{v}26.$ which served more than any other as a basis, (at least in the East) was hardly touched by him.[21]

This conventional note continues in his description of the mechanisms used to maintain and recognize purity of doctrine. Every

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16 De Monog. 13. cf. J. C. Plumpe "Mater Ecclesia" (1943) pp. 50-1.

17 De Bapt. 12. 7.

18 Ad Nationes I. 4. 1.

19 Ad Nationes I. 7. 19 and 26.

20 Ad Martyras 1. 1; De Bapt. 20. 5.
cf. De Praescriptione Haereticorum 42. 10.

21 As Plumpe op. cit. p. 62 points out. Whatever the origins of the Church-mother figure, at this time in North Africa it must have been free of Gnostic overtones for Tertullian to use it.

genus is known by its origins,[22] and so the Churches, who are the principal repositaries of doctrine are judged according to whether or not they have continuity of doctrine and an unbroken succession of bishops back to their apostolic origins. Certainly in two of these quotations,[23] the entire accent is upon the Churches. Only once,[24] but in the most unequivocal terms, does the list of bishops share first importance with the Church itself. Here the apostolic Churches are recognised by the episcopal list showing an unbroken succession from the apostles. Tertullian was not yet ready to distinguish between the Church of the bishops and the Church of the spirit; but it is significant that usually the Churches have first importance, rather than any particular members. So bishops serve as guarantees for the Churches, which then teach the apostolic doctrine; nothing is said about the exact nature of their teaching competence, vis-a-vis other Church members, although some sort of power in this area is certainly implied. A lot more is said about their "governmental" duties. This is not surprising, as Tertullian was very much a believer in an institutional, and organized Church. His later enthusiasm for Montanism was not a liberal exaltation of personal freedom, but an enthusiasm for those who would impose the fiercest

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22 De Praesc. Haer. 20. 7.

23 De Praesc. Haer. 20. 4-9; see also 36. 1.

24 Ibid. 32. 1-3.

discipline on the Christian community. The predominant position of the bishops in the community is recognized by the assertion that it is jealousy (or hostility) towards bishops which causes schisms.[25] Further evidence for this preeminence is found in his teaching on Baptism. While the bishop does not have an absolute monopoly in conferring this sacrament (presbyters, deacons and even laymen can perform the ceremony when necessary), his is the first right to do so; and in any case the rite should never be performed without his authority.[26] Women do not share this power.[27]

The bishops have a special place in the process of public penance, which will be discussed later. No doubt the strong possibility that all Christians, including laymen, participated in the creation of bishops[28] (each group did not necessarily participate in the same way), helps to explain Tertullian's and the community's acceptance of these wide powers. The recent convert's enthusiasm for most things Catholic seems to have blinded him at this period to the faults which he discovers later among the regular clergy; however the possibility of lapses is discussed,[29] and the bishops' teaching authority remains in obscurity.

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25 De Bapt. 17. 2.

26 ibid 17. 2.

27 ibid 17. 5.

28 Apologeticum 39. 4.

29 De Praesc. Haer. 3. 5.

At this stage, we should examine the influence of Roman law on these theories. Just as contemporary philosophy, beginning with the Apologists and especially in the Eastern Church, played an obvious part in the theological discussions of the following centuries, so Roman law also began to play an important, if more subdued part in the articulation of Church theories of authority, office, etc. This process is first obvious in Tertullian, and one of its most successful exponents was St. Cyprian.

An immediate example, more obvious in his Montanist-influenced writings, is his description of the bishops and clergy as an "order",[30] a term obviously borrowed from secular usage e.g. the senatorial order. Another example is the similarity between episcopal succession lists and that of the Roman law schools.

In order to examine this second similarity, we must outline in greater detail his concept of the episcopate. For him the bishops were not representatives of the Apostles and did not have apostolic power; at best they were "transmitters of the apostolic seed",[31] clearly inferior to the Apostles.[32]

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30 De Exhortatione Castitatis 7. 3; De Monog. 11. 4. It also appears in De Idololatria. 7. 3.

31 "apostolici seminis traduces" De Praesc. Haer. 32.

32 Unlike some of Christ's disciples (the Apostles?) they do not have the "officium praedicandi" from Christ himself. Apologeticum 21. 23. cf. A. Beck, "Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian" (1930) p. 132.

They are human witnesses to the apostolic teaching, who do not have a charism of truth for the preservation of true doctrine.[33] On both these counts he refused to follow Irenaeus, who believed that bishops did have a charism of truth and did inherit the "locum magisterii" of the Apostles.[34] The limited role he envisaged for the episcopate is also confirmed by an examination of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Church. He realised that the Holy Spirit had an important part here, and emphasised it even more when he went over to the Church of the Spirit. As early as the De Oratione, the Church is mentioned with the first two Persons of the Trinity, and in place of the Holy Spirit;[35] but he never devoted any time to working out how the Holy Spirit brought about the unity of the Church, and he never mentioned the bishops as the agents of the Holy Spirit in this matter either.[36] Later on, in as much as he believed that any group fulfilled this particular function, he would have assigned the role to the prophets. Remaining on this purely natural level (i.e. in his interpretation of the role of the bishops), we can better understand why those Churches founded by the Apostles themselves are preferred to those with later

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33 cf. K. Adam "Der Kirchenbegriff Tertullians" (1907) p. 42; G. Blum "Der Begriff des Apostolischens in theologischen Denken Tertullians" in Kerygma und Dogma (9) 1963. pp 108-109.

34 Adversus Haereses III. 3. 1. (II. 9.)

35 De Oratione 2. 6.

36 cf. J. K. Stirnimann "Die Praescriptio Tertullians im Lichte des Römischen Rechts und der Theologie" (1949) p. 155; 159. also cf. Blum op. cit. 105.

foundations. The argument against the heretics is of a straightforward rational nature, proving doctrinal unity through unbroken and direct succession back to the apostles; the case is so much clearer in these instances,[37] especially for purposes of debate, although the post-apostolic Churches do share in doctrinal unity.[38]

In the Church we have an order of bishops claiming succession from the Apostles, and possessing some teaching and disciplinary powers. Stirnimann building on Adam's recognition of the "nonsupernatural" nature of the bishops' teaching powers,[39] has pointed out the similarities between this conception and the way Roman law regarded the successive heads of the various law schools. "Successor" (and "successio") have two fundamental meanings in Roman law; a) a person who succeeds another in an official position e.g. proconsul, and b) a person who succeeds to certain legal obligations e.g. an heir, or debtor.[40] The bishop with disciplinary powers over his community and his obligations to preserve the true doctrine fits both these characteristics.

Stirnimann also quotes[41] the writings of Sextus Pomponius, a lawyer

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37 De Praesc. Haer. 36. 1; 32. 1-3; 21. 4.

38 ibid 20. 5-6. Stirnimann op. cit. pp. 149 sq has a full discussion of this whole question.

39 op. cit. p. 150.

40 Stirnimann op. cit. pp. 160-1.

41 ibid p. 164.

and law-historian in the time of Marcus Aurelius, who outlines a succession of lawyers dating from the early kingdom of Rome; and especially the heads of the two dominant law schools, which date from the time of Augustus.[42] It is precisely the corporate nature of these schools of thought, and the fact that the heads of these schools succeed each other in an unbroken line that distinguish them from the lists of republican times. Nor does Pomponius use "successit" of the earlier lawyers. The principal duty of these heads was teaching, and to support their theories they appealed to authors, who enjoyed various degrees of authority.[43]

Stirnimann himself recognized the provisional nature of his explanation[44] and it is a further question to know how much Tertullian was influenced by these similarities. On both points i.e. the nature of the similarity and Tertullian's possible awareness of it, the theory is open to serious objections.

The heads of the law schools were primarily teachers, and had little executive power, while bishops for Tertullian were much more executives than teachers. Also if the idea of legal succession is stressed, why are not the bishops equal to the Apostles, or at least much closer to them in dignity than he allows? Each of these characteristics of the law school lists fits Irenaeus' theory of the

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42 Sextus Pomponius. Excerpt from Digest. Book 1. c 2. in Corpus Iuris Civilis. 16th ed. Berlin 1954. vol. 1. pp 30-33.

43 Stirnimann op. cit. p. 168-9.

44 ibid. p. 172.

episcopate better than that of Tertullian, while the differences, although they do not destroy the similarity, seriously weaken it.

Greater difficulties arise when we try to prove that Tertullian knew and used the theory. The excerpt from Sextus Pomponius was written during the time of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.), and only continues the list up to the time of the previous Emperor, Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.). Therefore, as far as we know, the lists ended much earlier than Tertullian, and there is no certainty that they were known in his time in North Africa.

It is highly improbable that he took over his succession theory from the law schools, or even adapted it according to this source. He accepted it from Irenaeus, but refused to follow the bishop of Lyons all the way in exaltating the episcopate, even in his pre-Montanist days.

Another small group of texts is also relevant here. They are taken from the De Exhortatione Castitatis, and are heavily influenced by Montanism,[45] although there is no evidence that the author had yet broken with the Church, the work being dated usually between 204-212 A.D.[46]

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45 This is clear from the sections on remarriage i.e. De Exhort. Cast. 4. 2.; see also 7. 2-6.

46 cf. Braun op. cit. pp 573-4, where only one author Noeldechen is cited as suggesting a later dating i.e. 217-221. T. D. Barnes op. cit. n7. p. 115. writes that the work has "perhaps but one trace of Montanism"; this is surely an understatement.

It could be said to belong to both periods; but its interest for us lies in the fact that Tertullian regarded its doctrines as orthodox. This in turn again reminds us of the undeveloped state of theology at that time (on these points), and of the loose nature of doctrinal discipline. He asserts that the laity are priests (which could be nothing more than a repetition of 1 Peter $^{c}2.$ $^{v}9.$ i.e. not excluding a ministerial priesthood also), and more importantly for us, that it was only the authority of the Church which created the difference between the clerical orders and the laity.[47] This is one possible and logical amplification of his Catholic theory that the Apostles created the first bishops,[48] which also accords well with his earlier refusal to grant the bishops too exalted a status.

In the same paragraph of the De Exhortatione, he continued on immediately to claim that a layman could baptise and celebrate the Eucharist himself i.e. be his own priest (sacerdos), in a place where there was no "qualified" clergy. The Montanist sympathies of the book, and the evident desire to ruffle a few feathers make the claim suspect in this sense i.e. it is doubtful whether at least the second part was

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47 De Exhort. Cast. 7. 3.

48 De Praesc. Haer. 20. 4; 32. 2-3. It can also be reconciled with the assertion that Christ set up masters "magistros" to teach us; these masters would be the Apostles. De Praesc. Haer. 22. 3.

common Catholic theory. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus[49] shows that the ordination of presbyters and bishops was usual, but says nothing about the hypothetical case outlined i.e. celebration of the Eucharist when a priest was unavailable. As far as Baptism is concerned, Tertullian had already stated in a Catholic work that laymen had a right to baptise, although the bishop was the usual celebrant.[50]

While he developed no theory of the ministerial priesthood in his Catholic days, he unlike Irenaeus did apply the term (sacerdotalis) to both bishop and presbyter. The bishop is described as chief priest[51] and he objects to the heretics because they impose the functions of the priesthood on the laity.[52] In both cases the priesthood is not just that which belongs to the faithful but the ministerial variety. Beck

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49 This is more or less contemporary with the De Exhortatione; perhaps some years later, but it shows traditional Roman practice, which might have been different from that of North Africa on this point; but this is unlikely. Ordination was widespread, being also known in Alexandria by Clement and Origen, though not greatly esteemed by them. Irenaeus preserves an ambiguous silence here.

50 De Bapt. 17. 1-2.

51 De Bapt. 17. 1. Here the deacon seems to share the priesthood too.

52 De Praesc. Haer. 41. 8. As this statement is prefaced by the phrase "hodie presbyter qui cras laicus", the presumption is that the presbyters too share in the priestly duties. In De Exhort. Cast. 7. 2. "ordo sacerdotalis" refers to the presbyters.

suggests that he took over this terminology from Roman religious law,[53] but this is unlikely. He had no reason to impart this added dignity tc the clergy on his own behalf; he accepted it unquestioningly as part of the contemporary Christian vocabulary. His objections to the frivolous and temporary appointments to the clerical order among the heretics[54] also demonstrate that at this early stage he was far from believing that each layman could be his own priest.

CATHOLIC NORMS

We must now examine the internal characteristics of true doctrine, which distinguish it from falsehood. Time and again he stresses that true doctrine is recognized by its unity, and unicity. There is only one rule of faith, just as there is only one God and one hope of resurrection.[55] This is in direct contrast to the heretics who are strangers and enemies, because each believes as he chooses.[56] He emphatically rejects the Gnostic suggestion that the Apostles were ignorant of some doctrines, or that they reserved special doctrines for a few people; the very idea is a reflection on Christ himself, who set up the Apostles as teachers, and to whom He taught all things.[57]

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53 op. cit. p. 131.

54 De Praesc. Haer. 41. 6-8.

55 De Praesc. Haer. 26. 9-10.

56 ibid 37. 7.

57 ibid 22. 2-3; 25. 1sq; 26. 1 sq.

The Apostles did not teach different doctrines, and neither did the men of the apostolic age; this antiquity and unity is the real touchstone.[58] Especially in these matters of doctrine, Tertullian was a populist i.e. he did not want truth confined to an intellectual elite. But this was strongly in contrast with the unconscious elitism of his moral teachings, which could never be practised by more than a small minority. Without suggesting any relationship of cause and effect, both these doctrines are the direct opposite of common Gnostic teaching.

All that was said in the previous sections about the apostolic Churches and the unbroken tradition of teaching is relevant here. The Church's doctrine is recognized also from its origins, a factor which when united with its unicity, constitutes the foremost criterion for religious truth. The Churches could not invent doctrines, any more than contemporary men could. They accepted the rule of faith from the Apostles, as the Apostles had accepted it from Christ, and Christ from God.[59]

None of this must be taken in an anti-Scriptural sense, because the Scriptures remain the fundamental norm and source of true doctrine. In them we find the teachings of Christ, the Apostles and the apostolic

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58 ibid 32.5-6.

59 ibid 37. 1; 6. 3-5. In the second quotation, it is not the rule of faith, but "disciplina" which was accepted from Christ.

Churches. "Whatever we are" Tertullian wrote, "so were the Scriptures from the beginning";[60] while the error of Marcion and Valentinus is obvious because each, in his own way, tampered with these source documents.[61] There seems to be little uncertainty among the anti-Marcionites on the constitution of the New Testament canon; to all purposes Tertullian regarded it as closed.[62] Apostolicity is an important standard for canonicity, but not an all-sufficient one e.g. Luke was not himself an Apostle. The writing had to be accepted by the early Church,[63] and impress by its innate reasonableness.[64]

We are told that many teachings have been handed down from the past (traditum est), but the doctrine of tradition is given no developed treatment: "Traditio" means the teaching of Christ, the Apostles and the apostolic Churches,[65] and is not used in his Catholic writings of any doctrinal teaching distinct from Scripture.[66]

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60 ibid 38. 5.

61 ibid 37. 3.

62 cf. H. von Campenhausen "Die Entstehung der Christlichen Bibel" (1968) pp 319-20. He accepted Hebrews; only the second epistle of Peter, the third of John, and James' epistle are missing.

63 cf. De Pudicitia 10. 12.

64 De Res. Mort. 18. 1. cf. R. P. C. Hanson "Tradition in the Early Church" (1962) pp 217-18.

65 e.g. De Praesc. Haer. 21. 4-6.

66 cf. Braun op. cit. pp 427-8.

"Disciplina" is also handed down to us by tradition.[67] This word recurs many times throughout the whole body of Tertullian's writings; 319 times in fact, and of these it has a secular as distinguished from a religious meaning on only 32 occasions.[68] The religious meanings given to this same term are also many and various; and this reminds us once again of the gigantic task facing Tertullian as he created a new theological terminology in Latin.

For present purposes, one general conclusion that Morel makes is enlightening. He claims that "disciplina" often means all Christian doctrine, except the rule of faith; and only the rule of faith is the immutable part.[69] As a Catholic, did Tertullian believe that anything not contained in the rule of faith was open to review? As a Montanist, he certainly held this;[70] and he did make statements to this effect while still a Catholic.[71] At other times during this earlier period, he did not speak nearly as clearly. We cannot choose for ourselves, he wrote, anymore than the apostles did, when they received the

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67 e.g. De Praesc. Haer. 35. 1-5.

68 cf. V. Morel, "Disciplina. Le mot et l'idée représentée par lui dans les oeuvres de Tertullien" in Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique (40) 1944-5. p. 6.

69 ibid p. 19. This is a repetition of the viewpoint Morel first expressed in an article entitled "Le développement de la (disciplina) chez Tertullian" in Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique (35) 1939. p. 254.

70 De Virginibus Velandis 1.3.

71 De Praesc. Haer. 12. 5.

"disciplina" from Christ.[72] So too every doctrine received from the original and mother Churches of the Apostles must be held firmly; any opposing doctrine is a lie.[73] Obviously he was not entirely clear in his own mind at this early time; but his later Montanist doctrines do have roots in the Catholic period.[74]

He inherited the idea of a "rule of faith" or "rule of truth" as an accepted part of Christian theology, with Irenaeus being the most probable immediate source. His frequent use of the term could have been influenced by the similar notion in Roman law, the "regula iuris",[75] and he certainly believed that the rule was not just a summary of doctrine, but did have a normative function.[76] The contents as outlined in his writings show that there was no fixed verbal form for the rule, although the two examples from his Catholic period[77] show that the doctrines of Church order and the remission of sins are not mentioned on the lists. Morel claims that these

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72 ibid 6. 3-5.

73 ibid 21. 2-4

74 A parallel ambiguity seems to exist in Tertullian's mind between "disciplina" and "fides"; cf. Braun op. cit. pp.443-45.

75 Digest 50. 17. 1. (op. cit. vol. 1. p. 920) quoting Paul, "regula est quae rem quae est breviter enarrat". cf. Beck op. cit. p. 52; Braun op. cit. p. 451.

76 cf. Braun op. cit. n4. p. 451.

77 De Praesc. Haer. 13. 2-5; 36. 5.

omissions were deliberate,[78] so that even as a Catholic Tertullian did not believe that a doctrine of penance and at least some details of the doctrine of the Church were included in this immutable rule. There is no reason to doubt this fact, which goes some way to explain his later and changed position on these points, accompanied as they are by protestations of doctrinal fidelity. The insufficiency of the anti-Gnostic norms is apparent in the new situation, and the limited concerns of the rule reflect its haphazard origins and its differing verbal forms. Tertullian's claims highlight for the first time these ambiguities, although the confused references to the Church[79] and possibly to the remission of sins[80] in the baptismal interrogations show that there was an incipient realisation that these important doctrines demanded some sort of formal assent.[81] It is highly doubtful whether Tertullian or his adversaries believed the rule to be an entirely comprehensive norm of "essential" doctrine.[82]

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78 1939 article p. 258.

79 De Baptismo 6. 2.

80 ibid 11. 3.

81 On the nature of the baptismal "creeds" cf. J. N. D. Kelly "Early Christian Creeds" (1960) pp. 83-5; Morel 1939 art. p. 258. Kelly op. cit. p. 85 states that we do not know what the baptismal interrogations contained on the Church, beyond the mere mention of it.

82 It is not anachronistic to speak of the idea of "essential" doctrine i.e. doctrines which all Christians must believe, although it would be anachronistic to exaggerate the amount of agreement on what constituted these essentials.

Doctrines or practices could also be justified by "ratio", a word he used 340 times (more frequently than "disciplina").[83] Generally it means reason itself; or the divine intelligence; sometimes an argument from natural law; picus considerations or even an appeal to Christian "disciplina".[84] This norm will assume immense importance in the Montanist writings; initially however the only passage giving even a hint of what is to come is the commonsense observation that we should not appeal to the Scriptures where there can be no certain victory.[85]

Once again as a Catholic writer, Tertullian showed himself conventional. True doctrine should be Scriptural and traditional, and his basic rationalism is still firmly curbed. Only his opinion on what is essential to Catholic faith might be at variance with the common Catholic concepts of doctrine.

CATHOLIC PENANCE

Tertullian's early writings also offer a number of examples where his attitude towards Church authority manifests itself in practical questions, especially public penance, which now became the flashpoint

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83 Morel 1944-5 art. p. 44.

84 cf. F. de Pauw, "La justification des traditions non écrits chez Tertullian" in Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses (19) 1942. pp. 30-1.

85 De Praesc. Haer. 19. 1-3.

of all ecclesiological controversy from his Montanist period to the time of Cyprian. His attacks on the Gnostics are also illuminating in this regard; while a considerable amount of information can be gained from his writings about the degree of institutionalisation in the North African Church of the time.

Tertullian's Catholic theory of public penance is comparatively undeveloped and quite conventional. There is no reason to suspect that he did not take over and express the theories behind current practice.

After baptism, there is the possibility of another single penance to free us from our sins; but it can be used only once and no more.[86] This restriction is clearly based on Hermas; but while Hermas almost certainly considered this to be a psychological impossibility, the grounds for the rejection are now dogmatic.[87] Another example of the fact that when doctrines are transposed into a new cultural setting, they rarely remain unchanged.

There was nothing niggardly in Tertullian's endorsement. "If you

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86 De Paen. 7. 10. also 5. 1; 7. 4; 9. 1-2; 12. 5.

87 cf. B. Poschmann "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" p. 45. (Hermas. Mandatum IV. 1. 8; IV. 3. 6.); von Campenhausen op. cit. p. 218. points out this transition and explains it in slightly different terms. For the relationship between Tertullian and Hermas cf. Labriolle op. cit. p. 415; 421-2.

are frightened of public penance," he wrote, "then think of Hell."[88] Even this one penance after baptism is something which we do not deserve, and we should be grateful for it.[89]

Public penance took the form of excommunication, public performance of certain penitential practices, and finally re-entry into the life of the Church. On all these points, the Catholic writings give little detail. There are varieties of excommunication, although he does not mention that type, where the only punishment is exclusion from the Eucharist. Partial excommunication is a useful term to describe the penitent performing the penitential processes, while total excommunication describes one excluded from all participation in Church life, including the penitential processes.[90] As yet, he still believed that this second variety was reserved to recidivists only i.e. those who have participated once in the process.[91]

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88 De Paen. 12. 1.

89 ibid 7. 11.

90 cf. C. Chartier, "L'excommunication ecclésiastique d'après les écrits de Tertullian" Antonianum (10) 1935. p.303.

91 De Praesc. Haer. 30. 3. However Marcion's projected return after repeated falls (under certain conditions) shows that Tertullian did not believe that even the ban on recidivists was without exception (ibid 30. 3.). In this partial-total distinction, we are not considering the case of a first occasion sinner, who does not wish to repent. He would be totally excommunicated, but only until he decided to repent.

At this early stage, he had no occasion to specify who (e.g. the bishops) did what, so that we have no direct references to a public reconciliation rite. Because of the parallels with baptism, the existence of such a rite is well nigh certain.[92] His Montanist evidence fills in some of these lacunae.

So too there is obscurity about the nature of the Church's intervention. Was this an authoritative intervention, bestowing forgiveness, or was it only an act of intercession? In the early work "De Baptismo"[93] we are told that only God can forgive sins; a belief from which different conclusions are drawn in the Montanist period. Daly sees the Church's intervention exclusively in terms of intercession[94] through the prayers of the faithful, with the forgiveness emanating from God. However as Tertullian believed the prayer of the Church to be Christ's prayer[95] it is not unreasonable to put these two elements together (i.e. intercession; and the nature of this prayer) and postulate an incipient belief in the sacramentality of the Church's intervention.[96] The end result is not in doubt as the

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92 cf. B. Poschmann "Paenitentia secunda" (1940) pp. 289 sq.

93 De Baptismo 10. 3.

94 "The sacrament of penance" in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record" (69) 1947. pp. 705-6.

95 De Paen. 10. 6.

96 cf. Poschmann "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" p. 48.

reconciled sinner is "restitutus" i.e. a Roman legal term implying the return of civic status previously lost by condemnation.[97]

An interesting footnote is that Tertullian believed that clerics could be deposed for serious sins,[98] although we are not told who supervised the depositions. The bishops alone or a mixed synod probably did so for the Catholics, while the prophets are the most likely candidates among the Montanists.

In many other areas, Tertullian's thought developed in almost a straight line, but not on the subject of penance. Here we have seen the theology which preceded his about-turn.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND ORGANIZATION

The Christian community in Carthage was composed mainly of poorer people, so that it was difficult for rich women members to find suitable husbands;[99] another consequence of this was that most were also uneducated[100] and there was no intellectual circle of Christians as in Alexandria and Rome.

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97 De Praesc. Haer. 30. 3. Also cf. Daly op. cit. pp. 700-1. Beck op. cit. p. 116 has pointed out that much of Tertullian's penance terminology is taken from Roman criminal law e.g. "culpa", "noxa", "reus", "expiare", and especially "crimen".

98 De Bapt. 17. 5. the "presbyter" (it is unlikely that this means "elder") is deposed for composing the Acts of Paul and Thecla. De Exhort. Cast. 7. 6. the "sacerdotes" who remarry are removed. This could refer to bishops also.

99 Ad Uxorem II. 8. 3.

100 Adv. Prax. 3. 1.

The details of the penitential discipline, and Tertullian's attacks on the disorder prevalent among the Gnostics indicate a closely organized group similar to the Roman Church, and the Alexandrian community at the end of Demetrius' episcopate. This general pattern is confirmed in other ways.

The catechumenate is already a well established institution, with Tertullian stressing not only the necessity of doctrinal preparation,[101] but of a genuine repentance for sin and preparation for the sacrament through penitential exercises.[102] There are special times in the year for the rite (the Passover, and Pentecost),[103] which is usually administered by the bishop.[104]

There was also an almost complete hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and widows, as well as virgins, teachers (doctores) and martyrs,[105] with at least some of the priests (i.e. bishops or presbyters) being celibate.[106] The widows made up a special order of the clergy, into which certain suitable women are introduced;[107]

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101 De Baptismo 1.

102 ibid 20. 1-5.

103 ibid 19. 1-2.

104 ibid 17. 1.

105 De Praesc. Haer. 3. 5.

106 De Exhortatione Castitatis 11. 2; 13. 4.

107 Ad Uxorem I. 7. 4. "viduam adlegi in ordinem".

their principal work was prayer and acts of charity, but they also had some slight liturgical functions.[108] Tertullian devoted a lot of energy to the discussion of marriage; among many other points, it emerges that there was an ecclesiastical marriage service,[109] although we cannot be sure that this was obligatory. As a Montanist, he held that marriages must be made known to the Church.[110]

We do not have a great deal of information on the working relationship between the bishop and the presbyter, although we have seen that the bishop is clearly distinguished from, and superior to the latter. While the presbyter shares in most, if not all of the episcopal functions (the question of ordaining is an unknown quantity), together with the title of priest,[111] his position generally is a secondary one. Tertullian did introduce one useful clarification distinguishing the elders (maiores) from the clerical presbyters.[112] In the previous Greek literature, the same word πρεσβύτεροι had

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108 e.g. De Pud. 13. 7. Here a repentant adulterer prostrates himself before the presbyters and widows.

109 Ad Ux. II. 8. 6-7.

110 De Pud. 4. 4.

111 De Bapt. 17. 1. where the bishop is the chief priest; De Exhort. Cast. 7. 2. where "ordo sacerdotalis" refers to the presbyter.

112 De Ieiunio 13. 1. i.e. "traditione maiorum". The phrase "praesident probati quique seniores" (Apol. 39. 5.) is written for pagans, and still leaves intact the distinction between "maiores" and "presbyteri". In fact it describes bishop and presbyters.

often been used for both these Christian functionaries, to the great confusion of subsequent writers. While the presbyter could also be a teacher,[113] the teachers Tertullian occasionally mentions[114] are not necessarily clerics as they were in Cyprian's time.[115]

This organization presupposes strong community spirit[116] and well established and effective leader(s), who were in fact the bishop and his presbyters, rather than the bishop alone. However much the bishop might in fact dominate the "presbyterium", they were considered to rule together.[117] Not even Cyprian could ignore this some fifty years later.

THE MONTANIST MOVEMENT

Montanism commenced in Ardaban, Phrygia either in 156 A.D., according to Epiphanius, or more probably around 172 A.D. (the date

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113 e.g. "presbyter-doctor" mentioned in Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis 13. 1.

114 e.g. De Praesc. Haer. 3. 5; 14. 2.

115 cf. H. Koch, "Priestertum and Lehrbefugnis bei Tertullian" in Theologische Studien and Kritiken (103) 1931. nl. p. 97; K. Adam op. cit. pp. 47-48.

116 cf. Apol. 39. 5-6 which describes the Christian community providing for its poorer members.

117 cf. Apol. 39. 4.

given by Eusebius)[118] when a recent convert, Montanus, began to prophesy, insisting that the End was near.[119] He was joined by two prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla; and this formidable trio announced themselves as the special vehicle for the revelations of the Paraclete. Their prophesying was generally characterised by spectacular ecstasies, and their whole way of life dominated by the vivid expectation that the Kingdom of God was soon to be established at Pepuza in Phrygia. Truly the ways of God were not to be those of man!

Although they introduced a number of practical changes, and stressed some peculiarities of the Asia Minor Church less emphasized elsewhere e.g. chiliasm,[120] originally there was little doctrinal

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118 P. de Labriolle "La Crise Montaniste" (1913) p. 12;
W. H. C. Frend "Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church" (1965) p. 290; H. von Campenhausen "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" p. 181 n15. accept the 172 A.D. dating.
T. D. Barnes "The chronology of Montanism" in J.T.S. (21) N.S. 1970. p. 406. rejects the Epiphanius date; pp 407-8. he accepts as possible a number of years around 170 A.D.
G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, "The date of the outbreak of Montanism" in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History (5) 1954. pp 7-15 inclines to the year 156.

119 The suggestion that Montanus had been a priest of Cybele, based on Jerome Ep. 41. 4. is extremely improbable. cf. Barnes 1969 art. n7. p. 111.

120 K. Aland, "Der Montanismus und die klein-asiatischen Theologie" in Zeitscrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (46) 1955. pp. 113 sq.

innovation.[121] Theirs was a traditionalist religion, stressing the old values as outlined in the new prophecy, for they did not constitute themselves into a separate Church until after their excommunication. Ultimately they differed from the other Christians in the respect they gave to Montanus' prophecies, although the matter in these revelations, e.g. the rigorism, was an important factor in this rejection.

They achieved considerable success in Phrygia, being known in Rome, Lyons and North Africa, where Tertullian was their most distinguished convert. While the Passion of Perpetua and Felicity is Montanist, the opposition to Tertullian in Carthage, and the fact that forty years later Cyprian never mentioned them, cast doubts about the extent and permanence of their conquests. In Phrygia at least, they might have joined the Novatians.[122]

Was Tertullian a fully loyal and orthodox Montanist? The question is complicated by the fact that we cannot be entirely sure when in Montanist history certain doctrines - practices began. His loyalty is not in doubt, but his ability and his temperament would have made it difficult for him to be a docile member of any group. He shared their reverence for Montanus, and their expectation of the nearness of the last times.[123]

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121 It was an invention of opponents that attributed to Montanus a claim of assimilation into the God-head. cf. Labriolle op. cit. p. 40., von Campenhausen n18. p. 182; Barnes 1969 art. p. 113.

122 Labriolle op. cit. pp. 494-6. following Harnack's suggestion.

123 e.g. De Monog. 7. 4.

Neither was the movement burdened, as far as he was concerned, by intellectual respectability; in the Roman world "Phrygian" used to be the equivalent of "barbarian", and many country areas there were little touched by Greco-Roman culture.[124] With the Montanists, he shared in the paradox that while they were strongly populist by origin and inclination, their moral teaching, with its denial of ecclesiastical penance, was in fact elitist. They were united in fierce opposition to the Gnostics also.

The biggest point of difference seems to have been Tertullian's attitude to women. We have seen his strictures against the women of the Gnostic sects; how did he accept the doctrines of Priscilla and Maximilla? Very late in his Montanist writings, he still insisted that no woman, not even a virgin, could teach or baptise or offer the Eucharist;[125] earlier however he went some way towards resolving this tension by his recognition of women's right to prophesy, although St. Paul did say they should be silent in Church.[126] So the Montanist prophetess, seized by ecstasy during the Sunday Eucharist, afterwards explained her visions to a small group of the faithful.[127]

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124 Labriolle op. cit. pp. 4-6.

125 De Virg. Vel. 9. 1.

126 Adv. Marcionem V. 9. 11.

127 De Anima 9. 4.

Another possible difference is their respective attitudes to organization and authority. Ecstatic prophecies imply a certain untidiness, and the Carthaginian was no anarchist. However as the Montanists were always an organized group, originally within the Church, with a professed loyalty to the rule of faith and a strict moral code, there was probably only a difference of emphasis, with Tertullian nervous about some of the details of their more exotic prophecies e.g. he never mentions Pepuza as the site of the New Jerusalem.[128]

The later history of Montanism confirms this picture of a traditionalist and organized society, since the break with the Church was followed by the institutionalizing of a new hierarchy. The bishops maintained a place in the third rank, behind the patriarchs at Pepuza, and another group of officials known as "fellows" (κοινωνοί).[129] We know next to nothing about this last group, except that they were male and they were named in Justinian's anti-Montanist edict of 538.[130]

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128 The points outlined by R. G. Smith, "Tertullian and Montanism" in Theology (46) 1943. esp. pp. 132-3. do not prove a radical difference. Although Tertullian infrequently appeals to Montanus on concrete issues, the probable differences on asceticism are only ones of emphasis, and the siting of the New Jerusalem is secondary. Epiphanius' claim that the Montanists had priestesses (something which could have been an insuperable barrier to Tertullian) has been dismissed with a proper scepticism by Labriolle op. cit. pp. 508-11.

129 Jerome Ep. 41. 3.

130 Codex Just. I. 5. 20. (Corpus Iuris Civilis. 16th ed. Berlin 1954. vol. 2. p. 58.). W. Schepelern, "Der Montanismus und die Phrygischen Kulte" (1929) pp. 40-41. rejects as unproven the suggestion that they were the charismatic element within organizational forms (Labriolle op. cit. p. 506).

The term "patriarch" probably was suggested by the Jewish patriarchs of Tiberias and Babylon, who enjoyed special esteem from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem until the end of the fourth century.[131] Far from sinking into anarchy, the efficiency (or rapacity) of their officials who collected money for the prophets excited Apollonius to excited denunciations.[132]

In the matter of doctrinal norms, the Montanists were distinguished from the Catholics by the respect they accorded to the teaching of Montanus. For them he enjoyed almost equal rank with the New Testament writers,[133] but he was not the first of a continuing line of prophets, each enjoying equal status in explaining to successive generations the ways of the Spirit. As they idealized and institutionalized the memory of the first great prophet, his followers agreed that they were lesser men. The first cause of this was the scarcity of prophets, Militiades claiming that fourteen years after Maximilla's death, they still had no new prophet.[134]

Just as we know little of the functions of the three Montanist groupings, so we know nothing of their succession mechanisms; not

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131 cf. Labriolle op. cit. p. 507.

132 Eusebius E. H. V. 18. 2.

133 cf. von Campenhausen "Die Ent." pp. 259 sq.

134 Eusebius E. H. V. 17. 4. Schepelern op. cit. p. 37. has collected passages from Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrius and Jerome to show that at least ecstatic utterance did survive.

even whether the "fellows" were merely functionaries, or appointed office holders. They had little influence on subsequent Church history, except to reinforce the Church's distrust of ecstatic prophecy, but they did provide an appropriate setting for Tertullian's enthusiasm and rigorism.

THE MONTANIST TERTULLIAN AND HIS ECCLESIOLOGY

Much of the content of Tertullian's earlier theology was conventional and undeveloped; only relieved at intervals by flashes of sardonic wit. This was now changed, as even his bad humour was sharpened by adversity. Especially when he succumbed to this ill humour, he could be extremely foolish; but he never lost his debating ability to fasten on the real or imagined weakness of his opponents. These asides are quite revealing. The Montanists were rejected, he claimed, because they taught that it was wiser to fast than to marry and not because they rejected Christ or any rule of faith.[135] This is very close to the truth. If the moral teaching of the prophets had been less severe, there was a good possibility that they could have been retained in the Church. He himself had been a Montanist for some years before his final break with the Church. His later writings, and subsequent Montanist history, widened the original doctrinal divergence.

He now filled in many of the earlier gaps, often brilliantly,

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135 De Ieiunio 1. 3.

sometimes consistently, while never regarding these developments as a departure from Christian essentials. He made no shift towards the Gnostics; if anything moving further away, despite the fact that after his "Adversus Marcionem" he devoted less time to them, being busy on other fronts.

Christ's teaching remained the norm, and to the end he insisted that the rule (lex) of faith remained the same; while there could be, indeed there should be, in order to counteract the wiles of the devil, changes in matters outside this.[136] In this same work, which is always dated after his definitive break with the Church, he comes close to affirming a Church unity between the Catholics and Montanists, despite their differences. "There is one faith," he wrote, "one Lord, one Christ, one hope and one baptism. We are one Church, but it is you (i.e. Catholics) who divide (this) body."[137] He never developed this theme as it would have required an ecumenism, foreign to his black-and-white approach, and brought him some way towards the Gnostic mainstream, with their disregard for structures and discipline. Last but not least, he must have concluded that continued misdemeanours

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136 De Virg. Vel. 1. 4.

137 De Virg. Vel. 2. 2. "Una nobis et illis fides, unus Deus, idem Christus, eadem spes, eadem lavacri sacramenta, semel dixerim, una ecclesia sumus. Ita nostrum est quodcumque vostrorum est. Ceterum dividis corpus." My English translation is a paraphrase. Also De Pud. 21. 16-17. cf. Morel 1939 art. p. 259 on Tertullian's Church of the Spirit.

placed the Catholics outside the pale, despite the truth of their basic faith.

A new light is thrown on Tertullian's earlier ecclesiology by the fact that as a Montanist, he continued to believe in an episcopacy with limited powers and activities. The dispute can now be seen as one concerning the nature of episcopal office, rather than its existence, and he is on much stronger ground, when he claims that this notion of episcopal activity is reconcilable with doctrinal essentials.

Bishops maintain their part (i.e. imposing of hands) in the rite of baptism;[138] they can forgive the lesser sins, even if the more serious are forgiven by God alone.[139] They also retain their function as the normal organs of community discipline, because the Montanist bishops are described as prescribing fasts for the good of their people, and not merely for financial considerations as the Catholic bishops do.[140] These three statements all describe Montanist bishops, and are not Montanist observations on Catholic practice.

The three higher orders of clerics i.e. bishops, presbyters and deacons also seem to have maintained some teaching function. "If these three groups flee", we are told, "who will remain during the

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138 De Corona Martyrum 3. 2. Here the word used is "antistites".

139 De Pud. 18. 18.

140 De Ieiunio 13. 3.

persecution to explain the situation to the laity?"[141] This is not in contradiction with the Montanist conception of the bishop as administrator and disciplinarian, as distinct from the emerging Catholic concept of charismatic teacher and leader. He had absolutely no sympathy with those bishops who overemphasized their own importance.[142] The prophets were now the teachers and moral leaders; so much so that even Adam is counted among them as he prophesied the great mystery of Christ and the Church under the power of the Holy Spirit.[143] They, and especially Montanus and his two companions were the organs of the Paraclete.

This exaltation of the prophets obviously enhances the dignity of any lay person so endowed. Tertullian went beyond this, and became the first writer to play off the universal priesthood of all Christians against the ministerial.[144] He was already some way towards this position in the De Exhortatione Castitatis, but he had not used his position then as a weapon against the clergy. He now bounded on to the offensive against his clerical antagonists; bureaucrats insensitive

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141 De Fuga 11. 1. The ambiguous nature of this Montanist work written for Catholic consumption makes the identity of the clerics somewhat uncertain (i.e. Montanist or Catholic?). It is most probable that he is addressing the clerics of both parties. cf. Barnes op. cit. pp. 118-19.

142 cf. De Monog. 12. 2-3; De Pud. 13. 7.

143 De Anima 12. 4. Also cf. 21. 2.

144 von Campenhausen "Ecc. Auth." p. 228. points this out.

to the promptings of the Spirit, against whom the laity are urged to rise, because all are one, all are priests (sacerdotes).[145] His initial reservations about the bishops and clergy had now turned to open antagonism.

MONTANIST NORMS

We must now examine the criteria Tertullian used as a Montanist to determine true doctrine.

The teaching function of the bishops has been submerged by the activities of the prophets, and of Tertullian himself. Only once as a Montanist, in an early work, did he appeal to the order of bishops as a guarantee for the faith of the apostolic Churches.[146] In this same work, the apostolic Churches retain their importance as guarantees of true doctrine.[147] Later on this was not stressed; principally because it was not a point at issue. Until the end, he maintained the unity and irreformability of the rule of faith.[148] Tertullian never explicitly rejected the apostolic succession of bishops, who presumably served as the predecessors of contemporary

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145 De Monog. 12. 2. This common priesthood of God the Father derives from baptism De Monog. 7. 8.

146 Adv. Marcionem IV. 5. 2.

147 cf. Adv. Marc. I. 21. 4-5; III. 1. 2; IV. 5. 1. and 7.

148 De Virg. Vel. 1. 3.

Montanist bishops, although he never incorporated it into a developed Montanist theory. This task would have been difficult but not impossible, because while the prophets had in fact replaced the bishops as the main teachers, Montanist bishops did continue to exist in a lesser position.

The Catholic-Montanist struggle shifted the debate about the content of Christian belief onto new ground, but the broad principle that true doctrine was distinguished from error by its (i.e. truth's) antiquity remained undisputed. Doctrinal truths can be recognized because they have been possessed from the beginning, from the time of the Apostles.[149] The argument is even developed further to prove that Marcion's separation of the Law and the Gospel was not the reassertion of an original position temporarily abandoned, since God the Creator had been taught by the Churches ever since the time of the Apostles. He defied Marcion to produce any contrary evidence.[150]

Despite this the Catholics continued to accuse his group of innovation.[151] He attempted to answer with the fundamental and justified distinction between the basic and unalterable rule of faith and the remaining beliefs and practices of Christianity which can be changed.

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149 e.g. Adv. Marc. IV. 5. 1.

150 ibid I. 21. 4-5. Also cf. I. 20. 1.

151 e.g. De Ieiunio 1. 5.

He had not clarified this distinction as a Catholic, but certain elements of logical continuity exist in the obscurity. Once again the Montanist areas of innovation i.e. Church order and the remission of sins, are not mentioned in his later outlines of the rule of faith,[152] so allowing him to claim that there could be corrections in "disciplina" and "conversatio" provided the rule of faith (lex fidei) remained the same.[153] Because of this, Morel has suggested that Tertullian tidied up his thought so that the rule and discipline were now quite distinct, and together constituted the Christian faith.[154] While "conversatio" means the living out of the Christian religion in rites etc,[155] "disciplina" does have a doctrinal content, which implies a doctrinal activity on the part of the Holy Ghost,[156] as He works through his prophets to defend Christians and the rule of faith against the wiles of Satan. It is as though Christ laid the foundations of the Church (especially the rule of faith), and left the Spirit to complete his work, by perfecting the "disciplina". As Tertullian developed his

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152 De Virg. Vel. 1. 3.; Adv. Praxean 2. 1.

153 De Virg. Vel. 1. 4.

154 1939 art. pp. 254-5. As a Montanist, Tertullian often did draw a clear distinction between disciplina and the rule. Adv. Marc. I. 21. 3-4; De Monog. 2. 3.; De Pud. 19. 3.

155 Morel 1939 art. p. 247; cf. Braun op. cit. p. 434.

156 Examples of these doctrines are e.g. Church order, public penance.

theology to answer the Catholics, the appeal to reason assumed much greater prominence. In principle this was no bad thing, as both Gnostic illuminism and the Catholic tendency towards anachronism, through strict adherence to custom in matters large and small provide no blueprint for continued religious relevance.

Even as a Catholic, he realised quite clearly that Scripture did not provide the answers to every religious problem in daily life.[157] By the end of his life, he had moved much further in this direction, and had not only highlighted the insufficiency of Scripture, but subjected it to norms which, although supposedly based on these Scriptures, remained at one remove from them. "We do not take the parables as sources of doctrine," he wrote, "but rather do we take doctrine as a norm for interpreting the parables."[158] What in fact constituted the "normative doctrine" mentioned above i.e. the "materiae" by which the parables are interpreted? He does regard the most obvious candidate, the rule of faith as such a norm,[159] although Hanson is correct in pointing out that because of this norm's dependence on Scripture it is somewhat misleading to claim

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157 De Praesc. Haer. 19. 1-3.

158 De Pud. 9. 1. "Nos autem quia non ex parabolis materias commentamur, sed ex materiis parabolas interpretamur".

159 This is found in his Catholic period e.g. De Praesc. Haer. 12. 5.; and later e.g. Adv. Praxean 20. 3.; De Pud. 19. 3. and esp. De Pud. 8. 12.

Scripture is subordinate to it.[160] The teaching of the Paraclete, especially as communicated through Montanus, is another such norm,[161] which also depends on the Scriptures, or at least claimed as much. However, any appeal to Scripture alone founders, because neither Christ nor the Apostles left a fixed list of books, and the Church in a variety of ways and according to a variety of norms had to create this list. In as much as this is true, the supremacy of Scripture is weakened. This general consideration is relevant here because in this matter Tertullian did appeal to extra-Scriptural norms,[162] and did give to Montanus and his two female companions a status very similar to that enjoyed by the Scriptures.[163]

Certainly he did not deduce the necessity of a permanent teaching office with normative powers from the inadequacies of a "sola scriptura" argument. The prophets did not receive the reverence he reserved for Montanus, who was a special "once and for all" phenomenon, and the teachings of any prophet (who was not an office-holder qua prophet)

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160 op. cit. pp. 108-9

161 However it is not certain that the "materiae" of De Pud. 9. 1. are the sayings of the prophets as Schepelern op. cit. n285. p. 186 suggests. cf. Adv. Prax. 13.

162 As most of the canon was fixed, he certainly appealed to this body of Scripture as a norm in uncertain cases e.g. De Res. Mort. 18. 1. However he also appealed to Scripture's rationality (De Res. Mort. 18. 1.), and to the ancient and continuing prophetic enterprise in the Church (De Anima 2. 3.). While he claims to reject Hermas on Scriptural grounds and because of the decisions of the synods (De Pud. 10. 12.), a more obvious, if unexpressed, reason was Montanus' rigorism. In the Catholic De Oratione 16. 1., Hermas was accepted as Scripture; cf. De Orat. c15. 2., where 1 Cor., 2 Tim. and Daniel are quoted in exactly the same way.

163 e.g. the Paraclete speaks through Montanus (De Iei. 12. 4.; cf. ibid 1.3.; Adv. Prax. 1.5.) and through Priscilla (De Res. Mort. 11.2.)

whether uttered in ecstasy or otherwise do not impose any demand for uncritical acceptance. Yet ecstatic prophecy is much respected, for Marcion is told that no-one could possibly believe his teaching on God and creation, unless of course Marcion is prophesying in an ecstatic way.'[164] In this same work Tertullian's reluctance to make a final appeal to even this human source of authority appears in his claim that only time can decide the truth between Marcion and himself; the truth is earlier in Christian history.[165] The appeal to reason becomes more and more important.

As a Catholic, in e.g. the De Oratione, he had been keen to found all obligations on Scriptural teaching, but he now imposes traditional practices unfounded in Scripture. This was his reply to the Catholic opponents of his policy on the wearing of chaplets, when they demanded proof from Scripture.[166] He explicitly appealed to the use of "consuetudo" in civil life in the absence of written law.[167]

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164 Adv. Marc. I. 21. 5.

165 ibid IV. 4. 1.

166 De Corona 1.5.; 3.1.; 4. 1. sq.

167 De Corona 4. 5. "consuetudo etiam civilibus rebus pro lege suscipitur cum deficit lex." cf. Beck op. cit. p. 62. As Tertullian always distinguished between "traditio" as doctrine inherited from Christ, and "traditiones" i.e. Christian customs, there is no inconsistency in his use of these terms. But the appeal to non-Scriptural traditions (practices) is much more frequent in the Montanist period; cf. Braun op. cit. pp. 428-29.

Unfortunately neither Scripture nor custom could justify some Montanist practices, and here he decries tradition and appeals to truth,[168] explaining that there can be changes in discipline, but not in the rule.[169] In these circumstances his rationalism comes into its own, and he even claims that any one of the faithful can introduce a law provided it is reasonable and conducive to salvation.[170]

We have come a long way from the simplistic claim to the unity of doctrine and the irreformability of the rule of faith, although these criteria still stand for Tertullian. In his struggle for logical consistency amid the conflicting demands of a traditional and conservative religion, his innate rigorism and the teachings of Montanus, he threw much light on the problem of maintaining a basic continuity while implementing necessary day-to-day changes. While he was a little too clever, being able to justify his preconceptions too quickly with a facility far outstripping his opponents, his categoric recognition of the role of reason in religious debate was a new and important contribution. After him no competent theologian could claim successfully to find every solution in Scripture or in Tradition; neither could any one claim that his contemporary situation found the Church exactly as it had always been. He showed that the Church changes; the problem remains how to fasten or slow the process, and how to explain it.

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168 De Virginibus Velandis 1. 1.

169 ibid 1. 3-5.

170 De Corona 4. 5.

MONTANIST PENANCE

Despite the fact that all the faithful are equally pupils of the Paraclete, and all are free to introduce useful laws, in practice very few enjoyed any real personal freedom, as Montanist community discipline was stricter even than that of the Catholics. The two statements quoted would suggest the possibility of a wide and differing range of personal interpretations in many matters, founded on a basic unity in some few essential points. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the possibility of introducing improvements to the party line, enjoyed in theory by all the faithful, must be taken with a grain of salt. Once this improvement had been adopted, there was certainly no possibility of deviancy. Each cannot choose for himself.[171] There was little freedom except to tighten the discipline.

The classic example of this rigorism is the Montanist attitude to public penance. Here Tertullian admits that he has changed his mind.[172] His belief that only God can forgive sins is now developed in an anti-ecclesial sense.[173] Those whose sins cannot be forgiven by the Church are not necessarily condemned to damnation, since they are usually admitted to make the penitential exercises; but their hope is for forgiveness from God in the next life, as they cannot hope

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171 De Virg. Vel. 3.

172 De Pud. 1. 10-13.

173 De Pud. 3. 3; 16. 5.

to re-enter the Church on earth.[174] Some sins are so monstrous, especially unnatural sexual vice, that these prevented the sinner from taking part in the penitential exercises.[175]

All this is justified by the distinction, which Tertullian introduces into the Church for the first time, between remissible and irremissible sins; although there had been the previous distinction of mortal from venial sins,[176] whereby mortal sins earned expulsion from the Church. He claims as a justification of this, the distinction John makes between sins unto death, and other lesser sins not unto death.[177] Adultery and fornication bring instant death to the sinner, and dead people can no more be recalled than dead sheep.[178] A similar justification is attempted by distinguishing between sins against God and sins against man. Sins against God can be forgiven by God alone;[179] Our Lord only promised forgiveness for these sins committed against our fellow men.[180]

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174 ibid 19. 6.

175 ibid 4. 5. On this point; cf. von Campenhausen op. cit. p. 221; Poschmann "Pen. and An." p. 45.

176 cf. Poschmann op. cit. p. 45.

177 1 John [c]5. 16-17; cf. De Pud. 2. 14.

178 De Pud. 7. 17.

179 ibid 2. 10; 21. 15.

180 These are "delicta leviora"; e.g. De Pud. 18. 18.

He also gives lists of irremissible grave sins,[181] where the big three i.e. idolatory murder and adultery have pride of place, but fraud, false witness, fornication and other sins are included. There is some similarity between these lists and the lists in Hermas,[182] while von Campenhausen has pointed out an additional similarity with the Jewish classification of sins.[183]

Tertullian repeatedly accused the Catholics of logical inconsistency, because they forgave adulterers and fornicators, and refused to grant pardon to murderers and idolators. He pointed out that they should forgive all four sins, or much better, refuse pardon to them all if they wished to be consistent.[184] To make these repeated statements if they were in direct contradiction of all the facts would have been stupid; and Tertullian was not stupid.

How then can the situation be explained? In his earlier work on penance the De Paenitentia, he made no mention of any such doctrine. Similarly Hermas, the source of so much of the late second century's doctrine on penance is ignorant of the restriction, a fact which explains his annoyance with this author. "Those who wish to forgive adulterers should do better than appeal to Hermas. For from having

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181 De Pud. 19. 25. Also see Adv. Marc. IV. 9. 6.

182 Mandatum 8. 3-5.

183 op. cit. n108. p. 233.

184 De Pud. 5. 15. ; 9. 9-11. ; 9. 20.

divine sanction, his work has been placed among the apocrypha as false by all Church councils, including Catholic councils".[185] Insult was added to injury by his earlier dependence on Hermas. Therefore this limited form of rigorism cannot have been universal in the Church;[186] nor, because of Tertullian's earlier teaching to the contrary can it have been universal in Carthage. While recognizing the existence of such practice, we do not know how widespread it was. Neither do we know when it began.[187]

When the "anti-Montanist" use of Hermas by the Catholics leads us to the further question of the nature of apostolic teaching on forgiveness, Tertullian's replies betray embarrassment and inconsistency. He is on firmer ground when he denies that any valid claim can be made to Jewish practice, since the Christian dispensation commences with Christ's redemption.[188] Especially Paul however, proves more difficult. Tertullian refuses to believe that any Apostle forgave idolators and murderers; if any of the faithful

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185 De Pud. 10. 12.

186 cf. Eusebius E. H. IV. 23. 6. where Dionysius of Corinth (C 170 A.D.) writes to the Churches at Amastris and in Pontus urging that all sinners should be received into the Church. Evidently there was doubt in some quarters.

187 Labriolle's suggestion ("La Crise Montaniste" p. 432) that rigorism arose in Carthage at the beginning of the third century is no more than an interesting possibility.

188 De Pud. 11. 2-3.

believe this they should prove it.[189] In the case of the fornicator, he has a "heads - I win; tails - you lose" approach, suggesting that Paul did not forgive this sinner, just as a judge in a secular court does not show indulgence after he has given a definite sentence.[190] Yet if Paul did forgive the fornicator, this was a special case, and is not normative! After all did not Paul circumcise Timothy, when circumcision had already been abolished?[191] Tertullian never improved on this mixture in attempting to explain Paul's teaching. The practice of Christ does not seem to have been an issue, since Christ was divine, and nobody was denying that God could forgive sin. Neither side could imagine a contradiction between Christ's teaching and that of the Apostles; the point was to discover what sort of a lead the Apostles had given to the Church on this matter.

Tertullian did not believe that any Apostle forgave an idolator or a murderer. We have seen this; but he also believed that Peter had the power to forgive such grave sins.[192] Apparently Peter never used his power. Another series of contradictions confront us when we attempt to discover who, if anyone, inherited this power from Peter. Once we are told that Peter did not transmit his power to the Church;[193]

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189 ibid 12. 11.

190 ibid 2. 9. ; 14. 25.

191 ibid 17. 19.

192 ibid 21. 9-14.

193 ibid 21. 9-10. As a Catholic, Tertullian believed that Peter left this power to the Church; cf. Scorpiace 10. 8.

elsewhere the Paraclete, through his new prophecies, admits the Church's power to forgive sin, but forbids the use of this power, lest it cause other sins.[194] So too the Church of the bishops does not forgive sins, but the Church of the Spirit does;[195] this last assertion following shortly after the statement in the same work, that smaller sins can be pardoned by the bishop.[196]

In some form or other, these contradictions have been pointed out quite frequently.[197] They remain astonishing in a writer of such intellectual power. Some at least of these contradictions could have been eliminated and his basic rigorism still retained. While it was impossible to weld all the teachings of Scripture, tradition and Montanus into a coherent whole (the evidence of tradition at least is contradictory), this was one area where he succeeded only in increasing the confusion.

As a byproduct, he gives us some interesting information on Catholic penitential practice. He accuses them of granting their martyrs the power to forgive sins, noting that these martyrs were immediately surrounded by hordes of adulterers and fornicators.[198]

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194 De Pud. 21. 7.

195 ibid 21. 17.

196 ibid 18. 18.

197 e.g. Poschmann op. cit. pp. 48-9; Labriolle op. cit. pp. 438-41.

198 De Pud. 22. 1.

This confirms an earlier Catholic reference of his to this same practice,[199] which continued into Cyprian's time. If the practice had been widespread, he would have made greater capital out of it.

His own comments on this are interesting because the Montanists extolled martyrdom highly; and if anyone was to grant forgiveness in a Church of the Spirit, one would have imagined it to be the martyrs. This was not the case. A martyr could wipe out his own sins but nothing more.[200] If the Catholic interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son means anything, it means just this (according to Tertullian).[201] Indeed anti-Montanist martyrs seem to have cooled his enthusiasm for all martyrs considerably. Suffering is no longer sufficient warrant for a true martyr; one must be able to recognize Christ in him by his ability to explain the secrets of the heart i.e. to prophesy.[202] The prophets remain supreme.

His retention of the bishop's role in forgiving minor sins and his contrasting the practice of his Church of the Spirit with the Church of the bishops highlights the importance of the part played by the bishop in the penitential processes of the times. In a similar way we learn of the Catholic rite of reconciliation, when we are told of the

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199 Ad Mart. 1. 6. While he mentions this practice, he does not explicitly approve it. There is no hint of condemnation.

200 De Pud. 22. 4.

201 ibid 9. 21.

202 ibid 22. 6.

repentant sinner asking the community for pardon, and prostrating himself before the presbyters and the widows.[203] Penance was still seen as a community affair, with the bishop articulating the will of the Church.

MONTANIST LIFE STYLES

Just as Tertullian's teaching on penance betrays an ever increasing severity and muddle, so too his attitude to Christian life in the world mirrors this same severity and an increasing lack of balance. So many things, some important, some trivial, were now imposed on all; and under threat of severe sanction. As a Catholic, he had not objected to people serving in the army.[204] Later he insisted that this was incompatible with Christianity.[205] Earlier he had not been worried about wearing a garland,[206] now any public office must be avoided, if it entails wearing this garland or chaplet.[207] Initially virgins might or might not wear veils; this freedom was no longer possible.[208] He had once permitted flight in time of

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203 ibid 13. 7-8.

204 Apologeticum 42. 3. Tertullian might have been quoting this fact for the pagans without approving it. But at this stage he never condemned it.

205 De Corona 11. 1-3.

206 Apol. 40. 6.

207 De Corona 11. 7.

208 De Virg. Vel. 3. 1.

persecution as an alternative to denying the faith, although he had never encouraged it.[209] The "De Fuga" was written to deny this possibility. A similar progression is obvious in his teaching on the separate questions of divorce and remarriage. At first divorce is prohibited, except in cases of debauchery.[210] Later there is no mention of any escape clause.[211] So too the preference of the Holy Spirit that widows and virgins remain as they are,[212] has been translated into a positive interdiction of remarriage, which is a grievous sin;[213] because just as there is only one God, so there is only one marriage.[214] This prohibition applies to the laity as well as the clergy.[215]

These examples should amply demonstrate the fiercely conformist nature of Montanist belief; a conformism enforced in the details of day-to-day life, and always joined with an equally fierce rigorism. This increasing severity supports the contention that the key to Tertullian's religious development is his personal puritanism, and his

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209 De Pat. 13. 6; Ad Uxorem I. 3. 4.

210 Ad Uxorem II. 2. 8. The exact meaning of "stuprum" is unclear.

211 De Monog. 5. 3; 9. 1.

212 Ad Uxorem I. 4. 3-4; I. 6. 3-5; II. 2. 4.

213 De Pud. 1. 20.

214 De Monog. 1. 2.

215 ibid 12. 1.

determination to impose this on others.

CONCLUSION

A glance at his sacramental theory will serve to introduce this conclusion. Like most Christian writers of the second and third century, he realized the primary importance of baptism, but he was the only ante-Nicene writer to write a treatise on it. Baptism is necessary for salvation,[216] and through it we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.[217] There is no reason to doubt the central place of the Eucharist in his scheme of things, although he never devoted much attention to explaining the various roles of the laity and clergy in this celebration. We have noted his pro-Montanist teaching that the laity could when necessary celebrate their own Eucharist in the absence of a priest. Nonetheless, one should normally receive the Eucharist from the hand of the presiding bishop.[218] In the case of public penance, he came closer than any previous writer to explaining the sacramental nature of the Church's intervention. He never departed from this view, although he did see fit to restrict its application to the forgiveness of small sins.

This combination of doctrines could seem to imply the abolition of office, and at times he stated as much. However different concerns

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216 De Bapt. 12. 1. sq.

217 ibid 8. 3.

218 De Corona 3. 3.

provided his principal motivation, and he never escaped to this position. While he proclaimed that all the faithful were equal, and were pupils of no man but only the Holy Spirit, he never repudiated his early Montanist belief that the succession of bishops provides the historical guarantee of the fidelity of the Apostolic Churches. While he stated that authority and judgment belonged to the Lord, and not to any servant (least of all the bishops),[219] he still allowed the bishops to prescribe fasts and to forgive minor sins. If his first concern had been to substitute personal charism for office, he was doomed to failure from the beginning within the context of Montanist discipline. The rule of individual charismatics, without office, implies a large measure of individual freedom, something similar to the Gnostics. He was positively averse to this.

But if he never rejected ecclesiastical office as such, he tended to devalue it; especially the office of teacher. There was no about-turn on this point, even as there was development, because as a Catholic he never recognized any episcopal charism of truth. His preference was for departed or absent teachers i.e. Christ, the Apostles, Montanus; and true doctrine was known by its unicity, apostolicity and transmission by the apostolic Churches, rather than by a succession of bishops, who only served the indirect function of being historical guarantees for these Churches. This was the one point on which his Catholic theology was not conventional; possibly

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219 De Pud. 21. 17.

his initial doubts about episcopal teaching were occasioned by official laxity on practical moral problems,[220] so that Montanus' rigorism struck a firm chord, which finally resulted in his open anti-clericalism. Not too much should be made of the absence of any Catholic theory of ordination on his part, as at this time such a theology was everywhere under-developed, except in Rome. But this lacuna facilitated his later development.

He always wrote as though the New Testament bishops had been monepiscopal, and his objections to the episcopate were not arguments for a more democratic mode of procedure between the bishop and his presbyters.[221] His anti-clericalism was much more broad-based; and his earlier theories that a martyr can give the pax to sinners, and that in necessity each person can be his own priest, were symptomatic of this.

The whole of his career is marked by a scepticism towards contemporary teachers, and the minor prophets in Carthage no more filled this vacuum than the Catholic bishops did earlier in his career. He, a layman, was his own teacher. He held to this with remarkable fidelity, from his early boast against the heretics "I am the heir of the Apostles",[222] to his equally defiant claim as a Montanist, "We are

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220 In De Spec. 30. 7. there is a derisive reference to priests allowing people to attend the circus or the theatre.

221 cf. S. L. Greenslade "Scripture and other doctrinal norms in early theories of the ministry" in the Journal of Theological Studies (43) 1944. p. 169.

222 De Praesc. Haer. 37. 5.

not pupils of men, but of the Paraclete".[223]

His theological achievement is immense, but his contribution was many sided. His anti-intellectualism remained a pose, if an unconscious one. He was imprisoned by his rigorism, and held a warped contempt for the opponents closest to him. Also while he must be praised for insisting that the content of the faith was open to all Christians, and that right conduct was obligatory, his severity and preoccupation with detail, often irrelevant, make him an early example of that recurrent formalism which has plagued Christianity.

On the more positive side, he was utterly sincere and completely devoted to Christ and his teaching. He embodied that element of intransigence (and more) which Christianity has always needed to survive in a less than perfect world; and by no means least of all, he opened up the debate on the nature of the Church and showed clearly many of the alternatives for both norms and mechanisms. Cyprian inherited his teachings, and was a more successful leader and influential figure for posterity. But the bishop was without doubt a lesser theologian.

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223 Adv. Prax. 13. 5. This is not to question the sincerity of his adherence to Scripture and the rule of truth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ST. CYPRIAN

BACKGROUND AND PERSONALITY

St. Cyprian is a unique source for any study of authority in the early Church, as he was a considerable theologian, who held high office and left us much of his official correspondence. Not since St. Paul had there been a Christian writer possessing all these characteristics. Many held no, or only minor office in the Church. Of the office holders who were writers, Ignatius of Antioch left no theological treatises, beyond his small collection of letters; while we know few details of Irenaeus' administrative activity. The support and opposition he aroused in Carthage and North Africa can be charted in detail also; the same applies to a lesser extent to the relationship between Carthage and the overseas Churches. All this enables us to set him against his historical background.

Not a great deal is known of the life of Caecilius Cyprianus Thascius before his conversion. He was probably born in Carthage sometime between 200-210 A.D. and certainly belonged to a rich and sophisticated pagan family. Through the influence of a presbyter Caecilianus, he was converted to Christianity. A little later, he himself became presbyter, and then in 248 or early 249 A.D. was elected bishop of Carthage on an upsurge of popular support, and against the

wishes of several of the presbyters.[1] The remainder of his life, until his martyrdom on the 14th of September 258, is well known. The details of this period will be outlined in the rest of this chapter.

Like St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan in the next century, Cyprian was ideally cast for his role. Both belonged to what we now call "the Establishment", and possessed that self assurance typical of the ruling class in a traditional and hierarchical society. Both were products of a Western and Roman culture, rather than the more mystical-spiritual tradition of the Greeks, and for both of them religion was nothing if not organized. It was axiomatic that rulers should rule, and should be respected.

Cyprian, once again like Ambrose, could be intransigent on what he regarded as a matter of high principle e.g. the rebaptism controversy with Stephen; but he also possessed a genuine sensitivity to the political subtleties of all the difficult situations which confronted him. He succeeded in dominating the entire North African episcopate, and eventually won the support of most of the Church in Carthage; both of these are considerable achievements, requiring great strength and tact. In this, he could not have been more dissimilar from his fellow countryman Tertullian.

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1 Vita Caecilii Cypriani 4-5.

A couple of facts from this early period are significant. The opposition of some presbyters to his appointment as bishop, and continued presbyteral opposition sharpened his emphasis on the episcopate. A presbyterate united in their loyalty might have prompted from him a more developed theology of the presbyterate, stressing the collegial nature of the episcopal-presbyteral supervision of the community. Whatever the causes, this was not to be. Another fact must also be recalled if Cyprian is to be seen in context. He possessed an agile, but not profound mind, with a wonderful gift for reducing complicated situations to several basic issues, and then defending his point of view with force and clarity. But on many of the intellectual problems then confronting interested Christians, he was deeply insensitive; a quality which he sometimes used to advantage in the struggles of his episcopate.

His use of Scripture is the most obvious example. Nowhere does he show an awareness that either the Old Testament or the New presents difficulties to an exegete. Scripture is a quarry for proof texts, giving answers to contemporary problems. In his literalism he is much closer to Tertullian than Origen, who with his allegorizing might not have produced too many lasting solutions, but did certainly realise that problems existed. Cyprian applied his texts with a repetitious fervour and a conspicuous lack of discrimination. He attempts to prove from Scripture that schism is forbidden, even if the

schismatics remain within the one faith and one tradition.[2] Of the six texts he adduces from the Old and New Testaments, only a couple of them (Mt. 12. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 10.) are serious contenders for consideration as being strictly relevant.

He understood well the practical consequence of the exercise of authority, but his theory is another matter. The distinctions Tertullian introduced between an unalterable rule of faith and other changeable aspects of tradition; on the roles of "ratio" and "consuetudo" and the nature of "disciplina"; on the differences between divine i.e. from Christ, apostolic and the post-apostolic traditions - these all opened up the situation for discussion and development. In theological method and logical expertise, Cyprian is a regression from this. He used many of the above terms; but he blurred the distinctions between them, and tended to solve most problems, whether it was a defence of a personal action or a theological opinion, by dignifying his solutions with the words "divina et evangelica".

Cyprian's clarity has been mentioned. Apart from his few seminal ideas on e.g. Church unity, the necessity for rebaptism, this clarity was superficial. When one recognizes his type of intelligence, and that he was a Christian for only twelve or thirteen years altogether,

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2 Ad Quirinum Book 3. 86; cf. his use of Scripture in ep. 59 to establish divine sanctions for episcopal authority.

his achievements, not his shortcomings, are remarkable. He had neither the time (nor inclination) to obtain a scholar's understanding of Christianity, for his episcopate (more than three quarters of his Christian life)[3] was one succession of crises, culminating in his own martyrdom. Moreover the obvious dearth of theological literature should not be forgotten; a difficulty which was magnified because most of Tertullian's ideas on the nature of the Church and the episcopate (Cyprian's chief areas of interest) were not those that he wished to adopt.

Cyprian's style contrasts strongly with Tertullian's, being thoroughly rhetorical, verbose and loose in construction. Frequently he did not say exactly what he meant, preferring to leave unstated the preconditions and qualifications attached to his statements. Witness his frequent assertions that each bishop is free to decide for himself;[4] a right which plainly is not unlimited. Sometimes it is spelt out that these differences must occur within the framework of a basic unity;[5] at other times, the right to independent action is only grudgingly approved, as when bishop Therapius is rebuked for readmitting the lapsi too quickly; although Cyprian and his colleagues allow his decisions to stand.[6] On other occasions, bishops are made

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3 cf. G. B. M. Walker, "The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian", (1968) p. 9.

4 Sententiae Intro; eps 69-73.

5 Epistle 55. 21.

6 Ep. 64. 1.

to toe the line. Bishops cannot use water instead of wine in the consecration, because Christ had taught otherwise;[7] he insists that Stephen act against bishop Marcian of Arles, who would not readmit lapsi.[8]

These facts have been noticed in the past, recently and not so recently. Walker finds his arguments occasionally opportunist;[9] von Campenhausen claims that he "interprets and distorts everything in accordance with the practical and paedagogic needs of contemporary church life".[10] Last century the German O. Ritschl claimed that he was an energetic, not too scrupulous man, evolving a theory as he went along to justify his development away from the monepiscopate, towards a more monarchical exercise of authority.[11]

Before we examine his activities in detail, comparing them with his announced principles, is there anything in his makeup to explain von Campenhausen's reservations, and to refute the charges of Ritschl? Together with most men of his time, he had a simplicist black-and-white attitude to things religious. His opponents were inevitably immoral, as well as being deficient in doctrine.[12] He never hesitated to indulge in a little personal abuse, whenever the infighting

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7 Ep. 63. 1-2.

8 Ep. 68. 1. The freedom of the bishop is discussed more fully in section d of this chapter.

9 op. cit. p. 19.

10 "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" (1969), p. 280.

11 O. Ritschl, "Cyprian von Karthago und die Verfassung der Kirche" (1885), pp. 55-67; esp. p. 56.

12 e.g. ep. 50. 1; 52.

seemed to demand it. Novatian in particular riled him; a process which reached its climax in the torrent of abuse in letter sixty,[13] and then died away until Cyprian, with a less than episcopal dignity, compared Novatian to a monkey.[14] He had no sympathy with the Gnostics, who are mentioned only as obvious examples of what must be avoided.[15] The philosophers are hardly treated any better.[16] Not surprisingly, beset by persecution, schism and plague, he believed that the last times of the world had come;[17] a conviction which did not impair his political judgment, and had no practical consequences. Although certain elements thought his visions ridiculous, he took them very seriously.[18]

So far in this penpicture of our religious leader with his deep and simple faith, as well as his political cunning and intellectual shortcomings, we find little to substantiate the claim that he was unscrupulous. More basic than these snippets are his conversion and martyrdom, which eliminate the possibility that his devotion to Christ and the Church was unreal in any fundamental sense.

A final word of introduction must point out the unique nature of the Sententiae. Limited as they are, they provide not only a sketch of the North African episcopate's views on rebaptism and its general

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13 Ep. 60. 3.
14 Ep. 73. 2.
15 e.g. eps. 73. 5; 74. 7-8; 75. 5.
16 Ep. 55. 16.
17 De Unitate 16.
18 Ep. 66. 10.

ecclesiology, but considerable insight into the type of bishop then in office. No other such evidence exists before the Council of Nicaea.

NORMS

How much did Cyprian follow the Bible, and how much did he distort or at least reinterpret it for his purposes? This question must be asked of every theologian, as even unconscious adaptation remains adaptation. For him Scripture remains the primary source, but its teaching is especially complemented by reason and the interpretations of the episcopate.

All the traditional norms are used by him. His appeal is to the Christian past, which includes the Old Testament; yet on three occasions reason is invoked against custom. We have appeals to the law (lex), to the rule (regula), to tradition, to the Scriptures and to "disciplina". Cyprian had an almost parliamentary habit of appealing to these norms whenever in trouble, and then larding them with a variety of useful adjectives: divine, evangelic, apostolic, (all used regularly); and on occasion, heavenly, holy and even catholic. All these terms are taken over from Tertullian, but some of the combinations are new. However, if we judge Cyprian by his statements alone, many of the distinctions Tertullian introduced to distinguish the different types of norm have been blurred.

Not until the year 253, when Cyprian forbids the use of water rather than wine in the celebration of the Eucharist, do we have any

evidence that he was using the distinctions of Tertullian. He makes the customary affirmation that the tradition of (Our) Lord must be maintained,[19] then after quoting Galatians ^{c}1. ^{v}6-9. he explained that neither an Apostle nor an angel from Heaven could teach differently from what Christ had preached once and for all, and his apostles had then related (adnuntiaverunt).[20]

As he shared the common anti-Gnostic position that the Apostles did not teach differently from Our Lord, we should not misunderstand his appeal to the root and origin of the tradition of Our Lord.[21] In the summer of 256, we have a variation on this theme, when we are told to seek out the source of divine tradition[22] so that human error may cease. In this way he had countered Stephen, by demanding to know the source of the Roman bishop's tradition. Does it have the authority of (Our) Lord and the gospel? Does it come from the Apostles' rulings and epistles?[23] The implication is that Stephen's tradition is none of these things, and therefore to be rejected. Not unnaturally Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea also takes up this point, because the rebaptism controversy demanded some sort of clarification amidst the blanket appeals to the traditional norms. Firmilian's letter is notable for the violence of its tone (which contrasts strongly with Cyprian's comparative moderation), and the logical precision of

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19 Ep. 63. 2. "dominica traditio".

20 Ep. 63.11.

21 Ep. 63. 1.

22 Ep. 74. 10. "divinae traditionis caput et originem.

23 Ep. 74. 2.

its reasoning. He first congratulates Cyprian for acting "according to the rule of truth and the wisdom of Christ",[24] then rejects the suggestion that Stephen's tradition is apostolic by pointing out that the heretical sects of Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides are post-apostolic, so that there can be no question of rebaptising heretics before these sects themselves existed.[25] Rome herself, he claimed, had not maintained all the original traditions, and diversity of practice in the past had not necessarily meant a loss of unity.[26] He then wrapped up his case by stating flatly that his opponents prefer custom to truth, just as the Jews did when Christ came.[27] There are suspicious similarities between the Latin translation of Firmilian's letter and Cyprian's views, but it still emerges that the Caesarean understands the alternatives better.[28]

On many other occasions too, Cyprian appeals to a variety of norms decorated by the adjective "divine". A few examples will suffice.

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24 Ep. 75. 3.

25 Ep. 75. 5.

26 Ep. 75. 6.

27 Ep. 75. 19.

28 cf. J. Ludwig, "Der Heilige Märtyrerbischof Cyprian von Karthago" (1951), p. 39. claims that it is impossible to know where Firmilian stops, and the Carthaginian translator begins. Whatever might be said of the anti-Roman polemic, Firmilian's appeal to the different strands of tradition is more sophisticated, and depends less on an appeal to the quasi-"infallible" decision making power of the bishop.

There are divine commandments,[29] divine tradition,[30] divine law,[31] divine preaching,[32] divine authority.[33] What is interesting is to note the wide number of questions, for which these "divine" teachings give the answer. Naturally Cyprian's view on rebaptism is based on divine precept,[34] as are his views on the lapsi;[35] the divine tradition sanctions his method of enquiry into the legitimacy of a newly created bishop,[36] and divine authority does the same for the whole ordination process.[37] In these two last examples, quotations from the Old Testament are adduced as evidence of divine support. The adjective "divine" is neither limited to a directive coming from Christ; nor to beliefs or practices derived wholly from the Old or New Testament writings. In all fairness, the most that can be claimed for some of his solutions, described as divine, is that they are derived from (with greater or less logic) teachings in Scripture. While such a procedure has obvious practical advantages, it perverts any strict

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29 Epp. 15. 1; 72. 1.

30 Epp. 45. 1; 67. 5. This last letter is from the council of 252.

31 Ep. 45. 2.

32 Ep. 55. 27.

33 Ep. 67. 4.

34 Ep. 72. 1.

35 Epp. 15. 1; 55. 27.

36 Ep. 45. 1.

37 Ep. 67. 4.

appeal to the variety of traditional norms, such as Tertullian attempted. In a confused way, Cyprian has realized the insufficiencies of any mechanical appeal to Scripture or tradition. These must be interpreted.

His application of the adjective "divine" to so many different solutions is to some extent explained, if not justified, by his view that any legitimate act of a bishop receives divine sanction; a viewpoint which enables him to claim divine, or evangelic, or apostolic support for his successive and different positions towards the lapsi.[38] The difficulty remains that in disputed cases, Cyprian's norms were nowhere nearly precise enough to distinguish what was legitimate, as distinguished from illegitimate, episcopal activity.

The teachings of Our Lord ("Domini" or "dominicus") are also invoked in the lapsi debate.[39] Nowhere however are Old Testament quotations given as evidence of this teaching. On occasion he appeals to the "apostolic tradition", (a direct inheritance from Irenaeus and Tertullian), which he describes as also being evangelical,[40] and divine.[41] The post-apostolic traditions of the church were also held

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38 Ep. 15. 1. cf. ep. 57. 1. According to Cyprian, Christ told the Apostles, and therefore the bishops too, "Who hears you, hears me, etc." (ep. 66. 4.)

39 Eps. 27. 2-4; 37. 4. etc.

40 Eps. 4. 1; 69. 3.

41 Eps 45. 1; 67. 5. etc.

in high regard. Cyprian himself appeals to the council of his predecessor Agrippinus,[42] while his fellow bishop Novatus at the autumn council of 256 appeals to "the decree of our colleagues of most holy memory".[43] Contemporary episcopal decisions share this importance. Cyprian once refuses a decision, because of the impossibility of consultation, and because such a decision would set a precedent for later generations.[44]

Nonetheless he never showed a blind allegiance to traditions, only once announcing that there should be no innovation; a temporary prohibition until a council could meet to decide about the lapsi.[45] We find the real opposition to innovation in the Roman letters. Late in 250, the Roman clergy had declared themselves against any innovations; again an interim prohibition while they have no bishop.[46] In 256, Stephen demands that there should be no innovation away from tradition in the rebaptism controversy,[47] as does his African ally.[48] Cyprian rejected this on two grounds. That to which they appeal is not tradition but custom (consuetudo), and is rejected by reason

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42 Ep. 71. 4.

43 Sententiae 4.

44 Ep. 34. 4.

45 Ep. 43. 3.

46 Ep. 30. 8.

47 Ep. 74. 2.

48 De Rebaptismate 1.

(twice)[49] and truth[50]. Tertullian had used "reason" or "truth" to justify changes in matters outside the rule of faith. But in the case of Cyprian, it would be unwise to attempt limiting the meaning of either reason or truth too severely, (to an explicit appeal to ratiocination, rather than Scripture), because he backs up these claims by appealing to apostolicity, and the revelations of the Holy Spirit[51] as well as the precepts of Christ.[52] One suspects that Cyprian wants the best of both worlds, without explicitly distinguishing between them. Unlike Firmilian, he only employs the criterion of post-apostolicity as ground for rejection in an undeveloped and secondary way. So too in the council of 256, while many of his fellow bishops declare for truth rather than custom, no one connects this with post-apostolicity.[53]

Cyprian also took from Tertullian the term "disciplina", following his predecessor in using the term with a certain looseness.[54] It is a rough synonym for Christian teaching, which serves a variety of

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49 Eps. 71. 3; 73. 13. Typically in ep. 71. 4. Cyprian cannot resist appealing to the "custom" supporting his own practice, i.e. the council of Agrippinus.

50 Ep. 74. 9.

51 Ep. 73. 13

52 Ep. 74. 9.

53 Sententiae 23; 28; 30; 56; 63; 77.

54 cf. E. W. Watson, "The Style and Language of St. Cyprian" (1896) p. 251.

wonderful purposes,[55] and is dignified by a variety of adjectives, especially "ecclesiastical"[56]. As it is closely connected with the divine precepts[57] Cyprian can boast that his discipline has always been based on Our Lord's commandments.[58] The Romans usually call it evangelical discipline.[59]

Although he invokes the divine law,[60] evangelical law[61] and the law of faith[62] as well as the rule which is certain[63] and the truth of the Catholic rule[64] he nowhere takes over Tertullian's distinction between an unchanging rule, and the disciplina which can be emended, and perhaps the source of disagreement within a maintained Church unity.[65] If Cyprian had seen the rebaptism question as being outside

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55 e.g. De Habitu Virginum 1.

56 Eps. 4. 1; 14. 2; 43. 2; 52. 2.

57 Ep. 4. 2.

58 Ep. 81. 1.

59 Eps. 30. 1 and 4; 36. 1.

60 Ep. 45. 2.

61 Ep. 20. 2.

62 ibid.

63 Ep. 59. 8.

64 Ep. 70. 1. Although this last example is from the letter of the 256 council, D. van den Eynde, "Les Normes de l'Enseignement Chrétien" (1933), p. 298. is incorrect in claiming that Cyprian never appealed to the rule (cf. ep. 59. 8.). Typically Novatian makes frequent appeals to the traditional device of the rule of truth (De Trinitate 1; 9; 11; 17; 21.) which is the tradition and doctrine of Christ (De Cibis Judaicis 1.).

65 Tertullian believed the disciplina could be improved, but was very reluctant to conclude from this to the possibility of a (simultaneous) pluralism of practice within the Church.

the rule of faith, it would have been an effective rejoinder to Stephen's threat of excommunication; but his determination to use all the traditional norms to support his case excluded this possibility.[66] Irenaeus, and especially Tertullian saw Church unity in terms of a doctrinal unity, largely built around the rule of faith. In as much as Cyprian saw Church unity in doctrinal terms rather than a mystical-organic unity founded on the episcopate, it is not the rule but the baptismal profession of faith which distinguishes the orthodox Christian from the heretic.[67] Consciously or otherwise this use of the baptismal symbol as a criterion for orthodoxy ruled out Tertullian's claim to orthodoxy, and recognizes explicitly that Cyprian's ecclesiological concerns are central to the faith.

The basic constituents of these norms are traditional, and the Scriptures remain as the principal source. The book of Testimonies shows this. The New Testament Canon is not a subject for discussion, although Cyprian does not use Hebrews, James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John.[68] Despite his literalist exegesis, Cyprian also likes to appeal

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66 e.g. ep. 70. 1. claims the support of the rule for the doctrine of rebaptism.

67 Ep. 69. 7. The baptismal "symbolum" here contains explicit references to the remission of sins and the doctrine of the Church. For Tertullian these two subjects were not in the rule of faith, and only hinted at in the baptismal interrogations of the time: cf. Chapter 7, Sections C and H of this work.

68 P. Monceaux, "Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne" vol. 3. (1905) p. 231; cf Hartel's Scripture Index.

to less specified norms such as "the tradition of Our Lord" which enables him to use the Old Testament as well as the New, and to combine Scriptural teaching with his own preconceptions. His infrequent appeals to the rule and even the baptismal symbol fit this same pattern. By instinct, Cyprian liked room to manouevre. Origen practised a similar approach in a more sophisticated fashion through his allegorization, but entrusted the task of interpretation more to the teacher than the bishop.

THE CHURCH

Cyprian would have been horrified by any accusation of insincerity or dishonesty in his use of the Christian norms. "Noone is in union with the Church," he wrote, "who cuts himself off from the Gospel";[69] elsewhere he speaks of those trees within the Church being watered by four rivers (the four Gospels).[70] The Church had to remain faithful to Christ's teachings, and Cyprian throughout his stormy career never really imagined that she could do otherwise.

For him the Church is the fundamental religious reality with the only possible rival for this cornerstone position being the episcopacy itself. Naturally then these two realities of Church and episcopacy are closely related. He is the first Christian writer to give the

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69 De Lapsis 16.

70 Ep. 73. 10.

Church a thematic treatment,[71] which is both theological and sociological, because she is for him, unlike Clement and Origen, a very this-worldly reality.

One of his largest achievements was his articulation of the loyalty Christians felt for their Church, something which no doubt inspired even greater devotion among her followers. He could do this because he was a natural leader, because he wrote well, but most of all because he loved the Church. Thirty times he calls her "mother" or "mother Church".[72] For a person to have God as Father he must have first of all the Church as mother,[73] while the faction of Felicissimus is dismissed as an interfering stepmother.[74] Mother Church rejoices in her virgins,[75] just as she weeps over her lost children,[76] or rejoices to welcome back the glorious confessors after persecution.[77] Cyprian's efforts in this direction are devoted towards developing and strengthening the "pietas", or loving dutifulness of Christians towards the Church. "Pietas" was one of the

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71 von Campenhausen op. cit. pp. 268-9.

72 cf. J. C. Plumpe, "Mater Ecclesia" (1943) p. 81.

73 Ep. 74. 7.

74 Ep. 59. 13.

75 De Habitu Virginum 3.

76 Ep. 10. 4.

77 ibid 2.

strongest obligations in ancient Roman society; and was to be practised especially in the child-parent relationship and in a person's devotion to his country.[78]

The word "mother" is never used of the Church in any of the letters from Rome, or anywhere in Novatian's writings. We do not know why this was so; perhaps the term still had Gnostic overtones for them, or perhaps they thought Cyprian's usage too simplicist and emotional. Firmilian of Caesarea does use the term in this way.[79]

In his Testimonies for Quirinus, a whole section is devoted to the Church as the spouse of Christ, a doctrine which helps to explain her role as mother.[80] These two doctrines are one facet of Cyprian's concern for the unicity and unity of the Church,[81] spread out over the whole world; a concern shared by the Roman Church,[82] and by Firmilian.[83]

Cyprian's concept of Church unity moved at a number of different levels, and the good bishop moved easily and unconsciously from one to

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78 cf. Plumpe op. cit. p. 92.

79 Ep. 75. 14.

80 Book 2. 19.

81 This obvious, but useful distinction has not only been recognized by J-P Brisson, "Autonomisme et Christianisme dans l'Afrique Romaine" 1958, p. 43 sq. but he has attempted to follow it through in his examination of Cyprian's writings.

82 Ep. 36. 4.

83 Ep. 75. 3.

the other. At its most fundamental, it is a mystical unity founded on the activity of the Spirit, which should find expression in a unity of doctrine, and even in a loose sort of organizational co-operation.[84] His concern for these practical expressions is mirrored in words such as "concordia", "consensio", which are the special responsibility of the episcopate,[85] and which remained such elusive qualities during his life, despite his determination that they should be actualities as well as imperatives.

Just as Irenaeus and Tertullian had refuted the Gnostics by pointing to the apostolic origins of orthodox doctrine, so Cyprian now proves the mystical unity of the Church from the fact that Our Lord entrusted this, first to Peter alone and then to all the Apostles. Peter, on whom the Church had been founded by Our Lord, when he confessed that Christ was the Son of the living God, spoke for all and in the name of the Church.[86] The autumn council of 255 repeats these sentiments, and emphasizes the part of the Holy Spirit.[87] The exact nature of Peter's role is further explained, when we realise that the power given to him

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84 J. Ludwig op. cit. pp. 48-9 explains these different levels of unity.

85 The role of the episcopate in Church unity is discussed in the next section of this chapter, while the role of the councils and Rome is discussed in Chapter 10.

86 Ep. 59. 7. "Petrus tamen super quem aedificata ab eodem Domino fuerat ecclesia, unus pro omnibus loquens et ecclesiae voce respondens ait": cf. ep. 66. 8.

87 Ep. 70. 3.

first of all by Our Lord, was then given after the Resurrection to all the Apostles;[88] in any case Peter refused to bully Paul, and finally accepted the latter's point of view.[89]

Despite the fact that when Our Lord founded the Church on Peter, the Apostle had never seen Rome, the Roman Church continues his role in some way[90] as do all bishops. Cyprian tells Cornelius that they must work together to ensure the continued unity of the Church entrusted by Our Lord to the Apostles and their successors.[91] With Tertullian and Irenaeus, the apostolic succession of bishops had guaranteed the unity of doctrine since the first times. Now it is not doctrine, but the unity of the Church itself which had been entrusted by Our Lord to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops. This development shows that the Gnostic scare, and its preoccupation with doctrine has passed. Nor is it fanciful to claim that the practical, almost sociological concerns of a Roman-type mind have been added to the doctrinal interests of an earlier Christianity from

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88 Ep. 73. 7.

89 Ep. 71. 3.

90 Ep. 59. 14. Felicissimus and Novatus had dared to sail "et ad Petri cathedram adque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est,..."

91 Ep. 45. 3. "et laboramus et laborare debemus ut unitatem a Domino et per apostolos nobis successoribus traditam, quantum possumus, obtinere curemus"; cf. ep. 33. 1.; Ad Quirinum Book 1 intro.

the East. This should not be pressed too far; Irenaeus believed in an organized Christian community, and Cyprian was concerned for doctrinal purity; but the nature of the Church and the problems of Church life had replaced doctrine as the principal intellectual interest.

Cyprian's concern for unity is closely connected with his equally firm conviction about the unicity of the visible Church. God himself ordained that there be one Church,[92] so that there is one God, one Christ, one Church, and one (teaching) chair founded by Our Lord on St. Peter.[93] The Church and the episcopate are in distinguished company. He developed this theme in a series of beautiful images, which he turned against Christians outside the visible Church. The Church is like the sun with many rays, but one light; or a tree with many boughs, or the basic river source which feeds many streams.[94] The Church is a closed garden, the only stream of living water, for whom Noah's ark was a type;[95] she cannot be divided,[96] and those

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92 Ep. 72. 1.

93 Ep. 43. 5. Brisson op. cit. pp. 39 sq has shown how Cyprian has taken over Tertullian's language about the Trinity to explain his belief in the unicity of the Church. While he made no strict distinction between unity and unicity, "unitas" first of all means unicity.

94 De Unitate 5.

95 Eps. 69. 2; 74. 11.

96 Ep. 51. 2; De Unitate 7.

outside her cannot be saved,[97] whether they be pagan, Jew or Christian. By this doctrine all Christian groups separated from the Church are unchurched. He appreciated the difference between (what we now call) heresy and schism, giving a whole section of his Testimonies to explaining that schism is not permitted even when the one faith and one tradition are retained.[98] These terms are not synonymous for Cyprian, despite their occasional interchangeability, which Bayard ascribes to their root meanings: σχίσμα meaning rupture, and αἵρεσις implying choice, or personal preference.[99] Apart from being another example of the bishop's imprecise use of language, the point is of no consequence to us. For Cyprian, what we now call heresy and schism each had the same effect on Church membership. The nature of Novatian's teaching does not concern us, as whatever his teaching, he is outside the Church. Such an outsider is not even a Christian.[100]

Neither an apostate, nor a person born (and remaining) outside the Church can be admitted to the peace of the church, even if he dies as a martyr for Christ.[101] Apparently the dead can also receive the

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97 Ep. 4. 4; cf. ep. 74. 6; De Unitate 23.

98 Ad Quirinum Book 3. 86.

99 L. Bayard, "Le Latin de Saint Cyprien" (1902), pp. 182-3. In ep. 51. 1. a difference is implied.

100 Ep. 55. 24. "nec curiosus esse debere quid ille doceat, cum foris doceat.... christianus non est qui in Christi ecclesia non est."

101 Ep. 55. 29.

peace of the Church; and while they cannot quite be excommunicated posthumously, the Church can be forbidden to pray for their souls.[102] Except for the sinners within her, the earthly Church is exactly coterminous with the Church in Heaven (which of course contains past as well as present members).

Cyprian's insistence on the unicity of the visible Church is his major premise in the rebaptism controversy. Despite their common faith, the Novatianists cannot baptise, because they are outside the Church.[103] The text "He who is not with me is against me" is used to bolster this "all or nothing" claim.[104] So closely is the activity of the Spirit tied to the one visible Church, that if, per impossibile, there were heretics within her confines, they can still baptise.[105]

That Christ is the minister of baptism is recognised,[106] but the idea remains undeveloped. He does not argue from it to a hidden unity, lying beyond the visible differences. His opponents have pre-empted the appeal to tradition. Scripture is scarcely more helpful, and his exegesis is on occasion forced and slightly embarrassed.[107]

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102 Ep. 1. 2.

103 Ep. 69. 1.

104 ibid; De Unitate 6.

105 Eps. 69. 5; 73. 11.

106 Ep. 69. 2.

107 e.g. his comments on Acts 8. 14-17 in ep. 73. 9., and on Acts 2. 38-9 in ep. 73. 17. He does slightly better with Acts 10 in ep. 72. 1.

Scripture is invoked, but his case depends on his first premise that there is no salvation outside the one visible Church. It is this ecclesiology which enables him to reject the possibility of any half-measures or compromises; outside the Church there is no Holy Spirit, no Christ, no grace.[108]

Cyprian's ally in this struggle is Firmilian. While his use of the terms "schismatic" and "heretic" differs from the North African's, the end product is the same. Stephen is a true schismatic (the only time he uses the word), because he cut himself off from his opponents.[109] The words "heresy", "heretic" are used frequently, and given an extended sense. The baptism of the prophetess, performed with the correct rite and according to the rule of the Church is the same as the heretics'.[110] The devil was acting through this woman. Earlier he had written that heretics are united in blaspheming God the Creator, and included the Montanists in this group.[111] Obviously Firmilian believed that all outside the Church disagreed with the rule of faith, so precluding any discussion of those who left the Church, and remained orthodox in their basic beliefs.

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108 Eps. 69. 10-11; 70. 3; 73. 6 and 16; 74. 6. "Grace" is used in the non-technical sense of the life of Spirit, which enables baptism to be given, sins to be forgiven, etc.

109 Ep. 75. 24.

110 Ep. 75. 10-11.

111 Ep. 75. 7.

His ecclesiology is the same as Cyprian's. There is only one spouse of Christ, the Church, which he describes in terms used by Cyprian; those outside her perish.[112] This enables him to adopt an all or nothing approach; if heretical baptism works, it creates sons of God[113] and members of the Church.[114] No one suggests this, and he explicitly rejects the possibility of a partly successful baptism.[115] He also rejected baptism by a lapsed bishop;[116] something Cyprian never discussed, although a similar rejection would be demanded by his logic.[117]

The principal opponent of this point of view was Stephen, known only from the writings of his opponents. His position was based on an appeal to tradition and the Scriptures, and the unicity of the Church was not his first premise. Although his opponents could not destroy this appeal to tradition, he had to defend himself against the charge of appealing to an illegitimate development, mere "custom". He began with the one baptism common to all Christians when correctly

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112 Ep. 75. 14-15.

113 Ep. 75. 14.

114 Ep. 75. 17.

115 Ep. 75. 18 and 23.

116 Ep. 75. 22.

117 cf. ep. 71. 1. where Ecclesiasticus 34. 30. is quoted: "Qui baptizatur a mortuo, quid proficit lavatio eius"; also his attitude to the "lapsi" Spanish bishops is relevant here.

performed.[118] While denying that the Holy Spirit is with the heretics[119], he allows that Christ is with them.[120] While it is Firmilian who notes this remarkable division of Trinitarian activity, there is no impossibility in ascribing this crudity to Stephen. For him the theological difficulties in his position were outweighed by traditional practice, the (almost certain) opposition of exheretics to being rebaptised, and the realization, if unexpressed, of a shared heritage.[121]

Stephen's concept of the Church must have been that of Cyprian and Firmilian: there is one visible Church. If he had called the other heretical groups "Churches", or ascribed some ecclesiological reality to them, his opponents would have fastened upon it. There is nothing in the theological literature of the time to induce us to believe this development was possible. He was therefore admitting the existence of grace[122] outside the Church, but denying any

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118 Ep. 71. 1. Cyprian speaks of those who "dum unius baptismi adservatione baptizare venientes nolunt".

119 Ep. 75. 8.

120 Ep. 75. 12. "apud haereticos baptizantur adesse praesentiam et sanctimonia Christi".

121 Very possibly his position is the one ascribed by Cyprian to his opponents; i.e. "in nomine Jesu Christi ubicumque et quomodocumque baptizati gratiam baptismi sunt consecuti" (ep. 73. 16.).

122 At least "praesentiam et sanctimonia Christi" (ep. 75. 12.) was involved.

ecclesiological reality outside the Church. His view is not surprising; but it is not as coherent as Cyprian's position.

This discussion of the presence of God and his grace within the Church, as well as the whole story of Christian life in North Africa at this time, show that the Church was built around the Christians' love for one another and their love of God.[123] Cyprian's Church was no hollow political structure held together by the coercion of its leaders. In this, and much else he depends on the Scriptures and Christian tradition, as his use of Scriptural texts in De Unitate shows.[124] In a similar way his ideas on unity are a development on Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus. Beck himself stresses the dependence on tradition, rather than on Roman law,[125] while von Campenhausen summed it up nicely: the unity of the Church was an immemorial traditional concept, but Cyprian gave this belief "a strictly and exclusively official form".[126]

THE EPISCOPATE

Cyprian's writing on the episcopate is notable for many things. One preliminary is to point out that here especially, his theory is not necessarily the same as his practice. However more of this later.

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123 e.g. De Unitate 6; ep. 54. 1. where the importance of caritas, concordia and pax are outlined.

124 cf. De Unitate. 6-7. especially.

125 A. Beck, "Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian" (1930) p. 150.

For him the bishops were the key figures in the Church; on occasion he seemed to state that the bishops were the Church. A fellow African bishop Florentius was told that the bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop; if a person is not united to the bishop he is not in the Church.[127] This, written in 254 is not unique. Even earlier, in a letter of 250 addressed to persons unknown (probably lapsi), Cyprian wrote that the Church is built upon the bishops and every act of hers is governed by them.[128] These claims must be balanced by the fact that a few lines later in this same letter, he writes that she is built on the bishop, the clergy and all the faithful.[129]

The hierarchical nature of his thinking is quite obvious; and the distinction is not so much clergy and the rest, as bishops and the rest. The Church is held together by the mutual concord of the bishops,[130] because "the episcopate is one of which each part is held

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126 op. cit. p. 275.

127 Ep. 66. 8. "episcopum in ecclesia esse et ecclesiam in episcopo et si qui cum episcopo non sit in ecclesia non esse".

128 Ep. 33. 1. "ecclesia super episcopos constituatur..."

129 ibid "ecclesia in episcopo et clero et in omnibus stantibus".

130 Ep. 68. 3; cf. ep. 66. 8.

by individuals for the whole";[131] conversely schisms and heresies arise because the bishop is not obeyed.[132] To separate the bishop from his people is to scatter the members of Christ himself.[133] The bishop is for him not just an administrator or the president of the liturgical assembly; he is the leader of the community in every sense of the word, and its model or ideal, just as the gnostic was for Clement of Alexandria, the teacher for Origen, and the prophet for Tertullian. For Cyprian, the bishop has taken up the position once held by Apostles. Cyprian regarded leadership as a self-evident necessity; and the bishop as leader of the Christian community was no exception. He is like the officer who carries the standard;[134] after all, even sheep and robbers recognize a chief.[135]

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131 De Unitate 5: "episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur" the translation of J. H. Bernard, "The Cyprianic doctrine of the ministry" in "Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry" ed. H. B. Swete (1918) p. 244. has been adopted; cf. A. Beck op. cit. pp. 153-4. Here we must remember Cyprian's loose use of language, not seeking a clarity beyond the general idea which is clear enough (cf. von Campenhausen op. cit. n55 p. 276); certainly the "in solidum" is not used in its legal sense (cf. M. Bévenot, "Primatus Petro datur" in J.T.S. (5) N.S. note pp. 28-9). We have not adopted the translation "the power of the episcopate is one etc.", because it is difficult to see how "episcopatus" means "power of the episcopate", although this idea is included in "being a bishop".

132 Ep. 59. 5.

133 Ep. 41. 1.

134 Ep. 59. 13.

135 Ep. 66. 6.

Cyprian possessed many fine qualities, not the least of these being a sturdy common sense.

Cyprian's whole collection of letters and addresses is an example of episcopal teaching activity. Yet as J. H. Bernard has pointed out, not a great deal is said about the specifically teaching function of the episcopate, as distinguished from its legislative, disciplinary and administrative ones.[136] This shows that theory is not always an accurate representation of practice. Tertullian was also silent about the teaching role of the bishop, being suspicious of it from the outset, but Cyprian never developed this theme because he never doubted the teaching role of the episcopacy for a moment, and his opponents made no objection in principle to it.

It is also partly explained by Cyprian's uncomplicated approach to Christian teaching, and his immersion in the problems of his congregation as a whole, rather than the intellectual or spiritual difficulties of individuals. He was no teacher of those hidden mysteries reserved for the intellectuals as he was a product of the popular anti-Gnostic tradition. Neither was Carthage an intellectual centre (for pagans or Christians) with any freelance Christian teachers running parallel with the bishop. The confessors had popular support, and for a while laxist confessors and dissident presbyters were rivals for the leadership of the community. The teaching and leadership

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136 op. cit. p. 229.

roles of the bishop were already commonly accepted though, and Cyprian by overcoming this opposition, and especially by his life and martyrdom, further enhanced the episcopate's standing.

When we examine Cyprian's activities we are struck by the contrast between his emphasis on the unique importance of the episcopate, and his repeated claims, dating from the beginning of his episcopate, to decide nothing without his clergy and people.[137] Time and time again he referred to this common decision making,[138] mostly on the problem of the readmission of the lapsi, but sometimes involving the community's approval of ordination candidates.[139]

Two characteristics stand out; the claim is absolute (nothing is to be done without etc.), and the laity (plebs) are explicitly included. Both features are anachronistic, being more suitable to an age when the local communities were smaller, immersed in their own problems and having little contact with even neighbouring Christian groups, and where the position of the clergy, and especially the bishop, was less sharply defined: but Montanist prophets, and even a lay teacher such as Tertullian, probably strengthened these traditions of group involvement in North Africa.

In the main, his practice bears out his theoretical preference for

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137 Ep. 14. 4. "quando a primordio episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consilio vestro et sine consensu plebis mea privatim sententia gerere".

138 Eps. 17. 1 and 3; 19. 2; 26. 1; 55. 5.

139 Ep. 38. 1.

group decisions. Five of the letters are sent by episcopal synods,[140] and one by a group of bishops and presbyters.[141] In the fifty nine letters signed by Cyprian alone, there are appeals to, or references to group decision-making in eighteen.[142] Nor is this reality confined to North Africa. Firmilian mentions yearly synods to discuss common problems;[143] and Cornelius tells of a synod of presbyters and some bishops in Rome.[144]

Obviously communal decision making was very much part of Christian tradition. However in each of these cases the constituent members of the group are not identical. The five synodal letters are signed by the bishops alone; yet many of Cyprian's early appeals are to the whole of the Christian community.[145] These concern the readmission of lapsi and the ordination of clerics. In the first of these cases i.e. problem of the lapsi, as some confessors were themselves reconciling, and Cyprian himself was in hiding away from Carthage, the political

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140 Eps. 57; 61; 64; 70; 72.

141 Ep. 4.

142 Eps. 1. 2; 3. 1; 14. 4; 15. 1; 16. 4; 17. 1 and 3; 19. 2; 26. 1; 30. 5; 32; 34. 3-4; 43. 3 and 7; 44. 1; 55. 4 and 7; 59. 1 and 13-15; 71. 1 and 4; 73. 1 and 3; 74. 1.

143 Ep. 75. 4.

144 Ep. 49. 2.

145 e.g. eps. 14. 4; 17. 1. etc.

advantage of stressing the role of all the community is obvious. It was a simple fact that the political pressures for quick readmission were considerable, and these pressures had to be channelled if the unity of the congregation was to be maintained, together with the leadership role of the bishop. In the rebaptism controversy, there is never any appeal to the opinions of the clergy or laity. This difference might be explained by the slightly more theological nature of the rebaptism quarrel, so that it became something of wider consequence, more suited to be handled by the "professionals" than the locals. Another explanation might be a simple absence of popular pressure.

In any event, the role of the local community was completely overshadowed, whenever a sizeable number of bishops met to discuss and decide. This is perfectly natural. The uncertain democracy of the synod of bishops was substituted for the uncertain democracy of the local congregation. This accords more with Cyprian's theology of the episcopacy. When the local congregation did meet to decide on certain questions, the initiative must have remained with the bishop, and to a lesser extent the clergy, rather than the congregation. It would have needed a strong man to withstand Cyprian! Some indication of the balance of power within the congregation appears on re-examining his earlier letters, where we read he had decided to do nothing without the advice (consilium) of the clergy, and the consent of the people.[146]

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146 Ep. 14. 4.

Other references to the people "judging"[147] should be interpreted in this light. There is no evidence for any process of head-counting, or majority rule within the local congregation. Even at the outset of his career in 249 in the letter to Pomponius, only the bishops are mentioned by name, the presbyters as a group, while the laity are unmentioned.[148]

On occasion too, Cyprian moved even further away from his professed ideal of consultation. On four separate occasions, admittedly somewhat exceptional, he ordained clerics (never bishops) without the previous approval of the congregation.[149] However on each occasion he informed the people later, justifying his action with the claim that the clerics had been chosen by God as they were confessors.[150] Only Saturus (ordained lector) was not a confessor, and here Cyprian appeals to an earlier examination of the candidate by the clergy themselves,[151] in the meantime insisting that he had done nothing new in the absence of the clergy.[152] He himself forbade the use of water rather than wine in the Eucharist, because Christ himself had laid

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147 e.g. ep. 17. 1.

148 Ep. 4; cf. ep. 1. 1.

149 cf. eps. 29; 38; 39; 40.

150 Eps. 29. 1; 38. 1; 39. 1; 40. 1.

151 Ep. 29. 1.

152 ibid.

down what should be done.[153] While in exile he excommunicated Felicissimus, while claiming that Felicissimus had brought this upon himself and referring to a future gathering of bishops, when the whole affair would be seen in a clearer light.[154]

These events are of limited significance, except to further demonstrate the impossibility of always consulting his congregation. Once however, he did break new ground, without the advice of his clergy or people. When Cyprian from his exile allowed the deathbed return of penitent lapsi under certain conditions, he went against local and contemporary tradition, and he did it when acting completely alone.[155] It was a masterly gesture, as it placated the confessors, who had to give the penitent lapsi a certificate for reconciliation, and steered a middle course between the laxists and the rigorists. His complaints at the start of this letter that his other notes had remained unanswered show that he judged that some special gesture was required. There is no appeal to a future council, nor any hint that this is only an interim measure which could be reversed. In view of later developments, it is somewhat ironic to see him telling the Roman clergy that he had followed their suggestion in introducing this measure, because he did not want local practice to differ from that of

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153 Ep. 63. 11.

154 Ep. 41. 2.

155 Ep. 18. 1.

Rome in any respect.[156]

This is the first recorded and certain example of a Christian bishop, acting alone in a monarchical fashion to resolve a new and significant problem. A couple of years later in 252, he went a little further in the same direction, once again on his own initiative, when he allowed certain lapsi who were not ill to be reconciled.[157] However this is a much less significant breakthrough, and he does go on to appeal to next synod.[158]

If the ideal of community consultation had been limited to local issues, this condition was left unexpressed. Another difficulty emerges when we try to reconcile this ideal with his other belief that a bishop is responsible to God alone, and its necessary corollary that bishops can agree to differ within a basic Church unity. Typically neither of these last two statements provides a complete key to his practice. He first mentions the idea that each bishop answers to God alone, in a letter to bishop Antonianus sometime towards the end of 251. The condition for this is that the unity of the Church is maintained and he cited as a local example of this unity in diversity, the earlier practice of some bishops who refused to admit adulterers to the penitential processes.[159]

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156 Ep. 20. 3.

157 Ep. 56. 2.

158 Ep. 56. 3.

159 Ep. 55. 21.

His fullest and most extreme statement of these views is found in his preface to the opinions of the bishops at the council of September 256 on rebaptism. Here he rejects the idea that any one should set himself up as bishop of the bishops; no bishop can be judged by another, as all await the judgment of Christ, who is the one and only person who can judge episcopal actions.[160]

For the moment, we are not interested in reconciling Stephen's claims with this point of view. As it stands the statement goes far beyond the rejection of any individual bishop of bishops; on the face of it, the statement could be used against the coercion of any bishop, by any human individual or group whatsoever. How does this idea cohere with his other expressed views on the unity of the Church, and on the roles of the episcopate, clergy and laity within the Church?

On this point, his practice differs so much from his theory that it affords little help to our attempts to unravel his meaning, while his ideas themselves are expressed with characteristic imprecision, and are built upon a mass of unspecified conditions. In his favour it should be remembered, that these were all ad hoc utterances destined to win immediate support, or refute opponents, and were not the products

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160 Sententiae Episcoporum. Intro. "neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se episcoporum constituit...., quando habeat omnis episcopus pro licentia libertatis et potestatis suae arbitrium proprium tamque iudicari ab alio non possit, quam nec ipse possit alterum iudicare. Sed expectemus universi iudicium Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui unus et solus habet potestatem et praeponendi nos in ecclesiae suae gubernatione et de actu nostro iudicandi".

of scholarly and peaceful reflection.

Sometimes Cyprian went beyond his assertion that no action of a bishop can be judged by a human agency, to urge that no bishop should try to force another bishop to adopt any course of action.[161] This is only a logical forward extension of the prohibition of bishops to judge one another. Father Bévenot has suggested five possible meanings for the idea behind this group of statements, the last of which is "that the bishop using such an expression is insisting on his own rights, and will brook no interference". He then continued to suggest that this idea was logically implied in the dictum, "but it never occurred to Cyprian in his humility, to draw that particular conclusion".[162] Father Bévenot is too kind. This is precisely the position adopted by Cyprian and his friends during the rebaptism controversy. If they could not force their own view upon their opponents, neither were they about to abandon it. But Cyprian did not always act with such a scrupulous regard for the rights of other bishops, when he thought he could impose a "correct" viewpoint on them.

Although he had used the idea of episcopal independence before the rebaptism controversy, the line he adopted on this issue forced him to use it now as an escape clause. If he had placed the whole

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161 Eps. 72. 3. "nec nos vim cuique facimus"; ep. 73. 26. "nemini praescribentes"; also eps. 57. 5; 59. 14; 69. 17; 74. 8.

162 M. Bévenot, "A bishop is responsible to God alone" in Recherches de Science Religieuse (39) 1951, p. 414.

question as being outside the rule of faith i.e. something under the heading of Tertullian's "disciplina" then an appeal for individual episcopal sovereignty and the coexistence of differences in these non-essential areas would have been consistent. He never dreamt of doing this.[163] While Stephen also thought the question central, and was prepared to follow his logic, at least to threatening excommunication, Cyprian was forced to hold that bishops could differ among themselves on matters essential to the faith. The defence of this suspect position necessitated his stress on something very close to the absolute independence of individual bishops, provided they remain within the Church.[164]

Despite these difficulties, his claim that bishops are responsible to God alone does cohere well with some other elements of his thought and practice. We have already seen that he often described his opinions and solutions as being of God.[165] The episcopacy was founded by Christ;[166] genuine bishops are chosen by God's will;[167] episcopal authority is often strengthened by investiture with divine dignity; so that the bishop judges in Christ's place.[168] The man who separates a bishop from his people rends the members of Christ.[169] He clearly

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163 cf. Section B of this chapter, esp. n66.

164 That this last condition is presupposed is shown from ep. 55. 21. "manente concordiae vinculo"; cf. ep. 57. 4. also.

165 cf. Section B of this chapter.

166 Ep. 3. 3.

167 Eps 55. 9; 61. 3.

168 Ep. 59. 5.

169 Ep. 41. 1.

felt that bishops were very close to God. In his own case, this proximity was further exemplified by a number of heavenly visions. These were not infrequent; as Cyprian himself and some of his group had visions both at night and during the day.[170] Harnack wryly and correctly noted that these often appeared just when they were needed,[171] as e.g. when Cyprian felt obliged to act alone. Two of the clerics chosen by him alone were in fact chosen on the instructions received in visions;[172] after describing his visions he then inferred that it was in them that God had commanded him to flee from his people, and will tell him when to return.[173] His visions told him to excommunicate Florentius,[174] which he promptly did without the help of any other clergy. As Florentius was a layman (despite being called "brother"),[175] this is far less significant than the excommunication of a bishop. Cyprian did not have a vision every time he performed some significant action on his own, and he did have visions on other occasions.[176] However there were a significant number of divine

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170 Ep. 16. 4.

171 A. Harnack, "Cyprian als Enthusiast" in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft. 3 (1902) p. 190.

172 This is certainly true of Celerinus (ep. 39. 1.), and probably true of Numidicus (ep. 40. 1.): "Nam admonitos nos et instructos sciatis dignatione divina"...

173 Ep. 16. 4.

174 Ep. 66. 10.

175 Ep. 66. 1.

176 He had visions on the rebaptism issue (ep. 73. 13.), and before the conciliar decision to readmit lapsi as a preparation for the next persecution (ep. 57. 5.).

interventions when he did feel obliged to act alone. Is it reading too much into the evidence to suggest that the pressures of his subconscious, or the interventions of a benevolent Deity which produced these visions are a sign that these actions are less than traditional, and so in need of some extra support? Whatever the truth of this hypothesis, it is true that visionaries often feel that they are responsible to God alone. Cyprian was no exception, and the fact that he was a bishop did nothing to weaken the sentiment.

While we remain at this theoretical level, and before contrasting this with his practice, several observations should be made. Cyprian was the first Christian writer to develop the claim that the bishop is responsible to God alone,[177] although Novatian had earlier pointed out in passing that any person who had followed the gospel discipline and the heavenly commandments is quite happy to be judged by God alone. He then suggested that Cyprian was such a person.[178] While this might be another example of the bishop following Roman advice, a similar idea is clearly present in Irenaeus; "the spiritual disciple full of the Spirit of God judges all men, and is himself judged by no one".[179] As Clement of Alexandria claimed as much for his orthodox

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177 This was pointed out by M. Bévenot 1951 art. p. 398.

178 Ep. 30. 1.

179 Adversus Haereses IV. 50. (II. p. 256): "Talis discipulus spiritalis vere recipiens Spiritum Dei, ... judicat quidem omnes, ipse autem a nemine judicatur". The same idea occurs again in A.H. IV. 53 (II. p. 261).

gnostic, this sort of statement, based on a mass of unstated, and often different preconditions had been recurrent in Christian literature since St. Paul.[180] What was new was that Cyprian had made this a privilege of the episcopate, rather than the saints. Those outside the episcopate had no such privileges in practice or in theory. They had to do as they were told. Every act of the Church is governed by the bishops,[181] and heresies and schisms arise when the bishop is not obeyed.[182]

Cyprian's practices provide some support for his claim for the episcopate's independence of human agencies. He allowed episcopal differences in the rebaptism controversy. Earlier at the council of 252, the rigorist bishops who refused to admit penitent lapsi to strengthen them for the next persecution, had been treated with a similar indulgence,[183] while the same principle was invoked against the laxist Felicissimus,[184] who had however been excommunicated earlier.[185]

Here the list ends. In fact uniform practice within the one visible Church was his ideal, and diversity among the episcopate was

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180 cf. Romans 8. 33-4; also 1 Cor. 4. 1-5.

181 Ep. 33. 1.

182 Ep. 59. 5.

183 Ep. 57. 5.

184 Ep. 59. 14.

185 Ep. 59. 1.

only tolerated as a regrettable second best, sometimes necessary to maintain visible unity. He and his colleagues judged and condemned fellow bishops.

His correspondence commences with a prohibition of prayer for the soul of Geminius Victor, almost certainly a bishop,[186] because this man had appointed a presbyter as his executor. More importantly he issued a blanket prohibition on bishops using water in the Eucharist.[187] Whatever might have happened in the past, he announces that he is sending letters to his colleagues to prohibit any present deviation. Those who deny his point of view are adulterers.[188] Cyprian and his colleagues rebuke bishop Therapius who had reconciled the presbyter Victor without due process. While this reconciliation was allowed to stand, and as a consequence there was no excommunication, Therapius was instructed not to act in this way again.[189] The African synod of 254 does not hesitate to assert that the two lapsi bishops from Spain, Basilides and Martial cannot return to the exercise of their episcopal duties;[190] nor to condemn those bishops who are in communion

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186 Ep. 1. 1. Geminius was a bishop because i) he is called "frater", ii) the see is vacant, the letter being addressed to presbyters, deacons and people, iii) there would be little reason to posthumously excommunicate a simple layman. Cyprian does not decree this by himself; rather "ego et collegae mei... et con-presbyteri nostri" (ep. 1. 1.); he also cites the previous ruling of an episcopal synod (ep. 1. 2.).

187 Ep. 63. 1.

188 Ep. 63. 17-18.

189 Ep. 64. 1.

190 Ep. 67. 1.

with the lapsi, threatening them (not Basilides and Martial) with the Holy Spirit.[191] He wrote to bishop Stephen of Rome, not only demanding that he act against bishop Marcian of Arles who had gone over to the Novatianists, but also demanding that Stephen instruct the bishops of Gaul to act against Marcian also.[192] He quoted with approval the condemnation for heresy of bishop Privatus of Lambaesis by an earlier council of ninety bishops,[193] and accepts the condemnation of the schismatic (and heretic?) bishop Evaristus by Cornelius.[194]

Most of these prescriptions are made by groups of bishops (ep. 1. 1; 59. 10; 64. 1; 67. 9); some by Cyprian alone (ep. 63. 1; 68. 2), but in each case bishops had to obey other bishops. There is no discernible pattern whereby uniformity was demanded on central issues, and pluriformity allowed for others; or whereby uniformity was demanded only for issues directly dependent on Scripture. He believed rebaptism was central and demanded by Scripture; yet bishops could differ on this point. Neither Cyprian nor the North African councils restricted their activities to North African affairs.

Two further points should be noted before we continue our

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191 Ep. 67. 9. This second prohibition is more significant, as Basilides and Martial are, in the African view, no longer bishops.

192 Ep. 68. 2.

193 Ep. 59. 10.

194 Ep. 52. 1; cf. ep. 50.

examination of his theology of the episcopate. In his condemnation of Geminius Victor for appointing a presbyter as his executor, Cyprian appealed to the probibition by an earlier council of bishops.[195] While the appeal to tradition was universal, and we know of earlier councils, this is the first known conciliar teaching on a purely disciplinary matter, which has remained in force beyond the immediate incident prompting the ruling. We have an incipient canon law.

Cyprian's role in enforcing this highlights his position as de facto metropolitan of North Africa. There was no official recognition of this from his fellow bishops, and it probably depended as much on his outstanding personality, as his position as the bishop of Carthage. There was as yet no strictly divided ecclesiastical provinces, and his influence extended over the whole of Latin North Africa. He wrote to Cornelius on their behalf,[196] played host to and dominated their councils, while maintaining a general supervisory role and still asserting the equality of bishops! This role explains some interventions on e.g. water in the Eucharist, no presbyteral executors, even if it leaves untouched the interventions in Spain and Gaul.[197]

We have already noted his belief that the episcopal succession

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195 Ep. 1. 2.

196 Ep. 48. 3.

197 For Cyprian's role as metropolitan; cf. P. Monceaux op. cit. vol. 2. (1902), pp. 11-13; 343; O. Ritschl op. cit. pp. 228-30. This is discussed at greater length in chapter 10 of this work.

guaranteed the unity of the Church, as well as the unity of doctrine. There are two other developments.

The bishops are not just guarantees. Their importance is central to the very existence of the Church, which is built upon them. They have the same power to govern as the Apostles.[198] Also their position depends on a legitimate ordination ceremony. Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus and Hippolytus all provided elements for this new unity.

While working within the traditional Irenaean concept of the apostolic succession, Tertullian had explained that the Apostles, and not Christ created the first bishops,[199] then moving on to assert that it was only the authority of the Church which established the difference between the clergy and the laity.[200] Cyprian remained within this Irenaean framework, but he resolutely outlawed Tertullian's alternative by calling the Apostles the first bishops. The deacons were reminded that Our Lord himself chose the Apostles, who are the bishops and heads (of the Churches), while it was only the Apostles who instituted the diaconate after Our Lord's ascension.[201] Mathias, who replaced Judas

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198 This is the opinion of bishop Clarus of Mascula. Sententiae 79.

199 De Praescriptione Haereticorum 20. 4; 32. 2-3.

200 De Exhortatione Castitatis 7. 3.

201 Ep. 3. 3.

was a bishop.[202] This was a possible logical alternative, working from the Scriptural evidence. For his purposes it was also a happy one, as it enhanced the dignity of the bishop, and retained the doctrine of the apostolic succession.

Cyprian often appealed to the Old Testament in his theology of the clergy. This has often been noted, with Walker pointing out that his quoted sources on the Christian ministry are always taken from the Old Testament,[203] and M. F. Wiles, more accurately, denying that these texts are merely illustrations of Christian practice served up for debating purposes; they represent "rather the fundamental ground upon which he (Cyprian) bases his ideas about the ministry with unswerving regularity in the course of active debate".[204]

This is a discussion of Cyprian's theory of the ministry; there is no suggestion that he created a ministry working from Old Testament precedents. He inherited the reality, at least in its general outlines from his predecessors. Nor is his theory of the ministry based exclusively upon the Old Testament. As we have just seen, he believed that Christ had created the Apostles as the first bishops, and the Apostles had created the deacons. The theory of the apostolic succession, so central to his thought, does not come from the Old

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202 Ep. 67. 4.

203 op. cit. p. 36.

204 "The theological legacy of St. Cyprian" in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History (14) 1963, p. 146.

Testament; neither does his link-up of the Church and the episcopate. The importance he gives to St. Peter is based on the New Testament. The Old Testament is used more to explain the activities of the ministry, and the duties of other Christians towards it, rather than to explain the ministry's very existence. Even here and despite our occasional misgivings about his exegesis, Cyprian does occasionally appeal to the New Testament e.g. Acts ^{c}.23. ^{v}4-5. and Mt. ^{c}8. ^{v}4. are used to show that priests must be honoured.[205]

Yet the importance of the Old Testament should not be underestimated, despite these other sources of influence. He presupposes that Christian bishops are the successors of the Jewish priests,[206] and is especially fond of Deuteronomy ^{c}17. ^{v}12-3., where those who disobeyed the Jewish priest were threatened with death.[207] He often used the Old Testament to show that idolatrous or sinful priests cannot offer sacrifice;[208] which texts are blanket prohibitions on any unworthy priest. Examples of such include those priests who have lapsed,[209] and those who had been schismatic or heretical.[210] The

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205 Both texts are used in eps 3. 2; 59. 4; Acts 23. 4-5 is used in ep. 66. 3., and Acts 1. 15; 6. 2. in ep. 67. 4. For a discussion of Cyprian's limited appeal to the New Testament on this point, see S. L. Greenslade, "Scripture and other doctrinal norms in early theories of the ministry" in J.T.S. (44) 1943, pp. 173-4.

206 Ep. 67. 4. This is also a Roman view; ep. 8. 1.

207 e.g. eps. 3. 1; 4. 4; 43. 7; 59. 4; 66. 3.

208 Eps. 65. 2; 67. 1 and 3; 69. 9; 72. 2; De Unitate 18.

209 Eps. 65. 2; 67. 3.

210 Eps. 69. 9; 72. 2.

sacrifices of these sinful priests are not merely invalid, but poisonous.[211]

However Cyprian had read other books besides Tertullian and the Bible. He was a man of some culture, who had received the usual classical education of a gentleman before his conversion. This is obvious from his writings. While he was no friend of the philosophers, and indeed drew a clear line between the Christians and the Stoics,[212] Hugo Koch has demonstrated the many parallels between his writings and those of Seneca.[213] These parallels occur most frequently in areas which are not our concern, when he speaks of the motivating powers active in the pagan world, of death and of pagan objections to Christianity;[214] Stoicism was not an important influence on his thought. Koch has also pointed out his similarities with the earlier North African writer Apuleius, author of the Golden Ass (or Metamorphoses). There is much penance and salvation language in Apuleius,[215] who had also enjoyed religious visions.[216] He spoke of the evil son of Venus

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211 Ep. 67. 3.

212 Ep. 55. 16.

213 "Cyprianische Untersuchungen" (1926). The list of parallels is given on pp. 289-310.

214 ibid p. 289.

215 ibid p. 315-16.

216 e.g. Metamorphoses 11. 5. sq; 11. 21-2. cf. Koch ibid pp. 320-1.

in similar terms to those Cyprian used of his own opponents.[217] There are also stylistic similarities between the two authors.[218] The importance of the similarities between Cyprian's writings and those of Seneca and Apuleius is not so much to prove a direct connection, as to show that Cyprian wrote the same language, and was influenced by the same masters, very much as any cultured North African of his time. Consciously or unconsciously these influences manifested themselves in his writings.

Another and more significant example of this is his use of legal and political terms to explain the workings of the Church, and especially of the episcopacy. The Church is divided into the "plebs" and "ordo"; heresy is described as seditio,[219] factio,[220] and rebellatio.[221] Similar terms from Roman political-law and religious-law are used of the bishop i.e. honos, munus, officium, administratio religiosa, fungi, mandare, episcopatum gerere.[222] Tertullian's terminology had prepared the ground for this usage, but two developments have taken place. The civil-law terminology of Tertullian has been replaced by the terminology of political law;[223] and the legal

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217 Met. 4. 30. cf. ep. 55. 26; 59. 1.

218 Koch op. cit. pp. 328-32

219 Ep. 27. 3.

220 Ep. 45. 3.

221 Ep. 59. 5. "rebelles".

222 Beck op. cit. p. 161; von Campenhausen op. cit. n46, p. 274.

223 Beck op. cit. p. 159.

terminology has assumed a much more central position as a characteristic of episcopal power in Cyprian's thought.[224] Beck has also pointed out some similarities between the position of bishop and that of a Roman magistrate, who is the repository of all power, even when he exercises it with the help of a committee.[225]

However later in Cyprian's career, both his practice and theory became less democratic. There are fewer appeals to the decisions of the whole of the community (rather than fellow bishops), and the laity take no place in decision making about rebaptism. This however was more the instinctive development of an increasingly selfconfident aristocrat, who had largely succeeded in channelling and controlling popular pressures, rather than a conscious adaptation of the bishop's role to that of a Roman magistrate.

In his writings on the episcopate, and in his episcopal activity, Cyprian was in every fundamental sense a child of Christian tradition; of the Old and New Testaments and later Christian literature. Apuleius

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224 ibid p. 161.

225 ibid pp. 156 sq. A couple of facts will demonstrate the position of the local magistrate i) on his death, power does not revert to the local community; he is not their representative. ii) Even in the voting assemblies (comitia) under the magistrate, the assembly could not make speeches, and had no right of initiative or amendment. The magistrate was even free to accept or reject the result of their voting. (On this second point, see "Principles of Roman Law" by F. Schulz, translated by M. Wolff, Oxford, 1936, pp. 170-2.).

and Seneca had no appreciable influence on his writings on authority; Roman law helps us to understand Cyprian's facility at government, and it provided some of his terminology. Beyond that, its most important contribution was to facilitate his development towards a monarchical episcopate rather than a "monepiscopate". The spirit of Rome helps to explain his enthusiasm for the Old Testament precedents of judge and ruler.

He often wrote of the bishops as priests. This is somewhat marginal to our interests, but the development of the theory of the ministerial priesthood and its application to the bishops first of all, does much to cement the position of the bishop in the Christian community. Even the presbyters have to remember the honour due to the priesthood of the bishop;[226] it is a divine priesthood.[227]

In his very early book of Testimonies (around 248), while he had spoken of the new priest, Christ, who succeeded the old priesthood, he did not then speak of a new group of human priests.[228] The New Testament, and his simple, literalist exegesis left him no other alternative. While Christ remained important as the instigator and teacher of (Christian) sacrifice,[229] and He who ordained Aaron,[230] Cyprian

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226 Ep. 17. 2.

227 Ep. 43. 2.

228 Ad Quirinum Book 1. 17.

229 Ep. 63. 1.

230 Ep. 69. 8.

later applied the term priest to contemporary bishops. "Sacerdos" regularly meant bishop, rather than presbyter.[231] There is no equivalent in the Christian Church of the Jewish High Priest.[232]

The theory of the ministerial priesthood also helped to increase the differentiation between clergy and laity. This differentiation, or clericalization, was in some measure necessary as the number of Christians grew, and with it the necessity for competent administration by "professionals". The celibacy of the clergy, which was not rare at this time, also made its contribution. Celibacy, when used properly by Church ministers can strengthen the Church immensely, and enhance the official position of the ministers correspondingly. It need not create a barrier between minister and people, and there is no evidence that its influence was anything but beneficial at this time. However the differentiation between a celibate clergy and a largely non-celibate laity remains. Celibacy was not obligatory for the clergy, but Cyprian was unmarried, as was Cornelius,[233] and celibacy was highly regarded in the Church.[234] While married bishops and

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231 This is especially evident in ep. 59. 5., "unus in ecclesia ad tempus sacerdos"; cf. Watson op. cit. nl. pp. 258-9; Bayard op. cit. p. 179.

232 This is an unaccountable regression from Tertullian, who had believed that the bishop was the "summus sacerdos". De Baptismo 17.

233 Ep. 55. 8.

234 cf. De Habitu Virginum 5.

presbyters are not mentioned very frequently,[235] and celibacy was not confined to males or clerics, it is going beyond the evidence to state that most clerics were unmarried.[236] A more important sign of this clericalization is the multiplication of people in the minor orders. Cyprian ordained a lector and subdeacon so that clerics could take his mail to Rome.[237]

OTHER CLERGY AND LAITY

There is little reason to believe that the presbyters made a very effective contribution to the workings of Cyprian's ruling aristocracy. The situation in Rome was similar, except that the clergy there, probably at the urging of Novatian, wrote a number of important letters while their city was without a bishop.[238] Only once in Cyprian's correspondence, and that at the beginning of his episcopate in 249, were the presbyters mentioned among the signatories of a collective letter of the bishops; then it was as an anonymous group beside the individually named bishops.[239]

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235 e.g. Felix and Victoria in ep. 24. 1; Numidicus and his wife in ep. 40. 1.

236 G. Bardy makes this point in "Le sacerdoce chrétien d'après saint Cyprien" in La Vie Spirituelle (60) 1939, n84. p. 111.

237 Ep. 29. 1.

238 e.g. eps. 8, 30 and 36.

239 Ep. 4.

The presbyters followed the bishops and preceded the deacons in the hierarchy of importance. They, and not the deacons, are the successors of the tribe of Levi;[240] but Cyprian never makes it clear whether they were chosen by Christ as the bishops were, or by the Apostles as the deacons were.[241] This ambiguous silence is in keeping with his slightly mixed feelings towards the presbyters, some of whom had not been enthusiastic about his election or his leadership.

They have subordinate teaching, or rather, catechetical duties.[242] With the deacons, they can reconcile the lapsi when the bishop is unavailable,[243] and they share in the priesthood to the extent that they can celebrate the Eucharist in similar circumstances.[244] The "presbyterium" formed the bishop's council, but they could do little in the absence of the bishop, and probably not much more when he was present, caught as they were between him and laity.

Their thoroughly subordinate position is best exemplified by Cyprian's belief that the flight of a bishop during persecution is sanctioned by Christ in the interest of continued government, while the presbyter must stay at his post to provide his spiritual and

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240 Ep. 1. 1.

241 cf. ep. 3.3.

242 Ep. 29. presbyteri doctores

243 Ep. 18. 1.

244 Ep. 5. 2; 12. 1; 16. 4.

corporeal ministrations.[245] We can imagine Tertullian's reaction to this!

Cyprian's writings on the laity also demonstrate his clericalist cast of mind. While there was no official hierarchy among them as there was among the clergy, there were different categories. The basic distinction was between the "stantes", who remained faithful during the persecution, and the "lapsi", who lapsed into paganism. Among the faithful there were confessors, martyrs (those who had borne notable suffering in confessing Christ), virgins, widows, catechumens, and "paenitentes", who were those taking part in the penitential processes.

Their role in the decision making within the Church was limited, although they were not completely excluded. They played on an important part in Cyprian's election,[246] but their role in the election of the clergy was often secondary. Their role in Cyprian's theory of the penitential processes diminished during the bishop's career, in parallel with the decline of their fortunes in the more general field of decision making.

This fits in with Cyprian's general theology where his heavy emphasis on the bishops is partnered by the complete absence of any doctrine of the priesthood of all Christians. Neither did he ever show enthusiasm for contemporary prophets; this is certainly a part of the anti-Montanist tradition. None of the classical Scriptural

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245 Ep. 34. 4.

246 Vita Caecilii Cypriani 4-5

texts about prophets e.g. Numbers $^{c}11.\ ^{v}29.$ or Ephesians $^{c}4.\ ^{v}11.$ or 1 Corinthians $^{c}12.\ ^{v}28.$ are ever applied to the laity by him.

Cyprian was an aristocrat, and the Church was organized for the benefit of all by a clerical aristocracy. This clerical aristocracy was not a tyranny, being too mindful of Christian traditions of community involvement, and too genuinely interested in the well being of the Church for this. Also there was one group, largely non clerical and no part of the official hierarchy, which did have considerable influence among North African Christians. These were not prophets, or teachers, but the confessors and martyrs.

Their place in popular esteem is so secure that Cyprian uses it to remind them of their special obligation to give good example.[247] This respect also helps to explain how they felt able to reconcile those who had fallen.[248] Such was this demand for reconciliation, there was every possibility that these laxist confessors and their presbyter-supporters would effectively take over leadership of the Christian community from any bishop who dared to withstand them. Cyprian felt this, as he complained that his presbyters and deacons had not answered his previous letters.[249] His position was further

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247 Eps. 11. 1; 15. 1. etc.

248 Eps. 21; 22; 23.

249 Ep. 18. 1.

complicated, and weakened vis-a-vis the confessors by his flight from Carthage. However Cyprian's allowing the deathbed reconciliations of lapsi, who had a certificate from the confessors[250] temporarily relieved this pressure; and the later council decision to allow the return of all penitent lapsi as a preparation for the persecution of Gallus effectively removed the threat of a laxist schism. At least in his early years as a Christian, Cyprian was never tempted to laxism; that an unconstitutional (i.e. with no official authority) group such as the confessors should be claiming to dispense this largesse only compounded the error. He described the short, terse note of the confessors asking him to inform the episcopate of their decision to reconcile the lapsi (epistle 23), as being "destructive of every bond of faith, of the fear of God and the commandments of Our Lord, as well as of the sanctity and durability of the Gospel".[251] The distaste of the Roman official for the unconstitutional and freewheeling activities of these individuals is only too apparent. He never budged an inch further than recognizing the necessity of their certificate for reconciliation; and he always demanded their obedience,[252] just as he always lavished extravagant, and no doubt, sincere praise upon them.[253] The

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250 ibid.

251 Ep. 27. 2.

252 e.g. eps. 15. 1; 51. 2; 76. 1 and 6.

253 cf. all the letters to the confessors.

clergy and especially the bishops had been appointed by God to rule the flock, and neither the confessors, despite their achievements, much less any other group or the mass of the faithful could do any more than assist them in this role.

THE ELECTION OF BISHOPS

The penitential processes are always the "locus classicus" for an investigation into the workings of Church authority. This is true in St. Cyprian's writings. However we have a description of one other procedure which is very revealing; the election of bishops and clergy.

Typically Cyprian believed that this procedure belonged to divine tradition and apostolic observance,[254] and pointed out that this practice obtains through nearly all the provinces.[255] The whole community was involved in the election of bishops, and while Cyprian chose lesser clerics by himself without the help of the congregation,[256] he never abbreviated the procedure for a bishop. This was that the neighbouring bishops should meet together to ratify the choice of the new bishop in the presence of the people, who knew the worth of each of the candidates.[257] Here it is the presence of the people which is required; in other places we read of their suffrage,[258] or their

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254 Ep. 67. 5.

255 ibid.

256 Eps. 38. 1; 39. 1.

257 Ep. 67. 5.

258 Ep. 59. 5.

testimony.[259] Benson has pointed out that there is no evidence that the people cast votes;[260] but they could exert on occasion a decisive influence. The election of Ambrose to the archbishopric of Milan over one hundred years later shows that this tradition was not entirely dormant. Cyprian defended the role of the congregation from both Old Testament and New Testament precedents.[261] There is no proof that the people was only able to judge about the moral suitability of the candidates, while the bishops or clerics decided on their doctrinal orthodoxy. While one would expect that in normal circumstances the bishops would decide doctrinal suitability, the distinction and even the problem is slightly anachronistic because most North Africans saw heretics and schismatics as necessarily being immoral (and presumably the heretics returned the compliment). Certainly the people had a special responsibility to examine the moral suitability of candidates.[262]

As well as all this, divine judgment or approval was required.[263] This was obtained when all the necessary steps in the procedure had been carried out on a suitable candidate. Sometimes the divine intervention was a little more direct, and enabled Cyprian to ordain without

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259 Ep. 44. 3.

260 E. W. Benson, "Cyprian. His Life. His Times. His Work." (1897) p. 28.

261 Numbers 20. 25-6 and Acts 6. 2. are quoted in ep. 67. 4.

262 e.g. "mores et merita" ep. 38. 1; "crimina", "merita" ep. 67. 4; "quae singulorum vitam plenissime novit et uniuscuiusque actum de eius conversatione perspexit", ep. 67. 5.

263 e.g. eps. 43. 1; 59. 5; 67. 2.

the assistance of the congregation. Here divine approval was shown through visions,[264] or through the fact that those ordained were confessors.[265]

Naturally these fixed rules and the necessity of divine approval strengthened the position of the clergy; so did the requirement of popular approval, and the fact that bishops of other provinces ratified these episcopal consecrations as in Cyprian's approval of Cornelius' election.[266] The whole procedure was concluded by the imposition of hands on the candidate, probably by the bishops of the province only.[267] While this was necessary, Cyprian laid more stress on the suitability of the candidate, and the other parts of the procedure. He did not mention the imposition of hands very frequently, and did not regard it as having a special importance within the ceremony. The word "ordinatio" refers to the whole procedure.[268]

The presbyters and lower clergy have no separate part in the election. Sometimes they are named with the bishops and the people as a group at the election.[269] At other times, they merge into the plebs.[270] This confirms the overall picture of a community, which still maintains traditions of popular involvement, but which is in fact

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264 Ep. 39. 1.
265 Eps. 38; 39; 40.
266 Ep. 55. 8.
267 Ep. 67. 5.
268 e.g. ep. 67. 4.
269 Eps. 55. 8; 68. 2.
270 e.g. eps. 44. 3; 67. 4-5; 38; 39.

effectively managed by the bishops.

PENANCE

The earlier Hermas-type approach of Tertullian to penance, and his later denial of ecclesiastical reconciliation for all serious sins, together with his accusations of Catholic inconsistency in granting pardon to adulterers and fornicators, but not murderers or idolators[271] show that there was not one common practice among the North African Catholics; but there was a strong tradition of rigorism.

What is certain is that Cyprian until his letter of the summer of 250 did not want to readmit the lapsi to full reconciliation. When he did unbend it was only for those who were dying; this concession, or the later expansion of it to all penitent lapsi, would have prevented much trouble if granted earlier. Obviously he saw no incongruity in his being bishop of Carthage, and holding this rigorist viewpoint. This early rigorism is confirmed by the section in his book of Testimonies, written about the year 248, where he uses Scripture to prove that sins against God cannot be forgiven in the Church.[272] The

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271 De Pudicitia 5. 15; 9. 9-11; 9. 20.

272 Testimonia Book 3. 28. "Non posse in ecclesia remitti ei qui in Deum deliquerit". While there are good reasons for believing Cyprian only edited Books 1-2, rather than composed them himself, his stamp is more visible in Book 3. In both cases, he chose the texts as suitable for his friend (including the rigorist text); cf. R. P. C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church", pp. 261-4. The suggestion of A. d'Alès "La Théologie de saint Cyprien" (1922) p. 287. that "remitti" meant a total liquidation of sin as in baptism, without penitential practices, and was always disallowed by Cyprian, is false. In 259, (ep. 59. 16.) he now explains how he himself remits sins (remitto omnia).

texts used here i.e. Mt. $^{c}3.\ ^{v}28.$ and Mt. $^{c}12.\ ^{v}32.$ show that a sin against God means blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. A year later he referred to the misuse of wealth as a sin against God (in Deum).[273] He referred to idolatory and adultery as sins against God;[274] rebels against Church leaders also commit this crime.[275] In these last two cases though, the phrase against God was "contra Deum" or "adversus Deum" rather than the original "in Deum". He did return to this phrase, when explaining his conversion to a more liberal approach. He doesn't even examine the sins against God (in Deum) too scrupulously; in fact he confesses to almost sinning in remitting more sins than he should.[276] Tertullian's influence can be seen in this early rigorism. We cannot be sure what exactly constituted a sin against God (which could not be forgiven) for the newly Christian Cyprian. At this very early stage, the inclusion of the misuse of wealth in this category,[277] would seem to indicate a rigorism, denying ecclesiastical reconciliation to all serious sins. It is possible that as a recent convert, and living with Caecilianus away from the general stream of Church life, he did not think that serious sin occurred

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273 De Habitu Virginum 11

274 Ep. 55. 27.

275 Ep. 59. 13.

276 Ep. 59. 16.

277 De Habitu Virginum 11.

frequently in the community. If he ever believed in a Church of saints, the many falls during the Decian persecution would have served as a corrective. This assumption of a general impossibility of ecclesiastical reconciliation for serious sins, as outlined in the Testimonies, also prevents us from claiming that initially he excluded only idolators, but not adulterers or murderers.[278] His examples show that he did not limit the sin against God to idolatory.

Cyprian's view of penance before and after his change of heart was not necessarily the practice of all the North African Church. After this change he wrote that some of his predecessors and some of the bishops in his province had refused both to admit adulterers to penance and then to reconcile them.[279] When we recall Tertullian's Catholic opinions on penance, and his later attacks on Catholic bishops for reconciling adulterers we can reasonably conclude that much of this rigorism accompanied the rise of Montanism and was very probably prompted by it.

This text shows also that some of the African episcopate had reconciled adulterers in the past. The inference is that most followed this practice. There is also strong indirect evidence that lapsi were reconciled by some African bishops. Once again the

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278 cf. ep. 17. 2. which describes the penitential processes for sins not committed against God, and then insists on much greater caution in grave sins.

279 Ep. 55. 21.

De Paenitentia texts of Tertullian are relevant. Galtier adduced two more reasons also (i) the spontaneous appeal of the lapsed to the confessors, and (ii) the fact that neither Rome, nor Cyprian stated that the petition of the lapsi was directly opposed to tradition.[280] Those bishops who had excluded adulterers would certainly have excluded lapsi.

In Rome reconciliation of lapsi certainly happened. In the early letter of the Roman clergy to Cyprian, there is no attempt to establish the credentials for the deathbed reconciliation of penitent lapsi. It is presumed.[281] M. C. Chartier has offered the plausible suggestion that the purpose of this letter was to lessen the known rigorism of the Carthaginian Church.[282] Very probably this is the letter which Cyprian suggests has been tampered with, and about which he writes to Rome for confirmation. If this is so, then the only possible cause for his concern would be the teaching on reconciliation.

The fact that some confessors of Cyprian's time felt able to reconcile lapsi is paralleled by Tertullian's earlier complaint that Catholics allowed their confessors to reconcile adulterers.[283] Contemporary with Stephen, the confessors in Alexandria had granted a

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280 P. Galtier "De Paenitentia" (1931) pp. 172-4.

281 Ep. 8. 2-3.

282 "La discipline penitentielle d'après les écrits de saint Cyprien" in Antonianum (14) 1939, p. 38.

283 De Pudicitia 22. 1.

limited form of conciliation to some lapsi, and the bishop Dionysius had allowed this concession to stand.[284] The letter of Celerinus from Rome shows that this custom was known there also.[285]

This discussion has presupposed that Cyprian recognized the distinction between total excommunication, and partial excommunication i.e. partial reconciliation short of reception of the Eucharist. Those taking part in the official penitential practices come under this second heading. Total excommunication might be permanent, or temporary. Novatian and his supporters such as Marcian of Arles preached the total and permanent excommunication of lapsi,[286] so that lapsi could not even begin the penitential processes. The excommunication of the lapsi in Carthage until letter eighteen of the summer of 250 was an excommunication, which turned out to be temporary.[287] The synodal letter of 252 not merely admitted all penitent lapsi to exomologesis, (this had been done), but restored them immediately to full communion. However lapsi, who had reverted to a pagan way of life or had gone over to the heretics were explicitly excluded from this full communion.[288] Cyprian also believed that

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284 Eusebius H.E. VI. 42. 5. sq.

285 Ep. 21.

286 cf. eps. 55. 25; 68. 1.

287 No text gives us definite information on whether the lapsi presumed permission to commence the penitential exercises; or whether this was "normal" procedure.

288 Ep. 57. 3.

clerics who lapsed could only return to the Church as laymen, as in the case of Basilides and Martial in Spain.

He also described the steps in the process on a number of occasions.[289] First of all there is the performance of the public penances; then follows "exomologesis" i.e. the admission of guilt and declaration that the penances have been performed, the imposition of hands by bishop and clergy, and the celebration of Mass with the newly reconciled receiving the Eucharist. Koch[290] has pointed out that the word "exomologesis" was never used by Cyprian of any confession before admission to penance nor of the "absolution" by the bishop. We know of no special Church ceremony at the beginning of penance although the permission of the bishop was needed before a person could begin. The length and difficulty of the penance usually depended on the gravity of the sin.[291] The immediate full reconciliation of all penitent lapsi in the face of imminent persecution in 252 was exceptional.

There are a number of texts in which we read that only God can forgive sins.[292] These references are directed against the confessors, who themselves presumed to reconcile lapsi. D. B. Capelle has correctly pointed out that the judgment spoken of is the last judgment

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289 e.g. eps. 15. 1; 16. 2; 17. 2.

290 "Cyprianische Untersuchungen" p. 280-1.

291 cf. De Lapsis 28.

292 e.g. ibid 17.

at the end of time.[293] Only in the case of the martyrs is Christ's final judgment known beforehand.[294]

This final and definitive judgment does not exclude judgments by the Church, and especially by the bishops here on earth. However the emphasis on Christ's definitive judgment is explained not merely by the Scriptural evidence; but by Cyprian's preoccupation that a bishop might be deceived into reconciling an unrepentant sinner. If a sinner does deceive the bishop, then God will not be deceived and will correct the decision.[295] A little later the synodal letter explains that whatever is loosed by the Church on earth can be loosed in heaven.[296] Typically he does not seem to have considered the possibility of an orthodox bishop unjustly excommunicating a person, or refusing him full reconciliation.

Capelle has also pointed out a development in Cyprian's references to penance, which parallels the increasing emphasis placed on the bishops in other areas. In the early letter, there are many references to the imposition of hands, through which the penitent receives the right to full reconciliation,[297] being performed by bishop and clergy.[298] After letter eighteen the accent is much on the role of the bishop alone.

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293 "L'absolution sacerdotale chez saint Cyprien" in Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale" (7), 1935, pp. 224-5; cf. De Lapsis 17-18; eps 58. 3; 55. 20.

294 Ep. 55. 20.

295 Ep. 55. 18.

296 Ep. 57. 1.

297 Ep. 16. 2.

298 cf. op. cit. n9. p. 228. The texts cited are eps. 15. 1; 16. 2; 17. 2; 18. 1. Two others are relevant, eps. 14. 1 and 16. 4.

Peace is granted by Christ's priests (sacerdotes),[299] reparation or satisfaction is made to God through the bishops.[300] He had the politician's facility to emphasise at one particular moment that part of the whole truth which served his purposes. Another example of this is his two references to the confessors, written while he was in exile, pointing out that they will be judges in the next life with Christ.[301] This was obviously intended as a palliative for his refusal to grant them any independent power of judgment in the Church.

The significance of the role of the bishop in the penitential processes can only be considered in the context (i) of the role (limited though it may be) played by all the congregation in the act of judging; and (ii) of the fact that bishop and clergy performed the final right of reconciliation through the imposition of hands. Cyprian never denied either of these realities. The accent on the bishop alone merely shows that both these functions belong first of all to the bishop, and then in a subsidiary and derived fashion to other Christians. The bishop has these powers as a representative of Christ,[302] rather than as the delegate or organ of the community in whom these powers are vested.

There is no mention of any priestly absolution apart from the

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299 Ep. 55. 29; cf. ep. 66. 5. where the peace is given by Cyprian himself.

300 Ep. 43. 3; De Lapsis 29; 36.

301 Eps. 6. 2; 15. 3.

302 Ep. 59. 5.

imposition of hands. Naturally there is no suggestion that this final intervention has any magical quality independent of the repentance and penances of the sinner. Indeed, as with the ordination ceremony in the election of a bishop, little attention is given to the imposition of hands as a special part of the whole process. So Koch concludes that there is no sacrament of penance, because sins are not forgiven through an absolution, but through the performance of the necessary penances.[303] This last activity is very important; as satisfaction or reparation it is regarded as the true medicine.[304] Even here the bishop has a part to play, because he is the doctor who prescribes the correct medicine, the amount of penances required.[305] As always in these cases much depends on the definition of sacrament. The final official reconciliation is a necessary part of the process, and this whole process is sacramental in as much as the sinner is not merely reconciled with the Church, but receives the Spirit of the Father.[306] Some texts[307] also seem to weaken this sacramentality with their implication that the lapsi's cause is in abeyance till the next life. While all Christians are to be judged by Christ, these texts show the reconciled within the Church and on a level with other Church members.[308]

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303 op. cit. pp. 282-3

304 De Lapsis 15.

305 Ibid 14; 28.

306 Ep. 57. 4.

307 e.g. ep. 55. 29; De Lapsis 17.

308 cf. M. Bévenot, "The sacrament of penance and St. Cyprian's De Lapsis" in Theological Studies (16) 1955. pp. 195-6.

Finally the sacramental significance of sealing the process with the celebration of Mass should not be forgotten.

The language used to describe all this was not peculiar to Cyprian or even to Christians. Apuleius had spoken of leaving the community,[309] of refusing participation in the community,[310] of remitting sin.[311] Beck too has pointed out the many terms taken over by Cyprian in this matter from Roman criminal law.[312] Culpa, poena, facinus, crimen, reus, parracida, homicidium, stuprum, fraus are some examples of these terms, which are taken no longer from civil law. Even the penitential process is described in terms used of a Roman trial: excusatio, quaesitor, iudicium, causam agere, sententia.[313] Several consequences followed from this. The whole penitential process became more codified and organized,[314] and the emphasis was placed more on judgment than on healing. The bishop became more the judge, although still a physician. Here too the similarities of the bishop with the Roman magistrate are obvious, because the Roman magistrate had power to punish, or to remit punishment, just as the bishop has.[315] This model of the magistrate influenced Cyprian's increasing emphasis on the bishop, rather

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309 Metamorphoses 10. 14. "a nexu communionis discedere".
310 De Deo Socratis 5. "communio denegata".
311 Met. 3. 19; also 2. 10; 7. 27. cf. Koch op. cit. p. 316.
312 op. cit. pp. 168-70.
313 ibid p. 171.
314 ibid p. 146.
315 cf. Beck op. cit. p. 160; also J. L. Strachan-Davidson, "Problems of the Roman Criminal Law" vol. 1. Oxford (1912) pp. 96-100, who, quoting Mommsen, explains "the principle of the unity and pervasiveness of magisterial powers" in judging criminal cases, even when the magistrate's decisions are based on the findings of jurors, and liable to the counter appeal. Chapter 6 of this work pp. 96-114 is devoted to the role of the magistrate as a criminal judge.

than the whole community in his description of penance. The bishop is the "iudex vice Christi" just as the magistrate is judge.

Cyprian inherited the basic penitential practice. His theory of a total absence of spiritual life outside the Church meant that excommunication was a fearsome weapon. He explained all this in traditional terms, and in terms from Roman criminal law. This brought about subtle, but real changes in the process itself.

We cannot be sure just when Cyprian changed from the initial rigorism of the Testimonies. Certainly the major emphasis in the early letters is opposition to the overhasty concession of reconciliation;[316] but whether this is Cyprian's only objection as Poschmann maintains,[317] is doubtful. By instinct he would have stressed this common ground with his opponents, whatever further reservations he might have entertained as he was deciding what line to adopt. That he did have deeper objections than Poschmann supposes receives some support from his description of the penitential processes for lesser sins, and especially his quoting Matthew $^{c}10.\ ^{v}32\text{-}33$.[318]

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316 e.g. eps. 15. 2; 16. 2; 17. 3.

317 "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" (1964) p. 54.

318 Ep. 16. 2; cf. ep. 17. 2. It is true that during the quarrel he never explicitly invoked the threatening heading of the Testimonia (cf. Bévenot op. cit. p. 188), and that he continued to quote Mt. 10. 32-3 (eps. 58. 3; 59. 12; De Lapsis 20.). However the use of this text in the early uncertain situation is at least open to a variety of interpretations.

Just as we cannot pinpoint the stages in his development, so we cannot for the Roman traditionalist and rigorist, Novatian. When Cornelius became Pope, he broke with the Church, was consecrated bishop,[319] and finally excommunicated with his followers by a Roman synod of sixty bishops, as well as presbyters and deacons.[320] The letter of Cornelius to bishop Fabius of Antioch (quoted by Eusebius) shows that there was much personal animosity between himself and Novatian. This fact is sometimes linked with the moderation of letters 30 and 36 from the Roman clergy to Cyprian and penned by Novatian, to show that his rigorism is a consequence of his schism.[321] However in these letters he might have been expressing the views of the Roman clergy rather than his own, although he could hardly have held any profound objections to them at that stage.[322] His position is best explained by positing a gradual hardening of his rigorism, accentuated by his personal difficulties. While appealing to the old Hippolytan doctrine of a Church of saints, he continued to reconcile

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319 Eusebius E.H. VI. 43. 9.

320 ibid VI. 43. 2.

321 e.g. Poschmann op. cit. p. 58.

322 cf. M. Bévenot's review in J.T.S. (20) N.S. 1969. p. 632. of H. J. Vogt's book "Coetus Sanctorum: Der Kirchenbegriff des Novatien und die Geschichte seiner Sonderkirche" (Bonn 1968). I became aware of this book too late to use it.

adulterers.[323] Later Novatianists refused to reconcile all grave sinners.

CONCLUSION

By his own common sense standards Cyprian was an amazingly successful bishop. He combined a genuine religious sense, with an unfailing sensitivity of what was necessary for the corporate wellbeing and survival of the visible Church. Christ died to save us, and Cyprian died for his faith; but it never entered his head that the work of Christ could ever be furthered by the destruction of the Church. With his contemporaries he believed unhesitatingly in the healthiness of the visible Church, and he worked untiringly to this purpose. He articulated the devotion of her members to mother-Church; his increasingly generous treatment of the lapsi is prompted by this same consideration. Even in the rebaptism controversy, while his theory moved from the unicity of the Church, in practice he swallowed his pride and refused to act on the disruptive conclusions of this argumentation, in order to maintain the unity and wellbeing of the Church. The apostolic succession theory was developed to be applied directly to her, and she was linked indissolubly with the episcopate.

As far as the bishops were concerned, there was a double development from Tertullian. Not only were the Apostles the first bishops, but contemporary bishops had the same power as the Apostles. In

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323 At least Cyprian accused him of this (ep. 55. 27.).

practice there is no ambiguity about the role of the teaching bishop. In his episcopal practice, Cyprian followed no consistent pattern of procedure, acting as bishop for his own diocese, through provincial synods, as a metropolitan for Latin North Africa, and even interfering in Spain and Gaul. In the vast majority of cases he did act in concert with others, be it the clergy and people of his diocese, or his fellow bishops.

Whatever the earlier situation, episcopal control of the diocese of Carthage was strengthened during his time. From the situation during his absence, when the laxist presbyters and confessors came close to establishing de facto leadership of the community, he moved to a position of undisputed control, whose style was more monarchical than monepiscopal. In the lapsi debate he took a couple of important decisions without his local congregation, and in the rebaptism problem never appealed to them at all. At times, he was prepared to dispense with their services in the ordination processes, and theoretically at least he emphasised the role of the clergy and laity in the penitential processes less and less. This was paralleled by a general reticence on the role of the presbyters, although he was not directly anti-presbyteral. Nor was he considered to be so by his contemporaries. While the theory that Novatus was motivated by a defence of the presbyters' rights could explain his opposition to Cyprian's policy, it cannot explain his opposition to the bishop's consecration.[324] This

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324 See S. L. Greenslade "Schism in the Early Church" (1964) pp. 39-40.

extension of episcopal control was also much aided by Cyprian's elastic appeal to traditional norms, and his habit of usually reaching "divine" decisions.

While he realised that bishops might be deceived by unscrupulous people, especially in the question of readmission, he gave little consideration to the possibility of a "good" bishop acting with undue severity towards an innocent Christian. He had little interest in effective checks on episcopal power, beyond the general admonition that bishops must listen as well as teach,[325] and urging the laity in Spain to separate from their lapsi bishops;[326] even this last example was done under episcopal supervision.

His appeals to the equality of bishops and to the common decisions of his own congregation were both anachronistic. As some sort of ideal, these almost certainly were sincerely intended, but as norms they were no longer adequate to the new situation, and he never felt seriously bound by them. It seems that the determination of some to show that Cyprian did not believe in Roman jurisdiction over other dioceses (which he did not) has led them to accept at face value his

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325 Ep. 74. 10.

326 Ep. 67. 3.

claims of episcopal equality.[327] He no more felt a permanent obligation to act on this principle than he felt obliged to always consult his own congregation. If something had to be done, it was a secondary consideration how or by whom this was done.

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327 e.g. von Campenhausen op. cit. p. 277: "Cyprian nevertheless attaches the greatest importance to the fact that the following which he acquired there (Latin Africa) was at all times entirely voluntary; it came about simply through unanimity on the question at issue, not as a result of pressure or demands from his side". Also Benson op. cit. p. 191. (and pp. 193-5): the college of bishops "not even when unanimous constraining a single dissentient bishop". It is difficult enough to believe that this was true of a dissentient bishop within a council; it is certainly not true of dissentient bishops not present then. Walker op. cit. p. 34. has noted the problem, but his attempt to resolve it is unsatisfactory "If the collective episcopate could not pass judgment on any of its individual members, it could always turn a bishop into a laymen simply by expelling him from the episcopal college".

CHAPTER NINE

SYRIA AND ASIA MINOR

DIDASCALIA

The Didascalia highlights faithfully the relationship between doctrines and institutions in the early Church. As always these two were closely connected, but theory then tended very much to follow developments in institutional practice as post factum explanation. There is a temptation to see the consolidation of the episcopate in the West as a result of Irenaeus' writings on the apostolic succession, and to apply this same explanation and the example of Ignatius of Antioch to a "development" of the monarchical episcopate in the East. However the bishop in the Didascalia in theory and probably in practice is more monarchical than Cyprian, has a theology of the episcopate significantly different from the North African's, and does not use the theory of apostolic succession.

This is a work of elementary pastoral theology, concerned with correct moral practices in the day to day problems of a group of Christians organized in a local community. The author is neither a canonist, nor preoccupied with the doctrinal issues of theology proper, or the socio-religious concerns of ecclesiological problems. He would have infuriated Origen with his sententiousness, and his self-confident, uncomplicated episcopalism; the more so because he was so obviously a good man. But it is fairer to compare him with Cyprian;

persecution to explain the situation to the laity?"[141] This is not in contradiction with the Montanist conception of the bishop as administrator and disciplinarian, as distinct from the emerging Catholic concept of charismatic teacher and leader. He had absolutely no sympathy with those bishops who overemphasized their own importance.[142] The prophets were now the teachers and moral leaders; so much so that even Adam is counted among them as he prophesied the great mystery of Christ and the Church under the power of the Holy Spirit.[143] They, and especially Montanus and his two companions were the organs of the Paraclete.

This exaltation of the prophets obviously enhances the dignity of any lay person so endowed. Tertullian went beyond this, and became the first writer to play off the universal priesthood of all Christians against the ministerial.[144] He was already some way towards this position in the De Exhortatione Castitatis, but he had not used his position then as a weapon against the clergy. He now bounded on to the offensive against his clerical antagonists; bureaucrats insensitive

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141 De Fuga 11. 1. The ambiguous nature of this Montanist work written for Catholic consumption makes the identity of the clerics somewhat uncertain (i.e. Montanist or Catholic?). It is most probable that he is addressing the clerics of both parties. cf. Barnes op. cit. pp. 118-19.

142 cf. De Monog. 12. 2-3; De Pud. 13. 7.

143 De Anima 12. 4. Also cf. 21. 2.

144 von Campenhausen "Ecc. Auth." p. 228. points this out.

so many places in the Decian persecution,[4] and no suggestion of any lists outlining different punishment for varieties of sin.[5] The author's attitude to the presbyters, and exaltation of the episcopate can only be explained by his own episcopal rank.[6]

NORMS

The fiction of apostolic authorship for the Didascalia, while significant in itself, seriously limits any investigation into the variety of norms then used in the Syrian Church. The practical concerns of the author are also reflected in his simple use of traditional norms.

The authorship is supposed to belong to the Twelve Apostles, who met early on in Jerusalem when the Church was in danger of falling into heresy, to write the Didascalia.[7] Matthew[8] and Peter[9] among the

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4 Against this, W. H. C. Frend, "Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church", Oxford 1965, tells how we know of only two deaths (of bishops) in Syria and Palestine in this persecution (p. 413.); that many lapsed then and that the Christian community was severely disorganized in Syria is almost certain.

5 Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa appeal to the decisions of the "ancients" or "fathers" on this point; cf. Galtier op. cit. p. 343.

6 After early opposition, the single authorship of the work now receives overwhelming support. Galtier op. cit. p. 326. cites Connolly, Funk, Achelis, Nau, Bardenhewer and Harnack; also von Campenhausen n54. p. 245.

7 Didascalia 24 (p. 204.). The text of R. H. Connolly, Oxford 1929 is used. References are to the chapter headings and pages of his English translation of the Syriac text. When the Latin text is quoted, the chapter and page references, also from Connolly, are prefaced by the letter "L".

8 Didas. 10. (103).

9 Didas. 23. (200).

Twelve are specified as authors. Although the work, unlike the "Apostolic Tradition" of Hippolytus purports to be a direct production of the Apostles, there lies behind this naive device (used also by the Didache, which probably comes from the same area) a similar exaltation of the value of apostolicity as a criterion of true teaching, and a preventitive of heresy. Unlike the apocalyptic genre, and together with the Church Orders, it is written in the name of all the Apostles.[10] The tradition is one and Catholic, shared by all the Apostles, and formulated with the help of the people, James brother of the Lord (who is bishop of Jerusalem) and his presbyters and deacons.[11]

There are no explicit appeals to the epistles, as it is part of the fiction that these have yet to be written. But the "Gospel" (singular) is invoked many times, as it is the trumpet to be used in the Church,[12] with which the teachings of the Law and Prophets must accord.[13] As this passage is prefaced by the instruction that one must be "constant in reading the divine Scriptures with diligence", Scripture comprises Law, Prophets (i.e. Old Testament) and Gospel. It is these

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10 cf. A. F. Walls, "A note on the apostolic claim in Church Order Literature" in Texte und Untersuchungen (64) 1957. p. 92.

11 Didas. 24. (204).

12 Didas. 4. (36); presumably to be used especially by the watchman-bishop (ibid).

13 Didas. 4. (34).

"dominical and divine Scriptures which are the firm foundation of our faith",[14] and which are to be followed when the bishop judges sinners.[15]

All the four Gospels are quoted, with Matthew being used extensively, and only a few certain quotations from John.[15] The Acts of the Apostles, 1 Timothy and Titus are definitely used, while there are probably references to Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians. The use of other epistles is problematical, and the author does not seem to have known Hebrews or the Apocalypse;[16] of the Apocrypha, the Gospel of Peter was certainly quoted at least a couple of times.[17] Whether this Gospel was on a par with the four accepted elsewhere must remain an open question; Connolly has pointed out against this that the work is only cited twice,[18] but certain direct quotations from John's Gospel are equally rare.[19] Apart from the New Testament books the author did not quote, and perhaps did not know, it is difficult to decide whether

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14 Didas. 21. (180).

15 Didas. 6. (50-2).

15 Connolly. Intro. pp. LXX-LXXI.

16 cf. G. Strecker op. cit. n6. pp. 252-3; Connolly p. LXXII-LXXIII is a little more optimistic about finding other New Testament references.

17 cf. Connolly op. cit. pp. LXXV-LXXVI.

18 ibid pp. LXXVI.

19 cf. Connolly's own index. p. 274.

he did not elevate the other epistles to a rank with the Gospels because of the literary fiction of apostolic authorship, or because he did not regard them as having an equal status. The second possibility is a strong one, even if he granted them a special "inspired" status. The device of apostolic authorship is not compatible with a closed New Testament canon. Of the late second century and third century authors we have discussed so far, only Clement of Alexandria has a (somewhat) similarly fluid concept of the New Testament. This fact must be another indication of an earlier rather than a later third century dating.[20]

There is no reference in the Syriac text to the "rule", although the Latin text speaks of the "ecclesiasticam regulam et evangelicam formam".[21] We cannot be sure that the Latin form does not come from a later translator or editor.[22] Whatever the name given to this outline of the central beliefs of the faith, we are twice given some indication of its contents,[23] which contain no references to the Church

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20 H. von Campenhausen, "Die Entstehung der Christlichen Bibel" (1968) devotes little space to the place of the Didascalia in the development of the New Testament Canon, and adds nothing beyond Strecker; cf. n90. p. 196.

21 Didas. L. ^{c}LVI. (241). The Syriac text speaks of "the truth of the Church and the power of the Gospel" 26. (240).

22 cf. R. P. C. Hanson, "Tradition in the Early Church" (1962) p. 78.

23 Didas. 15. (132-3); 26. (258).

or the penitential processes. These lists are useful paraphrases, rather than comprehensive norms, as the heretics are distinguished from the orthodox by their rejection or misuse of the Scriptures.[24]

One of the principal themes of the work is its complete rejection of the Second Legislation ("secundatio", or "secundatio Legis" in Latin version); "when thou conformest to Him (Christ), through the Gospel thou conformest to the Law, and thou wilt entirely avoid the Second Legislation".[25] This is not the tradition of the elders, written or oral, explaining the Law, but the whole ceremonial legislation of the Pentateuch, which was only given to the Jews after they had worshipped the calf, and is distinguished from the first Law of the Ten Words and the Judgments.[26] Connolly has pointed out the similarities with Irenaeus' "Adversus Haereses",[27] who distinguished between the Decalogue and the ceremonial legislation, but was much more

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24 Didas. 25. (212). They also blaspheme the Catholic Church. However later on the heretics are those who do not follow the Law and the Prophets (no reference to the Gospel), who abstain from meats, refuse to marry and do not believe in the resurrection of the body. Didas. 26. (240-2). Apart from the reference to the Old Testament and a rejection of the resurrection of the body, the distinguishing marks are ones of moral practice.

25 Didas. 26. (240).

26 Didas. 2. (12-14).

27 op. cit. pp. LXIII-IV.

sympathetic to the latter than the Syrian work.[28] This difference is partly explained by the different opponents of the two authors; Irenaeus had to defend the Old Testament against Marcion who rejected it, while the principal concern of the Didascalia was not Gnostic heretics, but the Judaizing group within the Christian community who needed to be reminded that the ceremonial ordinances of the Old Law were gone irrevocably.[29]

CHURCH AND EPISCOPATE

The author shows a real love of the Church (which he often calls the Catholic Church[30]), which he expresses in traditional images, if not at great length. She is both the daughter[31] and the bride of the Lord God,[32] and Christ is her head.[33] She is also the tabernacle of God,[34] the receptacle of the Holy Spirit,[35] and unique. Those err who think there are other Churches.[36] The possibility and reality of

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28 cf. Adversus Haereses IV. 24. 2. (II. 181-2); IV. 25. 3. (II. 185-6).

29 cf. Connolly op. cit. pp. LXIV-V.

30 e.g. Didas. 1. (2); 8. (80). etc.

31 Didas. 10. (108); 13. (127).

32 ibid 9. (86).

33 ibid 13. (124).

34 ibid 8. (81).

35 ibid 25. (212).

36 ibid 23. (199). Chapter 23 (194-202) rejects all heresies and schisms.

sin within the Church is acknowledged,[37] as she is like a body whose health must be maintained;[38] outside her there is no salvation.[39]

The bishop is by far the most important person in the Church, but his office is not explicitly connected with the theory of the Church as in Cyprian's writings. Despite this, no theologian in the first three centuries of the Church had a more exalted concept of the bishop. It is both paternalist and triumphalist, and demonstrates an official self-confidence founded on the absence of significant opposition to his position, and the security deriving from accepted traditional concepts.

The author tells us in one breath that bishops are to their people as priests, prophets, princes, leaders, kings, mediators with God, preachers and knowers of the Scriptures and of the utterances of God.[40] This was not all. The bishop is like a father or mother, who must not be reviled;[41] he is like Moses,[42] ruling over body and soul (a king rules over the body only),[43] and is to be honoured as God, because he

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37 e.g. ibid 10. (108). This will be more apparent in the discussion of the penitential processes.

38 ibid 10. (107).

39 ibid 7. (66). speaks of the aliens who "will depart from the Church and from the hope of God; cf. 13. (127).

40 Didas. 8. (80).

41 ibid 9. (93-4).

42 ibid 9. (92).

43 ibid 9. (96).

sits in the place of the Almighty.[44] These remarkable emphases are only partly balanced by the belief that the bishop bears the sins of all, and has to answer for all,[45] as the Lord will require much of him to whom much has been given.[46]

The relationship between the Apostles and the bishops is ambiguous, as there is a most exotic typology for the different clerical orders. The bishop, who is Levite and high priest takes the place of God Almighty, the deacon the place of Christ, the deaconesses the place of the Holy Spirit, and the presbyters do not take the place of, but are in the likeness of the Apostles.[47] Within this framework there can be no doctrine of an apostolic succession of bishops, as they have more distinguished counterparts, and need no support from the Apostles. But the author did believe in a divine or apostolic origin of the episcopate as James, bishop of Jerusalem met with the Twelve when they

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44 ibid 9. (86-8); cf. 7. (60-2) where the bishop is to be loved, honoured and feared as "father and lord, and (as) God after God Almighty". The Latin is ambiguous, and less ambitious; "Diligite ergo et honorate episcopum, et timete sicut patrem et dominum et secundum Deum". L. ^{c}18 (61).

45 ibid 8. (80).

46 ibid 7. (56).

47 ibid 9. (86-8). The Latin text L. ^{c}25 (87-9) has the same set of comparisons, except that all the clerics including the presbyters are "a type"; e.g. the deacon is "in typum Christi".

wrote the Didascalia,[48] and there is another connection between Apostles and bishops. In a passing reference we are told that Christ said to the bishops through the Apostles, "He who hears you hears me, etc.".[49] This intriguing slip suggests that the author might have known the theory of apostolic succession, even if he felt no need to incorporate it into his theory. Certainly all the preparatory stages necessary for its articulation are present; the Apostles were leaders and teachers of the early Church, apostolicity is the criterion of true teaching, and bishops are the undisputed leaders and teachers of the contemporary Church. At a more general level, "all the working of the Lord our God has passed from the People (Jews) to the Church through us the Apostles".[50]

In one section the characteristics required of a bishop are developed at some length. He with his wife and family must be Catholic, chaste and together form a respectable, loving family;[51] normally he should be at least fifty years of age, immune from slander, and well educated or at least well versed in Scripture;[52] he should be

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48 Didas. 24. (204). As the Apostles had such an important place in the early Church (in the author's view), no other group could have sanctioned the choice of James as bishop. That the author believed Christ chose James is a stronger possibility.

49 ibid 7. (60-2). This is also in the Latin text L. ^{c}18. (61).

50 ibid 23. (198).

51 ibid 4. (32).

52 ibid 4. (28-30).

a friend of all, especially the orphans, widows, poor and strangers, a just judge, and ambitious for neither money nor the presidency.[53] Neither celibacy of the clergy, nor virginity as such is put forward as an ideal, or even a possibility, although there is no suggestion of a prohibition of either. Also no details are given of the election process or ordination ceremony for a bishop, except that there is an imposition of hands.[54]

The bishop is designated priest, and there can be no liturgy without him;[55] as well as baptising, loosing from sin, enabling people to partake of the Eucharist, he also teaches and admonishes.[56] With Cyprian, and unlike Clement and Origen, the author believes that Christian teaching involves no special difficulties, and is an episcopal prerogative. Unlike Cyprian however, the bishop is seen in terms only of his own small diocese, where it is presumed that all, or most, can be known personally. The relationship between the local Churches is not mentioned, and the apostolic Churches receive no special reverence, and are not distinguished from non-apostolic foundations.

Although the Jerusalem council is the occasion for the writing of the work, there is no suggestion that the power of the local bishop is

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53 ibid 4. (35); cf. 4. (32). The conditions generally follow those laid down in the Pastorals e.g. 1 Tim. 3. 1-7.

54 ibid 4. (32).

55 ibid 9. (86-8).

56 ibid 9. (93-4).

to be limited by regular meetings with his fellow bishops in a council. From him, we learn nothing of inter-Church or inter-episcopal relations. Remembering this limitation, the bishop of the Didascalia within his congregation is more monarchical in theory and in practice than Cyprian ever was. The Didascalia makes no appeal to the decision-making capacity of the congregation; there is no group of confessors and martyrs who have to be mollified and contained within the congregation; the bishop alone chooses the presbyters, deacons and sub-deacons;[57] no layman can judge others, as it was said to the bishop alone "Be ye approved money-changers".[58] The whole attitude of high seriousness and paternalism is caught by his statement that as the bishop is the head, he should not obey the tail (seditious laymen), but follow the word of God.[59]

The bishop also judges quarrels between Christians (as well as presiding over the penitential processes), and here the author's emphasis differs from Cyprian. At some length he warns the bishop against being too eager to judge his fellow-Christians, stresses the necessity of a diligent and cautious judgment, and the inevitability of divine punishment if the Bishop judges wrongly.[60] Cyprian realises that

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57 ibid 9. (96).

58 ibid 9. (100-1).

59 ibid 6. (44).

60 ibid 11. (115); 7. (66-8); 10. (105); 11. (112). There is no mention of any human consequences of this incorrect judgment; (Didas. 11. (112). is ambiguous on this point).

bishops can err (as his treatment of Stephen, or Basilides, and Martial shows), but in his treatment of the episcopacy's role in penance, his preoccupation is that an unrepentant sinner will deceive the bishop,[61] rather than that a bishop will misjudge the innocent. Cyprian was a little too self-conscious, and surrounded by too many opponents to develop the Syrian emphasis, although he would have shared the sentiments. The different concerns of the two authors also help to explain their differences; at heart Cyprian was a rigorist who occasionally felt uneasy about his concessions, while the Syrian was a determined opponent of all rigorism, who had no second thoughts about his "merciful" approach.

OTHER CLERGY AND LAITY

The presbyters receive only a few passing mentions, and little sympathetic treatment in the Didascalia. The author has taken over his basic typology of the clergy from Ignatius of Antioch, but he differs from his predecessor in placing the presbyters almost at the end of the list behind the deacons and deaconesses, preceding only the orphans and widows.[62] But we do learn that they are the bishop's counsellors,[63] being present with the deacons when he judges quarrels;[64] in church

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61 Cyprian. Epistle 55. 18; cf. ep. 57. 1.

62 Didas. 9. (86-8); cf. Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians 6; Trallians 2; Smyrnaens 8.

63 Didas. 9. (96).

64 ibid 11. (111).

they have their places around the bishop's throne at the east end.[65]

As the Latin version, unlike the Syriac gives a studiously literal translation of the Greek original,[66] it is possible that the Syrian translator on one occasion has corrected an unflattering, but typical, reference to the presbyters which remains in the Latin. Here we read that for each amount given as offerings by the laity to the presbyters, double should be given to deacons, and a four-fold amount to the bishop; if however a person wishes to honour the presbyters he can give them a double portion such as the deacons receive.[67] In the Syriac, the initial standard portion is given to the widows (not the presbyters), and the deacons receive the same as the presbyters.[68] Even in the Syriac version, the lectors are to receive as much as the presbyters and the deacons. That the deacons and lectors receive an equal tribute must strengthen our suspicion that this Syriac version has been corrected away from the original, preserved in Latin.

The exaltation in this instance of the deacon at the expense of the presbyter accords well with the tone of whole work. The theology of the diaconate is quite extravagant. Apart from taking the place of

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65 ibid 12. (119).

66 Connolly op. cit. pp. XVI-XX.

67 Didas L.^{c}26 (91) "Si quis autem et praesbyteros voluerit honorare, duplum sicuti diaconibus dabit illis".

68 ibid 9. (90). On this point, the paraphrased Greek text of the fourth century Apostolic Constitutions supports the Syriac reading (Connolly op. cit. note pp. 90-1); there is no mention of the leader.

Christ, the deacon is compared to Aaron, who was a prophet for Moses (now the bishop);[69] he must be of one mind with the bishop, telling him all as Christ did the Father, so that together as father and son they can shepherd the people;[70] at baptism it is through the bishop and deacon that we receive the Holy Spirit.[71] On many occasions, the bishop and deacon are mentioned together, without the presbyter.[72]

The deacon controls access to the bishop,[73] has a liturgical role, at least at baptism,[74] and an active, but definitely subsidiary role to the bishop in the judgment of sins.[75] Their comparison with Aaron probably refers to these duties, rather than a more specific teaching function. The deaconesses do not share this exalted status, but are appointed for visitation to places closed to men, and to anoint the women before baptism.[76] The subdeacons and lectors each receive a

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69 Didas. 9. (92).

70 ibid 11. (109).

71 ibid 9. (93).

72 ibid 6. (53); 9. (92); 9. (93); 11. (109); 15. (138); 15. (140); 16. (146). It is possible that the deacons were full time officials, while the presbyters, with their limited non-administrative functions, were only part time. This might explain why the presbyters were to receive less money than the deacons. But this still leaves unexplained the second rank of the deacons.

73 ibid 9. (90).

74 ibid 9. (93).

75 ibid 6. (53). We know nothing of the presbyters' role here, beyond the fact that they are present. cf. ibid 11. (111).

76 ibid 16. (146-7).

single mention.[77]

The laity are greeted by a flattering and traditional set of titles (largely based on 1 Peter 2. 9.) as the elect Church of God, the Catholic Church, the holy and perfect, a royal priesthood, a holy multitude, a people for inheritance, the great Church, the bride adorned for the Lord God.[78] After this promising start, they then receive less sympathy than even the presbyters. Among them the widows have a special place, even being mentioned with the clergy. But as they are linked here with the orphans,[79] their status is probably an indeterminate one, with only limited functions. They are the subject of the Church's special concern, and do not have full clerical status with deaconesses. Required to obey a host of regulations, they cannot even dine out, much less pray with people or impose hands on them, without the permission of the bishop or deacon.[80] Above all they are not to dabble in doctrinal questions beyond their competence, as the Lord sent males (the Apostles) and not women to teach.[81] Neither can they baptise.[82] Their function is to pray for almsgivers and the whole Church.[83]

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77 ibid 9. (96); 9. (90).

78 ibid 9. (85-6).

79 ibid 9. (86-8).

80 ibid 15. (138).

81 ibid 15. (132-3).

82 ibid 15. (142).

83 ibid 15. (132).

The injunctions against the laity are still more pointed. The layman cannot call a bishop to account, or even observe how the bishop discharges his stewardship;[84] certainly no layman can judge a bishop, or even a fellow layman.[85] All must attend church regularly,[86] and everyone must contribute, according to his capacity, to the upkeep of the clergy.[87]

PENANCE

The discussion of penance is dominated by the author's concern that mercy be shown to sinners, and his conviction that the central part in the processes was to be played by the bishop. The bishop has the power to forgive sinners, as Christ forgave them, because he has put on the person of Christ.[88] God wishes sinners to repent and return; He has no time for those hard-hearted people who deny repentance to sinners.[89] The author is determined to oppose the rigorist tendencies in his community; a fact which explains his hostility towards false informers, who are murderers. If these repent after their expulsion, they can be received back into the Church, so long as

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84 ibid 9. (98-100).

85 ibid 9. (100-1).

86 ibid 13. (124)

87 ibid 9. (90).

88 ibid 7. (64).

89 ibid 6. (48-50); 7 (76).

they desist from contentiousness and lying.[90] But there is another side to this liberalism, which prevents it degenerating into laxism. The bishop who can be bribed into allowing sinners to remain within the Church pollutes her before God and man,[91] and hands his flock over to Satan.[92] To obviate these dangers, and to give good example to all sinners, the bishop and the deacon must themselves be blameless.[93]

Excommunication is a very serious business, because through it a bishop can condemn people to death in eternal fire;[94] but no sinner who repents is barred from possible full reconciliation,[95] and the author knows nothing of a trilogy of murder, adultery and idolatory which exclude from reconciliation. Neither did the author use Hermas' doctrine of only one post-baptismal reconciliation.[96] These last two factors are related, as Rahner has pointed out that where there was only one reconciliation, there was a tendency to severely limit the number

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90 ibid 10. (106-7); 10. (101).

91 ibid 5. (38-40).

92 ibid 6. (54). cf. 10. (108).

93 ibid 5. (40).

94 ibid 9. (94).

95 cf. P. Beaucamp, "Un évêque du IIIe siècle aux prises avec les pécheurs: Son activité apostolique" in Bull. Litt. Ecc. (50) 1949 p. 40.

96 cf. K. Rahner, "Busslehre und Busspraxis der Didascalia Apostolorum" in Zeitschrift für Katholisches Theologie (72) 1950. p. 280.

of sins which required this once in a lifetime process.[97] While the author's liberalism is quite explicit, there are a couple of texts which are ambiguous, and can be interpreted in a rigorist sense. Anyone who commits a serious sin after baptism, we are told, is condemned to Hell;[98] and a little later, "but after baptism also, (a sinner is forgiven) provided that he has not sinned a deadly sin nor been an accomplice thereto".[99] Both texts can be reconciled with the author's final position by the addition of an unexpressed condition. Condemnation to Hell is avoided if the sinner repents; so the forgiveness denied to a serious sinner after baptism is only the "free" variety obtained at baptism; such a sinner can be cured through penance. Neither interpretation is an impossibility, but there is no sign of these conditions in any of our texts; therefore the possibility must remain of their being traces of another older and stricter discipline.[100]

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97 Rahner op. cit. p. 277. On p. 280 he points out that the similarities between the Didascalia and the contemporary Jewish practice of imposing a ban on their sinners (which was not restricted to more serious sins) is another reason for the absence of a once-only reconciliation in the Didascalia.

98 Didas. L. ^{c}11. (39). "si quis peccaverit iniquum aliquid post baptismum, hic in gehenna condemnatur"; The Syriac text agrees with the Latin; cf. 5. (38).

99 Didas. 20. (178) There is no Latin text at this point. Didas 10. (107-8) speaks only of excommunication; there is no mention one way or the other of reconciliation.

100 cf. Connolly op. cit. pp. LV-LVI.

But the brief penances, prescribed for between two and seven weeks,[101] cannot be used to support any theory restricting reconciliation to lesser sins. There are in fact two excommunications; the "real" excommunication when the serious sinner is excluded from the community, and the "liturgical" excommunication, which signifies a partial return to the Church, and is separated from full reconciliation by a period between two and seven weeks.[102] If a person has committed serious sin, he should be persuaded privately, or if this is unsuccessful before two or three witnesses, to repent of his sins; if he still remains obdurate after a final official warning from the Church, then he is to be completely avoided by all Christians.[103] Bishops are to hunt out such people outside the Church, even those who have despaired, in order to bring them back.[104] If the sinner does repent, he commences the performance of the penances, and after an appropriate time the people petition the Bishop for his return, as Christ pleaded for sinners. If the bishop is satisfied with his sincerity, a penance of two to seven weeks is imposed before full reconciliation.[105] This intermediate reception is the "liturgical

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101 Didas. 6. (52).

102 cf. B. Poschmann "Paenitentia secunda" (1940) pp. 476-7; K. Rahner op. cit. p. 261.

103 Didas. 10. (102-3).

104 ibid 7. (62-3).

105 ibid 6. (52-3).

excommunication" (a rather unfortunate phrase) mentioned by Rahner (106). Final and complete reconciliation occurs when the bishop lays his hands on the head of the penitent, while all prey.[107]

Just as the bishop alone is judge, so above all others he is the physician who heals.[108] Much more than in Cyprian's writings, it is the role of the bishop alone which is stressed. Rarely is the petition-making role of the laity mentioned;[109] even the martyr can cover only his own sins.[110]

The sacramental nature of the penitential process is outlined more emphatically than in any other pre-Nicene author, further confirming the preponderant role of the bishop. The episcopal imposition of hands receives the sinner back into the Church, as baptism admits the heathen; in both rites, the Holy Spirit is received.[111] This does not imply that the earlier parts of the process are non-sacramental; the "ordination" is the finale and crown of the reconciliation.[112]

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106 K. Rahner op. cit. p. 264.

107 Didas. 10. (104).

108 ibid.

109 Didas. 6. (52-3).

110 ibid 20. (178).

111 ibid 10. (104).

112 cf. Rahner op. cit. p. 274.

CONCLUSION

The Didascalia is a deadly serious work, simple, straight-forward and hierarchical in every sense of the word. As we are inclined to assign an early third century dating to it, its viewpoint can only be typical of a limited area, perhaps Syria. Origen, a contemporary in not too distant Caesarea, had a different view of the Christian community, and especially of the bishop. Even within this limited area, we hesitate to claim that the author's views were a typical clerical self-assessment, despite the lack of radical opposition to the bishop in the Didascalia. Did the presbyters share the author's enthusiasm for the deacons and the episcopacy, and their own correspondingly lessened position? But it could be that episcopal self-importance was common among many bishops outside Syria at this time, whatever the misgivings of opponents such as Tertullian or Origen.

While the claim to direct apostolic authorship is used here in good faith, it can also be a convenient way of expanding (or contracting) the appeal to traditional norms. The author's self-confidence, and the absence of radical opposition within the community show that his basic message was traditional, and faithful to his norms of Law, Prophets, Gospel and some epistles. But his New Testament canon was undefined, still open, and in practice smaller than many contemporary lists.

His theology of the clergy is a direct descendant from that of Ignatius of Antioch, largely independent of most of the post-Irenaeus developments in the West, and especially of the apostolic succession

theory. The Old Testament is an important influence here, but Roman law had no influence whatsoever on his views. He is a stage further than Cyprian along the road to being a truly monarchical bishop in theory and practice, but this is no sure sign that he is later in history, any more than his liberal penitential practice is a sign of a later rather than an earlier dating. His monarchical style is especially evident in the penitential processes, which are themselves seen more in terms of the health of the community, rather than the wellbeing of the individual (the terms are not mutually exclusive). People are expelled for the sake of the body, just as an amputation is necessary for someone with too many fingers.[113] Naturally the physician and surgeon for the amputation and the healing is the bishop. He stresses that the bishop is as much bound by the commandments as anyone, and he made no claim that the bishop is responsible to God alone. But, because of his monarchical position, and especially if the dearth of information on episcopal synods means that these were not a regular feature of Church life, the bishop's position must have approached in fact what Cyprian claimed as an ideal.

Less significant than the monarchical role of the bishop, but more exceptional, is the exaltation of the diaconate. The deacons are the special allies of the bishop as he rules the community, and are clearly second in importance only to him, although the author is prepared to pay lip service to the traditional position of the presbyters

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113 Didas. 10. (107).

by referring to them as the "crown of the Church", and counsellors of the bishop.[114] In the Latin text at this point the deacons are even said to be "in sacerdotio Christi", while the Syriac translator from the Greek has the phrase "in honour of Christ".[115] This development is a rationalisation of one aspect of the theology of Ignatius. If the bishop is to be respected as the Father, the deacon as Christ, and the presbyters as the Apostles,[116] it is only logical to place the deacons over the presbyters. That a desire to correct Ignatius was not the main reason for the deacon's importance can be presumed, although we can only conjecture at the motives beyond this point. The most probable explanation is that, at least in the past, the presbyters had come into conflict with the bishop; or simply that a bishop had felt it more becoming to rule without them.

Just as it is not an overstatement to speak of the author as anti-presbyteral, so the author's love for the laity did not prevent him

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114 ibid 9. (90). The phrase "corona ecclesiae" is also in the Latin text. L. ^{c}26. (91).

115 Didas. L.^{c}26. (91); cf. ibid 9. (90). Once again because of the literal nature of the Latin translation, we think that this is closer to the original than the Syriac.

116 Ignatius Ep to the Trallians 3. Elsewhere Ignatius was ambiguous on the typology of the deacons. In a parallel passage to the Smyrnaeans (^{c}8) the deacons are to be reverenced "according to God's command" (ὡς Θεοῦ ἐντολήν). In another parallel passage to the Magnesians (^{c}6), we are to act in harmony with the deacons "entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ". Did Ignatius sense the ambiguity of the passage to the Trallians (for the presbyters were clearly superior to the deacons in his eyes), and avoid it on other occasions? We are not suggesting that this rationalisation was the motor behind the rise of the deacon.

removing all "constitutional" checks on the episcopacy from their field of action. The laity is to be seen, but rarely heard. There is a real antipathy behind some of his remarks on the widows. No previous bishop had gone so far in this direction (as far as we know).

The Syrian Didascalia confirms the existence of a theological tradition and community life style in the East, significantly different from that of the West, and even the Alexandrian Church. It shows that the monarchical episcopate was not first created by the Western Church. So too, while the bishop is a determined advocate of a liberal penitential practice, and dominates the proceedings, there is nothing to connect this fact with the development of the monarchical episcopate. Ignatius' monarchical episcopate is the classic counter example, as we know nothing of his penitential processes.

This is an important work for any history of the exercise of authority precisely because of its differences from the patterns of authority in so many other Churches.

THE PSEUDO-CLEMENTINES

ORIGINS

From the number of ancient texts which purport to have been written by Clement of Rome, we are here concerned with the Homilies and the Recognitions. Both texts as we now have them date from the

fourth century, and recount (with considerable similarities) Clement's travels with Peter and the rediscovery of his long lost family. Both accounts are fabulous and bizarre, but beyond their mythology have some interest for us in their doctrines of Christ, their attitudes to the Law, and in the positions they assign to James, Peter and Clement.

Many different authors and many different doctrines have contributed to the final versions, and even the relationship between them is still disputed. The existence of Jewish-Christian elements in the Pseudo-Clementines is not denied, but there are fundamental differences over the literary and historical classification of these elements. This could scarcely be better illustrated than by the introductory notes in the second volume of E. Hennecke's "New Testament Apocrypha".[1] Early in the work, the Kerygmata Petrou is set out in a number of excerpts from the Homilies, prefaced by an introduction of G. Strecker defending this position, and dating the Kerygmata some time around 200 A.D.[2] But the introduction to the Pseudo-Clementines proper, written by J. Irmscher explicitly differs from Strecker,[3] and has serious reservations about the theory that the basic writing is based on two main source writings (the Kerygmata and Acts of Peter), which in essentials can be reconstructed.[4]

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1 English translation of vol. 2. "Apostolic and Early Church Writings". Eng. editor R. McL. Wilson, London, 1965.

2 ibid p. 111.

3 ibid p. 535

4 ibid p. 533.

Molland has set out very clearly the chief stages in the history of the debate, showing how even the limited consensus achieved before 1930, has been attacked by E. Schwartz, J. Thomas and B. Rehm.[5] While we have not accepted the thesis of Schwartz which denies the presence of Ebionite doctrines,[6] as well as the possibility of reconstructing the basic writing (Grundschrift i.e. G), and the Kerygmata Petrou,[7] Rehm's suggestion that these Ebionite doctrines are largely heretical interpolations in the Homilies, which the later author of the Recognitions attempted to eliminate[8] has not been effectively disproved.

However, while there is no strength in numbers with regard to these questions, the descendants of the Tübingen School, which see the Ebionite contribution as the earliest strands in the final works, are

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5 E. Molland, "La circoncision, le baptême et l'autorité du décret apostolique (Actes XV. 28 sq.) dans les milieux judéo-chrétiens des Pseudo-Clémentines" in Studia Theologica (9) 1955. pp. 2-5.

6 E. Schwartz, "Unzeitgemässe Beobachtungen zu den Clementinen" in Z.N.W. (31) 1932, pp. 187 sq.

7 ibid pp. 167 sq.

8 B. Rehm, "Zur Entstehung der pseudoklementinischen Schriften" in Z.N.W. (37) 1938, e.g. p. 161.

showing an increasing self-confidence,[9] and command a larger numerical following among scholars than their opponents.

With Rehm and his opponents we accept the existence of G,[10] composed in Syria perhaps in the first half of the third century,[11] and to be identified in broad outline by the similarities between the two final works. We have not attempted to disentangle the sources of G, and we have not attempted to date the Ebionite doctrines as either later heretical interpolations, or second century source material. In either case, they are outside the time span of this study.[12] A brief outline of their teaching is given, since whether from an earlier or

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9 Cardinal Daniélou in his work "A History of Early Christian Doctrine" vol. 1. "The Theology of Jewish Christianity" Eng. trans. London 1964, p. 59. adopts this point of view, not even mentioning the opposing literature; cf. n11. p. 59. G. Strecker, "Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen" in Texte und Untersuchungen (70) 1958. p. 34. claims that the consensus is moving back towards the Tubingen School approach. Molland himself adopts a variation of this; op. cit. pp. 6-8. Also O. Cullmann, "Die neuentdeckten Qumrantexte und das Judenchristentum der Pseudoklementinen" in Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (21), 1954, pp. 35-51. H. J. Schoeps "Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums" Tubingen 1949, p. 135. sees the exaltation of James and Peter, and the veiled attack on Paul through the person of Simon, in the context of the second century debate on the place of the Law in Christianity.

10 cf. J. Irmscher op. cit. p. 533.

11 Ibid p. 533. cf. J. Quasten "Patrology" vol. 1. p. 62. B. Altaner "Patrologie" p. 64.

12 Neither interpretation ascribes the Ebionite doctrines to the composer of G. Rehm believes these derive from interpolations in the Homilies, while Strecker (p. 105. "N.T. Apoc") believes the genuine Ebionitisms were sources for G.

later source, it could in its general outlines represent the group's doctrine in the late second and third century. The epistle of Peter to James, which is certainly Ebionite, has a number of interesting points for any study of authority. But their significance cannot be assessed, unless they can be dated with some accuracy.

The dating of the epistle of Clement is another and different problem. Strecker believes that it comes from the author of G,[13] while Rehm insists that the work as we now have it should be dated as late as possible.[14] Ullmann has a brief informative section on its dating and provenance, pointing out that it is rash to presume a priori that it originally constituted part of the Pseudo-Clementines, and there is no evidence that its transmitted form was composed in one piece at one and the same time.[15]

DOCTRINES

References to James and Peter will be discussed in the next chapter of this work. We are here concerned with more general ecclesiological questions, and must restrict our examination first of all to G, afterwards comparing this with Clement's epistle. Peter's

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13 1958 art. p. 92.

14 op. cit. n202. p. 148.

15 W. Ullmann, "The significance of the Epistola Clementis in the Pseudo-Clementines" in J.T.S. (11) N.S. 1960. pp. 316-17.

epistle is considered separately. On small points of detail, it is impossible to give even an approximate dating. An example of this is the reference to the "rule of the Church" in Clement's epistle.[16]

For G, Christ is the true Prophet, who is recognized by the unfolding of his prophecies. There is little interest in the Christological problem, and a simple belief that a just life is guarantee of a successful Last Judgment.

Both works share a belief in the importance of baptism, and the long intensive preparation which normally preceded it (as in the case of Clement himself). In the Recognitions, it is described as baptism in the "name of the threefold Blessedness for the remission of sins".[17] Again in the Recognitions, when Peter is in Caesarea we learn many details of the catechumate and the baptism ceremony.[18] The catechumen must first be inscribed, and then taught Christian doctrine; he must fast, and examine his own conduct. Baptism itself is given in the name of the Trinity with running water and is preceded by an anointing with oil. Once again though, little significance can be attached to these details, as the parallel passage in the Homilies only mentions

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16 2. 4. cf. R. P. C. Hanson "Origen's Doctrine of Tradition" pp. 77-8, who following Ullmann dates the work after Irenaeus and before Cyprian, and mentions the difficulty of explaining the exact meaning of the term.

17 Recognitions 1. 69.

18 Recognitions 3. 67.

regular instructions (by implication), fasting and a daily imposition of hands before the actual baptism.[19]

G and the epistle of Clement share a belief in the existence of bishops, presbyters and deacons. More significantly, the bishop is clearly monarchical in theory and probably in practice. He takes the place of Christ,[20] has the duty of preaching,[21] and the power to bind and loose;[22] he must be obeyed.[23]

Similarly there is a common belief in an ordination ceremony, by which bishops are consecrated. Hands are imposed on the person to be ordained by Peter alone,[24] who also prays over the ordinand. The exact words at this moment can only be guessed at, as they differ greatly in the different versions.[25] After the prayers and the imposition of hands, the candidate is placed on the episcopal chair,[26] from which he teaches, and presides in the liturgy. In every case Peter alone chooses the bishop; but we cannot conclude that a bishop

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19 Homilies 3 (Γ). 73. The epistle of Clement 13 has a brief section on the duties of catechists, stressing in particular that such a man be educated. There are also summaries of the teaching given to catechumens Rec. 4. 36. and Hom. 8 (H). 23; Rec. 6. 10. and Hom. 11 (ΙΑ). 27.

20 Hom. 3 (Γ). 60; Rec. 3. 66; Ep. Clem 2.

21 Hom. 3 (Γ). 71; Rec. 3. 66; Ep. Clem 5-6.

22 Hom. 3 (Γ). 72; Ep. Clem 2.

23 Hom. 3 (Γ). 61; Rec. 3. 66; Ep. Clem 6.

24 Hom. 3 (Γ). 63; Rec. 3. 66; Ep. Clem 2.

25 Rec. 3. 66; Hom. 3 (Γ). 72; cf. Ep. Clem 2.

26 Ep. Clem 19; Hom. 3 (Γ). 63. However in Rec. 3. 66. and Hom. 3 (Γ). 72. only the imposition of hands and the prayers are mentioned.

chose and then consecrated his successors, although the inference must be that the imposition of hands for ordination, at the time (and place) where G was written, was reserved to the episcopate alone, and that the bishop alone chose his presbyters and deacons as Peter did. Leaving to one side for the moment the positions of James and Peter, the author of G has shown a thoroughly traditional belief in the apostolic origins of the hierarchy, and their "apostolic" authority, as he describes Peter's ordinations in Rome, Caesarea, Tripolis, etc.[27]

There is little here which could not have been written by many writers at the beginning of the third century. A Syrian origin for G is suggested by the strongly monarchical position of the bishop, who takes the place of Christ.[28] However the apostolic origins of the episcopate were not so much as explicitly mentioned by either Ignatius of Antioch or the Didascalia,[29] so that G, if it is Syrian, represents a significant development for theology in that area. There is no reason why this might not have occurred.

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27 cf. C. Schmidt, "Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen" in Texte und Untersuchungen (46) 1930, p. 334.

28 Ignatius of Antioch (Ep. to the Trallians 2. 1.) speaks of the bishop being like Jesus Christ, but in the Didascalia the deacon, not the bishop, takes the place of Christ e.g. Didas. 9. (86-8).

29 The Didascalia certainly stressed the importance of the apostolic origins of doctrine.

The epistle of Peter and the Contestatio, in which Clement is not mentioned, present us with a sectarian Judaism based on the Law. This was given to Moses by God and confirmed by Christ, who promised that not one jot or tittle of it would pass away.[30] Some among the Gentiles who have followed a lawless and absurd doctrine are to be rejected.[31]

There are a number of appeals to the rule,[32] and the Scriptures have a subordinate position. These are ambiguous and even contradictory; one must know the traditions so that one is not perplexed by the ambiguous utterances of the prophets.[33] There is a real concern for unity of doctrine, "one God, one law and one hope".[34]

There is an ambiguity in the roles of both Apostles and bishops. The epistle is from Peter, and both it and the Contestatio are chiefly concerned with Peter's teachings. On the other hand, James who is not an Apostle, is the lord and bishop of the holy Church,[35] and clearly the dominant figure for the author. Therefore even the limited role von Campenhausen gives the Apostles as "founders of the Church's tradition and legislation"[36] is not their preserve alone.[37]

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30 Epistle of Peter 2. 5.

31 ibid 2. 3.

32 ibid 1. 4; 3. 2.

33 ibid 1. 3-5.

34 ibid 1. 5.

35 ibid 1. 1.

36 "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" p. 180.

37 cf. G. Blum, "Tradition und Sukzession" (1963) p. 160. who points out how James' authority limits that of the Apostles.

James is described as bishop, and the bishop supervises the handing over of the secret teachings.[38] But the books of Peter's preaching are not consigned to them, but to the teachers, who are compared to the seventy to whom Moses consigned his teaching function.[39] These preachings are secret, and are only to be handed over to those worthy of them. The teachers are the usual depositaries, James explains to his elders; they must be circumcised, and have undergone six years of preparation before all is revealed to them (although some works are revealed earlier as part of their trial). They seal their reception of these works with a vow to pass on the information only to those worthy to receive it.[40]

These ambiguities reflect the uneasy balance struck between Jewish and Christian elements in these two works, whatever the period when the final product emerged. If the body of the material assembled here, showing especially the subordinate role of Scripture, the appeal to the rule, the limited importance of apostolicity, and the existence of a set group of teachers, could be proved to have originated in the second century, then our picture of early Christianity would be considerably fuller. As opinions, however, are still so diverse about the period when these doctrines emerged, no firm conclusions can be drawn about their significance.

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38 Contestatio 2. 2; 3. 4.

39 Ep. Pet. 2. 1; cf. 1. 2.

40 Contestatio 1. 1.-3. 1. cf. Hom. 19 (IΘ). 20. where Jesus commands the mysteries be confined to the household, and explains them privately to his disciples. Schmidt op. cit. pp. 317-18 explains the role of the teachers.

GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER

LIFE AND WORK

A large number of biographies of Gregory Thaumaturgus were written after his death. All of them, with the possible exception of Gregory of Nyssa's, are so mythologised as to be almost worthless. The most important source of information remains Gregory's own panegyric of Origen.

He was born between 210-213 in the town of Neocaesarea in Pontus, of pagan and well-to-do parents. After the death of his father, he first came to know of Christianity, probably through his mother,[1] although it is not known whether he was baptised then. With his brother Athenodorus (mentioned only by Eusebius), he studied Latin, rhetoric and law in his native city. They had hoped to continue their legal studies in Beirut, or perhaps Rome, but after accompanying their sister and brother-in-law to Caesarea, they met Origen, enrolled in his school, and finally abandoned any thought of a legal career. After five years with Origen, both left Caesarea to return to Pontus as missionaries (c 238-9), and eventually both became bishops, Gregory in Neocaesarea itself. We should be a little sceptical of Eusebius' claim that his consecration occurred almost immediately after his return,[2] although he was bishop for some years before the persecution

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1 Panegyric of Origen 5. 49-50. (ed. H. Crouzel. 1969. Paris).

2 Ecclesiastical History VI. 30. 1.

of Decius in 250. About 264, he attended with his brother the first council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata, although his presence at the second council is unlikely.[3] Very possibly he had died in the meantime.

One incident in his personal history is of further interest. Gregory of Nyssa in his biography tells us that Phaedimus, bishop of Amasea consecrated Gregory bishop of Neocaesarea (or rather God did) by prayers, and without the imposition of hands as Gregory was not present, and perhaps unwilling. Later the proper forms were carried out.[4] Despite the mythological elements in the later Gregory's account,[5] this incident should not be dismissed out of hand as impossible. A number of questions arise. Was Gregory already a presbyter? When did he know of his episcopal commission? As the account serves no pietistic purpose, it is probably true in its basic outlines. That there was a proper ceremony later (by implication an imposition of hands) shows that such was the custom, if not always an absolute necessity. If Gregory himself had imbibed much of the spirit of his master Origen, he would hardly have quibbled over liturgical, or even "sacramental"

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3 cf. Crouzel's introduction to the Panegyric pp. 25-6. However V. Ryssel "Gregorius Thaumaturgus" Leipzig 1880. pp. 17-19. holds the opposite view, believing he did not die before 270.

4 De Vita Beati Gregorii P.G. 46. 909.

5 Ryssel op. cit. p. 62 admits the limitations of the biography, but denies that it should be dismissed out of hand as a "somnium somniorum"; also ibid p. 13.

details accompanying his nomination.

As far as we can tell from the few writings of his which survive, Gregory appealed to the traditional norms, and especially Scripture. The Old Testament is often invoked,[6] as is St. Paul.[7] As befits the practical concerns of the canonical letter, the people of Pontus who had just suffered at the hands of the Goths are reminded that because Achan sinned, the Jews had lost that particular war.[8] The profession of faith which Gregory of Nyssa outlines in his biography,[9] explaining that it was given to Gregory by St. John at the command of Our Lady, is neither a creed, nor a rule. It is not a brief statement of the faith, but a careful theological statement on the Trinity.[10]

The canonical epistle gives a number of insights into his missionary activity, and his general ecclesiology and attitude to authority. The many practical issues needing to be solved favoured a strongly monarchical style of episcopacy. Gregory himself must have dominated not only his own diocese, but the neighbouring ones as well, perhaps as Cyprian did. The canonical epistle to a neighbouring bishop shows this. While Gregory of Nyssa's life might be guilty of anachronism on this point, it does highlight the importance of the bishop, by

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6 Epistola Canonica. Canon 1 (1021); 2 (1023); 3 (1032) etc.

7 e.g. ibid 1 (1020); 2 (1028).

8 ibid 3 (1032).

9 P.G. 46. 912-3; also P.G. 10. 984-8.

10 cf. R. P. C. Hanson "Tradition in the Early Church" (1962) pp. 83-4.

explaining that Gregory constituted the Church in a neighbouring town, precisely by designating a bishop.[11] There is nothing in Gregory's own limited collection of writings to contradict this emphasis, and a good deal to support it. The canonical epistle is based on the premise that a bishop can legislate in some detail for his people. When Phaedimus chose Gregory, and he himself chose a bishop for Comana,[12] both the choice and the creation of the new bishop were episcopal prerogatives, though we should like to know whether an individual bishop at this time could decide to erect a new diocese. The possibility of a loose supervision by a local defacto metropolitan, or even a more general supervision by Caesarea herself (cf. Firmilian's yearly synods) must be a real one. But we just do not know. In Gregory's own case this monarchical power was tempered by common sense, and perhaps a touch of humour,[13] and effectively limited at least on important occasions by episcopal synods, such as those against Paul of Samosata.

His teachings on penance confirm this picture of well ordered

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11 Vita. 933. τὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐκκλησίαν διὰ τῆς ἱερωσύνης συνεῖχεσθαι.

12 Vita. 933-5.

13 e.g. Ep. can. 1 (1020-1). If the young women captured by the barbarians had previously been of good character, they did not have to enroll in the penitential processes. If their earlier conduct had not been free from reproach, then they had to undergo the penances.

communities, where the bishop rules justly, yet mercifully. The penalty of excommunication is used for serious sinners,[14] but there is no hint of permanent total excommunication for any sins. As Gregory was a pupil of Origen's, this is a confirmation of Origen's own liberal approach to penance, although Gregory does not mention any limitation to a unique penance after baptism. The penitential processes are seen in terms of the wellbeing of the community, rather than that of individuals (although this latter value is certainly presupposed). It is also seen as a judicial, as well as a healing process. For a general history of penance however, Gregory's chief significance lies in his enumeration of the different classes of penitents, with their varying degrees of excommunication i.e. mourners (those completely excluded from the liturgy), the hearers, and the prostrate, who both leave with the catechumens, the bystanders, and then those who participate fully by receiving Communion.[15]

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14 Ep. Can. 2 (1025); 7 (1040).

15 Ep. Can. 11 (1048). Crouzel op. cit. p. 28. believes that the types of penitents have been systematised according to the outline in the 75th canon of Basil's third epistle to Amphilochios, and that the passage is not from Gregory. So does Ryasel op. cit. p.31. However as O. D. Watkins "A History of Penance" vol. 1. (1920) pp. 239-40. explains, while the 11th canon is more technical and definite than Gregory's letter requires, it does explain the references of the letter, correctly describing a system which evolved before the end of the century, and which the Council of Ancyra in 314 referred to as "the defined grades", (therefore already well established). J. Grotz, "Die Entwicklung des Bussstufenwesens in der vornicänischen Kirche" (Freiburg 1955) pp. 408 sq. has a similar opinion, believing the divisions certainly came from Gregory's "Gedankenwelt".

Beyond the slightly ambiguous reference to the penitential grades, Gregory adds little that is new to our knowledge of the exercise of authority in the Church at this time. He confirms the existence of a strong and effective monarchical episcopate in Asia at the time, and of a remarkably effective missionary (and episcopal) activity. Neither legally, nor as a matter of fact was he metropolitan of Pontus, but his canonical epistle shows that his influence was not confined to his own diocese. The measure of his achievement is the legend that at his death there were only seventeen pagans in his city, just as there had been only seventeen Christians when he returned there;[16] and Basil's frequent appeals in his letters to Neocaesarea to the tradition established by Gregory.[17]

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16 Vita. 954.

17 Eps. 28; 204; 207; 210.

CHAPTER TEN

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

COUNCILS

After the initial "council" at Jerusalem recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we hear of no councils until the last third of the second century, when Eusebius tells us that a number were held in Asia against the Montanists.[1] By the end of that century and during the next, bishops often met together on a regional basis to discuss matters of common interest. But the meetings were in most parts irregular, the participants were different, and the whole haphazard process was ruled by custom rather than canon law, and intimately connected with the role of the local "de facto" metropolitan.

From the time of Paul's missionary journies, the disparate Christian communities did share a fellow-feeling which found expression in a number of ways. The epistles of Paul and Ignatius of Antioch are one example; Paul's collection for the Church in Jerusalem is another. The Roman concern for the state of the Church in Corinth, which we find in 1 Clement, is a practical expression of this fellow-feeling. With the increasing interest of the educated classes in Christianity in the second century, travelling scholars and teachers, both orthodox and heretic, helped to bring at least the Churches in the big cities closer together. Also there was the Church's missionary activity.

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1 Eusebius, "Ecclesiastical History" V. 16. 9-10.

If we grant this sense of unity (however confused and incipient it was) among the different communities, and the precedent of the council in Acts, a couple of questions present themselves. Why did the Church wait so long before resuming the practice? Why should it have started around 180 A.D. in Asia against the Montanists?

We do not have clear answers to these questions and we cannot be absolutely certain that there were no other councils before 180. However if they did occur they must have been very rare. By "council", we mean a gathering of Christians, with a number of bishops present as well as the local bishop.[2] It is often said that we hear of no councils (in this sense) meeting to decide the canon of the New Testament.[3] This is not completely true, because Tertullian tells us a number of councils, including those of the Catholics, placed Hermas among the Apocrypha;[4] but the fundamental point is valid. So too there were no councils against the Gnostics.

Perhaps it was because the Gnostic mainstream deviated in such a spectacular fashion from established tradition, especially in the use or rejection of Scripture, that the different orthodox communities felt little uncertainty about their basic anti-Gnostic position.

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2 A gathering of the local congregation, with the bishop and presbyters playing a dominant role, was the usual way of arriving at decisions in the early Church.

3 e.g. G. Kretschmar "Die Konzile der alten Kirche" in "Die Ökumenischen Konzile der Christenheit" ed. H. J. Margull (1961) p. 14.

4 De Pudicitia 10. 12.

However there are other considerations. A council presupposes a number of dioceses, with a bishop heading each of them; it also presupposes the money necessary for travel, and a bishop "separated" from his presbyters sufficiently to speak in the name of his community as its chief teacher (or at least the teacher who has the last word on orthodoxy). In some areas, not all these preconditions were present. At Rome and Alexandria, the orthodox community was so embattled against schismatics and heretics that its leaders had little time for travel. Finally, if a Christian community was clearly differentiated from (and superior to) its neighbours, as Rome was in Italy, there was less possibility and need for a council.

Beyond pointing to the absence of these preconditions, we cannot explain the dearth of councils on the Gnostics and the New Testament. But the presence of these conditions does help to explain the rise of the councils in Asia. Ephesus, while enjoying some sort of precedence, as the following Polycrates enjoyed shows, was not a dominant metropolitan see like Rome or Alexandria. There were numerous bishops in the area, and from St. Polycarp we know that the episcopate there was well established[5] with no group of intellectuals to seriously challenge the bishop's teaching role. Neither was Montanism in any way so obviously opposed to the Church's tradition as Gnosticism; indeed with its enthusiasm and severity, it could seem to bring many benefits. Initially its anti-episcopalism would have been somewhat muted (Tertullian never

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5 cf. Intro. of Ignatius' letter to Polycarp.

completely rejected episcopacy), and the antics of the prophets regarded as distasteful, rather than providing grounds for a basic rejection. Both in Phrygia and Rome, the movement initially hoped to remain within the Church.

During the second and third centuries there were councils of different types, but none of them claimed to be, or was regarded as representative of the whole of Christendom, as the later Ecumenical Councils were. Some were small local gatherings, such as the anti-Montanist councils in Asia; others had representatives from a large area, as for example in some North African councils, with members from all Latin North Africa. Some were completely dominated by the bishops (Cyprian's rebaptism councils); sometimes presbyters played a prominent part, and sometimes perhaps even the laity.

A probable example of this last category is the anti-Montanist councils. Eusebius does not specify who participated, and it is not until the ninth century "Libellus Synodicus" of Pappus, that we hear of a synod held at Hierapolis by Apollinaris and attended by twenty six other bishops.[6] There is no reason to doubt that the bishops played a prominent part; but where the gatherings were local, and the number of bishops small, the possibility of effective contribution by the other clergy and laity was so much greater. A certain example of

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6 Quoted by K. J. Hefele "Histoire des Conciles" vol. 1. trans. by H. Leclerq (1907) p. 128; but Hefele p. 129 accepts the trustworthiness of these accounts.

lay participation is mentioned by Gregory the Wonderworker, where he speaks of the total excommunication of those who joined the barbarians, until the saints (οἱ ἅγιοι) could meet together to decide;[7] however there is no certainty that any bishop was present except himself. At the local synod of Arsinoe in Egypt (c 255 A.D.), at which Dionysius of Alexandria presided, and the local presbyters and teachers discussed the Millenarianism of Nepos, any interested laity were also invited to attend.[8] The laity also attended the Arabian synod on the nature of the soul after death,[9] and their role is best seen in the account of the synod against Heraclides, at which Origen played such an important part. They are not simple spectators, but witnesses of the decisions taken, and guarantees that these will be kept.[10]

At these smaller synods, the presbyters (as a group) on occasion had a slightly more important part, if the fact that they are mentioned among the signatories is any guide. The first synod against Origen which supposedly expelled him from Alexandria was made up of bishops and presbyters.[11] Cyprian sometimes sent out letters in the name of the individual bishops and the group of presbyters present;[12] he

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7 Epistola Canonica. Canon 7 (1041).

8 Eusebius E. H. VII. 24. 6.

9 Ibid VI. 37.

10 Entretien d'Origène avec Héraclide ed. J. Scherer. (1960) 6 (68). Scherer. Intro. n2 p. 19. points out that this is similar to the role Origen envisaged for the laity at the ordination ceremonies.

11 Photius. Bibliotheca cod. 118 (P.G. 103. 398b).

12 Epistle 4.

also refers to decisions taken by the bishops and their "copresbyters",[13] while Cornelius tells him that he had discussed the content of his letter with the Roman presbyters, and five bishops who happened to be present.[14]

At other times, individual presbyters played an important part in councils which were otherwise very much dominated by bishops. When his fellow-bishops could not convince Beryllus of Bostra (in Arabia) of his error (according to Eusebius, he held that Christ had no divinity of His own), Origen was then sent for, and finally brought the bishop back to the right path.[15] It was again episcopal incompetence which brought Origen to the synod held to judge bishop Heraclides, although it is not certain that all the other participants were bishops.[16]

Two important councils were held against the bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata around the year 268. Obviously the bishop of such an important diocese could not be tried by the local clergy or the neighbouring bishops alone. The support of the neighbouring "metropolitans" was especially important. Dionysius of Alexandria was unable to come, but sent a letter to the Antiochene community (not Paul) setting out his views;[17] Hymenaeus of Jerusalem and Firmilian of Caesarea attended, as did many other bishops, including Gregory and

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13 Ep. 1. 1.

14 Ep. 49. 2.

15 Eusebius E.H. VI. 33. 1-3.

16 Scherer op. cit. n3. pp. 17-18. thinks that Maximus and Denis might have been presbyters.

17 Eusebius E.H. VII. 27; VII. 30. 3.

his brother from Pontus, and Maximus of Bostra.[18] Such a gathering was very different from the local synods against Montanism held nearly one hundred years earlier in Asia.

Paul's error was that he denied the divinity of Christ; at least his opponents claimed as much.[19] He was finally condemned and deposed, after winning a temporary reprieve. However such was his following in the city, he was able to refuse to hand over the church building, and the Emperor Aurelian was appealed to in order to judge between the two parties.[20] This is indicative of the freedom the Antiochene Church then enjoyed from persecution.

Apart from the prominence of the accused and the accusers, and the immense geographical area from Alexandria to Arabia and Pontus (represented by the bishops), the other notable characteristic of these gatherings was the prominent role played by the local presbyter Malchion. According to Eusebius, he was a man of great learning and principal of an important school of Hellenic rhetoric, and he alone succeeded in unmasking the bishop.[21] Evidently his role was very similar to that of Origen with Beryllus and Heraclides, although much less

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18 ibid VII. 28. 1.

19 ibid VII. 30. 11.

20 ibid VII. 30. 18-22.

21 ibid VII. 29. H. de Riedmatten, "Les Actes du Procès de Paul de Samosata" (1952) p. 14. believes Eusebius' information on Malchion probably came from the Acts of the council itself.

constructive.

Although we know of other Eastern councils,[22] it was Latin North Africa, more than any other country in the third century, which was the home of the councils. When circumstances permitted during Cyprian's episcopate, councils were held yearly, and sometimes more frequently (as in 256); some of these were much more than even provincial gatherings, and some were held long before Cyprian became bishop. He himself tells us of a council of bishops from Africa Proconsularis and Numidia, held under the presidency of his predecessor Agrippinus.[23]

Cyprian regarded the episcopal council as the usual way in which the bishops of his own province, and indeed the whole of Latin North Africa, should arrive at unanimity. Certainly the role of the laity in the later councils was negligible, as one suspects it was in the local gatherings also; so that the possibility must remain that Cyprian used the councils as a convenient method of overcoming local opposition,

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22 Dionysius of Alexandria speaks of synods at Iconium and Synnada on the rebaptism of heretics, held in the time of his episcopal predecessors. Eusebius H.E. VII. 7. 5. Firmilian of Caesarea told Cyprian that he had attended a synod at Iconium which condemned heretical baptism. Ep. 75. 19. Epiphanius. Haereses 7. 1. (P.G. 41. 993.) speaks of two Asian synods between 245-250 against the Patripassionist Noetus. Firmilian also speaks of yearly synods (ep. 75. 4.), but these are probably local affairs attended by bishops and "seniores" (almost certainly presbyters). The other possibility is that they were incipient provincial synods, due to the ecclesiastical preeminence of Caesarea within the province, and perhaps even beyond it. We cannot be sure.

23 Ep. 71. 4; 73. 3. Augustine (De Unico Baptismo 13) tells us seventy bishops attended.

and strengthening his monarchical position. If true, there would still be nothing sinister in this, even if he was too astute to fail to recognize the possibilities this long established custom offered.

The council was used as an aid to Communication between the African provinces as when Cyprian and the Proconsular bishops reply to a Numidian synod on rebaptism.[24] On another occasion all the bishops of Latin Africa, including Numidia and Mauretania met in Carthage in the spring of 256 to again discuss this question, a gathering second in importance only to the councils against Paul of Samosata during the third century. A final characteristic, which demonstrates that African councils did not feel bound by strict provincial boundaries as far as either membership or subject matter for decisions was concerned, is the autumn synod of 254. Here Cyprian and his episcopal colleagues did not hesitate to intervene in Spain (after they had been invited to do so by a presbyter, deacon and faithful from Emerita, and the neighbouring diocese of Legio and Asturica), oppose Pope Stephen, and support the petitioners' demand that the lapsed bishops Basilides and Martial be desposed.[25]

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24 cf. Ep. 70.

25 This is not an executive order in the strict sense, as the bishops realize the limitations of their influence; "laudemus pariter et probemus et quantum possumus adhortamur litteris nostris" - this to the petitioners (ep. 67. 9.). But it is an exhortation expressed in very forthright terms, based on divine commands "non tam nostra consilia quam divina praecepta" (ep. 67. 1; cf. 67. 2.), and an earlier decision by "omnibus omnino episcopis in toto mundo", including Cornelius of Rome (ep. 67. 6.). Basilides and Martial are certainly guilty, but "non tantum illos qui mala faciunt, sed etiam eos qui talia agentibus consentiunt"; all are "morte dignos esse et ad poenam venire" (ep. 67. 9.). Because he was negligent Stephen is less guilty than Basilides who deceived him, but guilty he remains (ep. 67. 5.).

This is a clear example of the prevailing opinion that when something clearly needed to be done, it was a secondary consideration who performed the deed. It also demonstrates beyond doubt Cyprian's conviction that a council of bishops could demand obedience.[26]

All these African councils are examples of full-blooded episcopalism, tempered by benevolence and common sense, and probably unencumbered with too many fine intellectual distinctions. Such a portrait (of the autumn council of 256) is certainly presented by the "minutes" preserved for us in the Sententiae. No presbyter played a leading role in this council. There is no doubt that Cyprian's doctrine of episcopal freedom (responsibility to God alone etc.) worked well at the councils he attended. Remarkably we have no evidence of serious differences at the rebaptism councils; a fact which might be explained by the absence of those bishops who disagreed with him. These cannot have been numerous, although the De Rebaptismate shows that there was some episcopal opposition on this point, perhaps in Mauretania.

We are not well informed on the Roman synods during our period. Eusebius mentions a synod at Rome during the Quartodeciman struggle, but tells us nothing of the participants except that Victor was bishop.[27] Jerome[28] and Rufinus[29] tell us of a "senatus" held in Rome, after

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26 cf. Chapter 8. Section x of this work.

27 E.H. V. 23. 3.

28 In Rufinum. Book 2. 5.

29 Apologia. 2. 20. (P.L. 21. 600.).

Demetrius had "depriested" Origen. Both these events were local gatherings, perhaps attended by some local and visiting bishops. The Roman council under Cornelius, composed of sixty bishops and a still greater number of presbyters and deacons[30] and called to condemn Novatian was a very different gathering from its local predecessors. As councils were not the usual method of obtaining Church unity in Italy an occurrence to be intimately connected with the position of the Roman Church and bishop, the summoning of such a large gathering shows the importance attached to Novatian's schism. However Cornelius alone wrote an account of the gathering to bishop Fabius of Antioch,[31] as he did for Cyprian of a smaller council on the return of the lapsi.[32] Roman councils, when they did occur, seem to have been instruments of the Roman bishop, rather than gatherings of theoretically equal bishops meeting to discover the truth.[33]

From all these different gatherings, we have no word about how they viewed the origin and nature of their powers to judge other Christians. If the role of the laity had ever been influential, it was so no longer by the middle of the third century. Occasionally in the East, a presbyter played an important part, but everywhere the councils were fundamentally episcopal. Therefore the nature of

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30 Eusebius H.E. VI. 43. 2.

31 ibid VI. 43. 3.

32 Ep. 49. 2.

33 cf. G. Kretschmar op. cit. p. 24.

conciliar power is essentially connected with the way the episcopate was seen, and was at least as diversified as the theology of the episcopate. R. Sohm's conviction that all the councils of the third century were in principle a local congregational meeting, reinforced by the presence of leading members of the other Churches[34] might be true of the smaller gatherings; but it is difficult to see the great African councils of the 250's in this light, especially when we recall Cyprian's conviction that the Church is based on the episcopate, and the bishop is the representative of Christ.[35] Although the theology of conciliar authority had not yet been worked out (this is largely true of the fourth century also), there is no doubting their confidence in the council's spiritual authority, and their certainty that a council spoke for the Church.

METROPOLITANS

The activities of the Roman Church and bishop are discussed in the next section of this chapter, although she shares many of the characteristics of the third century "metropolitan" dioceses. We have a number of cases where Christian communities claimed some sort of de facto superiority over an undefined number of neighbouring dioceses, and where in fact this superiority was recognized. Naturally these units were often based on an important city which was sometimes the centre of local missionary activity. The preeminence of the

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34 "Kirchenrecht" (1892) vol. 1. pp. 247-343.

35 Eps. 33. 1; 59. 5.

metropolitan see also depended in fact very much on the capacities of its bishop. Apostolic foundation or at least close and early contact with the apostolic tradition was another important criterion.

From the number of his episcopal letters which Eusebius preserves, it is clear that bishop Dionysius of Corinth (c 170 A.D.) exercised considerable leadership outside the confines of his diocese. Corinth of course had impeccable apostolic connections, and was also the capital of the province, Achaea. Dionysius writes to Athens, Sparta and the Nicomedians, and even replies to enquiries from the Churches at Amastris and in Pontus.[36] Eusebius explains at greater length his intervention in the Cretan diocese of Cnossus, where the bishop, Pinytus, was attempting (we do not know with what success) to impose obligatory celibacy on the faithful. Pinytus wrote a very courteous reply, requesting further information![37] Unlike Athens and Sparta which were in Achaea, Crete was a separate province. We cannot tell how far this metropolitical activity of Dionysius was based on his own special abilities, the apostolicity of the see of Corinth, or the city's secular status. After Dionysius we have no evidence within the period under review.

In nearly every geographical area, there is evidence at some time during the late second and third centuries of one diocese playing a role as at least an administrative centre. Irenaeus writes to Rome

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36 E.H. IV. 23.

37 ibid IV. 23. 7-8.

in the Quartodeciman quarrel representing the Churches of Gaul, where he was quite possibly the only bishop. Later Faustinus of Lyons initiates the correspondence with Cyprian over the Novatianist bishop of Arles, Marcian.[38]

The large and distinguished gatherings of bishops who judged Paul of Samosata were an eloquent tribute to the importance of the see of Antioch; as was the consternation aroused in Rome and Alexandria a little earlier when the Antiochene bishop, Fabius, declared for Novatian.[39] Incidentally Alexandria's rise to prominence in the Christian world is shown by the fact that the account of the synod against Paul of Samosata, sent to all the provinces, was addressed to the bishops of Rome and Alexandria.[40]

However the most detailed information we have of this sort of activity is to be found in St. Cyprian's letters. We will preface an outline of their contents by giving an earlier African viewpoint, hostile towards the episcopate, and doubly so towards any bishop of bishops. This is Tertullian's. His objection is first of all to the laxer penitential discipline of his opponent, but it is none the less anti-episcopal for this. We believe that the opponent so savagely attacked as "pontifex maximus" and "episcopus episcoporum"

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38 Ep. 68. 1. For the earlier situation in Gaul, at least in Eusebius' view cf. E.H. V. 23. 4; and Chapter 3. Section D of this work, especially n115.

39 Eusebius E.H. VI. 43-4.

40 ibid VII. 30. 1.

because he pardoned adultery and fornication,[41] is a Carthaginian bishop. As has been pointed out,[42] Tertullian realised that the Carthaginian bishop had a decisive influence, so that what was done in Carthage one day would be done by the rest of Africa soon afterwards. By this reckoning the Matthean text on the Petrine power of the keys is claimed by the local bishop, and "every Church united in kinship with Peter".[43]

Opinion on the identity is still divided today, but most favour an African bishop. Our reasons for sharing this opinion are as follows. As we do not believe there was a ban on the reconciliation of all serious sinners before Callistus,[44] his innovation and its significance should not be overemphasized. Hence the edict is less likely to have been heard of in Africa. Hippolytus mentions no such "edict" of Callistus, and most importantly says nothing of his limiting reconciliation to adultery and fornication, and so excluding murder and idolatory as Tertullian implies of his opponent.[45] The title

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41 De Pudicitia 1. 6.

42 C. B. Daly, "The edict of Callistus" in Studia Patristica (3) 1961. p. 121.

43 De Pud. 21. 9.

44 cf. Chapter 4. Section B of this work.

45 Philosophoumena 9.12 sq. This has been pointed out by a number of writers e.g. A. d'Alès, "La Théologie de saint Hippolyte" (1906) p. 44; 48. A. Donini, "Ippolito di Roma" (1925) p. 174 sq. K. Preysing, "Römischer Ursprung des Edictum Peremptorium?" in Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie (50) 1926. pp. 149 sq.

"pontifex maximus" would be unthinkable for any bishop or pope at the time, and is an example of heavy African sarcasm.[46] Finally we can imagine the capital Tertullian would have made out of the interference of a foreign bishop, and of the timidity of the African bishops in submitting to it.[47]

Possibly Cyprian learnt a lesson from the hostile reception given to his predecessor's "edict" (perhaps Agrippinus himself); certainly when acting outside his diocese he preferred to avoid any peremptory rulings. He was a fine leader, who only resorted to coercion in a small number of cases, and whose chief concern was the spiritual well-being of the Church, whether it be in Africa or Europe. Within Latin Africa there were no fixed limits to "our province",[48] which included Mauretania and Numidia, even though Numidia sometimes acted as a separate unit.[49] He received enquiries from all over Latin Africa, as well as Spain and Gaul,[50] and regarded it as a special duty to supervise African dioceses, temporarily without a bishop.[51] He

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46 cf. Daly op. cit. p. 177.

47 cf. B. Poschmann, "Penance and the Anointing of the Sick" (1964) pp. 40-1.

48 Eps. 43. 3; 45. 1; 48. 3. (where Numidia and Mauretania are explicitly included); 55. 21.

49 As in their letters mentioned in eps. 62. 1. and 70. 1.

50 Ep. 2. answers an enquiry from his own proconsular province; there are the Numidian letters previously mentioned, and eps 71 and 73 answer enquiries from Mauretania.

51 Ep. 1. 1-2; 48. 2-3; 56. 1; 58. Ep. 65. 1. treats of a different kind of vacancy as the bishop had lapsed.

organized financial help for the Christian communities in Numidia,[52] while on a more official level he played host to the councils in his own city, the capital of Roman Africa, and presided over these gatherings. He acted as African spokesman in Gaul and in Rome, treated Rome as an equal, and denied there was any appeal from the decisions of the African episcopate.[53]

These facts confirm his preference for persuasion rather than coercion, and his preference for conciliar decisions when common action was needed or coercion desirable. His relationship with the Church of Rome will highlight the basic sincerity of these preferences, and his willingness to act resolutely when he thought action was required.

Apart from Rome and Cyprian we know of no individual "metropolitan" giving orders to a fellow bishop before the end of the third century. There were real differences of opinion, and they sometimes offered one another strong advice; but they preferred to persuade, rather than to rule other bishops. When this was necessary, councils were held. Many of them e.g. Dionysius of Corinth, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Dionysius of Alexandria did not hesitate to make their opinions known outside their own provinces, wherever they thought it might be useful; a feature which is to be partly explained by the absence of fixed spheres of interest. Nearly everywhere the divisions were haphazard, and the

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52 Ep. 79. 1.

53 Ep. 59. 14.

effective leadership only spasmodic; but the ground was being prepared for the later codification of these practices, and it may be that this preparation had gone further towards the canons of Nicaea than the scanty sources available to us reveal.

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND BISHOP

From the collection of letters written by Dionysius of Corinth and conserved by Eusebius, we learn that there was an exchange of letters with Pope Soter, in which Dionysius praised the Roman Church for her charity and financial help.[54] In another brief excerpt, there is a hint of disagreement between them, when Dionysius points out that Peter and Paul had originally worked in Corinth as well as Rome.[55] We can only guess at the cause of these differences, but the implication is that Dionysius was conceding very little.

We next hear of the Roman Church in the Quartodeciman controversy when Pope Victor and a large number of other bishops insisted that the Resurrection be celebrated on a Sunday, while bishop Polycrates of Ephesus and the Asian bishops celebrated the feast on the fourteenth day of the month. Whether there was a deeper theological significance to the quarrel, which also involved ending the Paschal fast at different times, we do not know. That the conflict was about the relative merits of two complementary festivals, Easter Sunday and a

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54 Eusebius E.H. IV. 23. 9-10.

55 ibid II. 25. 8.

Christian Passover, must remain as a possibility, rather than an established fact.[56] Councils were held all over the Christian world; the one at Ephesus being summoned at the invitation of Victor;[57] when Polycrates and his supporters would not abandon their own tradition, Eusebius tells us that Victor excommunicated all their Churches.[58] Unfortunately we do not have the text of Victor's letter, so that it has been suggested that the first object of his wrath was the Asian communities in Rome itself.[59] Very possibly the local situation triggered the confrontation, but to move from this, and limit the excommunication to Rome, involves admitting that Eusebius either misunderstood or distorted the evidence on a massive scale. This is unjustifiable, especially when we recall the big number of councils held in such widely separated places, and the actual text of some of Irenaeus' letter, remonstrating with the Roman procedure.

The nature of the excommunication which Victor intended to impose is another disputed question. In fact such an action was one whose

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56 C. W. Dugmore, "A note on the Quartodecimans" in Studia Patristica (4) 1961. p. 412. suggests this. On p. 418 he outlines the different opinions. On the other hand P. Nautin, "Lettres et Écrivains Chrétiens des IIe et IIIe siècles" (1961) pp. 36-7 believes the quarrel was about the nature of the fast, rather than the dating of the feast.

57 Eusebius E.H. V. 24. 8.

58 Ibid V. 24. 9-10.

59 This was first suggested by G. La Piana in "The Roman Church at the end of the second century" in the Harvard Theological Review (18) 1925 pp. 216-219; 232; and then developed by N. Zernov, "Eusebius and the Paschel Controversy at the end of the second century" in the Church Quarterly Review (116) 1933 pp. 26-7; 29.

theological consequences were not examined, especially when a big number of Churches refused to recognize the decision, and more especially when both groups were ready to be reconciled. Because of the absence of any contrary evidence, the black and white ecclesiology of the times, and the attitude adopted towards later schismatics, such as the Novatianists, we can only conclude that Victor intended to unchurch his opponents. Just as certainly the Asian Churches rejected any suggestion that he could achieve this. As Polycrates wrote, "I am not scared of threats. Better people than I have said: 'We must obey God rather than men.'"[60] It was unprecedented that an individual bishop should have attempted an excommunication of such dimensions, for a disciplinary matter so far removed from any current conception of the central doctrines of the faith, and in the face of the especially strong case Polycrates was able to present. As bishop of Ephesus he had strong support in the province of Asia, and justly appealed to the tradition of the Apostles, saints and martyrs of the region, Scripture and the rule of faith (Eusebius V. 24. 1-7.).

Irenaeus objected to this Roman severity, and his intervention (and the councils') was no doubt in response to the efforts of both parties to win support among the rest of Christendom. Although he followed the practice of a Sunday Easter, he almost certainly ignored the practical consequences of the excommunication, and continued to

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60 Eusebius E.H. V. 24. 7. Victor must have realised that his action would have little effect. We cannot be sure how much this influenced his conception of what he was doing. Eusebius has to some extent caught the ambiguity of the situation; "Victor tried (πειρᾶται) to cut off the dioceses of all Asia". (E.H. V. 24. 9.).

communicate with Polycrates. While he commended the earlier decision of Polycarp and Anicetus, who had agreed to differ on this very point, he did not launch into a flat denial of the power of Rome to take such a decision. As this would have immediately ruled him out of court with Rome as a possible mediator, such an omission is not surprising. However it was not prompted entirely by tactical considerations, as he did recognize that the Roman Church had a special place, even among the apostolic foundations.

Rather than give the succession lists of all the Churches he cites Rome's, the greatest and oldest (maximae et antiquissimae) Church, founded by both Peter and Paul.[61] Under Clement she had intervened in Corinth to strengthen their faith;[62] she is the prime example (plenissima haec ostensio) of that unique vital faith given by the Apostles and conserved in the Church.[63] There is also the famous "potentiorem principalitatem" text which we give in full:

"Ad hanc enim ecclesiam, propter potentiorem principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio".[64]

As we do not possess the Greek behind this translation, our efforts to unravel its exact meaning are seriously hampered. Let us

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61 Adversus Haereses III. 3. 1. (II. 9.).
62 ibid III 3. 2. (II. 10.).
63 ibid III 3. 3. (II. 11-12).
64 ibid III 3. 1. (II. 9.).

first dispose of some of the less contentious points. "Convenire" means agree with (rather than "come together"), although the Quartodeciman quarrel shows that at least in practical matters the result of disagreement need not be excommunication. The nature of the necessity varies according to the importance of the doctrine or practice involved, which was in turn judged by Irenaeus' general anti-Gnostic criteria. The "in qua" refers to the Roman Church. The meaning of "potentiorem principalitatem" cannot be exactly determined, although the practical consequences of the translations suggested entail no important differences. Because of Irenaeus' stress elsewhere on the dual apostolic foundation, I think it probable that the word ἀρχήν or ἀρχαιότης lies behind the phrase.[65] The phrase "ab his qui sunt undique" has long been a stumbling block. To my mind, only one suggestion avoids considerable logical contortions. C. Mohrmann thinks that "ab" is a comparative, a populer equivalent of "prae", and translation of παρά , so that the passage now reads: "the apostolic tradition has always been conserved at Rome better than in

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65 D. van den Eynde, "Les Normes de l'Enseignement Chrétien" (1933) p. 177. suggests this. This is against R.P.C. Hanson "Tradition in the Early Church" p. 265. who puts forward linguistic objections, and suggests "commending position of leadership" rather than our own "more prestigious origins" (because of Peter and Paul). However this interpretation is connected with his view that the second "qui sunt undique" refers to Rome, i.e. her leadership is connected with the varied origins of her members (ibid pp. 145-6).

those other Churches, made up of the faithful everywhere".[66] Irenaeus himself followed the Roman view on the Easter dating. It is significant that he should have held these views on Rome, while still being an Easterner.

Of the other Christian writers before Cyprian, Hippolytus maintains an intriguing silence, although he was no opponent of Victor.[67] Clement of Alexandria and the Didascalia, not surprisingly, have nothing to say on the Roman Church either. Tertullian mentions the subject a couple of times, as he believed that Clement had been appointed bishop there by Peter;[68] for him Rome was one of the original witnesses to apostolic tradition, as Peter, Paul and John had been there![69] These were Catholic views; as a Montanist his rejection of any idea of an African metropolitan must also entail a rejection of Roman claims. The silence of Origen can hardly be unintentional as he visited Rome during the episcopate immediately following Victor's, explaining that he wished to visit the "most ancient Church of the Romans".[70] Later

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66 "À propos de Irenaeus Adversus Haereses. 3. 3. 1." in Vigiliae Christianae (3) 1949 pp. 58-60. The basic idea has been taken over from R. Jacquin, "Le témoignage de S. Irénée sur l'Église de Rome" in Année Théologique (9) 1948. pp. 95-99., although a different argumentation is now used.

67 Philosophoumena 9. 12. 10.

68 De Praescriptione Haereticorum. 32. 2.

69 ibid 36. 2.

70 Eusebius VI. 14. 10. " τὴν ἀρχαιοτάτην Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησιάν ". (Are there here shades of Irenaeus?)

he wrote to Pope Fabian, defending his orthodoxy.[71]

The next direct evidence we have of the Roman position is taken from the rebaptism controversy between Stephen of Rome and Cyprian during the years 255-57. We have already examined the ecclesiological consequences of Cyprian's insistence on the rebaptism of all heretics, and Stephen's opposition to this.[72] A few initial clarifications might be in order. Stephen did not doubt that he could order Cyprian to adopt the Roman custom; did he act on this conviction, and excommunicate Cyprian when the Africans refused to cooperate? Firmilian believed that he had done so,[73] and there is no real reason for rejecting this. Certainly Stephen refused to see the episcopal representatives of the African Church sent to him.[74] Cyprian continued to follow the local custom, and ignored the excommunication. Otherwise, what were his views on the Church and bishop of Rome? We must examine his actions as well as his doctrines.

We shall leave a discussion of the different texts in Chapter Four of De Unitate until last, and begin by pointing out that his professed

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71 ibid VI. 36. 4. According to Jerome (Ep. 84. 10.) he regretted that some doctrines were written down, but apparently retracted nothing; cf. H. Chadwick "Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition" (1966) n19. p. 159.

72 cf. Chapter 8. Sections C and D.

73 Ep. 75. 6.

74 Ep. 75. 25. Dionysius of Alexandria in a letter to Pope Xystus says that Stephen would not "maintain communion" with the Eastern dioceses which disagreed with him. Eusebius E.H. VII. 5. 4. (κοινωνήσων).

belief that bishops are responsible to God alone, etc. need not prevent him ascribing a special position to the Roman bishop any more than it curbed (in his view) conciliar powers of jurisdiction or prevented the bishop of Carthage from exercising a primacy in Africa.

The Roman Church played an important part in Cyprian's concept of the Church's mystical unity. She is the womb and root of the Catholic Church;[75] the Roman bishop stands in the place of Peter.[76] There is also the famous passage speaking of the Roman Church as "the chair of Peter and the leading (principalem) Church from which priestly unity has arisen"; her faith "so praised by the Apostle, to which treachery could not have entry".[77] Even here, where we have the text in the original language, the exact meaning of "principalis" is elusive. Arguing from secular parallels, Benson has made a good case for "constitutional pre-eminence as opposed to despotic rule",[78] while d'Alès has argued from Tertullian's use of the word to the meaning of "source", or "principle" (not anteriority).[79] This is the best possibility, follows on from Irenaeus, and coincides well with the idea of womb and root, as well as Cyprian's conception of St. Peter.

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75 Ep. 48. 3.

76 Ep. 55. 8.

77 Ep. 59. 14.

78 "Cyprian" (1897) pp. 537-40.

79 "Ecclesia Principalis" in Recherches de Science Religieuse (11) 1921. pp. 376-78. Against this H. Koch in "Cathedra Petri" (1930) pp. 95-102. translates "principalis" as "of the prince", and connects the "unde" with Peter rather than the Church. Against this, see J. Lebreton "Les origines de la Primauté romaine" in R.S.R.(21) 1931. pp. 601-605. Cyprian never refers to Peter as prince elsewhere in his writings.

No clear pattern emerges when we examine the practical consequences of Rome's distinguished position. Early on Cyprian explains to the Roman clergy that his acceptance of deathbed reconciliation for the lapsi was prompted by his desire to be at one with Roman customs.[80] This can be taken with a grain of salt, although the gesture would have been appreciated in Rome, and the explanation a useful foil for the rigorists in Africa. He seems to have been in the habit of communicating with Rome regularly on diocesan matters.[81] However in the letter where he lauds the Romans' faith and recognizes the special position of their Church, he denies the possibility of any appeal from African decisions on African questions.[82] A little later, on two occasions in the same year (254), he adopted different positions in the face of Roman interventions overseas. In Gaul, he strongly urged Stephen to appoint a substitute for the Novatianist bishop of Arles, obviously presuming that the Pope only had to write a letter for a new bishop to be appointed.[83] On the other hand, he together with an

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80 Ep. 20. 3.

81 Ep. 59. 9; cf. ep. 36. 4; cf. also M. Bévenot, "A bishop is responsible to God alone" in R.S.R. (39) 1951. pp. 407-8.

82 Ep. 59. 14.

83 Ep. 68. 2. "Quapropter facere te oportet..."; 68. 3. "Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate consistentem a te litterae quibus abstento Marciano alius in locum eius substituatur...". It is "by the letter" that Marcian is to be removed. Unaccountably, Cyprian makes no mention of the combined bishops of Gaul enforcing the Roman letter.

African synod contradicted Stephen, who had allowed Basilides and Martial to remain in their bishoprics, and demanded they be removed.[84] If something needed to be done, and he was able to do it, Cyprian was only too willing to chance his arm, even if it meant opposing the bishop of the Roman Church. The African bishops could intervene in Spain, and the Roman bishop (and Cyprian) intervene in Gaul because on each of these occasions (according to Cyprian) they were acting in a good and necessary cause. This outweighed Cyprian's general "rule" that province affairs should be settled within the province. Who performed what was necessary is a secondary consideration.

His conception of St. Peter is also interesting. The Church is founded upon Peter,[85] but the power of binding and loosing first given to him is then given to all the Apostles.[86] Moreover when Peter disagreed with Paul, he did not arrogantly assert his position i.e. "se primatum tenere" or despise Paul, but ceded to the truth.[87] The moral needs no explanation. As early as 250, he used Matthew $^{c}16.\ ^{v}18\text{-}19.$ to justify the power given to all the episcopate.[88] He clearly did not

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84 Ep. 67. 5.

85 Epa. 59. 7; 66. 8; 70. 3.

86 Ep. 73. 7.

87 Ep. 67. 5.

88 Ep. 30. 1. cf. M. Bévenot "Primatus Petro datur. St. Cyprian on the Papacy" in J.T.S. 5 (N.S.) 1954. pp. 21 sq.

see the Roman bishop as the only successor of Peter, a position which Firmilian tells us Stephen did envisage for himself.[89]

In drawing up this picture, we have not used the disputed texts of De Unitate. Neither would necessitate any substantial change, if incorporated, as the Primacy text explicitly gives equal power to the Apostles. Opinion is not unanimous that P.T. is genuine, and is still divided on which of the two versions is earlier.[90] Certainly P.T. could be used as a Roman apology, but Cyprian did not envisage the Roman bishop as the only successor of Peter. After the works of Chapman, van den Eynde and Bévenot there seem to be no grounds for denying the authenticity of P.T. on the grounds of manuscript evidence,[91]

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89 Ep. 75. 17. "se successionem Petri tenere contendit".

90 G. S. M. Walker "The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian" pp. 21-25. gives us a good outline of the modern opinions. The classical exposition of the case for T.R. as the only genuine text is still H. Koch's "Cathedra Petri" (1930) pp 33 sq; 91 sq. This viewpoint has been taken up more recently by J. le Moyne, "Saint Cyprien est il bien l'auteur de la rédaction brève du 'De Unitate' Chapitre 47" in Revue Bénédictine (63) 1952. pp. 70-115. Against this see Bévenot's J.T.S. 1954 article. Among those favouring the authenticity of P.T., some favour an early dating following on from J. Chapman's articles in the Revue Bénédictine (19) 1902. pp. 246-54; 357-73; (20) 1903. pp. 26-51.

91 J. Chapman op. cit; also ibid (27) 1910. pp. 447-64. D. van den Eynde "La double édition du De Unitate de S. Cyprien" in Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique (29) 1933. pp. 5-24. M. Bévenot, "St. Cyprian's De Unitate. Chapter 4 in the light of the manuscripts" (1939).

although few would want to join J. Ludwig in denying the authenticity of the Textus Receptus.[92] While one is tempted to believe Cyprian capable of preparing different versions for different audiences,[93] a more likely explanation is that an original P.T. was modified because his opponents gave it a more papalist interpretation than he intended.[94]

Cyprian differs from Irenaeus in not including Paul as a guarantee of Rome's position. The different emphases on their ecclesiology are relevant here. Irenaeus thinks more in terms of local Churches, and the special apostolic origins of Rome make her a special guarantee of doctrinal truth. For Cyprian, through St. Peter, Rome is the womb and root of the whole Church in a mystical sense. He did not regard Rome as infallible, and much in his thought is explained by comparing Rome to a business administrative centre, issuing directives but without the power to bind.[95] However this does not explain his idea of papal intervention in Gaul; but the incidents in Gaul and Spain do agree on one thing. On both occasions, Cyprian (once alone, and once with a council) not merely asserts an independence of, but a superiority over

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92 "Die Primatworte Mt. 16, 18. 19." (1952) p. 23.

93 A. Demoustier, "Épiscopat et union à Rome selon saint Cyprien" in R.S.R. (52) 1964. pp. 364 sq. suggests this, believing T.R. was earlier.

94 M. Bévenot, "Primatus Petro datur, St. Cyprian on the Papacy" in J.T.S. (5) N.S. 1954. p. 20. outlines the support for the priority of P.T.

95 This is suggested by Bévenot. ibid p. 34-5.

Roman authority. Cyprian was not over deferential to Rome but he had picked up her desire (dating from Victor) for practical uniformity on important issues whenever possible, and her determination to impose it on those outside her boundaries when necessary. Unlike Rome he usually used the councils for this, preferring to win support rather than attempting to command it. Sometimes the goal was unattainable; but the drive for uniformity on rebaptism was common to both Stephen and Cyprian.

It seems that the application of Matthew $^{c}16.\ ^{v}18\text{-}9.$ to the Roman bishop was a late development, still confined to Rome by the middle of the third century. We have seen that the African bishop whom Tertullian opposed used these verses to buttress his position. Tertullian himself recognised Peter's position as the foundation of the Church, and his reception of the power of binding and loosing.[96] However he is not sure who received these powers from Peter; sometimes it seems to be given to all who stand firm in persecution;[97] elsewhere he denies that the power was given to the Church at all.[98] Irenaeus does not use these verses at all in this context. Origen often mentions

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96 De Praescriptione Haereticorum 22. 4-5.

97 Scorpiace 10. 8.

98 De Pudicitia 21. 10; 21. 14.

Peter's special position,[99] but the disciples who drink of the spiritual rock, i.e. the perfect, become contemporary Peters.[100]

The Pseudo-Clementines form a case apart, and W. Ullmann has shown the significance of the Epistola Clementis for the history of the Papacy.[101] In chapter two we see Peter ordaining Clement as bishop of Rome, giving him the power of binding and loosing, and also clarifying the crucial relationship between Peter and his successors. If the work was written in the first half of the third century as Ullmann suggests,[102] it would be a fascinating contribution to the history of the developing self-awareness of the Roman episcopate. But there is no evidence that the later difficulty over the link between Peter and his successors was realised as early as the third century; most bishops must have enjoyed a similar ignorance of the early history of their "lists".

There had been a steady increase and clarification in inter-Church relations since the end of the second century, with the instrument of the council, especially in North Africa and around (what we now call) the Middle East, handling the vast increase of official inter-Church

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99 Comm. Series in Mt. 77; Comm. on John 5. 3; 10 (8). 6.

100 Comm. on Mt. 12. 10-11. In other words the orthodox "gnostics" are like Peter. cf. Ludwig op. cit. pp. 38-42.

101 "The significance of the Epistola Clementis in the Pseudo-Clementines" J.T.S. (11) N.S. 1960. pp. 295-317.

102 ibid p. 296; cf. the reservations expressed on pp. 316-17.

business. The de facto metropolitans, some of whom only emerged in this period e.g. Carthage and Alexandria, here found a new scope for their activities. The Roman Church showed an increasing self-confidence as the natural centre of Christianity, although her two major "jurisdictional" incursions were resisted. Nor did it stop with Stephen. After Dionysius of Alexandria had condemned some Sabellians, his opponents denounced him to Rome (c 260-5). Here Pope Dionysius did not hesitate to call a local council and draw up a couple of letters unfavourable to the Alexandrian bishop, and send them to him and his congregation.[103] But it was not an excommunication; rather a request for an explanation, accompanying a traditional uncomplicated affirmation of faith. Not all the Popes were like Stephen and Victor.

However the councils, the Church and bishop of Rome, and to a lesser extent the metropolitans were clearly to play roles of increasing importance.

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103 cf. Athanasius "Epistula de decretis Nicaenae synodi" 26 (P.G. 25. 461-5).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SOME CONCLUSIONS

From the end of the second century, we begin to learn more about the institutional life of the Church. In Irenaeus, we first hear of the rule of faith; there is an increase in the references to baptismal formulae. Fixed Eucharistic and ordination rites appear, and the catechumenate and penitential processes receive greater attention and become more systematized. It would be unwarranted to think that this represents only a theoretical recognition of much older practices. While there is an element of truth here, the situation represents a development, a tightening up of Church organization and discipline, a natural result of increased numbers, and an inevitable reaction (if orthodox Christianity was to survive) against the incursions of the Gnostics. This reaction was led in most cases by a group of men, one to a community, who in doing so emerged (where this had not already occurred) as undisputed leaders of their communities, and considerably strengthened their office. In times of stress a community scatters or leaders emerge; these leaders were the bishops.

We have every reason to believe that during the second century in Syria, to some extent in Asia Minor and in Greece, there was a strong monepiscopate, even if it was not everywhere monarchical. Here too there was a development, as bishops became increasingly involved outside their own dioceses. Councils and metropolitans are the principal

examples, but this inter-Church cooperation is shown also in smaller ways. The earliest evidence we have of the notice of a formal excommunication being communicated to neighbouring Churches occurs in Tertullian.[1] By the time of Novatian, this is already commonplace for important excommunicates.

Most of these changes were only followed afterwards by theoretical explanation, although the process was mutual. In the West, the doctrine of the apostolic succession of bishops, through its coherence and usefulness, must have helped to strengthen the position of the episcopate. Nonetheless Christianity's first interest was on the preaching and living of the Gospel, and everywhere there was little intellectual interest in the theory of authority. Yves Congar has written that "the secret of the New Testament concept of authority (as service) consists in the fact that authority is not put forward as the primary datum".[2] Even

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1 De Pudicitia 7. 22. cf. H. von Campenhausen, "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power" n121. p. 145. On the more general question of the development of ecclesiastical institutions, see J. Lebreton, "Le développement des Institutions Ecclésiastiques à la fin du second siècle et au début du troisième" in R.S.R. (24) 1934 pp. 129-64. M. Meslin, "Ecclesiastical Institutions and Clericalization from A.D. 100 to 500" in Concilium (7) 1969, pp. 14-20.

Where no references are given to support statements, recourse should be made to the relevant chapter and section of this work. Otherwise, or if the cross reference is not obvious, further notes are given.

2 Y. Congar, "The Historical Development of Authority in the Church. Points for Christian Reflection" in "Problems of Authority" (1964) p. 121.

in Cyprian and the Didascalia, this remains true for the period under consideration. It too was characterised in practice by a strong insistence on authority, which was closely linked to the Christian community, and markedly charismatic.[3] Finally the fundamental appeal was to the Scriptures. But there was no canon law to order the practical concerns of the Church; this was dependent on the rise of the councils and ecclesiastical provinces, and the first trace of such disciplinary law is not found until Cyprian.[4] Usually the appeal was to tradition or precedent.

One motif running through the whole period, which must be recognized if the changing patterns of authority are to be understood, is the struggle between the Christian intellectuals and the "plebs"; these at best were unintellectual, and often their opposition was more forthright. Max Weber is basically correct in pointing out that ancient Christianity "took a position against intellectualism with the greatest possible awareness and consistency".[5] Of the number of first rate Christian intellectuals who did flourish then, only Clement of Alexandria (as far as we know) escaped serious trouble with the hierarchy in his lifetime. Novatian, Hippolytus and Tertullian died

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3 Ibid p. 124

4 Ep. 1. 2.

5 M. Weber, "The Sociology of Religion". Eng. trans of 4th German edition. London 1966. p. 131.

outside the visible Church, and Origen had to leave Alexandria. This conflict played a big part in the struggle with Gnosticism, where the bishops emerged as the representatives of the ordinary Christian against the irresponsibility of Gnostic intellectualism. That much of the Gnostic movement could scarcely be dignified with the adjective "intellectual" did not prevent it from being characterised by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus and to some extent even Origen, as the natural ally of the pagan philosophers. One good result of this "popular" victory was the Church's rejection of that intellectual elitism, with its attendant divisions within the Christian community, practised by the Gnostics in their groups, and adopted, with certain differences, by both Clement of Alexandria and Origen. This same victory helps to explain the developments at Rome at the end of the second century, and the unfortunate experiences of Hippolytus and Origen.[6] The popular party was characterised by a strong concern for community discipline, a lack of sympathy for either theological or practical pluralism, doctrinal interests in the fall, redemption and salvation rather than the nature of the divinity or the creation of the world (e.g. Irenaeus), a preference for moral problems, and a positive

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6 For the general problematic see the very perceptive articles of J. Lebreton, "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Église chrétienne du IIIe siècle" in Rev. Hist. Ecc. (19) 1923. pp. 481-506; (20) 1924. pp. 5-37; also H. J. Carpenter, "Popular Christianity and the Theologians in the early centuries" in J.T.S. (14) N.S. 1963. pp. 294-310. This theme is investigated in the Church of Rome by G. La Piana "The Roman Church at the end of the second century" in the Harvard Theological Review (18). 1925. pp. 201-77.

distaste for speculation. That Tertullian as an intellectual, despite his disavowal of this title, cuts across this syndrome, does not destroy the general outline in other situations.

As has been inferred, all this has a direct influence on the way the bishop was regarded. Everywhere at the end of the century, the bishop usually with his presbyters was regarded as the leader of his community; but there were still some differences of opinion on what exactly was included in this leadership role. President of the liturgy, administrator, shepherd were all accepted roles of the bishop; but he was not everywhere accepted as a teacher, having the last word on questions of basic orthodoxy or supervising the teachings of the professional scholars. There is no explicit recognition of episcopal teaching power in the consecration prayers of Hippolytus' "Apostolic Tradition"; Clement of Alexandria does not make a single direct reference to the teaching activities of the bishop, as this was performed by his ideal, the teaching "gnostic"; Origen's stormy relationship with Demetrius, his preference for the generic term "teacher", and his theory of apostolic succession (which we shall examine shortly) allow an important teaching role to the bishop, but something far short of a monopoly. Even as a Catholic, Tertullian had serious reservations about the episcopate's teaching role; as a Montanist he rejected it for all practical purposes, while retaining the office. The ambiguity in the idea of a bishop being chief teacher precisely because he is a bishop is clarified if his role is seen first of all in relation to the essentials (or rule of faith; or kerygma), and only secondarily in

relation to theology proper. There is no evidence though that Clement or Origen was ready to grant this, any more than Demetrius was willing to be so restricted. With typical perversity, Tertullian who clarified the notion of a necessary rule of faith (distinguishing it from other changeable doctrine) more than anyone else in the period, went further than all the others in rejecting the episcopate's teaching authority.

Still it is much easier to accept the bishop as the "mouth of God" in small rural communities (such as the one envisaged in the Didascalia), where he hands out traditional solutions to simple problems, than in great intellectual centres such as Alexandria and Rome. This was the case. In Clement of Alexandria, we see the teacher and his group of followers immersed in their pursuit of perfection, professing a loyalty to the local bishop, but being nourished by their inherited secret doctrines, and having only a very loose relationship with the rest of the Christian Community.[7] For many years Origen taught as a layman, and there was no official catechetical school in Alexandria until Demetrius appointed Origen to head this group. This was an assertion of the episcopacy's right to control teaching; the assertion of this same right explains much of the subsequent conflict between bishop and teacher.

Rome in the second century was the intellectual centre of the Christian world, visited by many teachers of many different shades of

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7 cf. Chapter 5. Section D of this work.

orthodoxy. The Palestinian convert Justin set up a school there in the time of Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.), where for a while Tatian was his pupil. Marcion and Valentinus visited Rome, as did Irenaeus and Origen. Many of these visitors stayed to set up rival schools, made up of small groups of pupils around the "teacher", who usually was not a cleric. At least his clerical rank had nothing to do with the leadership of his school. The practical effects on Church life of this multiplicity of warring groups can be imagined, as can the confusion and resentment felt by the "orthodox" in this situation. We sense this in Hermas' rebuke of those "who desire to be self-appointed teachers, senseless though they be".[8] Such a situation makes nonsense of any claim that Rome was a centre of conservatism and orthodoxy, at least during the first seventy five years of the second century. In fact the favour shown initially to Marcion and Valentinus shows that there was considerable tolerance; this continued on towards the end of the century, as the Montanists were initially well received, and Hippolytus was not expelled, however strained relations may have become, but chose to leave. However during the last third of the century (at least), it may be that the confidence in its apostolic tradition which Irenaeus envisaged was precisely what enabled the Roman bishops to exhibit this tolerance towards theological discussion.

The heretics there would have disregarded the teaching of the Roman bishop and presbyters; and the presence of a number of orthodox

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8 Hermas. Similitude 9. 22. 1.

teachers would have seriously weakened the teaching position of the official clergy, whatever official recognition they received. That some such claim was asserted can be gathered from the letters of Pope Soter to Dionysius of Corinth (c 170), and even the earlier accord on Easter reached by Anicetus and Polycarp. However this Roman background should be sufficient to explain the reticence on teaching in the Hippolytan ordination prayers, and the single unaccountable ranking in his early Commentary on Daniel of the teachers before the bishops, presbyters and deacons.[9]

By the middle of the third century these ambiguities had vanished; there was opposition to episcopal teaching but no visible (and orthodox) opposition to the bishop as teacher. The councils are an example of this consolidation, which is an important element in the spread of a monarchical type episcopate as distinguished from a monepiscopate. For our purposes no better example of this earlier monepiscopate (to be distinguished from the monarchical form) can be found than that in the writings of Clement of Alexandria. While the bishop is compared

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9 Comm. on Daniel I. 17. 8. On the Roman situation and the teachers generally, see G. Bardy, "Les écoles romaines au second siècle" in Rev. Hist. Ecc. (28) 1932. pp. 501-32. A. Harnack, "The Mission and Expansion of Christianity" (Eng. trans. 1961) pp. 354 sq; n2. p. 443. Intro. of G. Dix' and H. Chadwick's edition of "The Apostolic Tradition" pp. XXIV; XXVII. D. W. Bousset, "Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom" (1915) pp. 317-319.

to the father of a family, Clement often writes as though there were only two basic orders, presbyters and deacons. Although it is difficult to know whether Irenaeus means "elder" i.e. revered teacher of former times, or "clerical presbyter" by πρεσβύτερος , he does seem to use the term presbyter of the bishops.

The movement towards a monarchical episcopate is to be recognized by the distinction of the bishop from the presbyters, so that he in fact dominates them, and can in theory, and to some extent in fact, teach and judge alone. This is sometimes seen as the inevitable result of the Gnostic crisis. Few things are inevitable; the monarchical episcopate clearly predates the Gnostic movement in Syria, and Gnosticism probably slowed down the development in the West rather than produced it by some automatic reaction.

It is difficult to trace this development, but the and result seems sure enough. Some indication of the increased importance of the episcopate can be seen in the Decian persecution, where bishops are objects of special attack. As Harnack has pointed out, the appearance of change is lessened because the bishop continued to act with his presbyters;[10] this practice is expressed in Cyprian's repeated appeals to the decision-making of his own community. To some extent this is already anachronistic, as he himself is the first certain example

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10 A. Harnack, "The Constitution and Law of the Church" (Eng. trans. 1910) p. 100.

we have of a bishop taking a decision in complete independence of his presbyters (and people), when he allows the deathbed return of penitent lapsi. By all the rules of logic the bishop in the Didascalia could have performed such a deed, as his theology of the episcopate is more exalted than even Cyrian's; but we have no evidence here. The emphasis is confirmed for Cyprian in the rebaptism councils, which are dominated by the episcopate. All the larger and later councils of the period under review, even when Melchion and Origen played such important parts, enhance the superiority of the bishop over the presbyters.

Just as significant for the spread of the monarchical episcopate, although scarcely less difficult to pinpoint, is the extension of episcopal control over all the activities in the community. The classical examples are Alexandria and Rome where the freelance teachers are brought under episcopal supervision, and the bishop wins acceptance as the chief teacher. None the less impressive is the list of dissidents whose demands were either absorbed in the community, or successfully rejected. A brilliant example of the first is Cyprian's handling of the confessors, who with their presbyteral allies, momentarily threatened his leadership. In turn the Gnostics, the Montanists and the rigorists such as Hippolytus and Novatian were opposed, and their challenge blunted. The episcopate led the Church in all these endeavours, and naturally gained immense prestige from

their successful conclusion.

As the theology of the clergy in the Didascalia is directly descended from that of Ignatius of Antioch, it is reasonable to conclude to an unbroken tradition of monarchical bishops in Syria, from where this style of Church government spread to the other Churches. e cannot trace all the steps in the process. Similarly it was the theology of the Eastern-born Irenaeus, which most influenced the estern concept of the episcopate, and to some extent the Alexandrinian concept too, through the doctrine of the apostolic succession of bishops. Wherever used, this cemented the position of the episcopate, and especially its teaching power. According to Irenaeus the truth of the apostolic tradition preserved in the local Churches is to be recognized by the unbroken line of bishops going back to the Apostles themselves. The emphasis is on the Churches, but the bishops receive the charism of truth and the Apostles' "locum magisterii". We have earlier evidence of this theory in Hegesippus, and something similar in the letter of Ptolemaeus to Flora. However the assumption that the Church received it from the Gnostics, based on the false assumption that Ptolemaeus' letter is earlier than Hegesippus, is ill-founded. We cannot be sure of the source, but the Christian theory differs from the Gnostics' because the bishop not the teacher is the witness to the tradition, which is no longer secret.[11] While Hippolytus, unlike Irenaeus, believed the high priesthood was one of the gifts of the

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11 cf. Chapter 3. Section C of this work.

succession, Tertullian never believed the bishops inherited the teaching power of the Apostles, or received a charism of truth. For him they were only non-supernatural witnesses to tradition. The connection between his theory and the succession lists of the Roman law schools is tenuous at best. Clement of Alexandria here adopted the gnostic approach, and believed in the transmission of secret traditions through the teachers, while Origen avoided the Catholic and Gnostic extremes and believed in the continuity of the apostolic teaching function in the Church, in which the bishop and presbyters played a prominent part. For Cyprian, it is not the unity of doctrine which is entrusted to the bishop, but the unity of the Church itself.[12] Neither Gregory nor the Didascalia uses the theory. With the exception of the last two writers, the connection between the apostolic bequest and the episcopate is an accurate indication of the authors' views of the episcopate, reaching a peak in Cyprian.

The pattern of ordination for major clerics is not uniform. Irenaeus does not mention such a ceremony; if he himself was consecrated bishop by the laying on of hands, as is probable, then this was done by the presbyters of Gaul, as there was no other bishop there.[13] Both Clement and Origen recognize the existence of such a practice, but neither esteems it highly; once again the presbyters probably

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12 Ep. 45. 3.

13 cf. Chapter 3. Section D. notes 115, 116, 117 of this work.

consecrated the new bishop, with this custom ceasing in favour of episcopal consecration some time before Athanasius. As early as the De Exhortatione Castitatis, Tertullian allowed the laity to celebrate the Eucharist, when no clergy was available. His later and fundamental anti-clericalism removed whatever importance he attached to the rite of ordination, although he was not in favour of "temporary" clerics. The classical source of information is Hippolytus' "Apostolic Tredition", where God's choice and the choice of the people are needed, as well as the ceremony where only the bishops say the ordination prayer, and one bishop imposes hands. Special types of confessors do not need ordination to the diaconate or presbyterate; but ordination is always needed to the episcopate. The procedure is similar in Cyprian except that the confessors' privilege has disappeared, and the provincial bishops probably play a greater part in the choice of candidates (at the expense of the local congregation) than they did at Rome.

Evidently opinion varied within the orthodox communities on the importance of the ceremony. What was important was the Church's appointment, although the extent to which charism is supposed as well as given, is shown by the example of Hippolytus' confessor; there was an increasing realisation that the Church's appointment should be expressed through an ordination ceremony including the laying on of hands. The reported consecration of Gregory Thaumaturgus catches this nuance, as although consecrated when in fact he was absent, he later underwent the requisite forms.[14] So too an episcopal monopoly of the

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14. cf. Chapter 9. Section H.

consecration ceremonies of bishops is well on the way to completion; if it is not already achieved.

What results the spread of the monarchical episcopate had on the position of the presbyters and deacons can only be guessed at, apart from a few scattered facts, and the truism that the presbyters suffered a decline in importance. One case cuts right across the common pattern; that is the Didascalia where the deacon has second rank to the bishop ahead of the presbyter. As there had been monarchical episcopacy in Syria since Ignatius, who believed in the second importance of the presbyters, the exaltation of the deacons cannot be connected with a move from monepiscopacy to monarchy. Except perhaps that the presbyters had heard of different conditions elsewhere, and either defied their bishop or sought to increase their share in the government - and then been denoted. We do not know. Elsewhere, especially if there is presbyteral opposition, the deacon is the obvious candidate to be the bishop's man.

During the Gnostic crisis, the orthodox Christians regarded the definition of belief as a self-evident necessity. They wanted to know at least the fundamental meaning of the Gospel, and to this end established a number of norms. It was at this level that the results of the Gnostic crisis were most evident, as there was now a common appeal to the one true faith everywhere transmitted by all the Apostles; a rejection of secret traditions and most importantly a fundamental loyalty to a "fixed" canon of Scripture, composed of the Old Testament

and based on the Gospels and Paul in the New.

Such a clarification of the norms was a prerequisite for the tightening of Church discipline; and there can be no doubt that the Marcionite canon of Scripture, rejecting the Old Testament and radically pruning the New, also hastened the coming into being of an orthodox list, wherever the origin for the idea might lie.

The need for both Scripture and the teaching of the Church was everywhere recognized, but the relationship between the two was not fixed in a unanimous way. If there was disagreement within the Church, who was to be reckoned as the teacher? How were the Scriptures to be used?

In this context the contribution of Tertullian has often been underestimated. Although he was extremely inconsistent sometimes, in explaining his Montanist beliefs on penance for example, the distinctions he drew as a Montanist between an unchanging rule of faith, and the remaining and changeable ("disciplina" and "conversatio") content of faith brought much light on the problem, and clarified the alternatives considerably. Today some would regard such an approach as doomed from the beginning, either because of the impossibility of arriving at clear cut solutions, or because they see it as a mis-statement of the entire problematic. With the possible exception of Clement, all Tertullian's contemporaries would have agreed with his aims, if not his methods; and the Church then (and now) in the day-to-day teaching of Christianity has to use some variant of his approach.

One of the dangers resulting from the adoption of written documents as the basic expression of normative tradition is that of a mechanistic appeal to those documents, so that the possibility of anachronism becomes very real as obsolete "details" of practice are maintained and imposed. The "nihil innovetur" argument of the Roman letters to Cyprian can be a source of great strength for the continued wellbeing of the community; in some senses it expresses the whole attitude of the Church of the Fathers. But if interpreted rigidly or stupidly, it can be disastrous. Tertullian explicitly recognized the role of "reason" in the application of Christian teaching to new situations, realizing that Scripture did not have all-purpose and ready-made prescriptions. But he did not conclude from this insufficiency to the existence of a permanent teaching office in the Church, least of all one belonging to the bishops.

Cyprian also appealed to reason rather than mere custom in the rebaptism controversy, but his appeal is to Christian tradition interpreted by the episcopate which is responsible to God alone. This enables him to arrive at a number of "divine" decisions, all appealing to Scripture or the rule etc. and many times based only in part upon them. He did complement Scripture with a permanent teaching office, and there was no danger of anachronism for him; but his understanding of the alternatives was so imprecise, his confidence in episcopal powers so great as he played fast and loose with traditional norms (even while this was done with the utmost sincerity), that the danger of a serious perversion of tradition was real.

In Alexandria the strengths and weaknesses of Cyprian's position

are also to be found in the extensive application of allegory to both Testaments. Because of the intellectual respectability of the device, and its sophistication when compared with Cyprian's muddle, we should not forget that the same dangers exist, as a determined allegorist can extract from Scripture most of what he wants to find there.

Both the Alexandrian writers were more interested in doctrinal synthesis, and the spiritual-intellectual problems of the advanced disciples than in the everyday concerns of the "other" Christians. This helps to explain their infrequent references to the "rule", a device frequently invoked in Irenaeus and Tertullian in particular, and to be distinguished from the baptismal creeds; it is normative for the orthodox and anti-heretical, being in fact an articulation of the content of faith, varying for various purposes. Its ambiguous relationship with the "essentials" of faith is shown in Tertullian's claim as a Montanist that because the Catholic doctrines of Church order and penance were not contained in it, he was free to change his doctrines on these points, while remaining true to genuine Christian tradition. If there had been a strict equation of the rule of faith and the essentials (i.e. for membership of the Church) then his case was unassailable. But it was rejected by most of contemporary Christianity.

While the heart of the New Testament Canon was fixed, the edges were still quite blurred. In the case of Clement of Alexandria, and even Irenaeus and Origen, it is somewhat misleading to speak of a closed canon; moreover the device of apostolic authorship in the

Didascalia can scarcely be reconciled with it. The apostolicity of the author was the foremost criterion, but acceptance by the Church was another important factor.

The concepts of the Church always stressed the paramount activity of the Spirit, and the necessity of mutual love and concord among its members. While those writers more influenced by Greek philosophy were less inclined to view the Church in terms of the here-and-now then either the North African or the Syrian authors, the principal tension in ecclesiology revolved around the issue whether the Church was to be a Church of saints, so excluding those guilty of serious sin. Even when this extreme was not adopted, the rigorist current was still strong with Hermas having a strong and numerous following.

No early Christian writer taught that there was salvation outside the one true Church, although Clement combined this with a belief that Plato taught as though inspired and in an almost prophetic way,[15] and the belief of Stephen and his allies against the rebaptism of heretics would seem to lead ultimately to such a position. The fierce opposition to schismatics and their equation with the heretics must be seen as a continuation of the orthodox party's disgust at the fragmentation of the Christian communities in the Gnostic crisis. Moreover the old anti-heretical norms left over from this crisis were the best weapons to hand, while the intellectual insensitivity of so many leaders, as well

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15 Strom. I. 8. 42. 1; V. 14. 108. 2.

as the need to rally popular support against the offenders, all contributed their part to the continuation of this black and white ecclesiology. It was an effective, if ruthless policy based on a strong sense of corporate authority and little respect for the individual conscience.

Not only does the attitude to the penitential processes vary, but our evidence of the interventions of the official clergy is limited. We hear nothing of the clergy's role in reconciling from Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Hippolytus, the Montanist Tertullian and the Novatianists refuse reconciliation to all serious sins. In both Clement, Origen and the Catholic Tertullian there can only be one reconciliation for serious sins after baptism; a restriction which clearly derives from Hermas. Early on Cyprian was a rigorist. Only Gregory and the author of the Didascalia, both from the East, have an uncomplicated acceptance of reconciliation for all serious sins, for which there is genuine repentance. Also the Didascalia gives the clearest insight into the sacramental nature of reconciliation process.

The role of the confessors in the penitential processes also highlights some of the authority patterns of the Church at the time. Catholic confessors in Africa claimed to be able to reconcile in Tertullian's time, as they did again in Cyprian's day in Rome, North Africa and Alexandria.[16] That they felt able to do so is evidence of

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16 cf. Chapter 8. Section C. notes 283, 284, 285 of this work.

the traditional reverence for charismatics, and the natural expectation that these charismatics can exercise public functions. The episcopate was strong enough to resist their efforts, although not even Cyprian could afford a direct confrontation with them, at least at the time letter eighteen was written. In Alexandria, bishop Dionysius allowed their concessions to stand.

The charismatics, be they prophet, teacher or confessor did receive great respect in their communities, and throughout this period it was still demanded most emphatically that office-holders be holy. A sinful office-holder was felt to be a contradiction in terms, although until the rise of the councils and metropolitans there was little possibility of acting on the consequences of this belief, and removing such an "officer", especially if he were a bishop.

Tertullian and Clement show the importance earlier in the third century of lay teachers, but the fact that Origen eventually accepted ordination to the presbyterate probably reflects a growing conviction in the Church that teachers usually should be clerics.

Origen was no champion of the mass of the laity against the clergy, although he did not hesitate to attack clerical abuses. Nowhere was there any developed theory of countervailing powers with the body of the laity balancing episcopal power. Tertullian did believe in a universal, and anti-ministerial sacerdotalism, but the Montanist community discipline was so harsh, in matters trivial as well as important, that his group was always destined to be a minority movement.

The rejection of Montanism also increased official suspicion of all prophecy, ecstatic and otherwise, so closing one other field of lay expression.

The role of the laity is typically shown in their part in the election processes of local clerics, and in conciliar gatherings, where they were quasi-official witnesses and more than mute onlookers, but where their role came to be more and more dominated by the provincial bishops.

These councils certainly exalted episcopal power, but they also placed an effective check upon it, at least in important matters of doctrine, and to some extent practice, which involved other bishops. The checks on episcopal power within a diocese on ordinary day-to-day matters were of much less consequence. These councils enabled a de facto system of appeals to work, at least on questions of doctrine, as well as instituting a natural process of arriving at unanimity on important matters.

As soon as bishops began to work together regularly, even at a distance, it was inevitable that individuals would come to predominate. There is nothing unusual in leaders emerging within an area; what is interesting is the development of a quasi-permanent pattern, and the establishment of de facto metropolitans. For a see to achieve any preeminence the bishop had to be preeminent also; while a continued leadership-role necessitated a succession of capable bishops. Every

metropolitan had to be in an important city, and apostolic foundation was another important, but not essential characteristic. Councils were generally less developed in the Western or Roman sphere of influence, with the exception of North Africa, which shows a greater conciliar activity than any other area in the third century, with the possible exception of Caesarea.

Rome was the greatest city in the world, its Church had been founded by Peter (to whom Christ had given a special position) and Paul, and had been led by a number of men who made significant contributions, such as Anicetus, Soter, Victor, Callistus, Cornelius and then Stephen. It had been the intellectual centre of Christianity during much of the second century. On the Easter date and the rebaptism controversy its view was eventually accepted by the Christian world. Possibly these happy solutions contributed as much to the consolidation of the Roman position as Roman influence contributed to their acceptance. Certainly Victor's episcopate is a turning point, if in some sense a culmination of previous history. La Piana rightly connects it with the rise of the Latin and popular party in the Roman Church, as opposed to the more sophisticated Greek-speaking group. They were determined that religion would no longer be the plaything of the intellectuals. Christianity was not primarily a theology, but a saving faith and a Church in which unity and uniformity were necessary.[17] Organization and authority were to cut through the debilitating pluralism in Rome, and outside the city

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17 La Piana op. cit. p. 214; p. 221 sq.

if necessary. Whether this approach was desirable and justified in terms of the Church's community wellbeing and the required fidelity to the teachings of Christ is not a question to be answered here.

A number of steps were necessary before the theology of the Roman bishop could be fully articulated. First of all the bishop had to be clearly superior to the presbyters, and seen as the successor of the Apostles, with superior teaching powers. The doctrine of apostolic succession was important here. Once Peter's special position is recognised, and the bishops are seen as the successors of the Apostles, it is a small step to one bishop claiming to have inherited Peter's position.

At least for internal organization no tidy pattern can be found dividing East from West, as long as Alexandria and Syria remain in the Eastern half. In inter-Church affairs a pattern was emerging dividing the Christian world geographically, is as much as the Eastern councils were more doctrinal, and the Western more practical. This is partly explained by the fact that many of Origen's pupils became bishops, bringing a stronger intellectual element into the Eastern hierarchy. Also there was no Eastern equivalent of Rome.

Organisation was still uncodified, and most were willing to abandon constitutional precedent in a good cause. There are dangers, as well as immense advantages, in this comparative freedom, but everywhere there was a confidence in the Spirit, a realisation of the importance of mutual love, and a determination to preach the Gospel.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Abbreviations:

G.C.S.	:	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
Z.N.W.	:	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
Rech.Sc.Rel.	:	Recherches de Science Religieuse
J.T.S.	:	Journal of Theological Studies
Rev.Hist.Ecc.	:	Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique
Vig.Chr.	:	Vigiliae Christianae
Rev.Hist.Phil.Rel.	:	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosphie Religieuses
J.E.H.	:	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
Bull.Litt.Ecc.	:	Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique
Z.K.T.	:	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie

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