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— Neil Godfrey - November 2023

- Turmel, Joseph (1859-1943) Auteur du texte. *Histoire Du Dogme De La Papauté. I, Des Origines À La Fin Du IVe Siècle*. Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1908.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Saint Cyprian and the Papacy before the baptismal controversy.

Here we are in the presence of the teacher whose name is often considered the symbol of opposition to the dogma of the papacy. We have seen Saint Cyprian reiterate the testimonies of deference to obtain, in difficult circumstances, the sympathies and support of the Roman clergy indisposed against him. We heard him declare to the priests of Rome that he had joined their school to temporarily resolve the situation of the lapsi, and that he would not proceed to a definitive solution without first consulting with them. But the holy bishop of Carthage did not always maintain this attitude towards the apostolic see. He has, on numerous occasions, expressed feelings of independence that are surprising. Did he not even, in a famous conflict, stubbornly resist the injunctions of a pope? We will have to expose the baptismal quarrel and to report the aggressive formulas which Saint Cyprian did not fear to use then. But his conduct in the affair of baptism would be an enigma to us, if we did not know the theories from which it was the logical result. Let us first find out what idea the Bishop of Carthage had of the Church and the episcopate. The language he used when he was a friend of Rome will help us understand the language he used when he was its adversary.

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Before the baptismal controversy, Saint Cyprian was led by various circumstances to explain himself, sometimes on the origin of the episcopate, sometimes on its constitution.

The first opportunity was provided to him by the necessity he found himself to defend the principle of authority, against certain more or less thoughtless attempts at insubordination, of which he was a witness. Almost at the beginning of his episcopate, learning that one of his colleagues had a complaint about his deacon, he proved to him, by a proper scriptural demonstration, that he had the right and the duty to be respected. However, he limited himself, in this regard, to declaring that the origin of the episcopate is divine, just like that of the apostolate with which it is confused, while the diaconate is simply an apostolic institution 1. But, some time later, he had to speak more clearly. It was towards the end of the persecution of Decius. Cyprian, still hidden in his retreat, had not yet been able to return to the midst of his people. Some lapsi informed him that they wanted to be reconciled without delay and that, in this process, they were the interpreters of the Church. Cyprian believed it was his duty to give a theological lesson to these insolent people who arrogate to themselves the rights of the bishop. He therefore wrote the following letter, where we will notice that the text *Tu es Petrus* is presented as the charter of the episcopate, as the formula which established the bishops 1.

1. Ep. iii, 3: "Meminisse autem diaconi debent quoniam apostolos id est episcopos et praepositos Dominus elegit, diaconos autem post ascensum Domini in caelos apostoli sibi constituentunt episcopatus sui et Ecclesiae ministros. » The foregoing scriptural demonstration includes four texts from the Old Testament and three from the New. These last three are: a) the place in Acts (xv, 4) where Saint Paul declares that, if he lacked respect for the (Jewish) high priest, it was without his knowledge; b) the place of Saint Matthew (wines, 23) where the Savior orders the healed lepers to go and show themselves to the (Jewish) priests; c) the place of Saint John (xviii, 23) where Our Lord denies having insulted the (Jewish) high priest.

1. Ep. XXXIII, 1.

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"Our Lord, whose precepts we must revere and observe, makes known to us in the gospel the respect due to the bishop and the constitution he has given to the Church, when he pronounces these words addressing to Peter: "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will establish my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." From there came the institution of bishops: from there it follows that the Church is established on bishops and that all ecclesiastical measures must be under the dependence of bishops 1."

1. "...Inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio et Ecclesiae ratio decurrit, ul Ecclesia super episcopos constituatur. »

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However, this letter had barely been written when the situation worsened. Five priests, who had seen Cyprian's election with annoyance and who had never ceased, from the beginning, to offer him silent opposition, exploited the discontent of the lapsi. Supported by a rich layman, Félicissime, they promised Christians who had apostatized during the persecution to immediately reconcile them. This attractive program gained them a good number of followers, and Carthage had two rival churches. If this spirit of revolt persisted, all Christian organizations would be over. But how to fight it? The excommunication - which, moreover, was immediately launched - could not make an impression on rebels who left the communion of their bishop to form a new one. Saint Cyprian understood that the only truly effective means of action was to enlighten people's minds by explaining to them the prerogatives of the episcopate and the great law of the unity of the Church. He therefore wrote, almost simultaneously, a few days before the Easter feast of 251, a letter - letter xliii - and a treatise 1. In the letter which he immediately sent to his people, he laid down the principle that each Christian community should have one church, one pulpit, one altar. "There is only one God, only one Christ, only one church, only one chair founded on Peter by the word of the Lord," he said. We cannot raise another altar, establish a new episcopate; there can only be one altar, only one episcopate 2 » How does the foundation of the Church on Peter result in unity of government and worship in each community, and by what link does this does it relate to this? The letter intended only for the people does not say this. But the treatise *De catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate*, which was to be read before a council of bishops, included more scholarly explanations. We find them there and we learn how the unity of the local community is deduced from the story of Saint Peter. Here is this piece of high theology 1.

1. The date of letter xliii is fixed by this information which we read at n. 7: (*Persecutionis istius novissima hæc est et extrema tentatio, quæ et ipsa cito. Domino protegente, transibit, ut repraesenter vobis post Paschæ diem eum collegis meis. i> Cyprian announces that we will see him again after Easter; therefore, it is before this feast that he writes about. Moreover, he is only separated from it by a few weeks at most, because he says (n. 1) that the perfidy of certain priests prevented him from returning before Easter as he did. As for the treatise on Unity, we see from the letter liv, 4 (lectis libellis quos hic nuper legeram) that it was read at the council of 251. However, it could not have been written during the council itself. same. We must therefore place the writing during the days which preceded the return to Carthage. Moreover, it offers with the letter xliii points of contact which prove that these two pieces were written at the same time. (See Chapman, *Revue Benedictine*, 1903, p. 26).*

2. Ep. xliii, 5: "Deus unus est et Christus unus et una Ecclesia et Cathedra una super Petrum Domini voce fundata. »

1. *De catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate*, 4, 5 and 17. It is generally believed that this treatise targets Novatieu. Chronology argues against this view. The Novatian schism was only known in Carthage at the very moment of the council, too late, therefore, to be able to be combatted in a dissertation which was read before the assembled bishops. Let us add that Cyprian engaged in a careful investigation before taking a position in the Roman

conflict (See Tillemout, m; Saint Cornelius, art. 7; iv, Saint Cyprian, art. 25). If we assume that De unitate is directed against Novatian, we must say that it was written after the return of the delegates sent to Rome. However, the council which only continued to await this return, dispersed as soon as it knew what to expect regarding the events of Ron'e. (See Chapman, loc. cit.)

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“The Lord speaks to Peter in these terms: “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” He builds his Church on one. And although, after his resurrection, he gives equal power to all his apostles, saying to them: “As my Father has sent me, I send you, receive the Holy Spirit, sins will be forgiven. “those to whom you give them, they will be retained “h those to whom you will retain them”, however, to make the unity perceptible, he decides to start it with just one. The other apostles were certainly just as much as Peter; they had received the same prerogatives and the same power. But unity is at the beginning, to teach us that the Church of Christ is one. 1 This unity of the Church is also proclaimed in the Song of Songs by the Holy Spirit, who says in the name of the Lord: One is my dove, my perfect. .. Does anyone who is not attached to this unity of the Church believe he has faith? Does he who fights the Church think he is in the Church?... This unity must be maintained and defended above all by us, bishops, by us who have the authority in the Church. We must show a one and indivisible episcopate. Let no one betray the federation with a lie; let no one alter the truth of the faith by impious prevarication. The episcopate is one, and the portion that each of us holds of it does not divide it. 1 The Church is one, although its progressive fruitfulness obliges it to expand and take the form of a multitude. Like the light of the sun, which is one, although the rays are many; like the stem of the tree, which is one with its strong root, although the branches are numerous; like the spring, whose numerous streams which flow from it do not break the unity. Try to separate one of its rays from the sun: the unity of light opposes this. Separate the branch from the stem: it will no longer produce fruit. Separate the stream from its source: it will dry up. Likewise, the Church spreads its rays over the entire universe which it illuminates with the light of the Lord, but the light which is thus spread everywhere is one... Its fecundity causes it to extend its branches over the whole earth and spread its streams far and wide; but the trunk is unique, unique is the source... Who will believe they can break this unity instituted by God and presented by him under celestial symbols? Who will believe they can destroy it by introducing opposing wills into it? Anyone who does not respect this unity does not respect the law of God... We must flee those who are separated from the Church. This man is perverse, he sins, he condemns himself. Can we be with Christ when we fight against Christ's bishops, when we separate ourselves from his clergy and his people? »

1. “Super unum ædificat Ecclesiam et quamvis apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parera potestatem tribut... tamen ut unitatein manifestaret, unitatis ejusdera ariginem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuil. Hoc »rant utique et ceteri apostoli quod futit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis, sed exordium ab anitate

proficiscitur ut Ecclesia Christi una monstertur. » In certain manuscripts we read from sed exordium ib unitate: 9 The beginning starts from unity and the primacy is given to Peter, to show that there is only one Church of Christ and one chair ... Whoever does not keep the unity of Peter (instead of hanc Ecclesiap unilatam), how can he imagine himself keeping the faith? Whoever abandons the chair of Peter on which (or on whom) the Church was founded, how can he believe he is in the Church? »» Critics agree that this lesson is interpolated. However, Dom Chapman tried to prove that the interpolation was authored by Saint Cyprian himself; in other words, that it is a second edition of De unitate modified for the use of the Novatian controversy, while the first edition was directed against the schism of Felicissime. He put forward the following considerations: a) The interpolated lesson aims at novatianism; b) it very probably already existed in the third century; c) it was used from the 4th century by Saint Optât and Saint Jerome, then, later, by Gelasius, Pelagius II and the venerable Bede. To this we can respond: a) The primacy of Rome was not at stake in Novatian's affair. The crime of this antipope was to dispute with Cornelius a title of which the latter was the sole legitimate possessor; it did not consist of rejecting the primacy of the Holy See. Therefore we do not see the relationship that can exist between the interpolated lesson and Novatianism. b) The manuscript which presents, for the first time, the interpolation, is from the 8th century. Dom Chapman believes that this manuscript descends from a third-century archetype. But he gives neither proof nor the beginnings of proof of his conjecture; because I cannot call by this name inductions on the respective order of the forms of interpolation, inductions which, apart from being absolutely arbitrary, have no significance, c) Dom Chapman, who affirms that Gelasius knew the interpolation, does not support this assertion on anything serious. It should be granted that Saint Optatus and Saint Jerome experienced interpolation if the formula "cathedra Petri" used by these doctors was found only in De unitate Ecclesiae. But we also find it in one of the letters of Saint Cyprian to Cornelius (Ep., lix, 14). Under these conditions we have no right to assert that Saint Optât and Saint Jerome borrowed from the interpolated lesson of De unitate. Let us conclude that the interpolation is later than Saint Cyprian. However, today it is of a venerable age, since it was known and used by Pope Pelagius II.

1. N. 5: " Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidura pars tenetur. "

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Let us pause for a moment on this essay. But first let us leave aside the definitive conclusion that it is intended to establish. There was undoubtedly a major importance for Saint Cyprian in chasing away the spirit of division from the community of Carthage and in proving that he must remain the sole shepherd of his flock. For us, what interests us here is only the way in which, to achieve his goal, he brings into play the great idea of the unity of the episcopate. We read that the episcopate is one and that this is the reason why the Christians of Carthage must all be united under the same leader. Now what does the unity of the episcopate consist of? It appears to us, first of all, as the result of the union of minds and hearts. Saint Cyprian will soon tell us in his letters that the unity of the episcopate is made of the concord and union which reign

between its members. 1. Here himself, he insinuates this thought, by declaring that the body is destroyed episcopal, when opposing wishes are introduced. However, this psychological and moral unity is only the expression and manifestation of a deeper unity. The episcopate is one, not only of the unity produced by the harmony of ideas and the concord of feelings; it is one of a physical or, if you like, metaphysical unity. The episcopal power is as if gathered and collected in a large reservoir from which each bishop obtains its supplies. Beyond this text that we encountered: "The episcopate is one, and the portion that each of us holds of it does not divide it. »And where is the proof of this metaphysical unity of the episcopate, of which the moral unity of the episcopal body is only the consequence? In the text *You are Petrus*. Saint Cyprian had already shown us in this word the charter of the episcopate. Here he completes his thoughts. The episcopate, he tells us, was indeed founded on the day when Christ said: *You are Petrus*. But we must nevertheless note that these words were addressed to only one apostle. Saint Peter was therefore, for some time, the sole depositary of the episcopate. Why that ? Is it because he was superior to the other members of the apostolic college? No, the apostles received after the resurrection the same powers as Peter and became his equals in every way: *Hoc erant utique et ceteri apostoli quod fut Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis*. Why then was the episcopate for some time the exclusive property of Peter? Why was it temporarily concentrated in one man? To make us aware of its unity; to show us that, whatever the number of those who hold the episcopal dignity, this dignity is one and cannot be divided. In the eyes of Saint Cyprian, Saint Peter is, undoubtedly not the source, but the symbol of the unity of the episcopate which must always remain one, as at the time when this apostle was its sole depositary. And this is what the holy bishop of Carthage means in the following text that we have already encountered: "There is only one chair founded on Peter by the word of the Lord. »

1. See further the letters lv, 24; lxvi, 8; lxxviii, 3.

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The letter xliii and the treatise *De catholicæ Ecclesiæ imitate* whose formulas we have just studied, were inspired by the schism of Félicissime. It is to the same cause that the Letter to Pappien is linked, where we read that "Peter on whom the Church had been built", spoke in a particular circumstance "in the name of the Church"; that "the Church is in the bishop and whoever is not with the bishop is not in the Church"; and that "the Catholic Church, which is one, can neither be torn nor divided" but that it is "brought back to unity by the bond of its bishops united among themselves 1". We already know in what sense Saint Cyprian says that the Church is built on Peter. We can therefore move on, noting only that he practically derives the unity of the Church from the moral union of the bishops 2. It will also be enough for us to mention the place in the Letter to Antonian, where Saint Cyprian declares that "the episcopate is one, thanks to the harmony which reigns between the numerous bishops 1"; from which it follows that Novatian cannot be a bishop, he who wanted to supplant a regularly elected bishop. But some of the letters written to Cornelius deserve our attention.

1. Ep. LXVI, 8: “Loquitur illic Petrus super quem ædificata fuerat Ecclesia, Ecclesiæ nomine docens... Unde scire debes episcopum in Ecclesia esse et Ecclesiam in episcopo...”

2. Ep. lxxvi, 8: “Ecclesia quæ catholica una est... cohærentium sibi invicem sacerdotum glutino copulata. * ”

1. Ep. LV, 24: “Episcopus unus episcoporum raullorum concordie numerositate diffusus.”

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Saint Cyprian wrote nine letters to Pope Cornelius, his “dearest Father,” as he said; to call him. Five of them are linked to the election of Cornelius, about the legitimacy of which certain doubts had hovered for some time in Carthage 2. We find nothing very important to glean there 3. Nothing to take either, either in the address of congratulations sent to Cornelius regarding the firmness he had just displayed in the face of the persecutors, or in the indictment drawn up against Novatian 1. So we only have two letters left to study. One concerns lapsi. In concert with Rome, Saint Cyprian had regulated, in the council of 251, that Christians who had fallen during persecution would be reconciled as soon as they became dangerously ill, and that, apart from the danger of death, they would be condemned to do penance with the prospect of being admitted to the Church in an undetermined future. But, towards the middle of the following year, hearing the first rumblings of Gallus's persecution, he thought it necessary to inaugurate a more lenient discipline. He therefore gathered his colleagues at Carthage, and there, in a council of forty-two bishops, he granted pardon to all the repentant lapsi. He then brought this decision to the attention of the Pope. What is striking in his letter is the spirit of contention that animates it. It seems that she has before her an adversary whose objections she refutes. Here is what we read there 1:

2. Ep. XLIV, XLV, XLVII, XLVIII, LI.

3. Note however (Ep., xlv, 1): “The opposing party (of Novatian) radice et matris sinura adque complexum recusavit”; (Eph. catholicæ Ecclesiæ... unitatem probarent... * ; (Ep. xlix, 2): “(The former supporters of Novatian in Rome declare:) We recognize that Cornelius is the bishop of the most holy Catholic Church elected by God... (they profess to believe) unum episcopum in Catholica esse debere. » The letter xlix from which this last text is taken is from Cornelius. The same pope, in his Letter to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, vi, 43), says that there is only one bishop ἐν καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. If we understand the catholica of letter xlix of the Catholic Church taken as a whole, we will arrive at the heretical conclusion that there is only one bishop in the entire Church. We must therefore translate: “There is only one bishop in each Catholic church (in the Catholic church of each city). The same interpretation applies to the text of the Letter n Fabius of Antioch. As for the terms radix, matrix, mater, the question is whether they designate the Church of Rome itself, or the Church in general, the Catholic Church whose representative in Rome was Cornelius. The word “matrix n” is used in ep. lxxi, 2,

and in De Unitate, 23, to designate the Catholic Church; the word c mater u and the word of radix” have the same meaning, the first in ep. lxxiii, 24, the second ep. lxxiii, 2. From which it follows that no philological reason prohibits us from applying the texts of Ep. xlv and XL wine. The context seems to oblige us, because the Novatian schism did not call into question the primacy of Rome, but the unity of the Church.

1. Ep. Lx and LII.

1. Ep. LVII

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“Today, it is not the infirm, it is the strong who need peace; it is not to the dying, it is to the living that we must grant communion. Those whom we exhort to fight, we must not send them there unarmed... By what right do we force them to shed their blood to confess Christ, if we refuse them the blood of Christ before the fight? By what right would we present to them the cup of martyrdom, if we did not first admit them to drink in the Church from the cup of the Lord? We must not confuse, dearest brother> with the apostates who have returned to the world and live as pagans, or with the heretics who turn parricidal weapons against the Church; we must not, I say, confuse with these criminals those who have not left the threshold of the Church, who have never ceased to implore with tears divine clemency and who now declare that they are ready to fight, ready to fight courageously for the name of the Lord and for their salvation... And let it not be said that the martyr is baptized in his blood, and that he does not need to receive peace from the bishop, who must soon have the peace of glory, who must receive from the Lord a much greater peace. Because, first of all, we cannot be fit for martyrdom when we are not armed for combat by the Church... Obeying the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the warnings that the Lord has given us through numerous visions and obvious, it pleased us to gather the soldiers of Christ into the camp as the enemy approached... We believe that the thought of paternal mercy (of God) will lead you to the same decision. That if, among our colleagues, there is one who, as the battle approaches, considers that he should not give peace to the brothers and sisters, he will have to give an account to the Lord, on the day of judgment, of his excommunication. inappropriate or its inhuman severity. As for us, we have held the language of faith, of charity, of pastoral concern...”

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Obviously this haughty and aggressive peroration was aimed at Cornelius, in whom she suspected an opposite course of action. She let him understand that his protests would be shattered against the unshakeable feeling of a duty accomplished. Did Cornelius nevertheless raise his voice and try to arrest the bishop of Carthage? We don't know anything about it. It is probable that he lacked time, because the letter we have just read only preceded his martyrdom by a few weeks. Saint Cypricn was undoubtedly able to proceed in peace with the reconciliation of the lapsi.

The second letter that we have to study aims to reproach Cornelius for his weakness towards the supporters of Felicissima. These schismatics, pushing the revolt to the end, had given themselves a bishop and had undertaken to have themselves recognized by Rome as the representatives of the true church of Carthage. Now, the gentle Cornelius, after having chased them away the first time, had let himself be disconcerted shortly afterwards by the audacious insistence with which they had demanded to be admitted to his communion. Deeply saddened by the pope's failure, Saint Cypri thought it necessary to remind him of the feeling of episcopal responsibility and give him a lesson in courage. He said 1:

1. Ep. lix, 3 et seq.

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"If this is so, dear brother, if the wicked find in audacity a means of making themselves feared, if they obtain by violence what the law cannot obtain for them, that is the end of it. authority of the episcopate and the government of the Church. We will no longer be able to remain Christians if we end up trembling before the threats and snares of the wicked... No, dearest brother, ecclesiastical discipline, episcopal censorship must not waver in the face of insults and dangers. I say it, because I am forced to say it, when a bishop takes a place that death has left vacant, when he has been peacefully elected by the suffrage of an entire people, when he has been the object of divine protection in persecution, when he is united with all his colleagues, when he received, for four years, the approval of his people... when it is this bishop who lost and out of Church attack, it is obvious that the attack does not come from Christ who established the bishops and who protects them, but from the adversary of Christ and the Church..."

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When he has unburdened his heart and inflicted on Cornelius the blame that his conduct seemed to him to deserve, Saint Cyprian moves on to another order of ideas:

"After all these excesses, after having given themselves a heretical bishop, they still have the audacity to sail towards the chair of Peter, they have the audacity to present themselves in front of the first church, the western one out of unity episcopal to bring him schismatic and impious letters "1. They do not reflect that the Romans, to whom they are addressing, are those whose faith the apostle once celebrated and who do not allow themselves to be surprised by perfidy. Now what reason do they have for going to Rome to announce that they have established a pseudo-bishop in front of the bishops? If they want to have their actions approved, they persevere in their crime. If, on the contrary, their behavior displeases them, they know where they must return. Indeed, we all agree to admit, as justice and equity require, that the case must be investigated where the crime was committed. In addition, each pastor has received a portion of the flock, which he must supervise and govern, and for which he will have to give an account to the Lord. 1 Under these conditions, our subordinates must not run from right to left, and break through clever maneuvers the good intelligence that unites the bishops. They must plead their case where their accusers and the witnesses to their crime are. It is true that, in the eyes of this

handful of lost men, the bishops of Africa who have already judged them and who, even recently, condemned their conduct with solemn condemnation, must have little authority. But, in reality, their case has been judged, the sentence has been pronounced against them. And it would be unworthy of bishops if one could accuse them of inconstancy and frivolity in their judgments. »

1. Ibid., n. 14: "... Navigare audent et ad Petri cathedram adque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est..."

1. Ep. lix, ll. 14: "... Et singulis pastoribus portio gregis eis adscripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernet, rationem sui actus Domino redditurus. "

This passage owes its just fame to the mention it makes of the "chair of Peter". Without doubt we have already heard the holy bishop of Carthage tell us that the Church was built on Peter, that there is a single chair established on Peter; and we know that, in his mind, these formulas were solely intended to present Saint Peter to us as the symbol of the unity of the episcopate of which he was the first and, momentarily, the only depositary. But here, it is indeed Rome that Saint Cyprian has in mind. He who likes to imagine the very dignity of the episcopate as a chair of which Saint Peter was the first occupant, it is indeed for the see of Rome that he reserves the title of *cathedra Petri*. He thus recognizes that particular links connect the church of Rome to the prince of the apostles. On the other hand, he admits that the episcopal body of Africa, which he calls *Unitas sacerdotalis*, comes from Rome, and that Rome is the main church¹, the mother church, the one to which the churches of Africa owe their foundation and of which they are the daughters. However, when it comes to putting these prerogatives into the practical realm, reserve and distrust immediately invade him. According to him, the day the schismatics of Carthage want to return to order, it is in Carthage and not in Rome that they will have to have their case judged. For what? No doubt because you have to be on the scene to know the facts well, and a foreign court can be misled. But, alongside this motive, there is another more important one. Each faithful reports only to his bishop; each bishop has shared the government of a portion of the flock, and for this government he must account only to God: *rationem sui actus Domino redditurus*. This is especially why one should not bring one's case to a foreign bishop.

1. On the meaning of this word, see above, p. 89.

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Before closing his letter, Cyprian asks the Pope to read it publicly to the faithful of Rome. "I know, dearest brother, that, out of consideration for the affection we owe and show to each other, you always read our letters to the flourishing clergy who preside over there with you, and to your people as numerous as they are holy; but I beg you today to do, at my request, what you usually do spontaneously and out of deference. Read this letter that I am sending you, so that if, there, the contagion of bad doctrines has infiltrated, it will be driven out of your minds.

1. Ep. lix, 19.

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We only have one letter left to examine, the first of those that Saint Cyprian addressed to Pope Stephen. It relates to Marcien, bishop of Arles. Marcien was an intransigent Novatian who had allowed several of his diocesans to die without reconciling them. Moreover, far from making a secret of his conduct, he showed audacity and declared to anyone who would listen that he had broken with the Catholic Church. The other bishops of southern Gaul, not daring to take it upon themselves to excommunicate him, referred it to Stephen who gave them no support. Then one of them, Faustin, of Lyon, addressed the bishop of Carthage, and sent him two letters to clarify the situation. Saint Cyprian tried to make the Pope understand that he had to act 2:

2. Ep. Lxviii. This letter predates the baptismal quarrel. On the other hand it must be set back a little after the beginning of the pontificate of Eliennc, since it follows two letters from Faustin to Cyprian, letters which themselves followed a letter from the bishops of Gaul to Stephen. Also we agree to place it towards the end of 254 (Harnack, Chronology, li, 356). Let us note in this regard that Stephen's pontificate goes from May 12, 254 to August 2, 257. Stephen succeeded Lucius, who died on March 5, 254 and whose pontificate, lasting eight months (Eusebius, seen, 2), had begun in June 253. We have from Saint Cyprian a letter to his "very dear brother" Lucius (Ep., lxi), which alludes to another lost letter.

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"Our colleague from Lyon, Faustin, wrote to me repeatedly, dear brother, to inform me of facts which, I know, have been brought to your attention, both by him and by our colleagues, the other bishops of his province. This is Marcien of Arles, who attached himself to Novatian and who broke with the truth of the Catholic Church, as well as with the federation of our episcopal body... He belongs to us, very dear brother, to remedy this situation, to us who, having our eyes fixed on divine clemency and holding in our hands the scales of ecclesiastical government, strike sinners with vigorous censures, without however denying the fallen the remedy of goodness and divine mercy which will raise them up and heal their wounds. »

"You must therefore write to our colleagues in Gaul a decisive letter 1, to tell them not to leave Maroien, this audacious man, this proud man, this enemy of divine goodness and the salvation of his brothers, so as not to let him, I say, further insult our body from which he has not yet been expelled, while he boasts of having separated himself from our communion to follow Novatian and his perverse doctrine... Wouldn't it be shameful for us, very dear brother, to suffer that Novatian's supporters mock us and set themselves up as judges of the decisions of the Church, when Novatian himself was expelled and excommunicated for faults by the bishops of God ? »

1. Ep. lxviii. n. 2: "Quapropter lacere te oportet plenissimas litteras ad coepiscopos nostros in Gallia constitutos. »

“Send to the province and to the people of Arles a letter of excommunication against Marcien, so that another may be put in his place and that the flock of Christ, left abandoned by this man, may be collected 1 ... Indeed, dearest brother, the reason why the vast body of bishops is brought back to unity through the bond of mutual concord is to allow everyone to intervene, as soon as one of the members of our college undertakes to spread heresy, to tear apart and ruin the flock of Christ 2... Is there for the leaders a more important and nobler mission than that of providing for the salvation of the sheep by dint of concern and remedies? Since the Lord has fulminated threats against the shepherds who do not take care of his sheep and let them perish, what should we do, dearest brother, if not put ourselves at the service of the sheep of Christ...? Although we others who are not-past-curs are numerous, we have to govern one and the same flock 1. We must therefore take care of all the sheep that Christ came to seek at the price of his blood and such passion, and not to leave in suffering our brothers who complain... We must honor the glorious memory of our predecessors the blessed martyrs Cornelius and Lucius 2. And it is you above all, very dear brother, who must bear witness to them of the deference, you who are their vicar and their successor. Inspired by the spirit of the Lord with which they were filled, these glorious martyrs decided by their letters not to refuse to the penitent lapsi peace and communion. And we all were the same opinion...”

1. Ibid., n. 3: “Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate consistentem a te litteræ quibus, abstento Marciano, alius in loco ejus substitutatur...”

2. Ibid., “Idcirco enim, frater carissime, copiosum corpus est sacerdotum concordiae mutuæ glulino atque unitatis vinculo copulatum ut... subveniant ceteri. »

1. Ep. Ixviii, n. 5: “Nam etsi pastores multi sumus, unum tamen gregem pascimus...”

2. Ibid. n. 5: “Servandus est enim antecessorum nostrorum beatorum martyrum Cornelii et Lucii honor glo* riosus. *

“Let us know the one who, in Arles, will be put in Murcian's place, so that we know to whom we must address our brothers and to whom we must write. Be well, dearest brother. “

This letter asks Stephen, in imperative terms, to intervene against the Bishop of Arles, and it explains to him the reasons which oblige him to act. What should the intervention of the pope be and what role is he called to fulfill here? Should he excommunicate and depose Marcien himself? Was his mission limited only to informing the Gallic bishops that the heretic prelate would find no support in Rome, and that they could confidently proceed with his deposition? This last hypothesis has for it the passage of the letter where we learn that the intervention of Stephen will have the consequence of leading the bishops of Gaul not to let Marcien insult the

episcopal body any longer, ne ultra... insultare patientur. The formula ne patientur seems to suppose that the deposition of the heretic will be pronounced in Gaul. On the other hand, we read a little further that the pope must send a letter whose effect will be the deposition of Marcien, litteræ (quibus abstento Marciano, and this does not fail to favor the first hypothesis. Where is the truth? In the synthesis of these two interpretations, the opposition of which has frequently been highlighted, without thinking that they could easily be reconciled.¹ In the thought of Saint Cyprian, the excommunication must be pronounced in Rome, the deposition must be pronounced in Arles, and this second operation must be the consequence, or, if you wish, the practical implementation of the first. Stephen must declare that Marcien is no longer in his communion. Then the Gallic bishops will tell the people of Arles to provide to replace their pastor. They will no longer allow their unworthy colleague to mock the episcopal body (nepatientur): they will depose him. But they will only be the executors of the pope's thoughts, whose letter will be thus - immediately — a letter of deposition: quibus abstento Marciano. In any case, whether one conceives Stephen's intervention as one wishes, one cannot deny that it must be decisive; that the fate of Marcien depends on it; and that, in asking for it, the bishop of Carthage attributes to the pope an unparalleled role.

1. Solini, Kirchenrecht, p. 393. On ancient interpretations see Tunnel, History of Positive Theology, ii, 241, 269, 280.

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But he requests this intervention, not without realizing that he has resistance to overcome. Does he know from Faustin the reasons alleged by Étienne to motivate his inaction? Was it conjecture that revealed them to him? What is certain is that he wrote his dissertation as if Stephen had informed the Gallic bishops that Marcien's conduct in Arles was an indifferent matter and, in any case, about which he had no concern. To occupy. To these two objections, formulated or presumed, Cyprian replied to the pope that inaction would be offensive to his predecessors - for "our predecessors", he said - Cornelius and Lucius, who condemned Novatianism, and that it would seriously engage his responsibility. Let us only concern ourselves with this last consideration. It will be noted that it appeals to the double principle of the unity of the flock of Christ and the episcopal federation. Ultimately, all the faithful are Christ's sheep, all have the right to be preserved from the teeth of wolves; moreover, the unity of the episcopal body was instituted by God, precisely to allow bishops to correct the fault of those of their colleagues who, through negligence or treachery, would abandon their sheep to eternal perdition: that is it, according to Cyprien, why Stephen cannot lose interest in the Arles affair.

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But why does the bishop of Carthage not himself excommunicate Marcien? How does he demand this measure from Stephen? There is here a tribute paid to the ascendancy of Rome, a tribute which the theory of the episcopal federation is powerless to account for, and which has its source in the reality of the milks. Cyprian, as we said above, recognizes that the pope's intervention in the affair of Arles must have an unparalleled role, and his approach to him, which

he seeks to explain by other considerations, can be explained above all in this part. We have seen Cornelius bring together the bishops of Italy in a council, appoint and depose them as he pleases, and behave, in a word, like the bishop of Italian bishops. Beyond the Alps and the sea, its authority, without being the same, is nevertheless far from being zero. When the Gallic bishops are grappling with Marcien of Arles who, with a haughty gesture, separated himself from their communion, it is not towards Carthage that they turn, it is towards Rome. Or rather they address Carthage, but only after asking Rome for an answer which was not given to them. And they then proceed with less ceremony. When it comes to writing to Stephen, the Gallic church officially intervenes, while the bishop of Lyon believes he has the authority to correspond alone and in his own name with Cyprian 1. Rome therefore occupies, with respect for the bishops of Gaul, a place to which Carthage could not claim. Cyprian was wronged; and this is why he urges Stephen to lend support to the Gallic church and to exercise a role to which no other bishop could claim.

1. Ep.F LXVIII, 1: "Faustinus collega noster... semel atque iterum mihi scripsit significans ea quæ etiam vobis scio utique nuntiata tam ab eo quam a ceteris coepiscopis nostris. »
a) Faustin alone wrote to Cyprian; b) Faustin and his colleagues (a ceteris coepiscopis nostris) wrote to Rome; c) they wrote to Rome before writing to Carthage, since Cyprian knows their approach to Stephen. See Sohra, Kirchenrecht, p. 362, 392.

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Rome is a center of communion. It is also a communications center. She receives the information and transmits it; it is through him that information passes from one church to another. Hence these words of Saint Cyprian: "Let us know him who, in Arles, will take Marcien's place." The church of Arles will bring its choice to the attention of Etienne. Stephen will notify Carthage, from where the news will spread to the various bishoprics of Africa.

Let's bring together the pieces of information we encountered during our investigation. The unity of the Church, whose law is attested by various scriptural texts or symbols 2, has its principle in the unity of the episcopate. The Lord wanted his Church to be one, but the episcopate is the means he used to carry out his plan and guarantee his Church the privilege of unity. And he established the episcopacy when he pronounced the word You are Petrus. Foundation of a Church whose law is unity, the bishopric must necessarily possess this unity itself. This is indeed how the Lord disposed of it, and he has sufficiently made his will known to us, by momentarily concentrating the entire episcopate in the hands of Saint Peter: so that the text Tu es Petrus, which is the charter of the episcopate, is at the same time the symbol of its unity. And this unity itself, of which Saint Peter is the syn b de, has its principle in the spirit of fraternal harmony which binds the bishops together. The Lord, who wanted the episcopal body to always possess unity, asked the spirit of concord and fraternity of the bishops to achieve this unity; the episcopate is therefore a federation: corpus est sacerdotum, concordia mutua glutino atque unitatis vinculo copulatum. If, in this federation, a traitor slips in, if a bishop abuses his pastoral office and uses it for evil, the other bishops must come to the aid of his flock in danger of perdition. But, apart from this case, each bishop is absolute master of the portion of the flock

which has been entrusted to him, and he must account for his administration only to God. This is why the supporters of Felicissime, in the event that they return to good feelings, should plead their cause in Carthage and not in Rome.

2. Here are the proofs of the unity of the Church listed in *De calholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate* 4 et seq. : a) *Una est columba mea, perfecta mea* (Cant.y vi, 8); b). *Unum corpus ctunus spiritus, uon spes vocationis vestrae, unus Dominus, una fides, unum bnplisma, unus Deus* (Eph., iv, 4); c) Noah's ark; d) *Qui non est mecum adversus me est* (Math., XII, 30); e) the seamless tunic of Christ; f) *Et erunt unus grex et unus pastor* (Jo.) x, 16); g) *Non siot in vobis schismata* (I Cor., i, 10); h) *In domo una comedetur, non ejicietis de domo carnem foras* (Exod., xii, 46); i) *Deus qui inhabitare facit unanimes in domo* (Ps., lxvii, 7).

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Rome! it occupies only a very modest place in this conception of the Church and the episcopate. No doubt Saint Cyprian calls it "the chair of Peter", "the main church from which episcopal unity arose". No doubt he made a representation to Stephen, by which he recognized that the intervention of the pope was necessary for the deposition of a heretic prelate; and he himself, in difficult circumstances, gloried before his people in having the support of Rome. He could not deny either present reality or past facts; he could dispute neither the preponderant importance of the siege of Rome in the 20th century, nor its historical role in the founding of the Western churches. Let us add, moreover, that "the chair of Peter" is a formula which must very probably have been developed in Rome, which must have come ready-made from Rome to Carthage where it was used. But we must nevertheless recognize that the dogma of the episcopate obscured in the eyes of Saint Cyprian the dogma of the papacy. Let us not be moved by the freedom with which the illustrious bishop dictates to Cornelius as well as to Stephen their duties and lectures them, not without some harshness. Arriving at the height of their power, the popes have, in fact, heard more than once the harsh language of apostolic independence. Nor should we let ourselves be shocked by the spectacle of this rudimentary label which constantly calls the Pope "dearest brother" only to give him the title "colleague 1". Without being completely incapable of providing us with useful indications, the protocol cannot serve as a precise instrument for measuring feelings of respect and dependence. But when we discard the tone, both imperious and familiar, with which Saint Cyprian speaks to the Pope, we find ourselves faced with a theory that is not so easy to dismiss. On what basis will the successor of Saint Peter base his authority, if the text *You are Petrus* is taken from him to be adjudicated to the episcopate? And by what right will he impose his will outside Rome, if he has only received as a share, like all the other bishops, a portion of Christ's flock; if each of his colleagues must account for his administration only to God; and if the union of minds and hearts is the only means instituted by God to maintain cohesion in the episcopal body? It is difficult to see how to provide a solution to these problems that is entirely consistent with the principle of pontifical primacy. And, when we hear Saint Cyprian using the language that we know at the time when he is the friend of Rome, we can only foresee how he will speak when the hour of conflict has come.

1. Ep. LX, 1: "Quis non sacerdos in consacerdotis sui laudibus tanquam in suis propriis gratuletur...?" » Ep. lv, 8: "Venio... ad personam Cornelii collegæ nostri." » Ep. ix, 1: "Cum de excessu boni viri collegæ mei (Fabien)". He uses the words consacerdos, collega when he speaks of the pope. When he speaks to the Pope he always calls him frater carissime, and his superscription formula is as follows: Cyprianus Cornelio fratri; Cyprianus Stephano fratri. But what is he called? The clergy of Rome and the confessors gave him the name of frater when they addressed him. Speaking of him we say (Ep. viii): "benedictum papatem Cyprianum". In addition, the superscriptions of the letters addressed to him bear: (ep. xxiii) "Universi confessores Cypriano papati"; (ep. xxx) "Cypriano papæ presbyteri et diaconi Romæ consistentes"; (ep., xxxi): Cypriano papæ Moyses et Maximus"; (ep. xxxvi): Cypriano papati presbyteri et diacones Romæ consistentes".