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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.

CHAPTER TWO

The Roman Church until Pope Victor

The Roman Church enters the scene of history only thirty years after the death of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and its first act is to see to the maintenance of discipline 1. It was towards the end of Domitian's reign (between 93 and 96). The Christian community of Corinth, torn by internal dissensions, was in complete disarray. The presbyters, who for a long time had been presiding over the exercises of the cult and exercising the episcopate, had just been dismissed, in spite of the regularity with which they had always discharged their functions. In their place, popular favor had installed men to whom heaven seemed to have lavished its supernatural gifts 2. This revolution had not been accomplished without bitter complaints, without giving rise to ardent protests. It had especially provoked the sneers of the pagans, witnesses of the not very edifying spectacle that the Christians were putting before their eyes 1.

1. See the Prima Clementis in Funk, *Patres apostolici*, i, 98 ff Tubingue, 1901.

2. Ibid, xxxviii 2; xlvi, 5; li, 2; liv, 1. allusions.

1. Ibid, XLVii. 7.

As soon as the Church of Rome became aware of the scandal of which her sister in Corinth had just been guilty, she considered it her duty to remedy it. Unfortunately, the persecution which was then raging condemned her to silence for a time. She took advantage of the first days of calm to write a letter which began thus :

"The Church of God that sojourns in Rome to the Church of God that sojourns in Corinth, to the elect whom the divine will has sanctified through Our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Almighty God pour out his grace and peace on you abundantly through Jesus Christ.

"The unexpected and repeated misfortunes which we have had to endure have not allowed us, brothers, to deal more quickly with your situation, which leaves something to be desired; to deal with this revolt, odious to the elect, unholy and abominable, which the pride of a few reckless men has stirred up, to the great damage of your name, which used to be esteemed and loved by all. 2

2 Clement, i.

After dwelling at length on the evils caused by jealousy and on the duties of the Christian life, the letter addresses and resolves the problem of authority. It teaches that the mode of transmission of offices has been regulated by God; that episcopal power derives, immediately or mediately, from the apostles, who themselves received it from God through the intermediary of Jesus Christ; that it comes from above and not from below; and therefore that it is a crime to rise up against constituted leaders. "The apostles were appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ as preachers of the Gospel; Jesus Christ was sent by God. Christ, therefore, comes from God; the apostles come from Christ; these two facts were settled, the one like the other, by the will of God. Invested with their mission, confirmed in their faith in the word of God by the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles went, with the support of the Holy Spirit, to announce the coming of the kingdom of God. So they evangelized the provinces and cities, and after having tested by the Spirit those who were the first conquests of their apostolate, they established them as bishops and deacons of those who would later come to the faith. This institution was not new, for many centuries before, Scripture had mentioned bishops and deacons in this oracle: *I will establish their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith...* Instructed by Jesus Christ our Lord, our apostles knew that the function of the episcopate would be a subject of dispute. It was to ward off this danger, known to them by their foreknowledge, that they established those of whom we have just spoken. They decided that at their death, their functions would be entrusted to other experienced men. We believe, therefore, that it is not right to remove those who were established by the apostles or, later, by other excellent men, with the consent of the whole Church; who have served the flock of Christ in an irreproachable manner, with humility, meekness and dignity; and whose long administration has received a good testimony from all. It is no small sin to remove from the episcopate those who have offered the gifts in a holy and proper manner. Happy are the older presbyters, whose fruitful and fulfilled career has already been traveled! They do not fear being removed from their place. You, on the other hand, have removed from their ministry some men who were doing it honorably 1.

1. Clement, xlii-xliv Sohm (Kirchenrecht., p. 82) gives ἀέπινομην (xliv, 2) the meaning of distribution and translates: "they charged them during their lifetime with the distribution of the offerings, so that when they died..." This interpretation, which accounts well for the word ἐπινομήν, is repugnant to the context and is generally rejected. On xliii, 6, see Harnack, *Texte wid Untersuchungen*, xx, 3, pp. 70-76.

The letter ends with the following observations: "Let us therefore obey his most holy and glorious name. In this way we will avoid the threats that Wisdom launches against the rebellious, and we will be able to have confidence in his majesty. Heed our advice: you will not repent. As God lives, as the Lord Jesus Christ lives, as the Holy Spirit lives, who is the faith and hope of the elect, so all those who diligently and humbly fulfill God's commandments will be numbered among the elect and will be saved by Jesus Christ, through whom God is glorified forever and ever. Amen. But if there are any who refuse to listen to the words that God speaks through us, they should know that they are in grave danger. As for us, we will be innocent of this fault and we will pray the Creator of all things not to let the number of his elect diminish, but to preserve them through his beloved servant, Jesus Christ, through whom he has called us from darkness to light... It is right that, following the great examples before our eyes, we should bend our necks and walk in the way of obedience. It is by renouncing the spirit of rebellion that we will arrive without reproach at the goal assigned to us. You will bring us joy and gladness if, heeding what we have written through the Holy Spirit, you reject the suggestions of rebellion, in accordance with the advice of peace and concord which we have given you in this letter. We have sent to you safe and prudent men who, from their youth to their old age, have lived without blemish among us. They will be our witnesses and yours. We have done this to show you that our concern is to see you return soon to peace. May the God who sees everything, who is the master of spirits and the Lord of all flesh, who has chosen the Lord Jesus Christ, who has chosen us, through him, to be his special people, may God give to every soul who calls upon his glorious and holy name, faith, respect, peace, patience... Send us back promptly in peace and joy, Claudius Ephesus, Valerius Biton and Fortunat whom we have delegated to you. Let them bring us the message of that peace and concord which we so earnestly desire, so that we may soon rejoice, on learning that order has returned to you. "1

1. Clement, lxiii-lxv.

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When Eusebius mentions this letter, it is to tell us that it is absolutely admirable 2, and already St. Irenaeus is not afraid to affirm that it is imposing 3. Imposing, indeed, is this monument which is almost confused with the origins of Christianity! And how glorious for the city of the popes! Without doubt, the Roman Church does not condemn anything here. It teaches, it tries to carry conviction, it does not command. It does not even think of showing off its titles to primacy. But she is aware that she is the first of all the churches. She knows that this supremacy gives her the charge of souls and imposes on her the obligation to put back on the right path those who have left it. She does not hesitate to call to order one of the most famous churches 1. And the facts show that she has the right to speak, because her opinions are listened to and put into

practice. Sixty years later, when Hegesippus visited the church in Corinth, he was pleased to see that everything was in order. The letter to the Corinthians had borne fruit.

2. Hist. of the Church, n. 16.

3. Hær, III, 3, 3.

1 It is more commonly believed today that the intervention of the Church of Rome was spontaneous and that it did not occur at the request of the Church of Corinth. However, the opposite opinion is also held. The texte i, 1, περί των ἐπιζητουμένων παρ ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, which I have translated "(we could not attend more quickly) to your situation, which leaves much to be desired" can also be translated c (we could not attend more quickly) to the questions posed by you" ; from which it would follow that the church of Corinth called upon Rome for help. But xlvi, 6, 7, implies that the Roman church knew of the dissensions in Corinth by reputation: "This noise did not come to our ears alone, but to the ears of the pagans themselves." Moreover, on the assumption that Corinth was consulted, we should read in i, 1, παρ ὑμῶν, whereas we read παρ ὑμῖν

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From the beginning of the second century until Victor, the Roman Church passed through years of silence, the tranquility of which was occasionally interrupted by the execution of martyrs. Under Eleutherus, St. Irenaeus came to Rome, bearing a letter from the confessors of Lyons, which probably recommended the Montanist movement to the pope's sympathy, and of which Eusebius has preserved the following fragment: "We wish you, Father Eleutherus, to be always happy in God. We have asked our brother and companion Irenaeus to carry this letter. We recommend him to you as a man full of zeal for the cause of Christ. If we thought that rank confers righteousness, we would recommend him to you as a priest of the Church, because he is.¹ " We do not know the result of this letter; at most we can conjecture that Eleutherus did not judge the Montanists severely². However, apart from this incident, the Roman church did not have to give either teachings or warnings. But since it had abundant resources at its disposal, it could do good around it, help the Christians of other churches, and distribute alms and consolation to them. And the following letter of St. Denvs of Corinth tells us that she exercised this ministry of charity extensively:

1. Eusebius, iv, 22, 2. Eusebius sought to make believe that the letter of the confessors of Lyon had nothing in common with Montanism. "However one feels to read it that it was not absolutely unfavourable to the Phrygian movement."> (Duchesne, Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise, i, 278).

2. Duchesne, Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise, i, 278. Here is the text of Tertullian (adv. Praxeas, 1), according to which a bishop of Rome, very well disposed for the mon- tanists had sent them letters of peace, when Praxeas arrived which showed him Montanism under an unfavourable light and decided him to withdraw his letters. Tertullien adds that, in order to indispose the pope against the Montanists, Praxeas appealed to the self-righteousness of his predecessors: "...

præ- decessorum ejus auctoritates defendendo, coegit et litteras pacis revocare jam emissas et a proposito recipiendorum charismatum concessare." Which is the pope aimed but not appointed by Tertullian? One pronounces sometimes for Eleutherus, sometimes for Victor. One even designated Zephyrin. Bishop Duchesne judiciously observes that the hesitant attitude of Rome is hardly explicable after Eleutherus when the churches of Asia had taken a clear stand against the Montanist movement. He therefore believes that the pope of whom Tertullian speaks is Eleutherus. Harnack (*Chronology*, I, 376) considers this feeling to be the most probable. In any case, the pope in question did not condemn Montanism; he limited himself, at the request of Praxeas, not to recognize it by public act (Duchesne, I, 270). However, as Praxeas, according to Tertullian, reminded this pope of the conduct of "his predecessors", or concluded that these predecessors - two in number, at least - took a clear position against Montanism (thus thinks, following Zahn. *Bardenhewer, Geschichte der allkirchlichen Literatur*, I, 529, which is confirmed in this feeling by the letter of the confessors of Lyon). This assumption is exaggerated. The pope to whom Praxeas spoke would not have sent letters of peace to the Montanists if his predecessors had taken a clear stand against the new doctrine (Harnack, *Chronology*, I, 376).

"It has been your custom, since the beginning, to shower the brothers with your benefits and to provide the numerous churches established in all the cities with the necessary subsidies for life. In this way you come to the aid of the needy and provide for the necessities of the brothers condemned to the mines. With these gifts, which you have been distributing from the beginning, you are following in the footsteps of your ancestors, acting as Romans. Your bishop, Blessed Soter, not content with maintaining this practice, has developed it, so abundant is the help he sends to the saints, and so paternally does he welcome the brothers on their journey, whom he comforts and treats like children... On this day, which is the holy day of Sunday, we have read your letter and we will continue to read it hereafter, as we read the letter that Clement once wrote to us 1."

1. Eusebius, iv, 23, 10.

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The liberality which the Roman Church extended to the various Christian communities could not fail to secure for it universal veneration and recognition. It is easy to find the expression of these sentiments in the letter we have just read. And already, half a century before Denys of Corinth, St. Ignatius of Antioch was obeying the same dispositions, when he wrote that pompous address with which his Letter to the Romans begins:

"Ignatius, called also Theophore, to the church which has obtained mercy from the most high Father and from Jesus Christ his only son; to the church beloved and enlightened by the will of

him who wills all things, according to the charity of Jesus Christ our God; to the church which is distinguished among all in the land of the Romans, which is worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of being proclaimed blessed, worthy of praise, worthy of being heard, most holy, distinguished by its charity, attached to the law of Christ, clothed with the name of the Father 1. "

1. Ad Roman, beginning, Funk, i, 252. The meaning of the expressions ἡτις καίπροκάθηται... προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης is discussed. See Harnack, Sitzungsberichte der kaiserl. preussisch. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1896, p. III, 13t; Funk, Kirchengesch. Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen, i, 4, (Paderborn, 1897). Funk believes that ἀγάπη should be translated here as "the covenant of charity" or "brotherhood." The parallel texts to which he refers did not strike me as convincing. I prefer to keep ἀγάπη in its ordinary sense of charity. The meaning of this word fixes that of προκά-θηται. Funk attaches to it the idea of presidency and translates: "to the Church which presides in the land of the Romans...which presides over all the brotherhood." If ἀγάπη is given the sense of charity, it should be translated προκαθήται "is distinguished by," as I have done.

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However, if the Roman Church borrowed from his charity the consideration and affection with which it saw itself surrounded from the beginning, it also owed them to a glorious memory which surrounded its forehead with a halo of light. This would be the moment to return to the texts of Clement and Ignatius 2 which we have encountered on our way, were it not for the controversies to which they have given rise. When these teachers evoke the names of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, are they alluding to the journey of the two illustrious apostles to Rome? This is probably the common belief, but the opposition party is far from having disarmed. Let us therefore leave their formulas in the relative obscurity which envelops them. On the other hand, Saint Ireneus provides us with a testimony that deserves all our attention. Here is how the holy bishop of Lyon expresses himself: 1

2. See above, p. 15.

1. Hær, in, 3, 2. " ... Maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognitæ a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo fundntæ et constitutæ Ecclesiæ... Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam propter potentiorem (and not poiioem as Massuel reads) principalitatem, necesse est omnem dbnvenire Ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio." The term "convenire" has provoked much discussion. It is usually used to mean agreement in faith, and it is according to this meaning that I have made my translation. However, I cannot ignore another interpretation, according to which "convenire" designates the act of meeting together, and which gives the following translation: "All the churches, that is to say the faithful of the whole world, necessarily meet in this church because of the outstanding position it occupies. This translation has some rather serious consequences. When it is adopted, we are logically led to translate the second part of the text in this way: "in the

Roman church (in qua) the apostolic tradition is kept pure by the faithful of the whole world. In this hypothesis our text would therefore simply contain the following two thoughts: a) The faithful of the whole world meet in Rome where they are attracted by affairs of various kinds; b) This perpetual contact with the faithful of the whole world keeps the church of Rome in the apostolic faith and prevents it from straying into opinions foreign to the doctrine of the apostles. - The advocates of this interpretation point out the following considerations in its favor: 1) The formula "convenire ad", which appears twenty-six times in the Vulgate, never designates there the agreement of spirits but always a material meeting, a reunion (except in II Cor., vi, 15 where the conventio Christi ad Belial designates a contract, a treaty, an interpretation which, in any case, does not suit the text of St. Irene). 2) The formula "hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles" whose purpose is to explain omnem ecclesiam, requires for "convenire" the idea of meeting and excludes the idea of agreement. It is understandable that after having said that all the churches meet in Rome, Irenaeus feels the need to specify his thought and to explain that he means the faithful belonging to the various churches: such an explanation is superfluous <"u even is a nonsense in the other interpretation; it is, in fact, the churches themselves which must agree with the church of Rome. 3) The expression "undique" strengthens the preceding induction: it too requires the idea of meeting and excludes the idea of agreement. If St. Irenaeus had meant that the faithful of the whole world must agree with Rome, he should have written: < eos qui sunt ubique fideles"; on the contrary, to say that the faithful come to Rome from all parts, he should have put undique. See Mark, i, 45 in the Vulgate, 4) The final proposition: in qua ab his, etc., leads to the same result. In qua refers to the Roman church, and St. Irenaeus says that the apostolic tradition has been preserved in that church (in qua) by the faithful (ab his) of the whole world. Now, the faithful of the whole world could only maintain the purity of the faith in the Roman church after having first been transported to that church; dispersed they could maintain the pure faith in their respective churches, but not in the Roman church. - This interpretation, once presented by Grabe, was taken up by Doellinger (La Papauté, p. 275), Langen (Geschichte der roemischen Kirche, i, 170), Puller (The primitive saints and the see of Rome, p. 25). Not very sympathetic to the Catholics, it has however found among them some supporters, at least as regards the interpretation of "convenire", in particular Nirschl (Lehrbuch der Patrologie, i, 190), de Rossi (La bibliotheca della sede apostolica, p. 21), and, already in the XVth century, Thomassin (Traité de L'unité de l'Église p. 11) who translates our text as follows: "For it is impossible that all the other churches and all the faithful who are their children do not come to this church, because of the power and primacy which is manifested in it, and because all the faithful of the whole universe preserve the tradition of the apostles in it. On the other hand, the interpretation dear to the Catholics was adopted by Harnack (Dogmengeschichte 3, i, 446); it is also the one to which Funk has attached himself in his Kirchen- geschichtliche Abhandlungen, i, 19.

Of the four objections mentioned above against the hypothesis of agreement in faith, the fourth should stop us for a moment. Saint Irenaeus seems to say, on the one hand: "It is necessary that every church agree with Rome"; and, on the other hand: "The apostolic

tradition is maintained in the church of Rome (in qua) by (ah his) the faithful of the whole world. Now these two propositions contradict each other; if the role of the faithful is to agree with Home, one does not see how they can maintain the pure faith in the Roman church. To remove the contradiction, it has sometimes been proposed to translate v in qua " by c in communion with which church ", which would be tantamount to saying that the faithful maintain themselves in the purity of the faith by their union with the Roman church; but this interpretation is false. The only way to overcome this obstacle, when one wants to give to "convenire" the meaning of agreement in the faith, is to refer "f in qua" not to the Roman church, but to "c omnem ecclesiam", that is to say to the churches of the whole world. Thus Harnack (Sitzungsberichte der K Pr. Akademie der Wissenschaft, November 9, 1893) followed by Funk (loc. cit. y p. 18). My translation is based on this attempted solution. In conclusion I limit myself to recall that we are reduced, to understand our text, to the Latin version which, it is true, here as everywhere, tightens very closely the disappeared Greek. One has often tried to reconstitute the Greek formulas which Saint Iréóée used. I abstain from reporting here the conjectures to which this attempt gave place; they can be found in Massuet, Harnack, Funk, etc.

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"Those who wish to know the truth will find the apostolic tradition in all the churches... But as it would be too long to transcribe in this book the episcopal lists of all the churches, we can limit ourselves to the greatest and most unique church, to the one known to all, which was founded and established in Rome by the first glorious apostles Peter and Paul. By exposing the tradition that this church has from the apostles, the faith announced to men that the chain of its bishops has transmitted to us, we confound all those who, for whatever reason, out of self-indulgence, vanity, blindness or perversion, hold illegitimate meetings. With this church, in fact, because of its supreme pre-eminence, all the churches in which the apostolic tradition has been preserved, that is, the faithful of the whole world, necessarily agree.

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This famous text is, as is well known, one of the three or four main beams on which, for several centuries, the treaty of the Church has rested. And, in this text, what has most often attracted attention is the formula *necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam*. The school of Bellarmine read in these words the dogma of the infallibility of the pope; without going so far, the Gallican school recognized there a favorable attestation to the indefectibility of the Roman church; the Protestant school, on its side, endeavored to reverse, at the same time, the interpretation bellarieminmie and the Gallican interpretation. We do not have to take sides in this controversy. If *omnem convenire ecclesiam* is obscure, *potentioem principalitatem* is not. Whether St. Irenaeus granted or refused to the Roman church either the privilege of infallibility or that of indefectibility, he did, in any case, recognize a supreme preeminence for it, what Bossuet calls "the principality," he put it above all other churches. And, when one asks him the reason for this superiority, one finds that he attaches it to a historical fact. The Roman Church was founded by

St. Peter and St. Paul, it is the work of these two illustrious apostles: this, according to St. Irenaeus, is its most beautiful title of glory; this is, if not exclusively, at least in part, why it has the "principality", why it dominates the other churches. St. Irenaeus was not the first to link the foundation of the Church of Rome to the apostles Peter and Paul; ten years before him, Dionysius of Corinth had done so. But he was the first to formulate the primacy of the Roman church, since Clement's letter is an act, not a formula, and the text of St. Ignatius is questionable; above all, he was the first to link the pre-eminence of the Roman church to the two apostles who died in the imperial city. Did he not also link it to another cause? Is not the prestige that the Christian community of Rome exerts over him, at least in part, a reflection of the dazzling brilliance that the capital of the empire projected far away? This question is not one that can be dismissed by theological considerations. We shall see later that the Greek Church has always been inclined to consider the popes as the heirs of the emperors. It should not be scandalized, therefore, to find in the pen of Saint Irenaeus traces of a conception so dear to the bishops of the East. Now these traces are hardly contestable. It is to the political circumstances that the Roman church owed to be "the greatest" of all, to be "known by all". By using these epithets the holy bishop of Lyon let us foresee that he did not intend to release from any civil influence the prestige of the church of Rome. As for the precise idea that he had of this prestige and the practical consequences that he deduced from it, his attitude in the question of the Passover will soon tell us.

1. The word "convenire" is a decisive proof of this preoccupation, if we attach to it the idea of meeting.

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By linking the foundation of the Roman church to the apostles Peter and Paul, Saint Irenaeus borrowed the language of a Roman catalog which we shall soon find again. This way of speaking was not long in being modified. In the first years of the third century, Pope Callistus, as we know from Tertullian 2, placed his authority under the patronage of Saint Peter; his contemporary Hippolytus presented the popes as the successors of Peter¹. If we go back a generation we hear St. Cyprian declare that the episcopal see of Rome is the chair of St. Peter; we see Pope Stephen presenting himself as the successor of Peter². From then on, it will always be so. From the end of the second century, St. Paul was excluded from the foundation of the Church of Rome, which was attributed exclusively to St. Peter. At the same time another change took place. St. Irenaeus, who attributed the foundation of the Roman church to St. Peter and St. Paul, did not count these apostles among the bishops of Rome and started the episcopal list with Linus³. According to him, Linus was the first bishop of Rome, Clement the third, Sixtus the sixth, Eleutherus the eleventh, Anicetus the tenth, Hyginus the eighth⁴. All these figures imply that St. Peter and St. Paul founded the church of Rome but did not become its bishops. Tertullian followed St. Irenaeus' way of counting; for him an apostolic church was one whose first bishop had been consecrated by an apostle, and therefore a church whose first bishop was the spiritual son of an apostle but not the apostle himself. This is proved by this text from the Prescriptions: "Let them (the heretics) make known to us the origin of their churches; let them unfold before our eyes the list of their bishops; let them prove to us that the bishop who is at the head of this list had as his master and predecessor either an apostle or an apostolic

man who remained in communion with the apostles. This is how the apostolic churches establish their origin. For example, the church of Smyrna shows us Polycarp established by John, the church of Rome proves that Clement was invested in his office by Peter". 1 But, while Tertullian held this language in Africa, in Rome, Pope Callistus probably counted Saint Peter as the first bishop of Rome 2. A half-century later, St. Stephen loudly proclaimed himself the successor of St. Peter, and St. Cyprian readily acknowledged that the bishop of Rome occupies the chair of Peter. And if Eusebius remained obstinately attached to the conception of St. Irenaeus 3, the author of the Clementine novel 4 adopted the new conception which was to supplant the old one little by little.

2. De Pudicitia, xxi, : " Si quia dixerit l'elio Dominus... idcirco præuuiis et ad te derivasse... "

1. Dons Eusebius, v, 28, 3: "Victor is the thirteenth after Peter."

2. See below, chapter V.

3. User.y ni, 3, 3. See text below.

4. Besides ni, 3, 3, see m, 4, 3; i, 27, 1. Eusebius (iv, ii, 2) makes Irenaeus say that Hygin was the "ninth" bishop; but we agree that he is mistaken. Here, moreover, is Dom Massuet's note on Hær.y iii, 4, 3: < Romanos pontifices enumerated των αποστόλων ab apostolis qui- bus verbis Petrum a catalogo suo perspicue removet." See also his note on Hær., i, 27, 1.

1. Præscript., 32.

2. See above the text of the de Pudicitia which is imprecise.

3. We read in Hist, eccl. iii, 2: c After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Lin, the first, obtains the episcopate"; see also ni, 4, 8.

4. See the letter of Clement to James at the head of the Clementine homilies. This letter, which predates the homilies, dates from about 260; see Harnack, Chronology, ii, 532.

How did Irenaeus draw up the list of bishops that he has just passed before our eyes? Did he have no other resource than to question oral tradition? Did he have a written document? He used a written document, a document which we no longer have, but of which Saint Epiphanius, we now know, has preserved for us an extract in the following notice: "Recently a certain Marcellina, who belonged to their sect (of the Gnostics), came to us (to Rome). She caused several falls during the time of the Roman bishop Anicet, who succeeded Pius and the other pontiffs. For the apostles Peter and Paul were both together the first bishops of Rome. Then came Lin, then Clct, then Clemenl, contemporaries of Peter and Paul and of whom Paul makes mention in the epistle to the Romans (Philippians)... After the death of Linus and Cletus, who had served as bishops for twelve years each, after the death of Peter and Paul, in the twelfth year of Nero, he was obliged to accept the episcopate. In any case, the succession of bishops of Rome took place as follows: Peter and Paul, Linus and Cletus, Clement, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus (Evaristus), Hygin, Pius, Anicetuswho has just been mentioned in the catalog 1 ."

1. Epiphanius, *Hær.*, xxvii, 6: Ἦλθε μὲν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἡδὴ πῶς Μαρκελλίνα τις... Lightfoot (*Apostolic Fathers*, S. Clement, i, 327-333) has pointed out that these terms have no meaning under the pen of Epiphanius and that the whole piece of which they form a part was, therefore, copied by the bishop of Salamis from an ancient document. This thesis is now universally accepted; the only question discussed is what this document is.

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Where did the document put together by St. Irene and St. Epiphanius come from? Where, when and by whom was it written? According to Harnack, it was composed in Rome under Soter, around 170, by a Roman. This hypothesis clashes with the following fragment of Hegesippus, which was, it is true, the object of ardent controversy in the past, but whose following interpretation no longer seems to be legitimately disputed: "While I was in Rome, I drew up a list of (episcopal) successions up to Anicetus, of which Eleutherus was deacon. In every succession and in every city, everything is in accordance with what the law, the prophets and the Lord prescribe." In this text Hegesippus attests to having taken advantage of his stay in Rome under Anicetus to draw up a catalog of the bishops of that city. It is not, therefore, under Soter, around 170, it is under Anicetus, around 160, that the episcopal list used by Saint Ireneus and Saint Epiphanius was composed; and it was not composed by a Roman, but by a foreigner staying in Rome.

1. In Eusebius, iv, 22, 3: ... γινόμενος; δ' ἐν Ρώμῃ διαδοχὴν ἐποίησάμην μέχρι; Ἀνίκητου οὐ διάκονο; ἦν Ἐλευθέρο; ... ἐν ἑκάστῃ δὲ διαδοχῇ καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῃ πόλει οὕτως; ἔχει ὡ; ὁ νόμος; κηρύσσει καὶ προφίονται καὶ ὁ κύριος;. Or has often substituted *διατριβὴν* for *διαδοχὴν*, so as to make Hegesippus say, "I stayed at Rome until Anicetus," and Harnack has recently still, maintained this opinion (*Chronology*, i, 180-187). After the refutations of Funk (*Kircheng. Abhandlungen*, i, 381) and Chapman (*Revue bénédictine*, 1901, p. 411; 1902, p. 13) the question seems to me to be settled; one must admit that Hegesippus composed an episcopal list which went up to Anicetus. It remains to be seen whether this list has come down to us. According to Lightfoot, it was collected by Epiphanius in the fragment we have just read. This feeling was opposed by Funk (*loc. cit.* 377-381), but it seems to me to have been victoriously defended by Chapman (*Revue bénédictine*, 1902, p. 15).

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In short, towards the middle of the second century, the Roman realization had the catalog of the leaders who governed it, since the time of its foundation by the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. But its memories were not limited to a simple nomenclature. We read in the fragment of Muratori that "the Pastor was written recently by Herma* while his brother Pius occupied the pulpit of the church of Rome. 4. St. Irenaeus reports that Valentinus came to Rome under Hyginus and made the exomologesis; that Telesphorus gave a glorious testimony; that Mäicion acquired influence under Anicetus 2; and that the ancient "presbyters" of Rome, from Sixtus to

Anicetus, sent, as a sign of fraternity, the Eucharist to the "presbyters" of the East, whose custom they did not, however, accept in relation to the celebration of the Passover 3 . For his part, Saint Epiphanius has just told us that the heretic Marcellina arrived in Rome under Anicet. These various pieces of information, and some others which can be overlooked here, come from Rome, and most of them were supplied by the episcopal catalog. We must therefore conclude that, towards the middle of the second century, the Roman church knew, at the same time as the succession of its bishops, the principal facts which had marked their government.

1. Fragment, line 73: < Pastorem vero nuperrime temporibus nostris in urbe Roma Herma conscripsit sedente cathedra urbis Koræ ecclesiæ Pio ejus fratre."
2. Hær, ni, 3, 3; ni, 4, 2; i, 27, 1.
3. In Eusebius, v, 24, 14.

51

But here several difficulties arise. In his letter to the Romans, St. Ignatius addresses himself exclusively to the faithful and not once to the bishop of Rome. He who, in his other writings, is constantly preaching the unity of the faithful with their bishop, does not mention the bishop of the Roman Church any more than if there were none. Yet once he uses the word bishop and another time the verb which, in Greek (ἐπίσκοπος) designates the episcopal ministry; but this is simply to say that he himself is the bishop of Syria and that, after his death, his church will be "watched over" by Jesus Christ and the "charity" of the Romans 1. It was time to come out of silence: Ignatius does not. How can this attitude be explained?

1. Romans, ii, 2; ix, 1.

This is not all. Clement, who does not spare the Corinthians any reproaches or advice, does not criticize them on the constitution of their church, from which we can rightly conclude that the regime of the Corinthian community was identical to that of the Roman community. Now Clement expresses himself as if the episcopate of Corinth were collegial or, if you like, collective. He says: "It is no small sin to remove from the episcopate those who have offered the gifts in a blameless manner... We see, in fact, that you have deposed from their functions some of those who fulfilled them without any reproach." Was Clement, then, only one of the many holders of the episcopate in the Roman Church? Was the Roman Church governed by a college of bishops, and was Clement only one of the members of this college? What is known is that in the letter to the Corinthians he has a singularly "facéc" attitude. Saint Dionysius of Corinth reports that this essay was written by Clement 1 2. We must take his word for it; but without him we would not know it. From one end of the letter to the other, the Roman church has the sole say and Clement was only its anonymous secretary. How can we explain this phenomenon?

1. Clement, XLiv, 4-6: ὁρώμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐνέουσί μεις μετηγάγετε..-
2. See above, p. 37.

52

This is not all. Hermas speaks of the "rulers" of the Roman church, of those who have precedence in the assembly of the faithful; but always as if the church had at its head a college of priests or bishops, and not a monarchical bishop. He reports the following oracles: 3 "You shall tell the leaders of the church to walk in the way of justice and to receive these instructions without reserve." "You shall read my revelations to the whole city in the presence of the presbyters who are at the head of ΓChurch." u I say to you, h you leaders of the church and who occupy the first places: Do not carry poison in your heart. How do you want to discipline God's elect, if you are not disciplined yourselves? Begin by disciplining yourselves and living in peace with one another." "These men are faithful and foolish, but they compete for the first places and distinctions. But they are fools to strive for the top positions... For all, life is to keep the commandments of the Lord and not to dream of the first places and distinctions." "(The false prophet) vt ut have the first place."

3. Vis., il, 2, 6: Ἐρεῖς οὖν τοῖς προηγουμένοις τῆς ἐκκλησίας. - Fis., II, 4, 3 :Συ δέ ἀναγνώση εἰς ταύτην τὴν πόλιν μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν προϊσταμένων τῆς ἐκκλησίας. - Vis., ni, 9, 7: Νυν οὖν ὑμῖν λέγω τοῖς προηγουμένοις τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τοῖς πρωτοκαθεδρίταις. -Sim. wine, 7, 4: ... ἔχοντες ζήλδον τινα ἐν ἀλλήλοις περὶ πρωτείων καὶ περὶ δόξης τινῶς. - Mandate, xi, 12: ... θέλει πρωτοκαθεδρίαν εχειν.

53

In summary, various" documents seem to say that the Roman church was governed primitively by a collective, by a college of bishops. The episcopal list, on the contrary, recruits* to the apostles the origin of monarchical government. How can we reconcile these testimonies which seem so opposed? If the Roman Church was, for some time, under collective rule, what becomes of the episcopal list? And if this list has historical value, what becomes of the documents which have passed before our eyes?

54

Most Protestant critics do not hesitate to say that we are here in the presence of an antinomy in which one of the terms must be sacrificed, and it is easy to guess that they sacrifice the episcopal list. According to them, the Roman church was, until the middle of the second century, governed by a college of bishops. Then the ecclesiastical constitution underwent a profound transformation and the collegiate episcopate gave way to the monarchic episcopate. When did the new state of affairs appear? Under Anicet, around the year 160, says Harnack⁴; under Pius, around the year 150, says the school of Lipsius 1 2 3. The first monarchical bishop was thus Pius or Anicet; before them the episcopal authority belonged to a community. Moreover, this community, before disappearing, went through two successive phases. Until about the year 120, the episcopal college probably had at its head no other president than its oldest member. In fact, its members shared the various functions of worship, information, administration and relations with the outside world. They probably exercised them temporarily and alternately, in virtue of a right that was equal for all and that did not take into account aptitudes. However, as merit is

never in vain, some bishops of this time were noted for the superior manner in which they carried out their ministry, and their management was remembered. From 120 or 130, the growing importance of the Roman community and the struggle against heretical propaganda forced the adoption of a new discipline. The functions were no longer entrusted only to the abilities; they were even probably centralized in the hands of one man, to avoid tug-of-war and to ensure that all the decisions of the ecclesiastical government were limited in view, without which there is no energetic and fruitful action. The episcopal body had, from then on, at its head men who were not only deans of age, but who were true presidents and whose memory was not forgotten. Telesphorus, Hygiu and, perhaps, Pius were presidents of the episcopal college that reached its second phase. This is what certain texts allow us to conjecture, which use their names to date various events; in particular, the place of Tertullian where we read that Valentinus ran for the episcopate, but that he was supplanted by a confessor of the faith who, we know it besides, was Telesphorus. Lin, Anacletus, Clement, Eva-Ristus and Sixtus were the most prominent members of this same college during its first phase. In any case, as soon as the monarchical episcopate was established, the concern was to give it the halo of antiquity. It is to solve this problem that the episcopal list served. Written under Soter, according to Harnack, under Anicet, according to the common opinion"-, it was intended to prove that the monarchic episcopate had existed from the beginning. It could reach this goal only by substituting to the real history a conventional and artificial history. However, the author did not invent his material from scratch; he did not imagine the names he uses to link Anicet or Pius to the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. What he has imagined is the role he assigns to these names. Lin, Anacletus and the other bishops of the college of the first epoch were distinguished from their colleagues by their personal qualities, but not by their situation: they were not monarchical bishops. And if Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius (?) exercised an eHective presidency, they were only the first among their peers, *primi inter pares*: they did not possess the monarchic episcopate either. Moreover, by combining the information which Saint Irenaeus and Tertullian provide us on the date of the coming of Valentinus to Rome, one arrives at the conclusion that Telesphorus and Hyginus exercised their functions simultaneously!, and that they were something like presidents of "the quarters".

1. Chronology, i, 193.
2. Lipsius, Chronologie der roemischen Bischcefe, p. 263.
3. Harnack, Chronologie, i, 195-200.

1. Irenaeus (m, 4, 2) says that Valentinus came to Rome under Hyginus who is presented on the list as the successor of Telesphorus. Now, according to Tertullian (adv. Valent., 4) Valentinus was in Rome at the beginning of the episcopate of Telesphorus, because he was the unfortunate competitor of this confessor of the faith for the episcopate (Harnack, p. 178). - However, the text of Ter- lullieo does not deserve to be taken into consideration. No doubt he tells us that Valentinus, who was vying for Γ episcopate, was ousted by a confessor who, according to the description he gives, can only be Telesphorus (Irenaeus says of Telesphorus and of him alone that he gave a glowing testimony); but his testimony is worthless. He is not afraid to assert (Præsc., 30)

that Valentinus and Marcion remained good Catholics until the pontificate of Eusebius (between 174 and 189), whereas St. Justin, writing about 150, already presents Marcion and Valentinus as heretics. When one allows oneself such fanciful assertions, one is not entitled to any credibility. Harnack, it is true, p. 178 conjectures that Tertullian wrote "sub episcopatu Telesphori" and that "Eleutherii" is a copyist's error. But this explanation, besides being arbitrary, does not give a satisfactory result. If Tertullian says elsewhere (adv. Valent., 4), as Harnack believes, that Valentinus was offended to see himself ousted by Telesphorus, he places his fall at the beginning of the episcopate of the latter. In any case, Tertullian does not agree with himself, and the historical information which he provides should not stop us.

57

In short, the names that appear on the episcopal list of the Roman Church are historical, but the list itself is not historical. It presents as predecessors of Anicet - or of Pius - men who did not centralize in their hands all the episcopal powers, and between whom there was no link of succession. It antedates the monarchical episcopate, and, to establish the artificial chain which it needs, it arbitrarily fixes the date of the entry in office of the alleged predecessors of Pius or Anicet. Such is the theory in vogue in the Protestant school.

58

This theory raises more than one difficulty. First of all, it can be reproached for stopping halfway and not going to the end of its principles. On what does it rely, in fact, to move back to Pius or Anicet the appearance of the monarchical episcopate? On the book of Hermas who, written around 140, expresses himself as if the Roman church were governed by a community. Now the texts of Hermas are not the last to give the reader the impression of a collective government; thirty years later we find others which, too, do not fit in well with the monarchical episcopate. Let us reread the letter of St. Denys of Corinth which has been reported above 1. This piece was written at the time of Soter, around 170. To whom is it addressed? To the faithful of the Roman church, and Soter is mentioned only incidentally. Moreover, Denys' writing, as is easy to see, is a reply to a letter from Rome. In accordance with the law which wants that, in the epistolary order, the point of arrival is identical to the point of departure, this answer is addressed to the signatory of the Roman letter. And this signatory was none other than the community of the faithful, since it is to the community that the reply goes. From this it follows that, around 170, the Roman Church sent a letter in its own name and not signed by its leader; that it received another letter addressed to itself and not to its leader. Are these not clear indications of a collegial regime? Yet the critical school recoils from such a conclusion. It teaches that the disappearance of the collective episcopate took place under Pius or, at the latest, under Anicet, and that Soter was a monarchical bishop, a bishop in the present sense of the word. In what it can only with difficulty escape the reproach of arbitrariness and inconsequence.

1. See p. 36.

Let us be fair, it is not without a very serious reason that, in spite of the letter of Denys of Corinth, one refuses to prolong the collegiate regime beyond the middle of the second century. What prevents the appearance of the monarchical episcopate from being further delayed is the episcopal list, which, as we know, presupposes a single head at the head of the Roman church and which, it is generally agreed, was drawn up by Hegesippus under the pontificate of Anicet, around 160. We find ourselves squeezed between Hermas, who, according to the theory, ignores the monarchical episcopate, and Hegesippus who, on his arrival in Rome, sees it constituted. The collegiate regime, it is said, must have disappeared after Hermas: therefore after 140; but before the voyage of Hegesippus: therefore before 160, before Anicet. And one is um brought to conclude that Pius was the first monarchic bishop. But here new embarrassment: the fragment of Muratori learns us that Hermas wrote his book "while the bishop Pius his brother occupied the pulpit of the Roman church. From this it follows that the li're, which passes for the last witness of the collegiate episcopate, was composed after the flourishing of the monarchic episcopate, and that the new state of affairs was ignored by the very brother of the first bishop. And this result looks very much like a dead end 1.

1. Many critics, it is true, seek to set back to about the year 100 a more or less considerable part of the Pastor. But it is generally agreed to place the last Similitudes around the year 140. Now, Sim.t vin, 7, 4 withers the search for the πρωτεία.

One can, however, get out of this, on condition that one denies Pius the monarchical episcopate. This is what Harnack does. He claims that Pius was not a bishop in the present sense of the word; that the testimony of the fragment of Muratori, otherwise true, is, on this point, inaccurate 2; and that Anicet read the first monarchical bishop. But he avoids a pitfall only to meet another one. He is led, indeed, by the logic of his system, to say that the episcopal list was not written under Anicet by Hegesippus, and that, in spite of the testimony of Hegesippus himself who declares to have composed this list.

2. Chronologyj i, 175.

One is therefore fatally condemned to arbitrariness when one strives to find in the primitive history of the Roman Church the passage from the collegial episcopate to the monarchical episcopate. Does this mean that the centralization of powers was at the beginning what it would be later? One would have to close one's eyes to the evidence to support such a proposition. One can no longer imagine, from the third century onwards, the Roman Church writing a collective and impersonal letter to any diocese, in which the pope would not be the object of either a mention or even the slightest allusion. However, the letter written by Clement to the Corinthians around the year 95 was a collective and impersonal letter. In the same way, it is hard to imagine a bishop writing a letter to the Roman church in the third century without addressing it to his leader, without even mentioning him. It is, however, a writing of this kind that

we find among the letters of Saint Ignatius. These two facts, against which no dissertation can do anything, prove peremptorily that the personal procedures used by the ecclesiastical government did not exist at the beginning, and that the community then occupied the first place which, for many centuries, has been taken away from it. But when one wants to oppose the two letters in question to the very idea of a monarchical episcopate, one will be contradicted by the letter of Saint Denys of Corinth to the Roman church and by the one that the Roman church sent to Saint Denys. If these two writings are compatible - and one wants them to be compatible - with the regime of the monarchical episcopate, why would the letter of Ignatius and that of the year 95 be irreconcilable with the same regime? And if Soter could have been a bishop in the present sense of the word, why could not Clement, Alexander and Evarist have been? Here is an objection to which one is incapable to answer, when one opposes to the monarchic episcopate the letter to the Corinthians of the year 95 and the letter of Ignatius. One will not succeed better with Hermas. Without doubt the author of the Pastor expresses himself as if the government of the Roman Church were in the hands of a community. But one does not have the right to draw from his texts a conclusion against the monarchical regime, as soon as one believes that he had under the eyes of college presidents. What Hermas seems, in fact, to ignore is not only the bishop properly speaking, but any pre-eminence among the holders of ecclesiastical powers. If one believes that he was able to speak as he did, while having before him a president, there is nothing more to prevent one from admitting that he wrote the Pastor under the government of a monarchic bishop. And, to explain the disdainful attitude which he observes with regard to the authority, one has only to recall the cavalier letter of the confessors of Lyon to Eleutherus, a bishop quite authentically monarchic 2. Hermas was not a martyr, but he was a prophet. He had not shed his blood for the faith of Christ, but he was favored with revelations from heaven. Like the martyrs, he put supernatural gifts above social necessities, and men of administration counted little in his eyes 1.

1. Hermas speaks, it is true (Mand.t xi, 12) of a < first pulpit " (πρωτοκαθεδρίαν); but he says that all the "rulers" are the holders of "first pulpits" (Vis", ni, 9, 7). Whence it follows that the πρωτοκαθεδρία (the. same remark applies to the πρωτεία) denotes the preeminence of the clergy or the presbyteral college over the faithful, and not the preeminence of one of the clergy over his colleagues.

2. See p. 34.

1. In Vis. III, i, 8, Hermas wants to give way to the presbyters, but the Church puts him before them and places him on his left, reserving his right for the martyrs.

63

One must therefore give up looking in the texts for the trace of the transformation that the Roman episcopate would have undergone during the second century. The documents which we have ignore the gradations which would put on different levels the age of Clement and the age of Telesphorus, the age of Telesphorus and the age of Anicet or Soter. They take us from Clement to Eleuthera, from the end of the first century to the last years of the second. For those who want to be guided by them, the question which arises is not to know what phases the

Roman episcopate went through before arriving, under Anicet and Soter, at the monarchic form; it is to know how the episcopate was exercised before the end of the second century, exactly before Victor. But, to this question, the texts provide only a summary answer. First of all, they tell us that the letters were written in the name of the community of the faithful, in other words, that in external relations the clergy took a back seat to the Church. Secondly, they teach us that the confessors of the faith and the prophets were inclined, under the influence of the high idea they had of themselves, to deal freely with the administration. Finally, they give us a glimpse of the fact that, as the clergy yielded to the Church, so the bishop yielded to his clergy. The rest is a matter of analogy and theology. Since the testimonies give no precise information on the primitive relations between the episcopate and the presbyterate, it is up to historical induction on the one hand, and theology on the other, to make up for the lack of testimonies and to say what these contributions could and should have been. And, when one remembers that the scholastics of the great era did not consider the episcopate as productive of a character and eliminated it from the list of orders, one does not fear to see historical induction enter into conflict with theology here.

But this is not the place to stop at this research. Let us go down the course of history. Here is that the government of the Roman church takes a decidedly personal form.