

HISTORY AND THE HIERARCHY

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THE PASTORALS AND APOLOGETICS

The attitude adopted in certain writings of the adverse critics leads to an inquiry into the place given to Saint Paul's Pastorals in Catholic Apologetics and in historical inquiry generally. The widely disseminated evolutionistic view of early Church development seems to challenge us with several questions: Have we used the Pastorals for their full worth in the historical argument? Have we laid sufficient emphasis on the picture of a primitive hierarchical Church which they supply? Have we dwelt enough on certain psychological features of the early Christians, both leaders and lay to which an analysis of the Pauline letters to Timothy and Titus as well as other early sources invite us? The fact that so many of the adverse critics date the Pastorals after the year 100 is itself a confession that their testimony for an episcopally-constituted hierarchy is strong. Other means of evading their witness is equally an admission of their strength. There were those who admitted every line of them and interpreted every vestige of hierarchy out of them, at least, perpetual hierarchical organization; others again left a shell and emasculated the texts bearing on hierarchy.

The denial of a primitive and permanent hierarchy has been less emphasized than the denial of Saint Peter's primacy, on the assumption possibly, and it is a good one, that with the envelopment and defeat of the larger force, the lesser one would crumple up in disaster. Our treatises on Apologetics and on the Church reflect this difference. The greater emphasis is laid on the historical and apologetic as well as the dogmatic treatment of the Petrine primacy. Yet the place given to the historical and apologetic discussion of the hierarchical constitution of the Church can be advantageously increased. The attack on the primacy has not been substantially changed and the strategy of Otto Pfeleiderer is still followed.¹ Having admitted that if Matt. 16, 18 were genuine, there could be no doubt of the primacy, he proceeded to demolish to the best of his ability the authenticity of the text. The recent writings of those pushing Form Criticism and of the Social Historical School have not added substantially to the weight of the old attack, though they have shown more clearly how an aprioristic evolutionistic assumption has ruled the methodology of history since their time. This assumption is of course a fundamental error and vitiates almost the entire output of these schools, for, given this sort of presupposition,

¹*Das Urchristentum*, Berlin, 1887, p. 155 ff.

historical sources mean little save as bits to be fitted into an aprioristic scheme, and at times very tawdry proofs seem to satisfy the adverse critics that they do fit.²

Catholic writers have done an excellent task in defending the genuinity and correct interpretation of the Petrine texts. But there is place yet for similar treatment and emphasis of the Pastorals. For not only do we hold to the fact and perpetuity of the primacy of Saint Peter, but also to the fact and perpetuity of the hierarchy. The sixth canon of the twenty-third session of Trent reads: "*Si quis dixerit, in Ecclesia Catholica non esse hierarchiam divina ordinatione institutam quae constat ex episcopis, presbyteris et ministris, anathema sit.*" (DB. 966) In agreement with this clear insistence on the fact of a hierarchy and its Divine establishment the condemnation of the errors of Pistoia qualified as heretical the proposition that the power of the Church's hierarchy was derived from the faithful. (DB. 1502)

Trent was rejecting principally the denial of Holy Orders and the democratic theory of Church organization put out by some of the reformers. Pius VI was condemning the errors of 18th century Gallicanism and Josephinism, which did not differ essentially from those of the court theologians as expressed in the Middle Ages by Marsilius of Padua. Yet though dealing with phases of error now unemphasized, the condemnations apply without change to the theses which are put forward by those adverse critics who accept the postulates of naturalistic evolution in history. There are very few now who do not.

THE ALLEGED EVOLUTION OF ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY

Because historical sources have been so frequently interpreted by many modern writers according to the presuppositions of evolution, for convenient reference the scheme or framework of the modern hypotheses may be profitably set out. Evolution as applied to Church unity or Church doctrine is familiarly enough known, the general thesis being that somehow Christianity was an amalgam doctrinally of Judaism and Hellenism which in its unity and universality eventually imitated the Empire. But evolution as applied to the rise of the hierarchy has its own stages. The particular schemes which various writers may offer differ often in accidental details, and monographs may fly in controversy over this or that point, but on the main lines of evolution there is a general agreement. The stages of evolution are:

²Because of the emphasis on Peter, Goodspeed argues that the Gospel of Saint Matthew was composed at Antioch some time shortly after 70 A.D. This is one of the more conservative views upon the origin of the Petrine texts. Cf. E. J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Chicago, 1937, p. 176.

1) Christ and the Apostles expected a glorious Second Coming very soon, and hence made no provision for the organization of a perpetual Church.

2) The Christian communities founded by the Apostles were governed in spiritual and doctrinal matters through men who were media of the direct action of the Spirit, the *Pneumatics*. Simultaneously the visible external association began to need regulation and care; a committee of caretakers or overseers, the elders (*episcopi, presbyteri*) was chosen out of the community and by the community for this charge, a *minor* charge both functionally and substantially, compared with that of the *Pneumatics*.³

3) The next important stage was an adjustment necessarily to be made when a) the Second Coming was continually postponed, b) when the charismatic phenomena (due always to first fervor and entirely natural in origin and occurrence) began to stop or be less effective, and c) when the pressure of the overseers' seizure of more power began to tell.

4) As the importance of the *Pneumatics* decreased, that of the elders and the overseers grew. This body gradually took over the liturgical, disciplinary and doctrinal functions of the *Pneumatics*.

5) One overseer, originally the chairman, was elected to, or seized, or imperceptibly was allowed to assume, the power of the whole committee of overseers. When a given community had arrived at this stage, what is called mon-episcopacy has set in. Not all sees arrived at this stage simultaneously.

6) The mon-episcopate raised itself to a position of exclusive authority by a) assuming apostolic powers, and b) developing a symbolical and ceremonial laying on of hands into a rite singularly and exclusively within its own power to confer. It was this stage of evolution which the Pastorals reflect and forward; they were fastened on Saint Paul to give them authority. In a word, the mon-episcopate, floating in the air, built its own foundations.

7) A general consciousness of unity throughout all the Christian communities and an urge towards an expression of universal unity due to internal causes (loyalty to Christ, etc.), and external reasons (persecution, missionary needs, imperial cosmopolitanism, etc), eventually led to larger and more wide-spread hierarchical unification. Eventually in the spiritual Kingdom the counterpart of the material Empire was obtained; the Bishop of Rome claimed and was gradually admitted to have Peter's primatial power.

³When the rationalists speak of the *Pneumatics*, or men gifted by the Spirit, this is not an admission of the supernatural character of the charisms. It is only an admission that early Christians believed (erroneously) that the gifts were miraculous.

There is no need to point out that this scheme is shot through with rationalistic naturalism. One might go even farther and say that some such scheme is a necessary corollary from the fundamental assumption that Christ was a mere man. Given denial of the Divinity of the Son of God, logically a development of this sort should be expected. It is for this reason that the postulates of evolution, both with respect to doctrine and hierarchical organization, rarely ever are examined by those who accept them. In the same year in which Lietzmann's book on the history of the Church appeared (about which a word presently), Gerhard Kittel published *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum*.⁴ It was a keen analysis of the defects of the general rationalistic postulates of the origin of Christianity out of Judaism and Hellenism. Also in this year, 1932, Olaf Linton put out his *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung*.⁵

Linton's book is a review of the various modern theories of the origin and growth of the Church. It is concerned chiefly with theories since 1880, which revolve principally about the hypotheses of Harnack and Hatch. An introductory study considers the older Protestant opinions, which, obviously, had in germ the evolution of modern times. If one is inclined to think that the author has criticized the assumptions and methodology of the adverse critics too rarely, it is to be recalled that such criticism is rarely considered necessary. Linton points out the aprioristic attitude which has prevailed. The value of the book lies in the succinctness of analysis of the multiple opinions found in the numerous books and monographs on Christian origins which appeared in the half-century up to 1932.

SOME RECENT WRITINGS

In 1938 under the title, *Founding of the Church Universal*, (Scribners' 432 pp.) appeared the translation of the second volume of Hans Lietzmann's *Geschichte der alten Kirche* (1932), already the subject of favorable reviews in non-Catholic religious journals. The second chapter of this work (pp. 60-88) deals with the organization of the primitive Church. Concerning the primacy of Peter and of the Roman Bishops after him it is admitted only that "the roots of Roman primacy extend deeply into the early history of Christianity." It is also stated that during the second century "Rome's attempt to claim a superior voice was denied at that time on all hands." While this is an implicit admission that Rome was acting on the assumption of its primatial authority, there is, strange to say, no proof of this "denial on all hands," which is, of course, a very

⁴Gutersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 132 pp.

⁵Upsala, xxxii, 210 pp.

large assertion. As an historical support for the fact that Rome was not primatial the equality of episcopate well into the second century is laid down. From then on Rome demanded and received increasingly larger grants of power. It will be pointed out later that much due historical discussion is wanting here, and even with these premises, a great deal of evidence could be gathered for the genuinity of the primacy of Rome.

Lietzmann assumes without proof that the episcopate had its origins, democratic and electoral origins, in the early Christian communities. In the discussion of this important opinion the Pastorals are not adduced as having any value as evidence; since the mention of them is omitted, it cannot be known how much they would embarrass the writer. The elevation of the bishops is attributed to a crisis in the Church, or in the various local churches. A combat for the leadership of the flock between the *Pneumatics* and the *episcopi-presbyteri* resulted in a victory for the overseers (*episcopi*). A factor in their triumph was that they did good service as a bulwark against the threat of Gnosticism. It is not until about 100 A.D. that in a single bishop is vested all authority, liturgical, doctrinal, disciplinary, administrative. What happened in a few sees soon spread to all; the rule of the Church passed entirely from the *Pneumatics*.

Of course the invention of a rivalry between those gifted with charismatic gifts in primitive Christianity and bishops is not the creation of Lietzmann, nor even of this century. The clearness of the New Testament texts from the narration of Pentecost onwards, in which the twofold feature of authority in the early Church, the charismatic and the governing power, and the indissoluble union and harmony of the hierarchical and charismatic functions are told, has been twisted into the story of a battle between separately developing bodies of men and independently evolving movements. No single book perhaps has been so influential in making this view accepted as Sabatier's *Les religions d'autorité et la religion de l'esprit*, which appeared in 1904.

Those who adopted the views of this school were rationalists or liberal Protestants; indeed their thesis is exactly the ancient Protestant claim of direct Divine intervention as against the authoritarianism of Rome, but in these later days the supernaturalism is dropped. On the followers of the school it made little impression that the apostolate itself was at once charismatic and authoritarian, and that the authority of the apostle regulated the charisms in the use or possession of others, even though the gifts were direct miraculous interventions on the part of God. The charisms, such as we find them at Corinth and in other churches, were Divine helps in special circumstances; their occurrence in many cases could not be calculated. The hierarchical institution, itself a charism, with its ranks of primate, bishop, priest, deacon, and other ministers, was the permanent

governing body. The sources sustain the view that the hierarchy was a permanent feature of organization, and that the other charisms were occasional, temporary, and an interim arrangement which might be expected to disappear, though not to diminish altogether, in the Church when the permanence of ordinary authority was sufficiently established. That a teaching and prophetic power resided exclusively in the *Pneumatics* and was transferred eventually to a rival body of overseers has no better support than a false inference from the fact that there were doctors and prophets who were charismatic and priests and bishops who had ruling functions.

Moreover, the alleged rivalry is completely routed once the force of the testimony of the Pastorals is fairly admitted. But the texts which portray a bishop with authority to rule and teach the Christian community is obviously an embarrassment for the upholders of a primitive contention between *Pneumatics* and bishops; above all such cogent testimony cannot be admitted to have come from Saint Paul. Conveniently, therefore, the Pastorals are shifted from the decade, 60-70 to that of 120-130. All this is fearfully poor history in view of the evidence available to prove the Pauline authorship of the three letters to Timothy and Titus. But at the same time it is widely accepted history at present, though it is a card-house which one breath from an *Introduction* to the Pastorals can blow over.

The grip, then, of the evolutionistic hypothesis being what it is, it occasions no surprise to find the Pastorals dated 120-135 by Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr. in his article, "Smyrna in the Ignatian Letters: A Study in Church Government," [*Journ. of Religion*, 20 (April, 1940) 2, 140-159]. The essay aims to study the data on Smyrna with the purpose of drawing the conclusion that the monarchical episcopate and the eventual unification of administrative and charismatic functions in the bishop were the results of a slow growth. Indeed, the writer contends that this evolution was not yet achieved in Smyrna at the time when Saint Ignatius wrote his letter. Ignatius, himself a driver towards the goal of mastery for the bishop in the household of the faithful, is careful to tread on no Asia Minor toes, being silent on, except for implicit hinting at, the bishop's teaching power. Evidence for a prevalent inclination to favor the charismatics and for sacerdotalism as the privilege of the whole congregation is adduced from an alleged contemporary source, *First Peter!* The *coup de grâce* of the charismatic movement and party was given sometime after 120 when the Pastorals appeared, with their emphasis on the teaching office, doctrinal authority, administrative control and sacerdotal ordination in the monarchical power of the bishop. Likewise, it is obvious that the *coup de grâce* of this hypothesis is given by the historical fact that Saint Paul composed the Pastorals. The force of the Pastorals is admitted by the author; so forceful are they that they are shifted sixty years.

In an article of Cyril C. Richardson, recently appearing in the *Anglican Theological Review* [22 (April 1940) 2, 88-120] the date of the Pastorals is set down as 120 A.D. From the title, "The Proposed Concordat: A Venture in Unity," one would judge that the author should be concerned solely with the attempts at reunion now being made by some Episcopalian and Presbyterian leaders. This is true, but since not a little difficulty in the process of uniting the churches springs from the divergent views of the two sects on Holy Orders and ordination,⁶ it is the purpose of the author to offer some help out of the history of primitive Christianity. To one versed in dogmatic theology and church history it will seem very dubious help.

Dr. Richardson insists upon the emphatically charismatic character of primitive Christianity. The position is taken that authority and leadership were the appanage of those gifted with the charisms, and was not then connected with any sacramental ordination. The Pastorals show how in the first quarter of the second century the emphasis began to be laid on the ceremonial laying on of hands; these letters mark the stage when the control of doctrine and liturgy had passed or was passing from the *Pneumatics* to the bishops. This scheme practically means that Holy Orders are a purely human institution, and in reality no better established than the self-justification of a body of usurpers effected through a fraudulent forging of their own credentials. How much this desupernaturalizing of Orders will be of help, or even be accepted, especially by Episcopalian theologians, in the discussions concerning Orders, this writer cannot say. But it may be pointed out that the hypothesis outdoes the democratic theories of the early reformers; at least they found a place in their New Testament for the Pastorals, and they were part of the Protestant rule of faith.

Now in the writings referred to above, we have three modern scholars, one of whom passes over the testimony of the Pastorals and the other two blandly remove them to the second century. On primitive Christianity and its hierarchical organization the three letters are debarred as witnesses. Such a viewpoint leaves fuller play for evolution; indeed, it is the aprioristic evolutionistic postulate which has caused the shift of the letters out of their historical place.

And yet the dating of the Pastorals in the decade 120-130 seems conservative to some writers. The same aprioristic arguments serve to put the Pastorals after 150 A.D., because basically the only point of the adverse critics is to place them at some date which will not embarrass the critics. Goodspeed puts the letters in the second half of the second century.

⁶Upon these difficulties, cf. "Comments on the Sacraments of Orders and the Ecumenical Movement," by John P. Haran, S.J. [*Theological Studies*, 1 (Feb., 1940) 1, 62-66].

"As the years went by and Christianity grew, it became more and more evident that Paul's conception of its work as a short, intensive campaign in preparation for the Lord's return must give away to a longer perspective."

With this introduction to the chapter on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus Edgar J. Goodspeed in his *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (Univ. Chicago, 1937, p. 327 ff.), names the four elements of crisis which the Pastorals met. They were lack of organization, the threat of the sects, the disesteem setting in towards the old scriptures, and the misinterpretation of Saint Paul's writings. The letters were addressed to Christian ministers *as represented under the guise of historic representatives of their class*; Paul "might most naturally be expected to have written" to Timothy and Titus! Hence, letters were sent as of Paul.

One inquires often if the Catholic literature on the subject is ever consulted, and if so, if its sheer historical fairness and its abundance of analyzed documentation are ever made the topic of serious study. Occasionally one hears the complaint that much of our fine material is tied up in our Latin treatises on Apologetics and on the Church. But this is scarcely an excuse for their neglect on the part of scholars. At least those quoted above read Latin as familiarly as they do other scholarly languages; if they do not, then the learned world should be spared its time in reading their inferences out of the Latin and Greek sources bearing on primitive Christianity. One may demand that these scholars consult an *Introductio*, such as that of Cornely-Merk, in the Latin text as much as in Masoyer's French translation.

In any case articles in the Encyclopedias in three modern scholarly languages under such titles as *Church*, *Saint Paul*, *Saint Ignatius*, etc., have pertinent and indispensable material, not to mention the abundant publicizing of the Catholic viewpoint on a hundred pertinent topics in the *Revue Biblique* and *Biblica*. Even the superb *Histoire de l'Eglise*, edited by Fliche and Martin, of which the first volume, *L'Eglise primitive* by L ebreton and Zeiller appeared in 1934 does not seem to have made any perceptible impression in reversing the evolutionistic hypothesis of the adverse critics, although in the first volume a good discussion with reference to sources is devoted to the relations of the primitive hierarchy to those gifted with charisms. More summarily, but in essentials, the *Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Bible*, of Father Hugh Pope, O.P., has our historical arguments on the Pastorals and on other New Testament sources. Certainly it would be our own profit to increase the output of our Catholic literature on all the history of primitive Christianity; but the lack of popular works is not an excuse for the failure of the critics to consult our erudite ones.

CONSIDERATIONS DESERVING GREATER EMPHASIS

In this question the neglect or rejection of the Pastorals has been a major omission of the adverse critics. There are other omissions too, and certain elements of the psychological attitude of early Christian leaders and people have been missed, and probably not sufficiently emphasized by ourselves. The outlook and viewpoint of early Christianity, both in the supernatural and natural features deserves attention. It is clear that the procedure of the critics is an admission of the fact that the Pastorals are forceful testimony for the fact that it was an Apostle who revealed the plan of hierarchical organization. The hierarchy as understood by Saint Paul and established by him in some of his churches was accepted *in toto* as the normal permanent medium of authority from the time of the earliest witnesses such as Saint Ignatius and Saint Clement of Rome. Hierarchical organization was accepted through Saint Paul as the will of Christ concerning His Church by men who are provably exceptionally alert in searching out and doing the will of Christ. Had the will of Christ been otherwise, these men would have accepted it and fought for it with just as much fervor as we find them showing in their loyalty to a hierarchical system. Had the Christians of 100 A.D. received it as apostolic tradition that the rule of the Church was to be a matter of charismatic gift, they would have accepted God's will with eager submission. It is time for modern historians to consider the conduct of these men from the standpoint of their holiness, their tenacious adherence to apostolic tradition, and their complete loyalty to whatever was the will of Christ.

Our defense of the hierarchy as pictured in the Pastorals does not commit us to say that immediately Popes and Bishops were functioning in the manner of later centuries. It is no historical embarrassment to us that between the time of the Pastorals and the end of the century there is little record of a hierarchy; but noticeably there is a reference in the *Didache*,⁷ and the lapse of time is only three decades in any case. It is clear that it was the will of Christ that the Kingdom should progress through Divine grace and the cooperation of men—humanwise and at the same time Divinely. Until the establishment of permanent pastors (how emphatic is Saint Paul on the care to be exercised in inspecting *convert* congregations for proper candidates) and until the development of modes of curial procedure through experiment and experience, the charismatic graces were providentially given by God to tide over the period between the founding of a convert church and the coming of stable episcopal rule.

It has been insufficiently emphasized that many of the functions which established episcopal curias and bodies of parish priests undertook in later

⁷The *Didache* is dated very late by some critics, before 100 by others; in any case it portrays a church with both hierarchical and charismatic features.

periods were necessarily beyond the efforts of the few chosen for permanent ministry. That any disharmony arose between the two bodies of men is not indicated in the sources. Nor is any to be expected; for those who had the charisms were at one with other Christians in loyalty to the will of Christ in the matter. The charismatically gifted were not religious fakirs; it is unfair to entertain the suspicion that they were charlatans on the make; and neither were the early bishops ward-politicians on the make. If God took care of the early Christians through genuinely miraculous gifts, this is not surprising; even at a later day, when the ordinary curial processes were disrupted and impeded, a similar Divine Providence sent the charisms of the doctor and prophet in Saint Catherine of Siena.

Again, while no disharmony occurred between those genuinely gifted with charisms and ordained pastors, there is every reason to conclude from the nature of the charisms that they should be under the control of the pastors as soon as the opportune day arrived for the setting up of a priesthood. The charisms of the early Church were Divinely caused phenomena; but in some respects they were humanly and diabolically imitable. This was no news to the Apostles or to early Christians, in whom more than a superficial knowledge of Old Testament history can be verified. In the Old Law tests for the genuine and false prophet were supplied; in the New likewise the flock was not left at the mercy of sincere or hypocritical deceivers. Saints Paul and John gave definite tests and authoritatively regularized the charisms. And as the two Apostles were clear on their authority in the matter, so too were the early bishops; not one text can be cited to show that the bishops doubted their authority.

This leads to a further unemphasized consideration. The authority of the Apostle and that of the bishop are similar and dissimilar. The *Apostles* who dealt with charisms as well as with other matters acted, claimed to act, and were accepted by the early Church as acting, infallibly and with Divine finality. The bishops who succeeded them are unanimous in claiming that they succeed to the place of the Apostles. But the bishops do not claim every prerogative of the apostolic office; they do not claim that *singly* they are infallible. In the face of charismatic phenomena we do not find one who hesitates to know his authority; but neither do we find one who claims to act infallibly. As soon as declarations upon the limit of their authority come to be made, tradition shows that all the bishops do not consider themselves infallible teachers in all matters of faith. What is the early tradition behind this view?

The tradition must stem from the absolute honesty and loyalty of the bishops of primitive Christianity. That they claimed to be and were accepted as the successors of the Apostles, and yet did not claim full apostolic privileges, is a sign that their hierarchical place was a matter of the will

of Christ and not a matter of worldly ambition, however sincere. Given the contention of the critics—a combat between the *Pneumatics* and the hierarchy—and given the fascinating allure of the wondrous charismatic gifts upon the simple of the flock, the reaction of early Christians towards episcopal and priestly rule would have been quite different in the early second century from what it was. Had the faithful understood that by the will of Christ their ordinary guidance was to come through wondrous, constantly promised and expected Divine interventions, then every religious instinct as well as every natural inclination to favor the miraculous over the ordinary would have made impossible any success, to say nothing of success in widely separated and uncommunicating territories, striven for by men who, as the critics portray them, were merely naturally, though sincerely, ambitious. The impact of the will of Christ as a controlling factor of the movements in Church history has been too long neglected by historians outside the Church. Yet does any more constant question occur to leaders and people in times of crisis than “What did Christ wish? What direction do His words and spirit dictate in this danger?”

In view of the holiness and loyalty to Christ which are verifiable in the early Church, it is not surprising to find that the only notice of hierarchy probably dated between the time of Saint Paul and 100, portrays the harmony between the hierarchy and those gifted with the charisms. The *Didache of the Twelve Apostles* reads: “Establish for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are gentle, not money-lovers, honest and tried. They will conduct your liturgy, nay even the ceremonies of the prophets and doctors. Do not hold them in disesteem. For they are the honored ones among you along with the prophets and doctors.” (15, 1-2) It is not clear that the community addressed has already a bishop, but it is clear that the place of the charismatics is below that of the permanent hierarchy, and the exhortation to avoid disesteem is a natural one, so astonishing is a miracle compared with the ordinary guidance of permanent authority.

A NOTE ON THE PRIMACY

Finally, to these considerations of underemphasized features of the history of the primitive hierarchy may be added a note on the primacy of Peter which professional historians among the adverse critics miss. Indeed, in the light of it, the admission of Lietzmann that “the roots of Roman primacy extend deeply into the early history of Christianity” may give away much more than the writer intended.

Abundant proof is available in the early documents to show how emphatically the oneness of the Church was seized upon as an essential mark of her being. Far beyond any mere cooperation of disjointed units or any

federation of sympathetic but separated foundations, the union of Christendom was considered a Divinely welded unity, the work of the Holy Spirit, a Body mystically united to Christ its Head, a Kingdom founded by Christ through grace and continued through His supernatural help. Over this unified body the hierarchy was the visible governing body. Its powers were distinctly stated to be Divinely descended; the bishops succeeded the Apostles. But as we have seen they did not succeed to all apostolic prerogatives.

To point the argument for the Roman primacy we may call to mind another apostolic prerogative. The Apostles were accepted by the whole Church as infallible teachers; *singly* each one of the Apostles could teach the faithful in *any and all places*. Not one that we know ever hesitated to speak the message of Christ, and with authority, to any group of Christians, *even to a group converted by another Apostle*. Several can be quoted who taught churches which we know they did not found. Saint Paul wrote to the Romans and the tone of authority in this letter rings out as clearly and boldly as in those to his own foundations. Saint James wrote to any Christian Jews in the Diaspora, and many certainly were in churches not founded or even visited by him. Saint Peter and Saint John wrote to Pauline foundations in Asia Minor. The title in their letters "an apostle of the Lord" was a sufficient declaration of their authority.

Quite obviously Christian territory was not parceled out with barriers and borders dividing the Christian world into twelve regions. That was the situation in the decade 60-70, to which most of the instances cited above belong; after that time we know only of the contact of Saint John with the Pauline foundations in Asia Minor. But about 100 A.D. the situation has changed substantially; in some places bishops are already ruling over Christians of a certain definite territory. Ignatius is bishop in Antioch, Polycarp in Smyrna; Clement is Bishop of Rome. As the second century rolls on, episcopal power over a territory becomes the rule. During this time bishops rule *their own regions* and admit the power of their neighbor bishops over *other* regions. There are three exceptions to this way of acting. The Bishop of Rome wrote to the Corinthian church in 96 A.D.; the Bishop of Rome was visited by Saint Polycarp over a matter which affected Christians of Asia Minor in 154; the Bishop of Rome settled the same matter in 190. The bishops who claim to succeed the Apostles do not claim to have a universal jurisdiction; *one* of them acts on the assumption that he has succeeded to such power; he claims to be and acts as a primate because he is the successor of Saint Peter.

Now during this second century there was no less emphasis on the unity of the Church; the acceptance of the hierarchy has not even suggested that there was division in the Church; rather, the hierarchy and priest-

hood were considered one of the factors of this unity, one of its causes and preservers. The bishops, fully conscious of their assumption of the places of the Apostles, exercised their authority over only a segment of the one flock; they did not claim the apostolic prerogative of authority universally. On the contrary, in the only instances we know of a crossing of episcopal borders, it was one bishop only who exercised universal jurisdiction. And not only did each of these bishops of the second century, except the bishop of Rome, keep his authority to a territory, but each was passing on a traditional attitude in this respect to the bishops of later centuries. This tradition, vocal only rarely in the second century, swelled and increased in the third and fourth in a grand confession of the primacy of the Roman See.

One may pause to ask if the bishops of the second century would have relinquished in favor of one bishop the prerogative of universal authority and teaching power had they felt that they had received it singly. Certainly not. They were tenacious of what had been laid down in apostolic tradition because the Apostles had been their instructors concerning the plan of Christ for His Church. The compelling reason which made them steadfast in what authority they had and made them unambitious about the prerogatives of others was the will of Christ. We are to remember that history portrays many of these early bishops as saintly men; their writings are filled with their evidence of love of Christ and love of the Church. As they are portrayed in the hypotheses of the adverse critics, they are ambitious first in gaining local power or they are the complacent inheritors of previous usurpers. Had they been thus worldly we may confidently believe that much definite and victorious action would have been taken if Rome was considered to encroach in the matter of authority.

Even the Quartodeciman dispute, which has been felt by some to be evidence of resistance to the usurpation of Rome, has several significant features which set out the doctrine of the Roman primacy in clear light. It is quite against historical truth to consider either Polycarp or Polycrates in the role of early patriots aroused to arms against Roman aggression. Significantly Saint Polycarp in spite of his four-score years came to Rome to consult Pope Anicetus on the time and celebration of the annual Pasch. This was a liturgical question; not one of doctrine. The two bishops did not settle it. The Pope did not use his authority, for Eusebius reports that "Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp." (Hist. Eccl. 5, 24, 16) Polycarp's argument was eastern custom, a custom deriving from Saint John. If the critics are right, his argument should have been that the affair, whether doctrinal or liturgical, was none of the business of the Roman Pontiff.

No settlement of a liturgical point was imperative when Saint Polycarp visited Rome in 154. But from 170 onwards the difference moved

out of the field of liturgy into that of faith. The Judaizers in the East and later at Rome threatened harm to doctrine, and the manner of celebrating the Pasch in Asia Minor gave these heretics an opportunity to confuse the faithful. This spurred Pope Victor to action. He encountered opposition, of which Polycrates, the Bishop of Ephesus, was the spokesman in 190. Polycrates' letter on the dispute is reported by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 5, 24, 2-8). Significantly he writes to Victor that at the bidding of the Pope he has convoked his bishops. He bespeaks his own and their opposition to a change of their custom, and from phrases in the letter the change was feared because it seemed to the Asia Minor bishops to be a breach of their traditional faith. Significantly the opposition to the Pope is not based on a denial of his power; indeed, at the Pope's bidding Polycrates had convened the council. In this very crisis when Polycrates is most conscious of the traditions which he is defending in the name of an Apostle he omits what would have been his most powerful and apodictic argument, could he have spoken otherwise than as a loyal Christian: "I and the bishops of Asia Minor have exclusive power in dealing with this situation both as regards faith and liturgy; we rule the faith and conduct of Christians in our territories without the advice or authority of others." That no such argument was proffered is significant.

In conclusion, it seems just to accuse the adverse critics and supporters of evolution of another error which is less grave than their wrong initial assumptions, yet still a grievous error in historical research. The study of the text and context from the etymological and morphological viewpoints does not give the total interpretation of a sentence; it is necessary to consider the background and attitude of the speaker. This defect in the historical methodology of the critics vitiates much of their writing on Christian origins. How futile, obviously, to determine fully the content of redemption in Saint Paul by searching the use of the word at Greek shrines! How ridiculous to allege that Christ, a man and a hero, was evolved into Christ, God, by such stern monotheists as the early Christians, who were horrified at the blasphemies of the polytheism of the Empire! And equally futile is it to think of a Church devoted to the will of Christ and to apostolic tradition evolving a hierarchy out of the ambitions of conscious or unconscious worldlings.



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