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How Peter Became Pope

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Christi et sanguinem pro te fusum; ex istis fulgebit praedestinationio;
 deutsch: „Schau' die Wunden Christi an und das für dich vergossene
 Blut; daraus wird dir die Prädestination entgegenleuchten“ (zu Gen.
 28, 9; Exeg. Opera lat., Erl. VI, 296 sq.). J. Pieper.

How Peter Became Pope.

I. To Constantine.

Waiving discussion, let us assume that Peter came to Rome shortly before his death.

This humble "elder" begs his fellow-elders to feed the flock of God and not to be "lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock," 1 Pet. 5, 1-3. How did this humble elder grow into the infallible Pope who holds the place of God on earth?

Rome was the capital of the world, and the bishop naturally shared in the glory that was Rome's.

All roads lead to Rome, and Christians from all parts of the world came to Rome and became acquainted with the bishop in the world's capital, and so his influence spread abroad.

Even in Paul's day the faith of the Roman Christians was "proclaimed throughout the whole world," Rom. 1, 8.

The Roman Christians were zealous missionaries. As early as 156 King Lucius asked them for missionaries to Britain, according to Tertullian and Bede. There were bishops in Mainz and Koeln as early as 185. In 180 Christians from Madaura and Numidia in North Africa were martyrs. There were Christians in Spain in the days of Irenaeus and Tertullian; they were numerous in the days of Cyprian. (Harnack, *Expansion*, II.) Naturally the missions were greatly influenced by the mother church.

People of influence joined the Christians. Paul converted the Proconsul Sergius Paulus of Cyprus, and the Philippian's get greetings from those of Caesar's household, Acts 13, 7; Phil. 4, 22. Tiberius tried to number Jesus among the Roman gods, but the Senate hindered it, says Tertullian, *Apol.* 5. (Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*, 25.) Being obviously pleased with the doctrine, Tiberius threatened death to the accusers of the Christians, says Eusebius, II, c. 2.

We hear of the Consul Titus Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla; a "distinguished lady," Pomponia Graecina; Justin Martyr; Valentinus; Ptolemaeus; Heracleon; Marcion, the Senator (?); Apollonius; the distinguished lawyer Tertullian, who says Christianity has gained the palace, the senate, the forum, and the army. Similar testimony is borne by Clement, Origen, Pliny's letter to Caesar, Cyprian, Eusebius, Minutius Felix, the second rescript of

Emperor Valerian, in 258, which notices only the upper classes and members of Caesar's household. (Harnack, *Expansion*, II, 182—239.)

The Emperor Septimius Severus permitted Christians among his courtiers and gave support to the Christian Proculus on the Palatine.

Marcia, the morganatic wife of Emperor Commodus, who was brought up by the Roman presbyter Hyacinthus, about 189 asked Bishop Victorinus for the names of Christians in the unhealthy lead-mines of Sardinia and had Commodus set them free, and under her influence the persecutions died away. Such powerful persons naturally added prestige to the bishop of the church at Rome.

The church at Rome became wealthy at an early date and used its wealth in works of charity. Marcion donated 200,000 sesterces to the church. "The fostering Mistress of Charity," Ignatius of Antioch calls Rome on his way to martyrdom at Rome in his first epistle to the Corinthians. About 170 Bishop Dionysius of Corinth writes to the Romans: "From the beginning ye have been wont to show forth divers good works towards all the brethren. To many churches in divers towns have ye sent supplies and in this manner either relieved the poverty of the needy or provided necessary sustenance for the brethren in the mines. By such gifts do ye as Romans remain faithful to the customs inherited from your fathers. So also has your worthy Bishop Soter not only kept up this custom, but has practised it in increasing measure; for not only does he make lavish distribution of the gifts for the saints (members of the church), but he also cheers the brethren coming from afar with blessed words, as a loving father cheers his children."

Towards the end of the first century the church of Rome sent letters to the Corinthians, urging them to stop their church quarrel; these letters are supposed to have been written by Clement, a freed-man of the Flavian imperial house, and so respected were they that they were read publicly in the churches for a century.

About the year 200 the forged Clementine Recognitions was brought to Rome with a letter from Clement to James at Jerusalem, telling how Peter had ordained him and set him in his own chair of teaching as Bishop of Rome. While the doctrinal part was rejected as heretical, the narrative part was readily believed and has been the traditional Roman account ever since. The consequence was drawn that, as Peter was the chief of the apostles, the Pope was the chief of all bishops. On this basis the Popes, as time went on, claimed ever-growing power.

Following St. John and the other apostles, the Asiatics kept Easter on the Passover, the 14th of Nisan; the Romans on Sunday. When the aged Polycarp of Smyrna came to Rome in 154, Bishop Anicetus tried to persuade Polycarp to follow the Roman rule, the custom of the "elders" preceding himself; not a word about the

authority of Peter over John nor any privilege of the Roman office. Polycarp could not yield, yet Anicetus invited him to preside at the Eucharist, rightly holding such trifle no cause for division in the Church.

Victor I, the first to write in Latin, in 196 arrogantly banned the Asiatic bishops. A large synod at Ephesus, under Polycrates, rejected the demands of Victor. Irenaeus and other bishops rebuked Victor, and used expressions handling him very severely, and called the Roman Popes "presbyters," and ignored Victor's excommunication. Eusebius, in the fourth century, sees in Victor's action nothing but a piece of undue intolerance. (Puller, pp. 25—30.)

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

"At the end of the second century we can already recognize by signs which it is impossible to mistake the spirit which in 1870 will proclaim the infallibility of the Pope." (Renan, *Hibbert Lect.*, 1880; Engl. tr., 172—174.)

This Easter quarrel was not settled till 525, when Dionysius Exiguus decided against the Roman sixteen-year cycle in favor of the Alexandrian nineteen-year cycle, as he frankly said.

When Pope Victor, or his successor Zephyrinus, 198—217, allowed adulterers and fornicators to be restored to church-fellowship after a light penance, Tertullian, deeply incensed in his moral earnestness, with bitter irony calls the Romish bishop by the name of his pagan colleague Pontifex Maximus and translates it into *Episcopus Episcoporum*, that is, one who sets himself up for an ecclesiastical despot. (Hase I, p. 218; Littledale, *P. O.*, pp. 129. 130.)

Tertullian of Carthage is the first to refer to Matthew, and in the *Scorpiace*, about 205, says every one confessing Christ as Peter did carries the keys of heaven as did he. (Shotwell, p. 295.)

In a famous passage, Irenaeus says that the apostolic tradition is preserved by the Christians who have come to Rome from the other local churches — not by an infallible Pope. (Puller, *Primitive Saints*, page 42.)

Irenaeus says the Communion cup usually bore a representation of the Good Shepherd. Again: "Whatever occupation employs us, we mark our forehead with the sign of the cross."

Liguori and others quote Irenaeus as saying: "It is necessary that all should depend on the church of Rome as on a well-spring, or fount." No such passage exists; it is pure forgery. (Littledale, *P. R.*, 126.)

Zephyrinus, 198—217, was "a dull and disgracefully corrupt person," according to the learned Hippolytus.

Calixtus I, 217—222, had been set up as a banker by his master, Carpophorus, a Christian official. He induced church-members, and especially widows, to deposit with him. He failed and fled. His

master caught him in the harbor. He was put into a tread-mill. Freed from that, he quarreled with the Jews of Rome; he was scourged and condemned to the mines of Sardinia by Marcus Aurelius. In 190 he was freed through Marcia, the mistress of Commodus, and came to Rome and gained the favor of Pope Zephyrinus. When elected Pope, he decided bishops could not be deposed, even not for grave sins.

He was the first to use the "power of the Keys" given to St. Peter as a basis for an arbitrary decision. Part of the congregation elected Hippolytus, the last Roman theologian to write in Greek, as a rival bishop, who violently denounced Calixtus as a "heresiarch *ex cathedra*," in the words of Cardinal Newman.

Tertullian accuses the Roman bishop of taking the title "Pontifex Maximus" and "Bishop of Bishops"; he also complains that the "Supreme Pontiff" was in the habit of quoting the decisions of his predecessors as final in disputes and that he claimed to sit in Peter's chair. These charges show the early date of the Petrine claim.

Under Caracalla and Elagabalus the Christians grew unhindered.

According to Doellinger's theory, in *Hippolytus and Callistus*, Christians in the third century, so far from regarding the Roman bishop as their master and teacher, troubled themselves very little to inquire who the bishop of Rome was.

Calixtus built the first church in Rome, on the site of S. Maria in Trastevere, beyond the Tiber, the quarter of the Jews and other foreigners. He also built a new catacomb near the Appian Way, where many bishops were buried.

Emperor Alexander Severus, 222—235, had images of Jesus and other Scripture characters in his Lavarium. He permitted the Church to own lands, build churches, elect officers openly, and send officials to court—made lawful in 312.

Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria held two synods, 231 and 232, in which he deposed the celebrated Origen as presbyter and teacher and excommunicated him without saying a word to the Roman bishop. Later on Bishop Pontianus, 230—235, asked for the opinion of the Roman clergy, and they agreed with Demetrius. (Schick, p. 65.)

Origen, between 246 and 248, wrote on Matt. 16, 13—19 against the papal pretensions: "If we, too, say like Peter, 'Thou art the Christ,' etc., we become like Peter, and to us the Word might say: 'Thou art Peter,' etc."

Jerome writes the Romans condemned him, "not because of his heresy, as some yelping hounds now pretend, in order to disparage him, but because they could not tolerate the splendor of his eloquence and learning." (Ep. 33, *Ad Paulum*. Shotwell, p. 313.)

Fabian, 236—250, divided Rome into seven or twice seven parishes, according to the political "regiones," and the lower clergy

into five grades. Penitence grew and also the influence of the Church on the world.

In 253 Bishop Fidus asked to have infant baptism forbidden. Sixty-six bishops met at Carthage and rejected the petition. And Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, was the president of the synod, not the Bishop of Rome.

Cornelius received from Bishop Cyprian of Carthage a letter to be read to all that African Christians had no right "to run about from place to place" and appeal to Rome. He thus flatly denies the Vatican Council of 1870. "In all causes which pertain to the jurisdiction of the Church, recourse may be had to the judgment of the Roman Pontiff."

According to Bishop Cornelius there were in office in Rome forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, not to mention the precentors, while those receiving charity numbered more than fifteen hundred. From twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars were spent yearly for the support of the clergy and the needy.

In 253 Valerian and Gallienus decreed to behead Christians holding meetings and entering cemeteries. On the fall of Valerian, Gallienus restored the confiscated cemeteries and published the Edict of Toleration of Christianity.

The *Teaching of the Apostles* from the third century brings the first extant clear claim that the priest is above the prince. "The king, who wears the crown, reigns only over the body and binds and looses only in this world; but the bishop reigns over both soul and body that he may loosen on the earth and bind in heaven by heavenly power."

When Stephen I, 254—257, for the first time in recorded history, claims to be Peter's successor in Peter's own chair, St. Firmilian of Caesarea says of this boast, "I am justly indignant at such open and manifest folly in Stephen," and compares him to Judas Iscariot and censures his "audacity and insolence." "Thou art worse than all heretics." "The true schismatic, who has cut off from communion no one but himself." (Gore, *R. C. Claims*, p. 133.) The bishops of Palestine write in the same strain. (Schick, p. 62.)

The Council of Carthage, in 255, rejected the letter of Pope Stephen, though enforced with a threat of excommunication, wherein he condemned the ruling of the synod earlier in the year, insisting on the rebaptism of sectaries, while the Roman bishops admitted the validity of heretical baptisms.

The bishops of Leon and Merida, Basilides and Martial, sacrificed to idols, and Martial buried his child with heathen ceremonies; they confessed their sins and resigned; Bishop Stephen of Rome declared them still in office; the Spanish bishop appealed against this ruling

to Bishop Cyprian of Carthage; thirty-seven bishops met there and reversed the sentence of Rome, in 270.

About the same time, Cyprian, presiding over eighty-seven bishops at a council at Carthage, said: "No one of us sets himself up as Bishop of bishops or forces his colleagues to obedience by tyrannical terrorizing; for every bishop, in the free use of his liberty and power, has his own right of judgment and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another. But let us wait for the judgment of our universal Lord Jesus Christ, who, singly and alone, has power to advance us in the government of His Church and to judge our conduct." (*Our Brief*, p. 31; Fuller, pp. 51—90).

In Letter 74 Cyprian speaks of Pope Stephen's "error," his lies, his betrayal of the truth and faith, his haughtiness and ignorance. Stephen called Cyprian a "deceitful worker, false apostle, false Christ." This is the same Cyprian who was the first to speak of the *cathedra Petri*.

The Romanists quote Cyprian as acknowledging the Pope to be the Universal Bishop. But Archbishop Benson of Canterbury, in his *Life of Cyprian*, proves the words on which the papalists base their claims to be deliberate forgeries. He says: "Papal apologists have steadily maintained the grossest forgeries in literature." "There never was a viler fraud, never one so easy of detection, embodied for the first time in 1563, after all earlier editions and reprints had escaped them." The editor Latini resigned rather than have his name linked with an edition which the theologians of the Vatican tampered with. (E. G. Man, pp. 210, 211; Bartoli, 89—94.)

Littledale says this impudent forgery was introduced by Pope Pelagius II in a letter to the bishops of Istria; that Baluze's note, giving the facts of the forgery, stands in the Benedictine edition, which was falsified after his death while he was busy on it; that this forgery is still inserted in the Roman edition of Cyprian's works and still quoted by Ultramontanes. (*P. R.*, 126; Bartoli, Preface XIII; Hurter and Allnatt. Gore, p. 112.)

H. Koch, Professor of Church History at the Roman Catholic Lyceum Hosianum in Braunsberg, shows Cyprian knew no papacy, neither in dogmatics nor in law. (*Cyprian u. d. roem. Primat.* Leipzig. Hinrichs, 1910, in *Theol. Literaturbericht*, June, 1910, p. 180.)

After the persecuting emperor Valerian was captured by the Persians in 260, his son Gallienus issued the first formal recognition of Christianity as an allowed religion and restored the churches and cemeteries to the Christians, and Bishop Dionysius, 259—269, instituted a regular parish in Rome with the care of one cemetery outside the walls. He also sent funds to redeem Christians enslaved by the Scythians in Cappadocia.

Bishop Dionysius of Rome wrote to Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria that his terms in defining the Trinity were erroneous, and he submitted and said he had been misunderstood. A century later this was used to justify Roman interference in other cities.

When Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, was tried, in 264, St. Firmilian presided, the same whom Pope Stephen had excommunicated. That shows that no "Vicar of Christ" was recognized. (Little-dale, *P. C.*, p. 141.)

In 269 seventy bishops met at Antioch, deposed Paul, and elected Domnus. Bishop Dionysius of Rome made no objection. Paul of Samosata was the first bishop to be also a royal official of Queen Zenobia.

In 272 Aurelian defeated Zenobia and took Antioch. Then for the first time opposing Christians competed for the aid of Caesar. And the heathen Caesar ruled "the church house belonged to those in communion with the Christian bishops in Italy and in the city of the Romans." What Victor and Stephen had fought for on religious grounds came to Felix I as a gift from a pagan Caesar.

By this time the Roman bishop had the ecclesiastical authority of consecrating and punishing the Italian bishops.

The *Liber Pontificalis* shows that Rome had not a chapel till about 220 and no silver altar vessels until about 230.

"It was not until the third century, as far as we are able to judge, that the Bishop of Rome gave himself out to be the personal successor of Peter (to the exclusion of all other claims) and began to claim for himself the duties, rights, and honors which Peter had possessed, or which he and others attributed to Peter."—(Ad. Harnack, in *Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries*.)

Marcellinus, 296—304, was charged with being a traitor, having, it was said, delivered Bibles to the heathen government to be burned and burned incense to the gods. The three hundred bishops of the Council of Sinuessa were satisfied with the confession, "since the First See could not be judged by any one." (Hefele, *Konzilien-geschichte*, I, 2, p. 143.)

Marcellus I was exiled by Maxentius for the terrible fights, from 300—309, among the Roman Christians on account of the reception of the *lapsi*. He built the cemetery on the Via Salaria.

Urged on by Galerius, Diocletian, in 303, ordered the fiercest persecution of all who refused to sacrifice to the emperor and the giving up of all the Bibles to be burned. Sinking under a loathsome disease, Galerius, in 311, issued an edict that Christians might exercise their religion and that churches should be spared or rebuilt.

Two miles north of Rome the Flaminian Way leads over the Milvian Bridge, the Ponte Molle, and there Constantine, in October

312, defeated Maxentius and then was welcomed by the people of Rome. "In the most public place" he set up his own statue bearing the sign of Christ. He named Bishop Hosius of Cordova his adviser in church matters, gave state grants to aid the churches, and presented the palace of the Lateran on the Coelian, the property of his wife Fausta, to Bishop Miltiades for a parsonage, where in 313 he held a synod to try the Donatists.

About 315, on his second visit to Rome, Constantine built churches for Peter, Paul, and Laurentius, one of the four deacons martyred with Xystus II in 258, August 6, under Valerian.

In 313 Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in Greek and Latin over the whole empire, placing Christianity on the same level with paganism and forbidding persecutions under severe penalties. Exiles were recalled; confiscated property was restored; the Christian clergy were exempt from military and municipal duties, a favor already enjoyed by pagan priests and Jewish Rabbis. In 315 the freeing of Christian slaves was made easier. In 316 various customs and ordinances offensive to Christians were abolished. In 321 bequests to churches were legalized and civic business forbidden on Sunday, but as a *dies solis*. In 323 Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, and Hercules were removed from the coins. In 324 the emperor issued a general exhortation to all Romans to embrace the new creed for the common weal. The highest offices were opened to Christians. Gifts and remission of taxes enriched the churches, and many churches were erected, and fifty costly manuscripts of the Bible were ordered prepared for the leading churches. The cult of Venus in Phoenicia, Aesculapius at Aegae, and the Nile priests at Heliopolis were forbidden, also private haruspices, probably even all sacrifices.

Constantine divided the empire into four prefectures, these into fourteen "dioceses," these into provinces. The Church divided along these political lines. The chief city, or metropolis, gave to its bishop the name Primate, or Metropolitan; the metropolis of a diocese conferred on its pastor the title Exarch; over the exarchs were placed the four Patriarchs, corresponding to the four pretorian prefects.

Constantine kept company continually with bishops and was fond of talking on religious subjects; he even wrote little sermons, which he delivered to his admiring hearers. He was spoken of by Eusebius — not the historian — as "a sort of general bishop," and he spoke of himself as "a bishop in externals."

Constantine became virtually the Pontifex Maximus of his new religion by controlling those who performed the sacred rites and by defining its faith, discipline, organization, policy, and privileges. He enacted legislation for Christianity just as his predecessors had for paganism. That the union did paganize and materialize the Church no one can deny.

And Dante laments:—

Ah, Constantine, what evil came as child
Not of thy change of creed, but of the dower
Of which the first rich father thee beguiled!

When Constantine became a Christian in name and used the imperial power to enforce uniformity of creed and the Church, instead of repudiating this interference of the State in church affairs, accepted his help, the Inquisition was born. About 316 Constantine issued an edict condemning the Donatists to lose their goods.

The emperors set the example of giving immense donations of lands and money to the various churches, especially to the great churches of the principal cities, and most of all to the primatial church at Rome, the capital of the civilized world. The example of the emperors was, of course, followed by all classes of society. The real estate of the Church was called the "patrimony of Peter" and now grew so quickly that the Pope became the largest real estate holder and the greatest financial power in all Italy. (*Real.*, 14, p. 769.)

A party at Carthage said Caecilian was no bishop because consecrated by a traitor, one who had surrendered the Bible in the persecution of Diocletian; and they appealed, not to Rome, but to Constantine. He turned the case over to the Roman bishop Miltiades (corrupted into Melchiades) and "Marcus," likely Merocles of Milan, to act with three Gallic bishops, who decided against the appellants, October, 313, in the palace of the Empress Fausta. These appealed from the "few bishops" of the first Lateran Council, and the emperor called the large Council of Arles, presided over by Marinus, not Sylvester of Rome; he is merely told "what they have decreed."

Pope Leo X, in the Lateran Synod of 1516, said, "It is manifestly established that the Roman Pontiff for the time being, as having authority over all councils, has alone the full power of convoking, transferring, dissolving," a claim made no earlier than 785 by Hadrian I. This is untrue.

The Emperor Constantine called the First General Council at Nicaea, in Bithynia, in 325, and entered it "as a messenger from God, covered with gold and precious stones, a magnificent figure, tall and slender, and full of grace and majesty." The emperor opened the council with an address, presided at times, took part in the debates, and acted as the real head, though the legates of Bishop Sylvester of Rome were present. The emperor required all bishops to sign the creed. The emperor formally confirmed the acts of the council with a splendid feast. As yet Peter is no vicar of Christ.

The fifth canon provides for a right of appeal to provincial synods, not to Rome.

The sixth canon says the Bishop of Rome has merely the same authority in his own region as has the Patriarch of Alexandria and

the Patriarch of Antioch in their regions. Peter was no Pope, not yet. "That the Roman Church always had the primacy" was forged into the Nicene canons, and it is rejected by the Romanist Hefele. (Gore, p. 100.)

In 326 Constantine visited Rome from June to September and is said to have built St. John Lateran, St. Peter, St. Paul, S. Lorenzo, St. Agnes, SS. Marcellinus and Peter — not one to the Virgin Mary. A later legend says Bishop Sylvester healed the emperor's leprosy at his baptism and received the Lateran palace for the papal residence and St. John Baptist for the cathedral of Rome and all the Western world — the fraudulent donations of Constantine.

The rights of the Roman bishop extend over the "suburbicarian" churches, probably the seven provinces of Campania, Tuscany, with Umbria, Picenum, Apulia with Calabria, Bruttii with Lucania, Samnium, and Valeria, and the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily. (Robertson, *Growth*, p. 57.)

After Constantine's visit to Rome his aged mother, Helena, made her famous pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where miracles revealed the true cross, and in Rome the Church of Santa Croce was built to house pieces of it. The nails of the crucifixion were found and sent to the emperor, who wore them as charms for protection. Churches were built at the sites of the passion, resurrection, ascension, and nativity. The pagan gods crept into the Church as Christian saints and acted as middlemen between the sinners and the holy God. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem and also to Rome began. After this time, church-bells came into use.

A pompous ritualism, with suggestions of image worship, was introduced. Great emphasis was laid on the sanctity and power of holy water, sacred relics and places, pilgrimages, and the use of the cross. New ideas in reference to the merit of external works resulted in asceticism and a celibate priesthood, fanatical martyrdom, indiscriminate almsgiving, and various patent methods for spiritual benefits. The number of church festivals grew and now included Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany, and various saints' days.

In the East there were four patriarchs, in the West but one; that alone made the Roman loom large. In the rivalry between the Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople the Bishop of Rome was often appealed to, and this fact naturally added greatly to Rome's influence.

When the emperor became a Christian, it became fashionable to join the church, and promotion lay through Christianity, as the pagans sadly complained. Naturally, the prestige of the Roman bishop increased.

When Constantine, in 330, moved to Constantinople, his new capital, the Bishop of Rome loomed up as the one big man in all the West. Yet the emperor was the "Bishop of bishops."

The Roman Catholic Joseph Rafaele of Naples, in the eighteenth century, says: "The transfer of the empire to Constantinople was the origin of the influence of the Western clergy and especially of the Roman bishop." He goes on to show how the Popes helped the Frankish kings and how these helped the Popes, "who did not yet dare call themselves sovereigns of Rome." (Schick, 56.)

Pope Pius II admitted that before the Nicene Council in 325 very little regard was had to the Church of Rome. (E. G. Man, p. 104.)

In all the records preserved to us of the jealous suspicion with which the pagan state watched every detail of Christian usage, we find no trace of any "vicar of Christ" ruling the Christians scattered in the wide Roman Empire, such as the Jewish patriarch at Tiberias ruling all synagogues in the empire by his legates *a latere*.

The very existence of the councils, parliaments of the Church, shows that there was no "vicar of Christ" known to the people.

"I also am a bishop, ordained by God to oversee the external business of the Church," said Constantine.

Milwaukee, Wis.

W. DALLMANN.

Marburg: Der Sieg über den Unionismus.

(Fortsetzung.)

Der Unionismus ist seinem Wesen nach unlauter. Diese innere Unwahrhaftigkeit gibt ihm sein jeweiliges Gepräge. Das Bild des zu Marburg betriebenen Unionismus, das hier in zehn Strichen entworfen werden soll, ist darum ein häßliches. Die Unionisten der Folgezeit werden darin ihr Bild und Gleichnis sehen. Sie haben es in manchen Stücken nicht so grob gemacht wie die Marburger Unionisten; in mancher Beziehung haben sie es aber gröber gemacht.

1. Der Unionismus nimmt es nicht genau mit der Wahrheit, mit der Wahrheit des Wortes Gottes. Er leugnet nicht nur die Geltung von Röm. 16, 17; Tit. 3, 10; 2 Joh. 10, 11; vielmehr ist ihm die Wahrheit des Wortes Gottes überhaupt eine gleichgültige Sache. Denn indem er für den Irrtum Duldung, Gleichberechtigung neben der Wahrheit fordert, ihn also für indifferent erklärt, erklärt er auch die dem Irrtum entgegenstehende Wahrheit für indifferent. Und während er das anfänglich auf nebenächliche Stücke bezogen haben will, dehnt er es seinem Grundcharakter nach auch auf wichtige Stücke, schließlich auf alle Stücke des Wortes Gottes aus. Er hat den Sinn für die Wahrheit verloren. Und er rühmt sich der Unwahrheit. Der Unionist tut sich etwas darauf zugute, daß er um des äußeren Friedens willen das ihm zu treuer Verwaltung anvertraute Wort seines Gottes fahren läßt. Wie sahen die Schweizer die Sache an? „Ob wir schon nicht eben in allen Stücken gleichgesinnt sind, schadet alles nicht hoch; so fern, lasse