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### The Brief Study of the Double Edition of St Cyprian's DE UNITATE ECCLESIAE

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A BRIEF STUDY OF THE DOUBLE EDITION OF  
ST. CYPRIAN'S DE UNITATE ECCLESIAE

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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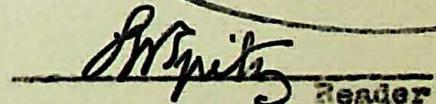
by

Herbert John August Bouman

June 1955

Approved by:

  
Advisor

  
Reader

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INTRODUCTION

This study is motivated by the fact that the fourth chapter of the treatise "De Unitate Ecclesiae," written by the bishop of Carthage, St. Cyprian, has two versions, but

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2. Van den Brink, "La Double Version de la Lettre de St. Cyprien," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (Louvain, 1953). In parallel columns the two editions of chapter IV are reproduced as follows:

Probatio est et fides scilicet  
essentia veritatis.

Probatio est et fides scilicet  
essentia veritatis.

Legimus deinde et petram  
supra quam aedificabitur ecclesia  
et ecclesia edificabitur super  
petram. Quis ergo petram  
dicitur esse ecclesiam? Quis  
dicitur esse ecclesiam? Quis  
dicitur esse ecclesiam?

Legimus deinde et petram  
supra quam aedificabitur ecclesia  
et ecclesia edificabitur super  
petram. Quis ergo petram  
dicitur esse ecclesiam? Quis  
dicitur esse ecclesiam? Quis  
dicitur esse ecclesiam?

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study is occasioned by the fact that the fourth chapter of the treatise "De Unitate Ecclesiae," written by the Bishop of Carthage, St. Cyprian, about 251 A.D., has come down to us in two quite different forms. One version apparently bases the unity of the Church in explicit terms on the primacy of Peter over and above the authority of other bishops, while the other version speaks in more cautious and general terms of Peter as a symbol of unity and power in which all bishops share equally. Following Van den Bynde who, in turn, follows Batiffol, the first-named form shall be referred to as A and the second as B.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. Van den Bynde, "La Double Edition du De Unitate de S. Cyprien," Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique (Louvain, 1933). In parallel columns the two editions of chapter IV are reproduced as follows:

A

Probatio est ad fidem facilis  
compendio veritatis.

Loquitur Dominus ad Petrum:  
Ego tibi dico, inquit, quia  
tu es Petrus, et super istam  
petram aedificabo ecclesiam  
meam, et portae inferorum non  
vincent eam. Dabo tibi claves  
regni caelorum: et quae liga-  
veris super terram erunt li-  
gate et in caelis, et quae-  
cumque solveris super terram

B

Probatio est ad fidem facilis  
compendio veritatis.

Loquitur Dominus ad Petrum:  
Ego tibi dico, inquit, quia  
tu es Petrus, et super istam  
petram aedificabo ecclesiam  
meam, et portae inferorum non  
vincent eam. Dabo tibi claves  
regni caelorum: et quae liga-  
veris super terram erunt li-  
gate et in caelis, et quae-  
cumque solveris super terram

It will be well to point out the principal differences.

Text B states that Christ builds His Church on one, and though after His resurrection He gave equal power to all the

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erunt soluta et in caelis.

Et eidem post resurrectionem suam dicit: *Pasce oves meas.*

Super unum aedificat ecclesiam et illi pascendas oves mandat suas.

Et quasvis apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parem tribuat potestatem

unam tamen cathedram constituit et unitatis originem atque rationem sua auctoritate disposuit.

Hoc erant utique et ceteri apostoli quod fuit Petrus,

sed primatus Petro datur et una ecclesia et cathedra una monstratur. Et pastores sunt omnes sed grex unus ostenditur qui ab apostolis omnibus unanimi consensione pascatur

Hanc et Pauli unitatem qui non

erunt soluta et in caelis.

Super unum aedificat ecclesiam,

et quasvis apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parem potestatem tribuat et dicat: Sicut misit me pater et ego mitto vos. Accipite spiritum sanctus: si cuius remiseritis peccata, remittentur illi; si cuius tenueritis tenebuntur, tamen ut unitatem

manifestaret unitatis eiusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuit.

Hoc erant utique et ceteri apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio praediti et honoris et potestatis

sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur et una ecclesia Christi una . . . monstratur. . . .

Quas unam ecclesiam etiam in cantico canticorum spiritu sancto ex persona domini designat et dicit: Una est columba mea, perfecta mea, una est matri suae, electa generici suae.

Hanc . . . ecclesiae unita-

apostles, yet for the purpose of demonstrating unity He determined by His authority to have the source of that unity begin with one individual. What Peter was, the other apostles were likewise, endowed with an equal partnership of honor and power. However, the beginning proceeds from unity, so that the Church of Christ may be shown to be one. Let no one believe he has the faith who does not accept this unity of the Church. Let no one claim to be in the Church who stands in opposition to the Church.

Text A, on the other hand, contains a number of significant additions. First of all, there is the statement that after His resurrection our Lord said to Peter: Feed my sheep, and entrusted to him His sheep that are to be fed. Furthermore, according to this version, Christ not only demonstrated the unity of the Church, but also established a single episcopal chair (unam cathedram constituit). The assertion concerning the equality of all apostles is weakened by the insertion of the phrase: But the primacy is given to Peter, and the one Church is equated with the one chair. A

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tenet, tenere se fidem credit?	tem qui non tenet, tenere se fidem credit?
Qui cathedram Petri super quam fundata ecclesia est deserit, in ecclesia se esse confidit?	Qui ecclesiae renititur et resistit, in ecclesia se esse confidit?

Cf. Edward White Benson, Gyrierian, His Life--His Times--His Work (London: Macmillan & Co., LTD., 1897), Appendix E, pp. 549 f., for a critical comparison of the two versions, complete with variant readings from the manuscripts.

further addition states that one separates himself from the unity of the Church also by deserting the chair of Peter [i.e. the Roman See] on which the Church is founded (cathedrae Petri super quam fundata ecclesia est).

Through the years this double version has given rise to considerable controversy.<sup>2</sup> The question of how to account for this literary phenomenon has engaged many ranking patristic scholars, Roman and non-Roman, and has led to greatly differing conclusions.<sup>3</sup>

There are multiple possibilities:

1. Both texts are by Cyprian himself,<sup>4</sup> or one of them

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<sup>2</sup>Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 24: "Un des problèmes les plus discutés de la littérature patristique." Benson, op. cit., p. 201: ". . . their controversial importance has been unmeasured." Joseph H. Fichter, St. Cecil Cyprian (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1942), p. 112: "The Bishop of Carthage now plunges into the fourth part of the treatise, completely unaware of the controversial storm that would arise from it centuries later."

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 7; Johannes Quasten, Patrology, The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus, II (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953), 352 f.; Henry Hart Milman, Latin Christianity, I (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860), p. 87, note 2: "There is little doubt that this famous passage is an interpolation." Ignaz v. Doellinger, Das Epistolum, revised by J. Friedrich (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlag, 1892), p. 25: "Die berühmte Stelle aus Cyprians Buch von der Einheit der Kirche wurde im Briefe des Papstes Pelagius II. an die istrischen Bischöfe mit Zusätzen, wie sie die römischen Ansprüche erhellschten, versehen."

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Quasten, op. cit.; Van den Eynde, loc. cit.; F. Cayre, Manual of Patrology and History of Theology, translated by H. Bewitt (Paris: Desclée & Co., 1936), p. 258: "It is possible that a first text . . . was recast by St. Cyprian." Adolf v. Harnack, Die Chronologie der altchrist-

is by another hand.<sup>5</sup>

2. If both are by Cyprian, they may have been issued simultaneously,<sup>6</sup> or the one represents a later revision of the other.<sup>7</sup>

lichen Literatur Bis Eusebius, II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), p. 334, note 2, attaches little importance to the so-called interpolations. He thinks that the investigations of John Chapman have made very probable the view that the interpolation is not an interpolation at all, but an alteration made by Cyprian himself.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. J. P. Migne, Patrologia, series Latina, IV, p. 513, note by Stephen Baluzius: "Locus iste, ut interpolatus est." Giorgio Bartoli, The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), Preface, p. xiii: "A German Jesuit, since dead, asked me to write an article against a local Anglican paper. . . . In the course of my article I quoted against him [the Anglican] certain words by St. Cyprian in his treatise De Unitate Ecclesiae. . . . My friend the German Jesuit read my article, smiled, stared at me, and asked me where I had studied my theology. 'You do not know,' he said, 'that the words you have just quoted were never uttered or written by St. Cyprian? And you mean to say that in Italy it is not generally known that they are a later interpolation in Cyprian's works?' Benson, op. cit., p. 201: "The words are spurious. The history of their interpolation may be distinctly traced even now."

<sup>6</sup>So John Chapman, as stated in Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 21. See also Gayre, op. cit., pp. 258 f.; Harnack, op. cit., p. 364; Fichter, op. cit., p. 112: ". . . the most probable explanation being that Cyprian himself added certain remarks in the margin when he sent a copy of the work to Cornelius at Rome."

<sup>7</sup>Van den Eynde, op. cit., pp. 22 f.; Quasten, op. cit., p. 352; Harnack, op. cit., p. 364: "Als er [Cyprian] dann De unitate nach Rom sandte, hatte sich die Situation sehr wesentlich veraendert. Es war inzwischen das Schisma Novatians eingetreten. Mit Ruecksicht auf dasselbe hat er--nach der einleuchtenden Untersuchung Chapmans--die Schrift De unitate etwas redigiert und namentlich die beruehete 'Interpolation' in c. 4 eingefuegt."

3. Either A or B may be the original. A may be an "interpolated" version of B, or the latter is a rescension of A.<sup>8</sup>

4. If A is the original, this may signify

- a. that Cyprian supports the claims of papal supremacy;
- b. that Cyprian is merely according a recognition of honor to the one apostolic sedes of the West, and that the expressions of A cannot be urged in contradiction of the general views of the African bishop, or the normal thinking of the middle of the third century.

5. If B is the original, and A represents a non-Cyprianic alteration, some intriguing possibilities present themselves:

- a. Some unknown copyist found marginal notes made by another anonymous as excerpts from other Cypriana for handy reference. The copyist quite innocently incorporated these notes into the text. Subsequent writers honestly regarded them as genuine;<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Quasten, op. cit., pp. 351 f.

<sup>9</sup>Doellinger, p. 367, note 109: "H[artel] meint, es seien Randglossen in den Text gekommen." F. W. Puller, The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), p. 89, note 1: "Ultramontane writers suggest that the interpolations were marginal notes, which crept into the text by the carelessness of copyists." Baluzius, in Migne, op. cit., p. 515: "At Latinus quae-

b. The variations in A from B were deliberate forgeries perpetrated for the purpose of exonerating Cyprian from the taint of a suspect sainthood, and of bolstering the pretensions of the papacy.<sup>10</sup>

6. If both A and B were written at the same time, A was intended for Roman consumption in support of St. Cornelius against Novatian, while B addressed itself to the

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cusque hic sunt addita omnia esse ex marginalibus summulis in contextum non semel, sed diversis temporibus tandem relata. . . . Addit summules illas marginales fuisse et ex Cypriani verbis collectas esse . . . vel ex ea tantum summula quam in manuscripto codice Cardinalis Hosii fuisse docet Palemius, in quo scriptum erat consequenter in contextu: Hic Petro primatus datur." (All emphases ours.) For a detailed discussion of this interesting possibility, cf. Benson, op. cit., pp. 208 ff. Note especially p. 219: "Its [the forgery's] first threads may have been marginal summaries in exaggerated language. Then came an unwarrantable paraphrase and a deliberate mutilation for a political purpose."

<sup>10</sup> Benson, loc. cit.; Doellinger, op. cit., p. 25: "Gegen Ende des sechsten Jahrhunderts wurde in Rom eine Fälschung unternommen, deren volle Wirkung erst in viel späterer Zeit eintrat. Die berühmte Stelle aus Cyprians Buch. . . ." Ibid., p. 367, note 110: "Nachdem Cyprian vom Concil von Ephesus in auctoritatem recipirt und in die Liste der Väter gleichen Charakters aufgenommen war, wie sie auch in das unechte Decret Gelasius I. ueberging, lag es nahe, dessen Text zu interpoliren." Fuller, op. cit., p. 89: "When in after-ages the papal idea began to grow up in the Roman Church, it was felt how unsatisfactory from the papal point of view S. Cyprian's teaching was, and a remedy for the supposed mischief was sought. . . . In a decree ascribed to that pope (Gelasius), lists of books recommended and books proscribed are given, and the works of Thascius Cyprianus appear as an item in the prohibitory index. Afterwards some person or persons unknown forged certain sentences about the grievous consequences of deserting the See of Peter, and inserted them into S. Cyprian's treatise." Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (ed.), The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), V, 558: "This is but a specimen of the way in which Cyprian has been 'doctored,' in order to bring him into a shape capable of being misinterpreted."

African problem created by Felicissimus.<sup>11</sup>

7. A is the original, while B represents an "expurgated" version, to give expression to a radical change in Cyprian's attitude toward the Roman See, occasioned by his controversy with Pope Stephen.<sup>12</sup>

Our task is to examine these possibilities and try to decide in favor of the most probable solution. It will be necessary also to determine, if possible, whether the double version has any important bearing on St. Cyprian's general hierarchical views, especially as they affect the attitude of his time toward the papacy. Finally, it will be of more immediate concern for us to evaluate the pertinence of a number of quotations from the writings of Cyprian in the Lutheran Confessions.

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. supra, note 6.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. supra, note 7. Also, infra, Chapter II, note 5.

## CHAPTER II

### ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON

The arguments presented for the Cyprianic authorship of both A and B run about as follows: Both versions are found in an impressive number of very ancient manuscripts, B being traceable to the very time of Cyprian, A quoted as early as the sixth century.<sup>1</sup> It can be demonstrated from unquestioned Cyprianic sources that the phraseology and style of the additions in A are in agreement with Cyprian's manner of speaking.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the thoughts of A are such as Cyprian expressed elsewhere. They are in harmony with his constantly

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<sup>1</sup>D. Van den Eynde, "La Double Edition du De Unitate de S. Cyprien," Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique (Louvain, 1933), pp. 6 f.: "Cependant l'edition de G. Hartel, tout en la releguant dans les notes, révéla l'âge respectable de cette 'interpolation.'" "Cette leçon est donnée par plusieurs manuscrits dont les plus anciens . . . dépendent d'un archétype qui peut remonter au VI - VII siècle." "La première attestation de la version A dans la tradition littéraire se rencontre dans la lettre que le pape Pelage II adressa aux évêques d'Istrie en 585."

<sup>2</sup>Chapman, in Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 7: "La version A porte toutes les marques du style authentique de l'évêque africain." (Emphasis ours.) Cf. Batiffol, ibid., loc. cit.: "Le texte A ne renferme pas un mot, pas une expression, qui n'appartienne à la langue et à l'usage de Cyprien." Ibid., loc. cit., quoting from Cyprian's Nab. virg. 10: "Petrus . . . super quem posuit et fundavit ecclesiam." Ibid., p. 16, quoting Cyprian, Ep. 43, 5 (to the Christians at Carthage): ". . . cathedra una super Petrum domini voce fundata." Ep. 59, 14 (to Cornelius): ". . . ad Patri cathedram atque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est."

reiterated thesis on the source of the Church's unity.<sup>3</sup> It is extremely difficult to account for these facts, if the theory of a forgery is upheld.<sup>4</sup>

But why should Cyprian issue two sharply divergent versions? Those who favor the view of a simultaneous, or nearly simultaneous, double edition maintain that almost identical problems agitated the Church both in Africa and at Rome at about the same time, to wit: the schismatic activity of Felicissimus and Novatus in Africa, and of Novatian in Rome.<sup>5</sup> Against both of them the inviolable unity of the Church must be asserted in the strongest terms. Now, since the bishop in any locality is the living emblem of unity, a man's relation to his respective bishop determines his fellowship in the Church. To make this truth particularly relevant for the Roman Christians, version A was circulated among them. Conversely, text B was intended for the African Christians, whose orientation was not geared so specifically to the Roman See, and, hence, could dispense with the peculiarly Roman emphases of A.

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Edward White Benson, Cyprian, His Life--His Times--His Work (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1897), pp. 197 ff., for a catena of Cyprianic passages on the Unity signified in the charge to Peter.

<sup>4</sup>Van den Bynde, op. cit., p. 20: "Interpolateur étrangement ingénieux pour réussir un texte qui s'accorde mieux avec les écrits cypriens de 249 - 254 que ne le fait l'édition prétendument originale de Cyprien elle-même (re-cension B)!"

<sup>5</sup>Cf. supra, Chapter I, note 6.

However, this explanation does not satisfy many others who still accept the Cyprianic authorship of both versions. According to them, the situation must rather be reconstructed along these lines: In the earlier years of his episcopate Cyprian believed strongly in the primacy of the Roman cath-  
edra, if only as an embodiment of the principle of eccles-  
iastical unity. St. Cyprian expressed his homage to Rome,  
the mother Church, in version A and in other writings of  
this period, about 251. Four or five years later the ec-  
clesiastical sky became dark and menacing. Starting from  
his pet theme of "Ecclesia est in episcopo" and proceeding to  
"Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus est" and "habere non potest  
Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem," the great  
African vigorously denounced the baptism and other rites ad-  
ministered by heretics and schismatics and denied their acts  
all validity. Stephen, the current bishop of Rome, did not  
share his colleague's extreme views. The result was a heated  
controversy in the course of which the thunderbolts hurled  
Rome-ward and Carthage-ward resulted in a breach of fraternal  
relations. At this stage the incensed Cyprian revised his  
treatise De Unitate and purged it of its pronounced pro-  
Roman elements in chapter 4. Exsq: two different versions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>van den Kynde, op. cit., p. 16: "Les affirmations de Cyprien sur le primauté antérieures à la controverse baptis-  
male, sont parallèles à celles de la leçon A. Par contre,  
celles qui sont postérieures à cette date, s'accordent avec  
la leçon B." Cf. Henry Hart Milman, Latin Christianity, I

Obviously, those who do not believe that Cyprian fathered both versions cannot accept either of the two solutions suggested. In their opinion, B must be regarded as the original, and only,<sup>7</sup> text from Cyprian's hand. Whether by inadvertance or with malice afore-thought, A must be rejected as spurious. After all, the latter is missing in the most ancient manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> Gratian quoted Cyprian according to B.<sup>9</sup> Many critical scholars have rejected A.<sup>10</sup> Still

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(New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860), pp. 87 f.: "Nor, so long as Carthage and Rome were in amity and alliance, did Cyprian scruple to admit (as Carthage could not but own her inferiority to Imperial Rome) a kind of primacy, of dignity at least, in the Metropolitan Bishop. The Punic league suddenly gives place to a Punic war. . . . Cyprian confronts Stephen not only as an equal, but, strong in the concurrence of the East and of Alexandria, as his superior. The primacy of Peter has lost its authority. He condemns the perverseness, obstinacy, contumacy of Stephen." Similarly, Pierre de Labriolle, Latin Christianity, translated by Herbert Wilson (London, 1924), p. 184, note 2.

<sup>7</sup>Hugo Koch, in Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 23, calls version B "la seule authentique."

<sup>8</sup>Silman, op. cit., p. 87, note 2: "It is not found in the best manuscripts." Cf. F. Cayre, Manual of Patrology and History of Theology, translated by H. Howitt (Paris: Desclée & Co., 1936), p. 264.

<sup>9</sup>Ignaz v. Doellinger, Das Papsttum, revised by J. Friedrich (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlag, 1892), p. 368, note III: "Gratian Caus. 24 qu. 1 c. 18 citirt indessen noch die Stelle Cyprians ohne die Interpolation."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., loc. cit.: "In jeder kritischen Ausgabe sind diese Interpolationen natuerlich ausgemerzt." Cf. F. W. Fuller, The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), p. 87, note 3: ". . . the interpolated passages, which had been expunged from every critical edition. . . . The evidence against the interpolations is overwhelming."

others have been kept from printing their convictions by fear of reprisal from the heavy hand of hierarchical power.<sup>11</sup> Yet even respectable Roman Catholic scholars had the courage to label A not genuine.<sup>12</sup> Besides, it would be a distortion of history to invest the relatively innocuous hierarchical ideas of 250 with the full-blown Ultra-Montanism of 1870.<sup>13</sup> The distinctive assertions of A run counter to the oft expressed view of Cyprian concerning the independence of each

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<sup>11</sup>Soellinger, op. cit., loc. cit.: "Als in neuerer Zeit Cyprian in Rom 1563 von Manutius herausgegeben wurde, mussten die interpolirten Stellen auf Befehl der roemischen Censoren beibehalten werden, obgleich sie in den Handschriften fehlen, wie der Editor Latino Latini in seinen Briefen klagt. So ging es auch mit der Pariser Ausgabe von Baluze auf Befehl des Ministers Cardinal Fleury." Cf. Puller, op. cit., p. 87, note 3: "Cardinal de Fleury, the Prime Minister of France under Louis XV., forced the Benedictines to insert the interpolated passages, which had been expunged from every critical edition, and had been erased by Baluze, who prepared the edition." Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (ed.), The Ante-Nicene Fathers, V (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1890), 558 (Elucidations): "Now note, Baluzius rejected these interpolations and others; but, dying (1718) with his work unfinished, the completion of the work was assigned to a nameless monk, who confesses that he corrupted the work of Baluzius, or rather glories in the exploit. . . ." Cf. also Benson, op. cit., pp. 209 ff.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Gayre, op. cit., p. 264. Benson, op. cit., loc. cit. Baluzius, in J. P. Migne, Patrologia, series Latina (Paris), IV, 513.

<sup>13</sup>Gayre, op. cit., p. 265, states that Cyprian did not fully understand "all that the privileges of Peter imply." Ibid., p. 266: "He did not grasp all that the privileges of Peter's successor implied with regard to rights for the Pope and duties for the bishops" (author's emphasis). Benson, op. cit., p. 528: "Cyprian and his times were as innocent of presbyterian and of congregational, as they were of papal catholicity."

local bishop.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 139: "We find a conception of the Church, a conception of the role, the prerogatives, and the duties of a Bishop diffused throughout the entire writings of Cyprian, which clearly explains his permanent attitude." *Ibid.*, p. 143: "He [Koch] finds nothing in the declarations scattered throughout the writings of Cyprian "which goes beyond or which contradicts them, but only the reiterated affirmation of the independence of each local bishop in his diocese." Cf. Cyprian's Ep. 72 [to Pope Stephen I, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, V: ". . . every prelate hath in the administration of his church the free power of his will, having to render unto the Lord an account of his acting." Ep. 55 expresses the same thought. Giorgio Bartoli, The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), p. 83: "The authority of every bishop is perfect in itself and independent."

## CHAPTER III

### CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENTS

1. Addressing himself to the "both versions by Cyprian" theory, regardless of the priority of one or the other, this writer finds it extremely difficult to conceive of such a situation, particularly with reference to Bishop Cyprian. His entire career, not only as bishop, but even as a Christian, covers a scant ten years. This brief span was filled with the most intense activity of a single-minded practical churchman. He was dedicated to one idea, the unbreakable unity of the Church of Christ, as exemplified in the person of the one bishop in any place.<sup>1</sup> Besides, as Quasten points out, Cyprian was a man possessed of "those noble qualities of heart that attract charity and gentleness, prudence and spirit of union."<sup>2</sup> That such a man should express any startling-

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<sup>1</sup>Giorgio Bartoli, The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), p. 78: "St. Cyprian, moreover, was possessed with a strange hankering after unity, which at times seemed akin, not to a religious virtue, but to a very human weakness." Cf. Theodore Hoyer, "The Papacy," The Abiding Word, II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 719.

<sup>2</sup>Johannes Quasten, Patrology, II (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953), p. 340. For a discussion of Cyprian's ideas of Unity and the meaning of the word "Church," cf. Edward White Benson, Cyprian, His Life--His Times--His Work (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1897), pp. 186 ff. Ibid., p. 191: [Cyprian's theory of government in the Church] "was lit and fired by that sense of love and feeling after unity which seemed to Augustine the most special characteristic of the man."

ly altered views is not easy to believe in the absence of unassailable contrary evidence.

2. The argument advanced by Chapman that both versions proceeded from Cyprian himself,<sup>3</sup> A appearing shortly after B with a change in addressees, and that this is supported by stylistic evidence,<sup>4</sup> is less than convincing. At the time when both editions are said to have appeared, ca. 251, there was a rather complete concord between Africa and Italy. The question of relative rank or authority of Carthage and Rome was not an issue at all. Why, then, should not either "version" have served equally as well, regardless of the circle of readers?<sup>5</sup> In addition, the material on which the argument from style rests is hardly sufficient to justify any

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<sup>3</sup>Quasten, op. cit., p. 352. Cf. Adolf v. Harnack, Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 334, note 2. Ibid., p. 364.

<sup>4</sup>P. Van den Eynde, "La Double Edition du De Unitate de S. Cyprien," Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique (Louvain, 1933), p. 21, says that Chapman has Cyprian address his original version (B) to the African Council with regard to the schism of Felicissimus, and a revision (A) some months later, to Rome, with regard to Novatian. Cf. Harnack, op. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>This is conceded by Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 22. He sees no reason why the so-called "Roman" version A could not have been read to the Africans as well, because very similar "pro-Roman" thoughts were expressed by Cyprian, for example, to the African Antonianus. "La connexion entre la version A et Rome n'est donc pas tellement necessaire!"

positive conclusions.<sup>6</sup> What have we? A few short sentences and phrases in chapter four of De Unitate, plus the interchange in some manuscripts of "hic" and "illic" (ille) in chapter 19. It is surely a precarious procedure to rest positive conclusions on so scanty a foundation. The fact that St. Cyprian uses identical phraseology elsewhere would seem to give the objection even more validity, because, far from making a forger's or "editor's" task more difficult, the easily available parallels would actually facilitate it.<sup>7</sup> To say with Quasten that Dom Chapman has "established the fact [our emphasis] that the variations must not be ascribed to corruption of the text but to a recasting of it by Cyprian himself"<sup>8</sup> would appear to say more than the evidence warrants.

3. It must be admitted that the view of Van den Eynde,<sup>9</sup> supported by Perler and Bevenot, is, as Quasten also holds, "more probable."<sup>10</sup> If A is the original text, written ca. 251, at a time of harmony between Carthage and Rome, and B

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<sup>6</sup>Van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 9: "Il serait souhaitable, croyons-nous, qu'on s'abstienne de tabler sur des indices si peu sûrs. L'état de la tradition manuscrite ne permet pas de reconnaître l'original avec certitude."

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Benson, op. cit., pp. 197 ff. for parallels.

<sup>8</sup>Quasten, op. cit., p. 352.

<sup>9</sup>Van den Eynde, op. cit., pp. 16 ff.

<sup>10</sup>Quasten, op. cit., p. 352.

arose four or five years later out of a situation of extreme tension between Cyprian and Stephen, we should have a real reason for the changes, that is, if we are willing to grant that Cyprian would be inclined to make any changes at all. There certainly appeared to be enough provocation.<sup>11</sup>

4. But this brings up another difficulty, arising from the fact that in the frame-work of mid-third century thinking the difference in the two versions is not so radical after all. Both texts accord a kind of primacy to Peter. It is true, the assertions of A are more emphatic, but not fundamentally different.<sup>12</sup> If the white heat of controversy regarding the baptism of heretics provoked Cyprian to undertake a revision of his earlier position at all, we might expect a more drastic change in terms of a clear-cut denial of Roman supremacy. This denial is not forthcoming. In other words, Cyprian does not go far enough in his revision.

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. Henry Hart Milman, Latin Christianity, I (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860), 87 ff. See Cyprian's letter to Pompey (Ep. 73), and especially the letter of Firmilian of Caesarea to Cyprian, against the letter of Stephen, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (ed.), The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), V, 386 ff.

<sup>12</sup>van den Eynde, op. cit., p. 10, admits a "correspondance fondamentale" between the two versions. Cf. G. A. Sneller, "Cyprians Schrift von der Einheit der Kirche," Zeitschrift fuer kath. Theol. (Innsbruck, 1912), p. 290: "Nicht nur in dem laengeren sog. interpolierten Text des Kapitels ist von ihr [i. e., the true cathedra, with reference to Matth. 16, 18 f.] die Rede, sondern auch in dem kuerzeren."

5. In view of the above, this writer finds himself still unconvinced by the arguments supporting the Cyprianic authorship of both A and B. It would seem to pose fewer difficulties to believe that St. Cyprian wrote only one text of his book De Unitate. The evidence is not full enough to compel a decision in favor of either A or B as the original. However, the experience with the variants in other ancient manuscripts would lend preponderance to B as the original. Textual criticism of ancient manuscripts indicates that additions and interpolations are more plausibly explained than subtractions.

To choose among possible motives for the interpolations is more difficult in the absence of knowledge concerning the editor's identity, let alone a statement of his intent. We could say that nothing more is involved than the innocent transfer of marginal notes into the text by a well-meaning but ill-informed copyist. Again, the transcriber may have done his work at a time when the primacy of Rome was no longer seriously opposed, and, acquainted with expressions of Cyprian elsewhere similar to A, might have inserted his "corrections" in the honest conviction that this is what Cyprian would wish to say, were he then living. The idea of

a deliberate forgery<sup>13</sup> cannot be dismissed out of hand. Unfortunately, there have been sufficient instances of demonstrable fraud in the history of Rome's efforts to shore up her claims<sup>14</sup> that the suspicion of forgery in connection with Cyprian's book is not altogether groundless. This latter view seems to be supported by the consideration that the additions of A are too well done to be anything but the result of careful planning.

There the matter rests for the present. To paraphrase Origen's judgment with regard to the authorship of Hebrews, "who wrote the two versions, or which one Cyprian wrote, God only certainly knows."

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<sup>13</sup>cf. Benson, *op. cit.*, pp. 193 f., 201, 219. Ernest Leigh-Bennett, Handbook of the Early Christian Fathers (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), pp. 121 f. Even Joseph H. Fichter, St. Cecil Cyprian (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1942), p. 112: ". . . mishandled, interpolated, misinterpreted."

<sup>14</sup>E.g., The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, the Donation of Constantine, et al.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BEARING OF THE DOUBLE VERSION

#### ON CYPRIAN'S BASIC THEME

The question arises: What bearing, if any, does St. Cyprian's treatise on the unity of the Church have on his basic views as expressed in his other writings? More specifically, does an acceptance of the Cyprianic authorship of both versions, A and B, of chapter four of De Unitate, particularly of text A, mean that Cyprian accorded the Roman See an authoritative primacy, such as is claimed by Ultramontane writers of more recent times? Does Cyprian's leit-motif of ecclesiastical unity in terms of episcopal prerogative suffer any modification in the light of text A?

There can be no doubt that Cyprian believed passionately in the indivisible unity of the Church. His treatise on Unity, especially in chapters four and five, is most emphatic on this point.<sup>1</sup> Any attempt at disrupting the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (ed.), The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), cited hereafter as ANF, V, 421 ff., c. 4: "Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the faith?" c. 5: "And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we also prove the episcopate to be one and undivided." For the Latin text cf. J. P. Migne, Patrologia, series Latina (Paris), IV, 516 ff. Cf. also Edward White Benson, Cyprian, His Life--His Times--His Work (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1897), p. 191.

Church's unity is vigorously condemned. The schismatic is really the greatest criminal. The validity of all acts extra ecclesiam, be they ever so good per se, is denied. A rival Church is inconceivable.

St. Cyprian sees the unity of the Church exemplified in the episcopate.<sup>2</sup> There can be only one lawful bishop in the Church at any one place. The bishop is in his person the visible symbol of unity. To be in the Church, therefore, means to be in fellowship with the bishop.<sup>3</sup> What the bishop

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<sup>2</sup>De Unitate, 5, Migne, op. cit., p. 516 f.: "Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidus pars tenetur. Ecclesia quoque una est, quae in multitudinem latius incremento fecunditatis extenditur." Cf. Reinhold Seeberg, Text-book of the History of Doctrines, translated by Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), I, 182: "In them [the councils] the bishops practically represented the unity of the church, as Cyprian now theoretically formulated it. Upon their unity rests the unity of the church." Ibid., p. 183: "The bond which holds the church to unity is thus the episcopate."

<sup>3</sup>Ep. 51, to Antonianus, ANF V, 327: "You wrote, moreover, for me to transmit a copy of those same letters to Cornelius our colleague, so that he might lay aside all anxiety, and know at once that you held communion with him, that is, with the Catholic Church." Ibid., loc. cit., note 7: "His idea is, that to be in communion with the whole Church, one must be in fellowship with his own lawful bishop." Cf. also E. Giles (ed.), Documents Illustrating Papal Authority (London: SPCK, 1952), pp. 38 f. Henry Hart Milman, Latin Christianity, I (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860), 87: "Within the pale of the Church, under the lawful Bishop, were Christ and salvation; without it, the realm of the Devil, the world of perdition. . . . Latin Christianity, in the mind of Cyprian, if not its founder, its chief hierophant, had soared to the ideal height of this unity." Giorgio Bartoli, The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), p. 84: "The tangible bond of the Church's unity is her one united episcopate" (author's emphasis).

is in his diocese every other bishop is in his, and all the bishops together form a united hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> "Episcopatus unus est."<sup>5</sup> All bishops are autonomous in their diocese.<sup>6</sup> All are equal in rank and authority. Together they are a true fraternitas.<sup>7</sup> They are the cement which holds the Church together in unity.<sup>8</sup> All bishops are the successors of the apostles. They hold their office by divine authority, and there is no appeal from their decisions. It will be seen that this could easily become legalistic.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>ANF V, 369: "For although we are many shepherds, yet we feed one flock." Ibid.: ". . . the college of priests."

<sup>5</sup>De Unitate, 4, Migne, op. cit., p. 516. Cf. also Ep. 45, Cornelius to Cyprian, ANF V, 323: ". . . and that in the Catholic Church there ought to be one bishop." Editor's comment: "One bishop, i.e., one episcopate."

<sup>6</sup>Ep. 51, to Antonianus, 21, ANF V, 332: "While the bond of concord remains, and the undivided sacrament of the Catholic Church endures, every bishop disposes and directs his own acts, and will have to give an account of his purposes to the Lord." Similarly in Ep. 53, to Cornelius, 5, ANF V, 338.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Seeberg, op. cit., pp. 182 f.

<sup>8</sup>Ep. 68, to Pupianus, ANF V, 375: ". . . while the Church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another."

<sup>9</sup>Theodore Hoyer, "The Papacy," The Abiding Word, II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 717: "The bishop is not merely the head of the local church; he has a relation to the Church Universal; he is part of the episcopate, which is one and single. And the climax for the time is reached in Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (258), who attributes distinct sacerdotal functions to the bishops; they are priests representing Christ, the successors of the Apostles, the conservators of apostolic grace, and the

The practical expression which St. Cyprian gave to his theory may be demonstrated in a three-fold way: 1. Cyprian acts in full independence of Rome. 2. Cyprian acts in concord with Rome. 3. Cyprian acts in opposition to Rome.

Cyprian constantly demonstrated his complete independence of action in his own locality. He dealt with his co-bishops, prominent or obscure, on terms of equality. They were his "fratres" and his "collegae."<sup>10</sup> Cyprian never dreamt of any bishop giving him orders, or demanding an account of his acts. What he had decreed, personally or in conjunction with other African bishops, was not subject to review or alteration by another bishop or bishops, not even

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authoritative interpreters of apostolic truth; without them the Church would be without that grace which it is to impart to men, and so would cease to exist." Cf. Seeberg, op. cit., p. 185: "The evangelical definition of the church was superseded by the catholic. The church is no longer essentially the assembly of believers and saints, nor an object of faith, but a visible body, controlled by divinely authorized 'ecclesiastical law.'"

<sup>10</sup> Almost any of Cyprian's epistles to his fellow-bishops demonstrates this fact. Note especially his letters to Cornelius and Stephen, bishops of Rome. Cf. Smalcald Articles, IV, 2, in Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), p. 427: ". . . nicht unter ihm [the Pope] als einem Herren, sondern neben ihm als Bruder und Gesellen, Christen zu sein, wie solchs auch die alten Concilia und die Zeit S. Cypriani weisen. Itzt aber tarr kein Bischof den Papst 'Bruder' heissen wie zu der Zeit." Ibid., note 11: "Luther zitiert diese Briefe haeufig."

the Roman.<sup>11</sup> When he was informed of the election of Cornelius to the Roman See, he reserved confirmation until he had satisfied himself as to the validity of the election.<sup>12</sup>

When it suited his purpose St. Cyprian was quite ready to cooperate with the Roman bishop. Convinced that Cornelius was the lawful praepositus of the Roman Christian community, he gave the latter his full support. This was especially the case when the authority and prerogatives of Cornelius were challenged by Novatian and his adherents.<sup>13</sup> Of course, the

<sup>11</sup>Ep. 54, to Cornelius, 14, ANF V, 304: "For, as it has been decreed by all of us . . . that the case of every one should be heard there where the crime has been committed; and a portion of the flock has been assigned to each individual pastor, which he is to rule and govern, having to give account of his doing to the Lord; it certainly behoves those over whom we are placed not to run about nor to break up the harmonious agreement of the bishops; . . . unless perchance the authority of the bishops constituted in Africa seems to a few desperate and abandoned men to be too little, who have already judged concerning them. . . . Already their case has been examined, already sentence concerning them has been pronounced." Cf. Ep. 51, to Antonianus, 24, ANF V, 333, for similar sentiments.

<sup>12</sup>Ep. 40, 41, 42, 44, all to Cornelius. St. Cyprian gives his support to Cornelius only after he had been convinced of the latter's lawful ordination. ANF V, 319 ff.

<sup>13</sup>Ep. 43, to the Roman Confessors, that they should return to unity, ANF V, 321: "For it weighs me down and saddens me, and the intolerable grief of a smitten, almost prostrate spirit seizes me, when I find that you there, contrary to ecclesiastical order, contrary to evangelical law, contrary to the unity of the Catholic institution, had consented that another bishop should be made" [i.e., alongside, or in opposition to, Cornelius, whose lawful election had been established]. Cf. also F. W. Paller, The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), p. 85, note 5.

Novatian schism was of immediate concern also to Cyprian because of the support it gave to the schism headed by Felicissimus in Africa. In both Rome and Carthage there was agitation against the lawful bishop. Here Cyprian's idée fixe concerning the lawful episcopate as the living symbol of the Church's unity came into play again. By upholding the episcopal office of St. Cornelius against unlawful pretenders, St. Cyprian was actually protecting his own authority; for if insubordination to the true bishop in one place could go unchallenged, the position of every other bishop was in jeopardy, and thus the bond of unity was broken.

It was a different story, however, when one bishop undertook to interfere in the affairs of another, particularly if the latter happened to be Cyprian. But perhaps the difference is more apparent than real. Cyprian was consistent throughout, as though he were saying: "I am the bishop, subject to no one save the Lord. I will suffer no domination or interference from any source, whether it be a layman, a schismatic, a heretic, or another bishop, even the bishop of Rome." This appears to have been the great African's motivation in his celebrated altercation with Pope Stephen over the question of the baptism of heretics.<sup>14</sup> By disagreeing

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<sup>14</sup>Cf. supra, Chapter II, note 6. Pierre de Labriolle, Latin Christianity, translated by Herbert Wilson (London, 1924), p. 144, note 2, quoting Ernest Havet with regard to the possible motive for deleting the pro-Roman statements from Text A: "Perhaps Cyprian himself as a consequence of

with Cyprian on the policy of heretic baptism and by interfering in a case already adjudicated by the bishop of Carthage, Pope Stephen was overstepping his bounds. He was invading the rights of a co-equal bishop. Again the fundamental unitive principle of the autonomy of the bishop was at stake. St. Cyprian was in no sense overawed by the prestige of his colleague on the Tiber. The threats emanating from Rome cowed him not at all. Both alone in an concert with other areas of the Church sympathetic to his position<sup>15</sup> he rebuked Pope Stephen for his presumptuousness and published the even more outspoken denunciation written by Bishop

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his quarrel with Stephen." Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953), p. 375: "In his controversy with Pope Stephen on the rebaptism of heretics he voices as the president of the African synod of September 256 his opinion as follows: No one among us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyranny and terror forces his colleagues to compulsory obedience, seeing that every bishop in the freedom of his liberty and power possesses the right to his own mind and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another."

<sup>15</sup>Wilman, op. cit., p. 88: "At length he [Stephen] broke off communion with all the churches of the East and of Africa, which adhered to the more rigorous practice. But the Eastern hatred of heresy conspired with the hierarchical spirit of Africa, which could endure no intrusion on the prerogatives of the clergy." Ibid., p. 89: "A solemn council of eighty-seven bishops, assembled at Carthage under Cyprian, asserted the independent judgment of the African Churches, repudiated the assumption of the title, Bishop of Bishops, or the arbitrary dictation of one bishop to Christendom." Cf. Joseph H. Fichter, St. Cecil Cyprian (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1942), p. 214: "At times Cyprian's tone was far from respectful toward the Vicar of Christ."

Firmilian of Caesarea.<sup>16</sup> According to Van den Eynde, as we have noted above, it was this situation that led St. Cyprian to "expunge" the more pronounced pro-Roman elements of his book De Unitate in a second edition. It is revealing and instructive to compare the defiant independence of a Cyprian with the total submission pledged to the pope by a present-day bishop.<sup>17</sup>

In the light of this undeviating independence of St. Cyprian we would seem compelled to construe his remarks in De Unitate and other writings about the primacy of Peter.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ep. 74, Firmilian to Cyprian, ANF V, 390 ff. This letter throughout is a dreadful indictment of Stephen and vigorously rejects all claims of a primacy of jurisdiction over other bishops. Firmilian goes so far as to say that by his arrogant acts Stephen has become the schismatic and cut himself off from the Church (*Excidisti enim temet ipsum; noli te fallere. Siquidem ille est vere schismaticus, qui se a communione Ecclesiasticae unitatis apostatam fecerit.* Quoted by Milman, *op. cit.*, p. 89, note 1).

<sup>17</sup>Compare the oath of a modern Roman Catholic bishop at his ordination, as contained in the Pontificals Romanum. Some characteristic phrases: "I, N., elected to the church of N., will from this time henceforth, be faithful and obedient to the blessed apostle Peter, and to the Holy Roman Church and to our lord N., Pope N., and to his canonical successors. . . . I will take care to preserve, defend, increase, and advance the rights, honors, privileges, and authority of the Holy Roman Church, of our lord the pope. . . . So help me God, and the Holy Gospels of God."

<sup>18</sup>Quasten, *op. cit.*, p. 376: ". . . it is evident that Cyprian does not recognize a primacy of jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome over his colleagues." *Ibid.*: "Thus the cathedra Petri is to him [Cyprian] the ecclesia principalis and the point of origin of the unitas sacerdotalis. However, even in this letter (Ep. 59, 14) he makes it quite clear that he does not concede to Rome any higher right to legislate for other sees."

It would be a gross anachronism to invest Cyprian's "pro-Roman" words with the ideas of the Middle Ages and the Vatican Council. However we interpret Cyprian's utterances on the cathedra of Peter, they cannot be made to signify a priority of rank or authority.

It was perfectly natural that the Church at Rome should be honored and that the bishop of Rome should share in that honor. Of all the churches either founded or served by the very apostles of our Lord, the Roman Church was the only one in the Western world. Rome had enjoyed the labors not only of St. Peter, spokesman of the apostles, but also of the great apostle St. Paul. Rome was the urbs aeterna, the incomparable world city of the world empire. Rome was the oldest See of the West, the ecclesia principalis.<sup>19</sup> She was

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Fuller, op. cit., p. 51: "But what does S. Cyprian exactly mean, when he describes the Roman Church as the 'ecclesia principalis, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est'? I have no doubt that he means that the Roman Church is the mother-church of Italy and Africa, whence the whole episcopate of those countries is derived. The word 'principalis' is used by African writers in the sense of ancient or primeval. So Tertullian, wishing to state that truth comes first and falsehood afterwards, contrasts the 'principalitas veritatis' with the 'posteritas mendacitatis'; in other words, the 'antiquity of truth' with the 'lateness of falsehood.' The 'ecclesia principalis' is the primeval church, the mother-church; in the words of S. Irenaeus, 'that very ancient church, founded at Rome.' (Cf. the discussion of 'principalis' by Edward White Benson, Cyprian, His Life--His Times--His Work (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1897), pp. 537 ff.

indeed the mater et radix<sup>20</sup> of a considerable portion of African, Italian, Spanish, British, and even of many Gallican churches. It would have been passing strange if this perfectly historical pre-eminence had not elicited a degree of deferential acknowledgement from the daughter and hinterland sees.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, it was only stating a fact when Cyprian, like his renowned compatriot and "magister," Tertullian, before him, declared that it was St. Peter whose grand confession our Lord acknowledged with the counter-statement, "Tu es Petrus, etc." And though the Lord subsequently "invested" all the apostles, He did, as a matter of record, do it first for Peter. The exposition and implications of this text are not in the scope of this study. It is to be doubted whether Cyprian himself saw the full implications of his use of the text.

The primacy, then, that St. Cyprian ascribed to St. Peter and the current incumbent of the cathedra Petri is not

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<sup>20</sup> Ep. 44, 3, to Cornelius, ANF V, 322: ". . . we have exhorted them to acknowledge and hold the root and matrix of the Catholic Church." But in the same context, a few lines farther on: ". . . we decided. . . ." See also Ep. 41, 1, to Cornelius, Ibid., p. 320: "But since the obstinate and inflexible pertinacity of the adverse party has not only rejected the bosom and the embrace of its root and Mother . . ."

<sup>21</sup> Milman, op. cit., p. 87: "Nor, so long as Carthage and Rome were in amity and alliance, did Cyprian scruple to admit (as Carthage could not but own der inferiority to Imperial Rome) a kind of primacy, of dignity at least, in the Metropolitan Bishop. Cf. Ep. 48, 2, ANF V, 325: ". . . since Rome from her greatness plainly ought to take precedence of Carthage. . . ." Cf. Benson, op. cit., p. 192.

to be construed as one of superior rank or jurisdiction. It is rather to be regarded as a historical, chronological primacy.<sup>22</sup> St. Cyprian's thesis is that the Unity of the Church is to be maintained at all costs. To this end, every metaphor or illustration that Scripture or reason might suggest could be employed. The fact that our Lord first singled out St. Peter furnished a most appropriate illustration of the theme of unity. Thus St. Peter became a symbol, a representative, of the one, united episcopate.

Withal, St. Cyprian's powerful hierarchical emphasis and the use he made of Matthew 16 for illustration introduced a

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<sup>22</sup>Ep. 73, 7, ANF V, 381: "For first of all the Lord gave that power to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and whence He appointed and showed the source of unity. . . . And after the resurrection, also, He speaks to the apostles, saying. . . . Whence we perceive that only they who are set over the Church. . . ." Cf. Fuller, op. cit., p. 84, note 5: "In the whole treatise [De Unitate Eccl.] there is not a single word about any peculiar authority either in St. Peter or in the Roman see. Peter, as the first-chosen apostle, is historically the first bishop, and so the commencement of the episcopate, and consequently he is a fitting symbol of the unity of the Church." For a good summary on the nature of Peter's primacy, see Bartoli, op. cit., pp. 83 ff. Cf. E. H. Klotsche and J. T. Mueller, The History of Christian Dog-trine (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1945), p. 111. Quasten, op. cit., p. 374, concedes the validity of these arguments and concludes: "Thus he [Cyprian] understands Matth. 16, 18 of the whole episcopate." Ibid.: ". . . Cyprian does not recognize a primacy of jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome over his colleagues." Ibid.: "If he refuses to the bishop of Rome any higher power to maintain by legislation the solidarity of which he is the centre, it must be because he regards the primacy as one of honor and the bishop of Rome as a primus inter pares."

new concept into the doctrine of the Church,<sup>23</sup> of the implications of which the energetic bishop was himself probably not aware. Henceforth, the Church was no longer simply the community of Christ's holy people, but Christ's people united with and under the lawful bishop.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Seeberg, op. cit., p. 184: "We have thus witnessed a momentous transformation in the general conception of the Church." Cf. supra, Chapter IV, note 9. Fr. Baethgen, "Papsttum," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, IV (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930): "Cyprians Begriffe primatus Petri und cathedra Petri laufen in seinen Konsequenzen der cyprianischen Idee eines Liebesbundes gleichgeordneter Bischöfe entgegen . . . enthielt aber den zukunfts-schweren Gedanken, dass der römische Bischof als der Nachfolger des Petrus auf der Kathedra der Inhaber von dessen Schlüsselpewalt sei. In jedem Falle werden an dieser Stelle nun mit voller Deutlichkeit die ersten Keime einer theoretischen Begründung des römischen Primatsanspruches sichtbar."

<sup>24</sup>Seeberg, op. cit., loc. cit. Hoyer, op. cit., loc. cit.

## CHAPTER V

### THE USE OF CYPRIANIC QUOTATIONS IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

A number of quotations from, and allusions to, the writings of St. Cyprian have found their way into our Lutheran Confessions.<sup>1</sup> Only those need concern us here that deal with the question of episcopal power. We note the following:

1. In the Smalcald Articles, <sup>part</sup> II, <sup>art.</sup> IV, <sup>par. 1-2,</sup> Luther argues that the pope is the head of all Christendom neither by divine right nor according to the Word of God, but only the bishop or pastor of the Church at Rome and of those who voluntarily place themselves under his rule. This is not a submission as to a lord, but one that is at the same time an association with him as of brethren and colleagues. In support of this

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<sup>1</sup>All references to the Confessions are to Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952).

Augsburg Confession, Art. XXII, 5, page 85 and note 3.

Apology, XXII, 5, page 329.

Augsburg Confession, XXIII, 25, page 91.

Apology IV, 322, page 222.

Apology XXI, 2, page 317.

Formula of Concord, S.D. VII, 37, page 983.

Appendix, page 995.

In addition to these Cyprianic references, none of which have any immediate bearing on our study, there are several which are directly pertinent and which are discussed above in the text. Cf. also infra, notes 2 ff.

contention Luther refers to the ancient councils and also to St. Cyprian's custom of addressing Pope Cornelius as "Brother."<sup>2</sup>

2. Melancthon, in his "tractatus de potestate et primatu papae," paragraph 14, discusses the sweeping powers which the pope has arrogated to himself and then proceeds to prove that these claims are false and impious. In the first place, they are refuted by Scripture and, secondly, by ancient church history. In this connection he adverts to the ancient custom, observed both in the East and in the West, of electing the bishops for each respective locality. St. Cyprian is introduced by a lengthy quotation from his letter to Felix and Aelius.<sup>3</sup> Here Cyprian declares it to be in accord with God's command and apostolic custom to elect bishops by the vote of neighboring bishops and in the presence of the people whom they are to serve.<sup>4</sup>

3. In paragraph 27 of the Tractatus Melancthon again cites St. Cyprian, this time with special reference to the

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<sup>2</sup>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, op. cit., p. 427: "Hodie vero nullus episcoporum audet papam nominare fratrem, ut aetate Cypriani factum est." Ibid., note 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 475, note 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.: "Sic enim ait Cyprianus . . . 'propter quod diligenter de divina traditione et apostolica observatione servandum est et tenendum . . . ut episcopi ejusdem provinciae proximi quique convenient et episcopus deligatur plebs praesente.'"

significance of Matthew 16, 18 f. Melancthon insists that our Lord's words to St. Peter cannot be construed to mean the building of the Church on the person or authority of Peter, but on the ministry of the confession which Peter made concerning the person of Christ.<sup>5</sup> This, says Melancthon, was the interpretation of many holy fathers, such as Origen, Ambrose Pseudo-Ambrose, Hilary, Bede, and also Cyprian.<sup>6</sup> This allusion to Cyprian is of immediate interest to us at this place, because Melancthon is apparently thinking of the treatise De Unitate. In the opinion of Dr. Volz, the editor of this section of the Bekenntnisschriften, this presupposes the use of text B: "Hoc erant utique et caeteri apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio praediti et honoris et potestatis, sed exordium ab unitate profiscitur, ut ecclesia Christi una monstratur."<sup>7</sup>

In the light of what was said of Cyprian's general orientation, it would seem that the references to his works in these contexts of the Confessions are à propos. They do

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 479: "Ideo alloquitur eum tanquam ministrum: 'Super hanc petram,' id est super hoc ministerium."

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.: "Et hoc modo non de persona aut auctoritate Petri interpretantur plurimi ex sanctis patribus hanc sententiam: 'Super hanc petram.'"

<sup>7</sup>That is: What Peter was, that also the rest of the apostles were, endowed with an equal partnership both of honor and of power; but the beginning proceeds from unity, that the Church of Christ may be shown as one. Cf. ibid., p. 479, note 4.

not, indeed, support the idea of a total democracy, nor did the sixteenth century Reformers operate with such a concept. The approval of the "plena praesens," as well as the admissibility of its protest, seems to be implied. Yet the people as such did not have the initiative in the election of the bishop.

To sum up, it appears that while St. Cyprian moved on a plane of entire equality with all his co-bishops, and in this sense exercised a kind of democratic independence in conspectu Romae, yet in his own domain he was thoroughly autocratic. First, last, and always he was guided by the principle of episcopal authority, as a symbol and guarantee of the unity of the Church. "The whole heart of the great bishop was bound up with this idea. In it concentrated all the elements of his religious thought and feeling. He had the juristic, logical bent of a Roman. Tertullian was his instructor. He had a warm heart. He was fanatically devoted to the hierarchy, and he loved Christ."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Reinhold Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, translated by Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954).

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