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# The development of the papacy

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THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE PAPACY

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The wording of the title of the present paper has been selected rather than the possible title THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAPACY upon the ground that there can be no evolution without a previous involution. If the writer were here holding a brief for the Romish theory of the Church, the rejected title would be, however, quite correct.

There is today a man who claims to be the vice-regent of Christ upon earth, the head of all Christians, their pastor, bishop, and official representative before the heavenly Father. In his theory, as in that of those who support him, he possesses the keys to the kingdom of heaven, able to forgive or to retain sins, to communicate grace and truth by the imposition of hands and the offering of prayer, and to exercise complete authority not only the beliefs, but the consciences of all true believers. This man is known by many titles, among them such far-reaching names as HIS HOLINESS, SUPREME PONTIFF, and THE POPE. He is at the head of an ecclesiastical empire which reaches to the ends

of the earth, which controls more money than any other single organization in the world, and which has made and unmade kingdoms and empires. It has spoken through him, as its head, and the world has listened. His word has sent thrones tottering, while his anathemas have (supposedly) dammed immortal souls both here and hereafter. While Leo XIII was the occupant of the Papal chair it was said officially that his deeds were the deeds of God, his words the words of the Holy Spirit, and his ex-cathedra definitions of belief and his enunciation of laws governing conscience were infallible. What has been the rise of this great ecclesiastical imperialism, the head of which bears upon his triple crown the title THE VICAR OF JESUS CHRIST? If we were to adopt the theory of the Roman Catholic Church itself, we would simply say that Christ gave to Peter, personally, the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and the headship of the Church, with the implications that this headship was to inhere in Peter's successors and that these successors were the bishops of Rome. In that case, since the involution of the papacy had taken place, the present paper would take up the evolution of the papacy, by showing

the gradual realization of the Savior's ideal and the development of the power which he reposed in the erratic and unstable Peter, as realized by his supposed successors in the episcopacy at Rome. But the present task is not to follow the lines above suggested. It is rather to begin with the infant Church, considered as a growing group of local congregations, to study the organization and polity of the separate societies and to see if the rise of the great institution known as the papacy cannot quite reasonably be attributed to causes very similar to those which have carved out other great institutions.

The veil of obscurity surrounds the origin and earliest development of ecclesiastical government. The various societies which were created looked for teaching and government to the apostles, prophets, and teachers who appear to have been specially called for that particular kind of work. We know, for example, of Paul's supervision, even from a distance, of the churches which he had developed, which John's long residence in Ephesus must have served the believers there in remarkable fashion. Among the teachers who were sent, partly

as pastors, we have App<sup>o</sup>llius at Corinth and Timothy at Ephesus. But as the apostles themselves began to scatter or die, and the services of the earliest prophets and teachers became less and less accessible, persons began to be set apart in each congregation as "angels" or pastors. 1 Cor. 16:15 refers to such services as begin voluntary in the Corinthian body. As time passed these men gradually acquired more and more control and authority in the church, and out of what was at first perhaps a temporary and voluntary tenure of a place of service, grew fixed and permanent offices and responsibilities. The earliest expression of this genuinely fixed principle is to be found in Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xlii. Other references of an early date are 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:7.

While the question of the local autonomy at this time appears settled, there can be no certainty as to whether the number of officers who governed and taught in the local society was few or several. About the year 116 the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch begin to speak of churches which were supervised and taught by only one person. This person was called a bishop. See 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17. With him

were associated as subordinates a presbyter and a number of deacons. Commonly, however, there were a number of presbyters<sup>1</sup>. By the end of the second century this form of government obtained throughout Christendom, except in Egypt. The presbyters and deacons constituted the advisory board, or cabinet, of the bishop. Sometimes, though, only the presbyters were permitted a place on this board, while the deacons served in the relief of the poor, and in the conduct of the public services.

The rise of the Gnostics and of the influence of Marcion had a profound influence upon the beginnings of the Roman Catholic Church. These people claimed to be Christians, to be Spirit-led, and Spirit-filled, and yet they were preaching and teaching matter which was felt to be directly antagonistic to the apostolic tradition and the Christian faith. This led the churches to unite in the formulation of doctrine and in an agreement as

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<sup>1</sup>The word PRESBYTER is in Greek ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ. It is an exact translation of the Hebrew SAKEN, the title of the ruler of the synagogue in all religious exercises. Among the Christian churches where the majority of the members were Jews, the term PRESBYTER was likely to be used in preference to the word EPISCOPOS, which was the Greek for our English term OVER-SEER.

to what was, and what was not, Holy Scripture of the new dispensation. Without entering into the details involved in the question, let it be said that this necessity gave rise to the formation, by the bishops, of an apostolic rule of faith, the old Roman symbol of which, the original of our present Apostles' Creed, is the oldest. The church in Rome had by the year 170 agreed upon the canonicity of the four gospels, the Acts, thirteen of the Pauline epistles, the first epistle of John, and the first epistle of Peter. But the double standard of apostolic tradition, and the accepted New Testament canon, proved inadequate to the emergency. In the first place, the Gnostics, even if, for the sake of argument they admitted the apostolic teaching as handed down by the bishops, used the alegorical method and interpreted the teaching to their own purpose. In the second place, the apostolic origin and tradition, and the authority of these teachings were not everywhere admitted. This grave difficulty drove the bishops, who were either simply the heads of local congregations, or in charge of a very limited field, to take a very advance position. They taught that they themselves were the successors of the apostles, in possession

of special divine grace which enabled them to transmit apostolic teaching without error. By taking this stand they doubtless thought only to protect the churches under their care from the sophistries and wiles of heretics, but as a matter of history, they laid at this time the foundation of the well known theory of apostolic succession.

Until the middle of the third century the episcopacy was only congregational, but as the churches in the metropolitan centers became large and influential, and began to establish suburban missions, the "see" of the "over-seer" became enlarged, and as his duties required his presence not only in the city church of which he was the pastor, but in the mission stations of the neighborhood, he began to call upon his presbyters to take over certain functions and labors which formerly had devolved only upon him. In this way the presbyters grew in importance in the economy of the church, even at times becoming the acting pastors of separate congregations. But the bishop was the chief officer, as he was the successor of the apostles in the teaching function, and as he was the spiritual leader for the entire "see".

Although the bishop alone had the right of ordination, his presbyters and deacons being alike dependent upon him for true teaching and safe leadership, he was not by any means unlimited in his powers. The bishops had to depend upon their presbyters as a sort of constituency. They did not dare make appointments or perform other official acts of importance without the assent of the presbytery. Even Cyprian, the great champion of the episcopacy, voices what was with him a settled principle; namely, not to perform any important function without the co-operation of his sub-clergymen, whom he even called his co-presbyters. No important question of doctrinal variation, discipline or polity, could be determined by the bishop alone. He must summon the clergy of his diocese, and in the presence of the society must submit the question to them. The principle undergirding the church work of the day, was that government was vested in the laity, and that the bishop and his presbyters were spiritual guides and teachers, but not masters.

While in general the same plan obtained throughout all the churches, it should be said that organization differed with locality and in an important sense grew up out of local congregational needs and temperaments. In the east, for example, the bishops had less power than in the west. In the east the presbyters under the bishop served the different rural congregations in turn, while in the west the practice was to retain a presbyter who had been made a pastor, and to consider him permanently installed unless he should be removed for inefficiency or sin. In Africa the general policy was usually somewhat different from that on the opposite shore of the Mediterranean. But the entire period covered by the first few centuries witnessed a constantly growing content for the term BISHOP.

Of great importance is the fact that the apostles had done their best to plant the Gospel in the large cities, strategic centers for the work of evangelization. Before the death of John churches were established in such centers as from location, population, and influence might be expected

to radiate the message and to serve as places of spiritual leadership. Chief among these centers were Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Alexandria, Milan and Damascus. As the work of evangelization went on, the churches followed the wise policy of its founders and many other metropolitan centers were added to the list. As the years passed and these societies grew, the influence, as well as the office, of the bishop, became larger. Each large city became the home of the bishop of a large geographical area, occupied also by numerous rural bishops whose work differed but little from that of their own bishop, to whom they were responsible. This system of dependent episcopates continued to grow and to intrench itself because it was firmly established upon the basis of utility. Institutions are likely to grow out of existing conditions which they can serve. By the year 325 the Council of Nicea, held in Constantinople, formally recognized three great sees or dioceses. These were (1) Rome, (2) Alexandria, (3) Antioch. The bishops of these cities had enlarged their fields of supervision and, by the process of accretion, added to their episcopates until their authority was recognized at

great distances. It should be said that in the east the growth of this metropolitan system was much more rapid than in the west. The Council of Constantinople held in 381 made Constantinople the center of a see, placing this episcopate second in the list, making Alexandria third, with Antioch fourth. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 added the bishopric of Jerusalem to the list, making it co-ordinate with the rest, but placing it last on the list. The bishops who were in charge of these great dioceses became known as PATRIARCHS.

A word must be said at this point upon the subject of church councils and their authority. Reference was made to the fact that the rise of the Gnostic heresy caused the bishops to declare themselves to be in the apostolic succession, as divinely appointed conservators and interpreters of Christian doctrine, which they were able to interpret and transmit without error. This theory was based upon the assumed solidarity of the episcopate, taking it for granted that all the bishops thought alike upon the questions of doctrine and polity. But however such a theory might comfort certain credulous persons, ~~it was not based upon facts. Discussions upon~~

important matters disclosed most serious disagreements. To meet the new emergency, the bishops resorted to the great councils which were called from time to time. In theory, since the solidarity of the episcopate was a cardinal assumption, the findings of the council would be in full harmony with the apostolic teaching and will. However poorly this theory worked out in practice, it is not within the province of this paper to discuss, our purpose being served when the appeal for the authority of the ecumenical council has been pointed out. Theoretically, then, whatever these bodies should determine, was the truth.<sup>1</sup>

But even if the findings of the ecumenical council was always truth, it was reached by paths of discord and clashing. The patriarch from Alexandria might well say, "It was Egypt that sheltered our Lord when he was a babe. I represent a large constituency and because of Egypt and all it has meant to the Faith, I demand that my wishes be given large place in the proceedings of this council!"

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<sup>1</sup> The ecumenical council was historically an enlargement of the more local, or synodal, councils. Long

The patriarch from Jerusalem could sustain his claim to a leading voice in deliberation by saying that the Gospel itself had its start in Jerusalem. The other metropolitans found reasons enough and to spare why their own particular views should be adopted as the findings of the body. The records of these great councils reveals the sad tale of discord and lack of unanimity.

During the years there had been growing up a general recognition of the Roman patriarchate. There were many reasons for this. The society in that city had always been conservative in doctrine, and although the dissatisfied and innovating elements from the whole Christian world drifted to the Imperial City, and the society there was subjected to many temptations to vary in doctrine and practice, it remained remarkably true to the faith once committed to it by the apostles. From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the eyes of believers everywhere had turned to Rome. General

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before the first ecumenical council, it was seen that even synodal councils could not agree. Their findings were nearly always reported to the Christian world, and the decisions of a given council were often met with coldness, or even hostility, on the part of other likewise "infallible" councils.

confidence reigned as to the attitude which the church there would assume upon any given question, no matter from what quarter it might come. The commendation of Paul that the faith of the Roman Christians was "known throughout the world" had not been forfeited during the years of persecution and trial.

But not only in doctrine was this body of Christians an example to all. In ministering to the needs of others, in relief of suffering, in matters of counsel and influence, the hand of Rome was felt over wide areas. Contributory to this was the existence of Roman roads, the fact that "all roads lead to Rome", that Roman merchants, soldiers and scholars, kept all the world in touch with the latest news from the city on the Tiber, that Rome was the center of social, literary, military, and commercial influence, and that people are more likely to refer matters for arbitration to authorities who live in large cities, rather than to those who are from outlying districts.

But the church in Rome made a strong

appeal for primacy based upon a double claim to apostolic descent. There was Scripture authority for the statement that Paul had labored there. Many of his epistles had been composed in Rome. But it was also stated that Peter had been in Rome as the first bishop of the Church there. Thus while Antioch or Jerusalem or Alexandria or Corinth could only claim one apostle, Rome could claim two!<sup>1</sup> The strange feature of the case was that the church there laid more stress upon the somewhat uncertain residence of Peter in Rome than upon the certain fact that Paul lived there.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (B.200; D. 256, a martyr), a man of wonderful powers and deep spiritual nature, differed radically from Novatian, Bishop of Rome, on the subject of the treatment of heretics, and those who had recanted during the persecutions of Decius, but he was an ardent supporter of the episcopate and an eloquent advocate for its solidarity. But that any bishop should assume primacy over his fellows was to Cyprian a flargant violation

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<sup>1</sup> An interesting tendency on the part of modern Protestant scholarship is evident in its growing disposition to regard the Roman residence of Peter as not improbable.

of propriety and a thing which Peter would not have done! Cyprian's remarkable work on the general subject of the episcopacy was, however, a strong instrument used in later times to maintain the arguments of those who urged the primacy of the the Roman See.

The writings of Cyprian, as well as of others of the same period, reflect, where they do not clearly state, that the Roman church was assuming primacy over the Christian world about the year 160. It seems that the church there was beginning to sense something of primacy even before it was formally declared by its bishop. As early as the year 102 the church at Rome sent a letter, signed by its bishop, Clement, to the bereaved and distracted believers at Corinth. This letter, which was written in the first person plural, reveals a certain feeling of superiority and leadership over ordinary congregations. But a century later the Bishop of Rome, Victor, voiced for himself the headship of believers when he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor for observing a different ritual in their meetings (190 A.D.).

Hyppolytus, in the beginning of the third century, engaged in a decidedly sharp struggle with two of the Roman bishops, Zephyrinus and Callistus, who were then claiming absolute power within their own jurisdiction. Callistus went so far as to declare that a bishop cannot be deposed by the presbytery even though he commit mortal sin. The stand here taken was defensive, as so honorable and careful a bishop as Hyppolytus charged Callistus openly with scandalous conduct, as well as with the Patripassian heresy.

From the best available sources of information it does not appear that the earliest emergence of the Roman See was due to the abilities or ambitions of the Roman bishops, but rather to the fact of public opinion. As a matter of fact the thirty popes of the first three centuries hardly embrace four whose characters or abilities are in any sense outstanding. Even down to the middle of the fifth century Clement was probably the only one who could compare favorably with such men as Augustine, Ambrose, Cyprian or Ignatius. The first fifty-four of the Roman bishops are,

however, duly canonized in the Church, this being the regular practice of the Church down to the time of Felix IV in 526, after which time the title was conferred sparingly, but twenty-four popes since then receiving it.

By the time the third century was well advanced, the ecclesiastical map was becoming more or less distinct and clearly defined. The patriarchs in each of the large centers consecrated the metropolitan bishops under their jurisdiction, the latter, in turn, consecrating the bishops of their respective dioceses, who, in their turn, had immediate charge of the clergymen under their care. The patriarch might summon a synod of the entire patriarchate and preside at its sessions. The patriarchate of Alexandria comprised six provinces; that at Antioch, fifteen; that at Constantinople, twenty-eight; and that at Jerusalem, three. While Rome was in all respects a patriarchate, the bishop of Rome never applied the title to himself, nor spoke of his see as a patriarchate.

From the middle of the second century the claims of the Roman church to primacy were often and pointedly repeated. What was called the Clementine Recognitions appeared about this time. These purported to be from the pen of Clemens Romanus, the fourth bishop of Rome, and a reputed disciple of Peter. They appeared about 370-390 A.D. and contained the first direct authority for the Roman bishop as the constitutional primate of the Christian world. The Recognitions were revised by Roman sympathizers and advocates, and the papal idea was considerably strengthened thereby.

An important element in the development of the Roman hegemony was the removal of the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium. Constantine had considered both Sardica and Troy as possible seats of the new capital, but he announced that Byzantium had been revealed to him in a dream as the divine choice, and on May 11, 330 were celebrated the dedicatory services whereby its name was changed to CONSTANTINOPLE. The city sprang up over-night, all the forms of the imperial government being removed thither. But the removal of the formal

government did not remove the traditional associations of empire from Rome. The residents of Italy, so long accustomed to look to Rome as the fountain of authority both legal and ecclesiastical, continued to look to Rome, unconsciously transferring much of the glory and authority with which they had formerly invested the Emperor, to the Roman bishop. This was a situation eagerly greeted by the bishops of Rome, and no opportunity was lost to foster, and later to demand, the reverence which was given. It should be stated, too, that the bishops of Rome seem to have been the only ones to profit by the disasters of the times. While other metropolitan centers were pillaged by barbarians who settled in them, in a large measure minimizing the standing of the Church and greatly subordinating the authority of the bishops, none of the conquering heathen (Alaric, Gaiseric, the Goths) settled in Rome. That city, so far as church life was concerned, grew great upon the ruin of others.

The Bishop of Rome was rapidly becoming the undisputed religious primate of Italy and was playing an important part in the life of the Church everywhere. Several of the Roman bishops had from

time to time tried to play a part in temporal matters, but the general result of their attempts had been failure and sometimes ridicule. But the greatest step taken toward the exercise of temporal power by the Roman bishop was taken under the pontificate of Gregory (590-604).

As a missionary he had practically reconquered the British Isles for Christianity. As a man of sobriety, piety, industry, learning, and beneficence, he had no equal. With the highest standards of personal and ecclesiastical purity, he set about creating extensive reforms on every hand. As Patriarch of the West he extended his care over the churches of Italy, Gaul, Spain and Britain. Himself lavish in the giving of alms, he exercised his episcopal prerogatives in the bestowal of vast sums of Church funds for the relief of suffering. His great personal ascendancy and tireless labors, secured to the Roman see practical supremacy over the Christian world. But it was only after severe struggles that the actual acknowledgments of papal supremacy were wrung from the patriarchs in other places. Somehow there is a tendency on the part of us all to cling

to a form or a name even after we know that its content has been taken away. Gregory had great trouble with the patriarch in Constantinople, who, in correspondence with him had used the terms "universal bishop" and "ecumenical" as applied to himself. These titles had been conferred upon that particular patriarch (John IV) and had been confirmed in his successors by a Constantinopolitan synod in 588, but Gregory was provoked and irritated beyond measure at this arrogant assumption on the part of his eastern rival. Some of his characterizations were "foolish"; "proud"; "profane"; "wicked"; "pestiferous"; "blasphemous"; and he even went so far as to call the use of the title by John a "diabolical usurpation". The whole attitude of Gregory on the subject of primacy and the use of the title "universal bishop" is open to misunderstanding. His mind harboured a strange mingling of lofty pride and great humility. His arguments against the use of the title by John appear to be directed more against the title itself than against its use by any particular bishop. But, although Gregory's favorite title for himself was "The Servant of the Servants of God", the practical outcome of his

enormous correspondence with his colleagues upon the subject, was the claiming of the primacy DE FACTO, while he repudiated it DE JURE. He argues passionately, adroitly, logically, sweetly, against the title "universal bishop" or "universal pope"; but he was strangely inconsistent in claiming the thing itself, while he repudiated the name. As a matter of history, several of his predecessors, among them Leo I, Felix, Gelasius, and Hormisdas, had claimed universal primacy, and done so in language arrogant and boastful. Is it any wonder that as Roman bishops followed Gregory, men who were far less humble and unselfish, they did not scruple to employ the most exclusive titles or to make the most imperial claims regarding their office? But it is to be remarked that the man under whose pontificate began the unfolding of the greatest power of the papacy, protested strongly against the un-Christian system which grew out of it.

The Church had long before been given permission to hold property, and by the time of Gregory it had, in scattered places, large landed holdings. These were governed by Gregory through rectores patrimonii, who were to act in matters

spiritual, as well as temporal. Here was one beginning of the temporal authority of the popes. Again, Gregory took advantage of the fact that the imperial representatives of the Emperor, sent to Rome from Constantinople, were without troops to govern and enforce their rule, and he bought off these representatives with favors and presents, gaining within a few years a powerful hold upon them.

Gregory further extended the prestige of the Roman see by missionary labors, alliances, and friendships in Spain, Gaul and Saxony, even obtaining the cordial support of the Lombards. In many ways, the pontifical reign of Gregory won him the well deserved title "the Great".

As England had been annexed to the Roman See under Gregory, other nations, or, more properly, peoples, were annexed under his successors. Although these popes for well over a hundred years, were vastly inferior to him in personal and ecclesiastical standing, or in influence over the Church, such missionaries as Augustine, Boniface and Ansgar were Roman missionaries and pioneers of the papacy. Under

Gregory II and Gregory III Germany was converted. The rise of the Mohammedan power in the east was crippling the power of the Eastern Church to such an extent that the Church in the west was outdistancing her in seven-league boots.

The next important step in the development of the papal idea and power took place in 755 with the gift of a large district from Pipin the Short to the Pope. The baptism of Clovis had formed something of a union between the Frankish kings and the Roman bishop, but the crowning of Pipin by Stephen II at Saint Denis made the union much closer. In addition to crowning Pipin, Stephen named him and his two sons patricians, that is, protectors of the Roman republic and the Roman Church. This was, on the part of Stephen, a virtual declaration of independence whereby he threw off his allegiance to the Emperor at Constantinople, to whom he was legally bound. Stephen expected some things in return, and he was not disappointed. In the first place, the very fact that he had called Pipin Patricius Romanorum, thus recognizing a title and office which Constantine had made subordinate only to the Emperor, Stephen laid the basis for Papal

authority over the crowns of France and Germany. In the second place, the Roman See was given temporal authority over an immensely wealthy section. It will be remembered that Gregory the Great had twice bought off Alstulf, king of the Lombards, from invading and pillaging Rome, but now that terrible monarch, emboldened, was threatening the eternal city. Stephen had gone from Rome to Saint Denis to interview Pipin, and it was there the coronation took place, as well as the interchange of promises between Stephen and Pipin. The new king accompanied Stephen, reaching Pavia without striking a blow. The Lombard king hesitated to offer submission, promising to restore to the See the captured exarchate at Ravenna. Hardly had Pipin crossed the Alps on his return home when the Lombards marched against Rome, pillaging churches and destroying property on their way. By post haste Stephen sent a messenger after the departing Pipin commanding him in the name of Peter and the Holy Mother of God to save the city from its detested enemies, promising him, if he obeyed, long life and glorious mansions in heaven. Stephen's letter is an index to the arrogant assumptions and blasphemous pride of the papacy.

Pipin recrossed the Alps, conquered the Lombards, and bestowed the conquered territory upon the Papacy. The ambassadors from Constantinople, who demanded the return of Ravenna and its territory to the Byzantine empire, were told that Pipin's sole object was to show his veneration for Saint Peter. Thus the new Papal district was much larger than before, embracing the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, East of the Appenines, with the cities of Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Cesena, Sinigaglia, Iesi, Forlompopoli, Forli, Montefeltro, Acerra, Monte di Lucano, Serra, San Marino, Bobbio, Urbino, Cagli, Luciollo, Gubbio, Comachio and Narni. The pope had already been in possession of tracts of land granted to the Church, even in the time of Gregory the Great, but by this rich gift of a foreign conquerer, he became a temporal sovereign over a considerable portion of Italy - all the time being the successor of Peter, who had neither silver nor gold, and all the time the Vicar of Christ, whose own lips had said, "My kingdom is not of this world".

This gift, "the patrimony of Peter", was the foundation of the temporal power of the popes,

in the largest sense, and it was likewise the beginning of sorrow for the Church. It provoked a long conflict with the secular power. It involved the papacy in the intrigues and wars of Europe. It secularized the papacy and the clergy and greatly lessened the spiritual influence of the Church.

The deed of Pipin was confirmed by his son Karl, and Pipin's policy was followed by the Austrian emperors as well. The temporal power of the papacy grew apace until it became one of the greatest forces to be reckoned with in the political field of the middle ages. It was lost under the last Protector, Napoleon III, who in 1870 withdrew his troops from Rome to fight against Germany, and by his defeat prepared the way for the taking of Rome by Victor Immanuel. Since that time Italy has been free and united, and the pope has been, in theory, a prisoner in the Vatican enclosure, with temporal authority over but a few acres of ground and a small number of buildings.

No sketch of the development of the papacy would be complete without reference to the

Pseudo-Isidorian decretals. In the middle of the ninth century, amid the chaotic confusion of the weakling Carolingians, as well as of the Church, there appeared a mysterious book which served powerfully in giving legal expression to most of the popular notions regarding the papacy, and which did more than any other single agency to establish and intrench that institution. Strictly speaking, a decretal is an authoritative rescript of a pope in reply to some question, while a decree is a papal ordinance enacted, with the advice of the cardinals, without previous inquiry. To be sure the earliest decretals had moral, rather than legal, weight, but a centuries passed and decretals multiplied, they came to possess a legal significance as well. Now the writer, or writers, of the Isidorian decretals committed the most colossal fraud known in the history of literature, but the fraud was not detected for centuries, not, indeed, until the book had well served its intended purpose. Its fraudulent character is now admitted by Roman Catholic historians. The book purported to set forth all, or most, of the decretals of all the pontiffs of the Church! Naturally the

forgers put into the mouths of the earliest popes exactly the doctrines and dogmas which they were themselves seeking to establish and defend, such as their theories of the sacerdotal system, of ordination, and of baptism. The work is full of the most patent anachronisms. The principal object of the forgery was to antedate by about five centuries the temporal power of the papacy, which, as shown, really rested, in full form, upon the donations of Pipin and Charlemagne. Secondary objects were numerous, among them the exaltation of the Roman bishop to full primacy in all spiritual, moral and social questions.

Straggely enough, the appearance of the decretals synchronized with that of a pope who was able to take advantage of them and the good fortune to employ the power thus bestowed in the interests of right and justice. This pontiff was Nicolàs I (857-867). It may be said that he was the only pope of ability between Gregory I and Gregory VII. Certain it is that he labored diligently in reinforcing and butressing the great theocratic power exercised by his successors. His contribution was three-fold - the incident concerning Photius, the incident

concerning Archbishop Hincmar, and that of King Lothair, brother to the Emperor.

Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was unjustly deposed by the Emperor, Michael III, but he refused to resign. Photius, a layman, and one of the greatest scholars of the time, was hurried through all the subordinate orders and offices in six days, and was given the patriarchal dignity (~~858~~<sup>858</sup>). Ignatius pronounced sentence of excommunication upon him, and Photius replied in kind, both appealing to Nicolas as arbitrator. The latter, however, assumed the attitude of judge, and decided for Ignatius (863). Photius then condemned the Roman bishop and, although this was the last case of a pope's official interference in ecclesiastical affairs in the east, the incident strongly entrenched the papacy as the center of justice.

The second incident was that of Nicolas' decision in the case of Lothair. Lothair had maltreated and at last divorced his wife, Teutberga of Bergundy, and married his mistress, Waldrada. The divorced wife appealed directly to Nicolas, after

several synods and bishops had condoned Lothair's wickedness. Nicolas saw his opportunity both to enforce justice and to extend the power of the papal chair. He sent word upholding the inviolability of marriage, annulling the decisions of two synods, and deposing the archbishops of Cologne and Treves for conniving at the sins of their king. He threatened Lothaire with instant excommunication if he did not receive back Teutberga and dismiss Waldrada. Probably under compulsion from local priests or bishops, Teutberga, in further appeal to Nicolas, asked for a divorce, which the good pontiff refused to grant. By this incident the supervision of the pope was confirmed over cases where metropolitans had presided, and his authority was made final.

The third case was similar and involved an appeal with Hincmar, with whom he had had three previous disputes on the subject of jurisdiction. Rothad, Bishop of Soissons, was deposed by Hincmar, of Rheims, his archbishop, but Rothad appealed to Nicolas. The pope summoned Rothad to Rome, and, no one appearing against him, restored him to his office and dignity. In determining this case, Nicolas made

extensive use of the Isodorian Decretals, from which he quoted at length.

The principal features of the development of the papacy have been traced, and to enter more fully upon the subject would be to overstep the brief limits of this paper. It should be said in closing, that the Decretals marked a sad era in the history of the Church. The early development of the organization of the Church had been upon a basis of utility. Only such officers were elected as were needed. The Church lived and grew because she served, and the passion of the Church was evangelism. Its chief end was not the perpetuation of forms, for there were none to be perpetuated, but when the early zeal waned and formalism crept in, the cold basis of legality was sought out and the usefulness of the Church was correspondingly diminished. A hopeful sign on the horizon of Romanism is found in the fact that the present pontiff, who is number 265 in the long line of popes, Benedict XV, as well as his immediate predecessors, have sought to establish their Church again upon the basis of service and life.

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