

## CURRENT THEOLOGY

### ST. IRENAEUS AND THE ROMAN PRIMACY

Perhaps the most used and most important passage in Irenaeus is the locus on the importance of the Roman Church as a criterion of apostolic tradition. And perhaps no other text of this great apologist has received such varied interpretations. Almost all the variations appeared after Luther's rebellion from the Roman Church and his consequent rejection of the Roman primacy. Especially within the last century has much been written on this classic text. Even within the last few years new opinions have been advanced on some parts of the passage. It seems timely, therefore, to make a complete study of the passage and to evaluate all the arguments anew. For convenient reference and further study a list of pertinent works follows (some unfortunately not available to the present writer).

#### I

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## II

## THE TEXT

The original Greek of this passage (*Adversus haereses*, III, 3, 2) is not extant. We are dependent solely on the ancient Latin version, which reads:

Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam,  
 propter potentiozem principalitatem,  
 necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam,  
 hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles,  
 in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique  
 conservata est ea quae est ab Apostolis traditio.<sup>1</sup>

To get a firsthand view of this passage in its context, we give here the pertinent parts of chapter 3, nn. 1-3, italicizing the passage under consideration.

1. All, therefore, who wish to see the Truth, can view in every Church the tradition of the Apostles which has been manifested in the whole world. Besides, we are able to list the bishops who were appointed in the Churches by the Apostles, and their lines of successors even to ourselves. These neither taught nor knew of anything like what the heretics rave about. . . .

2. Since, however, in a volume of this kind it would be very long to count up the lines of succession of all the Churches, we point out the tradition, received from the Apostles, as well as the faith preached to men, which has come down even to us through the lines of succession of the bishops, namely, that of the chief and

<sup>1</sup> The text of this passage can be found in Harvey's edition, II, 8-12, and in Migne, *PG*, VII, 849. Hereafter I shall refer to the *Adversus haereses* by the book, chapter, and paragraph divisions of Migne. The reference can then easily be traced in Harvey. For works in the bibliography author and page will be given.

The following unavailable items were omitted from the bibliography for lack of information, but are referred to in the text: Gutberlet, in *Katholik*, XLI (1910), 237-38; Mannucci, in *Rivista storico-critica delle scienze teologiche*, IV (1908), 613.

most ancient Church, known to all, which was founded and built up at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul. In this way we put to confusion all those who in any way whatever, either because of an evil self-complacency, or of vainglory, or of blindness and evil-mindedness, gather in unauthorized assemblies. *The reason is this: with this Church it is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful who are everywhere, should be in agreement, because of her greater sovereignty; in which the apostolic tradition has always been safeguarded by those who are everywhere.*

3. The blessed Apostles, therefore, having founded and built up the Church, handed over to Linus the bishopric for administrating the Church. . . . And this is the fullest proof that there is one and the same life-giving faith, which has been safeguarded in the Church from the Apostles till now and has been handed down in truth.

We shall discuss the reading in the course of the article. Nearly every phrase, and every word, in this passage has received varied interpretations. Since, therefore, so many combinations are possible, it is difficult to group the authors according to definite opinions in respect to the whole passage. One could, however, make two main groups: the one granting the Roman Church a primacy of moral power, of sovereignty, the other denying her this and granting her a primacy of honor only. The opinions on all the other phrases and words somehow converge on these two interpretations. It seemed more advisable, however, to treat the whole matter by studying each word or group of words separately, but not necessarily in the order in which they occur in the passage.

Interpreters have at times picked one word or expression of this text as the key to the interpretation: some have taken *principalitas*, some *convenire*, some *potentiozem*. As we proceed it should become evident that *potentiozem* is fatal to many an interpretation that has been advanced. It is, I believe, the key word for the interpretation, though, of course, *principalitas* is the most important word.

#### THE CONNECTIVE ENIM: THE CONTEXT

From the quotation given above of chapter 3, nn. 1-3 it should be evident that the general meaning of this section is certain as well as clear. The Saint is telling his readers that the truth, the apostolic tradition, exists, as a matter of fact, in the apostolic Churches. Which Churches are apostolic can be ascertained by tracing their episcopal lines back to the Apostles. Given the apostolic succession of bishops, the apostolic tradition is also given, because the tradition of the episcopacy is the tradition of the teaching office; the succession of the bishops is the succession of the apostolic teachers.

The Bishop of Lyons insists that there are two ways in which one may know the apostolic tradition of the Truth. The first way—a general and rather complicated one—is to trace the lines of succession of all the bishops of all the Churches and then to see what all the Churches teach in unison (n. 1). The second, and much simpler, way is to trace the line of succession of the bishops of the Roman Church alone and see what it teaches. Irenaeus asserts categorically that this Roman episcopacy and tradition and faith suffices by itself to confound all heretics and schismatics. Then, in our famous passage, he gives the reason for this self-sufficiency of the Roman Church as a criterion of the apostolic tradition. The connective particle *enim* clearly and certainly links this sentence with the preceding and indicates that this is a reason for the preceding, namely, for the statement that the Roman Church suffices by itself for confounding all errors and knowing the apostolic tradition.

His argument has, in summary, these three elements. (1) Every Church, that is, all the faithful everywhere, must agree with the Roman Church. (2) The reason for this necessity of agreement is that the Roman Church possesses a greater sovereignty, i.e., power of teaching authentically and authoritatively. (3) Moreover, as a matter of fact, every Church, all the faithful everywhere, who have in the past preserved the apostolic tradition have done so through the instrumentality of the Roman Church.

After giving this reason he proceeds to give the line of succession of the bishops of Rome from the Apostles Peter and Paul down to his own day. He also includes one instance where a particular Church, that of Corinth, preserved the apostolic tradition through the intervention of the Roman Church.

This whole context is most necessary for a correct interpretation of our passage. We must keep it in mind constantly. If St. Irenaeus is logical—and we may not assume that he is not—, then this sentence about the *potentior principalitas* of the Roman Church may not contradict his previous statement that the Roman Church by herself suffices for knowing the apostolic tradition. In fact, this sentence must confirm that statement, because it is added as a reason for it. O'Boyle rightly insists on using the scope of this passage as a test for the correct interpretation (p. 415).

I should like to insist here that Irenaeus clearly means to state that the Roman Church is infallible by herself, because to find the truth it suffices that one consult her tradition. That statement would be meaningless if the Roman Church could ever err or were dependent in any way on the other Churches for the genuine apostolic tradition. Just as clearly does he assert that the other Churches taken singly are not infallible. Only when all are



taken together can one find the truth. If the opinion of Harnack were true that all the others taken singly are infallible and that the Roman Church is merely *prima inter pares*, then it would be just as simple to consult any of them as it is to consult the Roman Church. But then there would have been no purpose in Irenaeus' saying that it would take too long to trace the episcopal lines of all the other Churches, for there would be no need of ever consulting more than one apostolic Church. The Roman Church, then, is not just a *sample* of how one can find the apostolic teaching. She is infallible by herself, whereas the others are infallible only when taken collectively, including the Roman Church. It must be stressed that all this is in the context antecedent to the *ad hanc* passage, and is true independently of the reason given in this passage.

AD HANC . . . ECCLESIAM

"This Church" to which all the other Churches and faithful must somehow come is none other than the Roman Church, which is here the Roman bishopric, because Irenaeus is speaking of tracing the episcopal lines of succession. There can be no doubt that *hanc* refers to the Church of Rome. The sequence of thought in what precedes and follows demands this. It cannot be the Catholic Church at large, nor anyone of the other apostolic Churches, much less the imperial city.

Some few have tried to hold that *hanc ecclesiam* is the Roman Church inasmuch as it exists all over the world, i.e., the Catholic Roman Church. This interpretation, however, is certainly excluded because *omnem ecclesiam* in the next phrase, which is in contrast to *ad hanc*, is the Roman Catholic Church at large. Moreover, the Catholic Church, in this interpretation, would be the same as all the Churches mentioned under the long way of finding the truth (n. 1); but Irenaeus' argument is in support not of the longer but of the shorter way of finding the truth. "This Church" is the one in which Linus is bishop. Paragraph 3 confirms this beyond denial. The Saint is there illustrating what he has said about the *potentior principalitas*, and he speaks about Pope Clement's letter to the Corinthians as the letter of the Church at Rome. It is, then, this same Church at Rome which is meant by *hanc*. Much less can *hanc* point out any other of the apostolic Churches as if all were equally infallible, as Beaven (p. 67) asserts. Besides, *potentior*, as implying a greater *principalitas* in one of the Churches, certainly excludes such an interpretation.

It is the *Church* at Rome and not the *city* of Rome that is meant. This seems rather evident, yet authors have been quoted as holding that Irenaeus refers to the imperial city. For instance, Feuardentius says a certain Smidel-

mus held this.<sup>2</sup> But all upholders of this view whom I have been able directly or indirectly to consult, actually hold that the *potentior principalitas* is said of the imperial city, but that on this account people must come to the Roman Church as well. At most, then, for them the idea of coming to the city would be implicit. (Thus Grabe, Neander, Langen, Knox; this view we shall refute later.) *Hanc ecclesiam* is, therefore, beyond doubt the Church at Rome, the bishopric of Rome.

#### OMNEM ECCLESIAM

The adjective *omnem* could, independently of this passage, mean "every" or "entire"; that is, "every Church" taken individually, distributively, which would be the same as "all the Churches" (cf. *omnium ecclesiarum* in n. 2); or "the entire Church," taken collectively. The only one I have found holding that it is, in context, the "whole" Church is Keble (p. 206). In this passage, however, the meaning is certainly distributive, "every Church," because this "every Church" is contrasted with the Roman Church, which is itself part of the "entire" Church. In n. 1 the same expression evidently means "every Church," because there it is a question of looking up the lists of the bishops in "every Church," not in the "entire Church," in contrast to looking up the list of the Roman Church in n. 2. This is confirmed by the plural *in ecclesiis* (n. 2) and *ab ecclesiis* (n. 3). Elsewhere when the meaning is "entire," the translator uses *tota* or *universa* (cf. I, 10, 3). In III, 12, 5 he contrasts these two meanings nicely: it is the *tota ecclesia* that is gathered at Jerusalem; but *omnis ecclesia* has its origin from the Mother Church at Jerusalem.

All these other Churches which must agree with the Roman Church are not merely the apostolic Churches, the Churches where some Apostle had his bishopric, but all episcopal Churches, which are all directly or indirectly traceable to some Apostle. Nor does Irenaeus by any means limit "every Church" to the Western section of the entire Church (cf. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 461; Gieseler, p. 150, note 10; Keble, p. 206). There does not seem to be even the slightest probability for this view. Irenaeus who came from Asia Minor and constantly speaks of the traditions there, who shortly afterwards writes about the Churches in Smyrna and at Ephesus, is not limiting "every Church" to the West. His own personal experience would not allow such a limitation. Again, Pope Victor wished to force the Asiatics to observe the Roman custom on the Pasch. Irenaeus acknowledged his authority to do so; but he pleaded with him to allow the Asiatics to follow their own custom.

<sup>2</sup> Feuardentius, *PG*, VII, 1608.

## HOC EST, EOS QUI SUNT UNDIQUE FIDELES

The reading of this phrase is certain, although, through the fault of a scribe, *eos* was omitted in the Arundel codex. *Hoc est*, too, belongs to the original of Irenaeus, and is not merely an interpolation introducing the Latin translator's explanation of *omnis ecclesia*. Irenaeus himself gave that explanation. The Latin translator did add his own explanation in a number of places, but introduced it, not with *hoc est*, but with *id est*. Irenaeus introduced his own explanations with *τούτέστιν*, which was always translated by *hoc est*.<sup>3</sup>

The Saint wishes to say that by "Church" he does not mean merely the heads of these Churches but all the faithful, all the believers in Christ, wherever they may be. This warning, he feels, is necessary since he has been speaking of the episcopal lines. He conveys this same idea in other passages: "Quae est in quoque loco Ecclesia universa" (II, 31, 2); "eam quae in unoquoque loco est Ecclesiam" (IV, 33, 8); "Ecclesia in omni loco" (IV, 33, 9). He is speaking of the Catholic Church that exists in various localities all over the world, and of all the faithful in those Churches. In a recent study Fr. Galtier, an expert on St. Irenaeus, shows that this expression has not a merely geographic meaning, "the faithful who are everywhere," but essentially a dogmatic meaning, "those who belong to the Church that is everywhere"; "the Catholics," as opposed to the separatists, mentioned shortly before, who gather illegitimately.<sup>4</sup> And so even the faithful at Rome would belong to the "qui sunt undique."

*Undique* is practically synonymous with *ubique*. Contrary to Puller (p. 35), it was not chosen because *convenire* means "to resort" to Rome *from* all other Churches, *from* all sides. Much less does it mean merely those faithful who lived close to, on all sides of, Rome. This opinion was ably refuted by Murray (p. 261 f.). Straub, however, correctly notes (p. 371) that Irenaeus uses *undique* because he loves the idea that all are called together in the one Church (cf. IV, 8, 1; 14, 1; 20, 12; 21, 3; 33, 1; 36, 5, 6, 8; V, 33, 4). I should like to add that this fits in well with *convenire*: they are everywhere but they are also "*from* everywhere" in the sense that they must agree with, resort mentally to, the Roman Church. *Ubique*, which Irenaeus uses in V, 20, 1, expresses the catholicity of the Church, but *undique* seems to express also the unity of the Church. *Undique* has the fundamental connotation of centripetal action.

In III, 11, 8 and I, 16, 2, where the Greek is extant, Irenaeus has *πανταχόθεν*, which the Latin translator rendered by *undique*. In III,

<sup>3</sup> Harnack, p. 946 f.

<sup>4</sup> Galtier, cf. bibliography.

18, 3 the Latin *ubique* stands for the Greek *πανταχοῦ*. In our passage, then, Irenaeus wrote *πανταχόθεν*.

AD HANC . . . CONVENIRE

In analyzing the meaning of any of the expressions in this passage recourse must always be had to the other expressions. They are mutually dependent. It is perhaps immaterial in the long run with which phrase one begins, but I prefer to start with *convenire*. Its meaning is easier to determine and it will be a help in determining the meaning of some of the other words and phrases.

We shall first consider the use of *convenire* in the Latin version of Irenaeus outside of our present passage. *Convenire* is radically a verb of motion and has the fundamental meaning of local approach: to come together, to assemble, to come to something or someone. From this fundamental meaning are derived a number of meanings that are all related by the idea of approximation. Things approach each other in the sense that their natures or properties are similar or have something in common or belong together: they are fitting, or are in agreement, they are suitable or harmonize. Closely related to this meaning is that of being morally fitting or proper, or logically reasonable. Here belongs the impersonal construction, "it is fitting, proper." Lastly, *convenire* is used for intellectual, mental agreement, for assembling in a moral body, for associating with others. Now in Irenaeus we find *convenire* used with these four meanings.

First of all, the translator employs it to denote physical action. In the sense of coming together, cohabiting, he uses it in, and derives it from, the story of Joseph and Mary in Matt. 1:18 ff. (III, 16, 2; 21, 4); in the sense of assembling, he uses it in, and derives it from, the story of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:25 (III, 12, 14 twice; 21, 2). In III, 12, 14, though he uses different verbs, it is easy to see the relation between assembling physically and morally: the purpose of physical assembly is agreement, "consensissent . . . convenientibus nobis." In I, 6, 3 he uses *conveniunt* (*συνίαισι*) for the Gnostics' gathering at every pagan feast. In I, 30, 5 the Powers assemble (*convenientes*) and form a man. In III, 21, 2 "convenientibus (*συνελθόντων*) autem ipsis in unum" is said of the seventy translators of the Septuagint.

Secondly, the translator uses *convenire* of realities which are in agreement, which fit each other, when speaking of the system of numbers that really do not fit the Gnostic fabrications at all. The construction is varied: with the genitive ("supputationem nominis convenientem Aeonis Pleromatis eorum habere debuit" [II, 24, 2]); with the dative ("Numerus iste

in nullo convenit figmento eorum. . . Et propitiatorium . . . in nullo convenit expositionibus eorum" [II, 24, 3]; "mensis . . . conveniens putaretur typus esse mendacio eorum" [II, 24, 5]; with the dative and *ad* ("Nec conveniens eis ad typicam . . . demonstrationem" [II, 24, 4]); absolutely, in the sense of harmonize ("Et sic conveniunt sermones Prophetarum" [III, 12, 14]). The last is from Acts 15:15, where the Greek has *συμφώνουσι*.

Thirdly, the translator uses it in the sense of moral fitness (e.g., IV, 29, 1, from Rom. 1:28, where the Greek has *μὴ καθήκοντα*), and in the sense of logical fitness ("magis . . . conveniebat annum . . . dividere" [II, 24, 5]). In this sense, too, he uses the impersonal *convenit* or *conveniens est* very often.

Fourthly, he uses *convenire* in the sense of mental agreement or association. In IV, 35, 4: "inter eos convenerit de iis quae in Scripturis. . ." In III, 12, 15 he speaks of associating with the foreigner, "convenire cum allophylo," which is from Acts 10:28, where the Vulgate has *accedere ad* and the Greek *προσέρχεσθαι ἄλλοφύλῳ*. In IV, 21, 3 it is used very much as in our own passage: "qui ex variis et differentibus gentibus *in* unam cohortem fidei *convenientes* fiunt." If these people from various nations gather together to form one cohort in the faith, it is evidently for the vast majority not a local gathering but an assembling in the one Church by mental agreement with her tenets. The translator also uses the noun *conventus* in the sense of a moral body, when in III, 15, 1 he asserts that those who do not accept the chosen Apostle Paul segregate themselves "ab apostolorum conventu," which at the time of Irenaeus was simply the Apostolic Church, a moral assembly. The importance of this "lexicon" for *convenire* should be apparent shortly.

We shall now try to define the meaning of *convenire* in III, 3, 2. Clearly, the second and third meanings are out of the question here. But we must decide whether Irenaeus is speaking of a local assembling at Rome, a resorting thither, or of a mental agreement with the Roman Church. But mental agreement can, of itself, be a purely doctrinal, intellectual agreement, or it may also include moral agreement, that is, submission of the will. Though authors never mention this distinction between the doctrinal and moral agreement, some imply it in their description of the agreement. Moreover, the distinction has a basis in the various interpretations of *principalitas*. Again, neither the doctrinal nor the moral agreement absolutely excludes the physical assembly on occasion. So we can say that there are four meanings which have been assigned to *convenire*: the physical, the doctrinal, the moral, and the mental-physical.

In view, however, of the opinions that have been advanced we must subdivide the physical meanings of *convenire*. One could resort to Rome

with the intention of agreeing with the Roman Church, or with the intention of contributing something to the preservation of the true tradition. Again, since not all the faithful of whom Irenaeus speaks can actually go to Rome, those who have tried to defend this interpretation have had to have recourse to the idea that either only delegates went, or visitors, who might even have become settlers.

We shall now show that *convenire* in our context means a doctrinal and moral agreement. This interpretation has been an almost unanimous one among Catholics. The only Catholics, to my knowledge, who have defended the physical meaning are Funk, Batiffol, and the anonymous writer in *Historisch-politische Blätter*, although Batiffol holds that the resorting was for the purpose of agreeing. A large number of non-Catholics admit that the meaning is to agree: Salmasius, Griesbach, Thiersch, Harvey, Keble, Böhringer, Harnack, Hitchcock, Koch, and Jalland. The Vatican Council in its chapters on the primacy of the Roman Church quotes this passage of Irenaeus in the sense of mental agreement.<sup>5</sup>

Our lexicographical study disproves the assertion of some scholars that *convenire* occurs nowhere else in Irenaeus in the sense of agreeing. We saw that it not only does have this sense, but that there is a passage very close in meaning to our present one. The expression "Apostolorum conventus" is also used, and refers to a moral body.

Grammatically the construction *convenire ad* is not only possible, but it is good Latin. Grabe has insisted, however, that if the meaning were mental agreement, instead of local assembly, the preposition should have been *cum*; and Böhmer claims that Cicero uses *ad* for agreement with things, but *cum* for agreement with persons (p. 196). Compare, "ut si cothurni laus illa esset *ad* pedem apte *convenire*" (*De finibus*, III, 14, 46) and "Hoc mihi *cum* tuo fratre *convenit*" (*De finibus*, V, 29, 87). To this objection there are several ready answers. The Latin translator of Irenaeus could have considered the Churches as things, since they are not physical persons. Further I have found a passage in Cicero in which *convenire ad* is used of persons: "Equidem vehementer laetor eum esse me in quem tu, cum cuperes, nullam contumeliam iacere poteris quae non ad maximam partem *civium conveniret*" (*Pro Sulla*, 7, 23). Of course, the meaning of *convenire* here is not exactly agree but fit. The best answer, however, to the objection is that the Latin translator, as is evident even from a cursory reading, never considered himself bound by all the laws of classical Latin. He made a literal translation of the Greek. And in Greek, as we shall observe later, either *eis* or *πρός* is idiomatic with verbs of motion that mean to agree.

<sup>5</sup> DB, 1824.

As far as one can judge from the literal Latin version, St. Irenaeus was very precise in his choice of words here, as we know he can be. There is no question, in this sentence, of an agreement between equals, as there is in III, 12, 15, where *cum* is used. One of the parties here is superior: to it the others must somehow "come" and with it they must unite themselves into one moral body. The verb *convenire* in its radical meaning of motion toward something is quite in place, and quite precise, with *ad*, as it is with *in* in the similar case of IV, 21, 3.

The context, too, demands that *convenire* be essentially a mental agreeing. Irenaeus intends to give a reason why the Roman Church suffices for finding the true, apostolic doctrine. So in the final analysis every Church must go to the doctrine of the Roman Church, and that need not be done by actually going to Rome. It can be done very well while staying miles away from the imperial city.

Our interpretation is further called for by the fact that these faithful who are *convenientes ad hanc Ecclesiam* are in direct opposition to the heretics and schismatics mentioned in the preceding sentence. Now these separatists are such essentially because they do not agree with the doctrine of the Roman Church and do not submit to her laws. They are not such because of their failure to resort to Rome physically. In fact, some of these separatists are actually in Rome. They love to flock to Rome, as we shall note later. They are nonetheless separatists, because they do not agree with the Roman Church.

Furthermore, the illustration that follows our passage demands this interpretation. In n. 3 Irenaeus shows how the Church of Corinth had to agree to what the Roman bishop demanded. But clearly, the Church of Corinth did not, on this account, come to Rome. On the contrary, the Roman Church by papal letter, and that a powerful one, went to the Corinthian Church, with the result that the Corinthian Church bowed to the Roman. Moreover, in the sequence (ch. 4, n. 1) Irenaeus says that, if any differences arise in the Churches, these must have recourse to (*recurrere*) the most ancient Churches. This is clearly not a local recourse exclusively, for such would often be impossible.

The idea of agreeing mentally with the true Church is frequent in Irenaeus, and is often expressed with a verb of motion. *Concurrere*, though radically a verb of local motion, is used in the sense of agreeing in doctrine (cf. III, 24, 1: "Qui non concurrunt ad Ecclesiam," that is, who do not bring themselves into harmony with the true Church). In this sense *consonare*, too, occurs twice in III, 21, 3. *Concurrere* is found in other contexts in the sense of agreeing with or belonging to (II, 19, 7; 34, 3, with the dative and *cum*;

III, 13, 3; IV, Pref., 4; IV, 34, 3). As was noted, *recurrere* is employed in the sense of mental recourse in III, 4, 1. *Confugere*, likewise basically a local verb, expresses mental recourse in V, 20, 2; and this passage is quite parallel to III, 3, 2, for to avoid heretical divisions the faithful must “confugere ad Ecclesiam,” mentally, doctrinally, since the writer adds that they must be *educated* in her bosom.

Finally, Neander’s objection that mental agreeing would make the meaning of “ab his qui sunt undique” senseless, is futile (p. 118, footnote). We shall show that the sense of that phrase is quite Irenaeian and traditional.

The use of *convenire* for mental agreeing is found, for example, in St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose.<sup>6</sup> St. Cyprian, commenting on Matt. 18:19 f., takes from this passage the very word *convenire*, and gives it both the local and the mental meaning.<sup>7</sup> It is equivalent to *concordes*, and is the opposite of being separated from Christ. St. Ambrose has this: “Advocat ad se Episcopum; nec ullum verum putavit nisi verae fidei gratiam, percontatusque ex eo est utrumnam cum Episcopis catholicis, hoc est, *cum Romana Ecclesia conveniret*. Et forte ad id locorum in schismate regionis illius Ecclesia erat.”<sup>8</sup> It is to be noted that both Cyprian and Ambrose use the expression precisely for agreeing with the Roman Church.

Langen appeals to Hugo Eterianus for the physical meaning of *convenire*. But Eterianus uses the word in the sense of agreeing and borrows it from Irenaeus. “Huius (Petri et successoris eius) Ecclesia de se splendorem emittit semper, et non tenebrescit: a qua exit lex et iudicium, *ad quam homines undique terrarum conveniunt*.”<sup>9</sup> The expression is too similar to that of Irenaeus not to have been borrowed from him, especially since it is a unique way of expressing the idea of all Churches agreeing with Rome. Besides, Eterianus is here writing on the primacy of the Roman Church, as Irenaeus is in the passage in which this similar expression occurs. And he intends *convenire* to mean agree. He is speaking of Rome’s being the source of light and law and judgment for all others—clearly a matter of doctrine and jurisdiction. Consequently, their going to the Roman Church is mental and moral; it is an assent of the mind and submission of the will to the apostolic power received from Peter. As in Irenaeus, so here, the verb has the basic meaning of resorting physically, and this need not be excluded here for those for whom it is possible, as long as the essential

<sup>6</sup> St. Lawrence of Brindisi cites the two passages referred to (cf. notes 7 and 8) in his work against Luther, *Lutheranismi hypotyposis (Opera omnia* [Padua, 1930–33], II/3, 50; II/1, 371).

<sup>7</sup> *De unitate Ecclesiae*, 12 (PL, IV, 524–25; CSEL, III/1, 220–21).

<sup>8</sup> *De excessu fratris sui Satyri*, 47 (PL, XVI, 1306).

<sup>9</sup> *De haeresibus Graecorum*, III, 16 (PL, CCII, 377).



idea of agreeing mentally is safeguarded. So no objection can be made from the fact that in the preceding chapter Eterianus uses *convenire* of a physical going to Nice for the Council: "Ab omnibus sanctis episcopis, eo loci convenientibus."<sup>10</sup> For them physical resorting was possible. There the verb has its legitimate fundamental meaning. But their resorting was plainly for the sake of agreeing. This was the essential element.

So much, then, for *convenire* as a mental agreement, at least in doctrine. That this is also a moral agreement, namely, a submission to authority, seems to me certain. Most of the Catholic authors who hold that it is agreement at all would probably admit that it is also moral agreement. Certainly those who maintain that *necesse est* is a moral necessity and that *principalitas* is jurisdictional power would admit this. Those who hold that *necesse est* is merely factual necessity would perhaps not admit that the agreement is more than doctrinal. Certainly, too, the non-Catholics who admit that *convenire* is an agreeing would not admit that it includes moral agreeing. And still that must be the full meaning, for agreement within the Catholic Church could never, for Irenaeus, be mere speculative agreeing. It is an agreeing by means of faith, and faith demands more than a mere intellectual agreeing. *Convenire* is said in opposition not only to heretics, but also to schismatics. The *principalitas*, on account of which there must be agreement, is, as we shall show, not merely an authentic teaching office, but also an authoritative teaching office.

We shall now deal directly with the opinion that *convenire* means a physical resorting to Rome. This opinion is held by very many non-Catholics: Grabe, Beaven, Neander, Langen,<sup>1</sup> Döllinger, Böhmer, La Piana, Puller, Kidd, Knox, Enslin. Among Catholics it was proposed only by an anonymous writer in *Historisch-politische Blätter*, and by Funk and Batiffol.

The chief argument is the historic fact that many churchmen of the second and early third centuries really did go to Rome, e.g., Justin, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Hegisippus, Tertullian. Polycarp, in particular, and even Irenaeus himself, went to Rome to consult with its Bishop, and not vice versa. Besides, at this time the faithful from all over made pilgrimages to Rome.<sup>11</sup> Such facts, however, are far from being a proof that Irenaeus intended to speak of such resorting to Rome. The positive arguments we have given for "to agree" militate against such an interpretation. Besides, Irenaeus says expressly that not only every Church but all the faithful, wherever they are, must *convenire* with the Roman Church. But it is wholly

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* (PL, CCII, 374).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Batiffol, p. 208, who quotes C. P. Caspari, "Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols," *Christiania*, III (1875), 336-48.

impossible for all the faithful to resort to Rome. The visitors and pilgrims, many as they might have been, could not be representative of all the faithful. Nor does it help matters to appeal to delegates from various Churches who might go to Rome to solve difficulties that arise. If Irenaeus had meant that, he would not have had to add "the faithful who are everywhere." The addition of this phrase definitely excludes the idea of mere delegates going to Rome, and so also of a physical resorting. And even if the delegates did go, the vast majority of the people could go only by agreeing with them. Thus in the final analysis physical resorting by means of delegates would be a mental agreement.

The defenders of the physical meaning of *convenire* appeal to similar cases in ancient literature. Eusebius records that in Asia Minor people came together, often and in various places, to examine the doctrines of Montanus and his followers; they condemned the heresy and expelled the heretics from the communion of the faithful. The pertinent words are these: τῶν γὰρ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν πιστῶν πολλάκις καὶ πολλαχῆ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς τοῦτο συνελθόντων.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to note that the Greek verb is a compound with σύν, and takes the preposition εἰς, though here not to indicate the place of gathering, but the purpose. But the fact that in this passage a verb corresponding to *convenire* means to assemble, is no argument that *convenire* has this meaning in Irenaeus. Much less can appeal be made to another passage in Eusebius where Montanus is said to have called two little towns (Pepuza and Timion) Jerusalem, in order to inveigle people to assemble there from all over: πανταχόθεν ἐκεῖ συναγαγέιν.<sup>13</sup>

The Synod of Antioch ordered that the bishop of the metropolitan city of a province should have charge of the entire province because all who have any business meet in the metropolis: Διὰ τὸ ἐν τῇ μητροπόλει παντοχόθεν συντρέχειν πάντας τοὺς τὰ πράγματα ἔχοντας.<sup>14</sup> Here we have the word *convenire* and *undique*, but in place of the Church as the destination (εἰς with the accusative) we have the city as the place (ἐν) which people meet for the sake of business. Naturally this fact would make of the city a good place for the metropolitan to live. We have here a possible reason for St. Peter's choice of Rome as the capital of the Church, but by no means a reason why the Bishop of Rome should have any special primacy. The Synod could have granted a primacy of honor to the metropolitan city, but the Roman Bishop had a primacy of jurisdiction from Christ.

Further, the bishops of the Province of Arles wrote to Pope Leo I to

<sup>12</sup> *Hist. eccl.*, V, 16, 10 (PG, XX, 467-70; GCS, II/1, 464).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 18, 2 (PG, XX, 467-70; GCS, II/1, 472).

<sup>14</sup> Joannes Harduinus, *Acta conciliorum* (Paris, 1715), I, 595-96.

have Arles recognized as the primatial church of Gaul. Among other reasons, they argue that all the people come to Arles to do business: "Ad hanc ex omnibus civitatibus multarum utilitatum causa concurritur, et plane ita sibi erga privilegia memoratae vel Ecclesiae vel civitatis. . . ." <sup>15</sup> So again, the fact that all people must in any case come to Arles for business reasons was a solid ground for conferring on it the primacy of honor. And, by way of parallel, because Rome was the center of the Roman Empire and people came there from all over, there was good reason for establishing the Primary See there. But the primacy of that See was one of jurisdiction and came from God, independently of the central position of Rome.

Finally, St. Gregory of Nazianzus in his farewell address on resigning the bishopric of Constantinople, praises the city as "the eye of the world, as the bond of union between land and sea, as the place where the extremities of the earth meet (*συντρέχειν*), and start afresh as from a common storehouse of faith."<sup>16</sup> Because of its central location Constantinople is both the goal and the source of faith for the surrounding peoples. The wording might be very close to what St. Irenaeus had in his Greek original. There is a word for *convenire* and for *undique*, and the place of destination is also given by *eis* with the accusative. But it is certain that not all peoples from in and around Constantinople made a personal visit to the city and Church. So this *syntréchein* took place, for many, through intermediaries and by agreement. This passage is, then, as much a parallel for the mental meaning of *convenire* as for the physical. Besides, the people did not come to the Church of Constantinople to confirm her faith by their contribution but to receive from her. This fact is definitely a difficulty for those who appeal to this passage for confirming the physical meaning.

Appeal has been made also to Hervaeus of Bordeaux. In a passage on the primacy of the Roman Church he states: "Roma tunc erat caput mundi, et de toto orbe *illuc conveniebant*, atque Romanos suscepisse fidem Christianae religionis ubique divulgabant."<sup>17</sup> But this is evidently not a parallel. Hervaeus says that all peoples came to Rome because it was the capital city of the world; they did not come directly to the Church of Rome. In Rome they saw that the Romans had accepted the Christian faith, and they reported this in their own lands. This passage merely proves that *convenire* could be used in the local meaning of going to Rome. It does not prove that Irenaeus used it in this sense. Hervaeus himself, indeed, ascribes a primacy of jurisdiction to the Roman Church. For, prior to the

<sup>15</sup> *Inter epistulas Leonis*, LXV, 3 (*PL*, LIV, 882).

<sup>16</sup> *Orationes*, XLII, 10 (*PG*, XXXVI, 469).

<sup>17</sup> *Commentarium in Romanos* (*PL*, CLXXXI, 604-05).

sentence quoted above he has said: "Ago gratias pro omnibus fidelibus. Et primum quidem pro omnibus vobis, scilicet quia vos primi estis, quoniam Romana Ecclesia primatum habet inter omnes ecclesias." There is, for him, no question of any necessity of going to the Church of Rome.

Though we exclude the physical meaning of resorting as not being the essential meaning of *convenire*, we do not have to exclude it altogether. Perhaps Irenaeus chose a word that is capable of the physical and the mental meanings because at times both would fit. Some of the faithful, like Justin and Tertullian, could go to Rome literally; especially representatives of the Churches, like Irenaeus for Lyons, and Polycarp for Asia, could go. They literally resorted to Rome, but, essentially and finally, in order to agree with her. As long, then, as the physical meaning remains accidental and occasional, and subordinated to the mental meaning, it need not be excluded.

Now, what might have been the Greek expression for *convenire ad*? We cannot be certain. Some, e.g., Salmasius, Schneemann, Harnack, and Nolte, suggested *συμβαίνειν εἰς* or *πρός*. Another choice has been *συμφωνεῖν*. This is used much by Irenaeus in the sense of agreeing or harmonizing. In III, 12, 14 the Latin uses *convenire* in the sense of harmonizing. But it seems in III, 3, 2 Irenaeus used a word that was radically a verb of motion. Besides, the Latin translator usually renders *symphonēin* by *consonare*. *Συντρέχειν* was suggested by Harvey and by Harnack as an alternative. It is the classical Greek word for agreeing. We saw that Gregory of Nazianzus used it with at least the connotation of agreeing. *Concurrere* is the literal translation for it, and the Latin often uses *concurrere* in cases that are parallel to our III, 3, 2. So *syntréchein* seems a good choice. Straub gave as first choice *συνιέναι*. It is extant in I, 6, 3 with a local meaning. Though not the classical expression for agreeing, *προσέρχεσθαι* with *πρός* or *εἰς* may well have been the original. In III, 12, 15 in a quotation from Acts 10:28 the Latin is *convenire cum*, in the sense of associate with. The Greek is *προσέρχεσθαι* with the dative. In a fragment of Hippolytus<sup>18</sup> the faithful are said to approach to the Gospel; this approach is not physical but mental, an agreement with it: the Greek is *πρός εὐαγγέλιον προσερχόμενοι*. A better parallel is found in St. Maximus, who seems to have used our passage of Irenaeus in a statement about the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Church as a guide for others. The faith of the Roman Church is for all other Churches everywhere (*πανταχοῦ*) the sun of eternal light toward which all look and from which they await a radiant ray. He ends by saying that "the Roman Church has the keys of the true faith in, and confession of,

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. d'Alès, S.J., *Théologie de saint Hippolyte* (Paris, 1908), p. 62, footnote 1.

Christ; and for those who piously approach [her] (τοῖς εὐσεβῶς προσερχομένοις) she reveals the only piety which is truly such by nature."<sup>19</sup> This approach to the faith of the Romans is mental. The word could be translated by "agree with." Certainly, even if it were a physical approach, the faithful receive from the Roman Church, and not vice versa. Since this wording seems to be close to that of Irenaeus, and since St. Maximus quotes Irenaeus elsewhere by name,<sup>20</sup> it is probable that he used Irenaeus here. Thus he would be a source not only for the wording of Irenaeus but for the meaning of a mental approach. In III, 21, 2, *συνέρχεσθαι* is extant for *convenientibus* in the sense of assembling.

To conclude this whole discussion of *convenire*, there seems to be no probability for the opinion that *convenire* here means essentially a physical resorting to Rome. Essentially and finally it means a mental, doctrinal, and moral agreeing with the Roman Church.

#### NECESSE EST

The phrase *necesse est* expresses some kind of necessity on the part of all the Churches in relation to the Roman Church. It is not an abstract necessity but a necessity of *convenire*. Hence the interpretation of this phrase must be correlated with *convenire*. It is either a necessity of resorting to, or of agreeing with, the Roman Church. Though we refuted the meaning of resorting, we must still take it into account, because some scholars speak of a necessity of resorting. Moreover, Irenaeus adds the reason for the necessity: *propter potentioorem principalityatem*. Consequently, *necesse est convenire* must also be correlated with *principalitas*.

Authors have advanced three kinds of necessity, which they label factual, logical, and moral. They are not agreed on the exact nature of these, nor even, in some cases, on the labels. The third, or moral, necessity is rather clear in the minds of all. The confusion exists between the factual and logical. Some call factual what others call logical or natural; some call physical what others call factual or logical. Thus it is not always easy to classify the authors. We shall do well to begin by defining clearly what we mean by these necessities, first, in themselves, and then, in the concrete case of resorting to or agreeing with. The following illustration may perhaps help to visualize the problem. In a symphony orchestra, while actually performing, the violinists are, by factual necessity, agreeing with each other; logically, however, they agree with the score; and morally, at least after a fashion, with the conductor.

<sup>19</sup> PG, XCI, 137. Straub (p. 362, footnote 1) is my source for this passage.

<sup>20</sup> PG, XCI, 276.

*Definition of Terms*

*Factual necessity.* A factual necessity is simply the existence of a fact. And so a necessity of resorting would be factual when the resorting is a fact. A necessity of agreeing is factual by the very fact that two things exist which are similar or identical. There is no other relation between them except this similarity or identity; in terms of causality, both have, as a matter of fact, the same material and formal cause. Some would call this a logical necessity because it is based on the mathematical formula that two things equal to a common third are equal to each other. There is a factual agreement, for instance, between two oaks standing side by side. There is factual agreement between the students in a chemistry class who receive the same A-bomb formula from the professor and return it to him in an examination with substantial accuracy. All this is logical necessity only *in facto esse*. That is quite different from the real logical necessity *in fieri*, which will be described later.

Every factual necessity may be analyzed still further. It may be that two facts are identical with no reason whatever for becoming identical, except perhaps that they had to be identical with a common third, an ideal, if they were to exist at all. This is simple factual necessity. Or it may be that they are identical because there was a logical necessity *in fieri* for them to be identical *in facto esse*. This we might style factual-logical necessity. Or it may be that there was a moral necessity *in fieri* for them to become identical *in facto esse*. This we might label factual-moral necessity. These implications of a necessary relation prior to the fact of identity are important when applied to the case of the Roman Church.

To make the application: if the necessity that Irenaeus speaks of is merely factual, then all the other Churches, as well as the Roman, preserved the apostolic tradition. The basis for the agreement is an equal preservation of the tradition by all. It is not due to any priority on the part of the Roman Church. Still the Roman Church may be *prima inter pares* for some other reason, e.g., a more eminent origin. If the necessity is factual but has become such because of a logical necessity *in fieri* for the agreement, there would be implied an infallible authentic teaching office of the Roman Church, which gave rise to the factual agreement. If, however, the factual necessity is based on a moral necessity *in fieri* for agreeing, there would be implied an infallible authoritative teaching office of the Roman Church, which resulted in the factual agreement.

Since authors do not make this triple distinction in factual necessity, it is difficult to group them merely by their descriptions. Very many non-Catholic scholars insist that the necessity is factual: Griesbach, Beaven,

Neander, Gieseler, Keble, Böhringer, Döllinger, Harnack, Puller, Böhmer, Koch, Kidd, Bonwetsch, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. These, because they do not admit that the Roman Church is more than *prima inter pares*, would not admit that there is implied, in the factual necessity, any logical or moral necessity *in fieri*. A few Catholics also maintain that the necessity is factual: Straub, Funk, Dufourcq, Ehrhard, Bardy, Altaner. These would no doubt admit the implication of a logical or a moral necessity respectively, according to what they hold about the *principalitas*; but they might deny that Irenaeus was aware of these implications. Straub's necessity of fact is, in his description, almost identified with logical necessity.

*Logical necessity.* The second kind of necessity for *convenire* is logical. This means that there is some logical ground for one thing to conform to another which has some kind of superiority. This ground may be mere propriety or real necessity. In other words, there are degrees in logical necessity. For all practical purposes, however, we can distinguish two degrees. We can class as strict logical necessity the case in which the one thing is the necessary exemplary cause of the other; namely, the other cannot be what it must be without conforming to the first. All other reasons of propriety can be grouped into one class, because they do not cause a strict necessity, but merely a suitability. To illustrate: in a discussion club all the members are practically of equal intelligence, but one member is chosen as the leader, perhaps because he is the oldest. It is proper, reasonable, suitable, to defer to him. Or a leader is appointed by a competent outsider because of the former's accuracy in knowledge. It is logically necessary to agree with him if the members want correct knowledge on the subject.

Now, to apply this to our case: the Roman Church was selected as the leader among the others because she was founded by the two Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. It is suitable and reasonable to look up to her doctrine. She has, moreover, always preserved the apostolic tradition intact by herself, and so it is even necessary to conform to her doctrine; she is the exemplar in doctrine for the others. In this last case, there would be a necessity of agreeing with the Roman Church, but only a logical necessity. There would be no moral obligation; and what is more important, there would be no right on the part of the Roman Church to oblige the other Churches to agree with her.<sup>21</sup>

Here, again, authors do not distinguish strict logical necessity from

<sup>21</sup> Esser (article in *Katholik*, p. 311), therefore, incorrectly observes that a necessity of agreeing on spiritual matters among spiritual beings can exist only through a moral relationship.

logical propriety, and thus it is difficult to group them. It is better, then, simply to class them all under the general heading of logical necessity. Several Catholics as well as non-Catholics hold this type of necessity; non-Catholics: Salmasius, Langen, Hitchcock, Jalland; Catholics: Bardenhewer, Batiffol, O'Boyle, Vernet, Van den Eynde, and perhaps Straub.

*Moral necessity.* Moral necessity means the duty on the part of the one to conform to the other, and the right on the part of the latter to demand this conformity. To illustrate: in an obligatory course—for instance, the spiritual training course in the novitiate of a religious order—the appointed director expounds the ideas and ideals of the order, to which all the novices must conform. He has the right to command conformity and to propose the dismissal of non-conformists.

If, then, *nesesse est* means a moral obligation, all the Churches the world over, and even all the faithful, have the moral obligation of conforming to the Roman Church's teaching and direction, because, precisely, the Roman Church has the moral power to command such conformity. She is not only infallible by herself, having always preserved the apostolic tradition, but she has also the authority to command others to agree with her tradition. She is the authoritative as well as the authentic custodian of tradition.

Moral necessity is the common Catholic interpretation. It was held by such scholars as St. Lawrence of Brindisi, St. Robert Bellarmine, Feuardenius, Massuet, Ballerini, Schneemann, the anonymous writers in the *Historisch-politische Blätter*, *Civiltà Cattolica*, *Dublin Review*, Chapman, Kneller, Ottiger, Rivington, Roiron, Saltet, Esser, Dublanchy, Vernet, and Zapelena.

#### *Moral Necessity Proved*

Factual necessity cannot be proved convincingly. It has often been objected that the *semper*, in the last phrase, is fatal to factual necessity (cf., e.g., O'Boyle, p. 420). All the other Churches did not always agree with the Roman Church, as Irenaeus himself realized in his account of the Corinthian Church (III, 3, 3). This objection, however, misses a point. The factual necessity does not have to mean that every Church always did agree with the Roman Church, but that every Church, when it had the apostolic tradition, agreed with the Roman Church. This is a conditional fact. Other arguments, therefore, must be used to refute factual necessity.

Factual necessity does not satisfy the aim of Irenaeus. He intends to say something special about the Roman Church. In mere factual necessity he would not be fulfilling his purpose. Such factual agreement would



obtain between any other two Churches as well, if one supposes that they preserved the apostolic tradition. For, two things equal to a common third—the genuine apostolic tradition—are equal to each other, with a factual necessity. Harnack and Koch expressly state that the Roman Church is given as a sample; others could have been chosen as well.

Factual necessity does not answer to the purpose of the entire passage, namely, to give reason for the self-sufficiency of the Roman Church. To say that all other Churches agree factually with the Roman Church does not explain at all why the Roman Church is the only single Church that is self-sufficient as a criterion of apostolic tradition. And we have already shown that this is what St. Irenaeus is actually saying. Let us note again, however, that if any of the other Churches could singly have been equally infallible, it would have been rather silly to say that they could consult all the Churches (n. 1), but since that is too difficult, they should look up the Roman Church by way of example (n. 2)! Irenaeus would simply have said that it is easy to look up any of the ancient Churches, for example, the great Roman Church.

If, moreover, this necessity be merely factual, the reason which Irenaeus adds for this necessity, namely, *propter potentiozem principalityatem*, would become completely useless. No amount of priority can influence a factual necessity. Nor is the situation saved by explaining that the factual necessity is based on and constituted by the *implied* logical or moral necessity, and that it is to this implied necessity alone that *propter* refers. Irenaeus evidently wishes to give the reason for his *expressed* necessity, not merely for any implication.

Ehrhard, in particular, claims that the necessity must be factual because such necessity alone would constitute an argument against the *fabulae* of the Gnostics (p. 267 f.). But such factual necessity would not really prove the Gnostics wrong, because they too appealed to a tradition of facts which they held to be infallibly true. Irenaeus does, moreover, not always argue against the Gnostics from facts alone, but often uses principles and dogmas.

Neither has logical necessity, whether of propriety or strict necessity, been proved. This opinion was introduced by non-Catholics as an escape from a moral obligation to conform to the Roman Church. For, if this necessity is only logical, than the *principality* can be reduced to a primacy of honor.

The proponents of logical necessity argue that *nesesse est* always translates either *ἀνάγκη* or *ἀναγκαῖον*, and that neither *nesesse est* nor its Greek equivalents are ever used in Irenaeus of moral obligation, but always of

logical or natural necessity. To express a moral obligation Irenaeus always used *δεῖ*, which the Latin translates as *oportet*. This argument is, however, not foolproof. Even one case to the contrary is sufficient to puncture it completely. Now there are many cases in which *necesse est* or an equivalent is used for a moral obligation, or for a combination of a logical and a moral obligation. In I, 31, 3 we find that it was necessary (*necessarium fuit*) to expose the Gnostic doctrines, so that the Gnostics themselves might be saved if they would do penance and turn to God, and so that other men might no longer be misled. But such a necessity is evidently not a merely logical one. Irenaeus was obliged to prevent those evils. In III, 15, 1 he says that men must (*necessitatem habent*) receive Paul's testimony if they accept Luke's; and from the whole tenor of his argument this again is not merely a logical necessity, but a moral obligation as well. Again, in the same locus (III, 15, 1), he writes that all must (*necesse habent omnes*) use Luke's Gospel and Acts. He definitely means a moral obligation of believing what these inspired writings teach. In III, 23, 1 he writes that it was necessary (*necesse fuit*) for Christ to "recapitulate" man and to save him, because it was so planned by God (a logical necessity), but also because that was according to God's will (a moral necessity). In III, 25, 1 he asserts that it is necessary (*necesse est*) that God be known through His providence; this is a logical necessity, but not merely that; it is also a moral obligation of knowing God, as is clear from the argumentation in Books II and III. In IV, 1, 2, again, the necessity of knowing God is clearly a moral obligation. So Irenaeus does use *necesse est* or equivalents for moral obligation. Hence, it is at least possible that this expression denotes moral obligation in III, 3, 2. The positive arguments below will make certain the presence of moral obligation in this passage.

Furthermore, the idea of logical necessity or propriety does not do justice to the aim of Irenaeus, nor to the reason for the necessity. It would be poor logic to reason that the Roman Church always suffices by herself as a criterion of truth *because* it is reasonable or highly logical to agree with her on account of her priority in age or eminent origin. It is true that if the intrinsic reason for a strict logical necessity were the infallible, authentic teaching office of the Roman Church, the *propter* clause would seem to be sufficiently explained. But there are still other arguments to exclude mere logical necessity. Logical necessity would involve an obligation, but only a logical one and only on the part of the people; it would not imply a moral power, a right, on the part of the Roman Church, as the context demands. We shall, therefore, give positive proof that the obligation in question is a moral one.

As we noted before, this is quite generally the interpretation of Catholics, and was held by them unanimously until non-Catholics began to propose either the factual or the logical necessity. It was the one taken for granted in the Vatican Council.<sup>22</sup>

Moral necessity alone satisfies the purpose Irenaeus has in adding this sentence, namely, as a reason why the Roman Church suffices, in place of all other Churches taken together, for finding the apostolic tradition. If the Roman Church suffices at all times for finding the truth, then she must be infallible by herself, independently of all the others. But Irenaeus has already clearly stated that principle, before offering it here as the reason for the need of conforming to the Roman Church. The self-sufficient infallibility of the Roman Church would, of itself, demand at least strict logical necessity of conforming to her. But the context demands more. The office of infallible teacher in the Church of Christ includes the office of authoritative teacher. In the concrete these offices are inseparable, and of this Irenaeus is quite aware. He calls attention to the fact that the Church has received from the Apostles the power to teach with an authority that binds all the others to agree with her (III, Pref.). This is unmistakably confirmed by the fact that immediately before our sentence Irenaeus has said that the Roman Church suffices to confound all the heretics and schismatics. But she confounds them not merely by proving them to be in error but by obliging them to conform to her, to unite with her. That is the only way that schismatics can be fully confounded. Otherwise it would have been enough to say that the Roman Church can confound all heretics.

The interpretation given is in keeping, too, with the remote aim of this entire section. In the preface to Book III, Irenaeus tells us that he will give the reader of this book ample proof for the "true and living faith" which was received by the Church from the Apostles, and which she distributes to her children. Christ gave the Apostles the power over the Gospel, by which we can know Christ's doctrine. To spurn the Apostles is to spurn Christ. This implies, evidently, the moral obligation of believing the Apostles, the Church. In III, 3, 1, Irenaeus writes that the Apostles transmitted to the bishops their office as authentic and authoritative teachers (cf. also III, 1, 2). If the entire Church, then, has this office of authoritative as well as authentic teacher, and if the Roman Church by herself suffices for knowing the truth and for confounding the separatists, then this Roman Church by herself has this office of teaching authoritatively as well as authentically.

This conclusion is confirmed, again, by the illustration that follows

<sup>22</sup> *DB, loc. cit.*

shortly: the office that the Roman Bishop, Clement, exercised towards the Corinthian Church was that of authoritative teacher, "renewing her faith" and bringing her to terms of peace. This conclusion is confirmed, finally, by the inference which Irenaeus himself makes in III, 4, 1: one must avoid (*oportet devitare*) the heretics and accept the tradition of the truth (as found in the Roman Church, of which he has been speaking). And *oportet* implies a moral obligation, as all admit. This *oportet* is really a commentary on *necesse est*.

The most weighty intrinsic argument is in the text of III, 3, 2 itself. Irenaeus gives a reason (*propter*) for this necessity of agreeing: the reason is that the Roman Church has the *potentioorem principatitatem*. As we said before, if the necessity were merely factual or logical, there would be no sense in ascribing to the Roman Church this excellence in regard to the other Churches as the reason for their having to conform to her. Moral necessity alone satisfies this reason. We shall show that there is question here of a moral power. This greater moral power would have no effect whatever either on factual or on logical necessity, even the strictest. Factual necessity of conformity exists by the very fact of the existence of similar objects. Logical necessity effects agreement by a logical principle of reasonableness or by logically necessary similarity. In either case moral power cannot touch, much less increase, the effectiveness of the necessity which produces the conformity. Moral necessity, on the other hand, supposes moral power, and the greater the moral power, the more effective the moral necessity.

Another forceful argument—a conclusive one, in fact—is found in the parallel passages, in which Irenaeus even refers to our passage. True, in those passages the Roman Church is not spoken of in particular, but since the Roman Church has a *potentioorem principatitatem*, what is said of all the bishops must be true *a fortiori* of the Roman Church. Now, in IV, 26, 2 Irenaeus writes: "It is of obligation (*oportet*) to obey the presbyters of the Church, those, namely, who, *as we have shown*, possess the succession from the Apostles." Now the only place where he showed this is in III, 3, 1-2. *Oportet* is certainly a moral obligation, an obligation of obeying; consequently, *necesse est* is a moral obligation. In both cases it is all the faithful who must obey or agree with the Church. In IV, 26, 4 he writes: "So it is of obligation to keep away from all such [presbyters] and, contrariwise, to adhere to those who, *as we have said*, guard the doctrine of the Apostles, and who together with those of the priestly rank offer sound doctrine and blameless conduct for the formation and correction of the rest." Again, there is here a moral obligation of adhering to the bishops

and priests, who not only teach but also correct. This is true, with greater reason, of the Roman Church. Lastly, in V, 20, 2, he tells his readers that they have the obligation (*oportet*) of fleeing from the teachings of the heretics, and of taking refuge in the Church. In n. 1 he has referred to Book III, where he claims he showed that the heretics are of later date than the bishops to whom the Apostles handed down the Churches. So in n. 2 of this passage he is evidently referring to III, 3, 2, on the necessity of agreeing with the Church; even the idea of avoiding the heretics came immediately before the idea of agreeing in III, 3, 2.

Koch attempts to prove a necessity which he calls logical necessity, but which is really factual, by saying that such a necessity gives rise to greater certitude than moral necessity (p. 58). But the two necessities cannot be compared from the viewpoint of certainty. They are in different fields altogether and each has its own kind of certainty. Besides, it is not a question here of which necessity begets the greater certainty. The question is: what kind of a necessity is it?

When all the arguments are considered—the unanimous opinion of Catholic writers until recent years, the expression itself, the text, context, proximate and remote, the parallel cases—there is little room for doubting that *necesse est* expresses a moral obligation on all the Churches, that is, on all the faithful, of agreeing with, of adhering to, of obeying the Roman Church.

We do not thereby exclude strict logical necessity altogether. No, the moral necessity supposes the logical. The authoritative teaching office supposes the authentic teaching office. But we insist that the logical necessity is not the adequate meaning of Irenaeus' expression. In other words, the Roman Church is not merely the necessary exemplary cause of the tradition of the other Churches; she is also the formal cause; she possesses the formal power to command that others conform themselves to her.

#### PROPTER POTENTIOREM PRINCIPALITATEM

##### *Potentiorem*

St. Irenaeus gives as reason for the necessity on the part of the other Churches to conform to the Roman Church, the latter's *potentior principalitas*. It is important, then, to determine the nature of this *principalitas*. But, since the meaning of *potentior* can be determined by itself, and since the meaning of *principalitas* will be controlled by *potentior*, we shall first determine the meaning of this adjective.

Some scholars have questioned this reading of the adjective. The codex of Clermont has *pontiorem*, while the others have our reading. There are those who thought the Clermont reading supposes *potiorem* as the correct

word, which an ancient hand had corrected, wrongly, to *potentioorem* (thus, e.g., Massuet, Mohrmann). It seems very unlikely, however, that a scribe, wishing to write *potioorem*, unwittingly inserted an extra *n* and got *pontioorem*; and it seems very likely, on the other hand, that *potentioorem* was accidentally shortened to *pontioorem*. Since the MSS favor *potentioorem*, there seems little doubt that that is the genuine word.

Now for its meaning. The idea of power is without doubt fundamental to *potentior*. The Latin translator uses the adjective *potens* and *potentior*, or equivalents, a number of times to mean powerful. It is certainly used for physical power in V, 3, 3, of God who is powerful (*δυνατός*) to produce the resurrection. In V, 4, 1 the comparative is used: "Quis potentior et fortior." In II, 6, 1 God's "invisible nature is powerful (*potens*) to bestow mental intuition of His most powerful (*potentissimae*) eminence." In II, 14, 9 there is question of "the images that have names that are . . . more powerful (*magis potentia*), by the very meaning of the word, to lead one to a contemplation of the divinity." In I, 10, 2 he writes of one "qui valde praeualet in sermone" (*ὁ δυνατός ἐν λόγῳ*). In II, 5, 3 he speaks of a god who would be "potentior et fortior et dominator," and in n. 4 of a necessity that would be "majorem et dominatiorem." The Latin uses the noun *potestas* for physical and moral power. To conclude, *potentior* can hardly mean anything else than more powerful, or greater, or something similar. We must, of course, suppose that the slavish Latin translator gave us a literal version here. Whatever the Greek word, then, it expressed the idea of something more powerful.

It seems certain that in this case Irenaeus wrote the comparative degree, as the Latin has. Stieren claims that, since there are cases where the translator changed a superlative to a comparative (e.g., in I, 9, 1, *σεβασμιωτάτην* became *venerabilior*), and since immediately before there occurred *antiquissimae* and *maximae*, both superlatives, for the Church of Rome, Irenaeus had a superlative for *potentioorem*. This, however, is not probable because precisely here he is comparing the Roman Church with all the other Churches taken as a group, for which the comparative degree is quite correct.

What might have been the Greek for this adjective? Various suggestions have been made. The writer likes Chapman's choice of *δυνατωτέρα*. In I, Pref., 3, *potenter* translates *δυνατός*; and in I, 25, 2 the heretics who think themselves *fortiores* than Jesus are *δυνατωτέροις*. But there is great probability for *ικανωτάτην*. In III, 3, 3 Irenaeus speaks of Pope Clement's letter as *ικανωτάτην γραφήν*, where the Latin has *potentissimas litteras*, that is, a very authoritative, a very effective letter. In III, 3, 4 he speaks of Polycarp's

letter as one which offers us a model of faith and of the preaching of the truth. He calls this letter *ικανωτάτη*, for which the Latin version has *perfectissima*. In I, Pref., 3 he uses *ικανώτερος* (*idoneus*) in the sense of being more capable of refuting the heretics.

Others choose *κυριωτέραν*, which occurs twice in I, 13, 4 in the sense of higher authority or greater dominion. The Latin is *dominator*. It seems that this was the Greek for the other cases where the Latin has *dominator* or an equivalent. In II, 1, 2 the Latin has *magis dominus*, as a coordinate of *majus est*, said of Marcion's good god. In II, 5, 3-4 it is *dominator*; in II, 16, 1, *magis dominantem*. This would fit in well with *principalitas*.

Saltet chose *αἰθεντικωτέραν* to go with *ἀρχήν* (p. 186). He appealed to Tertullian who speaks of "Ecclesia authenticae regulae."<sup>23</sup> But in Tertullian this word seems to mean genuine. Besides, there is no case in Irenaeus where *potens* translates *αἰθεντικός*. Knox (p. 183) and Mohrmann (p. 57) prefer *ὑπερεχούσα* to go with *ἡγεμονία*. Harvey favors *διαφορωτέραν*. But all of these suggestions confirm the meaning powerful. This is the important point to remember.

### *Principalitatem*

We shall first state the problem. What is the nature of this *principalitas*? Wherein does the priority consist if there is any? Since all the Churches possess the *principalitas* and the Roman Church only a greater degree of it, it must be of the same nature in all and cannot in itself express a priority of primacy. The primacy must be expressed in *potentior*. The problem resolves itself into the question of the nature of the *principalitas*.

Six distinct meanings have been advanced for *principalitas*: (1) jurisdictional or moral power, or, in other words, an authoritative as well as authentic teaching office; (2) only an authentic, that is, infallible, teaching office; (3) prestige because of eminent origin from the Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul; (4) prestige resulting from antiquity or primitiveness; (5) prestige of the Roman Church itself, but because of the prestige of the imperial city; (6) prestige of the imperial city alone and directly. Only in the first case would the Roman Church have a real primacy of power; in the other cases it would have at most a primacy of honor.

I hope to show that *principalitas* is essentially a power to teach authentically and authoritatively. This is certainly the meaning taken by the Vatican Council.<sup>24</sup> It is the traditional Catholic interpretation and today

<sup>23</sup> *Adversus Valentinianos*, 4 (*PL*, II, 581-82; *CSEL*, XLVII, 181).

<sup>24</sup> *DB*, *loc. cit.*

by far the more common opinion. Only after non-Catholics discarded this interpretation did some Catholics also interpret it as prestige because of primitiveness and eminent origin.

Our first argument is taken from the word itself as used in the Latin version of Irenaeus. It is used a number of times and, without exception, means power. Sometimes, by personification, this abstract noun stands for the supreme being of the Gnostics' system. In I, 26, 1 "ab ea principalitate quae est super universa" occurs twice. The first time the Greek, preserved by Hippolytus, has ἐξουσία; the second time, αἰθερία. In both cases it is the name of the supreme being of the Cerinthians and means "supreme or sovereign power," above which there is no other. In I, 31, 1 Cain is said to come "a superiore principalitate," and the Greek is αἰθερία. It is again the supreme being with sovereign power. In I, 24, 1, "Father" in Saturninus' system is called *summa potestas*, which is but a variant translation of αἰθερία, the Greek word extant here, and a clear proof that *principalitas* and αἰθερία mean sovereign power. This is confirmed by the fact that a few lines lower it is a synonym for *virtus* (δύναμις).

In the other cases of *principalitas* the Greek is not extant. It must, however, have been αἰθερία or ἐξουσία if this latter is genuine in Hippolytus' fragment. In I, 30, 8 Irenaeus writes of the Spirit, according to the Ophites, as originating "a principalitate," that is, from the Fullness viewed as the sovereign power. To this there is a parallel in IV, 35, 2. In II, 1, 2 Irenaeus argues that Marcion's good god would have to be surrounded "ab altera principalitate, quam necesse est majorem esse." Here we have a sovereign power that would be greater than some other sovereign power in its own field, greater obviously by power and authority. In IV, 35, 2-4 *principalitas* occurs three times in the sense of sovereign power, and is synonymous with Fullness, as is clear from the beginning of n. 1, and from 36, 1. In IV, 38, 3 we read: "Ut sic principalitatem quidem habebit in omnibus." The Greek fragment has only one word for *principalitatem habebit*, the verb πρωτεύει. This was evidently inspired by Col. 1:18, which is quoted verbatim in III, 16, 6 and 15, 3. There the Latin translator used *principatum* in place of the Vulgate *primatum*. Since in III, 3, 2 we have only a noun construction, and since in the above passages there is a verb construction, they are not parallel. However, they help us to prove that the Latin translator took *principalitas* in the sense of sovereign power. In II, 30, 9 it is used as a name for the angels, and evidently denotes power. It is a synonym for *principatus*, because in 30, 6 the same groups of angels are mentioned twice. Three of them are the same as in 30, 9, leaving *principalitas* and *principatus* as naming the same angels. For this the Greek may have been ἀρχή, because



Irenaeus alludes to those groups of angels in Eph. 1:21, where the group corresponding to *principalitas* or *principatus* is ἀρχή. Elsewhere (II, 28, 6; 30, 6; III, 7, 1) Irenaeus uses *principatus* for these angels, or *principia* (II, 30, 6; I, 24, 5).

To conclude, the Latin translator, without exception, uses *principalitas* in the sense of power, even sovereign power. He must, then, have intended that same meaning in III, 3, 2. This is confirmed by his use of cognate words. We have already noted a few cases where *principatus* always means supreme power, as does *principia* at times. Here are other cases. In II, 28, 7 God is said to have *principatum* over all things; in IV, 20, 2 *principatum habere* is used three times for Christ's power in heaven and on earth. It is inspired by Col. 1:18. In I, 30, 5 there is question of a quarrel about the *principatu*, that is, the sovereign power; and in I, 23, 3 we have *concupiscere principatum*, for which the Greek is φιλαρχεῖν. In II, 6, 2 Irenaeus says that the people ought to recognize the Roman Emperor as the one who has the greatest ruling power (*maximam potestatem principatus*). Another cognate word, *princeps*, is used very often. Sometimes it translates ἀρχῶν (I, 11, 1; 24, 3), sometimes ἀρχηγός (II, 22, 4; III, 12, 5). It always means one who has power of ruling or leadership.

The verbs *principiari* (deponent), *principiare* (active), and *principari*, are used in the sense of having sovereign power. In II, 33, 4 Irenaeus writes: "Anima possidet et principiatur corpori," for which the Greek most probably was κρατεῖ καὶ προηγείται. Compare I, 13, 4, where he refutes Marcus: "One who commands is greater and of higher authority (κυριώτερον, *dominatus*) than the one who is commanded, since the one rules (προηγείται, *principatur*), but the other is subject." In II, 34, 4 he says, "principiari enim debet in omnibus et dominari voluntas Dei," that is, it ought to have sovereignty and dominion over all things. In V, 34, 4 citing Isa. 32:1, where the LXX has ἄρχοντες . . . ἄρχουσιν, he has *principes* . . . *principiabunt*. This cognate verb, then, clearly favors the idea of sovereign power in *principalitas*.

A last cognate word is *principalis*. The Latin version used it often but in various meanings. Its root meaning is, of course, "first." In the translation of Irenaeus it has these three distinct meanings: (1) powerful, i.e., first in the order of power, having authority, sovereign; (2) main, chief, i.e., first in importance, in dignity, primary; (3) original, primitive, ancient, primary, or first in the order of existence. Though the first and the third meaning seem, in the abstract, to be far apart, they can be very close in the concrete. In reference to the Churches antiquity and sovereignty go hand in hand.

Now for the first meaning: powerful, sovereign. In IV, 35, 2 *principalis* is used as an equivalent for *principalitas*, which occurs twice there. In IV, 36, 1 Irenaeus writes that the Son comes from the Father *principali auctoritate*, whereas servants come from the Lord *serviliter*. The Son, then, comes with sovereign power. Since in I, 31, 1 *superior principalitas* and in I, 24, 1 *summa potestas* translate the one word *αἰθεντία*, it is possible that in IV, 36, 1 *principali auctoritate* translates that one word. In IV, 11, 8 *principale* stands for *ἡγεμονικόν* in the sense of sovereign. It is used with the adjectives "powerful" and "kingly." In the same paragraph *principalis* stands for *ἡγεμονική* ("sovereign"), along with "powerful" and "glorious," describing the generation of the Son from the Father. Possibly, then, the earlier idea that the Son comes from the Father *principali auctoritate* was expressed as *ἡγεμονικῆ ἐξουσία*. There is, in any case, ample confirmation from *principalis* that *principalitas* means sovereign power, especially since in the first instance they are used synonymously in that sense.

But *principalis* can also mean "main, chief." *Principales* is used once in the sense of "main tenets" (I, 29, 1). The cognate *principia* occurs in III, 17, 7 in the sense of "capital points" of the Gospel; also in n. 9. In II, Pref., 2; 1, 1; 19, 8, *capitulum* is found in this sense. The Greek could have been the same in these cases. In II, 13, 1, Mind, the Aeon, is said to be "quod est principale et summum, et veluti principium et fons universi sensus," where *principium* means the "primary thing," i.e., Mind is first in origin and in relation to the other Aeons, as efficient cause. In II, 18, 4 Irenaeus says that the word is "the chief thing" of which man thinks. In IV, 4, 1 the adverb *principaliter* means primarily, as opposed to secondarily. In I, 9, 3 there is mention of the Gnostics' Word not becoming flesh *principaliter*, *προηγουμενῶς*. Since according to the Gnostics the Word did not become flesh at all directly, but only indirectly inasmuch as He contributed to the formation of the Savior, the term here must mean "directly," a meaning that the Greek, too, can have.

Now for the meanings "original" and "ancient": one can distinguish between these two adjectives, though both have to do with priority in time. "Original," "primitive," and "pristine" express directly the idea of first, primary in existence, and abstract from the subsequent duration. "Ancient" expresses directly the idea of a long duration of what is first, and only indirectly the idea of being first. In fact, in "ancient" this indirect meaning can be absent altogether. Irenaeus' translator uses *principalis* both for "original" and for "ancient."

First, "original." In II, 12, 6 (twice) and 7; 15, 1; 21, 1; 23, 2, *principalis* is used with *prima* for the Ogdoad and Tetrad: "the first and original." In these cases the Greek is not extant. In II, 12, 5 it is *prima et archegonos*,

where *archegonos* is a transliteration of the Greek and evidently in place of the translation *principalis*. In I, 1, 1; 5, 2; 7, 2; 9, 3; 11, 5, the translator has consistently this pair: *prima et primogenita* (though twice the adjectives are inverted). In I, 1, 1 *primogenita* alone is used. In all these cases in Book I the Greek is *ἀρχέγονος*, which means original or primary. So it seems quite certain that in Book II *principalis* stands for *archegonos*, and is a synonym for *primogenita*, and so it means original or primary. In II, 17, 4 Irenaeus illustrates a point by saying that when lights are brought together they regain their "original" (*principalis*) unity, since one light results, which existed from the beginning. The adverb *principaliter* has the meaning of originally in IV, 17, 3, and V, 27, 2. In this second case the Greek is *προηγητικῶς*.

Next, "ancient." In I, 9, 3 and V, 12, 3 the Latin has *vetus plasmatio*; in I, 28, 1, *antiqua plasmatio*. In all three cases the Greek fragments have *ἀρχαία πλάσις*. Moreover, in V, 14, 1 and 2 the Latin has *principalis plasmatio*, and in 5, 21, 1 *principalis homo*. Because of the parallel expression one might think it certain that *principalis* and *vetus* are synonyms for the same Greek *ἀρχαία*. But this deduction is weakened by the fact that in V, 14, 2 we have also *prima plasmatio*, which supposes *πρώτη*. Thus, *principalis* in the other cases could stand for *πρώτη* or *ἀρχέγονος*, in the sense of primary or original. But even if *principalis* in these cases did mean original or ancient, we would still be very far from a proof that *principalitas* in III, 3, 2 means antiquity or genuinity or primitiveness.

So far, then, the argument from *principalis* to *principalitas* in the sense of antiquity or primitiveness is very slim. But now we come to what some consider a crucial text. In IV, 26, 2 *principalis* modifies *successio* in a context about the episcopal succession as a criterion of truth. The passage is quite similar, even in wording, to III, 3, 2.

Quapropter eis qui in Ecclesia sunt presbyteris obaudire oportet, his qui successionem habent ab Apostolis, sicut ostendimus; qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum secundum placitum Patris acceperunt: reliquos vero, qui absintunt a *principali successione*, et quocunque modo colliguntur, suspectos habere, vel quasi hereticos et malae sententiae, vel quasi scindentes et elatos et sibi placentes, aut rursus ut hypocritas, quaestus gratia et vanae gloriae hoc operantes.

The reading is certain, except that for *modo* (*τρόπῳ*) the Latin has *loco* (*τόπῳ*). The correction to "modo" was made according to the Armenian version of this passage and the parallel in III, 3, 2.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J. A. Robinson, "Notes on the Armenian Version of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses*, IV-V," *Journal of Theological Studies*, XXXII (1931), 370.

The parallel of this passage to III, 3, 2 is very striking. In both places there are the same three general groups of errors to be avoided: proud schismatics who please themselves, vainglorious hypocrites, evil-minded heretics. The same illegitimate gatherings are condemned: "qui quoque modo . . . praeterquam oportet colligunt" (III, 3, 2) and "et quocumque modo colliguntur" (IV, 26, 2). In both places the faithful are admonished to adhere to the apostolic, episcopal succession, which possesses the truth.

There is, however, an important difference. Though the general aim (to state that the truth is safeguarded by and found in the successors of the Apostles) is the same in both places, and though both places speak of the succession of all the bishops from all the Apostles, nevertheless only III, 3, 2 speaks specifically and separately of the succession and primacy of the Roman episcopacy from the Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. So IV, 26, 2 is parallel to III, 3, 1-4, but not specifically to III, 3, 2. *Principalis successio*, therefore, which in IV, 26, 2 is exactly the same as *successio ab apostolis* and *episcopatus successio*, is not parallel to *potentiorum principatitatem* of III, 3, 2, which is proper to the Roman Church and is greater than what the other Churches possess. The phrase of IV, 26, 2 rather parallels the episcopal succession spoken of in III, 3, 1.

Nevertheless, since the Apostolic succession of Rome has a greater *principalitas* than the other Churches have, these do have a *principalitas*, which in their case might be parallel to *principalis successio*. What, then, does *principalis* mean in IV, 26, 2? Above we noted that *principalis plasmatio* (V, 14, 1 and 2) or *homo* (V, 21, 1) might mean the ancient or original handiwork, or man, supposing the Greek to have been ἀρχαία. As a matter of fact, the Armenian version in IV, 26, 2 has "from the succession of the ancients."<sup>26</sup> And in Armenian the stem for "ancients" here is the same as for "ancient" in V, 14, 1 and 2, where the Greek is ἀρχαία. In view of this Van den Eynde argues that the Greek in IV, 26, 2 was ἀρχαία and that *principalis* means original (p. 172 ff.). From this he further deduces that *principalitas* in III, 3, 2 means antiquity or primitiveness, on the ground that IV, 26, 2 is a perfect parallel of III, 3, 2. He insists, too, that wherever *principalis* occurs in Irenaeus it is found with the idea of succession and supposes ἀρχαία. This observation is, however, quite incorrect. *Principalis*, as our examination above shows, is often used in Irenaeus apart from any idea of succession, and certainly without always translating ἀρχαία. However, because of the Armenian version there is a real probability that the Greek in IV, 26, 2 was ἀρχαία. But it is by no means certain, since the Armenian translator could have used the same word to translate different Greek words. We must note, however, that Irenaeus does stress elsewhere

<sup>26</sup> *Loc. cit.*

the idea of the antiquity of the Catholic bishops. In IV, 33, 8 he speaks of the "antiquus ecclesiae status," for which the Greek is τὸ ἀρχαῖον σύστημα. This is followed by an equivalent idea: "et character corporis Christi secundum successiones episcoporum." This seems implicitly to contain the idea of "an ancient succession." In III, 4, 1 he writes of all the Churches as *antiquissimae*, and in III, 3, 2 the Roman Church herself is called *antiquissima*. The idea, then, of an ancient or primitive succession would fit in very well in IV, 26, 2.

But even if *principalis* in IV, 26, 2 means original or ancient, one may not argue from this passage to the meaning of *principalitas* in III, 3, 2. As I pointed out, the two passages are not parallel in respect to the Roman Church. Besides, the word *principalitas* stands on its own feet, independently of support from *principalis*. Though the translator often uses *principalitas*, he always gives it the meaning of sovereign power and never is there even an inkling of antiquity or primitiveness. And to say that the *principalis successio* (original succession) is the same as the *principalitas* (primitiveness) which the other Churches have in a less degree than the Roman, is to miss the context. Of this we shall speak later on.

In IV, 26, 3 *principalis* is used in a context parallel to that of IV, 26, 2. Irenaeus condemns those who believe they are presbyters, though they are slaves of lust and have no fear in their hearts; who dishonor others but are themselves elated by the pride of *principalis concessionis*, as the MSS. have it. *Concessio* makes no sense. Grabe, Feuardentius, Harvey, and others, changed it to *consessionis*; namely, these people were proud of the *principalis* episcopal chair. The Armenian version confirms this correction and makes it certain. It has one word for the two, which corresponds to the Greek πρωτοκαθεδρίας.<sup>27</sup> It is certain, too, that the Latin did not have *consessionis*, as in n. 2, as many scholars guessed. Neither is *principalis* here parallel to the same word in IV, 26, 2, if in the latter passage it really means original and supposes ἀρχαία. Here *principalis* certainly means first. This is a confirmation that *principalis* can mean chief, most important, and does not necessarily mean ancient when associated with succession.

We must conclude from this analysis of the cognate words for *principalitas*, that there is no solid probability that this word means antiquity or primitiveness, and that there are many positive proofs that it means sovereign power. However, before we pass on to other intrinsic arguments from Irenaeus, it will be worthwhile to consult other ancient writers on their use of *principalitas* and *principalis*, perhaps even in a context on the Roman primacy and in dependence on Irenaeus.

Tertullian, a contemporary of Irenaeus, uses these words rather fre-

<sup>27</sup> *Loc. cit.*

quently. He uses *principalitas* in the sense of sovereign power. In *De anima*, c. 13, he defines and describes it thus:

Ad hoc dispicere oportet *principalitas* ubi est, quid cui praeest, ut cuius *principalitas* apparuerit. . . . Id autem, cui massa substantiae praeerit, in officium naturale substantiae deputetur. . . . Habes animae *principalitatem*, habes in illa et substantiae unionem, cuius intelligas instrumentum esse animam, non patrocinium.<sup>28</sup>

In this discussion about whether the soul or the mind is superior, he concludes that the soul is superior. It has "the sovereign power," the *principalitas*, which includes the power to rule (*praeest, praeerit*) the mind. In *De carnis resurrectione*, 15, he argues that the flesh ought to share the glory of the soul: "Sed etsi in cerebro vel in medio superciliorum discrimine vel ubiubi philosophis placet, *principalitas* sensuum consecrata est, quod *hegemonikon* appellatur, caro erit omne cogitatorium."<sup>29</sup> Regardless, then, of where the philosophers wish to put the "ruling power of the senses," the seat of thinking will always be somewhere in the flesh. Here again, *principalitas* means sovereign ruling power. In chapter 16 he continues by interpreting *principalitas* by *imperium*.<sup>30</sup>

In *De praescriptione haereticorum*, c. 31, Tertullian writes: "Sed ab excessu ["digression"] revertar ad principalitatem veritatis et posterioritatem mendacitatis disputandum." Because of the contrast with *posterioritatem*, *principalitas* has here a temporal meaning: truth is prior to falsehood; truth is the original, the genuine thing. This is confirmed by the illustration of the wheat that was sowed before the cockle. The dominant meaning, however, is not temporal priority, but genuineness. The idea, moreover, of ruling is not excluded. Truth really holds the supremacy over lies, in power as well as in time, and, perhaps, in time because in power. In chapter 20, Tertullian equates *primae* and *apostolicae* as predicates of the Churches: the latter are prior in time and are genuine. In chapter 35, speaking of the Catholic system, he writes: "Posterior nostra res non est, immo omnibus prior est: hoc erit testimonium veritatis ubique occupantis *principatum*; apostolis non damnatur, immo defenditur." This means that truth possesses a sovereign rule. In chapter 36, he continues as follows on the primacy of the Roman Church: "Age iam, qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuae, percurrere ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsae authenticae litterae eorum recitantur. . . . Habes Romanam, unde nobis

<sup>28</sup> *De anima*, 13 (*PL*, II, 708; *CSEL*, XX, 317).

<sup>29</sup> *De carnis resurrectione*, 15 (*PL*, II, 860; *CSEL*, XLVII, 44).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 (*PL*, II, 860-61; *CSEL*, XLVII, 45).

quoque auctoritas praesto est. . . ."<sup>31</sup> If authority comes to the Carthaginian Church from Rome, then the Roman Church holds the primacy of authority; like truth, she possesses the sovereign power. He could have written *principality* in place of *principatum*.

There can be no doubt, then, that for Tertullian *principalitas* means sovereign power and could have been predicated of the Roman Church in place of *principatum*. Some scholars have, however, tried to prove that the adjective *principalis* means ancient in Tertullian and in St. Cyprian; and that consequently *principalitas* in Irenaeus means antiquity. We shall, therefore, analyze their use of this adjective. Tertullian uses it in the various meanings that we have found in Irenaeus. A number of times (this includes the adverb) it means chief or main or primary.<sup>32</sup> A number of times it is employed in the sense of original, rather than ancient; at times with the implication of being genuine, authentic.<sup>33</sup> In *Adversus Valentinianos* Tertullian speaks of *principalium magistrorum* in the sense of the chief or the original teachers among the Gnostics, who discovered "the original tenets," as opposed to the self-appointed leaders of their followers.<sup>34</sup>

In one case he gives *principalis* the direct meaning of authentic: "Principalem adversus Iudaismum epistolam nos quoque confitemur quae Galatas docet."<sup>35</sup> We have seen that he uses *authenticus* in that sense (*De anima*, c. 36); see also *Adversus Valentinianos*, c. 4: "de ecclesia authenticae regulae."<sup>36</sup> Once he defines *principale* thus: "Quid principale, nisi quod super omnia, nisi quod ante omnia, et ex quo omnia? Haec Deus habendo est, et solus habendo unus est."<sup>37</sup> Tertullian is showing God's supremacy over all creatures. In this *principale* there is priority in time (*ante omnia*), and in origin (*ex quo omnia*), but first of all in power (*super omnia*). Priority in power, or superiority in His own nature, is the basis for God's priority in time and in efficient causality. This primacy of power, then, is the fundamental and essential note of *principale*. This text is most

<sup>31</sup> *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 31, 20, 35, 36 (*PL*, II, 51, 37, 58, 58-59; *CSEL*, LXX, 39, 24, 45).

<sup>32</sup> *De patientia*, 5 (*PL*, I, 1367; *CSEL*, XLVII, 6); *ibid.* (*PL*, I, 1369; *CSEL*, XLVII, 9); *Adversus Marcionem*, IV, 36 (*PL*, II, 480; *CSEL*, XLVII, 544); *De corona*, 13 (*PL*, II, 116; *CSEL*, LXX, 182); *De idololatria*, 11 (*PL*, I, 752; *CSEL*, XX, 41; here *principalis* could mean ancient); *De pudicitia*, 21 (*PL*, II, 1080; *CSEL*, XX, 271).

<sup>33</sup> *De pudicitia*, 1 and 5 (*PL*, II, 1034, 1039; *CSEL*, XX, 221, 226; *Adversus Valentinianos*, 27 (*PL*, II, 619; *CSEL*, XLVII, 203; this is the Irenaean *archegonos-principalis*).

<sup>34</sup> *Adversus Valentinianos*, 5 (*PL*, II, 582-83; *CSEL*, XLVII, 182).

<sup>35</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, V, 2 (*PL*, II, 502; *CSEL*, XLVII, 571).

<sup>36</sup> *Adversus Valentinianos*, 4 (*PL*, II, 581; *CSEL*, XLVII, 180 f.).

<sup>37</sup> *Adversus Hermogenem*, 4 (*PL*, II, 225; *CSEL*, XLVII, 131).

important and decisive in proving that *principalis* need not mean ancient or original in Tertullian or Irenaeus or Cyprian, and that when there is question of the soul or of God, as also of the Church, the idea of primacy in power is fundamental, even though the idea of primitiveness may not be excluded altogether. Furthermore, in arguing from Tertullian to Irenaeus one need not go indirectly from the *principalis* of Tertullian to *principalis* in IV, 26, 2 and then to *principalitatem* in III, 3, 2; one can go directly from *principalitatem* in Tertullian to that word in Irenaeus, III, 3, 2. It means sovereign power in both Tertullian and Irenaeus, even though there may be an added connotation of antiquity and genuinity.

As for St. Cyprian, a fellow countryman of Tertullian, he calls the Roman Church *principalis*.

Post ista adhuc insuper, pseudoepiscopo sibi ab haereticis constituto, navigare audent et ad Petri cathedram atque ecclesiam *principalem*, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est, ab schismaticis litteras ferre nec cogitare eos esse romanos, quorum fides, Apostolo praedicante, laudata est, ad quos perfidia habere non possit accessum.<sup>38</sup>

What does St. Cyprian mean to predicate of the Roman Church by calling her *ecclesia principalis*? He coordinates this expression with *Petri cathedram*. Now this latter is certainly the Roman See or bishopric, and that at the time of St. Cyprian, with all its primacy of power and dignity and infallibility, as Cyprian himself indicates. Only indirectly is there reference to its antiquity, inasmuch as it is *Peter's* chair, founded by him. In the same way *ecclesia principalis* refers directly to the primacy in power of the Roman Church. This is confirmed by the phrase that follows, "unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est," added by Cyprian as the formal reason for the recourse to the *ecclesia principalis*. He is not merely adding a fact which has no causal relation to the preceding: he is giving the formal effect of the *ecclesia principalis* precisely as *principalis*, namely, as having sovereign power which alone makes for unity in the priesthood, and so in the Church. *Principalis*, then, designates essentially and directly a primacy of power. I say "essentially and directly" because indirectly it may connote antiquity and genuinity. Certainly, mere antiquity could not beget such unity.

In this usage of *principalis*, therefore, Cyprian agrees perfectly with Tertullian's definition and use both of *principale* and *principalitas*; and also with Irenaeus' use of both words. Batiffol's attempt to prove from Tertullian that Cyprian refers to the antiquity of the Roman Church,<sup>39</sup> was a futile effort, as d'Alès amply showed.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Epistolae*, LIX, 14 (CSEL, III/2, 683).

<sup>39</sup> *Le Catholicisme de saint Augustin* (3rd edition; Paris, 1920), p. 102, footnote 2.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. article listed in the bibliography.



Though St. Augustine uses only words that are cognate to *principalitas* for describing the Roman Primacy, he can be of help here. "Ecce ubi commemorat Cyprianus, in Ep. 5, quod etiam nos in scripturis sanctis didicimus, apostolum Petrum in quo *primatum* apostolorum tam excellenti gratia praeeminet. . . . Quis enim nescit illum apostolatus *principatum* cuiuslibet episcopatus praefarendum?"<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere he argues that the Bishop of Carthage, although he has no small authority himself, need have no fear, because he is close to Rome: "Romanae Ecclesiae, in qua semper apostolicae cathedrae viguit *principatus*."<sup>42</sup> This last quotation, because of the wording "in qua semper apostolicae" and because of the idea of a primacy of power (*principatum*) seems certainly to allude to Irenaeus III, 3, 2, and to have been inspired by it. Thus, *principatus* is an interpretation of *principalitas* as primacy of power. Further, the *primatus* and *principatus* of the first quotation are also mere synonyms for Irenaeus' *principalitas*, and are inspired by it.

A last use of Irenaeus, among the more ancient writers, is found in Hugo Eterianus, whom we quoted above for *convenire*. He is writing *ex professo* on the primacy of power of Rome as contrasted with the primacy of honor of Constantinople.

Huius Ecclesia de se splendorem emittit *semper*, et non tenebrescit: a qua exit lex et iudicium, *ad quam* homines *undique* terrarum *conveniunt* et merito. . . . Quibus ex rebus liquido claret quod Petrum eiusque successorem *principem* Christus et caput non modo Latinorum. . . . Episcopus Constantinopoleos habeto *primatum honoris* post Romae episcopatum. . . . Beatissimum vero episcopum Constantinopoleos novae Romae, secundum ordinem habere post apostolicum thronum antiquioris Romae. . . . Qua in re manifestum antiquioris Romae praesidem *potestatem* a Petro accepisse. . . . Nequaquam licere cuiquam omnium calumniari sanctissimam, et magnam, omniumque *principem* Romanam Ecclesiam. . . .<sup>43</sup>

There can be no doubt that Eterianus is ascribing to the Roman Church a primacy of power in ruling and in teaching infallibly. Does he depend on Irenaeus? It seems so. The similar phrase: "ad quam homines undique terrarum conveniunt," the idea of being always a source of light, that is, truth, for all the faithful, and the idea of being the *princeps* successor and the *princeps ecclesia*, seem to allude to Irenaeus III, 3, 2. Moreover, *princeps* and *primatus* are then inspired by *principalitas*, perhaps indirectly through the traditional use of *primatus*, *principatus*, and *principalis*.

With regard to all these quotations, even though it cannot be proved positively and with absolute certainty that these writers used Irenaeus, it

<sup>41</sup> *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, II, 1, 2 (PL, XLIII, 126-28; CSEL, LI, 175 f.).

<sup>42</sup> *Epistolae*, XLIII, 3, 7 (PL, XXXIII, 163).

<sup>43</sup> *De haeresibus Graecorum*, III, 17 (PL, CCII, 377, 375, 376).

is quite probable that they did. And it is always when ascribing to the Roman Church a primacy of power over all the other Churches.

After this digression we must come back to a further analysis of Irenaeus himself. The modifier *potentioorem* is, as others have already noted,<sup>44</sup> a very strong, in fact, decisive proof that *principalitas* denotes power and not antiquity or primitiveness or origin. *Potentioorem*, as we have shown, has basically the meaning of powerful, and so would fit well with *principalitas* in the sense of sovereign power. But even in its derived meaning of greater or higher, or something similar, it excludes the idea of antiquity or origin, since it is a comparative adjective. The Roman Church is not greater in antiquity than some of the other Churches (see references below). Nor, apart from power, has she a more eminent origin, as we also hope to show further on. It was quite proper for Irenaeus to write of the ancient or original succession of all the bishops collectively (cf. IV, 26, 2), but not of a greater antiquity or origin of the Roman Church.

The proximate context demands that this primacy be one of power. If we accept as proved, apart from the argument from *principalitas*, that *necesse est* imposes a moral obligation, then its correlative in *principalitas* must be a moral right or power, since it is added as the reason for the necessity. Again, in n. 1 Irenaeus predicated of all the Churches and their bishops an authentic and authoritative teaching office, and elsewhere he predicates this of the Church in general. Now, if in III, 3, 2 he insists that the Roman Church suffices by itself for finding the apostolic tradition and if he insists that she suffices because she has a greater *principalitas*, this *principalitas* can be nothing else but a greater office as authentic and authoritative teacher. Once more, the sequel (n. 3) is meant by Irenaeus as an illustration of the position of the Roman Church among the others, i.e., that she has a *potentior principalitas* and that she suffices by herself for finding the truth. But according to this third paragraph the Roman Church, concretely the Roman Bishop, *obliged* the Corinthian Church to come to terms of peace, an exercise of juridical power, and renewed her faith, an exercise of Rome's teaching office. It is futile to attempt to explain this passage and its relation to the preceding in any other manner.

It would be erroneous to argue that Irenaeus often speaks of the infallibility of the entire Church, of all the bishops; that III, 3, 2 would be the only place where he ascribes that power to the Roman Church alone; and that, consequently, he does not mean to ascribe to her such a primacy. Irenaeus expressly states that the Roman Church, over against all the other Churches, suffices by herself as a criterion of apostolic tradition. Then he

<sup>44</sup> Chapman, pp. 60-64; Walkley, pp. 287-93.

ascribes to this Church of Rome a greater sovereignty. This one authentic passage suffices to grant to the Roman Church a genuine primacy. All the other passages are to be interpreted in its light.<sup>45</sup> They are general statements that allow a particularization. In those general statements is included the particular statement about the Roman Church, which can be specified, as it is in III, 3, 2.

The anonymous author in *Civiltà Cattolica* would have *principalitas* mean the *bishopric* of the Roman Church (p. 296). In III, 3, 4 Peter and Paul are said to have founded and built up the bishopric of Rome. Now it is clear that Irenaeus means their bishopric, not in some abstract sense, but as possessing the power of ruling and teaching others. That, nevertheless, does not make *principalitas* and bishopric synonymous, does not give them the same formal meaning. They differ as an entity differs from its essential functions, or even as the possessor of a power differs from the power itself. On the other hand, they are so closely related that they can be interchanged in a discourse on the primacy of the Roman Church. But one should not think of translating *principalitas* by bishopric.

So much, then, for a positive defense of *principalitas*. What of the other opinions? That *principalitas* is the authentic, infallible teaching office without authority to enforce it or moral obligation on the part of the faithful to accept it, need not delay us longer. It is excluded by the positive reasons for an authoritative teaching office. Indeed, hardly anyone has held this opinion. Perhaps Salmasius and Koch (pp. 58–60, 70) did, the latter in combination with eminent origin. La Piana holds that *principalitas* is the primacy of the teaching office, but that it comes from the cosmopolitan character of the Roman Church, not from an inherent gift given to the Roman bishop (p. 252).

Mere priority in time was defended by those non-Catholics who claimed that Irenaeus refers only to the Churches in the West; e.g., Gieseler (p. 150, footnote 10) and Keble (p. 260). But even these appeal also to eminent origin. They might be said to argue thus: Irenaeus has just called the Roman Church *antiquissima*, and in IV, 26, 2 he styles the succession of all the bishops as ancient (*principalis*); since the translator was given to variations, *principalitas* is just a variant of *antiquitas*. Now, it cannot be denied that Irenaeus stresses the idea of antiquity along with apostolicity. All the apostolic Churches are “most ancient” (III, 4, 1); Pope Clement’s letter is older than the Gnostics (III, 3, 3); the tradition of the Church is ancient (III, 4, 2); the heretics appeared on the scene later, when the Church was already in her middle age (III, 4, 3); since the Apostles are

<sup>45</sup> Kneller, p. 413.

more ancient than the Gnostics, they agree with the translation of the Septuagint (III, 21, 3); the Gnostics are much later than the bishops, to whom the Apostles handed down the Churches (V, 20, 1). Nevertheless, in spite of his interest in the antiquity of the Church and its bishops in general, and even of the Roman Church, Irenaeus could not have meant that the Roman Church has a greater antiquity than all the other Churches. The very word *principalitas*, which he uses so often, and never in any other sense than sovereign power, is against this interpretation. But even if *principalitas* were used elsewhere for antiquity, it could not have that meaning here, because it would contradict Irenaeus' own statement in III, 4, 1 that the other Churches are equally *antiquissimae*, and in III, 12, 5 that the Church of Jerusalem is older and the mother of all the others, even the Roman. To evade this difficulty by saying that he has in mind only all the Western Churches in III, 3, 2, is quite mistaken, as we showed earlier.

It cannot be argued that Irenaeus himself, in II, 5, 2, equates antiquity and power: "Id quod magis potest, antiquius sit omnibus." He is speaking there of the various gods as opposed to the one true God, and in this realm, of course, the principle holds. But more must be considered than mere antiquity in the application of this principle. It cannot be applied indiscriminately as it stands. It would, for instance, never hold in proving the Christian religion against the Jewish, while it would hold in proving the Christian religion against all heretical and schismatic Christian sects. It does not apply to the genuine Apostolic Churches: the Church of Jerusalem, though more ancient, is subject to the power of the Roman Church.

Neither can *principalitas* be mere priority of honor or dignity because of more eminent origin, i.e., because founded and built up by St. Peter and St. Paul. This is the common non-Catholic interpretation. Thus Griesbach, Thiersch, Böhringer, Lipsius, Böhmer, Harnack, Pusey, Keble, Koch, Bonwetsch, Jalland. It has been accepted by a few Catholics; e.g., Hagemann, Funk, Altaner, Van den Eynde, Doyle, Bardy. These last three speak of it as primitiveness, but they do not have in mind sheer antiquity.

It is true that Irenaeus does consider it a great privilege of the Roman Church to have been founded by the Princes of the Apostles (III, 3, 2 and 4); this eminent origin did add to the prestige of the Roman Church. Paul, however, did not add to the *distinctive* prestige of the Church at Rome as described in the present section of Irenaeus. That was due to Peter alone, or else the Church of Ephesus would have equal *principalitas* since it was founded by Paul and presided over by John for many years, in fact, to within a generation of Irenaeus (III, 3, 4). Even though Paul as a very close co-worker is included in the plural *Apostoli tradiderunt*—Peter and

Paul handed over the bishopric of Rome to Linus—still it is Peter's bishopric given to one man, Linus. There were no two equal bishops on the chair of Rome. It is not Paul, in this partnership, but Peter who makes the difference. If Peter did not have absolute primacy by himself, it would hardly have been limited to one man in his immediate successor, as Irenaeus claims. The latter is not, as Karl Adam thinks, implicitly teaching that the primacy rested also on Paul, and that Cyprian first fully explained the primacy of Peter (p. 196 f.).

Above we showed that the entire context, proximate and remote, speaks of a moral power of all apostolic Churches to teach and a moral obligation on the part of all the faithful to obey. This moral power, then, must be the *principalitas* that Irenaeus implies here for all the Churches. Now, if the Roman Church has a fuller *principalitas* than the other Churches, this would have to include essentially and directly a greater power to teach and to rule. Moreover, the subsequent context definitely shows that the Roman Church has, uninvited, a right to intervene in case of a difference of opinion among the Churches, and to make her opinion prevail, as in the case of Corinth. But eminent origin alone would never give her such powerful rights.

Some non-Catholics have claimed that greater *principalitas* is here ascribed to the Roman Church, but that it is due her because of the prestige of the imperial city. Among these are Neander, Langen, Hitchcock, Lipsius, Kidd, Gieseler, La Piana, Knox, Beaven. They maintain that the imperial city of Rome attracted people from all over. These visitors, many of whom became settlers in Rome, gave the Church of Rome a cosmopolitan character. All these outsiders helped to keep the tradition of the Roman Church pure. According to some of these writers, the *in qua* phrase explains that the *potentior principalitas* is due to the conflux of all Churches into the Roman. At Rome all are witnesses to the truth.

To this it must be said that the *in qua* clause does not explain *potentior principalitas*, as if the former were the efficient cause of the latter. The *in qua* clause indicates rather the effect of the sovereign power, and is to be interpreted in the sense not of a confluence, but of an agreement. *Convenire*, we have shown, is essentially an agreeing with Rome, not a resorting to her.

This non-Catholic explanation ascribes the *active* preservation of the tradition to the faithful, and that to chance visitors and settlers. Such a notion, however, is completely foreign to the ecclesiology of Irenaeus who insists always that the bishops are the custodians of tradition. The Bishop of Rome, then, must be the custodian of tradition in the Roman Church. Actually, in the sequel (n. 3) it is so. And this Roman Bishop guards the

faith not only in the Church at Rome but also at Corinth! Furthermore, the opinion adduced flatly contradicts Irenaeus' reason for writing this sentence at all. It is meant to give the reason why it suffices for the faithful to receive the apostolic tradition from the Church of Rome. In other words, there is no question of their contributing to the tradition of Rome, but of receiving from her tradition.

To repeat what we said before, the prestige of the imperial city in drawing all nations to itself might have been a reason why St. Peter chose it as the seat of his bishopric, which already possessed the sovereign teaching and ruling power apart from any city. Consequently, when the bishopric was once established at Rome, it was only the sovereign rule of the Roman Church that brought the faithful to the Church of Rome as such, for the sake of agreeing with her.

A final opinion, which is an extreme version of the one just dealt with, holds that the *potentior principalitas* does not belong to the Roman Church at all, but to the city. It is the city of Rome that possesses this greater sovereign power because of the Emperor. And it is this greater sovereign power of the Emperor that compels all citizens of the Roman Empire to seek the capital, and so, indirectly, the Church there. This was held by Grabe, Döllinger, Puller, and Coxe in his edition of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. This view is so clearly anticipated by the arguments advanced above in favor of the sovereign power of the Church of Rome that it hardly needs further refutation. It runs up against the most obvious meaning of the words. But at least it testifies that *principalitas* means a sovereign power or authority. From all we have said it remains true that *principalitas* is jurisdictional authority to teach, and that the *potentior principalitas* of the Roman Church includes the authority to teach all the faithful, even of the other Churches.

What Greek word did Irenaeus have here? Since the translator indulged in "elegant variation," it is almost impossible to arrive at certainty. One can, however, exclude some words with a fair amount of certainty. From the lengthy discussions that we have just finished, it seems certain that *ἀρχαιότης* (antiquity, primitiveness) was not Irenaeus' word. It occurs nowhere in the extant Greek of Irenaeus, much less for *principalitas*. It was suggested because of the supposed parallel between IV, 26, 2 and III, 3, 2, between *principalis* and *principalitas*. Another suggestion is *πρωτεία* or *πρωτεύιον* in the sense of primacy. Irenaeus uses *πρωτεύειν*, borrowed from Col. 1:18, for God's supreme power over all things, as we saw, and given by the translator as *principalitatem habere*. However, here it occurs in a verb phrase, not in a noun phrase as in III, 3, 2. Besides, adjectival nouns

with superlative force do not seem to admit of a comparative degree, as Batiffol correctly noted (p. 209).

Some scholars have suggested *ἡγεμονία*. There is a slight basis for this in the fact that *principalis* translates *ἡγεμονικός* twice in Irenaeus. Tertullian, too, explains *principale* by *hegemonikon*. This word would, of course, clearly express the idea of ruling power.<sup>46</sup> Still others choose *ἐξουσία*, which certainly would mean power. It was most likely the word for *potestas* (cf. I, 4, 5) and for *principatus*, for the angelic choir especially (cf. II, 30, 4 and 6). It is extant, too, for *principalitas* in one instance (I, 26, 1). But since *αἰθενρία* is used immediately afterwards, as well as in other passages of Book I where the Greek is extant, *ἐξουσία* is doubtfully the original here. It remains however, a possible choice for III, 3, 2, but not more than possible.

Excellent scholars have suggested *ἀρχή*. Irenaeus uses this term a number of times for the Gnostic Only-Begotten, who is the supreme power next to the Gnostic Father (e.g., I, 8, 5; 9, 2; 11, 3; III, 11, 1). In these cases the translator has *principium*, or merely the transliterated *arche*. In II, 30, 6 Irenaeus twice mentions six aeonic celestial beings, in terms clearly borrowed from Eph. 1:21. Though the Greek is not extant here, there is little doubt that *principia* in the first case, and *principatus* in the second case stand for *ἀρχή* in Eph. 1:21. Moreover, in II, 30, 9, where this same group of six aeons is mentioned, *principalitas* is used, evidently for *ἀρχή*. So it has a very good chance of being the original word. It would be clearly expressive of the sovereign power of the Roman Church.

A last suggestion, perhaps the best, and held by the majority, is *αἰθενρία*. We saw that this word was used a number of times in the first book where the translator has *principalitas*, both certainly in the sense of sovereign power. The objection of Straub (p. 365) and Van den Eynde (p. 172) that this word is not Irenaeus' choice, being used by him only for describing the Gnostic systems, does not seem valid. The Gnostics misused other words for their systems, and still Irenaeus did not hesitate to use them for the Truth. The choice, then, seems to lie between *arche* and *authenticia*. But all the probable Greek words not only leave the meaning of sovereign power intact, but fully confirm it.

#### IN QUA SEMPER . . . CONSERVATA EST

The meaning given to *in qua* depends very much on what meaning is given to *ab his conservata*. Hence we cannot proceed to the proofs of *in qua*

<sup>46</sup> In the letter of the Council of Chalcedon to Pope Leo, Nov., 451, the Fathers speak of him as being set over them, governing them (*ἡγεμόνευες*) as the head of the members (Mansi, VI, 148; DB, 149).

without always considering the possible meanings of *ab his*. The best general procedure seems to be to list the opinions according as they admit that *qua* is a relative pronoun with either the Roman Church or every Church as antecedent, or some other construction without specifying a Church. The first two cases, namely, with *qua* as a relative, can be subdivided according as *in* is either an instrumental or a local preposition, and each of these can again be subdivided according as *ab his* is an ablative of agent or is changed to some other construction. The table given may help to visualize better the variety of opinions.

Table of Opinions on *in qua*

- A. *Qua* is a relative pronoun referring to the Roman Church:
1. *In* is instrumental; *ab his* is ablative of agent. All the faithful *passively* safeguard the tradition for themselves *in* the Roman Church.
  2. *In* is local:
    - a) the faithful *actively* safeguard the tradition:
      - 1) through delegates, or
      - 2) through visitors and settlers, or
      - 3) together with the Roman Church.
    - b) *ab his* should be dative: tradition is preserved for all the faithful.
    - c) *ab his* should be *pro*, with meaning as in preceding.
    - d) tradition is safeguarded by the Bishops of the Roman Church:
      - 1) omit, as a repetition, *qui sunt undique*.
      - 2) change *qui sunt undique* to *qui praefuerunt*, etc.
      - 3) *ab his* should be *abhinc*.
      - 4) *ab his* should be comparative.
    - e) *conservata* should be *observata*.
  3. *In qua* is faulty for the Greek  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \eta\upsilon$ , "according to which."
- B. *Qua* is relative referring to "every Church":
1. *In* is instrumental: all the faithful *passively* preserve the tradition in their own Churches, by belief in their own bishops:
    - a) without dependence on the Roman Church.
    - b) with dependence on the Roman Church.
  2. *In* is local:
    - a) all the faithful *actively* preserve the tradition in their own Churches:
      - 1) without dependence on Rome.
      - 2) with dependence on Rome.
    - b) tradition is preserved by the bishops who preside (*praesunt*) each in his own diocese.
- C. The Church is not specified. *In qua*:
1. is a causal particle, or
  2. should be changed to one.

Now we shall explain these opinions more in detail as we eliminate all of them except the first. We shall try to prove that *qua* is a relative pronoun with the Roman Church as its antecedent, and *in* is an instrumental or



causal preposition, indicating that by means of the Roman Church all the faithful everywhere have always passively preserved the apostolic tradition for themselves, by belief in the tradition of the Roman Church, which is the active agent in this safeguarding of the tradition.

This had been the unanimous opinion among Catholics. In 1842 the Lutheran Thiersch rejected it and referred *qua* to *omnis ecclesia*. Later on some few Catholics followed suit, but it can still be called the common Catholic opinion. It is held by the anonymous authors in *Civiltà Cattolica* and in the *Dublin Review*, by Kneller, Bardenhewer, Ottiger, Straub, Dufourcq, Roiron, Freppel, Dublanchy, Forget, Van den Eynde, Zapelena, Hervé. We shall prove it by parts: first, that *qua* is a relative pronoun referring to the Roman Church; then, that *in* is instrumental; then, that *ab his* is an ablative of agent.

*Qua* refers to the Roman Church. Ordinarily the antecedent of a relative is the nearest noun, but there can be and are exceptions to this rule. The relative may refer to the noun that is logically nearest, that is, the noun in the more important clause. This is the case here. *Omnem ecclesiam*, in the dependent clause, is quite unimportant in comparison with the *hanc ecclesiam* in the independent clause. Irenaeus has another example, in IV, 20, 5, of an antecedent rather far removed from the pronoun.

Some argue that, if *omnem ecclesiam* were the antecedent, we would have a rather hard and meaningless tautology: "in which (every Church) the apostolic tradition was safeguarded by every Church (*qui sunt undique*).” Translated thus, it would, of course, be meaningless, but the translation could also run: "in which (every Church) the apostolic tradition was safeguarded by all the faithful.” Below we shall indicate that such a rendition can have a correct meaning, although it is not to be accepted for other reasons. For the rest, the reference to the Roman Church is discarded because it is said not to make any sense. Under the discussion of *ab his* we shall see that this is not true; it makes good sense.

The preposition *in* is instrumental or causal. It expresses the fact that every Church, even all the faithful, safeguard the tradition for themselves by means of, *in*, the Roman Church, which through its Bishop safeguards the tradition actively. *In* is often used with this instrumental sense in Irenaeus. By way of sample: "*Per Verbum per quod Deus perfecit conditionem, in hoc et salutem . . .*" (III, 3, 11; *in* equals *per* here); "*in semine tuo*" (III, 12, 3); "*in nomine Jesu . . . in hoc his salutem in eo dedit*" (III, 12, 4); what was lost *in* Adam was regained *in* Christ (III, 18, 1); "*in qua unctus est*" (III, 18, 3); "*in Deo per Jesum Christum offert Ecclesia*" (IV, 17, 8).

Causal *in*, precisely to express the active influence of the Roman Church in safeguarding the tradition, is found in other writers, who seem even to depend on Irenaeus. Pope Hormisdas (d. 517), in a profession of faith for the Spanish kings, wrote: "Quia *in* Sede apostolica citra maculam *semper* est catholica *servata* religio."<sup>47</sup> The Roman Church evidently preserved that religion for others. The underlined words show the similarity to Irenaeus, who seems to have been the inspiration for this wording, and *in* is here certainly causal. St. Optatus of Milevis wrote against the Donatists: "Negare non potes scire te in urbe Roma Petro primo cathedram episcopalem esse collatam . . . *in qua* una cathedra unitas *ab omnibus servaretur*."<sup>48</sup> The italicized words again show the close similarity to Irenaeus, and *in* is undoubtedly causal. Lastly, St. Augustine states: "Romanae Ecclesiae *in qua semper* Apostolicae cathedrae viguit *principatus*." We have already discussed this text and its dependence on Irenaeus.

In view of these texts of Irenaeus and of other writers, it would be futile to object that in this very section Irenaeus uses *in* with *ecclesia* and *ecclesiis*, but always in a local sense. Thus, III, 3, 2: "Quae [traditio] . . . per successiones presbyterorum *in* ecclesiis custoditur"; III, 3, 1: "Traditionem itaque apostolorum . . . *in* omni ecclesia adest perspicere"; III, 3, 3: "Ab apostolis *in* ecclesia traditio . . . pervenit usque ad nos," "[idem] quae *in* ecclesia *ab* apostolis usque nunc sit conservata et tradita in veritate"; III, 5, 1: "Traditione . . . sic se habente *in* ecclesia." In two of these passages the verbs *adest* and *habente* make it clear that *in* is local. In the other cases, since the *ab* or *per* indicate the active principle, the *in* must be local. But this merely proves that the local *in* can be used as well as the causal *in*.

Actually, in our passage, *in* cannot be merely local in view of Irenaeus' aim in this section. He is giving the reason for the greater sovereignty of the Roman Church, and indirectly for the fact that the Roman Church by itself is a criterion of tradition. In other words, the Roman Church has something that the other Churches must receive. It is not as if the other Churches had to contribute to the tradition of the Roman Church. Further, there is an active influence on the part of the Roman Church in preserving the tradition. This is actually what happened in the case of the Corinthians in n. 3, and is in keeping with the constant history of the Churches appealing to the Roman Church for a decision. Some authors translate the *in* by "in union with," or "in communion with." This does not differ essentially from the instrumental *in*. Thus, Feuardentius, St. Robert Bellarmine, the anonymous writer in *Dublin Review*, and Bardenhewer.

<sup>47</sup> *DB*, 171.

<sup>48</sup> *Libri septem de schismate Donatistarum*, II, 2, (*PL*, XI, 946-47; *CSEL*, XXVI, 36).

We come now to the third part of the proof: What is meant by *ab his . . . conservata*? *Ab his* is an ablative of agent, and all the faithful (*qui sunt undique*) are the agents by whom tradition was always preserved *in*, i.e., by means of, the Roman Church. This is the traditional understanding of St. Irenaeus, as is evidenced by the quotations above from Pope Hormisdas and St. Optatus. The Bishop of Lyons often speaks of the custodians of tradition. The construction is often found in the active voice, but sometimes in the passive with *ab* or *per*, and these prepositions always express agency. The conclusion must be that in III, 3, 2, also, the preposition *ab* indicates agency. See the following cases: "custoditur *per* successiones" (III, Pref.); "[Traditio] quae est ab apostolis, quae *per* successiones . . . custoditur" (III, 2, 2); "Est plenissima haec ostensio . . . quae [fides] *in* Ecclesia *ab* Apostolis usque nunc sit conservata" (III, 3, 3); "Quae pervenit usque ad nos custodita" (IV, 33, 8, without the agent indicated); "Quam [fidem] bene custoditam *ab* Ecclesia acceperunt" (V, Pref.); "Sanguis ad ultionem *a* Deo custoditus (V, 9, 3) is just another example of *custodire* with the ablative of agent.

There can be little doubt, then, that *ab his* in III, 3, 2 is an ablative of agent. But does not this express a doctrine that is not only incorrect but at variance with Irenaeus' thought? No: it expresses the fact (*conservata est*) that all the faithful wherever they are, if they have safeguarded the faith, have done so by means of the Roman Church. This is a conditional fact, not an absolute fact, as though all the faithful have always remained faithful and there were never any heretics. Irenaeus was not so ignorant of facts as to make such a statement. The active principle of this safeguarding is still the Roman Church: *in* is instrumental. The faithful have safeguarded it for themselves passively, by adhering to the doctrine of the Roman Church. And it is entirely in keeping with Irenaeus' thought that the faithful do guard the tradition in this manner. This point has hardly been noticed by those who have tried to refute the opposite opinions. In III, 4, 2 Irenaeus informs his readers that many of the barbarian peoples believe in Christ and carefully safeguard the ancient tradition: "et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes." In III, 24, 1 he says of all Catholics: "Quam [fidem] perceptam *ab* ecclesia custodimus"; in V, 20, 1 he speaks of our safeguarding the same hierarchy of the Church. We who belong to the Church do the safeguarding. But the clearest passage is in V, Pref., where he expresses both the active and the passive safeguarding: "Quod [praeconium] apostoli vero tradiderunt, a quibus *ecclesia* accipiens, *per* universum mundum sola bene custodiens, tradidit filiis suis. . . . [The purpose of his books is] ut [neophyti] stabilem *custodiant* fidem quam bene *custoditam* *ab*

*ecclesia* acceperunt." It might be questioned whether *ab ecclesia* here is the agent for *custoditam*, or whether it is the ablative of separation governed by *acceperunt*. In the first case the construction would directly favor our argument. But even in the second case it would indirectly favor it, because if men received the faith from the Church, and if that faith was well guarded, it was well guarded by the Church. Thus, the interpretation of *ab his* which we have given is not foreign to Irenaeus but is entirely in keeping with his thought elsewhere.

We are now in a position to refute the other suggestions, which seem to stem from a misunderstanding or ignorance of Irenaeus' doctrine, or an attempt to evade the primacy of the Roman Church. First, tradition was not safeguarded *in* (local) the Roman Church by the faithful, whether through delegates or through visitors and settlers, or together with the Roman Church. That it was so safeguarded through delegates and/or visitors has been held by any number of non-Catholics: Grabe, Beaven, Döllinger, Lipsius, Puller, Neander, Langen, Hitchcock, Böhringer, La Piana, Knox, Enslin, Kidd, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Koch. A few Catholics, too, have held it: the anonymous writer in *Historisch-politische Blätter*, Bardy, Altaner (this last only in the sense that delegates went).

The non-Catholics claim that thus the tradition of all the Churches from all over could be compared in Rome and the true tradition recognized, in a kind of ecumenical council. Such an explanation is foreign to Irenaeus' thought. According to his consistent and frequent statements the active custodians of tradition are only the bishops, as successors of the Apostles. The faithful are custodians merely in the passive sense, by adherence to the active custodians. Much more so, then, are chance visitors at Rome for business purposes not the custodians of the true faith, nor even those visitors who go to Rome of set purpose to investigate the tradition, because they are at best very few in comparison with the entire Church. Even if they should be bishops they are not the custodians of the faith in the Roman Church; the Bishop of Rome alone has this office, as is clear from Irenaeus' statement and illustration.

In his refutation on this point, Fr. Doyle (p. 301) asks very pointedly: "At this time Rome was not only a microcosm of churches, but especially of heretics. Now if the true tradition depended on the peoples' bringing it to Rome, how did it come that heretics were so clearly distinguished at Rome from the believers?" And Rome was quite a magnet for heretics. Valentinus came to Rome about 136-40 A.D., under Pope Hyginus, and flourished under Pius, but was excommunicated. Cerdon was at Rome, where he spent his time being converted and apostatizing a number of

times. Marcion was at Rome, and Apelles was there twice; Marcellina was there under Anicetus and gained adherents for Carpocrates; Theodotus was in Rome at the end of Eleutherus' pontificate and was excommunicated by Victor; Praxeas was in the capital city between 177 and 190; Florinus fell away at Rome (on all these, cf. Doyle, p. 301 f). Since Irenaeus wrote about 180 A.D., he could hardly have meant that outsiders brought the true tradition to Rome.

It may be objected at this point that it was not indeed the heretics who brought the true faith, yet the faithful did, those "who are from everywhere," because they brought to bear at Rome the tradition of the whole Church. But then we no longer have two criteria of tradition, the longer of the whole Church and the shorter of the Roman Church, but only one, that of the whole Church. This clearly contradicts the express words and intention of Irenaeus, who wishes to give a shorter criterion, that of the Roman Church. And by Roman Church he means the Bishop of Rome, as is clear from his aim and from his illustrations. The Roman Church is in no sense of the word all the faithful of Rome, much less the visitors. Furthermore, to explain the *potentior principalitas* as a kind of multiple force created by a cosmopolitan population, is plainly forcing the thought. We have proved that *convenire* means essentially to agree and not to resort to Rome. There is no question, then, of going to Rome and making a doctrinal contribution there.

Gieseler (p. 151) maintained that the Greek had merely a dative (with-out a preposition corresponding to *ab*) and that the preposition *σύν* in a compound verb (supposed in *conservare*), like *συντερήσονται*, expressed the idea that the tradition was safeguarded in the Roman Church, i.e., by itself, but also "together with" all the faithful. But all this is arbitrary guesswork. Others, taking it for granted that the obvious meaning of Irenaeus' statement is a contradiction to his doctrine elsewhere, indulge in more guesswork. Saltet (p. 183), without warrant, eliminates *ab* and makes a dative of advantage out of *his*: tradition was preserved in the Church of Rome *for* the faithful everywhere. That would, of course, make good sense, but the change is unnecessary and without foundation in the MSS. Mausbach (p. 126) got the same meaning by supposing that *ab* stands for *ὑπέρ*, being a poor translation instead of *pro*. This is equally arbitrary.

Still others, insisting that Irenaeus teaches consistently that only the Apostles and the bishops are the custodians of tradition, have decided that some absent-minded scribe must have introduced the second "qui sunt undique," as a repetition of the first. Böhmer seems to have been the first to make this observation, but he offered no further correction. Mannucci

would omit it altogether. The Benedictine scholar, Morin, at the suggestion of a confrere, decided that the text was corrupt, and looked about for a substitute. His choice fell on "qui ibi praefuerunt," i.e., the Bishops of Rome guarded the faith at Rome. Batiffol followed him, but preferred *praesunt*. This correction was accepted by Dörholt, Walkley, O'Boyle. Some even said this suggestion closed the issue. But *praesunt* is certainly incorrect, because Irenaeus is speaking not merely of the present, but of an historic fact that began with Peter (*conservata*, perfect tense). We admit that, if a correction of the text were needed, *praefuerunt* would fit. Irenaeus uses *praesesse* in the sense of governing: see II, 19, 7; 20, 1; 22, 5; IV, 38, 11; V, 9, 4. Particularly is I, 10, 2 to the point: "Is qui . . . ex eis qui praesunt ecclesiis." However, this correction is not needed. Irenaeus teaches clearly that the faithful, too, guard the tradition, if only passively by their belief. But that satisfies the meaning of Irenaeus here very well. There is, moreover, no warrant in the codices known to us for such a correction.

Less likely still is the suggestion of d'Herbigny that the original Latin should be "qui sunt undecim," i.e., the tradition was safeguarded by the eleven bishops who until then had occupied the chair of Peter. He argued that in III, 3, 3 Irenaeus says that the tradition was safeguarded by the Apostles, which is really an explanation of our passage; but there he stresses the fact that Eleutherus is the twelfth on the chair of Peter. D'Herbigny also called attention to the fact that Irenaeus uses numbers, e.g., in I, 1, 1-3; 3, 5; 4, 1; 5, 1; 6, 1; 7, 5. But, even apart from the fact that there is no need of correcting the text, these reasons are weak. It should be clear that these descriptions of the Gnostic systems by numbers are not parallel to our case. The Gnostics are dealing with sums; Irenaeus is not in III, 3, 2. The mere use of numbers elsewhere, especially in the descriptions of the Gnostic systems, is not warrant for a number here. Further, the Latin translator would hardly have written *sunt* but *fuerunt*. The eleven have gone down in history; the twelfth alone is present, and he would not be included. Why should the twelfth, the present pontiff, be excluded if the present is correct? He was actually safeguarding the tradition for all the faithful. To say that Irenaeus stresses the fact that Eleutherus is now the twelfth as the reason for the *undecim* in the preceding, is to refute one's own contention, because precisely then should the verb be in the past tense.

After Morin made his suggestion, Dörholt agreed that the text is corrupt. But he thought that *ab his* supposes *ἀπὸ τούτων* and that the Latin should be *abhinc*, i.e., since the time of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the tradition was safeguarded in the Church of Rome. He himself realized the weakness

of this correction, because as soon as d'Herbigny made his suggestion, he changed over to it.

The futility of all these attempts has driven others to a different solution. Recently Jacquin proposed the view that *ab his* is a comparative phrase; he announced it as a new interpretation. But it happens that Goussen had already proposed it in 1909. The meaning would be that tradition was preserved better in the Roman Church than in others. Christine Mohrmann has adduced other examples of such a use of *ab*. These scholars call attention to the fact that the Hebrew expresses a comparison with the preposition *min*. A similar construction is found in both Old and New Testament Greek. Even post-classical Greek and Latin used a preposition for comparisons. With *ab* one can distinguish four cases. I shall put participles with adjectives; the authors mentioned put them with verbs.

1) Sometimes the governing word was an adjective or an adverb in the comparative degree. St. Jerome writes: "Qui prima hora conductus est, *plus* meretur *ab* eo qui hora tertia missus est ad vineam."<sup>49</sup> (2) Sometimes the adjective (or participle) implies no comparison. A fragment in the Ambrosian library has "Quemadmodum sis pretiosus ab angelis."<sup>50</sup> Ps. 4:8: "A fructu frumenti, vini et olei sui *multiplicati* sunt"; Luke 18:14: "*Justificatus ab illo*." (3) Sometimes a verb that implies comparison is the governing word. Eccl. 24:39: "A mari enim *abundavit* cogitatio eius, et consilium eius *ab* abyso magna." Some may place here the example above from Ps. 4:8, because *multiplicati sunt* implies the comparison. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* has: "Nolite ipsi vos negligere . . . nec *praepone*re a verbo necessitatis temporariae vitae vestrae."<sup>51</sup> (4) Sometimes the verb implies no comparison. Ps. 92:3b-4: "Elevaverunt flumina fluctus suos a vocibus aquarum multarum."

In Irenaeus' Latin we do find *ab* employed for comparisons. No example, however, can be listed where the governing word would be a verb, with or without an implied comparison. But there are a number of cases with adjectives or adverbs in the comparative degree, or implying a comparison: "Quanto *pluris* sit idiota religiosus a blasphemo et impudente sophista" (V, 20, 2); "*Altera* autem sunt, quae constituta sunt, *ab* eo qui constituit; et quae facta sunt, *ab* eo qui fecit" (III, 8, 3); "*Inferiora* sunt ab eo" (II, 34, 3); "*Plus* potuisse iustitia . . . *ab* omnibus" (I, 26, 1). The Greek, preserved by Hippolytus, has adjectives in the comparative degree.

Two examples are cited with the adjective implying no comparison; in one case it is a past participle. The first case is in IV, 10, 2, a slavish rendering

<sup>49</sup> *Epistolae*, XXI, 41 (*PL*, XXII, 394; *CSEL*, LIV, 141).      <sup>50</sup> *PL*, XIII, 636.

<sup>51</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 30, 30; cf. Mohrmann, p. 59.

of the *LXX* of Gen. 49:12: "*Laetifici oculi eius a vino, et candidi dentes eius quam lac.*" These authors with whom we are dealing take *laetifici a* as expressing a comparison, just as the parallel *candidi quam* does. This is, however, incorrect. It is true, indeed, that in the Hebrew *min* is used in both clauses and expresses a comparison, which the Vulgate correctly renders by two adjectives in the comparative degree. But the *LXX* missed the meaning of the first Hebrew adjective, which they rendered by *χαρηποί*, bright or glassy. They did not, then, take *min* or *ἀπό* as a comparative particle in this first clause. Neither the *LXX* *χαρηποί ἀπό οἴνου* (eyes more glassy or brighter than wine), nor the Latin of Irenaeus, *laetifici a vino* (eyes more joyful than wine), makes sense. But both eyes bright or glassy because of wine, or eyes joyful because of wine makes good sense. *Χαρηποί* is the classical word for describing eyes that have become "glassy" from drink. This interpretation is confirmed by the reading of the *LXX* in the *Codex alexandrinus*, *ἕνεκ οἴνου*, because of wine. This, then, is also the meaning of the slavish translation of Irenaeus, and it is certainly not the use of *ab* to express comparison.

The second case is, likewise, a slavish translation of a passage from the *LXX*, Gen. 3:14: "*Maledictus tu ab omnibus pecoribus et ab omnibus bestiis terrae.*" Here again, it is not certain that the *LXX* understood *ἀπό* as a comparative particle. They could have taken it in its partitive meaning, "among." That would agree with the *inter* of the Vulgate. Then the Latin translator followed the meaning of the *LXX* as he did the literal wording. But it must be admitted that there is a possibility of this being *ab* in a comparison.

To sum up, then, there are in Irenaeus a number of cases where *ab* is used with adjectives or adverbs in the comparative degree for expressing a comparison. There is only one case, which is at least doubtful, where a past participle governs *ab* to express a comparison. But that is precisely the construction that would obtain in III, 3, 2 (*conservata ab*). So from this Irenaeian usage alone it is at least very doubtful that *ab* with *conservata* would express a comparison. On the other hand, we saw that Irenaeus employs *ab* rather frequently with the passive verbs to express the safeguarding of tradition, and in all cases it is an ablative of agent; in one case it may be an ablative of separation, which would indirectly amount to an ablative of agency. This interpretation is strengthened by the cases where the agency is given with *per*. There is, then, every reason for saying that in III, 3, 2 *ab* with a passive verb to express the safeguarding of tradition is an ablative of agent.

Again, the idea which a comparison would here express is alien to the



purpose of Irenaeus. It is not a question of preserving the tradition *better* than in the other Churches, but infallibly *by herself*. No other Church can, singly, preserve the tradition infallibly. Finally, there is no need for such an explanation since, as we have noted so often, the text as it stands, with the faithful as passive agents safeguarding the tradition, makes good Irenaeian sense, even though we might have expected mention of the active agents.

Another attempt to save the reference to the Roman Church in the local sense, without "contradicting" Irenaeian thought elsewhere, is to change *conservata* to *observata*. Neander proposed this but later dropped it as indefensible. More recently Gutberlet held it. There are, however, no indications whatever in favor of this change. A last suggestion, made by Stiglmayr, is that *in qua*, still referring to the Roman Church, is a faulty translation of *εἰς ἥν*, which he guesses was the Greek. This would mean that tradition was preserved everywhere according to the Roman Church. From all that has been said no further refutation is needed of this useless guessing.

We must now turn to the opinion that *omnem ecclesiam* is the antecedent of *qua*. Though to my knowledge no one has ever proposed the view that even in this case *in* could be instrumental and that all the faithful would passively preserve the tradition for themselves by means of (*in*) their own Churches, by their own bishops, it seems that this would, abstractly, be possible. Certainly, if such a preservation were conceived of as taking place with dependence on the Roman Church (an idea that would be implied from the first part of our text), the meaning would be quite orthodox. If it were without dependence on Rome, as though every Church were infallible by itself, it could not be defended. Even the former possibility, however, is excluded by all the arguments that favor our own opinion. More need not be said about it.

Another interpretation in which *qua* still refers to *omnem ecclesiam*, has gained favor among non-Catholics. It is that *in* is local and that all the faithful preserved the tradition in their own Churches, independently, of course, of the Roman Church. Thiersch first proposed this view; Harnack popularized it; Neander, Bonwetsch, and Koch all held it. It was defended, likewise, by some Catholics, but evidently with implied dependence on Rome. See "H." in *Historisch-politische Blätter*, Funk, Duchesne, Walkley, Esser, Vernet. This opinion was proposed by the non-Catholics to escape what was supposed to be a contradiction or a senseless statement in Irenaeus. But, as we have said so often in regard to other opinions, in the interpretation we defend there is no contradiction in Irenaeus.

Some try to refute this interpretation by saying that it is historically false, i.e., not all the Churches always preserved the tradition. However, as in the first opinion, one might object that this preservation can be taken as a conditional fact: those faithful who actually preserved the tradition did so in their Churches. This answer itself, in turn, however, depends on the preceding interpretation which would have the tradition passively preserved through the instrumentality of the bishops of every Church. The interpretation with which we are now dealing claims that the faithful of every Church are the active custodians of the tradition in every Church. In this sense of an active preservation, the faithful did not always safeguard the tradition in every Church, and the interpretation is historically false.

Jalland has recently added another page to the already thick volume of interpretations (p. 113). He accepts the Catholic suggestion that the text is corrupt and changes *sunt* to *praesunt*, but refers *qua* to *omnis ecclesia*, as if all the bishops who preside in the various Churches safeguard the tradition there. This needs no refutation other than what we have already written in favor of the first and against the other opinions.

A final, though older, interpretation departs completely from the idea that *qua* is a relative pronoun. According to Harvey *in qua* supposes the causal particle  $\eta$ , "inasmuch as." "Every Church must agree with the Roman . . . inasmuch as the tradition was preserved by the faithful everywhere." Griesbach had already suspected that a scribe inadvertently wrote *in qua* in place of the translator's original *in quo*, which supposes  $\epsilon\nu \hat{\omega}$  or  $\epsilon\phi' \hat{\omega}$ , a causal phrase, which is found in Greek literature, e.g., in Rom. 5:12. Nolte got the same effect by cancelling *in* and reading the Latin *qua* as a causal particle. But none of these suggestions needs any refutation apart from what has already been said.

What might have been the Greek verb for *conservata*? The possibilities multiply inasmuch as this Latin perfect could translate either a Greek aorist or a Greek perfect. Since the perfect is found more often with the idea of having safeguarded something, most likely it was used in III, 3, 2. Usually *conservare* stands for the simple  $\tau\eta\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  (I, 5, 1; II, 33, 5) and so does *servare* (I, 3, 1; 10, 1). The verb could, therefore, have been  $\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\eta\tau\alpha\iota$ . But in V, 9, 3 *conservare* translates  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\tau\eta\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ ; so  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\eta\tau\alpha\iota$  might have been our verb. Most of the time *custodire* is used by the translator for the idea of guarding the faith and tradition; and in I, 10, 2 the Greek for this is  $\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\epsilon\iota$ . In I, 3, 6 *conservare* stands for  $\delta\iota\alpha\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma$ . It is highly probable, then, that in our case the verb was  $\pi\epsilon\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\alpha\kappa\tau\alpha\iota$  or  $\delta\iota\alpha\pi\epsilon\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\alpha\kappa\tau\alpha\iota$ . As noted, all these verbs might have been in the aorist.

After such a long study it may be worth while to give the possible Greek original, including other choices in parentheses.

Πρὸς (εἰς) ταύτην γὰρ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν διὰ τὴν δυνατωτέραν (κυριωτέραν, ἰκανωτέραν) αἰθεντίαν (ἀρχὴν, ἐξουσίαν, ἡγεμονίαν, κυριωτάτην) ἀνάγκη (ἀναγκαῖον) ἐστὶ πάσαν προσέρχεσθαι (συντρέχειν) τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, τουτέστι τοὺς παντοχόθεν πιστοὺς, ἐν ἧ αἰεὶ ὑπὸ τῶν παντοχόθεν (συν)τετήρηται ([δια]πεφύλακται) ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀποστόλων παράδοσις.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I think the traditional interpretation of this famous passage of Irenaeus remains the best proved and the correct one. All other interpretations are attempts to evade the obvious meaning concerning the Roman primacy or to solve the supposed contradiction in the last clause. Irenaeus, however, told the Gnostics of his day, and us too, that it is morally necessary for every Church, that is, for all the faithful, to agree with this, the Roman Church, in which, as by an instrumental cause, the tradition of the Apostles has always been preserved by those who are everywhere.

The rebellion of Luther from the Roman Catholic Church and his denial of the sovereignty of the Roman Church over all the other Churches, called forth a vigorous defense on the part of Catholic scholars. They naturally appealed to St. Irenaeus' defense of the Roman sovereignty. We may fittingly close this study with quotations from two sainted scholars of the time, one of whom is a Doctor of the Church.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi, who so ably refuted Luther in general, uses St. Irenaeus' passage a number of times. When speaking of the apostolicity of the Roman Church he writes: "Ait 'Ad Romanam Ecclesiam maximam et antiquissimam, a gloriosissimis apostolis Petro et Paulo fundatam et constitutam, oportere propter potentiorum principalitatem omnem convenire Ecclesiam.'"<sup>52</sup> To prove that the Roman Pontiff is the legitimate successor of Peter, he quotes Irenaeus, III, 3, 1 (the first part) and all of n. 2. He then summarizes the succession of Popes from Peter to Eleutherus, and concludes: "Et ita quidem Irenaeus ostendit Romanos Pontifices, legitime electos, Petri successores legitimos esse. Hinc manifestum est quid Irenaeus senserit de hominibus, qui cum Romana Ecclesia non conveniunt."<sup>53</sup> Later he again quotes: "Et S. Irenaeus 'Ecclesiam antiquissimam et propter potentiorum principalitatem gloriosissimam' honorificentissime nuncupavit. . . . Unde D. Irenaeus Romanam Ecclesiam omnibus cognitam dixit."<sup>54</sup>

That the Holy Fathers always esteemed the Roman Church highly, as the "radix et matrix, mater et magistra omnium ecclesiarum," he proves by quoting, among others, St. Irenaeus: "Ita Irenaeus docet [quod] propter

<sup>52</sup> *Lutheranismi hypotyposis*, I, 4, 5 (*Opera omnia* [Pavia, 1930-33], II/1, 43).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 5, 9 (*Opera omnia*, II/2, 181-82).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 6, 6 (*Opera omnia*, II/2, 196).

potentior principalitatem ad Romanam Ecclesiam oportet omnem convenire Ecclesiam.”<sup>56</sup> Earlier in his refutation of Luther he quotes the same passage but omits the phrase *ab his*. At the end he adds: “Ita Irenaeus Romanam Ecclesiam dicit maximam, antiquissimam, notissimam, ab Apostolis Petro et Paulo fundatam, cuius fides omnibus annunciata est, et ad quam necesse est omnem Ecclesiam, hoc est, fideles omnes undique convenire.”<sup>56</sup> There is no doubt, then, in the mind of this great scholar of the value of St. Irenaeus’ testimony for the defense of the Roman Primacy.

The Doctor of the Church, whom we shall quote last, is St. Robert Bellarmine. He cites Irenaeus III, 3, 2, beginning with the words “maximae et antiquissimae,” and then comments:

Nota illud *Necesse est: et illud Omnem convenire Ecclesiam. Et illud: Propter potentior principalitatem: et illud: In qua semper ab omnibus conservata est apostolica traditio.*

Nam Irenaeus probat, posse nos confundere omnes haereticos ex doctrina romanae Ecclesiae, quia necesse est ad hanc Ecclesiam omnes convenire, et ab ipsa tamquam a capite et fonte pendere; et proinde necesse est, ejus doctrinam esse apostolicam et veram. Quod autem necessarium sit omnibus Christianis pendere a romana Ecclesia, probat.

Primo a priori, quia datus est huic Ecclesiae principatus. Secundo a posteriori, quia hactenus semper omnes conservarunt fidem in hac Ecclesia, id est, in unione et adhaesione ad hanc Ecclesiam, ut ad caput et matrem.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix I, 7 (*Opera omnia*, II/3, 274); cf. also Appendix II, added note 5 (*Opera omnia*, II/3, 333-34).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 10, 4 (*Opera omnia*, II/1, 310).

<sup>57</sup> *De controversiis christianae fidei*, II, 15, “De Romano Pontifice” (*Opera omnia* [Naples, 1856], I, 390).