

- (10) Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea, intimate friend of Origen and Cyprian. In Cyprian's 65th epistle, an epistle of Firmilian is preserved:

" . . . but the other heretics, also, if they separate from the church, can have no power or grace, since all power and grace are placed in the church, where presbyters, presided, in whom is vested the power of baptizing, and imposition of hands, and ordination."

Thus the fullness of episcopal power, authority, and functions, is explicitly vested in presbyters. (Cyprian did not disavow or disapprove of this witness.)

- (11) Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, in Cyprian's church

During Cyprian's concealment from the rage of persecution, Novatus ordained Felicissimus a deacon, without consulting Cyprian. Although Cyprian blamed Novatus for his factious ambition, yet he did not deprive either Novatus or Felicissimus of office, nor call into question the validity of the ordination.

- c. As witnessed to by the Later Fathers

- (1) Hilary, of Poitiers (A.D. 354)

On I Timothy 3, he observes that the apostle, "after the bishop, subjoins the ordination of the deacon; why? unless the ordination of the bishop and of the presbyter is one, for each of them is a priest. But the bishop is first, seeing every bishop is a presbyter, not every presbyter a bishop; for he is a bishop, who is first among the presbyters . . . . But they ought to be seven deacons, and some presbyters, that there may be two in every church, and one bishop in a city."

- (2) Damasus, bishop of Rome (A.D. 366)

We read but of two orders among the disciples of Christ, that is, of the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples; and who are now in the place of these. . . The primitive church only had these two sacred orders of priests and deacons."

- (3) Alerius, presbyter of Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste (A.D. 368)

He maintained that "by divine appointment, there was no difference between bishops and presbyters. Thus Epiphanius charges him with heresy, and represents him as asking:

" . . . what is a bishop before a presbyter? In what do they differ? The order is the same, the honor one, and the excellence one; the bishop imposes hands, and so does the presbyter; the bishop perform the whole of public worship, and the presbyter in like manner; the bishop sits upon a throne, and so does the presbyter."