

THE  
INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

*A COURSE OF LECTURES*

DELIVERED IN THE  
Divinity School of the University of Dublin

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*A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament*

SECOND EDITION

*LONDON*

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET .

1890

## XIX.

### PETER'S ALLEGED ROMAN EPISCOPATE.

I COUNT it as proved in the last Lecture that we have no Scripture warrant for regarding Peter as more than a foremost (or, if you will, the foremost) member of the Apostolic college, or as having any precedence but such as his boldness, promptitude, and energy gave him; and that there is no trace of his having held over the Church any official position of headship, wherein, according to Christ's intention, he was to have a successor. I go on now to consider Peter's connexion with Rome, which I look on as a mere historical problem, without any doctrinal significance whatever way it may be determined. The generally received account among Roman Catholics, and one which can claim a long traditional acceptance, is that Peter came to Rome in the second year of Claudius (that is, A.D. 42), and that he held the see twenty-five years, a length of episcopate never reached again until by Pío Nono, who exceeded it. It used to be said (but I believe untruly) that as part of the ceremony of a Pope's installation he was addressed 'Non videbis annos Petri.' Now if it is possible to prove a negative at all, we may conclude, with at least high probability, that Peter was not at Rome during any of the time on which the writings of the canonical Scriptures throw much light, and almost certainly that during that time he was not its bishop. We have an Epistle of Paul to the Romans full of salutations to his friends there, but no mention of their bishop. Nor is anything said of work done by Peter in founding that Church. On the contrary, it is implied that no Apostle had as yet visited it; for such is the inference from the passage already cited, in which Paul expresses his wish to see the Roman Christians in order that he might impart some spiritual gift to the end that they might be established. We have letters of Paul from Rome in which no message is sent from Peter; and in the very last of these letters Paul complains of being left alone, and that only Luke was with him. Was Peter one of the deserters? The Scripture accounts of Peter place him in Judea, in Antioch, possibly in Corinth, but finally in Babylon. I have discussed, in a former series of Lectures, whether this is to be understood literally, or whether we have here the first indication of Peter's presence at Rome. But plainly, if Peter was ever at Rome, it was after the date of Paul's second Epistle to Timothy.

Some Protestant controversialists have asserted that Peter was never at Rome; but though the proofs that he was there are not so strong as I should like them to be, if I had any doctrine depending on it, I think the historic probability is that he was; though, as I say, at a late period of the history, and not long before his death. I dare say some of you know that there was a

controversy on this subject at Rome not long after the Pope ceased to be the temporal ruler of the city. Quite lately I have seen it still placarded as ‘the immortal discussion at Rome.’ Roman Catholic priests are, as a general rule, not fond of controversy; but they were tempted into it this time by the fact that victory seemed certain; for the Protestant champions had undertaken the impossible task of proving the negative, that Peter was never at Rome. They might as well have undertaken to prove out of the Bible that St. Bartholomew never preached in Pekin. I don’t suppose he did; but I don’t know how you could prove out of Scripture that he didn’t. The event showed, however, of how little use a logical victory sometimes is. When the Protestants began to use such arguments as I employed just now in order to prove that Peter had not been twenty-five years bishop, the Romanists interrupted them by pointing out that that was not the question. ‘You undertook to prove he was never at Rome. We need not talk about twenty-five years; if he was there a day, or an hour, your cause is lost.’ Thereupon their opponents raised a shout of triumph. ‘Here are the men who, until we encountered them, had been asserting a twenty-five years’ episcopate; and now they give up the whole fable the moment they are grappled with, and are reduced to contend for a day or an hour.’

For myself, I am willing, in the absence of any opposing tradition, to accept the current account that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome. We know with certainty from John xxi. that Peter suffered martyrdom somewhere. If Rome, which early laid claim to have witnessed that martyrdom, were not the scene of it, where then did it take place? Any city would be glad to claim such a connexion with the name of the Apostle, and none but Rome made the claim. The place of Peter’s martyrdom was, no doubt, known to St. John, and we may reasonably think, was also known in the circle where his Gospel was first published. Now all agree that the date of that publication was quite late in the apostolic age; and the interval, till the time when men began to make written record of what they could learn by apostolic tradition, is too short to allow of the true tradition as to the place of St. Peter’s martyrdom being utterly lost, and a quite false one substituted. In the earliest uninspired Christian writing, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, he makes mention of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, but does not name the place where they suffered. There is a fair presumption, however, that in this Roman document Rome is intended. The earliest express mention of Italy as the place of their martyrdom is in a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, about 170. There is mention of their tombs at Rome in a dialogue of Caius the Roman presbyter, about A.D. 200, and from that time this tradition reigned without a rival. If this evidence for Peter’s Roman martyrdom were not deemed sufficient, there are few things in the history of the early Church which it will be possible to demonstrate.

From the question, whether Peter ever visited Rome, we pass now to a very different question: whether he was its bishop. Absentees are not popular in this country; but the worst of absentees is an absentee bishop. We think it scandalous when we read of bishops a hundred years ago who never went near their sees; but this abuse has now been completely rooted out of our Church. Canons against non-residence were made in earlier times; but, if we are to believe Roman theory, the bad example had been set by St. Peter, who was the first absentee bishop. If he became bishop of Rome in the second year of Claudius, he appears never afterwards to have gone near his see until close upon his death. Nay, he never even wrote a letter to his Church while he was away; or if he did, they did not think it worth preserving.

Baronius (in *Ann.* lviii. §51) owns the force of the Scripture reasons for believing that Peter was not in Rome during any time on which the New Testament throws light. His theory is that, when Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome, Peter was obliged to go away. And as for his subsequent absences, they were forced on him by his duty as the chief of the Apostles, having care of all the churches. 'Paul preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, and, not satisfied with that, designed to go even to Spain besides. Can we imagine Peter to have been less active?' These, no doubt, are excellent reasons for Peter's not remaining at Rome; but why, then, did he undertake duties which he must have known he could not fulfil?

There is another respect in which the accepted version of Peter's history accuses him of having set a bad example. In the primitive Church it was accounted a discreditable thing for a bishop to migrate from one see to another; and especially from a poorer see to a richer; it was accounted a kind of spiritual adultery, this forsaking a poorer wife for a richer. Several early canons forbade the practice; and I have mentioned how one of them was worked against Gregory Nazianzen. Pope Leo (*Ep.* 84), in a decree incorporated in the Canon Law (*Si quis Episcopus*, c. 7, qu. 1, cap. 31), ordered:—'If any bishop, despising the meanness of his see, seeks for the administration of a more eminent place, and for any reason transfers himself to a greater people, he shall not only be driven out of the see which did not belong to him, but he shall also lose his own, so as neither to preside over those whom in his avarice he coveted, nor over those whom in his pride he despised.' Yet we are told that Peter in order to obtain the see of Rome, abandoned that of Antioch, which he had previously held for seven years.

On this charge, at least, Peter may fairly claim an acquittal; for whatever credit may be due to the story of his Roman episcopate, the story of the Antiochene episcopate is entitled to still less, being both of later origin and

far less widely believed. In fact, I consider that it was the circulation of the tale of Peter's Roman episcopate, which stimulated the invention of Syrian Christians to make out an equal honour for their capital. There is a current story of an Englishman, who, in a country where veracity was not cultivated, found a claim made on him for the repayment of money which he had never received. At the trial he heard the fact of his having received the money attested by so many witnesses that he could not conceive how his own advocate could be able to break the case down. But he was not prepared for the line of defence actually adopted, which was to produce an equal number of credible witnesses who had been present when the money was duly paid back. On much the same system Eastern Christians attempted no contradiction of the story that Peter had been bishop of Rome; but they had the wit to see that the date assigned for his coming to that city left some years free, between the dates of our Lord's Ascension and A.D. 42, of which use might be made to establish an earlier dignity for Antioch. The Westerns were equally polite in accepting the Eastern story, the truth of which is strenuously maintained by Baronius, who relies on its being adopted in the Chronicle of Eusebius. And it is true that the story was fully accepted in the fourth century; but much earlier evidence would be necessary in order to establish its truth.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the Roman episcopate—in other words, with regard to the charge against Peter, of having undertaken local duties which he trust have known his apostolic labours could not permit him to fulfil—we might be disposed to give him an acquittal on the ground of character alone. But it is satisfactory to be able to report that the case against him completely breaks down. In fact, we can say with confidence that the story had not

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<sup>1</sup> I chanced lately to have my attention drawn to another attempt to give early Church history a Syrian colouring. I looked into the *Evidence for the Papacy*, by the late Lord Lindsay, in order to see whether it was a book of which I needed to take notice. I found that, in producing his very first Patristic witness, the author was so unlucky as to stumble into both the traps into which an inexperienced explorer of antiquity is in danger of falling: he took a spurious work for genuine; and he completely misconceived what his witness meant to say. The witness was Ignatius, who, in writing to the Romans, says: 'I do not command you like Peter and Paul'; from which it is a common and, as I believe, a just inference that Ignatius regarded these two Apostles as having some local connexion with that Church. But Lord Lindsay goes on to argue that Ignatius says elsewhere (*Ad Magnes.* 10) that 'the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch when Peter and Paul were founding the Church.' He asks why Ignatius did not say, 'when *the Apostles* were founding the Church,' unless that he regarded these two Apostles, with whom the Church of Rome was connected, as superior in rank to the rest. But the second passage has a coincidence with Irenaeus which would have awakened Lord Lindsay's suspicious if he had been more familiar with early Fathers; and it is, in fact, taken from the longer form of the Ignatian Epistles, which critics of all schools now own to be spurious. But what is amusing is that nothing could be further from this Syrian forger's intention than to furnish evidence in support of Roman claims. On the contrary, he takes the phrase, which Irenaeus had used about Peter and Paul founding the Church of Rome, and transfers it to the Church of Antioch.

arisen in the year 180: for Irenaeus, in a work published shortly after that year (Hoer. iii. 3), ascribes the establishment of the Roman Church to Paul as well as Peter; and then adds, ‘the blessed apostles having founded and built the Church, committed the episcopal office to Linus. Of this Linus, St. Paul makes mention in his Epistle to Timothy. To him succeeded Anencletus<sup>1</sup> [elsewhere called Cletus, or Anacletus]. After him Clement succeeded in the third place from the apostles.’ Thus Linus is made the first bishop of Rome, and his appointment St. Paul’s work as much as Peter’s. This is the earliest account we have of the succession of the Roman bishops. It is really useless to cite other authorities; for a doctrine so fundamental as Peter’s episcopate and its consequences is alleged to be, if true at all, could not but be known to Irenaeus. It is worth mentioning, as a sample of the way in which controversy is conducted, that in Wiseman’s Lectures this quotation from Irenaeus is prominent among the proofs that Peter was bishop of Rome, the quotation being so garbled as to make it seem that Linus succeeded Peter in the episcopate instead of being appointed first bishop by Peter and Paul.<sup>2</sup>

I have said quite enough for the mere purpose of refutation of the Roman claims; but to me it is always pleasanter to deal with questions historically than controversially; and I wish, therefore, to state the conclusions (some of them as I think certain, some of them from the nature of the case only probable) which I consider would be arrived at by a historical inquirer with no theological purpose in view, on the questions: What was the connexion of Peter and Paul with the Roman Church? How came it to believe that Peter had been its first bishop? and, How came the duration of his episcopate to be fixed at twenty-five years? I am justified in thinking that candid inquirers need not differ very much on these questions, because I find

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Anacletus is no name I ever heard of. But Anencletus (meaning the same as Innocentius) is found as a mail’s name in a Greek inscription (Boeckh, Corp. Inser. i. 116, n. 1240). The Greeks always have Anencletus. In Photius (*Cod.* 113, p. 90, Bekker) the name stands Anacletus; but the *Cod. Marc.* has the right form, Anencletus, as Dindorf observes (*Thes. Gr.*). The name Cletus is equally unknown, and is clearly a corruption of Anencletus, which sounded strange to Latin ears.’—(Von Dollinger, *First Age of the Church*, ii. 153, Oxenham’s translation, 1877.)

<sup>2</sup> The whole passage is amusing:—‘I presume it will not be necessary to enter into any argument to show that St. Peter was the first bishop of Rome. . . Among the moderns it may be sufficient to observe that no ecclesiastical writer of any note pretends to deny this fact. “To St. Peter,” as St. Irenaeus observes, “succeeded Linus, to Linus Anacletus, then in the third place Clement”’ (*Lectures on the Catholic Church*, Lect. 8, vol. 1., p. 278). I think I have already remarked that a controversialist who has ventured on an assertion which, when challenged, he finds himself unable to prove, has no other resource than to protest loudly that the thing is too evident to need any proof. Dr. Cunningham is equally positive the other way. He says (*Growth of the Church*, p. 43):—‘No ecclesiastical historian, who is free from ecclesiastical trammels, now believes that Peter was bishop of Rome.’ And he is the nearer the truth of the two, as may be judged from the line taken by von Dollinger.

that the results at which I had arrived independently are, on several points, in agreement with those obtained by von Dollinger in his *First Age of the Church*, a book published while he was still in full communion with the Church of Rome, and was regarded as its ablest champion.

I have seen, in a Roman Catholic book of controversy, the question put, ‘Who founded the Church of Rome?’ and the answer given: It could not have been St. Paul, because we learn from his Epistle that there was a Church at Rome before he had visited that city; therefore the founder could have been no one but St. Peter. But there are absolutely no grounds for the tacit assumption in this argument, that the Church of Rome must have been founded by some Apostle. On the contrary, we know (Acts ii. 10) that ‘strangers of Rome’ were present on the day of Pentecost; and we may reasonably believe that some of them soon returned to that city, whither also the constant influx of visitors from every part of the empire would be sure soon to bring some professors of the Christian faith. It follows that the origin of the Church of Rome is not to be ascribed, as in the case of some other cities, to the exertions of some missionary arriving with the express intention of evangelizing the city, but was due to silent and spontaneous growth. It is quite possible that among those who came to Rome were some ‘prophets or teachers,’ but very unlikely that any Apostles were for some time among the visitors. I do not attach credit to the tradition told in the *Preaching of Peter*,<sup>1</sup> and also by Apollonius,<sup>2</sup> that our Lord commanded His Apostles not to leave Jerusalem for twelve years after His Ascension; but all probability is opposed to their having, for a considerable time, made missionary journeys to distant places. The example seems to have been set by Paul in the year 48; and even he seems to have needed a special revelation to induce him to cross from Asia into Europe (Acts xvi. 9): so that, bearing in mind how slowly the idea of throwing open the doors of the Church to the Gentiles gained acceptance with the first disciples, we must pronounce it a complete anachronism to imagine an assault made by an Apostle on the capital of the Gentile world so early as the year 42. I have already said that the Epistle to the Romans gives us every reason to think that Paul was the first Apostle to visit that city.<sup>3</sup>

But what, then, are we to say to the statement of Irenaeus that Peter and Paul founded the Church of Rome? Probably the simple account of the matter is, that the visit of the two great Apostles was such an important event in

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<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. *H.E.* v. 18.

<sup>3</sup> “On this point I differ from von Dollinger, who says (*First Age*, i. 160):—‘The notion of a gradual origin or the community without any particular founder, or of Aquila and Priscilla being its founders, or St. Paul himself, is self-evidently untenable.’ As I remarked just now, if a man says a thing is self-evident, it usually means that he can give no proof of it.

the history of the Roman Church that the men of the next generation did not care to trace that history further back; but it is likely enough that these Apostles, at the time of their visit, did important work in organizing the Roman Church, and guiding it through the period of transition from the state in which the Church was taught by missionaries, or men endowed with miraculous gifts, to the permanent state in which it was under the guidance of a settled ministry. That the two Apostles founded the Church of Rome in the sense of appointing its first bishop is a thing by no means incredible, even if we do not regard the authority of Irenaeus sufficient to enable us to assert it as an ascertained fact.

But we travel at once out of the region of historic probability when any evidence, tending to induce us to believe that St. Peter once visited Rome, is taken as establishing that he was bishop of Rome. The case is much the same as if some person, zealous for the honour of the city of London, were to maintain that King Alfred had been its first Lord Mayor; and by way of proof were to present us with some evidence that King Alfred had visited London, in which city he would, of course, when present, have been the most important personage. The functions of a King and a Lord Mayor are not more distinct than those of an Apostle and a local bishop.

On the question of the date of the origin of episcopacy, candid men on both sides appear to me to be now approaching to very close agreement. On the one hand, it may be regarded as certain that, at the end of the second century, that not only were bishops everywhere, but there was no recollection that the constitution of the Church had ever been different; and men even found it hard to conceive the idea of a Church without its bishop. On the other hand, we find in the Acts of the Apostles, but one clear indication of a Church being presided over by a single resident ruler, namely, that of the Church of Jerusalem, presided over by St. James. For other such indications we have to go down to St. Paul's later Epistles, and perhaps to the Revelation and the third Epistle of St. John. In the New Testament records of the apostolic age, though we find 'bishops' mentioned, the word does not appear to denote persons singly bearing rule in separate Churches, but to be employed as equivalent to 'presbyters'; and this use is continued in the genuine epistle of Clement of Rome. It is found also in the lately recovered Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Thus, then, although I hold that the episcopal form of Church government dates from apostolic times, I consider also that its rise must be placed quite late in apostolic times. This is the opinion of von Dollinger, who says (*First Age*, ii. 130):—"The office afterwards called episcopal was not yet marked off; the Episcopate slept in the Apostolate. It was the last branch to grow out of the apostolic stem. In Jerusalem it had already taken shape in the person of St. James, whose attitude towards the local Church, his renunciation of missionary work, and his



remaining within the holy city, point him out as the first true and proper bishop. The other Apostles discharged their episcopal office in superintending and guiding different communities.’ My own opinion is that St. James was not only bishop of Jerusalem, but that the veneration gained for him, both by his personal character and by his kinship to our Lord, obtained for him, as the Clementine author believed, that position of primacy over the whole Church which, in later times, it was imagined had been possessed by Peter. In fact, Jerusalem, being the mother Church, naturally exercised commanding influence over the daughter Churches (Acts xv. 1, Gal. ii. 12); and so the head of the Church of Jerusalem possessed, over the entire, authority the exact extent of which we need not trouble ourselves to define.

Von Dollinger attempts to explain why the branching off of the Episcopate as a distinct office did not take place earlier. He considers that, ‘while the Temple stood, and the connexion of Judaism was not finally dissolved, the organization of the Church was, in one sense, incomplete and provisional. It might in the interval have presbyters, who were a common Jewish institution; and their appointment was no sign of separation; but the appointment of bishop, would certainly have been regarded by all Jews, and by Christians also, as an act of sealing the exclusion of the Church, and its definite separation from the Israelite nation and religion. Therefore the Apostles retained the episcopal authority provisionally in their own hands’; and he goes on to urge that until the two nationalities, the Jewish and Gentile, were completely amalgamated, their mutual jealousies (exhibited, for instance, in Acts vi.) would have made it difficult for a bishop, chosen from either party, to obtain submission from the other. And he urges, further, that it would be difficult, in newly-formed Churches, to find men with due qualifications for single rule; and that in such Churches it would be easier to find a dozen presbyters than one bishop. The result is, that we may not only think it an absurdity to speak of an Apostle as bishop of Rome, but also, without at all denying the apostolic origin of episcopacy, may count it an anachronism to speak of anyone as bishop of Rome in the year 42.

Accordingly, although Dollinger, as a good Roman Catholic, contends that St. Peter was the founder of the Church of Rome, yet he appears to shrink from calling him bishop of Rome, and even explains away the story of his twenty-five year’s episcopate. He says (ii. 149):—‘From this list [the Liberian] comes the much-criticised statement of the twenty-five years’ duration of St. Peter’s episcopate. This does not mean that he was bishop at Rome twenty-five years, as it was afterwards misunderstood, but that from Christ’s Ascension to his death was twenty-five years, during which he held his episcopate—that is to say, his dignity in the Church.’ For myself, I cannot admit that there was any misunderstanding, for I do not believe that those who asserted Peter’s Roman episcopate intended to be understood in

any but the obvious sense of the words; but Dollinger's explanation is quite necessary in order to make the assertion consistent with truth. But, according to this explanation, St. Paul had the same right as St. Peter to be accounted bishop of Rome, and each Apostle to be accounted also bishop of each of the Churches which enjoyed his superintending care. So that, if we call an Apostle bishop because he exercised episcopal—nay, more than episcopal—power, we must also hold that, in apostolic times, one bishop might hold several sees, and one see have, at the same time, more bishops than one.

I have already stated that the earliest list of Roman bishops we possess is that published by Irenaeus about A.D. 180. But Irenaeus was not the first to publish a list of Roman bishops. A list had been made by Hegesippus some twenty years earlier, as we learn from an extract from his writings preserved by Eusebius (*H. E.*, iv. 22). The claim of certain Gnostic sects to have derived their peculiar doctrines by secret tradition from the Apostles stirred up the members of the Catholic Church to offer proof that whatever apostolic traditions there were must be sought in those Churches which had been founded by Apostles, and which could trace the succession of their bishops to men appointed by Apostle. It would seem to be with the object of collecting evidence for such a proof that Hegesippus travelled to Rome. He states that on his way he stopped at Corinth, where he found Primus as bishop, and was refreshed with the orthodox doctrine of the Church, which it had held since its first foundation. Thence he proceeded to Rome, where he arrived in the episcopate of Anicetus, which may be roughly dated as A.D. 155-165. He tells us that he then made a 'succession of bishops (*diadochn*) down to Anicetus'; and that in every city and in every succession the teaching was in accordance with the law, and the prophets,<sup>1</sup> and the Lord. He adds that to Anicetus succeeded Soter, and to Soter Eleutherus, who had been deacon to Anicetus. Thus it appears that the work from which Eusebius made his extract was published in the episcopate of Eleutherus—the same episcopate as that in which the work of Irenaeus was published. But it may reasonably be inferred that Hegesippus had published his list of bishops in the time of Anicetus, to which, in the later work, he merely adds the names of the two bishops, Soter and Eleutherus, who had succeeded Anicetus. Nothing more than what is here quoted is directly known of the list of Hegesippus; but Bishop Lightfoot has lately (*Academy*, May 21, 1887) given reasons, which to me appear convincing, for thinking that we have indirect means of knowledge of it.

Epiphanius (*Her.* xxvii. 6) gives a list of Roman bishops, beginning with Peter and Paul, and ending with Anicetus. This list entirely agrees

with that of Irenaeus, except that Anancletus is here called Cletus. Also, besides the mere list of names, Epiphanius shows, in this section, that he had information as to the duration of episcopates, which, it may be presumed, he drew from the same source as that whence he derived the list of Names. Now, the chapter in question begins, 'There came *to us* one Marcellina, who had been deceived by these [viz. the Carpocratians], and who perverted many in the times of Anicetus, bishop of Rome, the successor of Pius, and of the *above-mentioned*.' Many critics had inferred from the phrase 'to us' that Epiphanius, who is habitually clumsy in his use of his authorities, has here incorporated in his work a sentence taken bodily from an old writer, who must have written in Rome where Marcellina taught her heresy. This inference is confirmed by the phrase 'the above-mentioned,' for in what precedes, Epiphanius had made no mention of Pius or his predecessors; it is afterwards that he goes on to explain this sentence by giving a list of Roman bishops. Lipsius had conjectured that Hippolytus was the writer from whom Epiphanius borrowed this sentence; but Bishop Lightfoot puts forward the preferable claims of Hegesippus, who, we know, was in Rome in the time of Anicetus, and whose work contained a list of Roman bishops ending with that prelate. Lightfoot points out a further coincidence, which seems to me enough to remove all doubt as to the correctness of his suggestion. In the same context Epiphanius quotes a passage from the epistle of Clement of Rome, with which epistle he would seem, however, to have no direct acquaintance; for he states that he found the quotation, *en tisin upomnhmatismoid*. Now, Eusebius (*u.s.*, see also iv. 8) calls the books of Hegesippus *upomnhmata* (*Hghsppod en pente toid eid hmad elqousin upomnhuasi*),<sup>2</sup> and states the passage already quoted, in which Hegesippus mentions his visit to Rome. There seems, then, good reason to think that the list given by Irenaeus just reproduces for us the list made by Hegesippus some twenty years before, except that the latter list may not improbably have noted durations of episcopates, which Irenaeus omits as irrelevant to his purpose. Dollinger, indeed (ii. 150), considers that Irenaeus 'certainly did not know Hegesippus's book, or he would have appealed to it against the heretics'; but the coincidence appears to me so close as to exclude the supposition that the authorities are independent; and it is possible that what Irenaeus knew was not the book published in the episcopate of Eleutherus by Hegesippus, but the list which he had made, and probably had published, in the episcopate of Anicetus. In any case we arrive at the result, that

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<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that hostility to the Old Testament was a marked feature of the leading Gnostic sects.

<sup>2</sup> In another passage (xxix. 4), where Epiphanius quotes *upomhmatismoi* as his authority, there is reason to think that Hegesippus is also intended; for the passage relates to

in any investigation as to the origin of episcopacy, we must take it as a fact that a traveller to Rome, about 160, found the Church ruled by a bishop (Anicetus), and that the Roman Church then believed that, since the Apostles' times, it had been governed by bishops, whose names were then preserved.

To return now to the story of Peter's Roman episcopate, the real inventor of that story was an editor of the Clementine Romance, of which I spoke when lecturing on the New Testament Canon. This work was brought to Rome at the very end of the second or beginning of the third century; and it had then prefixed a letter from Clement to James at Jerusalem, telling how Peter had ordained him, and set him in his own chair of teaching as bishop of Rome. Though the doctrinal teaching of the Clementines was rejected as heretical, the narrative part of the book was readily believed; and in particular this story of Clement's ordination by Peter was felt to be so honourable to the Church of Rome that it was at once adopted there, and has been the traditional Roman account ever since.

But the adoption of this fable sadly perplexed the chronology. For, according to the list of Irenaeus, Clement was but the third Roman bishop since the Apostles; and this is confirmed by the internal evidence of Clement's epistle, which, according to the judgment of the best critics, cannot be earlier than about A.D. 97. It was felt that unless Clement could be pushed back to an earlier period, his ordination by Peter would not be chronologically possible. Accordingly, another list of Roman bishops was published,<sup>1</sup> which puts up Clement to the second, and pushes down Anacletus to the third place. This double list has been very perplexing to historical inquirers; but that the earlier order of Irenaeus is really correct is proved by a kind of evidence which I count peculiarly trustworthy. In the Roman Liturgy to this day the names of its first bishops are commemorated in the order of Irenaeus, viz. Linus, Anacletus, Clement. If this were the original order we can understand its being preserved in the Church of Rome (which was very conservative in liturgical matters), notwithstanding that subsequent chronologers of eminence placed Clement second. But if Clement had been really originally in the second place, it is quite impossible that the name of Anacletus, who is unknown to Church history, should have been placed before him. These Clementine legends have so filled with fable the whole history of St. Peter, that I should even think the story of Peter's coming to

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a tradition concerning James, our Lord's brother, of whom Hegesippus wrote largely (Euseb., *H. E.*, ii. 23).

<sup>1</sup> My own opinion is that this innovation was made by Hippolytus, the first in the Roman Church to take up the study of chronology—a science, however, in which he deserves credit for zeal and industry, rather than for skill. His list appears to have been published in the third decade of the third century—a time when the story of Clement's ordination by Peter had come to be fully believed in.'

Rome at all to be open to question, were it not, as I already said, that no rival Church claims the martyrdom.

The Clementine letter itself, which represents Clement as ordained by Peter, and as succeeding Peter in his chair as chief teacher of the Church, does not expressly speak of Peter as bishop of Rome. Tertullian, in the early part of the third century, had heard and believed the story of Clement's ordination by Peter, for he speaks (*De. Praescrip.* 32) of Polycarp having been placed by John over the Church of Smyrna; and Clement, by Peter, over the Church of Rome. But it does not seem to have dawned on Tertullian that Peter was bishop of Rome any more than John was bishop of Smyrna.

We can only give conjectural answers to the questions, Who first counted Peter as bishop of Rome? and, How came the duration of his episcopate to be fixed at twenty-five years? but I will tell you what seems to me most probable. Were it not that there is no better authority for believing Peter to have been bishop of Rome at all than for believing that he came to Rome in the second year of Claudius, many learned Roman Catholics would be glad to get rid of this inconvenient addition to the story. They have found the bringing St. Peter to Rome so early as the year 42 to be attended with chronological difficulties sufficiently perplexing. First, they have had to push back the date of the imprisonment of Peter by Herod, which independent chronologers, with general consent, assign to the year 44. Then they have to bring back Peter to Jerusalem, to be present at the Council of Jerusalem, the proceedings at which are related (Acts xv.). Then they want him at Rome again, in order that the edict of Claudius mentioned (Acts xviii.) may provide him with a decent excuse for leaving his see, and undertaking those missionary labours in 'Pontes, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,' which appear to have continued so long that non-Episcopalians would be justified in concluding that a Church could get on very well without a bishop. If the commencement of the Roman episcopate could be placed at a later date, the Roman advocates would certainly find their task much easier.

Now Hippolytus was the first Christian scientific chronologer at Rome. Before his time, lists of Roman bishops had been made, and notes of the duration of episcopates had been preserved; but I consider that it was Hippolytus who first put these dates together, with the view of showing how the whole interval between our Lord's time and his own was to be accounted for. My belief is that, in working his way chronologically back, he placed the accession of Linus twenty-six years after our Lord's Ascension. You may take it as a fact that, in the early part of the third century, men had come to find it impossible to conceive the idea of a Church without a bishop. So to the question, What about the twenty-six years before the acces-

sion of Linus? Was there no Roman Church then? Hippolytus answered that there was, and that it had St. Peter as its bishop; and my belief is that the duration of twenty-five years was intended to indicate that the Roman Church was founded the year after our Lord's Ascension.<sup>1</sup>

Now you, perhaps, hardly understand how much chronology has been helped by the use of a fixed era, such as 'Anno Domini,' and how difficult early chronologers who did not use this assistance found it to make their sums total agree when they added together lengths of episcopates, and lengths of emperors' reigns for the same period, the durations being often given only by whole numbers of years, without mention of months and days. There is, therefore, nothing to wonder at if, when the calculations of Hippolytus, who was not a skilful computer, were repeated by abler chronologers, they arrived at a somewhat different result; and taking Peter's episcopate at twenty-five years as he had fixed it, instead of getting back to the year after the Ascension, only got back to the second year of Claudius.

As I have quoted Epiphanius just now, there is a peculiar notion of his which it is worthwhile to mention before concluding this Lecture. Irenaeus, as I have said, begins his list of Roman bishops by naming Peter and Paul as the founders of the Church, and as having appointed Linus as bishop. We have just seen reason to think that Hegesippus also began by naming Peter and Paul. It follows that there is as good reason for calling Paul first bishop of Rome, as for so calling Peter. This was clearly seen by von Dollinger, and was no doubt the reason of his evident reluctance distinctly to call Peter bishop of Rome. He says concerning the passage in Irenaeus:—'This makes the regulation of the Roman Church and the appointment of Linus a common act of both apostles; and since then the Roman bishops have been frequently regarded as successors of both. The Roman Church was viewed as inheriting<sup>2</sup> alike from St. Paul, his prerogative of Apostle of the Gentiles, and from St. Peter, his dignity as foundation of the Church, and as partaking the power of the keys.' And he goes on to say that Eusebius says of Alexander that he formed the fifth bishop in the succession from Peter and Paul, and that he almost always reckons the others 'from the Apostles,' i.e. Peter and Paul. He adds that later such expressions are frequent as that the Roman Church is the seat of the two Apostles, or that the power of Rome is founded on Peter and Paul. Now, the admission that the origin of the Roman episcopate is to be traced to Paul as much as to Peter, is equivalent to an admission that neither Apostle was bishop of Rome in the modern sense

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<sup>1</sup> Substantially this view is taken by von Dollinger in the passage already cited from his *First Age of the Church*. Elsewhere he seems to think that the twenty-five years was intended to represent the interval between Peter's imprisonment by Herod and his martyrdom.

<sup>2</sup> But where is the evidence that such an inheritance was bequeathed to Rome any more than to the other Churches where these Apostles respectively laboured?

of the word. For the ancients never dreamed of two bishops sitting, like two kings of Brentford, in the same chair. There is just one Father who had the courage to entertain this notion, viz. Epiphanius. In his time (the end of the fourth century) the assertion that Peter had been bishop of Rome had gained general acceptance. But he saw that ancient authorities gave as much justification for counting Paul bishop of Rome as for counting Peter. So he jumped to the conclusion that they had both been bishops, (*Hoer.* xxvii. 6) .

In this connexion I must notice another passage (lxviii. 7) where Epiphanius names it as a peculiarity of Alexandria that 'it never had two bishops, as the other cities had.' Dr. Hatch (*Growth of Church Institutions*, p. 17), with easy faith, accepts this passage as 'decisive,' that 'where there was more than one community in a city, there was, as a rule, more than one bishop.' Those who know their Epiphanius will be amused at hearing any-one quote as 'decisive,' on any subject, the unsupported testimony of an author so uncritical and so rash. There is no hint or trace elsewhere of one Church having really had two bishops; and if Epiphanius meant to say that it was customary for cities to have two bishops he would stand quite alone. But Mr. Gore (*Church and Ministry*, p. 165) has shown that the sentence in Epiphanius, read in connexion with its context, does not bear the construction put upon it. Epiphanius, in *Hoer.* 68, treats of the schism made by the Egyptian Meletius, in consequence of which there were in most Egyptian cities two bishops, a Meletian and a Catholic. But Meletius was on good terms with Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, and appears not to have established his schism in that city during Alexander's lifetime. It is in telling of the appointment of a Meletian bishop on Alexander's death that Epiphanius remarks that Alexandria had not previously had two bishops as the other cities [of Egypt] had.