

(question) And Ignatius had this great idea of the importance of the bishop. And we find this idea of the importance of the bishop to be carried on all through our ancient ~~church history~~ church history, as you recall. You recall, in our church history, we have had cases where there has been a dispute over who was the right bishop. But we have not had any evidence of any group in ancient history which said there should not be great authority in a bishop. And that seems strange when you note that the N.T. gives no evidence of authority to the ~~bishop~~ bishop.

If you are going to hold it on N.T. grounds, it would seem as if the only way you could do it, ~~is~~ is to say, we are really apostles. Or to say, the N.T. apostles took their authority to bishops, but they certainly didn't say so in the N.T. But this idea of the bishop is very prominent through the rest of ancient ch. hist. The importance of the bishop and his great authority, and the great importance of being subject to the bishop. That is very common in ancient ch. hist. Jerome, you remember, flatly said, bishop and elder were the same. In the Bible. He flatly says so. But he ~~said~~ said, that was different from like it is now. And no one in his day held that they should be the same. But they were the same in the N.T. But by this time, within 100 ~~years~~ years after the time of Christ, ~~it~~ it was established throughout the Christian world, that the bishop was the head of a church, and a presbyter was an assistant to a bishop. That system was established.

Well, now, that system being established, then we find perhaps the next thing clearly in this is Cyprian. Cyprian had an idea the church is the bishop, but it was all the bishops of the world which might be several thousand of them, standing together. ~~Cyprian~~ Cyprian admitted no supremacy of one bishop over another. And when we come to the Council of Nicea, the important matters were decided by a council, which was made up of bishops, what we would call ministers today, they were. They were not over more than a single city, generally just a single church, but there was no recognition of any one bishop having any authority over others. There does come, in the Council of Nicea, a recognition of a certain bishops in great cities of