

pronouncements, give appointments, etc., in areas others thought belonged to them. (You may wish to review the entire bishopric system to see how this situation came to pass and what the logical implications of it were. III.4.b. in these notes)

The consensus clearly was that each bishop was responsible for his own territory and had no authority in the regions of another. Cyprian reproached Stephen of Rome for attempting to give opinions binding outside his own bishopric. Still we know that men of ability will not be limited to any one area of life and it was only natural that the larger sees would begin to dominate the smaller sees. The authority of the individual bishops, therefore, will soon be a prime area of difficulty.

#### Heretical baptism

Baptism is a troubled area in many ways with no uniform agreement in the early church so far as we are able to tell. At this time in our study the question of mode and subject is not the problem (although there are queries on baptism of infants) but the matter is a question of lay or heretical baptism. Many of the fathers felt heretical baptism was no baptism but the view was not unanimous. I always note that your views of baptism have got to be made of stronger stuff than the opinions of the fathers, anyway.

In this regard it was commonly held that heretics, after returning to the church, could not be given public office. But as the time of persecution passed more and more into an ecclesiastical limbo this was weakened in force and soon would become an historical argument. I must say that the question on what to do with those who have defected in some way is still with us although the area of defection may be different today.

### III.3 Church Leaders

#### CHURCH LEADERS OF THE PRE-NICENE AGE

In an arbitrary fashion we divide the chief persons of this period into three groups and our chart is on page 50! The classification may not meet all academic standards but it does offer a convenient mold for the study of a large number of leading persons, so