

In Cyprian we find that the bishop could:

- take presidency over presbyters,
- maintain unity of church by fact of office
- exercise power of pardon
- express forgiveness of sins
- veto unapproved actions of presbyters, et al
- with other bishops exercise concerted action in needed areas.

We also find he could not:

- have sole power of ordination
- exercise sole power of government or discipline
- exercise power over a plurality of congregations
- override the opposition of other bishops

He apparently believed the consummate number of bishops was the church. He made no special deference to the bishop of Rome but upheld him in his role of bishop in Rome for Rome. He was a man of authority (any bishop) and the authority was the collect power of all the bishops, coming from the Apostles and so from Christ.

2. Pursuit of a holy Life becomes a dominant theme that will lead to monastic living and some very ascetic ideals in the next period. As the church becomes legal, its problems with purity will increase.

G. Conclusion:

These summaries, you will remember, are not exhaustive and only indicate in fragment form how the doctrines were gripped by the writers and thinkers of the Ante-Nicene period. There is not a lot of formalized doctrinal statements yet, but they are coming and we will find them much more in the next period.