

choose a Bishop," their choice was invalid without the consent of the Bishops, and thus we find the explanation of the 4th Canon of Nicæa. I have shown that St. Cyprian had received "an Apostolic observance" that in almost all the Provinces, when a See was vacant, the neighbouring Bishops used to meet and elect a Bishop, *plebe presente*. This evidence was given by a Bishop some 125 years before the Council of Nicæa, and he tells us moreover that he had been ordained with the consent of his fellow Bishops, *consensus co-episcoporum*, and that Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, had been ordained (elected) Bishop by sixteen co-Bishops. Yet Mr. Dawson says that, "that before the Council of Nicæa there is no trace, even in ordinations of the assembly of the Bishops on such occasions." Surely, sixteen was a large number to assemble at a time when persecution was raging, and the Roman Clergy could write to St. Cyprian, "that the grant of a Bishop was withheld from us by God," and that in this crisis, "they were obliged to consult with some of the Bishops who are near to us and within reach, and some whom the heat of the persecution had driven out from other provinces."* Again, the Council of Laodicea held (according to Dr. Pusey) before the Council of Nicæa, provides in the 12th Canon. "That the Bishops long approved both in the word of faith and the dispensation of the right doctrine, be constituted to the ecclesiastical government, by the judgment of the metropolitan and neighbouring Bishops." And, as if to prevent any misunderstanding, the following (13th) Canon says, "That the multitude be not permitted to make the elections of those who are about to be appointed to the Priesthood (Episcopate)." It would be difficult to reconcile these provisions of the venerable Council that gives us the first list of the Canonical Books of Scripture, with Mr. Dawson's assertion that Clergy and Laity alone were concerned in elections before the Council of Nicæa.

We have the incidental testimony of the Emperor Alexander Severus, A.D. 235, nearly a century before the Nicene Canon, to the method adopted by the Christians of publishing or propounding the names of those who were to be ordained Bishops. His Historian Lampridius says, "When he wished to give rulers to provinces, or to ordain procurators, he published

* Ep. 30.