

prayer of one or two, have so great a force, how much more prevalent must that be, which is made by the bishop, and the whole church." Dionysius bishop of Alexandria writes, that when he was banished to Cephro in Lybia, there came so many christians unto him, that even there he "had a church." Cyprian says, there is but one bishop in a church at a time. And Cornelius, bishop of Rome, in the *third* century, objects to Novatian, that he did not remember, "that there ought to be but one bishop in a church." *Ignatius*, and other christian writers have said the same.

But further, it will here be well to show some of the principal powers and rights of the *laity* of the church, during several of the earliest centuries. They chose their bishops and had the power of deposing them, for heretical doctrines, and gross vices and immoralities; and were consulted by their bishops, and by them informed as to all material affairs concerning the church. As to the choice of bishops, Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, and bishop of Caserea, who lived in the third century, says of the church of Rome, on the death of its bishop Anterus:—"All the brethren met together in the Church to chose a successor, where all the people unanimously chose Fabianus." On his death, as stated by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, Cornelius was chosen bishop of Rome "by the suffrage of the clergy and the people." And Cyprian says the same as to Churches generally. At the ordination of the Clergy the whole body of the people were present. So, as Cyprian writes, "an African Synod held Anno 258, determined, that the ordination of Ministers ought to be done with the knowledge and in the presence of the people, so that either the crimes of the wicked may be detected, or the merits of the good declared; and so the ordination may be just and lawful, being approved by the suffrage and judgment of all." Pontius, a deacon of the Church of Carthage, says that Cyprian was elected its bishop "by the favor of the people;" and Cyprian himself in one of his epistles, acknowledges himself that he was chosen "by the suffrage of the people." And further, all the people of a diocese were present at church censures. In the third century, Origen describes an offender as appearing "before the whole