

Church History - Senior 1 (SR.)

very great importance in the history of the Christian and one which we in the far west here often fail to realize. So A is the separation of the East and the West. As you know, the viewpoint originally was that the Christian church was one church and that at the Council of Nicaea it was decided that the custom which had developed should be maintained of having the church generally divided into four patriarchies; the patriarchy of Rome, of Constantinople, of Antioch and of Alexandria, while the Bishop of Jerusalem might be called the Patriarch but he had very little authority since it was not a great Christian center. Now the Bishop of Rome claimed, increasingly as time went on, to be the only successor of Peter and the head of the whole church. All the rest of the church gave to Rome a great trustee. They were ready to recognize first a primary standing of Rome. After all it was the old seat of empire. It was the foundation of the Roman empire. But none of them were ready to recognize any superior authority in Rome over Antioch, <sup>or</sup> Alexandria, and then, of course, Constantinople, when it was founded very shortly after the council of Nicaea naturally came to feel that it was over the Eastern area. Yes? (Student) The Eastern church was ready to give them a preeminence in the sense of naming them first. That they were all ready to do. It was the Roman empire. It's capital might be at Constantinople but it was the Roman empire, and so the Bishop of Rome, they would readily say, we mention first, but the Bishop of new Rome would be mentioned second, and just as the authority of the Bishop of Rome would be greater than that of any other individual bishop in the West, similarly the Bishop of new Rome would be greater than that of any other individual bishop in the East. Now in the days when Rome was in tremendous decline, in about 590, you remember, the Bishop of Constantinople tried to make himself Bishop over the whole church. The empire had its headquarters in Constantinople, the emperor was there and the Bishop said, "This is new Rome; this is now the seat of the whole empire," he said. "I am the universal bishop!" and Gregory said, "It is wicked for anyone to call himself universal bishop." He said, "I am the servant of the servant of God. I am the Bishop of Rome, but no one should call himself the universal bishop." And yet, not so long after he said that, other bishops of Rome were calling