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ART. I.—*The Ecumenical Councils.*

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ABOVE the patriarchs, even above the patriarch of Rome, stood the Ecumenical or General Councils,* the highest representatives of the unity and authority of the old catholic church. They referred originally to the Roman empire, but afterwards included the adjacent barbarian countries, so far as those countries were represented in them by bishops. They rise up like lofty peaks or majestic pyramids from the plan of ancient church history, and mark the ultimate authoritative settlement of the general questions of doctrine and discipline which agitated Christendom in the Græco-Roman empire.

The synodal system in general had its rise in the apostolic council at Jerusalem,† and completed its development under

* The name *σύνodus οἰκουμένης* (concilium universale, s. generale) occurs first in the sixth canon of the Council of Constantinople in 381. The *οἰκουμένη* (sc. γῆ) is, properly, the whole inhabited earth; then, in a narrower sense, the earth inhabited by *Greeks*, in distinction from the barbarian countries; finally, with the Romans, the *orbis Romanus*, the political limits of which coincided with those of the ancient Græco-Latin church. But as the bishops of the barbarians outside the empire were admitted, the ecumenical councils represented the entire catholic Christian world.

† Acts xv. and Gal. ii. Comp. my "History of the Apostolic Church," § 67-69 (Engl. ed., p. 245-257). Mansi, l. c. tom. i. p. 22, (De quadruplici Synodo Apostolorum), and other Roman Catholic writers, speaks of *four* apostolic synods: Acts i. 13, sqq., for the election of an apostle; ch. vi. for the election of deacons; ch. xv., for the settlement of the question of the binding authority of the law of Moses; and ch. xxi., for a similar object. But we should distinguish between a private conference and consultation, and a public synod.

its catholic form in the course of the first five centuries. Like the episcopate, it presented a hierarchical gradation of orders. There was, first, the *diocesan* or district council, in which the bishop of a diocese (in the later sense of the word), presided over his clergy; then the *provincial* council, consisting of the metropolitan or archbishop, and the bishops of his ecclesiastical province; next, the *patriarchal* council, embracing all the bishops of a patriarchal district (or a diocese in the old sense of the term); then the *national* council, inaccurately styled also *general*, representing either the entire Greek or the entire Latin church (like the later Lateran councils and the council of Trent); and, finally, at the summit stood the *ecumenical* councils, for the whole Christian world. There was, besides these, a peculiar and abnormal kind of synod, styled *σύνδος ἐκδημοῦσα*, frequently held by the bishop of Constantinople with the provincial bishops resident (*ἐκδημοῦντες*) on the spot.*

In the earlier centuries, the councils assembled without fixed regularity, at the instance of present necessity, as the Montanist and the Easter controversies in the latter part of the second century. Firmilian of Cappadocia, in his letter to Cyprian, first mentions that at his time, in the middle of the third century, the churches of Asia Minor held regular annual synods, consisting of bishops and presbyters. From that time we find an increasing number of such assemblies in Egypt, Syria, Greece, Northern Africa, Italy, Spain, and Gaul. The Council of Nice, A.D. 325, ordained, in the fifth canon, that the *provincial* councils should meet twice a-year, during the fast season before Easter, and in the autumn.† In regard to the other synods, no direction was given.

The ECUMENICAL Councils were not stated but extraordinary assemblies, occasioned by the great theological controversies of the ancient church. They could not arise until after the conversion of the Roman emperor, and the ascendancy of Christianity as the religion of the state. They were the highest, and the last, manifestation of the power of the Greek church, which in general took the lead in the first age of Christianity, and was the chief seat of all theological

* It is usually supposed there were only four or five different kinds of councils; but Hefele reckons eight (i. p. 8, 4), adding to those above named the irregular *σύνδοι ἐκδημοῦσαι*, also the synods of the bishops of two or more provinces; and, finally, the *concilia mixta*, consisting of the *secular* and spiritual dignitaries of a province, as separate classes.

† A similar order, with different times, appears still earlier in the 87th of the apostolical canons, where it is said (in the ed. of Uel'zen, p. 244), *Διάρρηξις τοῦ ἔτους σύνδοις γινώσκω τῶν ἐπισκόπων.*

activity. Hence in that church, as well as in others, they are still held in the highest veneration, and kept alive in the popular mind by pictures in the churches. The Greek and Russian Christians have annually commemorated the seven ecumenical councils since the year 842, on the first Sunday in Lent, as the festival of the triumph of orthodoxy,* and they live in the hope that an eighth ecumenical council shall yet heal the divisions and infirmities of the Christian world. Through their symbols of faith those councils, especially of Nice and Chalcedon, still live in the western church, both Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant.

Strictly speaking, none of these councils properly represented the entire Christian world. Apart from the fact that the laity, and even the lower clergy, were excluded from them, the assembled bishops themselves formed but a small part of the catholic episcopate. The province of North Africa alone numbered many more bishops than were present at either the second, the third, or the fifth general council.† The councils bore a prevailing oriental character, were occupied with Greek controversies, used the Greek language, sat in Constantinople or in its vicinity, and consisted almost wholly of Greek members. The Latin church was usually represented only by a couple of delegates of the Roman bishop, though these delegates, it is true, acted more or less in the name of the entire west. Even the five hundred and twenty, or the six hundred and thirty, members of the council of Chalcedon, excepting the two representatives of Leo I., and two African fugitives accidentally present, were all from the east. The council of Constantinople, in 381, contained not a single Latin bishop, and only a hundred and fifty Greek, and was raised to the ecumenical rank by the consent of the Latin church towards the middle of the following century. On the other hand, the council of Ephesus, in 449, was designed by emperor and pope to be an ecumenical council; but instead of this it has been branded in history as "the synod of robbers," for its violent sanction of the Eutychian heresy. The council of Sardica, in 343, was likewise intended to be a general council, but immediately after its assembling assumed a sectional charac-

* This Sunday, the celebration of which was ordered by the Empress Theodora in 842, is called among the Greeks the *κυριακή τῆς ἑορδαξίας*. On that day the ancient councils are dramatically reproduced in the public worship.

† The schismatical Donatists alone held a council at Carthage in 808, of two hundred and seventy bishops (comp. Wiltch. Kirchl. Geogr. u. Statistik, i. pp. 58, 54); while the second ecumenical council numbered only a hundred and fifty; the third a hundred and sixty (a hundred and ninety-eight); and the fifth, a hundred and sixty-four.

ter, through the secession and counter-organisation of the eastern bishops.

It is, therefore, not the number of bishops present, nor even the regularity of the summons alone, which determines the ecumenical character of a council, but the result, the importance and correctness of the decisions, and, above all, the consent of the orthodox Christian world.*

The number of the councils thus raised by the public opinion of the Greek and Latin church to the ecumenical dignity, is seven. The succession begins with the first council of Nice, in the year 325, which settled the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and condemned the Arian heresy. It closes with the second council of Nice, in 787, which sanctioned the use of images in the church. The first four of these councils command high theological regard in the orthodox evangelical churches, while the last three are less important, and are far more rarely mentioned.

The ecumenical councils have not only an ecclesiastical significance, but bear also a *political* or state-church character. The very name refers to the *oikoumên*, the *orbis Romanus*, the empire. Such synods were rendered possible only by that great transformation, which is marked by the accession of Constantine. That emperor caused the assembling of the first ecumenical council, though the idea was probably suggested to him by friends among the bishops; at least Rufinus says he summoned the council *ex sacerdotum sententia*. At all events, the Christian Graeco-Roman emperor is indispensable to an ecumenical council in the ancient sense of the term, its temporal head and its legislative strength.

According to the rigid hierarchical or papistic theory, as carried out in the middle ages, and still asserted by Roman divines, the pope alone, as universal head of the church, can summon, conduct, and confirm a universal council. But the history of the first seven, or, as the Roman reckoning is, eight, ecumenical councils, from 325 to 867, assigns this threefold power to the Byzantine emperors. This is placed beyond all contradiction by the still extant edicts of the emperors, the acts of the councils, the accounts of all the Greek historians, and the contemporary Latin sources. Upon this Byzantine precedent, and upon the example of the kings of Israel, the Russian Czars and the Protestant princes of Germany, Scandinavia, and England—be it justly

* Schröckh says (vol. viii. p. 201), unjustly, that this general consent belongs to the "empty conceits." Of course the unanimity must be limited to orthodox Christendom.

or unjustly—build their claim to a similar and still more extended supervision of the church in their dominions.

In the first place, the *call* of the ecumenical councils emanated from the emperors.* They fixed the place and time of the assembly, summoned the metropolitans and more distinguished bishops of the empire by an edict, provided the means of transit, and paid the cost of travel and the other expenses out of the public treasury. In the case of the Council of Nice and the first of Constantinople, the call was issued without previous advice or consent from the bishop of Rome.† In the council of Chalcedon, in 451, the papal influence is for the first time decidedly prominent; but even there it appears in virtual subordination to the higher authority of the council, which did not suffer itself to be disturbed by the protest of Leo against its twenty-eighth canon in reference to the rank of the patriarch of Constantinople. Not only ecumenical, but also provincial councils were not rarely called together by western princes; as the council of Arles, in 314, by Constantine, the council of Orleans, in 549, by Childebert, and—to anticipate an instance—the Synod of Frankfort, in 794, by Charlemagne. Another remarkable fact has been already mentioned: that in the beginning of the sixth century several orthodox synods at Rome, for the purpose of deciding the contested election of Symmachus, were called by a secular prince, and he the *heretical* Theodoric; yet they were regarded as valid.

In the second place, the emperors, directly or indirectly, took an active part in all but two of the ecumenical councils summoned by them, and held the *presidency*. Constantine the Great, Marcian, and his wife Pulcheria, Constantine Progonatus, Irene, and Basil the Macedonian, attended in person; but generally the emperors, like the Roman bishops (who were never present themselves), were represented by

* This is conceded even by the Roman Catholic Church historian Hefele (i. p. 7), in opposition to Bellarmine and other Romish divines. "The first eight general councils," says he, "were appointed and convoked by the emperors; all the subsequent councils, on the contrary [*i. e.*, all the Roman Catholic general councils], by the popes; but even in those first councils there appears a certain *participation of the popes* in their convocation, more or less prominent in particular instances." The latter assertion is too sweeping, and can by no means be verified in the history of the first two of these councils, nor of the fifth.

† As regards the council of Nice, according to Eusebius and all the ancient authorities, it was called by Constantine alone; and not till three centuries later, at the council of 680, was it claimed that Pope Sylvester had any share in the convocation. As to the council of Constantinople in 381, the Roman theory, that Pope Damasus summoned it in conjunction with Theodosius, rests on a confusion of this council with another and an unimportant one of 382. Comp. the notes of Valesius to Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 9, and Hefele (who here himself corrects his earlier view), vol. i. p. 8, and vol. ii. p. 36.

delegates or commissioners clothed with full authority for the occasion. These deputies opened the sessions by reading the imperial edict (in Latin and Greek), and other documents. They presided in conjunction with the patriarchs, conducted the entire course of the transactions, preserved order and security, closed the council, and signed the acts either at the head or at the foot of the signatures of the bishops. In this prominent position they sometimes exercised, when they had a theological interest or opinion of their own, no small influence on the discussions and decisions; though they had no *votum*; as the presiding officers of deliberative and legislative bodies generally have no vote, except when the decision of a question depends upon their voice.

To this presidency of the emperor or of his commissioners, the acts of the councils and the Greek historians often refer. Even Pope Stephen V. (A.D. 817) writes, that Constantine the Great presided in the council of Nice. According to Eusebius, he introduced the principal matters of business with a solemn discourse, constantly attended the sessions, and took the place of honour in the assembly. This presence among the bishops at the banquet, which he gave them at the close of the council, seemed to that panegyric historian a type of Christ among his saints!* This prominence of Constantine in the most celebrated and the most important of all the councils is the more remarkable, since at that time he had not yet even been baptized. When Marcian and Pulcheria appeared with their court at the council of Chalcedon, to confirm its decrees, they were greeted by the assembled bishops in the bombastic style of the east, as defenders of the faith, as pillars of orthodoxy, as enemies and persecutors of heretics; the emperor, a second Constantine, a new Paul, a new David; the empress, a second Helena, with other high-sounding predicates.† The second and fifth general councils were the only ones, at which the emperor was not represented, and in them the presidency was in the hands of the patriarchs of Constantinople.

But together with the imperial commissioners, or, in their absence, the different patriarchs or their representatives, especially the legates of the Roman bishop, the most powerful of the patriarchs, took part in the presiding office. This

* Euseb. Vita Const. iii. 15: Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἰδοῦν ἢ τις φαντασθεῖσθαι εἰκόνα, ὅσαρ τ' εἶναι ἀλλ' οὐχ ὕπαρ τὸ γινόμενον.

† Mansi, vii. 170, sqq. The emperor is called there not simply *divine*, which would be idolatrous enough, but *most divine*, ἰδιότατος καὶ ὑπερβίωτατος ἡμῶν διασέσης, *divissimus et piissimus noster imperator ad sanctam synodum dixit*, &c. And these adulatory epithets occur repeatedly in the acts of this council.

was the case at the third and fourth, and the sixth, seventh, and eighth universal councils. For the emperor's connection with the council had reference rather to the conduct of business and to the external affairs of the synod, than to its theological and religious discussions. This distinction appears in the well-known dictum of Constantine respecting a double episcopate, which we have already noticed. And at the Nicene council the emperor acted accordingly. He paid the bishops greater reverence than his heathen predecessors had shewn the Roman senators. He wished to be a servant, not a judge, of the successors of the apostles, who are constituted priests and gods on earth. After his opening address, he "resigned the word" to the (clerical) officers of the council,* by whom probably Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, and Hosius of Cordova, the latter as special friend of the emperor, and as representative of the western churches, and perhaps of the bishop of Rome, are to be understood. The same distinction between a secular and spiritual presidency meets us in Theodosius II., who sent the *comes* Candidian as his deputy to the third general council, with full power over the entire business proceedings, but none over theological matters themselves; "for," wrote he to the council, "it is not proper that one who does not belong to the catalogue of most holy bishops, should meddle in ecclesiastical discussions." Yet Cyril of Alexandria presided at this council, and conducted the business, at first alone, afterwards in conjunction with the papal legates; while Candidian supported the Nestorian opposition, which held a council of its own under the patriarch John of Antioch.

Finally, from the emperors proceeded the *ratification* of the councils. Partly by their signatures, partly by special edicts, they gave the decrees of the council legal validity; they raised them to laws of the realm, they took pains to have them observed, and punished the disobedient with deposition and banishment. This was done by Constantine the Great for the decrees of Nice; by Theodosius the Great for those of Constantinople; by Marcian for those of Chalcedon. The second ecumenical council expressly prayed the emperor for such sanction, since he was present neither in person nor by commission. The papal confirmation, on the contrary, was not considered necessary, until after the fourth

* Eusebius, *Vita Const.* iii. 18: 'Ο μὴδὲ ταῦτ' εἰσὼν Ῥωμαίικα γλώττω [which was still the official language], ὑφιρμημένους λόγου, παρῆιδου εἰς λόγον τοῖς εἰς συνέδου προσέδρασι. Yet, according to the immediately following words of Eusebius, the emperor continued to take lively interest in the proceedings, hearing, speaking, and exhorting to harmony. Eusebius's whole account of this synod is brief and unsatisfactory.

general council in 451.* And notwithstanding this, Justinian broke through the decrees of the fifth council, of 553, without the consent, and in fact despite the intimated refusal, of Pope Vigilius. In the middle ages, however, the case was reversed. The influence of the pope on the councils increased, and that of the emperor declined; or rather, the German emperor never claimed so pre-eminent a position in the church, as the Byzantine. Yet the relation of the pope to a general council, the question which of the two is above the other, is still a point of controversy between the curialist or ultramontane, and the episcopal or Gallican schools.

Apart from this predominance of the emperor and his commissioners, the character of the ecumenical councils was thoroughly *hierarchical*. In the apostolic council at Jerusalem, the elders and the brethren took part with the apostles, and the decision went forth in the name of the whole congregation.† But this republican or democratic element, so to call it, had long since given way before the spirit of aristocracy. The bishops alone, as the successors and heirs of the apostles, the *ecclesia docens*, were members of the councils. Hence, in the fifth canon of Nice, even a provincial synod is termed “the general assembly of the *bishops* of the province.” The presbyters and deacons took part, indeed, in the deliberations, and Athanasius, though at the time only a deacon, exerted probably more influence on the Council of Nice by his zeal and his gifts, than most of the bishops; but they had no *votum decisivum*, except when, like the Roman legates, they represented their bishops. The laity were entirely excluded.

Yet it must be remembered, that the bishops of that day were elected by the popular voice. So far as that went, they represented the Christian people, and were not seldom called to account by the people for their acts, though they voted in their own name as successors of the apostles. Eusebius felt bound to justify his vote at Nice before his diocese in Cæsarea, and the Egyptian bishops at Chalcedon feared an uproar in their congregations.

Furthermore, the councils, in an age of absolute despotism, sanctioned the principle of common public deliberation, as the best means of arriving at truth and settling controversy.

* To wit, in a letter of the council to Leo (Ep. 89 in the Epistles of Leo, ed. Baller., tom. i. p. 1099), and in a letter of Marcian to Leo (Ep. 110, tom. i. p. 1182, sq.).

† Acts xv. 22, Τότε ἰδοὺ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ἅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ; and verse 23, Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ ἁγίαστοι τοῦ . . . ἁδελφοῦ, κ. τ. λ.—Comp. my History of the Apostolic Church, § 69 and § 128.

They revived the spectacle of the Roman senate in ecclesiastical form, and were the forerunners of representative government and parliamentary legislation.

In matters of discipline the *majority* decided; but in matters of faith *unanimity* was required, though, if necessary, it was forced by the excision of the dissentient minority. In the midst of the assembly an open copy of the gospels lay upon a desk or table, as a symbol of the presence of Christ, whose infallible word is the rule of all doctrine. Subsequently the ecclesiastical canons and the relics of the saints were laid in similar state. The bishops, at least according to later usage, sat in a circle, in the order of the dates of their ordination or the rank of their sees; behind them, the priests; before or beside them, the deacons. The meetings were opened and closed with religious solemnities in liturgical style. In the ancient councils, the various subjects were discussed in open synod, and the acts of the councils contain long discourses and debates. But in the council of Trent the subjects of action were wrought up in separate committees, and only laid before the whole synod for ratification. The vote was always taken by heads, till the council of Constance, where it was taken by nations, to avoid the preponderance of the Italian prelates.

The *jurisdiction* of the ecumenical councils covered the entire legislation of the church, all matters of Christian faith and practice (*fidei et morum*), and all matters of organisation and worship. The doctrinal decrees were called *dogmata* or *symbola*; the disciplinary, *canones*. At the same time the councils exercised, when occasion required, the highest judicial authority, in excommunicating bishops and patriarchs.

The *authority* of these councils in the decision of all points of controversy was supreme and final.

Their doctrinal decisions were early invested with infallibility; the promises of the Lord respecting the indestructibility of his church, his own perpetual presence with the ministry, and the guidance of the Spirit of truth, being applied in the full sense to those councils, as representing the whole church. After the example of the apostolic council, the usual formula for a decree was, *Visum est Spiritui sancto et nobis*.^{*} Constantine the Great, in a circular letter to the churches, styles the decrees of the Nicene council a

* "Ἐδοξε τῷ πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν, Acts xv. 28. The provincial councils, too, had already used this phrase; e.g. the Council Carthaginense, of 252 (in the Opera Cypriani): "Placuit nobis, sancto Spiritu suggerente, et Domino per visiones multas et manifestas admonente." So the council of Arles in 314: "Placuit ergo, presente Spiritu sancto et angelis ejus."

divine command;* a phrase, however, in reference to which the abuse of the word *divine*, in the language of the Byzantine despots, must not be forgotten. Athanasius says, with reference to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, "What God has spoken by the councils of Nice, abides for ever."† The council of Chalcedon pronounced the decrees of the Nicene fathers unalterable statutes, since God himself had spoken through them.‡ The council of Ephesus, in the sentence of deposition against Nestorius, uses the formula: "The Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has blasphemed, determines through this most holy council."§ Pope Leo speaks of an "*irretractabilis consensus*" of the council of Chalcedon upon the doctrine of the person of Christ. Pope Gregory the Great even placed the first four councils, which refuted and destroyed respectively the heresies and impieties of Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, and Eutyches, on a level with the four canonical gospels.|| In like manner Justinian puts the dogmas of the first four councils on the same footing with the holy Scriptures, and their canons by the side of laws of the realm.¶ The remaining three general councils have neither a theological importance, nor therefore an

* *Θεῖαν ἐντολήν*, and *Θεῖαν βούλησιν*, in Euseb., *Vita Const.* iii. 20. Comp. his Ep. ad eccl. Alexandr., in Socrates, H. E. i. 9, where he uses similar expressions.

† Isidore of Pelusium also styles the Nicene council divinely inspired, *Θεῖος ἐμπνευσθῆσα* (Ep. l. iv., ep. 99). So Basil the Gr., Ep. 114, in the Benedictine edition of *Opera Omnia*, tom. iii. p. 207, where he says that the 318 fathers of Nice have not spoken without the *ἰστέγνια τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος* (non sine Spiritus sancti afflatu).

‡ Act i., in Mansi, vi. p. 672. We quote from the Latin translation: "Nullo autem modo patimur a quibusdam contuti definitam fidem, sive fidei symbolum, a sanctis patribus nostris qui apud Niceam convenerunt illis temporibus: nec permittimus aut nobis, aut aliis, mutare aliquod verbum ex his quæ ibidem continentur, aut unam syllabam præterire, memores dicentis: *Ne transferas terminos æternos, quos posuerunt patres tui.* (Prov. xxii. 8, Matt. x. 20.) Non enim erant ipsi loquentes, sed ipse Spiritus Dei et Patris qui procedit ex ipso."

§ *Ὁ βλασφημῆς παρ' αὐτῶν κύριος Ἰησ. Χριστὸς ἄριος διὰ τῆς παρεούσης ἁγιοτάτης συνόδου.*

|| Lib. i. Ep. 25 (ad Joannem episcopum Constant., et cæteros patriarchas in Migne's edit. of Gr. Opera, tom. iii. p. 478, or in the Bened. ed. iii. 615): "Præterea, quia corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem, sicut sancti evangelii quatuor libros, sic quatuor concilia suscipere et venerari me fateor. Nicænum scilicet in quo perversum Arii dogma destruitur; Constantinopolitanum quoque, in quo Eunomii et Macedonii error vincitur; Ephesinum etiam primum, in quo Nestorii impietas judicatur; Chalcedonense vero, in quo Eutychetii [Eutychis] Dioscorique pravitas reprobatur, tota devotione complector, integerrima approbatione custodio: quia in his velut in quadrato lapide, sanctæ fidei structura consurgit, et cuiuslibet vitæ atque actionis existat, quisquis eorum soliditatem non tenet, etiam si lapis esse cernitur, tamen extra ædificium jacet. Quantum quoque concilium pariter venerit, in quo et epistola, quæ Ibas dicitur, erroris plena, reprobatur," &c.

¶ Justin. Novelle, cxxxi.: "Quatuor synodorum dogmata sicut sanctas scripturas accipimus, et regulas sicut leges observamus."

authority, equal to that of those first four, which laid the foundations of ecumenical orthodoxy. Otherwise Gregory would have mentioned also the fifth council of 553, in the passage to which we have just referred. And even among the first four there is a difference of rank, the councils of Nice and Chalcedon standing highest in the character of their results.

Not so with the rules of discipline prescribed in the *canones*. These were never considered universally binding, like the symbols of faith; since matters of organisation and usage, pertaining rather to the external form of the church, are more or less subject to the vicissitude of time. The fifteenth canon of the council of Nice, which prohibited and declared invalid the transfer of the clergy from one place to another,* Gregory Nazianzen, fifty-seven years later (382), reckons among statutes long dead.† Gregory himself repeatedly changed his location, and Chrysostom was called from Antioch to Constantinople. Leo I. spoke with strong disrespect of the third canon of the second ecumenical council, for assigning to the bishop of Constantinople the first rank after the bishop of Rome; and for the same reason he protested against the twenty-eighth canon of the fourth ecumenical council.‡ Indeed, the Roman church has made no point of adopting all the disciplinary laws enacted by those synods.

Augustine, the ablest and the most devout of the fathers, conceived, in the best vein of his age, a philosophical view of this authority of the councils, which strikes a wise and wholesome mean between the extremes of veneration and disparagement, and approaches the free spirit of evangelical protestantism. He justly subordinates these councils to the holy Scriptures, which are the highest and the perfect rule of faith, and supposes that the decrees of a council may be, not indeed set aside and repealed, yet enlarged and com-

* Conc. Nic. Can. 15: "Ὅτι ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν μὴ μεταβαίνοιμι μήτι ἰσίσκουσι μᾶτι ἀρεβύτιρον μᾶτι διάκονοι." This prohibition arose from the theory of the relation between a clergyman and his congregation as a mystical marriage, and was designed to restrain clerical ambition. It appears in the Can. Apost. 18, 14, but was often violated. At the Nicene council itself were several bishops, like Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eustathius of Antioch, who had exchanged their first bishopric for another and a better.

† Νόμος πόλεως τὴνηκόσας, Carm. de vita sua, v. 1810.

‡ Epist. 106 (al. 80) ad Anatolium, and Epist. 105 ad Pulcheriam. Even Gregory I., so late as 600, writes in reference to the *canones* of the Constantinopolitan council of 381: "Romana autem ecclesia eosdem canones vel gesta Synodi illius hactenus non habet, nec accepit; in hoc autem eamden synodum accepit, quod est per eam contra Macedonium definitum." Lib. vii. Ep. 84, ad Eulogium episcopum, Alexandria, tom. iii. p. 882 ed. Bened., and in Migne's ed. iii. 893.

pleted by the deeper research of a later day. They embody, for the general need, the results already duly prepared by preceding theological controversies, and give the consciousness of the church on the subject in question, the clearest and most precise expression possible at the time. But this consciousness itself is subject to development. While the Holy Scriptures present the truth unequivocally and infallibly, and allow no room for doubt, the judgment of bishops may be corrected and enriched with new truths from the word of God, by the wiser judgment of other bishops; the judgment of the provincial council by that of a general; and the views of one general council by those of a later.* In this Augustine presumed that all the transactions of a council were conducted in the spirit of Christian humility, harmony, and love; but had he attended the council of Ephesus in 431, to which he was summoned about the time of his death, he would, to his grief, have found the very opposite spirit reigning there. Augustine, therefore, manifestly acknowledges a gradual advancement of the church doctrine, which reaches its corresponding expression from time to time through the general councils; but a progress within the truth, without positive error. For in a certain sense, as against heretics, he made the authority of holy Scripture dependent on the authority of the catholic church, in his famous dictum against the Manichæan heretics: "I would not believe the gospel, did not the authority of the catholic church compel me to it."† In like manner, Vincentius Lerinensis teaches that the church doctrine passes indeed through various stages of growth in knowledge, and becomes more

* De Baptismo contra Donatistas, l. ii. 3 (in the Benedictine edition of Aug.'s Opera, tom. ix. p. 98): "Quis autem nesciat, sanctam Scripturam canonicam, tam veteris quam Novi Testamenti, certis suis terminis contineri, eamque omnibus posterioribus Episcoporum literis ita præponi, ut de illa omnino dubitari et disceptari non possit, utrum verum vel utrum rectum sit, quidquid in ea scriptum esse constiterit; Episcoporum autem literas quæ post confirmatum canonem vel scriptæ sunt vel scribuntur, et per sermonem forte sapientiorum cujuslibet in ea re peritoris, et per aliorum Episcoporum graviores auctoritatem, doctioresque prudentiam, et per concilia licere reprehendi, si quid in eis forte a veritate deviatum est; et ipsa concilia, quæ per singulas regiones vel provincias fiunt, plenariorum conciliorum auctoritati, quæ fiunt ex universo orbe Christiano, sine ullis ambagibus cedere; ipsaque plenaria sæpe priora posterioribus emendari, quum aliquo experimento rerum aperitur quod clausum erat et cognoscitur quod latebat; sine ullo typho sacrilegæ superbiæ, sine ulla inflata cervicæ arrogantis, sine ulla contentione lividæ invidiæ, cum sancta humilitate, cum pace catholica, cum caritate christiana." Comp. the passage Contra Maximinum Arianum, ii. cap. 14, § 8 (in the Bened. ed., tom. viii. p. 704), where he will have even the decision of the Nicene Council, concerning the *homousion*, measured by the higher standard of the Scriptures.

† Contra Epistolam Manichæi, lib. i. c. 5 (in the Bened. ed., tom. viii. p. 164): "Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me ecclesiæ catholicæ comoveret auctoritas."

and more clearly defined in opposition to ever-rising errors, but can never become altered nor dismembered.*

The protestant church makes the authority of the general councils, and of all ecclesiastical tradition, depend on the degree of its conformity to the holy Scriptures; while the Greek and Roman churches make Scripture and tradition co-ordinate. The protestant church justly holds the first general councils in high, though not servile, veneration, and has received their statements of doctrine into her confessions of faith, because she perceives in them, though compassed with human imperfection, the clearest and most suitable expression of the teaching of the Scriptures respecting the Trinity and the divine-human person of Christ. Beyond these statements, the judgment of the church (which must be carefully distinguished from theological speculation) has not to this day materially advanced; the highest tribute to the wisdom and importance of those councils. But this is not saying that the Nicene, and the later Athanasian creeds, are the *non plus ultra* of all the church's knowledge of the articles therein defined. Rather is it the duty of theology and of the church, while prizing and holding fast those earlier attainments, to study the same problems ever anew, to penetrate further and further these sacred fundamental mysteries of Christianity, and to bring to light new treasures from the inexhaustible mines of the word of God, under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit, who lives and works in the church at this day as mightily as he did in the fifth century and the fourth. Christology, for example, by the development of the doctrine of the two states of Christ in the Lutheran church, and of the three offices of Christ in the Reformed, has been substantially enriched; the old catholic doctrine, which was fixed with unerring tact at the council of Chalcedon, being directly concerned only with the two natures of Christ, as against the dualism of Nestorius and the monophysitism of Eutyches.

With this provision for further and deeper soundings of Scripture truth, Protestantism feels itself one with the ancient Greek and Latin church in the bond of ecumenical orthodoxy. But towards the disciplinary canons of the

* *Commonitorium*, c. 28, (in Migne's *Curs. Patrol.*, tom. I. p. 667): *Sed forsitan dicit aliquis: Nullusne ergo in ecclesia Christi profectus habebitur religionis? Habeatur plane et maximus. Sed ita tamen ut vere profectus sit ille fidei, non permutatio. Siquidem ad profectum pertinet ut in semet ipsum unaquaque res amplificetur; ad permutationem vero, ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transvertatur. Crescat igitur oportet et multum vehementerque proficiat tam singulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius ecclesie, statum ac seculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia, sed in suo duntaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia."*

ecumenical councils, its position is still more free and independent than that of the Roman church. Those canons are based upon an essentially catholic, that is, hierarchical and sacrificial conception of church order and worship, which the Lutheran and Anglican reformation in part, and the Zwinglian and Calvinistic almost entirely, renounced. Yet this is not to say that much may not still be learned, in the sphere of discipline, from those councils, and that perhaps many an ancient custom or institution is not worthy to be revived in the spirit of the evangelical church.

The moral character of those councils was substantially parallel with that of earlier and later ecclesiastical assemblies, and cannot therefore be made a criterion of their historical importance and their dogmatic authority. They faithfully reflect both the light and the shade of the ancient church. They bear the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. If even among the inspired apostles at the council of Jerusalem there was much debate,* and soon after, among Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, a violent, though only temporary collision, we must, of course, expect much worse of the bishops of the Nicene and the succeeding age, and of a church already interwoven with a morally degenerate state. Together with abundant talents, attainments, and virtues, there were gathered also at the councils ignorance, intrigues, and partisan passions, which had already been excited on all sides by long controversies preceding, and now met and arrayed themselves as hostile armies for open combat. For those great councils, all occasioned by controversies on the most important and the most difficult problems of theology, are, in fact, to the history of doctrine what decisive battles are to the history of war. Just because religion is the deepest and holiest interest of man, are religious passions wont to be the most violent and bitter; especially in a time when all classes, from imperial court to the market stall, take the liveliest interest in theological speculation, and are drawn into the common vortex of excitement. Hence the notorious *rabies theologorum* was more active in the fourth and fifth centuries than it has been in any other period of history, excepting perhaps in the great revolution of the sixteenth century.

We have on this point the testimony of contemporaries, and of the acts of the councils themselves. St Gregory Nazianzen, who, in the judgment of Socrates, was the most devout and eloquent man of his time,† and who himself, as

* Acts xv. 6, Πολλὰς συζητήσεις γινόμενης; which Luther indeed renders quite too strongly, "After they had wrangled long."

† Hist. Eccl. lib. v. cap. vii.

bishop of Constantinople, presided for a time over the second ecumenical council, had so bitter an observation and experience, as even to lose, though without sufficient reason, all confidence in councils, and to call them in his poems, "assemblies of cranes and geese." "To tell the truth"—thus, in 382 (a year after the second ecumenical council, and doubtless including that assembly in his allusion), he answered Procopius, who, in the name of the emperor, summoned him in vain to a synod—"to tell the truth, I am inclined to shun every collection of bishops, because I have never yet seen that a synod came to a good end, or abated evils instead of increasing them. For in those assemblies (and I do not think I express myself too strongly here), indescribable contentiousness and ambition prevail, and it is easier for one to incur the reproach of wishing to set himself up as judge of the wickedness of others, than to attain any success in putting the wickedness away. Therefore I have withdrawn myself, and have found rest to my soul only in solitude."* It is true, the contemplative Gregory had an aversion to all public life, and in such views yielded unduly to his personal inclinations. And in any case he is inconsistent: for he elsewhere speaks with great respect of the council of Nice, and was, next to Athanasius, the leading advocate of the Nicene creed. Yet there remains enough in his many unfavourable pictures of the bishops and synods of his time, to dispel all illusions of their immaculate purity. Beausobre correctly observes, that either Gregory the Great must be a slanderer, or the bishops of his day were very remiss. In the fifth century it was no better, but rather worse. At the third general council, at Ephesus, 431, all accounts agree that shameful intrigue, uncharitable lust of condemnation, and coarse violence of conduct, were almost as prevalent as in the notorious robber-council of Ephesus in 449; though with the important difference, that the former synod was contending for truth, the latter for error. Even at Chalcedon, the introduction of the renowned expositor and historian Theodoret provoked a scene, which almost involuntarily reminds us of the modern brawls of Greek and Roman monks at the holy sepulchre under the restraining

* Ep. ad Procop. 55 (al. 42). Similar representations occur in Ep. 76, 84; Carm. de vita sua, v. 1680-1688; Carm. x. v. 92; Carm. adv. Episc. v. 154. Comp. Ullmann, Gregor. von Naz., p. 246, sqq., and p. 270. It is remarkable that Gibbon makes no use of these passages to support his summary judgment of the general councils at the end of his twentieth chapter, where he says, "The progress of time and superstition erased the memory of the weakness, the passion, the ignorance, which disgraced these ecclesiastical synods; and the Catholic world has unanimously submitted to the *infallible* decrees of the general councils."

supervision of the Turkish police. His Egyptian opponents shouted with all their might, "The faith is gone! Away with him, this teacher of Nestorius!" His friends replied with equal violence, "They forced us [at the robber-council] by blows to subscribe; away with the Manichæans, the enemies of Flavian, the enemies of the faith! Away with the murderer Dioscurus! Who does not know his wicked deeds?" The Egyptian bishops cried again, "Away with the Jew, the adversary of God, and call him not bishop!" To which the oriental bishops answered, "Away with the rioters, away with the murderers! The orthodox man belongs to the council!" At last the imperial commissioners interfered, and put an end to what they justly called an unworthy and useless uproar.*

In all these outbreaks of human passion, however, we must not forget that the Lord was sitting in the ship of the church, directing her safely through the billows and storms. The Spirit of truth, who was not to depart from her, always triumphed over error at last, and even glorified himself through the weaknesses of his instruments. Upon this unmistakable guidance from above, only set off by the contrast of human imperfections, our reverence for the councils must be based. *Soli Deo gloria*; or, in the language of Chrysostom, Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν.

LIST OF THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

We only add, by way of a general view, a list of all the ecumenical councils of the Græco-Roman church, with a brief account of their character and work.

1. The CONCILIIUM NICAENUM I., A.D. 325; held at Nice in Bithynia, a lively commercial town near the imperial residence of Nicomedia, and easily accessible by land and sea. It consisted of three hundred and eighteen bishops,† besides a large number of priests, deacons, and acolytes, mostly from the east, and was called by Constantine the Great, for the settlement of the Arian controversy. Having become, by decisive victories in 323, master of the whole Roman empire, he desired to complete the restoration of unity and

* *Ἐκβολήσους ἡμερομηναί.* See Harduin, tom. ii. p. 71, sqq., and Mansi, tom. vi. p. 590, sq. Comp. also Hefele, ii. p. 406, sq.

† This is the usual estimate, resting on the authority of Athanasius, Basil (Ep. 114; Opera, t. iii. p. 207, ed. Bened.), Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, whence the council is sometimes called the assembly of the three hundred and eighteen. Other data reduce the number to three hundred, or to two hundred and seventy, or two hundred and fifty, or two hundred and eighteen; while later tradition swells it to two thousand or more.

peace with the help of the dignitaries of the church. The result of this council was the establishment (by anticipation) of the doctrine of the true divinity of Christ, the identity of essence between the Son and the Father. The fundamental importance of this dogma, the number, learning, piety, and wisdom of the bishops, many of whom still bore the marks of the Diocletian persecution, the personal presence of the first Christian emperor, of Eusebius, "the father of church history," and of Athanasius, "the father of orthodoxy" (though at that time only an archdeacon), as well as the remarkable character of this epoch, combined in giving to this first general synod a peculiar weight and authority. It is styled emphatically, "the great and holy council," holds the highest place among all the councils, especially with the Greeks,* and still lives in the *Nicene creed*, which is second in authority only to the ever venerable apostles' creed. This symbol, was, however, not finally settled and completed in its present form (excepting the still later Latin insertion of *filioque*), until the second general council. Besides this, the fathers assembled at Nice issued a number of canons, usually reckoned twenty, on various questions of discipline; the most important being those on the rights of metropolitans, the time of Easter, and the validity of heretical baptism.

2. The CONCILIUM CONSTANTINOPOLITANUM I., A.D. 381; summoned by Theodosius the Great, and held at the imperial city, which had not even name in history till five years after the former council. This council, however, was exclusively oriental, and comprised only a hundred and fifty bishops, as the emperor had summoned none but the adherents of the Nicene party, which had become very much reduced under the previous reign. The emperor did not attend it. Meletius of Antioch was president till his death; then Gregory Nazianzen; and, after his resignation, the newly-elected patriarch Nektarius of Constantinople. The council enlarged the Nicene confession by an article on the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, in opposition to the Macedonians or Pneumatomachists (hence the title *Symbolum Nicæno-Constantinopolitanum*), and issued seven more canons, of which the Latin versions, however, give only the first four, leaving the genuineness of the other three, as many think, in doubt.

3. The CONCILIUM EPHESINUM, A.D. 431; called by Theodosius II., in connection with the western co-emperor Valentinian III., and held under the direction of the ambitious and

* For some time the Egyptian and Syrian churches commemorated the council of Nice by an annual festival.

violent Cyril of Alexandria. This council consisted of, at first, a hundred and sixty bishops, afterwards a hundred and ninety-eight,* including, for the first time, papal delegates from Rome, who were instructed not to mix in the debates, but to sit as judges over the opinions of the rest. It condemned the error of Nestorius on the relation of the two natures in Christ, without stating clearly the correct doctrine. It produced, therefore, but a negative result, and is the least important of the first four councils, as it stands lowest also in moral character. It is entirely rejected by the Nestorian or Chaldaic Christians. Its six canons relate exclusively to Nestorian and Pelagian affairs, and are wholly omitted by Dionysius Exiguus in his collection.

4. The CONCILIUM CHALCEDONENSE, A.D. 451; summoned by the emperor Marcian, at the instance of the Roman bishop Leo; held at Chalcedon in Bithynia, opposite Constantinople, and composed of five hundred and twenty (some say six hundred and thirty) bishops.† Among these were three delegates of the bishop of Rome, two bishops of Africa, the rest all Greeks and orientals. The fourth general council fixed the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ in opposition to Eutychianism and Nestorianism, and enacted thirty canons (according to some manuscripts only twenty-seven or twenty-eight), of which the twenty-eighth was resisted by the Roman legates and Leo I. This was the most numerous, and, next to the Nicene, the most important of all the general councils, but is repudiated by all the monophysite sects of the eastern church.

5. The CONCILIUM CONSTANTINOPOLITANUM II. was assembled a full century later, by the emperor Justinian, A.D. 553, without consent of the pope, for adjustment of the tedious monophysite controversy. It was presided over by the patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople, consisted of only one hundred and sixty-four bishops, and issued fourteen anathemas against the three chapters‡ so-called, or the Christological views of three departed bishops and divines, Theodore of Mopsueste, Theodoret of Cyros, and Ibas of Edessa, who were charged with leaning towards the Nestorian heresy. The fifth council was not recognised, however, by many

* The opposition council, which John of Antioch, on his subsequent arrival, held in the same city in the cause of Nestorius, and under protection of the imperial commissioner Candidian, numbered forty-three members, and excommunicated Cyril, as Cyril had excommunicated Nestorius.

† The synod itself, in a letter to Leo, states the number as only five hundred and twenty; Leo, on the contrary (Ep. 102), speaks of about six hundred members; and the usual opinion (Tillemont, *Memoires*, t. xv. p. 641) raised the whole number of members, including deputies, to six hundred and thirty.

‡ *Tria capitula, κηφάλια.*

western bishops, even after the vacillating Pope Vigilius gave in his assent to it, and it induced a temporary schism between Upper Italy and the Roman see. As to importance, it stands far below the four previous councils. Its acts, in Greek, with the exception of the fourteen anathemas, are lost.

Besides these, there were two later councils, which have attained among the Greeks and Latins an undisputed ecumenical authority: the **THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE**, under Constantine Progonatus, A.D. 680, which condemned Monothelitism (and Pope Honorius, A.D. 638*), and consummated the old catholic Christology; and the **SECOND COUNCIL OF NICE**, under the empress Irene, A.D. 787, which sanctioned the image-worship of the catholic church, but has no dogmatical importance.

Thus Nicæa—now the miserable Turkish hamlet, Is-nik†—has the honour of both opening and closing the succession of acknowledged ecumenical councils.

From this time forth the Greeks and Latins part, and ecumenical councils are no longer to be named. The Greeks considered the *second Trullan*‡ (or the fourth Constantinopolitan) council of 692, which enacted no symbol of faith, but canons only, not an independent eighth council, but an appendix to the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils (hence called the *quinisexta*, sc. synodus), against which view the Latin church has always protested. The Latin church, on the other hand, elevates the *fourth* (chronologically the sixth) *council of Constantinople*, A.D. 869,§ which deposed the patriarchal Photius, the champion of the Greek church in her contest with the Latin, to the dignity of an *eighth* ecumenical council; but this council was annulled for the Greek church by the subsequent restoration of Photius. The Roman church also, in pursuance of her claims to exclusive catholicity, adds to the seven or eight Greek councils eight or more Latin general councils, including that of Trent; but to all these the Greek and Protestant churches can concede only a sectional character. Three hundred and thirty-six

* The condemnation of a departed pope as a heretic by an ecumenical council is so inconsistent with the claim of papal infallibility, that Romish historians have tried their utmost to dispute the fact, or to weaken its force, by sophistical pleading.

† *is Nicæna*.

‡ *Trullum* was a saloon with a cupola in the imperial palace of Constantinople.

§ The Latins call it the fourth, because they reject the fourth Constantinopolitan council of 692, because of its canons; and the fifth of 754, because it condemned the worship of images, which was subsequently sanctioned by the second council of Nice, in 787.

years elapsed between the last undisputed Græco-Latin ecumenical council of the ancient church (A.D. 787), and the first Latin ecumenical council of the mediæval church (1123). The authority of the papal see had to be established in the intervening centuries.*

The universal councils, through their disciplinary enactments or canons, were the main fountain of ecclesiastical law. To their canons were added the decrees of the most important provincial councils of the fourth century, at Ancyra (314), Neo-Cæsarea (314), Antioch (341), Sardica (343), Gangra (365), and Laodicea (between 343 and 381); and in a third series, the orders of eminent bishops, popes, and emperors. From these sources arose, after the beginning of the fifth century, or at all events before the council of Chalcedon, various collections of the church laws in the east, in north Africa, in Italy, Gaul, and Spain, which, however, had only provincial authority, and in many respects did not agree among themselves. A *codex canonum ecclesiæ universæ* did not exist. The earlier collections became eclipsed by two, which, the one in the west, the other in the east, attained the highest consideration.

The most important Latin collection comes from the Roman, though by descent Scythian, abbot DIONYSIUS EXIGUUS,† who also, notwithstanding the chronological error at the base of his reckoning, immortalised himself by the introduction of the Christian calendar, the "Dionysian era." It was a great thought of this "little" monk to view Christ as the turning point of ages, and to introduce this truth into chronology. About the year 500, Dionysius translated for the bishop Stephen of Salona a collection of canons from Greek into Latin, which is still extant, with its prefatory address to Stephen.‡ It contains, first, the fifty so-called

* On the proper number of the ecumenical councils, it may be added, the Roman divines themselves are not agreed. The Gallicans reckon twenty-one, Bellarmine eighteen, Hefele only sixteen. The undisputed ones, besides the eight already mentioned Græco-Latin councils, are these eight Latin: the first Lateran (Roman) council, A.D. 1123; the second Lateran, A.D. 1139; the third Lateran, A.D. 1179; the fourth Lateran, A.D. 1215; the first of Lyons, A.D. 1245; the second of Lyons, A.D. 1274; that of Florence, A.D. 1439; (the fifth Lateran, 1512-1517, is disputed); and that of Trent, A.D. 1545-1563. The ecumenical character of the three reformatory councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and of the fifth Lateran council, A.D. 1512-1517, is questioned among the Roman divines, and is differently viewed upon ultramontane and upon Gallican principles. Hefele considers them *partially* ecumenical, that is, in so far as they were ratified by the pope.

† It is uncertain whether he obtained the surname, Exiguus, from his small stature or his monastic humility.

‡ It may be found in the above-cited Bibliotheca, vol i., and in all good collections of councils. He says in the preface that, *confusiones priores trans-*

apostolic canons, which pretend to have been collected by Clement of Rome, but in truth were a gradual production of the third and fourth centuries;* then the canons of the most important councils of the fourth and fifth centuries, including those of Sardica and Africa; and, lastly, the papal decretal letters from Siricius (385) to Anastasius II. (498). The Codex Dionysii was gradually enlarged by additions, genuine and spurious; and through the favour of the popes attained the authority of law almost throughout the west. Yet there were other collections also in use, particularly in Spain and north Africa.

Some fifty years after Dionysius, JOHN SCHOLASTICUS, previously an advocate, then presbyter at Antioch, and after 365 patriarch of Constantinople, published a collection of canons in Greek,† which surpassed the former in completeness and convenience of arrangement, and for this reason, as well as the eminence of the author, soon rose to universal authority in the Greek church. In it he gives eighty-five apostolic canons, and the ordinances of the councils of Ancyra (314) and Nice (325), down to that of Chalcedon (451), in fifty titles, according to the order of subjects. The second Trullan council (quinisextum, of 692), which passes with the Greeks for ecumenical, adopted the eighty-five apostolic canons, while it rejected the apostolic constitutions, because, like the canons of apostolic origin, they had been early adulterated. Thus arose the difference between the Greek and Latin churches in reference to the number of the so-called apostolic canons; the Latin church retaining only the fifty of the Dionysian collection.

The same John, while patriarch of Constantinople, compiled from the *Novelles* of Justinian a collection of the ecclesiastical state laws, or *νόμοι*, as they were called in distinction from the synodal church laws or *κανόνες*. Practical wants then led to a union of the two, under the title of *Nomocanon*.

These books of ecclesiastical law served to complete and confirm the hierarchical organisation, to regulate the life of

lacionis (the Prisca or Itala) *offensus*, he has undertaken a new translation of the Greek canons.

* "Canones, qui dicuntur apostolorum, . . . quibus plurimi consensum non præbuerunt facilem;" implying that Dionysius himself, with many others, doubted their apostolic origin. In a later collection of canons by Dionysius, of which only the preface remains, he entirely omitted the apostolic canons, with the remark, "Quos non admisit universitas, ego quoque in hoc opere prætermisi." On the pseudo-apostolic canons and constitutions, comp. the well-known critical work of the Roman Catholic theologian, Drey.

† Σύνογμα κανόνων, concordia canonum, in the Bibliotheca of Justellus, tom. ii.

the clergy, and to promote order and discipline; but they tended also to fix upon the church an outward legalism, and to embarrass the spirit of progress.

ART. II.—*Kurtz and Stewart on Sacrifice.*

Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament. By J. H. KURTZ, D.D., Professor of Theology at Dorpat. Translated by JAMES MARTIN, B.A. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1863.

The Tree of Promise; or the Mosaic Economy a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. By the late Rev. ALEXANDER STEWART, Cromarty. Edinburgh: W. P. Kennedy. 1864.

IT is recorded of Dr Arnold, that while at one time he was discouraged from prosecuting the study of Hebrew by his notions of the uncertainty of the best knowledge gained about it, the interpretation of the prophets seeming to him almost guess work; yet subsequently he was led to modify this opinion by observing the general coincidence of two men so different as Lowth and Gesenius in the interpretation of Isaiah, which he regarded as a proof that the real meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures could be satisfactorily ascertained. A somewhat similar conviction, in regard to the interpretation of the Mosaic ceremonies, is likely to be produced by the perusal of the two works above named, on any who might be inclined to doubt the possibility of a clear and certain knowledge of the typical meaning of the old economy. Many are apt to regard with suspicion the very mention of typology; and to view the investigation of the import of the ancient ceremonial worship as a mere play of imagination, in which there is nothing to restrain within the bounds of truth and certainty the arbitrary ingenuity or wayward fancy of the expositor; a land of clouds, which may be likened to a camel, or a whale, or anything the spectator pleases, but where no solid and well-founded knowledge can be attained. But when there appears such a general agreement on this subject, between two men so diverse in mental character, and in all their intellectual and literary surroundings, as Dr Kurtz of Dorpat and the late Mr Stewart of Cromarty; we cannot fail to see in this a proof that the investigation of the subject is not mere guess work or play of the fancy, but that there must be certain guiding principles capable of being ascertained and followed, which lead independent thinkers to results so generally harmonious. For certainly these two authors, the German and the Scottish divine, are as