

The fourth century was assumed as the great model of a Christian Church; and they laid it down, that the nearer they approximated to it, the nearer they approximated to perfection. The Hon. and Rev. Mr Percival said, there were three leading principles on which this system was based, and on which they must proceed, namely, the participation of the body and blood of Christ, in the eucharist; that the mystery of his body and blood was confided only to the hands of the successors of the Apostles and their delegates; that, since the Apostles, those who derived their succession from them in a direct and unbroken line, by the imposition of the hands of Bishops, are the only priests to give this body and blood to the people. These were the three principles on which they proceeded. Many who patronized them at first, left them, (and very wisely,) others adhered. Other divines, however, began to read the Fathers as well as they, and other scholars to study ecclesiastical records of the fourth century, and of the antinicene Church, as closely as they; and when it was shown to absolute demonstration, that to transfer the Nicene Church of the fourth to the nineteenth century, would be the resurrection of contamination, and a positive calamity to the most corrupt Church in Christendom at the present moment,--Mr. Newman, who had the learning to discover and the candor to avow this, saw that any defence of the modern church by a reference to the Nicene Church, was altogether untenable; but he was no less convinced that the end, viz., Popish supremacy, must be gained by other means, if such could be discovered. Instead of quoting the Nicene Church as the model for the Church of the nineteenth century, he struck out or rather resuscitated the following theory: that the Apostles left behind them the mere seeds of truth; these seeds of truth were entrusted to the Church, (by which word Sectarians and Romanists mean the Hierarchy) to be gradually developed. They were successively developed and expressed in the Council of Nice, then in Ephesus, in Constantinople, the Councils of Lateran, and ultimately in the Council of Trent, where they were fully developed; and the Council of Trent is therefore the full development of the principles entrusted to the Apostles and their successors. The idea is this, that the seed cast into the earth at Pentecost, grew up into what the Romanists would call the glorious and overshadowing tree of the Council of