

ending earnestly the theories which character of the discusses the use nent in Heb. ix. op Lightfoot and side and Bishop be permitted to Littell's Living y able and inter- lonod on French d the current of ticipate much of it there are few ion more fully on heard of Vidocq; sketch of the life mple Bar. But tiele in either of ll worth reading. t's Land Gleamer cle on "Church wider circulation hall refer to this is fully maintain he first number. nd 23) is full of and utility. We ommons Foiled" The Paris of the ner, "M. Pasteur temporary) by Dr. ue of the Pasteur logy of Matthew t, a bright and satisfactory. The nd the Nihilists," nat Mr. Kennan's ue, but protests ie Nihilists. But made a beginning. t (August) is bet- s of it are admir- gust) commences of Isaiah, giving g question, which a very thoughtful e Christian Theo- ndles. Of "The e have 1 Cor. vii. otes, and Methods tion of Rothe's d on, and Sir G. cluded. We again ication to all our he clergy. The rk, of Edinburgh.

ENT SYNODS."

LIGHT.

men in England.)

f Councils. At the Spanish synod met rules of discipline. ops; but twenty- and deacons and t "standing," but words "the bishops of Arles in 314, ary" Council, and us, because three e of York, London, ither to represent om the documents king, formed the w which Augustine npanied by clergy; st and a deacon in ; and the Emperor red the bishops to of the second order. e held in this same a, for disciplinary d of eighteen and etius is said to have f Alexandria in a ius entered on his under his rule, he ds; and this, says was to forbid them Church, for it was at importance othe- e the Church, Arch-

bishop Alexander, of Alexandria, in the first instance took counsel with his clergy. He caused them to sign a letter of remonstrance addressed by him to the adherents of Arius. (I need not remind any one present that the essence of Arianism consisted in these three propositions: That the Son of God was not eternal, that He was not uncreated, and that, therefore, He was external in the Divine essence, which, as such, is eternal and uncreated. He was then, in the Arian view, reduced to the position of the eldest and greatest of all creatures). Finding the Arian party resolute, Alexander summoned a Council of all the bishops who were subordinate to his great See, and there a sentence of excommunication was passed against Arius and his followers, and he drew up, apparently with the help of Athanasius, then his deacon and secretary, an encyclical, which he sent to his "fellow ministers," i.e., fellow bishops "of the Catholic Church in every place;" and, again assembling his own clergy, he obtained their assent and concurrence, attested by their signatures. But, as is well known, these local measures proved insufficient; the movement of heresy spread, and the first General Council was assembled at Nicea, primarily for the purpose of dealing with Arianism, although the question of the right time for Easter, and the purely Egyptian question of the Meletian schism, were also brought before it.

The summoning power, so to speak, was the Emperor Constantine's. The Bishop of Rome was represented by deputies, or delegates, but they did not preside. The presiding bishop was the Emperor's chief religious adviser, the venerable Bishop Hosius, of Cordova; and the statement that he presided under commission from Pope Sylvester is unsupported by contemporary evidence, and has grown out of a falsification of Eusebius' words, which was adopted by a writer of the fifth century. In the preliminary discussions (as we gather from the documents) not only Christian laymen, but non-Christian philosophers, so-called, took part. In the actual conciliar proceedings Athanasius, then only a deacon, is known to have spoken with great effect. He was present as a theological adviser to his own bishop, on the same footing on which Malchion had been present and had been argumentatively prominent in the Council of Antioch. But the constituent members of this great Council, as of all the great ancient general and provincial Councils, were bishops and bishops only. It was long known as the "assembly of the 318"—the bishops being popularly reckoned as of that number. The formal epistle ran in the name of "the bishops assembled at Nicea." A word must be said as to the part taken by the emperor. It would be a great mistake to suppose that he was either a constituent part of the Council, or that he attended as representing the laity of the Church. He addressed the Council as the sovereign of the empire, who, as in a certain sense a disciple of Christ, was interested in the unity and good order of the Christian body, but he was not, as yet, even a member of the Church, for he was not baptized until overtaken by his last illness in 337.

At an Arian synod, held at Antioch about 330, laymen were apparently present, but their presence proves nothing as to their relation to the synod properly so-called. The like may be said of a Council at Tyre, which was dominated by the enemies of St. Athanasius. The Council regarded itself, and was regarded by Constantine, as an assembly of Bishops. The Great Western Council of Sardica, which is now referred, not, as formerly, to 347, but to 343, accepted the testimony of laymen as to Arian deeds of violence and injustice. At Milan, in 355, a Council met, which was terrorized by the Arian Emperor Constantius. It seems to have been held in the inner part of the great church; the laity, who were in the nave, became cognisant of what was going on behind the screen or curtain of the chancel. At Ariminum, in 359, laymen, "in words" made their sentiments known to the Council. One may, for convenience, pass over a number of Arianizing Councils held at Antioch, Sirmium, Ancyra, Seleucia, and elsewhere; together with others on the Catholic side, for instance at Paris. At a Council of Alexandria, in 362—a Council eminent for its considerate equitableness, and its peacemaking zeal—clerics were present as representing their absent Bishops; and certain monks, whom we may presume to have been laymen, were sent by their bishop, Apollinaris—then supposed to be developing a heterodox theory of the Incarnation—to explain his views.

The second Ecumenical Council met at Constantinople in 381, under the summons of the Emperor Theodosius I., in order to establish religious unity in the East, to re-affirm Catholic doctrine, and to repress a variety of unsound theories. It was composed of 150 bishops, not one of whom represented any Western Church, so that the See of Rome stood quite apart from its proceedings, and its claim to be ecumenical resulted from the acceptance ultimately given to that recension of the Nicene Creed, which was called after its name. About the same time an Italian Council met at Aquileia, for the purpose of dealing with two clever and pertinacious Arian

bishops. One of these complained that what he said had not been fairly taken down, and desired that "honourable men," that is, men of high position, who were within reach, should be called in as "hearers." St. Ambrose, who swayed the synod, declared that Palladius was herein awaiting the sentence of laymen, whereas Bishops ought rather to be judges of laymen.

At another western Council, held at Toledo in 400, presbyters were seated, deacons stood, and others, that is, of course, laymen, were present. The Council of the Oak, at which under the malign influence of Theophilus of Alexandria, St. Chrysostom was condemned, was an assembly of partisan bishops which received accusations brought by enemies of the great Bishop of Constantinople. In the course of the Pelagian controversy we find the Bishop of Jerusalem holding a synod of the priests of his own diocese, in which, contrary to precedent, but in consideration of his position, Pelagius, who was not in Holy Orders, was permitted to sit while questioned as to the charges brought against him by a young presbyter from Spain. Shortly afterwards a small synod of bishops of Palestine was held, at which Pelagius, as Augustine represents it, obtained an acquittal on the charge of heresy by disingenuously disclaiming opinions which, in fact, he held, so that, if Pelagius was "absolved," Pelagianism was virtually "condemned." The African Councils which treated of this question were also episcopal assemblies.

We come next to the third Ecumenical Council, which met at Ephesus in 431, for the purpose of dealing with the Nestorian controversy. It will be remembered that Nestorianism reduced the Incarnation of the Son of God to a specially intimate alliance or association between Himself and a human individual, the Son of Mary, so that its practical result was to make two Christs instead of one. It is certain that this Council was composed of bishops only. The Imperial Commissioner disclaimed any other relation to it than that of maintaining order. He had, in fact, been expressly forbidden by the Emperor, who had summoned the Council, to take part in discussions about doctrine; his function was limited to the enforcement of regularity in the proceedings. The Archbishop of Alexandria, Cyril, presided, claiming also to hold, as we should say, a proxy for Celestine of Rome, before the arrival of Celestine's legates, which took place after the deposition of Nestorius. It ought here to be explained that a letter of Celestine's containing the words, "Join the authority of our see to your own, act in our stead," was written to Cyril nearly a year before the Council, and while as yet there was no thought of such a Council. The commission thus given was discharged by Cyril in the latter part of the year 430, and it was not renewed, so far as we know, with a view to the Council of Ephesus. The Pope's delegates, on arriving at Ephesus, held (as usual) high language about the dignity of the see; but although the Council itself had referred to Celestine's letter to Nestorius as a ground for their sentence against Nestorius, their anathemas were uttered before that letter had been read to them; in announcing the sentence to the condemned archbishop they did not allude to Celestine; in writing to Theodosius they commended Celestine for his zeal. It may be well to add that in the list of signatures to the acts of the first session of Ephesus, we find two priests signing in behalf of their invalid bishops, one signing for his bishop under the bishop's personal order, though present, and a deacon signing for his bishop because, as it was curiously worded, "he was unable, or could not write." It was common enough for clerics thus to sign, simply as representing their bishops, who for some reason were incapacitated from doing so, just as it has been common in later days for bishops to be enthroned by proxy.

The Nestorian heresy, by re-action, produced the Eutychian. Eutyches, a devout, but ignorant and narrow-minded abbot, thought that the only way to bar out a theory which divided the Personality of the Redeemer, was to make His "oneness" depend on an absorption of His manhood into His Godhead. For this he was accused before a local synod of Constantinople, in 448, which, after much inquiry, condemned him. The sentence was signed by thirty-two Bishops, personally or by proxy, and by a number of abbots, of whom nearly all were clerics. All these signed as abbots, but not in the form ordinarily used by bishops signing a conciliar decree, i.e., not with such words as "defining" or "judging." The synod was, in fact, an episcopal synod. It is so described. The abbots occupied a position lower than that of constituent members and the Imperial Commissioner afterwards disclaimed having made any pronouncement about doctrine. The controversy, as is well known, was kept up through the strong encouragement given to Eutyches by the Emperor Theodosius II., and by the Patriarch of Alexandria.

The latter presided over a Council at Ephesus, infamous in Church history for its violence, and known as the "Gang of Robbers;" the Emperor, by what was thought an extraordinary favour, directing that a certain Abbot Barsumas, who was a priest, should

be summoned with the Bishops to the Council. The enormities perpetrated at this assembly increased the agitation and confusion; and after the death of Theodosius the Emperor Marcian summoned the fourth General Council to meet at Chalcedon in the autumn of 451. It was a great gathering of bishops; they alone were constituent members. The Imperial Commissioners, a number of high State functionaries, represented, as we might say, the interest of the State, and continually and seasonably interposed to secure order, but they were exterior to the synod itself. The presiding members of the Council were the representatives of Pope Leo the Great; this fact is unquestionable, but so is the fact that the Council insisted on satisfying itself as to the orthodoxy of a Bishop whom Leo had already received into his communion—that the famous acclamation, "*Peter spoke thus by Leo*," indicated not—as on Papal principles it should have done—a dutiful acceptance of whatever the Bishop of Rome might declare *ex cathedra* upon a question of doctrine, but, the convictions of the bishops that, in his great doctrinal letter or "Tome," then read, and already signed by many bishops in their individual capacity, before the Council had met, Leo had been true to the teaching of St. Peter. We must also remember that the famous 28th canon of Chalcedon, about the respective positions of the Churches of Rome and Constantinople, was passed in the legates' absence after they had been invited to be present, and was adhered to, in spite of their remonstrance, and although afterwards the sanction of Leo was requested in a respectful letter from the Archbishop of Constantinople, as necessary to validate the canon, his persistent refusal did not prevent the Greek Church from acting upon it as settled Church law. As an African Church writer expresses it, "Although the apostolic see still contradicts, that which was established by the Council still remains in full force, under the patronage of the Emperor."

It may be desirable to extend our survey a little further. Towards the close of the fifth century Pope Gelasius held a Council at Rome, at which priests acted co-ordinately, or concurrently, with bishops in applauding the Pope's determination to restore to his communion a bishop who had been deposed for unfaithfulness to his trust as the Pope's legate. But what this shows is, not so much an equality of synodical right between bishops and priests, as the assertion and recognition of the supreme right of the Roman See: we must remember that the Pope was here on his own ground, and that the bishops had been accustomed to look on him as master. At Spanish synods, in the early part of the sixth century, laymen were expressly permitted to be present, and the reason is expressly given—*That the people also might know what is to be decreed by the bishops only*. The most remarkable and instructive case is that of the second Council of Orange, in 529; it is the last which I will bring before you. The Council is one to which Western Christendom is greatly indebted; for it drew a line between the truth which Pelagianism had assailed—the doctrine, as it is called, of Grace—and the exaggerations by which that doctrine had been compromised. It consisted of a small number of Gallic bishops, who had assembled for the dedication of a church, built by a zealous layman, himself a high civil functionary. The bishops, in their document, declare that they had discussed matters pertaining to the "rule of the Church," and had resolved to promulgate some statements of earlier writers commended to them by "the Apostolic See" on the question of grace and free will. This body of statements they call "*their definition and the definition of the Fathers*." They then say that they had thought fit that the lay dignitaries who had, with them, attended the recent service, should also sign what was intended to be of "healing" efficacy, not only for the clergy, but for the laity as well. Whereupon eight laymen did sign; and the remarkable point is, that they adopted the same formula used in such cases by bishops—"I sign consenting," or "I consent and sign." But this cannot imply that they were regarded as constituent members of the synod, for that would contradict the explicit language of the document, which runs in the names of the bishops, and treats the "definition," or body of doctrinal statements as completed, as in full existence, before the laymen were invited to intimate their personal acquiescence by their signatures.

With this instance I conclude: the "synods of the Ancient Church" may be sufficiently represented for our present purpose by those which belong to the first 530 years of the Church's life—a period which, it will be observed, extends to within seventy years of the beginning of our English Christianity.

—When God intends to fill a soul, he first makes it empty; when he intends to enrich a soul, he first makes it poor; when he intends to exalt a soul, he first makes it humble; when he intends to save a soul, he first makes it sensible of its own miseries, wants, and nothingness.