

places they were so generally Scriptural, and free of serious error, that, it is true, no council was needed, to define them. Moreover, in all the earliest centuries, the churches were independent of each other; and that at Rome, was merely one of them; and not the largest, and for the three first centuries, not even the most influential. Antioch, and Alexandria, and even Carthage, were equal to it, and in some particulars *before* it. A celebrated church historian, has written of the Church of Rome, in the following terms:—"It would seem to have been purposely appointed by Infinite Wisdom, that our first accounts of the Roman Church, should be very imperfect, in order to confute the proud pretensions to universal dominion, which its bishops have, with such unblushing arrogance, supported, for so many ages. If a line or two in the Gospels, concerning the keys of St. Peter, have been made the foundation of such lofty pretensions, in his supposed successors to the primacy, how would they have gloried if his labors at Rome had been so distinctly celebrated as those of St. Paul, in several churches. What bounds would have been set to the pride of ecclesiastical Rome, could she have boasted of herself, as the Mother church, like Jerusalem; or even exhibited such trophies of Scriptural fame, as Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, or Ephesus."

As to the holding of General Councils to which the Archbishop has referred, there were such nearly constant and general persecutions of the Christians during the three first centuries that none could be safely or conveniently held, and it was only after the Emperor Constantine, adopted Christianity and in A. D., 325 that the first General Council of all the churches—the celebrated Council of Nice—was held. It is said about 300 bishops attended it. It was not held at Rome, but at the city of Nice in Bythinia. The Bishop of Rome, through infirmities, could not attend, but was represented in the council by two Presbyters. Eusebius the historian, bishop of Cæsarea, attended it, and has given some account of its proceedings. The council was held chiefly with reference to the heresy of Arius of Alexandria, who denied the eternal and full *divinity* of the Saviour. There were no discussions in the Council regarding *infallibility* in any church, pope, or bishop,