

functions, and to govern those so sent by them.—The *see* of Rome is *far too shallow* to cover these stones of stumbling which the *Bible* has placed at the very threshold of her haughty claims; and until they are effectually removed, and the way to the Chair of St. Peter made as smooth as the surface of the unruffled deep, intelligent Protestants cannot return to her authority.

VI. The second rule regards the prerogative of calling Councils, and the *generality* of every Council. The King, as head of the state, has this power, and he alone. This, in the abstract, is essential to supremacy; and in practice it cannot be departed from without a full and absolute surrender of all claims thereto. If such a power is essential to the constitution of the Church universal, as it undeniably is to the constitution of every state, we ought to find it as distinctly recognized in the commission of St. Peter to rule the Catholic Church, as we find it given to the King in the British Constitution. If it has a necessary existence in the Church, it must reside in the supreme head of the Church, or the Church can have no such head. No Council should ever be called without his doing it, and every council thus called should be a *general* Council representing the Universal Church, the same as the British Parliament assembled always represents the whole United Kingdom. Supremacy evidently requires this as its sole prerogative—its *PECULIUM*: and the possession and exercise of it from the beginning in other lines of descent than that of St. Peter, annihilates the claim of supremacy at a blow. But the papal system, as held by many, makes such a general Council essential to the existence of the Church, and co-existent with her, because in it, with the Pope at its head and mouthpiece, they place infallibility; and infallibility they make essential to her existence. This should have been asserted and acted on by St. Peter, and all his successors; and it should have been a universal article of faith, that no ecclesiastical Council could be assembled except by the Pope; and that all Councils but his should be held as treason and rebellion. But what says history?

1. The first Council we read of, namely, in Acts xv. seems to have been convened by common consent, probably at the request of St. Paul, who, with Barnabas, had come up to Jerusalem about the question of circumcision, and not by command of any one. "The Apostles and Elders came together for to consider this matter," but no intimation is given of Peter's authority as supreme head of the Church. He appears in the Council, but barely as *par cum paribus*—one among his equals. But then was the time, if ever, to place his supremacy beyond dispute, that the Church universal might recognize him in his high character of "Prince of the Apostles" and head of the Church.—His modern successors would never be guilty of such death-doing sins of omission.

2. Eusebius tells us, Eccl. Hist. Book iii. chap. xi. that, "after the martyrdom of St. James, and the captivity of Jerusalem, the report goeth, that the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, which were then alive, (whereof many yet remained) gathered themselves together, with the kinsmen of our Lord according to the flesh, to consult whom they should think worthy to succeed James: so that all in one voice judged worthy of the See of Jerusalem. Simeon the son of Cleophas, mentioned in the Gospel, and called the cousin of Christ, for Hegesippus writeth that Cleophas was the brother of Joseph." But by this it does not appear that the Bishop of Rome had any concern, either in calling this council at the seat of the *Mother Church*, or in authorizing Simeon to discharge his episcopal functions; both of which, as universal bishop, he should have done personally or by special commission.—In Book v. Chap. iii. he intimates a council, held by "the brethren inhabiting France," who censuring the errors of Montanus, "laid down in writing their godly and CATHOLIC censure of them, and withal, alledged sundry epistles of the holy Martyrs that suffered among them, which being in close prison, they had written unto the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, in the which also they called and provoked Eleutherius then Bishop of Rome, to the defence of the ecclesiastical peace." Here, observe, a *Provincial Council* laid down a *godly Catholic* censure of heresy, and called and provoked the SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH to do the same!—In Book v. Chap. xxi. he relates the meeting of councils concerning the keeping of Easter, and has these words: "Their epistle is at this day extant, who at that time (about 193.)

for this cause assembled together in Palestine, of whom Theophilus Bishop of Casarea, and Narcissus Bishop of Jerusalem were chief. At Rome likewise there was a synod gathered together for the same cause, of the which Victor their Bishop was president. Again there was another of the Bishops at Pontus, where Palmas, as the most ancient, did govern. Another of the Bishops throughout France, which Irenaeus did oversee. To be short, another of the Bishops throughout Ostroena and the cities therein contained, and specially of Banchillus Bishop of Comuth, with many others: all which with one and the same sentence and judgment ordained the same decree, and their uniform assent was thus made manifest unto the world."

In the next Chapter, xxii. Eusebius records the epistle of Polycrates Bishop of Ephesus to the same Victor and his Church at Rome, in which he says that *notable pillars* of the Christian Religion had rested in Asia, from whom they held the custom of keeping Easter "according unto the Gospel, in the fourteenth Moon, swerving no where, but observing the rule of faith. To be short," continues he, "and I Polycrates, the meanest of you all, do retain the tradition of my forefathers, of which also I have imitated some. For there were seven Bishops before me, and I am the eighth, which always have celebrated the feast of Easter on that day in which the people removed the leaven from among them. I therefore (my brethren) which have lived three score and five years in the Lord, have conferred with the brethren throughout the world, and have read, and over read the Holy Scripture, yet will not be moved at all by those things, which are made to terrify us. For my ancestors and elders have said, that we ought to obey God, rather than man..... I could repeat the Bishops which were present, whom you requested me to assemble..... they have consented unto this epistle. They also know that I bear not this gray hair in vain, but always have had my conversation in Christ Jesus."—"Immediately upon this (saith Eusebius) Victor Bishop of Rome goeth about to sever from the unity in the communion all the Churches of Asia..... But this not pleasing all the Bishops, they exhorted him to seek after those things which concerned peace and unity, and love among brethren. And our words are at this day extant, that sharply reprehended Victor; of which number Irenaeus in the name of all the brethren in France that were under his charge, wrote and allowed the same sentence."—We will pass over the councils till the time of Constantine the Great, in whose life, Book i. Chap. 37, Eusebius saith of him—"as if God had ordained him to be AN UNIVERSAL BISHOP, he called a synod or council of the Clergy,"—and that round the very seat of Papal Supremacy!

3. As to *general* councils, the doctrine of Supremacy and Universal Bishop requires, that all councils to decide on the doctrines and practice of the Catholic Church should be general, and that no *partial* council could be lawful. This is plain upon a constitutional comparison with the *nature*, and with the *facts* of Supremacy, as we find them in every government under heaven. But what says history? The first that is claimed as a general council is that of Nice, in the year 318, not assembled by the Pope of Rome, but by Constantine the Emperor of Rome. Hence the Supreme Head of the Church, even had he asserted his claim, and called the Council of Nice, must have been unpardonably neglectful of her true interests and his own lawful power, to allow 250 years of heresy, schism, and *Nocesan* episcopal usurpation to desolate the Church without

• The reader will please observe the value of this evidence in favour of Episcopacy. He declares Scripture to be the rule of faith, and professes to follow the customs of the Church as the Apostles followed them; and in asserting his lawful claim to the Episcopate, he declares it better to obey God than man, making his episcopal functions a part of his duty to God. All these he couples together. His defence of keeping Easter involves the certainty of an Episcopal succession for *eight generations*, to which he made a public appeal before his enemies and the whole world; and he could not have appealed to a *known falsehood* for the confirmation of a *disputed truth*. The world before which he made the appeal certainly knew whether he was what he claimed to be.—This happened in the year 195. Allowing that the first of the succession was appointed in 65, during Paul's life, it leaves 130, which, divided by eight, gives an average of sixteen years for the episcopate of each Bishop, including himself; and he was then an old man.