

The Papal System – IV. Councils For Seven Centuries Repudiate Papal Jurisdiction



Continued from [III. The Ancient Scottish Church](#)

THE POPES HAD NO SUPREMACY OF JURISDICTION IN THE GREAT COUNCILS OF THE FIRST SEVEN CENTURIES.

For fifteen hundred years a general council has been the chief center of authority, the chief source of hope to the Church of Rome. It is supposed that a universal synod is governed by the Holy Spirit, and reaches infallible conclusions; and, therefore, ordains laws that must work for the best interests of the Christian world.

In modern times, the pope calls a council, and presides over it by deputies; no question can be discussed in it without the permission of his representatives; its decisions are worthless till he confirms them; from beginning to end, it is his abject slave. And he claims the widest range of authority over these judicatories. Leo X., in 1512, with the approbation of his Lateran Synod, says:

“That the Roman Pontiff, for the time being, as one who has authority over all councils, hath alone the full right and power of convening, transferring, and dissolving councils; and this not only from the testimony of Holy Scripture, the sayings of the holy fathers, and the decrees of our predecessors, and of the sacred canons, but also by the proper confession of councils themselves, is manifest.”

Pius II., elevated to the popedom in 1458, says:

“Among general councils we find nothing ratified without the authority of the pope, when one was reigning, because the Church is not a body without a head, *from which all power flows to the members.*”

For centuries, the doctrine has been firmly held, and sometimes haughtily expressed, that the birth, life, death, and toils of a council, by the decree of Jehovah himself, depended on the Roman Pontiff. For seven centuries of the Christian era

THE BISHOP OF ROME HAD NO MORE POWER IN A GENERAL COUNCIL THAN OTHER BISHOPS.

This declaration is capable of being sustained by any amount of evidence. From a very early day the bishop of the chief city of the world-embracing empire of Rome, in virtue of his place of residence, was held in high esteem, his name was placed first in a list of bishops, and his opinion was naturally enough received with great attention. But when you examine his power as he sits in person, or by delegates beside his brethren in councils, he is weak as other men in the episcopal office.

The first great synod which ever sat was a convention of the highest importance. It met to compose the bitter differences excited by the Arian controversy. It convened to show in its composition, workings, and claims what all coming ecumenical councils should be; it assembled at

Nice, A.D. 325.

The number of bishops attending it is variously represented from 250 to 318. The place in which its sessions were held was a room in the imperial palace. Many bishops were there who still enjoyed the power of working miracles—one of them had raised the dead, The bitter persecution of Licinius had maimed or scarred many of them: some had their right eyes torn out, some their right hands cut off; and some by holding hot iron had lost the use of both hands. The Council of Nice had largely the appearance of an assembly of martyrs. When they met in their chamber, a low chair of gold was placed in the center of the hall, and the Emperor, the first Christian sovereign in the world, of unusual height, of majestic aspect, attired in the gorgeous robes of Roman royalty, entered the meeting and sat upon the seat of gold. It was a scene never to be forgotten by these victims of heathen cruelty, who had witnessed the butchery of so many of the saints of God. The human master of the nations, with a sword of victory, was now the leader and protector of the Christian Church! The council made the celebrated Nicene Creed, condemned Arianism, and issued twenty canons. After their toils they returned to their homes laden with imperial gifts, and cheered with bright hopes.

The Roman pontiff was not present in the council at any of its meetings. He was represented by two presbyters, named Vito and Vicentius, who took no remarkable part in its proceedings. There were a score of bishops there whose influence was greater than that of the aged bishop of the Eternal City.

Constantine himself managed the council. There is ground for doubting whether it had any other president during most of its discussions; though several persons are said to have occupied this position. He delivered exhortations to the council. He heard the propositions of all with patience and attention; reasoned with them, appealed to them, encouraged them, and exercised such a marvellous influence over them that he led the whole assembly to one mind respecting disputed questions. And for the time he became the ruler of the council, and the common father of Christendom.

Accusations were made in writing, against a number of bishops, to be presented to the council through Constantine. He placed them all in a package and sealed them up without looking at them; and when the factions were reconciled he brought out these documents and burned them before the parties concerned, declaring upon oath that he had not read them; by which he showed

plainly that he was master of the council, and regulated the questions which it should debate.

Constantine summoned its members together; and they came at the voice of no ecclesiastic in the east or the west. Commanded by their Emperor they came to the city called Victory, and held the first general council under the auspices of a secular prince.

Nor had the Roman pontiff anything to do with the presidency of the council. When Constantine entered the apartment used by the bishops, and occupied his golden chair, "the great Eustathius, bishop of Antioch," first spoke, and took occasion to compliment the Emperor in the most flattering terms, Evidently according to Theodoret, who records the speech of the Bishop of Antioch, he was the leader of the council. Du Pin says: "It is very probable that it was Hosius who held the chief place in the Council of Nice in his own name, because he had already taken cognizance of this affair, and was much esteemed by the Emperor." Du Pin Yearning is universally recognized; and when it is remembered that he was a Catholic, and that he gives it as his conviction that a Spanish bishop, in his own name, was probably the first officer of the first general council, it must appear very evident that the pope had nothing to do with managing the bishops at Nice.

The sixth canon of the Council of Nice has given for centuries the greatest trouble to the advocates of papal jurisdiction over the churches of the world, and no effort has been spared to destroy its force. This celebrated article gives the same authority over his province which the bishop of Rome enjoyed in his see to the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, and by its terms it shows clearly that the Roman pontiff was simply on a level with his brother bishops in the East. The canon is:

"Let the *ancient customs* prevail which are in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis; that the Bishop of Alexandria have authority over all, since this is customary also to the Bishop of Rome. In like manner also as regards Antioch, and in all other provinces, let the churches preserve their dignity. This is altogether certain, that if any one become a bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan, the great synod has determined that he ought not to be a bishop."

From this decision of the first and purest synod that ever was held, the patriarchs of eastern provinces are authorized to perpetuate in their respective dioceses the authority conferred by ancient customs; and this authority is declared to be according to the usage of the Bishop of Rome. Du Pin says: The most natural sense that can be given to it is this:

"We ordain that the ancient custom shall be observed which gives power to the Bishop of Alexandria over all the provinces of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, because the Bishop of Rome has the like jurisdiction over all the suburbicary regions. We would likewise have the rights and privileges of the church of Antioch, and the other churches preserved; but these rights ought not to prejudice those of the Metropolitans."

It is not a cause for astonishment that the popes should hate a canon which

placed them on the same platform with prominent prelates of the East; and which, if carried out everywhere, would strip them of their entire sovereignty over the Church.

Constantine confirmed the decrees of the Council of Nice, and immediately they became binding throughout the whole Christian world; and he recommended universal obedience to decrees in themselves so important and reached in so much unity.

No one in those days imagined that the confirmation of the canons of Nice by the Roman Bishop was essential to their validity. It was, however, a common practice to solicit the ratification of the decrees of a council by all absent bishops; not with a view to give them legal authority, but for the purpose of increasing the respect in which they might be held. As among ourselves, when a petition is adopted and unanimously signed at a public meeting, but still other names are wanted, and absent parties are invited to append their signatures, so after a general synod adjourned it was common to invite all bishops who were not present to endorse its decrees, And through this practice the number of bishops at councils has frequently been greatly magnified; the calculation being based upon the names appended to its canons. In this way the Council of Sardica is occasionally represented as having three hundred bishops at its meetings, when it had about half that number; the balance came from the absent who subscribed its documents.

Constantine himself recommended the Nicene decrees to all bishops, and he undertakes to secure their assent to them. Pope Liberius recommended to Constantius: "That the faith delivered at Nice might be confirmed by the subscription of all bishops." The Council of Sardica, after the completion of their work, wrote to the "bishops of every nation commanding them to confirm these decrees." When we look at the party calling the Synod of Nice, at its probable presiding officer, at the character of its sixth canon, at the confirmation of its decrees by Constantine, at the entire absence of allusions in any form to papal jurisdiction over the Churches, we cannot be mistaken in the assertion that the pope had no supremacy in authority in the days of the first Christian Emperor.

If in the time of the Council of Nice, or if during the first few years after its dissolution, there was any man in the Christian world who seemed to be the "*Head*" of the Church rather than another, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova in Spain, has the strongest claim to that position. At the outbreak of the Arian controversy, when Constantine became anxious about its angry results, he determined to send a man of commanding influence into Egypt, whose mission might quiet the animosities of Alexander and Arius, and out of all Christendom he selected Hosius to transact, as he regarded it, the most important business claiming his attention in any part of his dominions. Speaking of the mission to Alexander and Arius, Sozomen says:

"The emperor deputed one who was honored for his faith, his virtuous life, and his steadfast confession of truth, to put an end to the strife which existed in Egypt. This man was Hosius, Bishop of Cordova."

Eusebius, describing the same circumstance, says:

"He selected from the Christians in his train one whom he well knew to be approved for the sobriety and genuineness of his faith; and who had before this time distinguished himself by the boldness of his religious profession, and sent him to act as mediator between the dissentient parties at Alexandria."

In describing the distinguished bishops at the Council of Nice, Eusebius classes Hosius among the most illustrious. "Even from Spain itself," says he, "one whose fame was widely spread took his seat as an individual in the great assembly." The Council of Sardica, in their synodical letter, speak of the bishops forming that body "As worthy of honor and respect, particularly the venerable Hosius, on account of his advanced age, his adherence to the faith, and his labors in the church."

Hosius, beyond a doubt, was for some years the leading bishop in the Christian world, with the sovereign and the people. The celebrated Athanasius, as quoted by Theodoret, says:

"It is unnecessary that I should speak of the great Hosius, that aged and faithful confessor of the faith; of all the bishops he is the most illustrious. What council can be mentioned in which he did not preside, and convince all present by the power of his reasoning? What church does not still enjoy the glorious effects of his ministration?"

This great man who, according to Du Pin, presided at the first Council of all the Churches held at Nice, and at the Council of Sardica, though the pope had delegates there to represent him, and who, according to Athanasius, was the chief officer of all the councils, has evidence to prove that he was the Head of the Church, far exceeding anything accorded to the Roman bishops in the first seven centuries.

Sardica.

This council met A. D. 345, or as others say A. D. 347. It was convoked by the emperors Constans and Constantius, as its own episcopal members declare. Theodoret tells us that it had 250 bishops when it convened. The object of the council was to compose difficulties agitating the Church in connection with Athanasius, Marcellus, and the Arian controversy. The eastern bishops, taking umbrage at the composition of the council, withdrew in a body. The western bishops, with Hosius as their president, proceeded to legislate as a General Synod. The most important business transacted by this council was the enactment of three canons, the spirit of which is admirably presented by Du Pin:

"They do not," says he, "give the Bishop of Rome power to judge the cause of a bishop in his own tribunal at Rome; they only give him authority to inquire whether it were well or ill determined, and in case he find that it was determined wrong, to order a new decision of it in the country, and by the neighboring bishops of the province where it was determined, whither he might send legates in his own name to be present, if he thought it convenient."

Du Pin frankly declares that, "The discipline which these fathers establish is new." It was never heard of in the Christian Church till the Convention at Sardica, And though the jurisdiction conferred on the Roman Bishop was very slender, not authorizing him to judge any ecclesiastic outside the diocese of Rome, but simply giving him power to order a new trial by bishops adjoining the offender in cases in which he believed that an unjust sentence had been imposed, yet it excited the bitterest opposition. In fact, the recognition of such an authority in the pope was one of the chief causes of that separation which finally divided the churches of the East and West.

The Council of Sardica, on account of the retirement of the eastern bishops, was never recognized in that section of the world. And as Du Pin says of its decrees:

"They were never put in the code of the canons of the universal Church, approved by the Council of Chalcedon. The East never received them, neither would the bishops of Africa own them. The popes only used them, and cited them under the name of the Council of Nice, to give them the greater weight and authority."

The popes for centuries practised this detestable deception, and not only quoted them as canons of Nice, but gave them a latitude of application, equally astonishing and iniquitous. Only the bishops of the West united in the effort to honor a brother prelate; and of course the sole reason why Rome was preferred to Cordova was that the City of the Seven Hills was the old capital of the empire of the Caesars.

Constantinople.

The second council received as general met at Constantinople A.D. 381. It was summoned by the Emperor Theodosius to calm the troubles excited by the heresy of Macedonius. This man taught that the Son of God is not of the same substance as the Father, but that he resembles him in every particular. He also affirmed that the Holy Spirit is a creature. His followers were numerous and influential. The council condemned the Macedonian and some other heresies, and made some changes in the Nicene creed. One of their principal acts was to place the See of Constantinople next in point of dignity with the bishopric of Rome. Their canon was: "Let the Bishop of Constantinople have rank next after the Bishop of Rome, for Constantinople is new Rome."

Now in this canon the reason for the elevation of Constantinople is given: it is because it is new Rome. What is the meaning of this designation? It certainly does not imply that Peter had founded the Church of new Rome, and after having labored on the banks of the Tiber, had conferred equal honor on the city of Constantine. But it does mean that as the Roman Bishop had the highest rank among prelates, because his residence was the capital of the empire, so Constantinople, being now the seat of the Emperor's government, the consideration which gave old Rome its ecclesiastical rank, must stand in church honors next to the city of Romulus. This is the view of the historian Sozomen, who, commenting A.D. 450 on this canon, says: "Constantinople was not only favored with this appellation (new Rome), but was also in the enjoyment of many privileges, such as a senate of its own (like old Rome),

and the division of the citizens into ranks and orders; it was also governed by its own magistrates, and possessed contracts, laws, and immunities similar to those of Rome in Italy."

Evidently the point of comparison between the two cities was that each had been the seat of government. The canon implies that this circumstance had given the pope his sacerdotal standing, and on this account the Bishop of new Rome must appear next him in church dignity. The Roman pontiff had nothing to do with calling this council, presiding over it, or inspiring its canons. Nor did he see reap any honor from its decrees— especially from the one which we have given.

Ephesus.

The Council of Ephesus met a. p. 431. It was summoned by the Emperor Theodosius to condemn the so-called heresy of Nestorius. He had taught that Mary was not the "Mother of God" but the mother of Christ, that "That could not be called God which admitted of being two months old or three months old." His idea was that the Godhead of the Son dwelt merely in the body of Christ, so that he was composed of two persons. These opinions excited general horror.

Two hundred bishops gathered at Ephesus to try Nestorius, and in due time they condemned him. Cyril was President of the Council. The imperial letter convoking the council was addressed to "Cyril and the presidents of the holy churches in every quarter." In this council, for the first time, a practice was introduced by the pope which very cunningly increased his power, and at the same time flattered his friend. As one man in some financial corporations can cast the vote of another who is absent, so Celestine, Bishop of Rome, authorized Cyril to represent him as well as himself in the Synod of Ephesus, and Cyril, to increase his own importance, seems to have yielded to the temptation. But Cyril was master of the council without the aid of Celestine; the Emperor's summons addressed to "Cyril and the presidents of the holy churches in every quarter" proclaimed to all the favor which Theodosius had for Cyril; and his desire that he should be first bishop in the approaching Synod.

Chalcedon.

The next General Council was summoned by the Emperor Marcian in a. D. 451. It met first at Nice, and was transferred to Chalcedon. It was composed of 630 bishops. It was called to dispose of the heresy of the monk Eutyches. He denied that the Saviour had two natures; he insisted that the body born of the virgin was not real flesh and blood, but merely the appearance of it, so that he had no suffering.

The council met in the church of St. Euphemia, directly opposite Constantinople. This holy place consists of three immense buildings. One is open to the sky, including a court of great extent, and adorned on all sides with columns; and next to it there is another structure resembling it in length, breadth, and columns, but with a protecting roof. On the north of this, and facing the east, stood a circular building, skilfully terminating

in a dome, and surrounded in the interior with beautiful columns which support a gallery. Under the dome, at the eastern side, is a splendid enclosure, within which are guarded the sacred remains of Euphemia, the saint and martyr. They are preserved in a long coffin of silver, ingeniously made, The mightiest prodigies are said to have been wrought by these relics.

Here the emperor, ecclesiastics, and multitudes from New Rome are accustomed to gather at stated times; and, through a little door which can be opened, the priests introduce an iron rod with a sponge on the end, which they turn around several times, and withdraw covered with stains and clots of blood. The clots are permanent; the blood retains its color, and the greatest blessings rest on those who possess the gory sponge. And the quantity obtained is so great that a liberal distribution is made to the sovereign, priests, people, and distant friends. But the most curious part of, the story is that St. Euphemia frequently appears in a dream to the bishops and others, inviting them to come and "gather a vintage" among her bones. Leo, the Bishop of old Rome, urges Marcian to call this council, showing that he had no authority to issue such a summons. And Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, was lacking neither in ability nor in audacity in exacting what was due his see, and something more when circumstances favored him.

Pope Leo had three representatives in the council, Paschasinus and Lucentius, bishops, and the presbyter Boniface. Marcian was the master-spirit of the assembly. Eusebius, for himself and others, demanded that a petition should be read in the council, addressed to the emperors, and he ended with this appeal:

"And this we will do on the issuing of your divine and revered mandates to the holy and universal synod of the bishops, highly beloved of God, to the effect that they should give a formal hearing to the matters which concern both us and the before-mentioned Dioscorus, and refer all the transactions to the decision of your piety, as shall seem fit to your immortal supremacy. If we obtain this, our request, we shall ever pray for your everlasting rule, most divine sovereigns."

And the imperial commissioners who had charge of the council granted the request. In fact, there was nothing done in the council without them or their master Marcian. The form of one decision of the senators of the council is:

"It seems to us, according to God's good pleasure, to be a just proceeding, if approved by our most divine and pious sovereign, that Dioscorus, the most reverent Bishop of Alexandria; Juvenalis, the most reverent Bishop of Jerusalem; Thalassius, the most reverent Bishop of Ceesarea, in Cappadocia; Eusebius, the most reverent Bishop of Ancyra; Eustathius, the most reverent Bishop of Berytus; and Basilius, the most reverent Bishop of Seleucia, in Isauria, who exercised sway and precedency in that synod (a synod of Ephesus), should be subjected to the self-same penalty, by suffering at the hands of the holy synod deprivation of their episcopal dignity, according to the canons; whatever is consequent hereupon, being submitted to the cognizance of the emperor's sacred supremacy."

Du Pin states the situation exactly: "This council was held in the great church of St. Euphemia, the emperor's commissioned officers and the counsellors of state being present, who were to direct all their motions. On their right, the Bishop of Alexandria and others; and on their left the pope's delegates." To them the speakers addressed themselves, and by them all questions were decided except a few more serious cases, which they submitted to the Emperor himself. The Council of Chalcedon was more an advisory convention, called by their sovereign, to give him their opinions, which he might accept or decline, than an independent deliberative assembly. No body could strike heavier blows at, the divine supremacy of the Roman See than the renowned Synod of St. Euphemia. The 9th canon says:

"If one clergyman have a matter against another, let him not leave his own bishop and go to the secular courts; but first let him lay open the cause before his own bishop; or else, with the consent of the same bishop, before those who shall be chosen by both parties. But if any one shall do contrary to this, let him be subjected to canonical censure. If any clergyman have a matter against his own bishop, or against another, let it be judged by the synod of the province. But if a bishop or clergyman have a dispute with the metropolitan of the province, let him have access either to the exarch (a bishop in the Eastern Orthodox Church) of the diocese, or to the throne of the imperial Constantinople, and let it be there judged."

Here there is no appeal to Rome. In the courts to which an injured ecclesiastic may carry his case, Rome has no place whatever, The throne of imperial Constantinople is either the throne of the Emperor or the throne of the Patriarch of new Rome, and, in either case, there is an utter prohibition of appeals by ecclesiastics beyond the city of Constantinople; and that, too, by the largest and most respectable council of all antiquity. It is commonly supposed that the throne of the Bishop of Constantinople is referred to, and that it makes him the final judge of all disputes among clergymen.

The 28th canon of Chalcedon occupies the most important place in its entire transactions. By it the honor paid the Bishop of Rome in ecclesiastical matters is expressly declared to be given, not because Peter was first Bishop of Rome, or the pontiff the vicar of Christ, or Peter the rock on which the Church was built; Christians had not yet fallen into that sleep in which they had these dreams; but because ROME WAS THE IMPERIAL CITY. The canon reads:

"We, everywhere following the decrees of the holy fathers, and acknowledging the canon which has been just read of the 150 bishops, most dear to God, do also ourselves decree and vote the same things concerning the precedency of the most holy Church of Constantinople,—New Rome; for the fathers, with reason, gave precedency to the throne of old Rome, because it was the imperial city; and the 150 bishops beloved of God, moved by the same consideration, awarded EQUAL PRECEDENCY TO THE MOST HOLY THRONE OF NEW ROME, reasonably judging that a city which is honored with the government and senate should enjoy equal rank with the ancient queen Rome; and, like her, be magnified in ecclesiastical matters, having the second place after her; but so that the metropolitans alone of the Pontic, Asiatic and Thracian dioceses, and

also the bishops among the barbarians in the said dioceses, should be ordained by the aforesaid most holy throne of the Holy Church of Constantinople, to wit: that each metropolitan of the said dioceses, with the bishops of the province, should ordain the bishops of the province, as it is stated in the divine canons; but that the metropolitans of the said dioceses, as has been said, be ordained by the Archbishop of Constantinople, where there has been an agreement in the election, according to custom, and a report been made to him."

The grand foundation of the spiritual supremacy of the pontiff for many centuries has been its supposed divine origin. Such a doctrine was entirely unknown in the councils of the first seven centuries, when the Church was measurably pure. A certain amount of rank was given to the Bishop of Rome, but wholly on the ground that his city was THE IMPERIAL CITY. And by the decree just quoted, Constantinople is raised to equal authority with the ancient queen Rome in ecclesiastical matters.

Rome, at the Council of Chalcedon, made strenuous efforts to acquire power over the churches; through the far-seeing Leo, she had letters written to move the council in her favor. A portion from one of these, written by Placidia, the mother of Theodosius, says: "Seeing it becometh us in all things to preserve the dignity of this chief city, *which is the mistress of all others.*"

For this reason, Placidia and Eudoxia, the empresses, endeavored to maintain the dignity of the Roman See. This is the starting point of all the power Rome ever acquired over the nations. The Synod of Chalcedon, "the greatest of all ancient synods," gave no other, knew none besides. Du Pin says: "The 28th canon grants to the Church of Constantinople, which is called New Rome, *the same privileges with old Rome, because this city is the second city in the world.*"

The Fifth General Council was held at Constantinople.

It met A.D. 553. It was called by Justinian the younger, and it was composed of 165 bishops. "It condemned and anathematized Theodore of Mopsuestia, and his impious writings, also whatever Theodoret had impiously written against the right faith, against the twelve chapters of the sainted Cyril, against the first holy synod at Ephesus, and all that he has written in defence of Theodore and Nestorius; it also anathematized the epistle said to have been written by Ibas to Maris, the Persian." Vigilius, Bishop of Rome, was in Constantinople during the sessions of the council, but refused to attend its meetings, or to subscribe to its decrees, for which he was sent into exile, until finally, as an illustration of papal infallibility, he changed his mind and gave his approbation to the measures of the synod. Through bribing the celebrated general Belisarius, Vigilius secured his own election to the papal throne, and the deposition of Silverius, and he rendered his title unquestionable by putting Silverius, his predecessor, to death. Of this council Du Pin says: "Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, held the first place in it." Nothing flattering to papal supremacy occurred in the Fifth General Council.

The Sixth General Council was held at Constantinople.

It met A.D. 680. It was called by the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus. It had 160 bishops in attendance during its later meetings. It held eighteen sessions. *"The Emperors occupied the first place in its gatherings."* The great patriarchs were either present or represented by delegates. The council was specially convened to condemn a new heresy, a species of the Eutychian, by which it was taught that: In the union of the two natures of Christ, there was but one will, from which circumstance the advocates of this theory were called Monothelites. This general council condemned Honorius, Pope of Rome, and anathematized him as a heretic. The words of the council are:

"In addition to these, we acknowledge also Honorius, who was formerly pope of old Rome, to be amongst those cast out of the holy Church of God and anathematized, because we find from his letter to Sergius that he altogether followed his opinions, and confirmed his impious dogmas."

Strong language for an infallible council to use about a pope of Rome. And in the 17th action of the council, "they all exclaimed, *"Anathema to the heretic Honorius!"*

The popes of Rome themselves have denounced this unhappy successor of Peter. Leo II. says: "He did not only favor the new heresy by his silence and negligence, but did suffer the apostolic traditions to be sullied and defiled by a contrary doctrine," for which conduct Leo condemned him. In the *Liber Diurnus*, we find that the successors of Honorius were regularly in the habit of cursing him. So that, though incapable of error in matters of faith, he was anathematized by the popes following him as an unmitigated heretic. Surely this council showered few distinctions on Rome.

A very important Council was held in Constantinople in a. D. 692.

This convention ought to be the Seventh General Council, it had more claim to the character of a general synod than several to which this title and character have been given. It was called by Justinian II., and was attended by about 200 bishops; among its members were representatives of the Bishop of Rome; and the other great patriarchs were present in person. This council met in a tower of the Emperor's palace called Trullo, from which it sometimes takes its name. It was called Quini-Sextum, because it was regarded as a supplement to the fifth and sixth councils. It made 102 canons. The 36th renews the canons of Constantinople, granting the church of Constantinople the same privileges as the church of old Rome, the same authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and the second place in honor. The third, it gave to Alexandria, the fourth to Antioch, the fifth to Jerusalem. The Greek Church recognized this body as a general council, but because it interfered with some of their customs and claims, the Latins rejected its authority. Its decrees were signed by all present, including the Emperor, whose name appears first.

We think any candid mind will conclude that the great councils of the first seven centuries, including the synod of Sardica, which, though not a general synod, was a highly important body, *give no claim whatever to the Bishops of*

Rome to supremacy over the churches of Christendom. A place of honor was readily conceded to the popes as the prelates of the imperial city, but a position of power, of jurisdiction was sternly denied them. Neither friend nor foe on earth can lay his finger on a genuine canon, decree, or resolution of any general council during the first seven hundred years after the Saviour's death, giving any pre-eminence in legislative, judicial, or other departments in which power is accustomed to be exercised over Christendom to the Pope of Rome. There is not a scholar in the Christian world to-day who pretends to show such a decree, canon, or resolution. These great councils then, that are led by the Holy Spirit, for SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS KNEW NOTHING OF THE SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY OF THE BISHOPS OF ROME. And as the chain of spiritual sovereignty wants the seven hundred links next to Christ, the great mooring pillar, it will not be able to protect and hold the papal ark, which trusts it when the wind is angry, and the sea rages.

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