

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY, 8th APRIL, 1831.

PAPAL SUPREMACY.

In all questions of controversy, there is a certain *first principle* upon which all subordinate ones are suspended; and which, if taken away, leaves them in ruins. We shall therefore, in this article, reach forth our right hand, and boldly take hold of the CHAIR OF ST. PETER, and try the title of his ostensible successors.

I. The Supremacy of the Pope of Rome stands upon the very threshold of the disputed patrimony of the successors of St. Peter, the same as the supremacy of the King of England over the British empire stands first in a question of his right as king to govern it. If the supremacy in either case be clearly made out, all subordinate questions are merged into that one. If, on the contrary, that claim be set aside, there the controversy ends.

II. The abstract notion of supremacy is the same in either case, because it simply concerns government over men in a state of subordination, and nothing else. Each case embraces the same general and leading features in the detail of the exercise of power. 1. The King, as head of the nation, is the fountain of all authority, and alone possesses the power of *mission* to the discharge of official functions. 2. He alone has power to assemble the great Council of the nation, and every council assembled is a *general* Council. 3. He is the head of the Council when assembled, and his assent as such is essential to the legality of all its decrees. 4. He alone is the umpire of legal controversies and the interpreter of law, which he does by his Judges, and to all practical purposes, in a loose sense, he is infallible.

III. Papal supremacy, with its General Councils, as it is claimed over a great body politic, the Church Universal, should of necessity embrace, as to substance, the four great features above named, in nearly the same terms as those stated. To these four rules we will add a *fifth*, namely, That this state of things must have existed entire in each case from the very beginning: in the one, from the time that King and Parliament first ruled England: in the other, from the constitution of the Church by our Lord in the Apostolic commission. The trial of these four first rules by the last, will, as we conceive, decide the controversy, at least as far as supremacy, infallibility, and *oral tradition* are concerned.

IV. Before proceeding, let us examine the claim made on Peter as the *rock*, and our Lord's address to him in the last of John's Gospel. 1. "Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *petra*, I will build my Church:" as the two words in *italic* stand in the Greek; *Petros*, a masculine noun, signifying a *stone* which a man might handle; and *petra*, feminine, a *rock* of any supposable magnitude. But it is claimed that, as our Lord spoke *Syriac*, and used the single word *Cephas*, which has but one gender, it identifies *Peter* with *rock* in its largest sense. This, however, amounts to a claim that impeaches the veracity of the sacred penman who gave our Lord's meaning in Greek. But taking for granted the truth of the Greek text, we may read the words thus: "Thou art a *small stone*, and upon this *great rock* I will build my church." Paul, however, asserts, that it is built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; and Peter, it appears, but one among many: which is supported by St. John in the Revelation xxi. 14: "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." 2. It is true that our Lord promised Peter the keys of the Church, and he opened it to the Gentiles, and no man shut it. 3. "Feed my lambs—feed my sheep," is claimed as a commission of supremacy over both laity and clergy. But all sheep are once lambs, and all lambs are fed expressly that they may become sheep. Hence, unless it was intended that all the laity should become clergymen, women as well as men, this makes nothing for the supremacy of Peter.

V. To apply the *first* rule.—The Pope, as head of the Church, is the fountain of authority, and alone possesses the power of *mission* to execute the clerical functions. The Right Rev. Dr. Mil-

ner, in his "End of Religious Controversy," part 2, p. 149, says: "Every Catholic pastor is authorized and enabled to address his flock as follows: The word of God which I announce to you, and the Holy Sacraments which I dispense to you, I am QUALIFIED to announce and dispense by such a Catholic Bishop who was consecrated by such another Catholic Bishop, and so on, in a series which reaches to the Apostles themselves: and I am AUTHORIZED to preach and minister to you by such a prelate, who received authority for this purpose, from the successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome." But here, while the Doctor admits the commencement of a *multitude* of lines of descent from the persons of the Apostles for the tradition of the power of ordination down to posterity, he confines the power of *mission* to exercise the clerical functions to St. Peter and his successors in the papal chair. But how would such doctrine appear in regard to the King's supremacy as being both the fountain of authority and mission to exercise it? How many independent lines of descent for constituting the subordinate official character in the servants of the crown does the British Constitution recognize? And if more than one could exist, what would become of the unity of the empire as under one personal supremacy? And what again would be the value of the numerous lines of descent from the Apostles independent of each other and of the line of St. Peter, having power to convey Holy Orders, if none but the possessor of the chair of St. Peter could grant permission to exercise Holy Orders? The thing is a self-evident absurdity. Again, at page 157, he says: "The case is, the same necessity of an Apostolical succession of *mission*, or authority to execute the functions of Holy Orders, as of the Holy Orders themselves. This *mission*, or authority, was imparted by Christ to his Apostles, when he said to them: '*As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.*'" But this is fully granting the power of *mission*, as well as of *ordination*, to EVERY ONE of the Apostles, and in fact admitting that each one was an *absolute* Pope, and fully qualified to transmit the plenitude of his powers of ordination and Mission (which constitute ecclesiastical supremacy) in a line of descent to future ages: which is nothing short of a virtual, though unintentional, surrender of the whole Papal controversy. The wise are sometimes taken in their own craftiness. In virtue therefore of this commission, which was common to THEM ALL, they went forth to spread the Gospel, to plant Churches, and to ordain and send others to the work, with full powers to transmit their own commission unimpaired of its essentials to posterity. Paul, besides exercising the powers of ordination and mission, all over Asia Minor and Greece, left one line of descent in Timothy and one in Titus. James left one in the see of Jerusalem, which, as the primary head-quarters of Christianity, ought to have been governed, as the *seat of empire*, by none but the "prince of the Apostles" and the universal Bishop himself, instead of one of his subjects, while he was employed as a *Missionary* "of the Circumcision." In short, primitive Church History gives us lists of episcopal successions from the persons of the different Apostles, of a MULTITUDE OF SEES, which exercised every function ever known in the Church without let or hindrance. And it was the universal custom of the whole Church, for neighbouring Bishops to consecrate new ones, and give them authority, charge, and power of ordination and mission over vacant or new sees, which the new Bishops accordingly exercised, precisely as the Bishops now do in England and the United States of America. But for the claim of a universal Bishop to be valid, or even to wear the face of probability, our Lord should have consecrated and sent BUT ONE INDIVIDUAL endowed with those plenary powers instead of THIRTEEN (including Paul), and that one should have been exclusively furnished with the means of perpetuating his individual line of descent; and from that line alone should those powers have emanated from the very first which history informs us emanated not only from each individual Apostle, but from all the lines of Apostolic succession which they established; the same as the Crown of England furnishes and sends all its public functionaries. And common sense teaches us that the powers of ordination and Mission should reside together. A careful perusal of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus must convince even the most credulous, that Paul commissioned both of them with full authority to ordain to the ministry, to send to the discharge of the clerical