

whether by ordination or possession, can prove their descent from the ancient Saints and Bishops of these Isles. It is a positive fact, that they, and they *alone*, can trace their Ordinations from Peter and Paul, through Patrick, Augustine, Théodore, Colman, Columba, David, Cuthbert, Chad, Anselm, Osmund, and all the other worthies of our Church. No Popish Bishops can by any possibility trace their spiritual descent by ordination from the original pastors of our Churches; for their line of succession began at Rome, scarcely more than two Centuries ago; and none of them have ever received Ordination from any British or Irish Bishops, descended from the ancient line of Prelates, who for so many ages have represented the Apostles in these realms."*

I must observe, however, that I speak of the Church of England as an Ecclesiastical body or religious Society, and not as a political institution or national Establishment. This is a distinction of the utmost importance; as almost all the objections to the Reformed English Church are founded upon certain historical facts relating to the latter view; whereas the truth of a religion must be considered as altogether independent of its connexion with the State; though it must be confessed that a considerable prejudice naturally arises from attending chiefly to the character and motives of the English statesmen who were instrumental in establishing the change of religion in the country.

It must be admitted that, in an Ecclesiastical point of view, there were some defects and irregularities in the legal Establishment of the English Reformation at the accession of Queen Elizabeth; but these arose from the peculiar circumstances of the times, and cannot affect the

* Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, Vol. II. p. 252. (Ed. 1839.)