

To the Editor of the Catholic.  
**ANGLICANISM AND THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION IN CANADA.**

REV. SIR,—Of late years there is perhaps no Catholic doctrine which has been more agitated among Protestants, than that of the Apostolical succession:—for the most part, however, superficial views seem to be taken of it; and the single fact of the transmission of orders, without jurisdiction or any regard to doctrine, alone considered a sufficient warrant for claiming divine mission. Still, by a learned body in the Anglican communion, (whatever may be said of the high claims they so pompously put forward,) the doctrine has been skilfully advanced, and in a manner which has materially excited the suspicion and dislike of their law church and dissenting brethren, who, on the other hand, represent it as a "popish figment" which truly enough ought to lead its advocates back again to Rome.—Anger, animosity, and not unfrequently bitter enmity, has been the consequence of a strife which has ensued as to the respective claims of "the sects," but amidst all this the Catholic looks calmly on,—not wondering at the miserable dissensions of protestants; but with a smile to see so much vain warfare about the possession of that which is not to be had among them all. "The Catholic," says Dr. Wiseman, "speaking of Anglicans and dissenters, stands between the two, unable to recognize the claims of either, but connected on behalf and communion, with the great Church Catholic, through the Holy See."—(Catholic Unity, p. 7.)

It is not my intention, however, upon the present occasion, to examine into the claims to apostolical succession set up by the Anglicans,—whether they have a succession of orders or not, or whether a succession of mission or not, but—granting their claims for argument sake—to shew from their own application of the doctrine; from their own principles, and from their own writers, that in this country at least, the society to which they belong is not only not a true Church; but does not form any part whatever of the Church of Christ. I wish to do this especially for the consideration of the *Toronto Church Editor*, who is in the habit of using such phrases as "our pure branch of the Holy and Apostolic Church,"—"the only branch of the Catholic Church in this province," and the like: I wish to shew him that the language he applies to dissenters, is upon his own principles equally applicable to himself; that every time he attends St. James' Cathedral, he is committing the heinous sin of schism; and worse, that he does so in violation of the unity of Christ's body, and that he and his brethren "have not the crutch of an excuse to lean upon," as—to use his own words—"they set at naught the teachings of the Holy Scripture, the testimony of the Primitive Church and early fathers, . . . and the recorded declarations of their most illustrious . . . bishops and divines."

In speaking, however, of the principles of the *Church editor*, I am supposing him to hold, as he seems to do in part, the opinions of the High Church party in England; and not any such trumpery notions as those of Bishop Mountain, who in his last charge (July 1842.) speaks of the Anglican, as "that Church which is properly the Church of the British Empire." We are quite at a loss to know upon what principle it is so anywhere—unless indeed it be that of "Parliament Churches" and "Parliament bishops"; of course the learned editor of the *Church* acknowledges no such principle as this: we do not suspect him of it.

Passing over the writers of the "Tracts for the Times," (the best specimen of English High Churchmen,) as I am aware of the prejudice existing against them on account of their "popish tendencies,"—I shall quote a few authors, dead and living, to whom the

Church cannot object; and first, the learned divine, Palmer, in a work\* which is "wo known strongly recommended by several [English] bishops as a text book for the use of clerical students," (London Times, 28th Oct., 1841,) speaking of schism, says, "Unity of Communion being the law of God, both in the universal Church, and in all the particular Churches in which it is arranged; it is impossible that in the same place there can be several different Churches, authorized by God and united to Christ. In the case of rival communions in a particular locality, it is possible that none of them may be Christian; but one alone can be the Church of Christ; and it is as impossible that there should be two particular churches in the same place, as two universal churches in the world; . . . in one locality there can be but one society whose communion Christians are bound to seek in preference to all others." (P. I. ch. iv. sect. 2.) This principle I suppose will not be disputed by any professing High Church views. Another example, therefore, may suffice:—Thus, Dr. Hook uses the same language.—"Of this one society," he says, "there cannot be two branches in one and the same place opposed to each other, either in discipline or in doctrine; . . . although there be two opposing societies or more in one place. . . yet we are quite sure that only one of them can be the real Church." (Church Dict. p. 153.)

Now, as to the obligation of external communion, none will deny that Christ has appointed the Holy Catholic Church as the only way unto eternal life; he "never appointed two ways to Heaven, nor did he build a Church to save some, and make another institution for other men's salvation." (Bp. Pearson on the Creed, art. ix.) And "Christ has but one body, and those who are separate from the body of Christ, are no longer of his body." (Dean Sherlock.) Whence "appears the necessity which every Christian lies under, of maintaining communion with the particular Church wherein he lives, in order to his communion with the Church Catholic, and with Christ the head of it." (Archbishop Potter, on Church Gov't. p. 459.)

Now, "the Bishop is in the Church," says Bishop Jolly, "and the Church in the Bishop, and if any be not with the Bishop they are not in the Church. . . and there can be but one Bishop at once in a Church. . . no other Bishop [can] interfere in the affairs of his diocese without involving himself in the guilt of schism." (On the Christian Church p. xxv.)

Again, "no clergyman, however orthodox, orthodox and canonical, could officiate in his diocese but by his authority." Again, as we cannot "give the least countenance to the administrations of an usurper of the sacred office," . . . without being partakers of [his] crime,"—so, (the ministrations in both cases of course being equally unlawful,) "we are equally obliged to abstain though the person officiating has received valid ordination, if he is at that time exercising his orders in opposition to the rightful Bishop of the diocese."—(id. p. xxix.)

And again, "when it comes to resisting or opposing the rightful bishop and setting up an usurper against him, then it answers to rebellion and . . . according to the sentiments of the first Christians, is the sin of Corah, Dathan and Abiram in the ringleaders, and of their company in those that follow them, assist them, or adhere to them." (id.)

The singularity of one Bishop in one place at a time descended from the Apostles by a perpetual succession, is a principle which has ever been recognized by the Church, and one which was formerly ratified by the council of Nice, whence writes St. Cyprian, "since there can be no second after the first; whoever is made after him who ought to be alone, is not a second Bishop but is none," and he therefore designates such an appointment, as "setting up a profane altar—erecting an adulterous chair—offering sacrilegious sacrifices against the true priest," and says elsewhere, that "whosoever, divorced from the Church, is united to an adulteress, is separated from the Church's promises." So, Palmer, speaking of those who establish "rival altars" and a "rival priesthood" says, they are "guilty of that aggravated schism which the second acumenical council calls heresy," and are "altogether cut off from the unity of the Church." (P. I. ch. xi.)

Again, Johnson (Presbyter) says, "the eucharist is one . . . and therefore when a new altar is erected, a new Bishop ordained in opposition to the former, then there is just

occasion to ask that question as St. Paul did, "is Christ divided?" When two several pastors, assuming to themselves the privilege of offering and consecrating the sacrament, not only in two distinct places [of worship], but in contradiction to each other, and by two several inconsistent claims; then it is evident that one of them acts by no commission; for if the true Eucharist can be had in two opposite assemblies, then Christ's flesh ceases to be one. (Unbloody sacrifice, Part II. ch. 3.)

And again, Dodwell, "disunion from the bishop is disunion from Christ and the Father, and from all the invisible heavenly priesthood, and sacrifice, and intercession. . . disunion from any one ordinary, must consequently be a disunion from the whole Catholic Church, seeing it is impossible for any to continue a member of Christ's mystical body, who is disunited from the mystical head of it."—(Discourse on the one Priesthood, and one Altar, chap. xii.)

Now, from all this it appears, first, that in Canada for example, of the many societies professing to be Churches of Christ, there is one only which is so truly, and whose communion Christians are bound at once to join in order to salvation. "It is plain" says Palmer, "that it is the duty of every one to unite himself to [the Church] without delay, nor is it in any degree necessary to enter on an examination of all the doctrines or practices of [the Church] to ascertain their conformity with christianity;" even he says, though considered by some, as teaching "heresy on several points." (P. I. ch. x. sect. 8.)

And secondly, the identity of the Church, depends upon the identity of the Bishop, not any Bishop, but the Bishop, and hence upon the testimony of history; as to who the first bishop was, to which communion he belonged,—who are the rightful Bishops—and who intruders. This must be quite plain to all, from what has been said above; everybody indeed who is at all acquainted with the controversy, as carried on in England, knows, that the main argument there against the Catholics is, that they have no succession, as it is said their Bishops are intruders there, possessing no jurisdiction: this opinion, however, is founded upon the supposition that the Anglican Bishops have valid and lawful orders and jurisdiction,—a supposition entirely unsupported by historical facts and catholic principles.

Without referring to Palmer, Percival, Hook, or many others who might be quoted on the same subject,—one passage may suffice from Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of Oxford (1839), and I quote him thus in instance, because he belonged to a party which blindly clings to the English church, solely I believe upon ground involved in the principle in question: thus he says, "since there cannot be in the same place two successors of the apostle, the admission that we have the apostolical succession must . . . altogether exclude them (the Catholics)." (p. 117.)

In the United States also we find the same principles mentioned: thus, because they had a Protestant Bishop there in 1785, and no Catholic Bishop until two or three years after, therefore, it is said, the Protestant Episcopal church is the church of Christ there; and the Catholics a schismatical body external to it.

Now, let us apply anglican principles to Canada,—(principles which are granted so far with the provision that Catholic Bishops alone have jurisdiction any where. In Canada we have been under the jurisdiction of Catholic Bishops for nearly two hundred years.—Francois de Laval, abbot of Montigny, was, I believe, the first "Bishop of Canada,"—he was appointed in 1660, when there was no Protestant Bishop here until fifty years since: hence we have the following acknowledgment from Palmer—to which we beg the serious attention of the *Toronto Church Editor*—the "Roman Churches founded in South America, Canada, the Philippines &c. by the Europeans who first colonized . . . those countries . . . are altogether free from schism and are invested with the original right of Catholic Churches so that no one has a right to establish rival communions among them." (P. I. ch. xi. sect. 4.)

Now, as Palmer elsewhere very truly observes,—and we wish anglicans would always recollect this, though Palmer himself forgets it when convenient as will be seen—"since God has commended unity in his church, and since Christ so earnestly desired and prayed for it it follows necessarily that he must have provided means for sustaining this unity; and

that any society which does not possess means for upholding unity of communion and whose fundamental principles oblige them to tolerate and even encourage separation without limit, cannot be a church of God." (p. I. ch. iv. sect. 2.)

And as it is acknowledged that the Roman is "a true Church of Christ" by Palmer and indeed all high Churchmen of the present day, as well says the learned Thordike as "I have always known to be accepted," (Epilogue) it is consequently the plain duty of anglicans in this country, upon their own principles, not only to be willing to communicate, but to seek communion with the Roman Catholic Church here established. Mr. Palmer does indeed tell us that "if in Canada the English community united to [the anglican establishment at home] have Bishops & Priests," it is only to be considered "provisional" & "not designed to interfere with the prior claims of the Roman Church," but "as a matter of necessity, because the Church there refuses them communion," except upon conditions which he thinks objectionable! (p. I. ch. xi. sect. 1.) but every one will at once perceive this to be a miserable shift manifestly contradictory and opposed to his own principles, as given above.

We say, then, to the editor of the *Church*, "thou that teachest another teachest not thyself"—we tell him and his brethren that while they call dissenters Schismatics, they are equally so themselves—that upon their own principles the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ in this country, and that their society is external to it—we tell them their Bishops are intruders here, and consequently to use the words of the Protestant Parson Mr. Falloon, "it is extremely doubtful whether all their functions . . . are not *ab initio* invalid," (*Church Journal*, April 14) and we remind them lastly in the mild language of their own Gresley, that "to set up altar against altar" as they do, "and pulpit against pulpit . . . is palpably inconsistent with christian charity and union, and must inevitably bring God's displeasure on those who do such things."

Thus then, "out of their own mouths" are the anglicans of this country condemned; let us hope, however, that from the attention now so much drawn to the doctrine of the apostolical succession, they may be brought to the consideration of Catholic views; and with many doubtless it will be so; ardent minded and thinking persons—at least those who are not bound down by prejudice or worldly interest—will not be satisfied with the mere dream of Christian unity which anglicanism presents: they will see at once the absurdity of those views which, if consistently carried out, would make a man a Greek in Russia, a Catholic in France, and a Protestant in England—views founded upon principles which give no security to a true faith, and which are no barrier against heresy or schism. They will see, too, that the single fact of one Bishop's succeeding another in the same see, may indeed be episcopal, but is not apostolical succession—that there can be no apostolical succession, where there is not a succession of valid orders and jurisdiction, or right to exercise such orders, as well as uniformity of faith and identity of religious principle. And when the anglican does see thus far, we may hope all things of him in time: he will soon learn to look upon the Bishop of Rome, not as "that proud priest," but as the successor of Peter, "the rock of the church," and the essential center of unity, not as *antichrist*, but as the *Vicar of Christ*; and upon the Church of Rome, not as an "idolatrous church" but as the one Holy Catholic and apostolic church. And he will soon cease moreover, if we mistake not, even to respect the names of those so-called referers, who, while they gravely acknowledged the principle that the Church alone "hath authority in controversies of faith," set at naught all church authority & assumed it themselves. He will cease looking to the English Bishops for their gloss upon scripture or the fathers, and will look to the Church, and "hear the Church," the divinely appointed and faithful witness of revelation, the unerring judge of doctrine, and "pillar and ground of truth." He will cease to rest upon individual interpretation, but repose upon her authority as the only sure motive whereon to ground his assent to the revealed word of God.—And he will find at last that anglican unity is one thing, and Catholic unity another; that while the one is but a dream of the fancy, the other is something to be felt and not fancied only.

Believe me, Rev. Sir,  
 Yours respectfully,  
 A LAYMAN.

Kingston, May 4th, 1848.

\* Treatise on the Church of Christ by the Rev. Wm. Palmer, M. A. 1839.

\* He is speaking primarily of the Anglican establishment in England.