

The Church.

"Her Foundations are upon the holy hills."

"Stand ye in the days and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Vol. XVIII.]

TORONTO, CANADA, MAY 31, 1855.

No. 44

Poetry.

HYMN FOR WHITSUNDAY.

Spirit of Truth! in this thy day,
To thee for help we cry,
To guide us through the dreary way,
Of dark Mortality!

We ask not, Lord! thy cloven flame,
Or tongues of various tone,
But long thy praises to proclaim
With fervour in our own.

We mourn not that prophetic skill
Is found on Earth no more;
Enough for us to trace Thy will
In Scripture's sacred lore.

We neither have nor seek the power,
Ill demons to control;
But Thou, in dark temptation's hour
Shalt chase them from the soul.

No Heavenly harpings soothe our ear,
No mystic dreams we share;
Yet hope to feel Thy comfort near,
And bless Thee in our prayer.

When tongues shall cease, and power decay,
And Knowledge empty prove,
Do Thou Thy troubling servant stay
With Faith, with Hope, with Love!

BISHOP HARRIS.

Selected.

No. III.

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

The Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is one of the most fundamental of all Church principles. For if it be acknowledged that the Christian Ministry is a Divine Institution, and that it forms an essential part of the Constitution of the Church, then it is plain to see that a question which touches the very existence of that Ministry amongst us, cannot be a question of any light importance. Now that the Christian Ministry is a Divine Institution, appointed by the Head of the Church Himself for the most essential purposes, one or two passages of the Holy Scripture may be sufficient to show. It is written in Ephes. iv. 8-15, that when our Lord Jesus Christ ascended up on high, and received all Power in Heaven and Earth, to be seated at the right hand of His Father, and to receive all things that His Father had given Him, He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. The gift of the Christian Ministry upon Earth is thus closely connected with the Power that our SAVIOUR received upon His Ascension, being in fact the first exercise of that Power. The same truth also learn from S. Matt. xxviii. 18, "All Power is given unto Me in Heaven and Earth; Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Here our SAVIOUR makes this original Commission which was given to the Eleven, to depend on the Power that was then given to Himself to be Head that was given to the Church. (Compare also Eph. i. 20-23.) The Christian Ministry is therefore as much a Divine Gift as the Bible, or the Sacraments, or the Church. It forms an essential part of the Constitution of the Church; as indeed the purposes for which it is instituted are a social necessary in no such Ministry, city in which there is no such Ministry, cannot be a properly constituted Branch of the Church at all. Now all this being generally granted and acted upon by all who call themselves Christians; it next becomes a Question, "How is the Christian Ministry to be handed down from one generation to another? By what Method may a person obtain the Sacred Office of a Minister in the Church of Christ? Who has proper Power to ordain persons to the Christian Ministry? Did the Holy Apostles take any measures to secure a continual succession of Ministers in the Church?"

To answer these questions, let us first of all consider this point, "May any one at his own pleasure take upon himself the Sacred Office?" To this all will probably answer, No. Few will be found so ill-informed as to venture to say that any one who pleases may take upon himself the spiritual office of a Minister for Christ. For then even that elementary Precept of Scripture could not be fulfilled, "Let all things be done decently and in order." There would be nothing but confusion and disorder in the Church. Then every parent might baptize his own children, and every one might give the other Sacrament to himself or his neighbour. Then too, how could we "obey those that are set over us in the Lord?" (Heb. xiii. 17.) There would be as much disorder and confusion in the Church, as there would be in the State if every one were to take upon himself at his own pleasure the office of a Magistrate or of a Judge. Besides, Holy Scripture is very express on this point. How many examples are there in the Old Testament in which God visited with single punishment those who presumed to take upon themselves Sacred Offices. Such as Korah and his company, Uzzah, Uzziah, and Jeroboam. And in the New Testament we observe the same principle maintained in various ways. "Even Christ Himself glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest." (Heb. v. 5.) And S. Paul adds, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Aaron received a call from God at the Hands of the Jewish Priesthood, and the Ministry of the Gospel is of far

higher power and glory than that of the Law. (2 Cor. iii. 9.) So that if the less glorious office might not be taken upon himself by any one at his own will, much more unlawful is it to take upon oneself the greater office. However well qualified then an individual may be to discharge the sacred duties of the Ministry, yet this gives him no authority to act as a Minister of Christ. If a man is well qualified for the office of a Magistrate or of a Judge, yet he has no power to do the acts of those offices until he has received a commission from the Sovereign. If of his own accord he undertook those offices, his acts would be entirely without power or authority, people might obey him or not just as they pleased. In like manner, that a person may become a true and lawful Minister of the Church of Christ, he must not take the Office upon himself, however great his own personal qualifications for it might be, but he must receive a commission, in some way or other, from the Divine Head of the Church; he must be publicly called of God; he must receive the Sacred Office from such as have power to give it. In short, no person who seriously consults either his own common sense, or the Holy Scriptures, can ever doubt for a moment, that it is wrong for people to take unto themselves, any one at his own pleasure, the honour of ministering in Sacred Offices in the Church of Christ. The Office must be conferred upon them by such persons as have the proper power to do so. All who call themselves Christians will most probably agree to this.

II.

We come now therefore to the principal Doctrine of this Tract. Since it is not lawful for every one at his own pleasure to assume to himself the Office of a Minister for Christ, the question now is, Who has power to confer that Office? Can any one, at his pleasure, give the Sacred Office to another? Can the eight principal tradesmen of this Parish lay their hands upon you and ordain you to the Ministry of the Church of Christ? Can a man, or any company of men, give that which they have not received? If a Congregation of Dissenters should wish to have a person ordained, do they ask three or four of the Members of the Congregation to ordain him? Do they not rather send for two or three Pastors who have been already ordained in the Church of Christ, that the Farmer, the Bricklayer, and the Shoemaker can lay their hands on their neighbour the Miller, and make him a true and lawful Minister of the Church of Christ. They might with just as much propriety pretend to confer upon him the office of a Judge or a King. For the Honour and the Power of a Minister of Christ is greater than all the honours and powers of the officers of the kingdoms of this world. Neither can the Supreme Temporal Ruler confer the Sacred Office of the Christian Ministry on whomsoever he pleases. For to have power in the kingdoms of this world, gives a man no Spiritual Authority in the Kingdom of Christ. But let this point also be decided by an appeal to Holy Scripture. Is there any one single example in which the Sacred Office of the Christian Ministry was conferred on others by persons who had not themselves been before ordained to that Office, and specially gifted with the Spiritual Power of ordaining others? Can you produce one single case in the New Testament in which the people have made their own Ministers? This method of conferring Holy Orders, namely, by such as have not received Holy Orders themselves, cannot be defended for one moment, at least, not by those who would be guided by what they find in the Holy Scriptures. Against what, if not against this practice, does S. Paul so strongly speak, when he writes, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." (2 Tim. iv. 3.) We may well then conclude both that a man cannot take unto himself at his own will the Office of a Minister for Christ; and also that the Office cannot be conferred by any man, or company of men at their pleasure, but only by such as have themselves been ordained, and empowered to ordain others. Or to speak in other words, there must be a regular Succession of some kind. This conclusion cannot be avoided by any one who examines the subject seriously. For the simplest considerations of common sense, or from an appeal to the New Testament, it equally follows that in the Christian Ministry there must be a regular Succession. For to sum up all that has been said; if either any individual who pleases may assume unto himself the Sacred Office; or, if any person or persons who please may confer the Sacred Office, then is the door opened to all disorder, and confusion, and division; then things cannot be done decently and in order in that very Society where Order and Unity ought to be perfectly displayed; and then the precept of Heb. xiii. 17, is given to us quite in vain. Moreover, not one trace of such a system is to be found in the New Testament, it is entirely without the sanction of the Apostles of Christ, or of the Word of God, and as we shall soon see, it is quite opposed to that method which was established by the Apostles, and which has continued in the Church ever since.

III.

Since then there must be a Succession of some kind in the Office of the Christian Ministry, let us consider what necessarily follows from this conclusion. Mr. Y. cannot ordain Mr. Z. unless he himself is ordained and has received the Power of

ordaining others. The same may be said of the person who ordained Mr. Y. And so on backwards, at every Ordination. Now where are we to stop in this series of Ordinations? If the series begins with a Mr. X. who either took upon himself the sacred office, or was ordained by a person who had not been ordained himself, what has the series to hang upon? It falls to the ground therefore. For if Mr. X. was ordained by Mr. W., what was his ordination worth, if Mr. W. had no spiritual authority to confer the Sacred Office? It was a mock Ceremony. It had no reality, no validity in it. And so when Mr. X. undertook to ordain the next in the Succession, what was the worth of the pretended Ordination? It was nothing at all. So that on this supposition, the whole line or series of Ordinations, was of no validity at all. The persons so ordained were none of them really ordained. None of them had any true or lawful Call to the Ministry in the Church of Christ. How far back then must we go? Surely to the Apostles themselves, who had been Divinely commissioned by the Head of the Church Himself. Unless the series of Ordinations proceeds from the Apostles, it has no lawful beginning. But if it begins from them, then it hangs on a most firm and strong support; then through them it begins from the Divine Head of the Church Himself, from Whom alone all Spiritual Authority in the Church must be derived. Thus we are led naturally and necessarily to the fundamental Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession. Without the Succession from the Apostles of Christ, there is no lawful or regular Ministry; and without a Ministry there is no properly constituted Church.

But now for the more confirmation of this truth, let us reverse the order of the proof, and begin at the other end. For after all that has been said, the strongest argument remain to be explained. If we begin from our own time, we cannot avoid arriving at the Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession of Holy Orders. Let us now begin from the Apostles, and we shall find a still stronger proof of the same Doctrine. In the first place, then, we read that even our SAVIOUR CHRIST did not glorify Himself to be made the great High Priest, or the Head of the Church. But God the FATHER sent the SON to be the SAVIOUR of the world. Our SAVIOUR exercised His Power in sending forth the Apostles to build His Church throughout the world. Just as He was ascending, He said "All Power is given unto Me in Heaven and Earth; go ye therefore, &c." This Sacred Commission given to the Eleven by the Head of the Church, is the spiritual Authority on which they acted. And what we have now specially to observe, is the Method which the Apostles took to hand on this Commission before they left the world. Our LORD had distinctly promised this, as He was ascending, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This could only mean that our LORD would be with those who should succeed the Apostles in the Ministry of the Church even to the end of the world; for the Apostles themselves were soon to leave the world. Hence it was necessary that the Apostles should make some provision for the continuance of the Ministry in the Church after their departure. When our SAVIOUR said to His Apostles, "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." (S. John xx. 21.) He distinctly gave them such a Divine Commission as included in it a Power of sending others to succeed them in the Ministry of the Church. The FATHER sent the SON; and by virtue of that Mission the SON sent the Apostles; they in like manner by virtue of their Mission sent others, who had also the Power of sending others with a similar commission. Thus accordingly we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that they ordained Elders and Deacons in every branch of the Church that they planted, reserving for a time the highest Order of the Ministry in their own hands. But before they died, they gave the First Order to others, with the express Power of ordaining. This we see recorded in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. S. Paul ordained Timothy by the imposition of hands; and afterwards commanded him to "lay hands suddenly on no man." (1 Tim. v. 22.) All the directions to be used in the choice of fit persons to serve in the Sacred Offices of the Christian Ministry are exclusively given in Holy Scriptures to individuals, namely to Timothy and Titus, the first Bishops of Ephesus and Crete, not to ordinary Members of the Church, nor to Congregations. And thus Titus was bid to ordain Elders in every city of Crete. (Titus i. 5.) Now suppose for a moment, that you had been living in one of those cities of Crete. In it there was an Elder, (or as we say, a Priest), who had been ordained by Titus. Titus himself had been ordained by the Apostle. The Apostle had received the Divine Commission to act as a Minister in the Church from the Head of the Church Himself. Here therefore is the Apostolic Succession most distinctly established by the Apostles, and recorded in the Word of God. The Christians living in that city of Crete were evidently bound by the most sacred obligations to be in Communion with that Elder, who had been ordained and set over them in the Lord, by Titus the Bishop of Crete, who had been left in Crete for a very purpose among others of ordaining Elders in the Church. If you withdrew yourself from Communion with that Elder, how could you be in Communion with the Church? If you separated yourself from him, how would you not be breaking that

precept which is written in Heb. xiii. 17? How would you not be breaking the Order and Unity of the Church, and become guilty of the sin of Schism? Now it is contended that this was the Method established by the Apostles, and this alone, for the continuance of the Christian Ministry upon earth throughout all generations. There is no trace of any other Method in the New Testament. And what adds absolute certainty to our conclusion, is the fact that the whole Universal Church throughout the world constantly practised this Method, and this alone, from the times of the Apostles; as all the History of the Church abundantly testifies. The Principle of the Apostolic Succession was just as well known and acted upon as any other Principle of the Christian Religion. When false Teachers arose, or some new Sect was formed, claimed to be a Branch of the Church, the members of the Church were taught to apply the test of this fundamental Principle. Thus about the end of the second Century after Christ, Irenaeus writes, "We can enumerate Bishops who were by the Apostles instituted Bishops in the Churches, and their Successors, even to our time." "Wherefore it is necessary to obey those Presbyterians (i. e. Elders), who are in the Church, those who have Succession from the Apostles." At the end of the second Century, Tertullian writes, "If any heretics dare to connect themselves with the Apostolic age, we may say, Let them declare the Origin of their Churches, let them unfold the catalogue of their Bishops; so denouncing by Succession from the beginning, that the first Bishop had as his Ordainer some one of the Apostles, or of the Apostolic men who remained united to the Apostles." About the middle of the third Century, Cyprian writes, "Novation is not in the Church, nor can he be reckoned a Bishop, who despising the Evangelical and Apostolic tradition, and succeeding to no one, is sprung from himself. These are they who of their own accord, without the Divine Will, appoint themselves to preside over some random conventicle; who without any lawful Ordination, constitute themselves Pastors." No Principle of the Christian Religion, admits of a clearer or more certain proof than this of the Apostolic Succession in the Ministry of the Church. And it has been acted on, abundantly declares. This Method, throughout of handing on the original Commission in the Christian Ministry, is the only one established by the Apostles and recorded in Holy Scripture. Now the Apostles were directly commissioned by the Divine Head of the Church, and were under the immediate guidance of the HOLY GHOST; so that what they established carries with it the Divine Sanction as plainly as any Institution can do. Since, therefore, our LORD has appointed by His Apostles this one particular Method of continuing the Ministry in His Church from generation to generation, who that professes to regard His Will, will ever think lightly of this Succession, which less neglect or reject it? It is plain that any Community which is without this Succession is not in a rightly constituted Branch of the Church of Christ. If it is governed and taught by self-appointed Ministers, it has no sanction whatever from the Word of God. To speak in the mildest terms possible, it is entirely doubtful whether any acts of those self-appointed Ministers are acceptable to God; and it is entirely doubtful whether the Members of the Community ever can receive the Sacraments of Christ. In a word, since there is nothing at all to choose between this Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession and the Principle that every man that pleases may lay hands upon his own head and make himself a Minister for Christ; it is plainly a Doctrine of the very highest importance, and one that concerns very nearly the Salvation of each soul. No one can be a consistent Member of the Church who does not understand and hold this Doctrine. Some common objections will be answered in the next Tract.

We observe that in the House of Commons on the motion for the second reading of the Marriage Bill for allowing a man to marry his deceased wife's sister or niece, Mr. Walpole moved that it be read that day six months. He grounded his opposition on the scriptural and legal objections.—The Attorney-General, Sir C. Cockburn, supported the Bill.—Mr. Wigram urged that if any alteration were required, a general and not a special measure should be brought forward. To be consistent, the Bill ought to allow a woman to marry her husband's brother.—Mr. Collier supported the Bill, and in reply to the argument founded on the 'Apostolic Canons,' observed that those Canons had been violated by five of our Bishops, who had married widows.—Mr. Napier opposed the Bill in a very able speech. He said:—"He, for one, was not prepared to give up the benefits and blessings of English homes, and English family life, for the sake of imitating America, or Germany, or Denmark, or Sweden, or any of those countries which had been referred to by the Attorney-General. It was contended that these marriages did not run counter to the law of nature. Well, that depended on what was meant by the law of nature. (Hear, hear.) Marriage, let it be observed, was a divine institution. It was beautifully and truly described by Lord Stowell as the origin and the offspring of society. In dealing with marriages, they touched the very foundations of what was meant by the law of nature. (Hear, hear.) Marriage, let it be observed, was a divine institution. It was beautifully and truly described by Lord Stowell as the origin and the offspring of society. In dealing with marriages, they touched the very foundations of what was meant by the law of nature. (Hear, hear.) 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