

sent English Episcopate. Remember, I do not give it as a positive proof that the succession was broken, or as involving insuperable difficulties of any kind whatever; but only that you should, at least, know the facts of the history, and, therefore, no longer assume it as a demonstrated truth, that the apostolical succession is yours; and further, I would remind you that the French defence of your orders, which you all value so highly, was authoritatively condemned, and that its author died a heretic even upon the cardinal doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Moreover, if you ever read that defence itself, I think you will not consider its arguments so conclusive as they have been represented to you: e. g., it is no sufficient apology for the defective form of consecration to say that it contains as much as was expressed in the most ancient rituals, any more than it would be a sufficient justification for one who refused the Athanasian creed to say that he retained that of the Apostles. To reject an article that has once been defined is a very different thing from not having consciously held that article before such definition. So, in like manner, to abolish all the usual rites in the consecration of bishops, substituting for them a form of words not even irreconcilable with Presbyterianism gives some ground to suspect that episcopacy was retained only for form sake; or at least with a very different design from that hitherto entertained by the Church, and rather as a civil than an ecclesiastical dignity.

Again, it is false to plead that the exercise of supremacy by Queen Elizabeth, in depriving the Catholic bishops, was no more than that of her predecessor in depriving Protestant Bishops: for Mary was supported by the authority of the Holy See; all the sentences of deposition issued in her reign were pronounced by bishops, and by them only; the bishops had either been notoriously guilty of a breach of vows, or were such as only pretended to "hold their bishopricks by letters patent of King Edward VI., during good behaviour"* (*quam diu se bene gesserint*); and moreover she only reversed, by royal authority, innovations that had been made by the same authority in the preceding reign; whereas Elizabeth on the contrary, not only placed herself in an attitude of defiance with respect to the Holy See but carried on her measures of reform against the express protest of the whole episcopate of the country, and of every other ecclesiastical authority; and having usurped to herself all manner of spiritual authority and jurisdiction, delegated it by letters patent, under the great seal, to a commission formed almost exclusively of laymen, which commission proceeded to deprive the Catholic bishops for refusing a new and uncanonical oath. I will not examine any further details of the Defence

because, as I have already said, it is only my purpose to show that the Apostolic origin of your bishops is at least not a simple, clear, and incontrovertible fact: that there are grave difficulties connected with it, which none but men of eminent ecclesiastical learning are at all able to grapple with—perhaps even they unable to overcome.

And if, instead of limiting the enquiry to the mere validity of orders we extend it to spiritual jurisdiction, it becomes more complicated still; yet this is of course included in the idea of Apostolicity, otherwise there might be two rival churches in the same place, both Apostolical, because both having the succession which you would be the first to deny. What, then, is the condition of the Church of England in this particular? Whence St Augustine, to whom she must look as the founder of her hierarchy, derived his jurisdiction is universally known. No one ever attempted to deny that he came direct from Rome, sent as a missionary by St. Gregory the Great; that, so soon as he found that the people were likely to embrace the faith, he went according to the commands which he had received from the holy father, Gregory, to Etherius, archbishop of Arles, and was by him consecrated bishop over the nation of Angles; that Pope Gregory sent him the Pall, and wrote to him to the effect, that he should consecrate twelve bishops, who should be subject to his rule; that he should send a bishop to York, who in case of that city and neighbourhood receiving the faith, should ordain other twelve bishops; and the letter continues, "not only those bishops whom yourself shall consecrate, or those who shall be consecrated by the Bishop of York, but also all the priests in Britain who shall hold subject to you, by the will of our God and Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Nothing can be more explicit than this, no other source can be mentioned whence St. Augustine drew his spiritual jurisdiction, but only the Apostolic See: surely then the bishops of the present Church of England can scarcely pretend to be the inheritors of that jurisdiction, when they repudiate the authority of the See by which it was originally conferred; for if, as the English Church teaches, "the Bishop of Rome neither hath, nor ought to have, any jurisdiction in this realm of England," then he had no power to confer any on St. Augustine, and if that original grant was nugatory, all that flows from it must be nugatory also.

And, in fact when we read the history of the Reformation, we find that a principle was at that period introduced into the English Church, by which her claim to obedience was rested on a basis totally different from that of Apostolical descent. In 1535, Henry VIII. issued out 'letters of inhibition,' forbidding, 'auctoritate sua suprema ecclesiastica,' the archbishops and bishops, 'ea quæ sunt jurisdictionis exerce,' and thus, says the historian of your Church, (Collier iv. 297, 254, &c.) "all episcopal jurisdiction was laid asleep, and almost struck dead by the Regale during the king's pleasure." The same historian had told us, in the preceding page, how the archbishop of Canterbury began to make his metropolitan visitation, but did not "venture upon this branch of jurisdiction without the king's license, for now the bishops could do little without authority from the crown." In fact, the bishops had already taken out a commission in the following terms: "Whereas all authority of jurisdiction, and indeed jurisdiction altogether, as well that which is called ecclesiastical, as that which is secular, emanated at first from the royal power, as from the supreme head," &c. And in the beginning of King Edward's reign, new commissions of the same tenor and form were again taken out by the same bishops; (Collier, v. 179, &c.) and the commission for Cranmer's archbishopric is thus expressed: "We will that thou shouldst take our stead in the manner and form below mentioned and shouldst be licensed to ordain within thy diocese of Canterbury."—Thus the power of ordination, and all other branches of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, were to be conferred by the king, and to be executed "vice, nomine, et auctoritate ejus." Later still, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, "the whole compass of church discipline was again transferred upon the crown," (Ibid. vi. 224. i.)

* Collier, vi., 65.

* Redæ Hist. Eccl. I. c. 29.