

**THE CLAIMS OF THE ROMAN SEE
TO SUPREMACY, DISPROVED BY
AN EXAMINATION OF THE
TESTIMONY OF CATHOLIC
ANTIQUITY**

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The Claims of the Roman See to Supremacy, Disproved by an Examination of the Testimony of Catholic Antiquity by Ch. Egbert Kennet

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OF CATHOLIC ANTIQUITY.

BY THE

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"Cur profers in medium quod Petrus et Paulus edere
noluerunt? Usque ad hunc diem sine ista doctrina
mundus Christianus fuit."

S. Hieronymus. [Opp. ii. 181.]

M A D R A S :

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1869.

TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
EDWARD HAROLD,
Lord Bishop of Ely,
WHOSE MASTERLY INVESTIGATION OF THE QUESTION
DISCUSSED IN THESE PAPERS,
IN HIS WORK ON THE ARTICLES,
HAS WON MORE THAN ONE FROM THE ROMAN OBEDIENCE,
AND CONFIRMED OTHERS IN THE ENGLISH COMMUNION ;
THIS SLIGHT OFFERING
IS
PRESENTED,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF PERSONAL KINDNESSES
RECEIVED AT HIS HANDS,
AND WITH DEEP REVERENCE FOR HIS SACRED OFFICE,
AND THE VIRTUES WHICH SUSTAIN IT.

PREFACE.

THE appearance of the present little work upon a subject, which has been exhaustively treated, by Dr. Isaac Barrow at an earlier period, and by the late Bp. Hopkins of Vermont and others in our own time, may need explanation. It cannot be denied that events of the day give it fresh prominence, and make any contribution towards its discussion, conducted in a careful and impartial spirit, more than ever seasonable.

The recent Pontifical Bull convoking a General Council to be held in Rome at the close of the year, reiterates the claims of the Pope to Supremacy over the Catholic Church, and maintains that in order "that the unity and integrity of the Church and her government might remain perpetually immutable, the Roman Pontiffs, successors of St. Peter, sitting in this same chair of Peter, inherit and possess, in full vigour, the very same supreme authority, jurisdiction, and primacy of Peter, over the whole Church." These claims are thus once again advanced in the face of Christendom, with solemnity and undiminished assurance, at a time, when the circumstances of the Papacy, and the

awakened activity of Branches of the Church which are severed from its communion, would seem to render a re-consideration and abatement of such claims, a measure indicated as necessary or prudential for the restoration of the broken unity of the Church. Even so sturdy a champion of the Reformation as BR. JEWEL, admitted, "that if the Church of Rome would now faithfully keep the traditions and doctrine of the Apostles, we would frankly yield her all that honour that Iræneus giveth her;"¹ but a primacy of honour and the first place in dignity among all Bishops of the Church, is a very different thing from exercising supremacy over the whole Church, and claiming to be the source of jurisdiction to its universal Episcopate. To confound *primacy* with *supremacy* is too palpable a sophism, and yet very much of the argument on the Roman side has been conducted by means of it.

The earnest longing for visible Re-union, is also a fact, which is impressing its feature on our times; and its tendency in a large and increasing number of minds in our Church, is, to produce an unwillingness to dwell on the doctrinal differences which separate her from the Roman Communion, with the hope that mutual explanations will effect the desired reconciliation, when the Roman claims to supremacy should be moderated, or found to give place to

¹ Works, Vol. I. p. 365. Parker Society.

a canonically defined primacy only, in the possessor of the Venerable See of Rome. Such a possibility is not denied. It clearly has been contemplated from both sides, as by Leibnitz and Spinola in the wider field of Protestantism, and by Abp. Wake and Du Pin in the more contracted sphere of the Church of England. But the danger, at present, lies in the desire to purchase Unity at the expense of Truth, as if the one may be attained by the mere surrender of the other. And it too often happens, that the possession of the mind by theories of the need of "a living voice" and of "an infallible guide," or of an "ideal of the Church," has led to a submission to the Papal claims, without a calm and patient examination of the evidence on which those claims profess to be grounded.

It is a sense of the pressing importance of facts such as these, that has induced me to commit these papers to the press. They consist mainly of collections made upwards of twenty years ago, when I felt the necessity of settling the question, discussed in them, for my own sake, whilst enjoying the seclusion and advantages of a college life. The battle was then fought and won for myself. I now venture to hope that what was useful to me, may prove so to others also, amid the wider ferment of religious thought now prevailing. The work here offered to such as may be interested in its subject,

makes no pretensions whatever to originality. It is simply the fruit of a Student's toil. I may safely say, that I did not seek in my enquiries to establish a foregone conclusion. The circumstances of my life at the time they were conducted, left me absolutely free to follow my convictions, which ever way they might lead, and they had the effect, in God's mercy, of confirming me in my allegiance to the Church of England. I now print these papers thus originally collected, with such additions as I found occasion to make in subsequent years, under a deep sense of the momentous concern which the question they treat of possesses, both in itself, and in relation to higher truths, which are affected by it. For what an earnest and laborious Clergyman of our Church, now gone to his rest, wrote some years ago, has always struck me as being painfully too true: "Some one has sent me Mr. A ——'s book. He says he has now found out that the Chair of the Chief Shepherd is indeed 'as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' Do you think, if he had ever experienced our Saviour to be such, he would ever have applied these words to the Pope? Surely he never would; and this is the history and the end, I fear, of all secessions."¹ Deepening years but deepen the experience, that while our love for our dear LORD leads us to love and value all what-

¹ Is. Williams' Memoir of Sackling. App. p. 227.

ever He, in His wisdom and grace, has instituted for our salvation in His Church, whether as to its government or the sacraments committed to its custody, it will be attended with an ever-growing consciousness of enjoying His presence in His ordinances, and a jealousy of aught which may overshadow the glory of that Presence, or obstruct its power to our souls. The abstract unity of the Catholic Episcopate, which as being diffused throughout the whole Church but reflects His Image, may help to raise our conceptions of His invisible Presence and abiding work in the midst of us, as "in the midst of the seven candlesticks" seen in vision by S. John. But the strong concrete form of the Episcopate in the Papacy, effected by merging that diffusive unity in the monarchy of one single Bishop, has, in point of fact, resulted in the assumption of spiritual powers in the person of the Roman Pontiff, which, to say the least of it, seems practically to relegate the Person and work of Christ to Heaven, and leave His kingdom on earth to the uncontrolled dominion and rule of a human Vicegerent. But the true Scriptural doctrine of the unity of the Church as one body—"the whole family in heaven and earth," necessarily involves that the headship which is claimed as essential to the unity of the Church, must extend beyond the Church *upon earth* and include that *in heaven*, a consequence which is absolutely fatal to the pretensions of the Pope, who