

CHAPTER III.

Of the Ecclesiastical Government of the Culdees.—The Account given of this by Bede.—How explained by Bishop Lloyd.—Of Sodor.—Whether a Bishop always resided at Hii.—Usher's Testimony from the Annals of Ulster.—Goodall's reasoning on this Head.

IN each college of the Culdees, there were twelve brethren, and one who was their Provost or Abbot. It has been supposed, that, as twelve priests accompanied Columba from Ireland, and settled with him in Iona, they afterwards retained this number, in imitation of the conduct of their founder; while it is by no means improbable, that, in this circumstance, he might allude to the apostolic college. The meaning of a passage, relating to this part of the subject, which occurs in the Extracts from the Register of St Andrews, has undoubtedly been misapprehended. It is there said of the Culdees, that there had been, in that church, *tredecim per successionem carnalem*, “thirteen by carnal succession.” This has been understood as if it signified, that, before the time that this account was written, there had been thirteen suc-

cessions of Culdees, at St Andrews, in hereditary descent. But the meaning obviously is, that, as the established number in the college, according to the original institution by Columba, was twelve, with their Abbot or Prior, the individuals succeeded their fathers, in the way of inheritance. There is every reason to believe, that this plan of hereditary succession had been unknown, till the Culdees, like other ecclesiastics, began to decline. *

They chose their Abbot or President from among themselves. Bede informs us, that “ most of the preachers, who, during the reign of Oswald, [A. 635, and downwards] came from Scotland, were monks; and that the monastery of Hii,” or Iona, “ had for a long time authority over almost all the

* Habebantur tamen in ecclesia Sti Andreae, quota et quanta tunc erat tredecim per successionem carnalem, &c. V. Excerpt. ut sup. p. 31, 32. Several facts have been referred to, connected with this account, which deserve attention. They have been compendiously stated by an intelligent annotator. “ Even till the council of Rheims in 1148, monks might marry; and it cost many a struggle to establish the popish system. And even till the time of the Reformation, it does not appear to have been completely adopted in Scotland, and other places, remote from the seat of ecclesiastical power. Nor is hereditary succession to the priesthood without example in the middle ages. It prevailed in Bretagne, whose inhabitants, themselves of a Celtic race, were converted by the Irish or Scots of these days, and followed their customs, and this among the rest, till it was abolished by Hildebert, archbishop of Tours, in his provincial council, in 1127. In the end of the same century, or beginning of the next, Giraldus Cambrensis, a zealous catholic priest, complains [of it,] as one of the disgraces of Wales, (where, as well as in Ireland, Culdees remained till his time,) that sons got the churches after their fathers, by *succession*, and not by election, possessing and *polluting* the church of God by inheritance. Keith, Preface. Pink. [Enquiry] part vi.” V. Sibbald’s Hist. of Fife, p. 177, 178, Note.

monasteries of the Northern Scots, and over all those of the Picts, and had pre-eminence in the government of their people.”¹

By some it has been urged, and certainly not without great appearance of reason, that the government of these societies of Culdees bore a very near resemblance to the Presbyterian form. That there were some, who, in early times, were called “Bishops of the Scots,” cannot be denied. But it would be the height of prejudice to object to the name, if rightly interpreted. It is as scriptural as any other. It is most evident, however, that these bishops, whatever they were, cannot be viewed as diocesan bishops.

So far were they from possessing the exclusive right of ordination, that it does not appear that they were themselves ordained by bishops. As far as our historical evidence extends, they were not only chosen, and sent forth, but ordained by the College of Culdees at Iona. These monks seem to have been mostly presbyters. It may well be supposed, that they are the persons whom Bede designs *Majores natu Scottorum*, when he says that King Oswald “sent to the Elders of the Scots, amongst whom, during his banishment, he had been baptised, that they might send him a bishop, by whose doctrine and ministry the nation of Angles, which he governed, might be instructed in the Christian faith.”² It is

¹ Hist. lib. iii. c. 3.

² Idem ergo Osuald, mox ubi regnum suscepit, desiderans totam cui præesse coepit gentem fidei Christianae gratia imbui, cujus experimenta permaxima

natural to think, that the application had been made to them, by whom the bishop was sent. Now, the historian says, that Aidan was appointed, *destinatus*, from the island which is called Hii. He afterwards relates, that Finan, who succeeded Aidan, was appointed, *destinatus*, from the island and monastery of Hii. ¹ Colman, who succeeded Finan, was also sent from this monastery.

It cannot be supposed, that the power referred to exclusively belonged to the abbot, or that these bishops had their authority from him singly. Colman expressly declares, that he received his episcopal honours, of what kind soever they were, from the College of Elders. Defending his mode of celebrating Easter, in the synod held at Straneschalch, he says; “The Easter, which I keep, I received from my *Elders*, who sent me hither as Bishop; which all our ancestors, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated in the same manner.” ² Here he ascribes his mission to Presbyters, undoubtedly as including all the solemnities connected with it. Had he been ordained by persons of a superior order, he

in expugnandis Barbaris jam ceperat; misit ad majores natu Scottorum, inter quos exulans ipse baptismatis sacramenta, cum his qui secum erant militibus, consecutus erat; petens ut sibi mitteretur Antistes, cujus doctrina ac ministerio gens quam regebat Anglorum, Dominicae fidei et dona disceret, et susciperet sacramenta. Hist. lib. iii. c. 3.

¹ Successit vero ei in episcopatum Finan, et ipse illo ab Hii Scottorum insula ac monasterio destinatus, &c. Hist. lib. iii. c. 17.

² Tunc Colmannus: Pascha, inquit, hoc quod agere soleo, a majoribus meis accepi, qui me huc episcopum miserunt, quod omnes patres nostri, viri Deo dilecti, eodem modo celebrasse noscuntur. Hist. lib. iii. c. 25.

would unquestionably have at least made some allusion to them ; if not with the view of adding to his own respectability, at last as giving greater authority to the ritual for which he contended.

It must be admitted, that, according to Bede's narrative, there is something in the conduct of Finan, which does not seem entirely consonant to the view given of the ordination at Iona. Peada, prince of the Midland Angles, upon his conversion to Christianity, having received four presbyters, from Finan, for the instruction of his people ; one of these, Diuna, was afterwards ordained by Finan to be bishop of that nation. ¹ Whether this should be ascribed to some greater attachment, on the part of the Saxons, to the model of the Roman church, I shall not presently inquire. But unless we suppose, that Finan renounced the tenets of his mother church, we cannot hence conclude, that he viewed the office of a bishop as essentially distinct from that of a presbyter.

Whatever was the distinguishing character of the *Bishops of the Scots*, or of those sent from Iona under this name, it is evident from Bede, that their authority was very different from that of those called diocesan. "That island," he says, "is always wont to have for its governor a Presbyter-Abbot, to whose authority both the whole province, and even the bishops themselves, by an unusual constitution, ought to be

¹ Factus est Diuna, unus ex præfatis quatuor sacerdotibus, episcopus Mediterraneorum Anglorum simul et Merciorum, ordinatus a Finano episcopo. Ibid. lib. iii. c. 21.

subject; after the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a presbyter and monk.”¹

Why does the venerable writer use the phrase, *ordine inusitato*, but because this plan of government was so different from that of the church of Rome, to which he adhered? From what is here said, it might seem that these bishops had been subject to the Presbyter-Abbot only. But if we compare this with the language which he puts in the mouth of Colman, it appears at least highly probable, that the subjection spoken of was due to the whole college, with the abbot as their president. For it may reasonably be supposed, that this subjection would continue to be given to all those by whom, as Colman expresses himself, the bishops were *sent*. They must, at any rate, still have been subject to one, who, according to the modern ideas of episcopacy, was inferior in office.

Lloyd, Bishop of St Asaph, has strained every nerve to set aside the force of the testimony from Bede. It may be proper to examine his reasoning on this subject particularly; as it has been said, by a learned writer of our own age, that the bishop “has completely prostrated the adversaries of his order, and demonstrated episcopacy to be coeval with Christianity in these isles.”²

¹ *Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper Abbatem Presbyterum, cujus juri et omnis provincia, et ipsi etiam Episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subjecti, juxta exemplum primi Doctoris illius, qui non Episcopus, sed Presbyter extitit et Monachus.* Hist. lib. iii. c. 4.

² Ledwich's *Antiq. Irel.* p. 106.

Because Bede sometime speaks of “the provinces of the Northern Picts,” and “because it is familiar with him to call a bishop’s diocese by the name of a province,” the writer concludes that, therefore, “as far as one can judge by his words, he meant nothing else, but that all the province or diocese, which was under the Bishop of Hy, did then belong to that monastery.”¹ But, in the first place, this is evidently to beg the question. For he has produced no proper evidence that there was a Bishop of Hii. The plural term, *episcopi*, clearly implies, that, whatever was the extent of the province, it, according to the conviction of Bede, had more than one bishop. To avoid the force of this obvious reply, on the ground of his previous assumption, that “there could be but one bishop at a time,” in “one province or diocese,” he says, “It might have been successively, and so I understand the place.”² But, if the language of Bede has any meaning, it must refer to a plurality of bishops living at one time. Otherwise, the climax is lost. Nay, the assertion is good for nothing; for, if *the whole province* was subject to this Presbyter-Abbot, it needed no ghost to tell, that the clergy in it were also subject to him.

In the second place, this assertion contains one of the most glaring fallacies that can well be imagined.—“He meant,—that all the province or diocese, which *was under* the bishop of Hy, did then *belong to that monastery.*” Could the Bishop

¹ Historical Account, p. 177. V. also Pref. to Keith’s Catalogue, xix.

² Ut sup. p. 178.

of St Asaph really believe that Bede meant this? Could he believe that Bede could not express his meaning more clearly? nay, that he said the very reverse of what he meant? Here there is such a gross change of terms as can scarcely be paralleled. Bede speaks of a *province*; therefore he meant a *diocese*, several centuries before a diocese was known in our country. He speaks of *bishops* in the plural; and he could refer only to *one bishop* at a time. He asserts, that “all the province, and also the bishops themselves, ought to be *subject*.” But, according to Lloyd, he could only mean that the province *was under the bishop*, that is, was *subject* to him. He directly inverts the idea of the original writer, and substitutes a new one of his own, as to territorial property;—it “did *belong to*.”—But to whom did it, even in this sense, *belong*? To the Presbyter-Abbot? No; even this would be yielding too much. It belonged to “that monastery.”

The fact undoubtedly is, that Bede uses the term *province*, not in an ecclesiastical, but in a civil sense; in the same sense in which, in the preceding part of the chapter, he speaks of “the provinces of the Northern Picts,” and of “the province of the Bernicians:” and it appears most probable, that he here uses the term, in the singular, with the same latitude as when he uses it in the plural, as denoting the whole territory of these Picts.

The argument might, indeed, be carried farther. Did I contend, that the phrase, *omnis provincia*, ought to be rendered, *every province*; as the passage, according to this view, would be completely disencumbered of the mighty “pro-

vince or diocese of Hy," this version might be urged with considerable appearance of reason. It might be said, that it has been thus translated by a writer who cannot be suspected of any partiality in the cause; ¹ that this use of the Latin term is not only supported by the best authorities, but is perhaps the most common; that, in the present instance, it is the most obvious signification; that this gives a satisfactory reason for the mention which is made of *bishops*, more than one province being referred to by the ancient writer; and that *omnis*, in this sentence, should naturally be viewed as having a retrospect to what he had said a little before, in the same chapter, that "Columba came into Britain, to preach the word of God in the *provinces* of the Northern Picts."

There is, indeed, every reason to think that the expression ought to be understood with still greater latitude, as referring to what occurs in the preceding chapter. There, when speaking of the observation of Easter, he had said, that "after this manner the northern province of the Scots, and the whole nation of the Picts, continued to observe Easter-Sunday." ² Now, if we shall suppose, that by "the northern province of the Scots," he means Argyleshire, we have at least three provinces in North Britain referred to, including

¹ "Bede speaks of the singular pre-eminence [of the Abbot,] and says that the island always had for a governor an Abbot-Presbyter, whose power (by a very uncommon rule,) not only *every province*, but even the bishops themselves, obeyed." Pennant's Tour, 1772, Part 1. p. 292, 293.

² Hoc etenim ordine Septentrionalis Scottorum provincia, et omnis natio Pictorum illo adhuc tempore Pascha Dominicum observabat. Hist. lib. iii. c. 3.

the two under the Pictish dominion. In this sense, undoubtedly, he uses the phrase, *provincia Scottorum*, in the fifth chapter of the same book, when giving an account of Oswald's desire to have a bishop from this province. But, even according to the concession of Gillan, the term is to be viewed as still more comprehensive. For, when Bede, in the third chapter, speaks of the *septentrionalis Scottorum provincia*, or northern province of the Scots, Gillan says, that by this "he not only means the *North of Ireland*, but the western Scottish islands, and those parts of Britain that were inhabited by the Scots." He agrees with Sir James Dalrymple, in viewing these northern Scots of Ireland as under the jurisdiction of Iona. ²

But if it shall be urged, that the north of Ireland is meant in the preceding extract from chapter third, because, a little downward, he speaks of "the nations of the Scots, which inhabited the southern parts of the island of Ireland," as having learned to observe Easter canonically; I shall not be contentious. Although this should be viewed as a province in Ireland, it cannot be denied that it was subject to the monastery of Hii.

As the learned prelate, however, had laid it down as a fixed principle, that there must have been a bishop of Hii, he points out the very place of his residence. "The Bishop of Hii," he says, "had his seat at *Sodora*, in that island; and yet might have all the North-Picts in his diocess, at first,

¹ Remarks, p. 57. 79.

² V. Collections, p. 64.

as the Bishop of Lindisfarn had all the Northumbrians. And yet afterwards, when the North-Picts had more bishops, he that dwelt there at Hii might have only the isles to his diocess." ¹ As he has erected a diocess, and created a bishop, where neither can be found in history, it was perfectly consistent, that he should also fix an episcopal seat for him. The good bishop seems here as fast asleep as that "dreaming monk," Hector Boece, whom he accuses of following Jeffrey of Monmouth, in "turning a cloak into a man." ² He has, indeed, had less ground to go upon, than had Boece in making a man of the word *Amphibalus*. Because, in later times, some have been called "Bishops of Sodor," or "of Sodor and Man," it has been imagined, that the title must have had its origin from the name of a place. Some have said, that this name was given to a holm, or small island, in the neighbourhood of Man, where they pretend that the cathedral stood. Others, among whom is Bishop Lloyd, have transferred it to Iona. But there is no more evidence, that there ever was a place of this name, than that the place was thus denominated from the Greek word *Soter*, as signifying the Saviour; which vain idea was necessary to complete the fable.

It is now well known, that the name *Sodor*, or the title *Sodorensis*, originated from the designation given, by the Norwegians, to one division of the islands in the neighbourhood of Scotland, while they were under their dominion. They call-

¹ Historical Account, p. 178.

² Ibid. p. 147. 151.

ed all those to the north of the point of Ardnamurchan, in Argyleshire, *Nordercys*, that is, the Northern Islands, and those to the south of this point, *Sudercys*, that is, Southern Islands; the latter division including Arran, Bute, Cumra, &c. and, among others, Man and Iona. The bishop of this province takes his title from the Southern Islands, because these were reckoned the most important. ¹

The good bishop is indeed much puzzled with Bede's *more inusitato*. He first admits it in language abundantly strong: "But whatever diocess they had, it is certain that the bishops that sat there successively, till Bede's time, were all subject to the abbot of that monastery." ² Then he tries to account for it in this way, that in other places bishoprics preceded the monasteries, but here the monastery preceded the bishopric; adding, that the Pictish king and his people "gave him the island in possession for the building of a monastery; and withal, for the maintenance of it,—the royalty of the neighbouring isles; six of which are mentioned by Buchanan, as belonging to the monastery." "And therefore," he says, "though Columba found it necessary to have a bishop, and was pleased to give him a seat in his island [that is, *Sodor*,] and perhaps to put the other islands under his jurisdiction, yet it is not strange that he thought fit to keep the royalty still to himself and his successors." ³

¹ V. Camden's *Britannia*, vol. iv. p. 503. 520; Dr Macpherson's *Dissert.* No. xvi. p. 256. 258; Pennant's *Tour*, 1772, Part ii. p. 294.

² *Historical Account*, p. 178.

³ *Ibid.* p. 179, 180.

But what is all this to the purpose? Here we have another sophism, an evident change of the terms, or rather, of the subject. Bede's language evidently respects spiritual subjection on the part of "the bishops themselves;" and Lloyd can devise no better plan for getting rid of the difficulty, than to understand the language as if it had been meant of temporal subjection. I have already observed, that the ecclesiastical writer evidently uses the term *province* in a civil sense; and as including not only the north of Ireland, but most probably also the whole territory of the Northern Picts. But did this jurisdiction, which Lloyd denominates "the *royalty* of the Abbots of Hii," include not only the north of Ireland, but a great part of the Pictish dominion? Has not Dr Lloyd himself circumscribed it within the compass of a few adjacent islands?

He finds himself, indeed, in a strange dilemma here; and seems at a loss to determine which side he ought to prefer. He has previously affirmed, that, according to Bede, "all the province or diocess, which was under the Bishop of Hii, did then belong to that monastery." Now, either the *royalty* of the abbot was confined to a few naked islands, almost uninhabited; and, according to this idea, the diocese of the bishop was scarcely as large as a modern Hebridean parish; or the bishop "might have all the North-Picts in his diocess;" and what must have followed? Nothing less than a complete ecclesiastical dominion. For we must believe, that the *royalty* of the abbot, and the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishop, were co-extensive. Thus, in order to deprive the

abbot of any ecclesiastical power, the learned writer confers on him at least half a kingdom in a temporal respect. He seems willing to convert an abbot into a prince, rather than that he should, in the slightest degree, infringe on the rights of a bishop. He will leave royalty to shift for itself, if he can only guard the episcopate.

But although, in this place, the Bishop of St Asaph seems resolved to understand all the subjection, meant by Bede, in a temporal sense, or in relation to the *royalty* ascribed to the abbot; as if conscious that he trode on very insecure ground, he had previously endeavoured to provide himself with a different footing. "If," says he, "those that were ordained bishops of any diocess should afterwards come to retire in their monasteries, as Coleman did at Hy for some time after his leaving York;—in that case, there is reason to believe that they lived *under the ordinary government in the monastery*, as they did before they were made bishops."

Here the good bishop takes up very different ground. The subjection to the royalty, or temporal jurisdiction of the abbot, or monastery, is transformed into subjection to the monastic rule. For he is so much nonplussed by the subjection to which Bede refers, that he is at a loss whether to call it temporal or spiritual; or, in other words, whether to view the supremacy of the abbot as territorial or conventual. He, however, takes both in; wisely judging, perhaps, that

* Ibid. p. 168, 169.

if he was wrong as to the one, he must be right as to the other. But even this supposition cannot avail him. For, whatever was the nature of the subjection which the bishops gave, it was given by the whole province. That it was not, therefore, subjection to the monastic institute, must necessarily be admitted ; unless it be said, that all the inhabitants of “ the province of the Northern Picts ” subjected themselves to the rule of Columba, or, in other words, became monks.

But, in order to prove that Columba “ acknowledged the episcopal order superior to his own order of Presbyter,” Lloyd further asserts, that “ Columba did acknowledge that bishops were necessary for the ordaining of others into the ministry.”¹ The first proof is ; “ It appears—there was always one in his monastery, as Bishop Usher tells us out of the *Ulster Annals*, Prim. p. 701.” Usher’s own words, in the passage referred to, are ; “ The *Ulster Annals* teach us, that even that small island had not only an abbot, but also a bishop.”² This is somewhat different from there being “ always one in his [Columba’s] monastery.” Usher, however, does not quote the words of the *Annals*, but immediately subjoins, in the same sentence ;—“ From which [*Annals*] it may perhaps be worth while to learn the first series of *Abbots*.” He then adds a list of ten in succession, giving various notices concerning some of them. Would it not have been fully as natural to

¹ Historical Account, p. 102.

² Nam et exiguam illam insulam non Abbatem solum sed etiam Episcopum habuisse, Ultonienses nos docent *Annales*: ex quibus primorum *Abbatum* seriem operae precium fortasse fuerit cognoscere.

have given a list of the pretended bishops, if he could have done it? But, although "superior to Abbot-Presbyters," it is not a little singular that antiquity has thrown a veil over their names.

The occasion on which Archbishop Usher refers to the *Annals of Ulster*, as proving that "this small island had not only an Abbot, but a Bishop," particularly deserves our attention. It is when he wishes to correct what he considers as a mistake in Notker, who had said that "the Abbot of the monastery of Iona was viewed as the *Primate* of all the Hibernian Bishops." The good Primate of Ireland, with all his candour, could not easily digest this doctrine.

It must forcibly strike the mind of his reader, as very unaccountable, that, though he gives the names of ten abbots, or what he calls "the first series," he does not mention one bishop. It naturally occurs, that there must undoubtedly be some reason for this silence; either, that the archbishop found no names there, or that he had ground to doubt whether he could view the persons as properly bishops. Under this impression, I cast my eye on the *Extracts from the Annals of Ulster*, which Mr Pinkerton has appended to his *Enquiry*, and met with the only passage, to which, it would seem, the learned primate could possibly have referred. The whole proof is contained in these words; A. "711. Coide, Bishop of Hii, deceases." ¹

Besides the ten Abbots of Hii mentioned by Usher, there

¹ 711. Coide episcopus Jae pausat. Vol. ii. p. 312.

were, according to these extracts, during the lapse of about three centuries, other nine, who are expressly designed Abbots, ten called *Coarbs*,¹ and one denominated “Heir of Columb-cille.” Johnstone, in his Extracts from the same Annals, gives the names of two abbots not appearing in Mr Pinkerton’s.² But not another, besides Coide, is mentioned as bishop.

¹ This term is written in a variety of ways, *Coarb*, *Corbe*, *Corba*, *Comorba*, *Comorban*, *Converb*, &c.; and various explanations have been given of it. Johnstone says, that “the *converbs* of Iona seem to have been a sort of patriarchs or archbishops.” *Antiq. Celt. Norm.* p. 67. “Our chorepiscopi, or archpresbyters,” says Dr Ledwich, “were married, as the other clerical orders were to the 12th century: about that time the Romanists called them *Corbes*, an opprobrious name, as if they indulged in incest and lewdness.” He refers to O’Brien, vo. *Corba*. *Antiq.* p. 84. According to Mr Pinkerton, “as, in the middle ages, ecclesiastic dignities were often hereditary, *Coarb* is either the heir, or the person who had the title, but not the actual possession.” *Enquiry*, ii. 317, N. “Ware,” he adds, “suspects a *Coarb* the same as a lay-abbot.” He, indeed, remarks, that “the word was often applied to lay-abbots, or such as had wives;” but he does not give this as the only signification. For he says; “Colgan rightly observes, that it is in many places taken among our ancient writers for a successor in a bishopric, or other ecclesiastic dignity; and in this sense frequent mention is made, in the Annals and Histories of Ireland, of the *Comorbans* of Patrick, Albe, Jarlath, Columb, Fechin, and others.” *Antiq. of Irel.* p. 232.

Dr Smith also explains it as signifying a successor. “*Coarb*, or *comhorb*, ‘a *comh*, i. e. con, and *forb* ager, patrimonium: Usurpatur pro successione in dignitate ecclesiastica;’ *Colgan*. *Coarb*, or *coirb*, is still used in Gaelic to denote one’s equal.” *Life of Columba*, p. 166, N. This sense is certainly to be preferred to the others mentioned. For, invariably, one is said to be *coarb*, not of Hii, but of Columbcille, i. e. Columba; also of Adomnan; sometimes of St Patrick, of Columba, and of Adomnan. V. Smith, p. 167. Thus it is used, not in relation to a place, but to a person.

² *Antiq. Celt. Norm.* p. 64, 69.

In Colgan's list, as given from Innes's MS. Collections, we find twenty-six successors of Columba, in the course of two hundred and sixty-three years; and besides Ceudei, who is evidently the same with Coide, only one of these Abbots has the title of Bishop. ¹ This is Fergnan, surnamed the Briton, the third in this list; the same person with Fergnaus, who also holds the third place in Usher's. But Usher takes no notice of his being a bishop; and Smith, who, in his Chronicle, calls him Fergna, gives him no other designation than that of Abbot. His name does not appear in the extracts from the Annals of Ulster. Smith also mentions Coide under the name of "St Caide or Caidan," but merely as Abbot of Hij. ²

To the article respecting Coide, Johnstone affixes the following note: "The Abbots of Iona, Derry, and Dunkeld, are frequently stiled Bishops." ³ This remark seems to be well-founded, from what follows in the Annals: A. "723. Faolan M^d Dorbene, Abbot of Iona, was succeeded in the *primacy* by Killin-fada." ⁴ Conchubran, an Irishman, who wrote the life of the female saint Monenna, about the middle of the twelfth century, calls Columcille, or Columba, "Archbishop of Scotland;" though he must have known that, as Bede says, he was merely "Presbyter and Abbot." ⁵ We are

¹ Caledonia, i. p. 823. 324.

² Life of Columba, p. 164.

³ Antiq. ut. sup. p. 60.

⁴ Ibid. p. 61. Or, as in the original, according to Mr Pinkerton, "723. Faolon M^d Doirhene, abbas Iae, dormit. Cillinus Largus hic (*sic*) in principatum Iae successit." Enquiry, ii. 312.

⁵ Primord. p. 706.

at no loss to conceive, why, in later times, the title of *Bishop* was sometimes given to the Abbots of such celebrated monasteries. In an earlier period, this title could not be supposed to add any thing to the dignity of one to whom "bishops themselves were subject." But afterwards, when episcopacy extended its powers, and made far higher pretensions, it may easily be imagined, that those, who adhered to the Columban institute, paid this compliment to the prejudices of the times, from the idea that it would add to the respectability of their monastic presidents; especially as they considered them fully entitled to it, from the primacy which they held.

It ought also to be observed, that not one of the bishops mentioned, in the lists referred to, can be viewed as supplying the friends of the order with an instance in point. For each of them was "Abbot of Hij," as well as bishop. Whether the title had been conferred on account of any mission, from which they had returned, as did the predecessor of Aidan, and Colman, I shall not pretend to determine: but not one of them is designed "Bishop of Hii;" all their relation to this island being marked by the term *Abbot*. It cannot reasonably be supposed, that, because one had been previously sent on a mission in an episcopal character, that this, in the event of his returning to Hii, should preclude him from being eligible to the office of Abbot. He certainly must have had an equal claim with any of his brethren. But the thing to be proved is, that "there was always" a bishop "in this monastery," besides the abbot, for discharg-

ing those ecclesiastical duties that did not belong to the latter. It must, indeed, also be proved, that he was "Bishop of Hy;" for otherwise this diocese must be deemed, if not "a monkish," at least a modern "dream."

The only thing besides, which has a shadow of proof on this subject, is mentioned by Goodall. But it scarcely merits a moment's consideration. "A bishop, called *Adulphus Myiensis ecclesiae episcopus*, subscribes the canons of the Council of Calcuith, A. D. DCCLXXXV., where the learned are of opinion, that, instead of *Myiensis*, it ought to be read *Hyiensis ecclesiae*." ¹ But if there be no better proof, that there was always a Bishop of Hii, than a supposed misnomer in a single list of the members of a synod which met more than a thousand years ago, it is surely time to give up the argument. It would be fully as natural to suppose, that this was the subscription of the Bishop of *Mayo*, in Ireland. For it appears that Mayo was accounted a bishopric before this time. ² Bede observes, that, "in the language of the Scots," *i. e.* Irish, it was "named *Mageo*;" and that in his time it was "usually called *Muigeo*." ³ Usher says, "we commonly name it *Maió*." He at the same time observes, that, in the Roman Provinciale, it is designed *Mageo*; and that the last bishop of this see, A. 1559, is called *Magonensis Episcopus*. ⁴ *Mayensis*, however, is also used as the designation of the county. ⁵

¹ Pref. to Keith's Catal. p. xx.

² *Monasticon Hibern.* p. 81.

³ *Hist. lib. iv. c. 4.*

⁴ *Primord.* p. 964.

⁵ V. Hofmann. *Lex. in voc.*

Goodall seems to reckon it a sufficient reply to all the reasoning from the language of Bede, with respect to the authority of this abbot, that “ Adamnanus, who himself was Abbot of Hii, tells us of Columba, the first abbot, that, having once called up a bishop, whom he at first took to be only a priest, to assist him at the consecration of the Eucharist, upon discovering his character, he desired him to make use of the privilege of his order in breaking the bread alone. ‘ We now know,’ says Columba, ‘ that you are a bishop ; why then have you hitherto endeavoured to conceal yourself, and hindered us from treating you with due respect and veneration ?’ ”¹

But this is undoubtedly of little weight, when opposed to the strong testimony of Bede : especially as it rests on the solitary assertion of a very credulous writer, whose work almost entirely consists of miracles said to have been wrought by the saint, of revelations made to him, or visions seen by him. From the manner in which Adomnan relates this part of the history, it appears that Columba discovered the bishop’s character miraculously, or by some supernatural impulse. Over this Goodall prudently draws a veil ; lest, perhaps, he should raise a laugh, at the expence of his countryman, for laying claim, even in so early an age, to the wonderful faculty of the *second-sight*.² For, indeed, what is here

¹ Pref. to Keith’s Catal. xix.

² That pleasant tourist, Pennant, has, I find, paid this compliment to Columba on a different ground. “ He is the first on record,” he says, “ who had the faculty of *second-sight*, for he told the victory of Aidan over the Picts and Saxons on the very instant it happened.” Voyage to the Hebrides, p. 279.

ascribed to Columba looks very like this. “The holy man,” says his biographer, “therefore approaching to the altar, and suddenly casting a prying look on his [the bishop’s] face, thus addresses him; ‘Christ bless thee, brother. Do thou alone, as being a bishop, break this bread after the episcopal mode. Now we know that thou art a bishop, &c.’”¹

There must, indeed, be something very extraordinary in the episcopal office, that a miracle was wrought in order to make it known; not to say that this presbyter, amidst all his veneration, addresses the bishop with sufficient familiarity.

Adomnan, we know, strained every nerve to reduce the monks of Hii to *catholic* obedience; and might therefore deem it necessary to make their founder, Columba, speak that language which was most grateful to the church of Rome. Such pious frauds have been. It is not improbable, however, that this story may have been interpolated by some monk in a later age. At any rate, all that can be inferred from this solitary proof, is, not that Columba did not claim an ecclesiastical jurisdiction over “bishops themselves,” but that he paid this respect to a stranger, who had come from a distance, and did not belong to the province over which he presided. That he was a stranger is undeniable; for Adomnan calls him, de *Numinensium* provincia proselytus. This, as it is noted in the margin, is certainly an error for *Momoniensium*.

¹ Sanctus proinde ad altarium accedens, repente intuitus faciem ejus sic eum compellat: Benedicat te Christus, Frater. Hunc solus episcopus episcopali ritu frange panem. Nunc scimus quod sis episcopus, &c. Vit. S. Columb. lib. i. c. 16. Messingham.

The same word is also written *Muminensium*,¹ and refers to the province of Munster, in Ireland, whence, it is most probable, this stranger came.

There is great reason, indeed, for viewing this whole story as a mere legend; as it rests on the ground of its being supposed that two presbyters were necessary for consecrating the Eucharist. For this idea, however, there does not seem to be the slightest foundation, from ecclesiastical history. This privilege was denied to deacons. “St Hilary—assures us, there could be no sacrifice, [such was the language of the times], or consecration of the Eucharist, without a presbyter. And St Jerom says the same, That presbyters were the only persons, whose prayers consecrated bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.”²

It may be added, that, if we could suppose this account to be true, it would clearly shew that, notwithstanding all the strong assertions which have been made on this head, no bishop, during the age of Columba, usually resided at Iona. Thus it proves rather more than the friends of diocesan episcopacy wish, as it destroys their own argument.

¹ Usser. Primord. p. 865.

² Epist. 85. ad Evagr. V. Bingham's Antiq. 1. 267.