

CHAPTER V.

Continuation of the Account of the Ecclesiastical Government of the Culdees.—Bishop Lloyd's View of the Ordination of Finan.—Of that of Colman.—Bede's Account of the Ordination of Aidan.—Of the Episcopate of Cedd.—Of the Conversion of the Saxons by Scots.—Testimony of the Saxon Chronicle.

I HAVE attentively considered all the principal exceptions which have been made, not only to the argument from Bede's assertion with respect to the government of Hii, but to that from the account which he has given of the designation, ordination, and mission of Aidan. His successor Finan had no higher authority. But it is not surprising, that the friends of episcopacy, after using so much liberty with the testimony of the ancient historian, should exhibit a similar claim with respect to the appointment of Finan. This has been done by Bishop Lloyd in the following language: "After Aidan's death, Finan 'succeeded him in his bishopric, and in his stead received the *degree* of episcopacy,' saith Bede, again using the

same expression, meaning (*I suppose*) that he received a degree higher than what he had before when he was priest.”¹

Supposition is often of signal use, when there is a deficiency of evidence. There is obviously no foundation for the supposition which is here made. In neither of the passages referred to, does Bede insinuate that he *meant* any such thing. His language is; “But Finan succeeded him in the episcopate; and to this he was appointed from Hii, an island and monastery of the Scots.”²—“Bishop Aidan being dead, Finan in his stead received the degree of bishopric, being *ordained* and *sent* by the Scots.”³ When Bede says, that Finan “was appointed to this from Hii—a monastery of the Scots,” he undoubtedly means that he received all that was included in his *destination*, or connected with it, from the college there, from the very persons whom he elsewhere denominates *Seniors*. He received no other “degree of episcopacy,” as far as we can learn from Bede, than what consisted in an *ordination* and *mission* by these presbyters. It appears, indeed, that he had no other ordination, or consecration, than Aidan had before him.

I need scarcely add, that Lloyd makes the same attempt as to Colman, who succeeded Finan, saying, from Bede, that he “was a bishop of Scotland;” and that “the Scots sent

¹ Historical Account, p 107.

² Successit vero ei in episcopatum Finan, et ipse illo ab Hii Scottorum insula ac monasterio destinatus. Hist. lib. iii. c. 17.

³ Aidano episcopo ab hac vita sublato, Finan pro illo gradum episcopatus, a Scottis ordinatus ac missus, acceperat. Ibid. c. 25.

him bishop to Lindisfarne." But all that can be proved, is, that Colman received a mission from the monks of Iona.

The mode, in which the venerable writer expresses himself concerning the mission of Aidan, who was a great favourite with him, may, I think, fairly be viewed as a key to all that he elsewhere says on the subject of these missions. His words, from their very place, claim peculiar attention. For they constitute the link between the account he has previously given of the appointment of Aidan, nay, of the peculiar model of ecclesiastical government at Hii, and the more particular narrative that he proceeds to give, both of the circumstances which led to the nomination of Aidan, and of those which attended it. Having described the unusual government at Hii, he says: "From this island, therefore, from the *college* of these monks, was Aidan sent to the province of the Angles, who were to be initiated into the Christian faith, having received the degree of the episcopate. At which time Segenius presided over this monastery, as Abbot and Presbyter." †

If ever a writer, friendly to episcopacy, as Bede certainly was, had occasion to guard his language, as far as he could do it consistently with truth, this was the place. Having, a few sentences before, described the peculiarity of the government, having said that the head of this college was not a bi-

† Ab hac ergo insula, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad provinciam Anglorum instituendam in Christo, missus est Aidan, accepto gradu episcopatus. Quo tempore eidem monasterio Segeni Abbas et Presbyter praeftuit. Hist. lib. iii. c. 5.

shop, but a presbyter ; if Bede knew that, notwithstanding, all the ordinations mentioned were by bishops, it was scarcely possible for him to avoid giving this caveat to his reader. But his whole language is so laid, as to appear a designed and formal confirmation of what he had said with respect to their singular administration. “ *Therefore,*” says he, on the ground of this very peculiarity, Aidan, whatever authority he had, received it not from bishops, but from “ the college of these monks.” Can his language be reasonably subjected to any other interpretation ? But, does not Bede say, that Aidan “ received the degree of episcopacy ?” Yes ; but, if there be any sense or connection in his language, he must have meant, that it was such episcopacy as presbyters could confer ; an episcopacy, in conferring which none had any hand, who enjoyed a higher order than Segenius. Else why does he add, “ At which time, Segenius, abbot and presbyter, *presided* over this monastery ?” It would, certainly, have been far more natural to have told what bishops joined in conferring this degree.

Bishop Lloyd has been at considerable pains to prove, that all those, who were called bishops among the Saxons, received episcopal ordination. I do not see how it can fairly be denied, that, in one instance, the language of Bede can admit of no other interpretation. Having mentioned, that Cedd the presbyter had been sent to preach the word to the East-Saxons, he says, that “ Bishop Finan; seeing his success in the work of the gospel, and having called to him two other bishops for the ministry of ordination, made him bishop

over the nation of the East-Saxons :” adding, that he, *accepto gradu episcopatus*, “ having received the degree of episcopacy, returned to the province ; and, *majori auctoritate*, with greater authority, fulfilled the work which he had begun, erected churches in different places, ordained presbyters and deacons, who might assist him in the word of faith, and in the ministry of baptism.”¹

But, though the accuracy of this statement be admitted, it will by no means prove, that the episcopal mode of ordination was received in the northern part of Britain. This cannot be believed, in direct opposition to that evidence from facts which has been already exhibited. How then, may it be said, can we account for the difference as to the mode of ordination in the two countries ? The difficulty may, at least partly, be solved, by supposing that the church of Rome had greater influence among the Saxons than in North-Britain. About half a century before the ordination of Cedd, Augustine had been sent to Britain by Pope Gregory, for the purpose of subjecting it more effectually to his usurped domination. He had ex-

¹ Ubi cum omnia perambulantes multam Domino ecclesiam congregassent, contigit quodam tempore eundem Cedd redire domum, ac pervenire ad ecclesiam Lindisfaronensem, propter conloquium Finani episcopi ; qui ubi prosperratum ei opus evangelii comperit, fecit eum episcopum in gentem Orientalium Saxonum, vocatis ad se in ministerium ordinationis aliis duobus episcopis : qui accepto gradu episcopatus rediit ad provinciam, et majore auctoritate coeptum opus explens, fecit per loca ecclesias, presbyteros, et diaconos ordinavit, qui se in verbo fidei et ministerio baptizandi adjuvarent, maxime in civitate quae lingua Saxonum *Ythencaestir* appellatur. Hist. lib. iii. c. 22.

pressly ordained Mellitus to preach the gospel to the East-Saxons.¹

It is evident, that Augustine was extremely zealous for the episcopal dignity; for, before his death, he ordained Laurence as his successor, “lest upon his death,” we are told, “the state of the church, as yet so unsettled, might begin to fault, if it should be destitute of a pastor, though *but for one hour*: in which he followed the example of the first pastor of the church, the most blessed prince of the apostles, Peter, who, having founded the church of Christ at Rome, is said to have consecrated Clement his assistant in preaching the gospel, and at the same time his successor.”² According to Bede, indeed, Augustine had the dignity of an archbishop, and conferred the same on Laurence; although this is disputed by some writers of the episcopal persuasion, who assert that there was no such title in the western church at that time.³

We also learn from Bede, that “King Ethelbert built the church of St Paul, in the city of London, where Mellitus, and his successors, were to have their episcopal see.”⁴ Thus, every thing was cast, as far as possible, into the Roman mould.

Although the East-Saxons made a profession of the faith for some time, they apostatised, and expelled Mellitus. It was

¹ Bed. Hist. lib. ii. c. 8.

² Ibid.

³ V. Transl. of Bede's Hist. 1723, p. 123, Note.

⁴ Ibid. p. 121. V. also English Martyrologe, for January 7th, p. 6.

to the very same people that Finan afterwards sent Cedd: and it seems highly probable, that these Saxons, having been formerly accustomed to the greater pomp of that episcopacy which had been introduced by Augustine, might, upon their return to the profession of Christianity, refuse that submission to Cedd, which they had formerly given to Mellitus; and might urge the necessity of his receiving that ordination which alone they had been taught to consider as canonical. Now, though we have seen, that Finan himself had only that more humble ordination, which was usually conferred in the island of Iona, he might judge it expedient, in the appointment of a successor to Mellitus, so far to comply with the prejudices of the people to whom he was sent, as to ordain him by the imposition of the hands of bishops. But, though he might deem such a compliance expedient, there is no satisfactory evidence that he viewed the office of bishop as essentially different from that of presbyter. For, had he done so, he must have denied the validity of his own orders; and he could never pretend to take any share in conferring on another a power which he did not himself possess. Besides, it is admitted by Lloyd,² that when Bede says,³ that Cedd was ordained by the Scots, we must understand the passage as intimating, that the bishops, whom Finan called in to assist him in ordination, were also Scots. If so, they must have had the same ordination with Finan, that is, ordination by

² Bed. Hist. lib. iii. c. 22.

² Histor. Account, p. 116.

³ Hist. lib. iii. c. 25.

the presbyterial college of Iona. Here, surely, there could be no canonical transmission of the episcopal dignity. It would appear, therefore, that Finan viewed the difference as lying more in name than in any thing else; as this designation, from the influence of prejudice, was reckoned more honourable than that of Presbyter.

It is true, indeed, that Bede speaks of Cedd as deriving greater authority from his episcopal ordination, and as ordaining presbyters and deacons in consequence of it. But it may naturally enough be supposed, that the ecclesiastical historian expresses himself according to his own prejudices, and the general sentiments of the age in which he wrote.

Lloyd represents the great distinction between bishops and presbyters, even in the period referred to, as lying in the right of ordination; as if this had constituted the chief part of their work. But the humble monks of Hii had a very different view of matters. They considered preaching as the principal work of a bishop. Hence, according to Bede, Colman "was appointed to the preaching of the word to the nation of the Angles."¹

It is admitted by Lloyd, that "if the Scots were governed only by presbyters, then Cedd was made a bishop by presbyters; which is all," he subjoins, "that our adversaries would have. But what if Cedd was ordained by no other than bishops: Then Bede's saying, any one was *ordained by*

¹— Erat ad prædicandum verbum Anglorum genti destinatus. Hist. lib. iv. c. 4.

the Scots, will not argue that he was ordained by Scottish presbyters; nay, it will argue the contrary, unless our adversaries can bring at least one instance of a Scottish ordination by presbyters.”¹ Because Bede says, that Cedd was “ordained by the Scots,” referring to his ordination, mentioned above, by bishops of that nation, he deduces this general conclusion, that always when we read of one being ordained by the Scots, we are bound to believe that the persons who conferred ordination were diocesan bishops. This is, indeed, in the boldest manner, to infer an universal conclusion from particular premises. I do not say, that it can justly be denied, that this is Bede’s meaning in the passage referred to:² but I must reject the inference. For, although an historian, in one instance, uses a phrase in a sense different from that in which it is commonly used by him, we are not bound to understand it every where else in direct contrariety to the connection. Although Bede says, that “the venerable bishop Cedd was, *ordinatus a Scottis*, ordained by the Scots,” this is something very different from what, as we have already seen, he asserts concerning Aidan, Finan, Colman, and others, who are not only said to have been “ordained by the Scots,” but to have received all the ordination they ever had, before they left Hii; nay, to have been ordained and sent by *Presbyters*.

It ought also to be observed, that Bede, when speaking of the episcopate, describes it only by the term *gradus*, and not

¹ Histor. Account, p. 117.

² Interea Aidano episcopo de hac vita sublato, Finan pro illo gradum episcopatus, *a Scottis* ordinatus ac missus acceperat. Lib. iii. c. 25.

by any one expression of difference of office or order. Now, it is well known, that many learned men, who have opposed diocesan episcopacy, have admitted, that the term *bishop* was very early used in the church, as denoting a distinction with respect to *degree*, while the office was held to be essentially the same. In what sense this distinction has been made, may be afterwards explained.

It deserves also to be mentioned, that, how little soever some now think of Scottish orders, it is evident, from the testimony of the most ancient and most respectable historian of South-Britain, that by means of Scottish missionaries, or those whom they had instructed and ordained, not only the Northumbrians, but the Middle-Angles, the Mercians, and East-Saxons, all the way to the river 'Thames, that is, the inhabitants of by far the greatest part of the country now called England, were converted to Christianity. It is equally evident, that for some time they acknowledged subjection to the ecclesiastical government of the Scots: ¹ and that the only reason why the latter lost their influence, was, that their missionaries chose rather to give up their charges, than to submit to the prevailing influence of the church of Rome, to which the Saxons of the West and of Kent had subjected themselves. ²

¹ V. Bed. Hist. lib. iii. c. 21, 22, 23, 24. Augustinus—ordinavit—Mellitum quidem ad prædicandum provincie Orientalium Saxonum, qui Tamense fluvio dirimuntur a Cantia, et ipsi Orientali mari contigui quorum metropolis Landonia civitas est, super ripam præfati fluminis posita, &c. Lib. ii. c. 3. Conf. cum lib. iii. c. 22. ut sup. cit. p. 86.

² V. Id. lib. iii. c. 25, 26.

The Saxon Chronicle, under the year 560, supplies us with an additional proof of the nature of the ecclesiastical government of Iona, in perfect consonancy to the account given of it by Bede, a proof, which, notwithstanding the attempts that have been made to invalidate it, appears absolutely irrefragable. I shall give the sense of the passage as literally as possible. “Columba, Presbyter, came to the Picts, and converted them to the faith of Christ, those, I say, who live near the northern moors; and their king gave them that island which is commonly called Ii. In it, as it is reported, there are five hides [of land,] on which Columba erected a monastery; and he himself resided there as abbot thirty-two years, where he also died when seventy years of age. This place is still held by his successors. The Southern Picts, long before this time, had been baptised by Bishop Ninian, who was trained up at Rome. His church and monastery are at Whiterne, consecrated in honour of St Martin, where he rests with many other holy men. Thenceforth there ought to be always in Ii an Abbot *but no Bishop*; and to him ought all the Scottish Bishops to be subject; for this reason, that Columba was an Abbot, not a Bishop.”¹

This proof is so strong and distinct, as scarcely to need illustration. Bishop Lloyd discovers great anxiety to over-

¹ Nu sceal beon aefre on Ii Abbod. and na Biscop. and than sculon beon under theodde calle Scotta Biscopas. forthan the Columban was Abbad na Biscop. Deinceps perpetuum in Ii Abbas erit, non autem Episcopus; atque ei debent esse subditi omnes Scotorum Episcopi, propterea quod Columbanus fuerit Abbas, non Episcopus. Vers. Gibson. p. 21.

throw it: but, to every candid reader, his attempts must appear extremely feeble. He supposes, that from the "words of Bede," (which we have formerly considered) "*not rightly understood,*" this note has been "inserted into the later copies of the Saxon Chronicle." * This, however, forcibly reminds one of the Socinian mode of reasoning. It is well known, that, when writers of this class are much puzzled with any passage of scripture, which opposes their system, they raise the cry of interpolation.

It might justly be asserted, that, here, there is so great a difference, both in the mode of expression, and as to some circumstances mentioned, that no room is left for supposing that the annalist copied from Bede. But, although the bishop's conjecture were well founded, it would not at all invalidate the evidence. Let us even suppose for a moment that this passage had been inserted some time after the year 850, as he imagines; was this too late to know the model of government at Iona? Had not many of her delegates officiated in England, in the two preceding centuries. If Bede had expressed himself inaccurately, had not abundance of time elapsed, for enabling later writers to guard against a similar mistake? Whether was a writer, let us say, a century after the death of Bede, or Lloyd, a thousand years after him, best qualified to *understand* Bede's meaning? If this insertion was made so late, as by this time episcopacy had gained far more strength, is it not natural to think, that a writer,

* *Histor. Account*, p. 174.

immediately attached to the church of Rome, would be so much the more on his guard as to the language which he used ?

But what the Bishop of St Asaph at first only *supposes*, he a little downwards roundly asserts. "These words of the Saxon Chronicle," he says, "A 560, *were all put in* by a later hand. For the old Saxon Chronicle has nothing of Columba in that year." ¹ What he means by "the old Saxon Chronicle," I cannot easily conjecture. He could not refer to Wheeloc's edition, A. 1644. The learned Bishop Gibson, indeed, who published his in the year 1692, informs us, in his preface, that Wheeloc had given his copy from two very imperfect MSS., both evidently written by the same hand, which contained merely fragments of the genuine Chronicle. Gibson's edition, from which I have quoted, was given to the public, only as the result of the most accurate investigation of the best MSS. In this work, he had the assistance of the very learned Hickes, the first Saxon scholar that this country has produced. But even Wheeloc gives the controverted passage. Lloyd must therefore refer to some imperfect MS., containing merely an abstract.

He pretends that this passage must be an insertion, made "some time after the year 850," from what is said "concerning the Picts, that they dwelt at that time in the North Moores;" as "it was about that year that the Picts were conquered by the Scots, and till then they continued in their old

¹ Ibid. ut sup.

habitation.”¹ I need scarcely say, that the idea of the Picts being *expelled* by the Scots is now almost universally viewed in the same light in which the history of the government of the Culdees appears to the bishop, as “ a monkish dream.” This is, indeed, the proper distinction of the Northern Picts, in the earliest period of their history. The language might, perhaps, be more properly translated, “ near the northern mountains.” The term occurs frequently in this sense, in Alfred’s translation of Bede ; as, *In heagum morum* ; in excelsis montibus ; lib. iv. c. 27. Gibson has improperly rendered it by *paludes*, as if it had signified marshes ; in which sense it is also used. They are said to live “ near the high mountains,” because they were separated from the Southern Picts by the Grampians : and this is the very description of those Picts who were more immediately subject to the college of Iona.

It is evident, that the writer, unless he meant to act as a base interpolator, must have lived before the date assigned. For he speaks of the monastery of Hii as still retaining its dignity and power. Nor can it be reasonably supposed, that any subsequent writer would have made such an attempt ; as he could have no end to serve by it, and the forgery must soon have been discovered.

I shall only add, that Lloyd takes no notice of the different account which the Chronicler gives of the ecclesiastical government of the Southern Picts. For the contrast would

¹ *Ibid.* p. 175.

have enfeebled, if it had not overthrown, his objection. The ancient annalist evidently knew well what he was writing. But observe the opposition stated. "In Hii, there must be always an Abbot, not a Bishop." He seems to give the very ground of the difference, in what he says of Ninian. He "had his education at Rome."¹

Henry of Huntingdon, a writer of high respectability, who flourished about the year 1140, has given a similar testimony. His language so nearly resembles that of Bede, that it may perhaps be said that he has transcribed from him. But it can hardly be supposed, that a writer of his description would implicitly receive any thing merely on the testimony of another. It would appear, that he had informed himself concerning the truth of the statement given by Bede; as, after speaking of Columba, he says; "Whose successors, imitating his example, have made a conspicuous figure."² Nor did he live too late to receive accurate information on this subject. For, in his time, the disputes between the Bishop of St Andrews and the Culdees must have made so much noise, that we can scarcely suppose they could be unknown to him. There were still Abbots of Hii in his time; and he speaks as

¹ *Ninna biscope. se was on Rome gelaered.*

² *Ejus monasterium Septentrionalium Scotorum et omnium Pictorum arcem tenebat. Having spoken of the monasteries in Ireland, and of many in England, he subjoins; In quibus omnibus monasterium Hii principatum tenet. Abbatiautem illius insulae omnis provincia, et etiam episcopi, ordine inusitato, solent esse subjecti, quia Columba praedicator, non episcopus fuit, sed presbyter et monachus. Cujus successores. ejus imitatione, valde claruerunt. Hist. lib. 3. Praef. Selden. ad Decem Script. ix.*

if they had still maintained their claim, however much their power had declined.

John of Fordun, one of our most ancient historians, says, that, before the coming of Palladius, “the Scots had, as teachers of the faith, and administrators of the sacraments, only presbyters and monks, following the custom of the primitive church.”¹ Lloyd is very angry with Fordun for this assertion. He roundly calls him “a dreaming monk;” and sarcastically says, that he “was pleased to discover this for the honour of his order no doubt.”² Sir George Mackenzie, however, has taken notice of the bishop’s mistake in this instance; observing, that Fordun was “a Presbyter, not a Monk, as St Asaph calls him.”³ Lloyd is disposed to disregard the whole of what is here asserted, on the ground, as would seem, that the writer was in an error in supposing that Palladius visited the Scots of Britain, because, he says, there were no Scots at that time. But it has been seen, that there is a high degree of probable evidence, that Palladius resided for some time in the northern part of our island, and that he died there.

It is a singular circumstance, that, however much later writers have affected to despise the testimony of Fordun with respect to the Culdees, the Canons of St Andrews did not hesitate to avail themselves of it, when it was subservient to their credit in the mean time, though at the expence of giving

¹ Scotichron. lib. iii. c. 8.

² Histor. Account, p. 147.

³ Defence of the Royal Line, Pref. p. 26.

a severe blow to episcopacy in an early age. As there had been a dispute, at a meeting of parliament in the reign of James I., with respect to precedency between the priors of St Andrews and Kelso; the king having heard the arguments on both sides, determined it in favour of the former on this principle, that he was entitled to priority in rank, whose monastery was prior as to foundation. "We have a proof of this," adds Fordun, "from St Columba, who is represented as arch-abbot of all Ireland, and who was held in such pre-eminence among the inhabitants, that he is said to have confirmed and consecrated all the Irish Bishops of his time." ¹ The whole of this chapter, not excepting the passage last mentioned, has been embodied in the Register of St Andrews.

Lloyd pays as little regard to the assertion of Major, and treats with still greater contempt that of Boece, who has said, that the Culdees "chose, by common vote among themselves, a chief priest, who had power in things belonging to God; and that, for many years after, he was called *Bishop of the Scots*, as it is delivered in our annals." ² Elsewhere he says, that before the time of Palladius "*the people*, by their

¹ Scotichron. lib. vi. c. 49. It is quoted, in the transcript of the Register among Macfarlane's MSS. as the *first* chapter; which would indicate that the copy, from which the transcript had been made, was differently arranged from those now extant. The title is; *Excerpta De VIt. Libro Scotichronicon, Capitulo Primo.*

² Pontificem inter se communi suffragio deligebant penes quem divinarum rerum esset potestas. Hist. lib. vi. Fol. 95, b.

suffrages, chose bishops from the monks and Culdees."¹ Lloyd endeavours to set aside the testimony of Boece, by recurring to what is commonly admitted, that he is a writer entitled to very little credit. But how slender soever the credibility of any writer, his testimony is generally regarded, when it is opposed to the honour of the society to which he belongs; because, in this case, we conclude, that nothing but full conviction of the truth could have extorted such a testimony. The natural inference, then, from this assertion, is, that as Boece, in other instances, appears abundantly zealous for the interests of the church of Rome, he would not have ventured such an assertion, had he not known that, in his time, the truth of it was generally admitted. Had he been a presbyterian, his testimony would have been liable to exception. But his zeal for episcopacy cannot be doubted by any one who has looked into his work on the *Lives of the Bishops of Morthlac and Aberdeen*; a work expressly written in consequence of his attachment to Bishop Elphinston. Now, what temptation could a writer, who rigidly adhered to the whole hierarchy of the church of Rome, have for asserting what he had reason to disbelieve, at the expence of the honour of that church of which he was a member? Others, it may be said, had done it before him. But this invalidates the objection from his want of credibility as an historian in

¹ Erat Palladius primus omnium qui sacrum inter Scotos egere magistratum, a summo pontifice episcopus creatus: quum antea populi suffragiis ex monachis et Culdeis pontifices assumerentur. Ibid. lib. vii. Fol. 133, a.

other respects. He retained the assertion, because he saw no good ground for rejecting it as unfounded.

In the Breviary of Aberdeen, which was written before Boece's History, we have nearly the same account. There it is said, that before the time of Palladius, the Scots had "for teachers of the faith, and ministers of the sacraments, presbyters and monks; following only the rite and custom of the primitive church."† Had it been supposed that there was any ground for doubting what is here asserted, how would it have obtained admission into the very first book printed in our country, as containing the liturgy of the church?

Martine, even while he asserts the antiquity of bishops in Scotland, pays great respect to the memory of the Culdees. This appears from a quotation which he makes in his *Reliquiae*. "To prove," he says, "that we had bishops in this kingdom very long since, even from near the time of our conversion to the faith, whom the Culdees elected, I shall set down a famous testimonie out of the MS. of the bishops and archbishops of St Andrews, in Latin, in the Life of William Wishart, bishop there. It is this: Quando ecclesia Scotica crescere bona fide, et in bona fruge adolescere coepit, Culdei semen evangelii mirum in modum multiplicatum cernentes, ex suo corpore episcopum crearunt, qui nullae certae sedi alligatus fuit, circa annum conversionis 62, i. e. reparatae

† Habentes fidei doctores ut sacramentorum ministros presbiteros et monachos, primatue ecclesie solummodo sequentes ritum et consuetudinem. In Julio, Fol. xxiv. xxv.

salutis humanae 270. Cum vero unicus, qui sedem habere praecipuam incipiebat Sodorae in Argadia, non sufficeret, ut opinabantur, tunc plures ex eorum Culdeorum corpore episcopi sunt creati: Nec hoc satis erat, quia postea ab elemosynis ad certos annuos census ecclesiastici transivere, tum episcopatus crescere, Abbatiae fundari et donationibus ditari, dignitas etiam et honor, a putativa illa sede apostolica, augeri a regibus optimatibusque et populo in admirationem haberi coeperunt; tunc omnia pessum ire. Verum Culdei episcopum e suo corpore eligendi potestatem in Scotia semper habebant, donec translatum fuit ab iis jus illud ad clerum, quod primum in electione Sanctandream Episcopi Willielmi Wishart abrogatum fuit anno 1271, aut eo circa.”¹

The following things are admitted as facts by this ancient writer: 1. That the seed of the word greatly increased by means of the preaching of the Culdees. 2. That they elected one, from among themselves, to be bishop over them. 3. That this bishop had no fixed diocese. When it is said that he had his seat at Sodor, in Argyleshire, there is evidently a reference to Iona, where it has been erroneously supposed that the cathedral of Sodor was erected. 4. The Culdees are represented as the judges of the supposed necessity of an increase of the number of bishops. For *opinabantur* must refer to them, in the same manner as *cernentes*. 5. It is admitted that the Scottish bishops were at first supported merely by free gifts. 6. That the Culdees retained the exercise

¹ Reliquiae Divi Andreae, p. 27, 28.

of their right of choosing the bishops, till they were deprived of it at the time of Wishart's election.

It is vain to say, that Fordun, and the other writers last mentioned, lived too late to know any thing certain as to the original government of the Culdees. When we find them exhibiting a testimony in favour of a model directly opposed to their own, we may be assured that this is not done wantonly. In this case, though we knew of no early records to which they could have had access, we would be bound to suppose, that it was from such documents that they had formed their judgment. How many chartularies and annals might these writers have seen, which may have all perished since their time! But if we find that these later writers give substantially the same testimony with others of a far earlier date, who are of undoubted credit, especially if there has been a succession of these; we are under a necessity of concluding, that they acted both an honest and a judicious part, and of admitting their testimony, as at least of the nature of corroborative evidence.

Before leaving this important branch of our subject, it may be proper to take notice of what has been advanced by Goodall; whose account of the Culdees, according to Mr Pinkerton, is "the best yet given." He is at great pains to shew, that, in a very early period, there were in Scotland a considerable number of diocesan bishops living at the same

^a Enquiry, ii. 271.

time. In order to prove this, he refers to two passages in Bede, which we have not yet considered.

“Bede,” he says, “gives us a letter from Laurence Archbishop of Canterbury, directed to the bishops and abbots throughout all Scotland in the year 604, Hist. ii. 4.”¹ From the confidence with which this is brought forward, I was inclined to suspect that I might be mistaken in my preceding conclusions; but, on looking into it, I found, not without some degree of surprise, that it has no relation to the point in hand. The letter, indeed, bears this address; “To the lords our dearest brethren, the bishops, or abbots, through all Scotland.” But the only judgment we can form, favourable to this writer’s integrity, is, that he had not read the chapter that contains the letter to which he refers. For Bede, speaking of Laurence, says; “He not only watched over the church, which was newly gathered from among the Angles, but also over the ancient inhabitants of Britain; and even exercised a pastoral solicitude *with respect to the Scots who inhabit Ireland*, the island nearest to Great Britain.”²

He refers to another letter, but not more happily. “Bede,” he says, “has preserved to us a letter from Pope John in the year 640, directed to five Scottish Bishops, and six Presbyters by name, and one of these Segenus, Abbot of Hii, about

¹ Pref. to Keith’s Catalogue, xvii.

² *Necnon et Scottorum qui Hiberniam, insulam Britanniae proximam incolunt, &c.*

the observation of Easter, and about Pelagianism, Hist. ii. 19.”¹

This letter is addressed, indeed, Dilectissimis et sanctissimis Tomiano, Columbano, Cromano, Dinnao, et Baithano Episcopis ; Cromano, Ernianoque, Laistrano, Scellano, et Segeno Presbyteris ; Sarano, ceterisque Doctoribus seu Abbatibus *Scottis*, &c. But Bede evidently uses the term *Scottis* here, in the very same sense as in the passage last quoted. Accordingly, Smith observes in his notes, that Tomianus was Archbishop of Armagh, Dinnaus, Bishop of Connor, Baithanus, of Clonmacnois ; Cronan, Abbot of Roscree, and Segenus, of Hii. “The seats and titles of the rest,” he adds, “I have not discovered.” Thus, three, at least, of the bishops were Irish. This is admitted by Archbishop Usher, and by the Bishop of St Asaph.²

Gillan claims a right to conclude, that, “because they confess they cannot find the sees of the other two bishops, they at least had their bishoprics in Scotland, especially” as it is granted, “that Segianus the priest was the same with Segenius, Abbot of Icolmkill.”³ But it must be obvious, that the presumption lies entirely on the other side ;—that, because three of these bishops were Irish, the rest were so. Nothing can be inferred from the circumstance of Segianus being joined with them. For it cannot be denied, that the connection of Hii with Ireland was not less than with North-Britain.

¹ Pref. to Catalogue, xviii.

² Primord. p. 928, 969, 702. Histor. Account, p. 96.

³ Remarks, p. 52.