[THE] FOUNDATIONS OF [THE] ENGLISH CHURCH

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HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

General Editor:

JOHN HENRY BURN, B.D., F.R.S.E.

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

HANDBOOKS OF
ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH (to A.D. 800). By J. H. MAUDE, M.A.

II. THE SAXON CHURCH AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST (A.D. 800-1135). By C. T. CRUTTWELL, M.A.

III. THE MEDIÆVAL CHURCH AND THE PAPACY (A.D. 1135-1485). By A. C. JENNINGS, M.A.

IV. THE REFORMATION PERIOD (A.D. 1485-1603). By HENRY GEE, D.D.

V. THE STRUGGLE WITH PURITANISM (A.D. 1603-1702). By BRUCE BLAXLAND, M.A.

VI. THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

BY

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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THE initial impulse to undertake the task of editing this series was given me, so far back as 1897, by the late Dr Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London. He was good enough to suggest the names of some of the writers whom I should invite to collaborate; and he drew up what he called "a rough scheme," of which the following is a modification.

I. The Foundations of the English Church (to A.D. 800).
II. The Anglo-Saxon Church and the Norman Conquest (A.D. 800-1135).
III. The Mediæval Church and the Papacy (A.D. 1135-1485).
IV. The Reformation Period (A.D. 1485-1603).
V. The Struggle with Puritanism (A.D. 1603-1702).
VI. The English Church in the Eighteenth Century.

The names of the six scholars, who have accepted the invitation to contribute to this series, are a sufficient guarantee that the work is conceived in no narrow spirit of partisanship, but with the earnest

desire to do justice to all parties, whether religious or political. The Editor has thought it right to allow to each writer the utmost freedom of treatment consistent with the general plan of the series. If here and there this has resulted in some slight divergence of view between one volume and another, he believes that it will prove rather advantageous than detrimental to the utility of the work; for much would be lost, and very little gained, by preventing a writer from giving free expression to his own view of the facts, and of the inferences to be drawn from them.

J. H. BURN

THE PARSONAGE
BALLATER

INTRODUCTION

IT is hardly necessary, perhaps, to argue that the early history of the English Church is, or ought to be, a subject of deep interest to Englishmen. But it may be worth while to point out that the particular period embraced in this volume offers some special features of interest and instruction.

In the first place, it is the history of a most important episode in a most important period of Church extension. It supplies the most detailed account that we possess of the manner in which one of the Teutonic peoples became converted to the Christian faith. The history of Christian Missions, that is to say the history of the manner in which the Christian Church has endeavoured to fulfil her Master's command to make disciples of all the nations, falls roughly into three great periods. The first began when the Church that was at Antioch, having fasted and prayed, laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them away to minister to the Gentiles. It ended when Christianity became the dominant religion of that Roman world to which S. Paul, as has been recently pointed out with new emphasis, especially addressed himself. This conversion of the empire is a very wonderful fact,

the significance of which Gibbon vainly attempted to explain away by referring it to the operation of causes which he considered natural. But of the details of the process, after S. Paul's death, we possess but little information. The work was the silent and unseen work of the leaven; only its results come from time to time into the light. It operated mainly from below and not from above in the scale of society, and in the teeth of the strongest opposition from the secular authority. When that authority was at length compelled to capitulate to the new force, and Christianity became the recognised and most prevalent religion in the Roman world, there was a pause. And then the Church found herself face to face with the gigantic task of bringing within her fold those barbarian peoples who had swept over and broken up the fabric of the empire; and a fresh period of missionary work began, which may be said to have ended with the conversion of Hungary in the year A.D. 1000. In many external features the missionary work of this period was in direct contrast to that of the first three centuries. It was outward and visible, instead of being unseen; large masses of people, even whole tribes and nations, were admitted into the Church together; socially the movement worked mainly from above to below instead of from below to above; and the work of conversion was mostly effected through the agency of conspicuous individuals whose names and characters and actions are fairly well known. Through the genius and industry of Bede, the story

of the conversion of the English supplies the fullest information that we possess as to the character of missionary work during this period. When about the year A.D. 1000 all the nations of Europe had accepted the Christian faith there was of necessity a pause. Christendom was on the defensive against the Mohammedans, and the greater part of the world was inaccessible. It was not until the great discoveries and the intellectual revival of the fifteenth century that the third great period of Missions began. One characteristic of this last period is that the work has been for the most part carried on, not by the Church at large, nor by single individuals, but by voluntary associations, such as the Society of Jesus, and later on by the missionary societies of the English Church. Perhaps it may not be too sanguine to hope that we stand now at the beginning of yet another era, in which our Lord's command to make disciples of all the nations may be literally fulfilled. If so, the study of past missionary efforts must be full of instruction, and of these the history of the foundation of the English Church supplies one of the fullest and most valuable records.

Secondly, it follows from what has been already said that the personal interest of this period is very great. The history centres around a group of great names. Augustine, Aidan, and Theodore stand apart as the founders of the English Church. But in Paulinus, and Edwin, and Oswald, and Cuthbert, and Wilfrid, and Cædmon and Bede, not to mention

others, we have a series of personalities exceptionally attractive.

Thirdly, there are certain great problems of enduring difficulty, especially those of the relations between Church and State, and the relations of a national Church to the Roman See, upon which the history of this period throws at all events some useful light.

Fourthly, while the English Church has at all times exercised a strong influence on the national life, during the period now under consideration she was more than an influence, she was the main factor in the actual formation of the nation. The Church attained to unity and corporate life ages before the nation had even a nominal unity. It is not too much to say that but for the English Church there might never have been an English nation at all. "The unity of the Church in England," to quote Dr Stubbs, "was the pattern of the unity of the state: the cohesion of the church was for ages the substitute for the cohesion which the divided nation was unable otherwise to realise. . . . Englishmen were in their lay aspect Mercians or West Saxons; only in their ecclesiastical relations could they feel themselves fellow-countrymen and fellow-subjects. . . . The unity of the church was in the early period the only working unity; and its liberty, in the evil days that followed, the only form in which the traditions of the ancient freedom lingered."

These are some of the reasons why this period of Church History has a special claim upon our

attention. There is unfortunately another reason which must be mentioned. Much of the early history of Christianity in these islands is very obscure, and the period has consequently been exploited by ignorant or unscrupulous controversial writers in the interests of their own theories. In spite of all the labour that has been recently expended on this piece of history, in spite of the researches of many eminent scholars, and in spite of many admirable popular works which have brought their results within the reach of the unlearned, it is still not uncommon to come across such statements as that the early Scotch Church was presbyterian, or that the mission of Augustine did little towards the conversion of the English, or that the British Church refused to accept the claims of the Church of Rome, or that it preserved a purer type of Christianity than the rest of the Western Church. Such fables are the offspring of ignorance or prejudice, but when once they have become current they are hard to kill, and their continued existence is a sufficient justification for even a humble attempt to give a plain narrative of the facts which have come down to us.

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE KELTIC CHURCHES

THE first beginnings of the English Church date from the year A.D. 597. Before that year not only was there no English Church, but, as far as we can tell, no man or woman of English race had embraced the Christian faith. Our history begins, therefore, with the definite date of the coming of S. Augustine. But although none of the English were Christians, they had displaced a Christian people, and Christian Churches already existed in these islands; and before beginning the narrative of the conversion of the English it will be necessary to clear the ground by considering shortly who the English were, and what their condition was at the end of the sixth century, and also to describe in outline what we know of the older Keltic Churches which had been founded in the British Islands before their coming.

The English began to settle in Britain about 150 years before the mission of S. Augustine. They had infested the British coasts for purposes of plunder

long before, but now they came to make the land their home. Some authorities think that English settlements had been formed at an earlier date, but this much-disputed question need not be discussed here. It is certain that from about the year A.D. 450 the process of conquest and settlement went steadily on. At the end of the fifth century there was a check, and after a great British victory at Mons Badonicus there came a period which the British historian Gildas dignifies by the name of peace. Then there began from about A.D. 550 a second stage of advance, and at the time of the coming of Augustine the Britons, still undisturbed to the west of the Pennine range, and in Devonshire, Cornwall, and Wales, were almost everywhere else subdued or threatened. The English made a very good exchange when they migrated from Jutland and Slesvig and the lower waters of the Weser and the Elbe: 'They came from a country,' says Mr York Powell, 'overgrown with big timber and thick scrub down to the water's edge, with rivers for its highroads, clearings and glades for its oases, and broad heaths and thick swamps and shallow lakes varying the else unbroken stretch of woodland. The country they came to was largely drained and cleared and tilled. Here were long water-meadows and fine hill pastures with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep of divers breed, here were herb gardens and orchards and vineyards about the houses, and here were broad cornfields of many acres, producing more grain than the island could consume. The arable was neatly tilled . . . there were ironworks, mines

for tin and lead, marlpits, quarries, potteries, brick and tile kilns, glassworks, and fisheries. There were more than thirty walled towns, and many camps or military stations; and these were knit together by good, well graded, stone-made roads. . . . Near each town was an area of tilled land; but along the roads stood neat and comfortable country houses, after the Italian fashion, each with its farm and cornfields tilled by slave or serf labour. The ports and havens were safe and handy for the vessels of that day, and a constant traffic during the summer kept up the regular supply of many foreign luxuries and utilities. . . . It was a golden land to the Teutonic eye.'

Opinions have varied as to the extent to which the Romanised Britons were destroyed or driven westward by their English conquerors. It used to be commonly held that, at all events to the east of Long. 2 W., they were practically exterminated, and this view was supported by the fact that the population of the eastern parts of England is conspicuously Teutonic, and that the conquered people left the scantiest traces of influence on the language, customs, and religion of the new-comers. But these traces appear to be greater than has been sometimes supposed, and it is more probable that while most members of the upper classes of the Britons were expelled or slain, the actual tillers of the soil remained in much the same position as before, except that their masters were English instead of Roman or Roman-British. The disappearance of the Christian religion in the parts of the country occupied by the

English may perhaps, as will be seen later, be accounted for on other theories than that of the extermination of the people. At all events it is quite clear that as the conquest went further west, the larger became the number of the Britons who were spared. Whether they were many or few they exercised little influence on their conquerors. The English went on living their old life, with such modifications as the process of conquest and the change to a new country brought about. They had never dwelt in towns, and they did not begin to do so. The strong walled towns and fortresses naturally held out against the invaders after the country side had been occupied, and when at length they were taken or starved out, they were in many cases levelled with the ground, and the inhabitants massacred. Many have remained utterly deserted to the present day. The institutions and customs which the invaders brought with them continued in their new homes. The most important changes were the amalgamation of many tribes into one body, and the institution of kingship, both caused by the necessities of conquest. Eventually seven kingdoms emerged, some of them for a time with subdivisions, which occupied the whole English territory. These kingdoms were independent of each other, and had no common polity. But in time some one of the kings came to hold a position of superiority or overlordship over the others. At the beginning of our period such a position had been won by Ethelbert of Kent. He did not gain it, as far as we know, by fighting with the other

kingdoms, but probably by the superiority which renewed intercourse with Gaul gave to the kingdom of Kent, which from its position would be the first to profit by a renewal of communications, and also for the sake of the advantage of having a common leader in the perpetual war against the Britons. After Ethelbert's death Kent, with the other smaller kingdoms to the east and south which were not in contact with the common enemy—East Anglia, Essex, and Sussex—fell into a subordinate position, and the three larger kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex, which marched with the Kelts, successively took the supremacy, until the last succeeded in amalgamating all the English kingdoms under its rule. In other respects the English had certainly advanced considerably in civilisation during the century and a half that intervened between their first settlement in Kent and the coming of S. Augustine. They had settled down into peaceful industry, and had renewed the intercourse with Gaul that had been broken off in the earlier years of the conquest. Ethelbert had even married, about the year A.D. 584, Bertha, the daughter of a Frankish king, Charibert. She was herself a Christian, and she brought with her a Christian bishop, and, although no attempt at conversion appears to have been made, the queen and her chaplain were allowed the use of a deserted Roman church, S. Martin's, within the walls of the ruined city of Doruvernum, which the Kentishmen had reoccupied, and called Canterbury. This fact alone suggests that the heathenism of the English was not of an intolerant character, and

indeed the whole history of the Conversion indicates that they had reached that stage of progress at which new ideas, coming from a higher civilisation, are readily entertained; and also that their old religion had no very strong hold over them, and was incapable of offering any effective resistance to the reception of the new doctrines. It is remarkable that we hear so little in the narrative of Bede, or indeed anywhere else, of the old religion of the English. To some extent this may be due to the general attitude of the ecclesiastical writers towards heathenism: the heathen beliefs and practices had no historical or scientific interest for them, and except so far as they had hindered the introduction of Christianity they would not be likely to say much about them. Still if they had interposed great obstacles to Christian teaching we could hardly have failed to have had more information. As a rule the strongest opposition to the introduction of new religious ideas is offered by the persons most interested in the maintenance of the old system, that is, by an order of priests or officials. Now in Bede's narrative there is only a single mention of a heathen priest—in the account of the work of Paulinus in Northumbria—and on that occasion the priest himself took the lead (apparently from inadequate motives) in the destruction of his own temple. Similarly, while there is sufficient mention of temples and images to prove that they existed and were used, what is said about them certainly does not suggest that they had any very strong hold on the affections or fears of the people. There is no doubt,

however, that English paganism was in its main features that which was common to the other branches of the Teutonic family. There are traces of the worship of all the principal German and Scandinavian deities, and from the fact that the royal genealogies are traced back to Woden the sun-god, and that a considerable number of places (such as Wednesbury) are named after him, we may conjecture that he was the favourite English divinity. Tacitus had said of the Germans in the first century that 'they especially worship Mercury,' and by naming Wednesday after Woden they identified him with Mercury, who with the Romans gave his name to the fourth day of the week. The German religion seems to have been originally a worship of the forces of nature, which became personified as gods or heroes. The seasons of the year, the solstices and equinoxes, were observed as festivals, fire and water were specially honoured, and trees and groves were also objects of reverence. There was also a great belief in magic of different kinds. Now, while the parts of this body of belief and observance which probably had the greatest hold on the affections of the people, such as the periodical festivals, the reverence paid to holy wells and other places, and a belief in witchcraft and spells, easily survived the introduction of Christianity, or became incorporated in it, the actual worship of the heathen divinities quickly disappeared, and left little or no trace.

If this is a true account of the condition of the English at the close of the sixth century, the question which seems to require an answer is

not, Why did they so readily embrace Christianity at this time? but, Why did they not become Christians before? Why were they not converted by the Keltic churches which already existed in these islands when they came? All other parts of the Roman empire had been visited, to a greater or less extent, by similar swarms of Teutonic invaders, and in every case they had adopted the religion, and generally the language and much of the civilisation of the provincials whom they conquered, and among whom they settled. Why was not this also the case in Britain, which was also fully a part of the empire? To answer this question it is necessary to go further back and shortly sketch the earlier history of these Keltic churches.

When the Romans first invaded Britain it had already been overrun by two successive waves of Keltic immigration. The earlier wave, that of the Goidels, had displaced, or absorbed, the Iberian or non-Aryan inhabitants, and occupied the greater part of the islands. After them came the Brythons, the same people as the northern Gauls, who drove the Goidels westward and into the mountains, and occupied the greater part of the country afterwards conquered by the Romans. The difference is still to be traced in language: the existing Gaelic, Manx, and Erse languages are Goidelic; Welsh, Breton, and the extinct Cornish are Brythonic. This distinction between the two branches of the Keltic race has an importance in Church history, for there was a marked difference between the history and

characteristics of Brythonic and Goidelic Christianity, and this must be borne carefully in mind in considering the relations of the English Church to the British and Scotic churches. The Brythonic religion appears to have been a polytheism of the type usual on the Continent, and the Brythons themselves were incorporated into the empire, and more or less completely Romanised. When Christianity was introduced among them their Church organisation does not appear to have differed from that of Gaul, from which it was undoubtedly derived. The Goidels, on the other hand, were untouched by Roman civilisation, and retained all their tribal peculiarities. Their religion, called Druidism, was a sort of pantheism. They had a great reverence for sacred places and objects, such as holy wells, and they were believers in the efficacy of magic and spells, by the use of which the Druids exercised a great ascendancy. They readily accepted Christianity, but were able to retain with it a very large amount of their old tribal customs and their former beliefs, and even their former morality. Thus there arose a Goidelic Church, whose most remarkable characteristics were, first, a quite exceptional condition of Church organisation, so far influenced by the tribal system that the ordinary system of government was hardly operative at all, and secondly, an ascetic and deeply devotional form of piety not unmixed with superstition. The close connection of missionary work with the tribal system led to the spread of Christianity through the formation of monastic societies, which settled

on land given by the head of the tribe, and which were usually ruled by members of the tribe to whom the 'Saint' or founder belonged. The monastery was in fact regarded as a sort of tribe, and was often called the tribe of the Saint. The ordinary diocesan government appears to have been almost, if not quite, non-existent. Orders were transmitted by bishops who were either heads of monasteries, or perhaps in some cases resident in monasteries under the rule of the abbot, who in the case of Iona, the most important of all, was always a presbyter; out of respect, Bede says, to its great founder, S. Columba, who was himself a presbyter. When in these pages the aggregate of Goidelic Christianity is spoken of as the Scotic Church, it must be remembered that we do not mean a well-organised society, like the English or the Gallican churches, with a common system of government, and the power of united action, but rather a loose federation of monasteries, in which indeed the sacred orders of bishop, priest, and deacon were carefully preserved, but where the idea of jurisdiction was almost absent. This Scotic Church covered all Ireland, which was then called Scotia, and also occupied a great part of what is now Scotland, whence it powerfully influenced, as will be seen later, the nascent Church of the English. It is important to be quite clear about the main facts that concern these Keltic churches, because many absurd theories and fables have long been current about them, propagated mainly in the interests of modern controversies; and fables of this sort die hard.

The origins of the British Church must be sketched first. Setting aside mere legends or conjectures, such as those about S. Paul, Joseph of Arimathæa, and King Lucius,[1] there is really no information whatever about the first introduction of Christianity into Britain. It is highly probable that there may have been individual Christians in Britain at quite an early date, for there was a continual going to and fro of soldiers and travellers in all parts of the empire, but it is exceedingly improbable that Christianity spread widely, or that there was a settled Church until the close of the second century. Irenæus, writing at some time between A.D. 176 and 189, enumerates the Christian churches and does not mention Britain, though from his position as Bishop of Lyons he could hardly have been ignorant of any considerable settlement of Christians in that country. On the other hand, Tertullian, writing probably between A.D. 200 and 208 speaks somewhat rhetorically about 'parts of the Britons not reached by the Romans but subject to Christ.' Origen, some thirty years later, speaks of Britain in two passages as having received Christianity, while in a third he mentions the British as one of the nations of whom most have not yet heard the word of the Gospel. The fact that a great persecution fell upon the churches of Southern Gaul in A.D. 177, which might have the effect of driving Christians northwards, makes it not improbable that Christianity was introduced into Britain, or at all events received an accession of strength at the

[1] For those legends see Haddan and Stubbs.

end of the second century. The first definite name of a British Christian is that of S. Alban, who, according to a local tradition which can be traced back to A.D. 329, and which there is no reason to doubt, suffered death at Verulam. At all events in A.D. 315 three British bishops, of London, York, and 'Colonia Londinensium,'—perhaps Lincoln or Caer Leon — are mentioned among the Gallican bishops present at the Council of Arles. The names seem somewhat suspicious, but the presence of British bishops may be accepted as a fairly certain fact, and it proves both the existence of an organised church, with diocesan episcopacy, and also that this church was in full accord, in doctrine and discipline, with the rest of the Western Church. British bishops are again mentioned at the Council of Ariminum in A.D. 359, which was induced by strong pressure by the Emperor Constantius to compromise its orthodoxy on the Arian question. On this occasion it is mentioned that the emperor offered to defray the expenses of the Council, and that the bishops in general declined assistance, because of the emperor's Arian opinions, but that three British bishops accepted the proffered allowances because they were too poor to pay their own expenses, and did not wish to be a burden to their brother bishops. Here we have an intimation that the British Church was poor. During the last quarter of the fourth century and the first quarter of the fifth, numerous passages in the writings of Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, and other writers mention the British Church in a way that shows it

to have been in full communion with the rest of the Church. Pilgrimages of British Christians to Syria and Palestine are particularly mentioned, and a close connection with the Gallican churches evidently existed. S. Martin of Tours was regarded with special reverence, and a Briton named Ninian, who was ordained bishop by Pope Siricius and settled in Galloway to preach to the Picts, was probably one of Martin's disciples. He built a stone church, and as the material was a novelty to the Britons of that district, it was called Candida Casa or Whithern. A legend states that he heard of S. Martin's death while building it, and dedicated it to his memory. This would fix the date to A.D. 397. Ninian is said to have converted many of the Picts, and Whithern became a place of resort for Christians from Britain and Ireland. The celebrity of Ninian's stone church suggests a source of information which is exceedingly meagre. Considering that a large part of Britain was for centuries under Roman rule, and that a considerable mass of Roman remains and inscriptions still exists, we should naturally expect to gain a good deal of information about the British Church from monumental sources. As a matter of fact the whole of the Christian remains of the Roman period are enumerated by Haddan and Stubbs (Councils, etc., vol. i. part 1, Appendix C) in four pages. Mr Haverfield has somewhat enlarged the list, but it is still extraordinarily short. Half a dozen churches of which remains exist, half a dozen others (including Ninian's) whose existence is known, and a few

Christian emblems or inscriptions practically exhaust it. Now this is a very significant fact. Making all allowance for the use of perishable materials, it would seem that a Church which had made itself a dominant force among Roman provincials must have left behind greater material traces of its existence.

There are other indications of weakness. It has been seen that the British bishops at the Council of Ariminum, or some of them, were too poor to support themselves. Later on, in A.D. 396, Victricius, bishop of Rouen, was invited into Britain to make peace, though there is no information as to the nature of the dissensions that existed. At the beginning of the fifth century, when Alaric was threatening Rome, the Roman troops were withdrawn from Britain, and the political condition of the country became lamentable. This can hardly have failed to be a great trial to the Church, and it was the beginning of the isolation into which British Christianity was soon to fall. But for a little while we have more information than usual. Early in the fifth century the Pelagian heresy made its appearance, and for some time distracted the Western Church. It is noticeable that the heresiarch himself, and several of his supporters, were of British race, and their doctrines evidently found a congenial home in Britain. Help came again from Gaul. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, were sent to repress the heresy. Prosper of Aquitaine, a contemporary chronicler, says that they were sent by Pope Celestine: the biographer of

Germanus says that they were sent by a Gallican council: but there is no inconsistency in this, for either the pope may have remitted the matter to a council, or the sanction of the pope may have been asked. At all events they came: a great meeting was held—no doubt at Verulam, for the spot of S. Alban's martyrdom was visited immediately afterwards—and the orthodox arguments prevailed. After this, according to tradition, came the 'Alleluia Victory.' Germanus and Lupus are said to have led the Britons against an invading host of Picts and Saxons, and concealing their forces in a valley gained a bloodless victory by shouts of Alleluia, which so terrified their assailants that they fled in confusion. The bishops returned to Gaul, but Pelagianism was not dead, and Germanus visited Britain once more, probably in A.D. 447, the year before his death, to contend with it again.

Both negative and positive evidence thus indicate that the British Church, while perfectly Catholic in doctrines and practice, and separated in no way from the rest of the Western Church, had not succeeded in effecting so real a conversion of the whole of the people as to extinguish Paganism, or to become a dominant power. If, as there is reason to suspect, it was always a weak and struggling Church, this will to a great extent explain the fact that during the process of the English Conquest the Christian religion disappeared, except in those parts of the country which were able to resist the arms of the invaders.

With the beginning of the English Conquest

absolute darkness settles down over the British Church. For more than a century it passes altogether out of our knowledge, and the silence is at last broken by the querulous voice of Gildas. Writing in the middle of the sixth century, this British monk deplores in extravagant terms the misery and wickedness of his Church and nation. That his denunciations are exaggerated can hardly be doubted, but it would be strange if they were not founded on fact. There is very little actual historical information in his pages, but incidentally there is evidence that the Church continued to exist, and even after a sort to prosper. There was still a regular diocesan episcopacy, and the office of bishop implied an extent of wealth and power which made it worth purchasing, for he especially laments the sin of simony. Bishops claimed succession from the Apostles, and to sit in the seat of S. Peter, and priests claimed the power to bind and to loose. The Church was governed by synods, though discipline was lax. The monastic life was adopted by large numbers. Gildas is evidently quite unconscious of any differences between the British Church and Rome as regards Church government or doctrine, though he mentions two British customs—the anointing of hands at ordination, and certain special lessons used on the same occasions. Apart from Gildas there is some evidence of activity in the British Church during the latter half of the sixth century. Irish traditions speak of a mission from the British Church to Ireland, where there had been a falling away, and in

this Gildas himself, as well as S. David, the patron of Wales, is said to have taken part. The existing Welsh bishoprics also date from about this period. The actual known history of the British Church during the 150 years of Saxon conquest before the coming of S. Augustine amounts to almost nothing; but it must be remembered that the population of the Romanised parts of Britain was mainly Brythonic, and that in retiring before the English the Brythons fell back upon the western and mountainous districts which were inhabited by Goidels. Of the process of amalgamation which must have taken place no details are known, but it is clear that the characteristics of Goidelic Christianity, which must next be described, must have impressed themselves to a great extent on the retiring Brythons; and that the Christian church or churches which Augustine found in existence in the West must have been as much Goidelic as Brythonic, or more so; that is to say they were more tribal, more monastic, more ascetic, and less highly organised than the Church of Romanised Britain. The vast monasteries at Bangor Iscoed and elsewhere, and the probable existence of non-diocesan side by side with diocesan episcopacy, are indications of this. But at all events one thing is certain, that British Christianity never effected or attempted to effect anything whatever towards the conversion of the conquering English. The case in Britain was altogether different from what it was in Gaul and other parts of the empire that were more completely organised, and where the Church was the dominant

power. In such provinces the invaders, after the first rush of conquest, settled down to adopt much of the civilisation, and with it the religion and even the language of the conquered people. But the English had no respect for the civilisation of the Britons. They would not live in their cities, and they destroyed or allowed to fall into decay the material monuments of civilisation; and the long duration of an internecine war made them little disposed to enquire into or adopt the religion of their enemies and their slaves. The weak and distracted condition of British Christianity combined with racial hatred to keep the two peoples apart. The English Church is in so far the successor of the British Church that the latter was ultimately absorbed into the former. But towards the conversion of the English and the foundation and building up of the English Church British (as distinct from Scotic or Goidelic) Christianity made, as far as our information goes, no contribution whatever.

It now remains to give some account of what has been called Goidelic Christianity; that is, the form which Christianity assumed in Ireland and parts of Scotland, and the mountainous districts of the West of Britain. The general characteristics of this Scotic Church, as it will be called, have been already noted on pages 9 and 10, but a short sketch of its history, if it can be said to have a history, must be given here. The traditional account of the foundation of the Scotic Church is that Patrick was sent to Ireland in A.D. 432 by Pope Celestine, to replace Palladius, who had been sent by the same pope in the previous year.

Patrick founded the Church of Armagh, visited most parts of Ireland, and did a great deal towards the conversion of the whole of the inhabitants. An enormous mass of legend gathered round the name of Patrick, and a good deal round that of Palladius. The difficulty of extracting historical fact from this mass of legend may be seen to some extent by a short enumeration of the principal authorities.

Prosper of Aquitaine, a contemporary chronicler, well informed about events at Rome, says that Pope Celestine in A.D. 431 sent Palladius to the Scots (*i.e.* Irish) believing in Christ; and he also says elsewhere that Celestine made the barbarian island (Ireland) Christian. Bede copies Prosper, but no Irish authority mentions Palladius until the Book of Armagh, which will be spoken of below, and all subsequent mentions of Palladius are probably derived from writers who had seen Prosper or Bede. For S. Patrick the earliest and best authority consists in certain writings attributed to him, and until lately unhesitatingly accepted as genuine. The most important are the *Confession*, a sort of Apologia written in his later years, and a letter to Coroticus, a British prince. Prosper and Bede do not mention Patrick, though the latter was well informed about Irish affairs. In Irish authorities S. Patrick's name is once mentioned in the sixth century, and twice in the seventh. In the Book of Armagh there are besides the *Confession*, two lives of S. Patrick, and other documents which give some information about him. This beautiful manuscript belongs to the early part of the ninth

century, and the parts relating to S. Patrick were probably written before the year A.D. 807, but some critics have placed it later, and considered the lives contained in it to be forgeries. There are some eight other lives, dating from the ninth and three following centuries, which add a vast amount of legendary matter, but little of historical value. Now it must be noted, (1) that Palladius and Patrick are both credited with the conversion of the Irish at nearly the same time; (2) that the authority for Palladius is practically the short statement of Prosper, and that alone; (3) that there is no contemporary authority for Patrick except the writings ascribed to him; that he is not mentioned by Prosper, Columban, or Bede, all of whom (it would seem) ought to have known much about him; and that there is no account of him beyond two or three casual mentions of his name until the end of the eighth century at the earliest; (4) that the later lives are full of ridiculous and contradictory details, and that their chronology is impossible. Such being the character of the authorities, it is not surprising that there should be many different views about Patrick. The following theories about him may be noted.

1. There is the traditional view, which accepts as much as possible of the later lives. According to this, Palladius was sent by Celestine in A.D. 431, but he died or returned soon afterwards, and Patrick was sent by the same pope in his place, and practically accomplished the conversion of Ireland. The date of Patrick's mission is thus

fixed to A.D. 432, for Celestine died in that year. With regard to this it has been said that the silence of Prosper and Bede seems inexplicable, and that if the *Confession* of S. Patrick is genuine, it seems inconsistent with a mission from Rome.

2. Either Palladius or Patrick, or both, have been thought to be altogether fictitious. But with regard to the former, although the amount of evidence is small, it is good contemporary evidence, and there seems to be no reason for rejecting it. With regard to those who doubt the existence of S. Patrick, Dr Todd says: 'Such doubts have proceeded for the most part from writers strongly prejudiced by party feeling, and wholly ignorant of the original sources of the history. Their objections derive whatever plausibility they may possess from garbled quotations, misinterpreted authorities, and mistakes about antient customs, especially Irish antient customs. They deal largely in premises from which the conclusions deduced do not follow, and in conclusions which are deduced from no premises at all.' The case, however, would be materially altered if it were to be proved that the writings attributed to S. Patrick, and until lately unhesitatingly accepted, are forgeries. And Mr Plummer, in his most admirable edition of Bede (which, as Dr Collins says, it is a joy to use), accepts the verdict of Zimmer that they are not genuine.[1] If this be so, probably Mr Plummer's conclusion is right, and 'Of the origin of Irish Christianity we know absolutely nothing.'

[1] Dr Zimmer has withdrawn his earlier view, and now accepts the *Confession* as genuine.

Other distinguished scholars, however, regard Zimmer's arguments as quite inconclusive.

3. It has been argued with great plausibility by Dr Loofs that Palladius and Patrick were two names for the same person. This theory explains the fact that two men are credited with the conversion of Ireland at the same time, and it also explains why Prosper and Bede only mention Palladius, and the earliest Irish traditions only Patrick. But it is open to the objection that Palladius, if he existed, certainly came from Rome, and that the author of the *Confession* apparently did not.

4. One suggestion is that Palladius preached to the Scots in Scotland, and Patrick to the Scots in Ireland. This seems quite untenable.

5. Dr Whitley Stokes thinks that the dates and all the main facts may be reconciled by supposing that Patrick was ordained priest about the year A.D. 397, and went as a missionary to Ireland for about thirty years, that he went to Gaul about A.D. 427, intending to go to Rome; that hearing of the death of Palladius he was directed by Germanus to take his place, that he was consecrated bishop in Gaul and returned to Ireland in A.D. 432.

To a great extent, however, this confusion has been cleared up by Professor Bury, whose Life of S. Patrick is the most complete if not the only attempt that has been made to deal with the subject in a manner fully critical, and at the same time completely impartial. Unfortunately the conclusions of too many writers have been coloured by strong

prepossessions. On the one side there has been a desire to preserve as much as possible of the legendary details of S. Patrick's life, even in defiance of a reasonable criticism, and to insist strongly on his connection with Rome. On the other hand, there has been the wish to represent the early Keltic churches as entirely independent of and unconnected with the other churches of the West, and this has led to the astonishing statements which still recur in popular manuals about the direct derivation of Keltic Christianity from the Church of Ephesus or some other Eastern source. And further, as has been shown above, the character of the authorities has caused some scholars to despair of finding any substratum of fact beneath the remarkable superstructure which has been erected upon the original tradition. There is one point already mentioned about which a few more words may be said. The silence of Bede has been probably the principal cause which has led some to doubt S. Patrick's existence or to minimise his work. Bede, it has been said, knew much about Ireland, and if S. Patrick were really the founder of the Irish Church, and if his work had been of so extensive and successful a character, how could his name fail to appear in Bede's pages? About this two things may be said. First, that Bede was writing a history of the English Church. He mentions Ninian and Columba because their work directly affected the English Church. But that of Patrick did not. There was no reason why he should be mentioned. And again, he may have

done all that is claimed for him, and yet Bede may not have known much about him. The great monastic revival of which Columba was the most conspicuous figure did not hold S. Patrick in special veneration, and Bede's knowledge came mainly through the Columban Church. And there may have been very little documentary evidence available. The lives in the Book of Armagh were probably written before A.D. 807, but Bede died in A.D. 832, and they may very well have not come into his hands. And earlier lives were probably in the Irish language, and not intelligible to Bede.

If these considerations sufficiently account for Bede's silence, there do not appear to be any other cogent reasons for doubting the substantial accuracy of the main facts of the Patrician tradition. The following sketch of S. Patrick's life represents roughly what Professor Bury accepts as probable.

S. Patrick was born about the year A.D. 389 in a place, probably in the west of Britain, which has not yet been identified. He was brought up in the Christian faith, for his father, who belonged to the middle class, was a deacon. He grew up in a time of great distress, when the Roman forces were being withdrawn from Britain, and when he was sixteen years old, he was carried away by Irish pirates who plundered his father's farm. In Ireland he was employed as a swineherd. His own words in the *Confession* seem to imply that the place of his captivity was near the forest of 'Fochlad' in N.W. Connaught, but later tradition says that it was on Mount Miss in the valley of the Braid. Here

Patrick underwent profound spiritual experiences which coloured the whole of his subsequent life. After some years he made his escape, apparently to Gaul, and probably at this time visited the monastery of Lerins. Thence he returned to his family in Britain, but he had become possessed by an over-mastering desire to return to Ireland as a missionary, and it was probably to prepare himself for this work that he took up his abode at Auxerre. Here he was ordained deacon by the Bishop Amator, and remained for a long time, perhaps waiting for a special opportunity. In A.D. 429 Germanus, now bishop of Auxerre, was sent to Britain, as has been mentioned above on page 14, to deal with the Pelagian heresy. Soon afterwards a similar appeal for help appears to have come from such bodies of Christians as already existed in Ireland, and Palladius, who had been instrumental in procuring the mission of Germanus to Britain, and probably accompanied him there, was consecrated bishop and sent by Pope Celestine to organise these little communities as their first bishop. But within a year the mission of Palladius came to an end, probably by his death. Patrick is said to have already set out on his way to Ireland when the news arrived. He turned back and was consecrated bishop by Germanus in succession to Palladius. In later days it was believed that he too, like Palladius, was consecrated by the pope. It seems clear, however, that this was not the case, and indeed the matter is of little importance. Palladius had been sent by the pope with a special mission to

organise a church in Ireland, and his consecration by the pope himself had a distinct significance. But it was not in the least necessary, or in accordance with ordinary usage, that his successor also should be consecrated by the pope in person. The infant church in Ireland was in any case in full communion with Rome, and there was no reason why the ordination of the second bishop should not take place in the normal and most convenient way.

Patrick's labours in Ireland lasted for twenty-nine years, and extended over the greater part of the whole island. The details which have come down to us in legend are only too abundant, but a critical examination reveals a solid substratum of fact. The north-west of the country, and Connaught were the chief scenes of his activity, but there is sufficient evidence of his having visited Leinster and Munster as well.

There is good reason to believe that Patrick visited Rome about the year A.D. 441, soon after the accession of Pope Leo the Great. A few years afterwards he founded the church of Armagh, which was to exercise the powers of a metropolitan see over the whole of Ireland. The fact that the pre-eminence of Armagh was afterwards supported by forgeries does not prove that it did not rest upon a real foundation. Documents of doubtful authenticity easily came into existence in the Middle Ages in support of all sorts of claims, but it would be difficult to produce an instance of a primatial or metropolitan see whose position rests wholly upon a fictitious basis. Certainly in the case of Armagh

it is difficult if not impossible to explain the prestige and authority which it enjoyed in the seventh century and onwards, except on the supposition that it was derived from the original intention of S. Patrick. And the foundation of a metropolitan see, or its equivalent, was a natural, an almost inevitable part of his work. It is true that the practical organisation of the later Scotic Church differed considerably from that of the rest of Christendom, but there is no reason to suppose that anything different from the ordinary diocesan system was introduced into Ireland by Patrick. There were no doubt many monastic foundations from the first, and the particular form which these took was largely conditioned by the political and social condition of the country. At a later time, as will be seen, when communication with the rest of the Western world was almost cut off, the monastic organisation tended to overshadow and almost absorb the ordinary organisation of the church, but all the scanty evidence that exists tends to show that this was a later developement, and not due to the intention of the first founders of the Irish Church.[1]

In his old age S. Patrick wrote the document from which our most certain knowledge about him is derived. The *Confession* is not an autobiography,

[1] There is no reason to suppose that the secular clergy were ever entirely supplanted by monks. Bede (*H. E.* iii. 3) implies that some secular clergy came as missionaries to Northumbria. 'They were mostly,' he says, 'monks, and the bishop, Aidan, was himself a monk.'

and it does not inform us of many facts: it is a reply to some aspersions which had been cast upon Patrick, perhaps in his native country of Britain. Apparently his want of culture, which he fully admits, and which his literary style illustrates, had been cast in his teeth, and he also has to meet the charge of self-seeking in his mission work. His reply is practically that his work was undertaken, not from any personal inclination to it, but in obedience to what he believed to be an imperative call from God. The humility of the tone of the *Confession* has led some critics to suppose that Patrick was conscious that his career had been a failure. But not only is this contrary to the other evidence which exists, but the kind of detraction which appears to have called forth this Apologia is that which is usually caused by jealousy of success. Though the facts mentioned in the *Confession* are few, it reveals something of S. Patrick's character, and at all events shows him to have been a very different person from the thaumaturge of the later lives. 'The writings of S. Patrick,' says Professor Bury, '. . . reveal unmistakably a strong personality and a spiritual nature. The man who wrote the *Confession* and the *Letter* had strength of will, energy in action, resolution without over-confidence, and the capacity for resisting pressure from without. It might be inferred, too, that he was affectionate and sensitive; subtle analysis might disclose other traits. But it is probable that few readers will escape the impression that he possessed besides enthusiasm the practical qualities most essential for carrying through the task which he

undertook in the belief that he had been divinely inspired to fulfil it.' It may be added that in spite of the illiteracy which he ruefully acknowledges, his writings show that, like most prominent men in the 'Dark Ages' he possessed an extraordinarily complete knowledge of the Scriptures.

Whatever may be the truth about the first introduction of Christianity into Ireland, we are on somewhat firmer ground when we come to S. Columba, and the channels through which Scotic Christianity influenced the English Church. We pass to a new period. In an ancient document in the book of Armagh, called the Catalogus Sanctorum, there are said to have been three Orders of Saints, and these seem really to correspond roughly with three periods of Irish Christianity. The first period is that of the first conversion of the people, and a large number of bishops is its special characteristic. There is some evidence that there was a falling away or weakness of some kind, and the mission from Britain mentioned above on page 16, led by David, Gildas, and Docus, seems to have produced a great extension of monastic foundations, which perhaps to a great extent supplanted a secular clergy. The greatest name in this period is that of Columkil or Columba. He was a member of the royal race of the Hy Neill, a leading tribe in the north of Ireland, and he was connected with the kings of Dalriada, the Scotic kingdom that had been founded in the south-west of Scotland by a migration from Ireland. His baptismal name was Colum, a dart, and Kil was added because he spent so much time in his youth

in the Kil or oratory. He is said to have been at the great monastery of Finnian at Clonard, which contained as many as three thousand students, and he founded the monasteries of Derry, Durrogh, and others. In A.D. 563[1] with twelve companions he sailed across to Britain. This is all that is said of this momentous journey by Columba's earliest biographer, but later legends supply a reason. It is said that Columba copied without leave a manuscript belonging to Finnian or Finnbar of Moville, and that Finnian claimed the copy on the principle that 'whose is the cow his is the calf.' Diarmid the King of Ireland decided that the copy belonged to Finnian, and Columba moved his tribe to fight against the king in the great battle of Culdremhne in A.D. 561, and contributed to their success by his prayers. A synod of the Saints of Ireland was held to consider this conduct, and the penance imposed upon Columba was to win as many souls from heathenism as had been slain in the battle, and to this end he was exiled for ever from Ireland. Now with regard to this story it is possible that Columba may have had something to do with the battle of Culdremhne, which is twice mentioned by his successor and biographer Adamnan. But the rest of the story is absolutely inconsistent with what is known from good authority about Columba's life. He was on terms of intimate affection and respect with Finnian, and so far from being exiled for ever from Ireland, he repeatedly visited it, and was received with great honour, and he exercised a close

[1] The exact date is not quite certain: Bede makes it A.D. 565.

supervision over his monasteries in that country. No other motive, in fact, need be sought than the pure missionary enthusiasm which was the glory of the Irish Church of that and following ages. Columba was himself one of the twelve missionaries from the school of Finnian of Clonard who were called the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, and his life was spent in missionary work. If there were any other motive, it is possible, as seems to be hinted in some early authorities, that the political circumstances of the kingdom of Dalriada, whose king had met with defeat and death in a battle with the King of the Picts a few years before, may have inspired a natural and legitimate desire to come to the aid of his kindred by evangelising the Picts, and deepening the Christianity of the Scots who were already Christian. With the story of the exile there also fall to the ground various elaborate estimates of Columba's character. There is not, apart from this more than apocryphal story, the faintest evidence that Columba was vindictive, passionate, or contentious. The picture of him drawn by his successor Adamnan, and other early authorities, is that of a man of commanding character, unwearied activity, and the highest gifts of body and intellect, and yet so inspired by a 'holy joy' that he was beloved by every creature who came near him. And the results of his work bear out this picture.

Shortly after his arrival in Britain the monastery of Hii or Iona was founded. The island was granted to Columba by the King of Dalriada, or by the Picts, or by both. There is a conflict of

evidence about this, and it is a matter of no great importance, but the island lay at the extremity of territory claimed by the kingdom of Dalriada, and while a formal grant from the king of that country is probable, the practical acquiescence, at all events, of the Picts must have been necessary. Columba soon began his missionary work among the Picts, for he is said to have converted King Brude about two years after his arrival. His two successors in the abbacy of Iona, Cumene and Adamnan, who both wrote his biography, do not give any detailed account of his missionary work, but it is clear from the dedications of churches, and the monastic foundations ascribed to him, that Columba himself and his immediate followers must have accomplished a great deal towards the conversion of the Pictish nation. Columba's position, both in Scotland and Ireland, must have been strengthened by his close alliance with the Dalriadic kingdom. In A.D. 574 his kinsman Aidan (who must not be confused with Saint Aidan) came to Iona to be solemnly consecrated king, and in the following year both Columba and the king attended an Irish synod in great state. Columba retained his marvellous powers to the last, and he died, in all probability, on Sunday morning, June 9, A.D. 597, the very year in which Augustine set foot in Kent. A detailed and touching account of the last days of his life is given by his biographers.

As the monastery of Iona exercised so great an influence on English Christianity, it will be well to give some further account of the special features of

Scotic monasticism. Our main source of information is Adamnan's life of Columba. Adamnan was abbot of Iona from A.D. 679 to A.D. 704, and he visited Northumbria at least twice. On his second visit he went to Jarrow, where Bede must have seen him. In his life of his great predecessor a number of details are incidentally mentioned which enable us to construct a fairly complete account of the life of the monastery

The Monastic life, which had its home in the East, is first heard of in the Western Church after the visit of S. Athanasius to Rome in A.D. 341. The first monastery in Gaul was founded by S. Martin in A.D. 372, and his great monastery near Tours (Majus Monasterium—Marmoutier) became the centre of Gallican monasticism. Thence it would naturally pass to Ireland by two channels. The connection of S. Ninian with S. Martin has already been noticed, and his foundation at Candida Casa is known to have been a resort of Irish Saints. From Brittany also, which was under the jurisdiction of Tours, the monastic life would pass into the British Church, and through the nission of David, Gildas, and Docus to Ireland. Once established there it was found to be so well adapted to the needs of Christian extension in the condition of society which then existed that it speedily became dominant, and to a great extent absorbed or superseded the ordinary organisation of the Church. It must be remembered that monasticism before the time of S. Benedict was less highly organised, and far more capable of adaptation to

varying conditions of society. The ideas which we are accustomed to associate with a complete system of monastic life are at least these—the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience; a rigidly enforced novitiate; and a rule prescribing the whole conduct of daily life, including always the observance of the fixed hours of prayer. Now all these elements undoubtedly existed in Irish monasteries, but with a good deal of elasticity. The obligations of poverty, chastity and obedience must have been observed, but of vows we hear little or nothing. In Adamnan we read of men being admitted members of the community without any novitiate; and although hours of prayer are mentioned, what is said about the life and occupations of the monks shows that the strict observance of them was not generally binding. The Irish monks might travel with the consent of their abbot, but canons of councils show that for centuries they were accustomed to travel even without his consent, and the wandering Irish monk who roamed from one monastery to another became a serious nuisance on the continent of Europe, and probably in England also. There is a delightful illustration of the independence which sometimes accompanied the monastic profession in Bede's account of Bishop Colman's movements when he left Northumbria after the Council of Whitby. He established a monastery on the island of Inishbofin for himself and his followers, some of whom were English and some Irish. But internal concord was lacking, inasmuch as the Irish monks were

accustomed to leave the monastery at the time of summer when the harvest is to be gathered in, and wandered dispersed throughout places known to themselves; but with the approach of winter they returned and desired to use those stores which the English had laid up. Hence there arose some not unnatural friction, and finally the Englishmen had to settle in a monastery of their own in Mayo. Bede relates this story with perfect gravity, and indeed, as will be seen later, there were in his day far more serious disorders in monastic life. But in the early days of enthusiasm, a system of great laxity was very well adapted for missionary work, and the English Church owes too much to Irish monks to criticise their methods severely. Many of the early Irish monasteries must have been rather colonies of Christian converts than monasteries proper. In a very wild and distracted condition of society they supplied perhaps the only possible means for leading the Christian life. No doubt one of their great attractions was the security which they afforded. Most of them were placed upon islands or in other positions easily defended against attack, such as the rock of Cashel, and religious or superstitious terrors soon combined with their isolation to make them safe from the disorder which prevailed around them. An admirable description of their work and influence is given by Mr Skene, from whom the following quotation may be made. 'The monastic character of the Church,' he says, 'gave a peculiar stamp to her missionary work which caused her to set about it in a mode

well calculated to impress a people still to a great extent under the influence of heathenism. It is difficult for us now to realise to ourselves what such pagan life really was—its hopeless corruption, its utter disregard of the sanctity of domestic ties, its injustice and selfishness, its violent and bloody character . . . The monastic missionaries did not commence their work, as the earlier secular church would have done, by arguing against their idolatry, superstition, and immorality, and preaching a purer faith; but they opposed to it the antagonistic characteristics and purer faith of Christianity. They asked and obtained a settlement in some small and valueless island. There they settled down as a little Christian colony, living under a monastic rule requiring the abandonment of all that was attractive in life. They exhibited a life of purity, holiness, and self-denial. They exercised charity and benevolence, and they forced the respect of the surrounding pagans to a life the motives of which they could not comprehend, unless they resulted from principles higher than those their pagan religion afforded them; and having won their respect for their lives, and their gratitude for their benevolence, these monastic missionaries went among them with the Word of God in their hands, and preached to them the doctrines and pure morality of the Word of Life. No wonder if kings and nations became converted to Christianity, and incorporated the church into their tribal institutions in a manner which now excites our wonder, if not our suspicion.'

The early construction of an Irish monastery was simple enough. It consisted of a group of rude huts, built of wood or wattle, with an oratory, and some other necessary public buildings—a refectory, a kitchen, an abbot's house, and a house for strangers. No stone buildings seem to have been erected until the period of the Danish invasions. The inmates were divided into the *Seniores*, whose occupations were mainly prayer, reading, and writing—i.e. the transcription of MSS. in which they excelled; and the *Juniores*, to whom fell the ordinary work of the monastery and the important duty of agriculture. Hospitality was practised on the largest scale, and at a later period the Irish monasteries were frequented by strangers from all over Europe for the sake of study and devotion. The abbot was supreme, but we hear of his taking the advice of the elder monks, and there seem to have been practical limitations to his power, for even so great an abbot as Adamnan was unable to enforce his views on the Easter question on the brethren. All the Columban monasteries formed a *familia* or diocese ruled over by the abbot of Iona, who must have had many bishops in monastic subordination to him; and there were other less important groups of monasteries.

These appear to have been the main features of the monastic system of what may be called the 'Columban' Church. A short description of them is necessary in a history of the English Church because of the great influence of the Scotic missions upon early English Church History. The character of early English monasticism and the lax organisa-

tion of the first period of the English Church are mainly due to the Scotic influence. The deep personal devotion and the beauty of character which grew up in the retirement of Iona and kindred monasteries, and of which S. Aidan and S. Cuthbert and S. Chad are conspicuous examples, left on the English Church an impression less easy to trace, but it may be hoped of a more permanent kind. But it is now time to turn to the actual beginnings of the English Church itself.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

A. *Authorities.* Haddan and Stubbs' *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, Oxford, A.D. 1869, is an invaluable collection of the most important documents connected with Church History. Vol. i contains documents and other authorities for the history of the British Church. Vol. ii was never completed, but part ii has been published, and it contains the writings ascribed to S. Patrick. All the most important original authorities for the life of S. Patrick are printed with Whitley Stokes' edition of the *Vita Tripartita* in the Rolls Series. The Book of Armagh has been sumptuously edited by Dr Gwynn. The chief source of information for the character of Scotic monasticism and for the life of S. Columba is Adamnan's *Vita S. Columbae*. This was edited by Dr Reeves for the Irish Archæological Society in A.D. 1869, with notes and dissertations that form a perfect storehouse of erudition. A convenient edition by J. T. Fowler was published by the Clarendon Press in A.D. 1894, with a valuable introduction and notes. Adamnan, who was the ninth abbot of Iona, and died in A.D. 704, embodies in his book an earlier work on S. Columba by Cumene, the fifth abbot. Bede does not deal at length with the history of the Keltic Churches, which only indirectly belongs to his subject, but he gives some valuable information. Mr Plummer's admirable edition

of Bede's Historical Works (Clarendon Press, 1896, 2 vols.), with copious notes, is indispensable to the serious student.

Of modern works Dr F. Loofs' treatise *De antiqua Britonum Scotorumque Ecclesia*, Leipzig, 1882, is valuable. *The Beginnings of English Christianity* by Dr W. E. Collins (Bishop of Gibraltar) is an admirable introduction. Dr G. F. Browne's (Bishop of Bristol) lectures on *The Church in these islands before the coming of Augustine*, 1894, are also useful. For S. Patrick Dr Bury's *Life*, already spoken of, has practically superseded all others, but Dr Todd's *Life of S. Patrick* should also be mentioned. Dr Zimmer's views are to be found in the article 'Keltische Kirche' in the '*Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie u. Kirche*,' 1901. It is translated into English by Miss Meyer under the title of *The Keltic Church in Britain and Ireland*, 1902. *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, by Dr G. T. Stokes, 1886, gives a pleasant popular sketch of the history. For the Columban Church consult Skene's Celtic Scotland, vol. ii. Edinburgh, 1887. See also Healy's *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum, or Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, Dublin, 1893.

CHAPTER II

AUGUSTINE AND THE ROMAN MISSION

THE history of the foundation of the English Church is very largely biographical. It centres round a number of great names. And three of these stand out conspicuously as those of the men to whom the actual accomplishment of the work must pre-eminently be ascribed. Augustine led the first mission and founded the English Church; Aidan was the leader of an independent mission, which built upon the foundation already laid, and which perhaps had the largest share in the actual conversion of the people. Theodore consolidated the work of his predecessors, and made the Church founded by Augustine the Church of all the English. But behind Augustine there stands a still greater figure, that of pope Gregory the Great, 'whom,' Bede says, 'we can and ought rightly to call our Apostle.'[1] So Aldhelm speaks of him as 'our watchful pastor and paedagogue'; the Council of Cloveshoch in A.D. 747

[1] Dr Lightfoot, in '*Leaders of the Northern Church*,' says: 'Not Augustine, but Aidan, is the true Apostle of England.' The statement would not be worth mentioning but for the great name of its author, and to discuss it would be slaying the slain. It is sufficient to refer to Dr Bright's Essay 'An Appeal to Bede' in *Waymarks of Church History*. Cp. also *Letters of William Bright*, p. 219.

orders that the 'birthday' of 'our pope and father' should be kept as a festival; the first archbishop of York calls him 'our teacher,' Alcuin 'our preacher,' and a bishop of Sherborne in A.D. 800 'our father in God.' And these grateful expressions are but a reasonable recognition of the debt which the English Church owes to the greatest man of his age.

Gregory was born at Rome, probably in the year A.D. 540. He came of a family both noble and pious. He used his wealth and position in the service of God, and in his early manhood he became a monk, turning his own house on the Coelian hill into a monastery, which he dedicated to S. Andrew, and himself ruled as abbot. Thence he was sent to Constantinople as apocrisarius or envoy of the Roman see at the imperial court. He held this office under two popes for about six years, and it was probably after his return, in one of the years A.D. 585-588, that the event took place which led to the conversion of the English. It is told by Bede as a tradition, but there is no reason to doubt its truth, and it may be related in Bede's own words: 'They say that on a certain day some merchants had lately arrived, and many things had been brought into the forum for sale. Many people had come to buy, and Gregory himself came and saw some boys put up for sale, of fair complexions, and comely countenance, and remarkably beautiful hair. They say that on seeing them he asked from what land they came. He was told that they came from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants resembled them in appearance. He again asked whether these

islanders were Christians or still involved in pagan errors, and was told that they were pagans. Then he sighed deeply and said: Alas, that the author of darkness should hold men of a countenance so full of light, and that so gracious an outside should cover a mind destitute of grace within. He asked again, What was the name of that race? It was answered that they were called Angles. They are well named, he said, for they have angel faces, and such should be co-heirs of Angels in heaven. What is the name of the province from which they come? It was answered that the people of that province were called Deiri. Well are they named Deiri, he said, being rescued "de ira"—from wrath—and called to the mercy of Christ. What is the name of the king of that province? He is called "Aelli," was the answer. And playing on the name he said: Alleluia! the praise of God the Creator must be sung in that land.'[1]

This was no mere piece of sentiment: Gregory went to the pope, and asked that a mission should be sent to the English, offering himself for the service, but the citizens of Rome would not suffer him to go from the city, and it was not until he himself became pope that he could carry out this work which he had long desired.

Gregory became pope in A.D. 590, and there came upon him not only the care of all the churches, but such temporal responsibilities as seldom fall to the lot of a ruler of men. Italy was smitten with

[1] This and some other quotations from Bede are taken from Dr Mason's admirable translation in *The Mission of S. Augustine*.

famine, pestilence, and war. Thirty years before the Lombards had swept down upon the provinces which Justinian had won back from the Ostrogoths, and had carried devastation and bloodshed into every corner of the unhappy land. The feeble imperial power could do nothing to help, though it did something to hinder Gregory's statesmanship. In A.D. 593 his wise policy only just averted the capture of Rome itself, and later on laid the noble foundation of the temporal power of the papacy over the defenceless lands which looked to him for protection. It is marvellous enough that amid such cares Gregory should have found time to plan a mission to the English, but his wonderful command of detail enabled him to order far smaller matters in all parts of Christendom. He had indeed more than one plan for England, for he writes to Candidus, the steward of the pontifical estates in Gaul, directing him to purchase English boys of seventeen or eighteen years of age to be trained in monasteries. It is not certain whether the letter was written in A.D. 595, before Augustine's mission, or later, but in any case this admirable plan, which was adopted by Aidan and Wilbrord, and is employed in some of the most successful of modern missions, was not apparently carried further, perhaps because in view of Augustine's success it was thought unnecessary. For in the year A.D. 595 or A.D. 596, probably in the early spring of A.D. 596, the mission left Rome. Gregory had chosen for its head the *praepositus* or provost of his own monastery of S. Andrew. The provost was next in order to the abbot, and as

Gregory retained this latter office himself, his second in command must have been practically the head of the house. In any estimate that we may form of Augustine's character we must bear in mind that Gregory was a good judge of men, and that he chose Augustine to represent him in two things very near to his heart,—to preside over the monastery which he left with so great reluctance, and to lead the mission which he would fain have led himself. How many monks went with Augustine we do not know: there were about forty members of the mission when it reached England, but this included some Frankish presbyters who went to act as interpreters: and of the original members of the mission very few[1] can be identified with certainty. Laurence and possibly Honorius, both afterwards archbishops, Peter, afterwards abbot of SS. Peter and Paul, Romanus, afterwards bishop of Rochester, and a monk named John, make up the list of names. The travellers reached Provence, and there their hearts failed them, and they sent Augustine back to ask that they might be relieved from their task. But Gregory did not give up an undertaking so easily. Augustine started again with many letters from the great pope, dated July 23, A.D. 596. In one he exhorted the brethren to be of good courage, and to obey Augustine, whom he appointed to be their abbot. The others were addressed to various kings and bishops in Gaul, commending Augustine, and desiring help for his mission. Read-

[1] See Appendix B. in Dr Collins' *Beginnings of English Christianity*.

ing between the lines of these letters we gather that the missionaries had heard unfavourable news of the English, and were alarmed at the difficulties of the journey, and of the strange languages with which they would have to deal. It also seems clear from the fact that they were directed to obey Augustine as abbot that the desire to turn back was not shared by him. In three of the letters—to the abbot of the great monastery of Lérins, the bishop of Aix, and the 'patrician' of Burgundy, who lived at Arles or Marseilles, Gregory mentions that he had heard news of them from Augustine, so that it may be inferred that the travellers had not got further on their way than Aix, or possibly Arles. By what route they accomplished the remainder of their journey we do not know: Gregory's letters seem to be intended to provide for alternative routes. The journey occupied some time, for the letters are dated July 23, A.D. 596, and Bede states that Augustine did not reach England until the following year. If he crossed early in A.D. 597 this would allow time for Ethelbert's baptism at Pentecost in the same year, and this is the traditional date. It may be conjectured that the missionaries crossed in a merchant ship from Boulogne, and Bede says that they landed in the isle of Thanet, then really an island. There is still much dispute as to the exact spot. It is generally supposed to have been Ebbsfleet, where tradition says that Hengist and Horsa had landed 150 years before. But it is also argued that the port of Richborough was the natural place for a ship coming from Gaul to put in, and that Ebbsfleet, as

far as this can be judged from indications of the configuration of the coast at that time, was an inconvenient place to land, and not a port at all. Richborough is not now in Thanet, but it was then an island, and may have been considered as belonging to Thanet and not to the mainland. And Thorn, the Canterbury chronicler, who wrote indeed long afterwards, but who knew the local tradition, which in such a matter is of considerable value, says that Augustine landed in Thanet, at Richborough, which makes it appear that in his time Richborough was still reckoned as a place in Thanet.[1] Wherever they landed, the party consisted of about forty men, including some Frank interpreters, who were by Gregory's directions to be priests. This has been understood to mean that the Frankish language was intelligible in England. But it does not seem to have been so sixty years later, for the King of Wessex then dismissed his bishop, Agilbert, because he was 'tired of his barbarous speech'; and it may be more probable that clergymen were to be found in Gaul who had learnt the language of their neighbours in England. Augustine sent to King Ethelbert to inform him that he had come from Rome, and that he brought the best of messages, and Ethelbert replied that the missionaries were to remain on the island, and to be supplied with necessaries. He shortly afterwards came himself to meet them, taking his seat in the open air, for fear of witchcraft, and the band approached bearing as a standard a

[1] The question of locality is fully discussed in Mason's *Mission of S. Augustine.*

silver cross, and a picture of our Lord painted on a panel, and singing litanies as they came. And when they had given their message the King answered that he could not then abandon his old beliefs, but he gave the missionaries hospitality in Canterbury, and full liberty to teach and to make converts.

As they approached the town, we are told, according to their custom, with the holy Cross, and the picture of the great King, our Lord Jesus Christ, they intoned in unison this litany : 'We beseech thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thy fury and thy anger may be taken away from this city, and from thy holy house ; because we have sinned. Alleluia.' The missionaries settled in Canterbury, and they were allowed the use of the old Roman church of S. Martin, which was also used by the queen. Whether her chaplain, the bishop Liudhard, took any part in their work is not stated. Nothing further is heard of him, nor is there any indication that he had previously done anything to gain adherents. The example however of the holy and devoted lives of the new settlers soon attracted converts, and when the King himself believed and was baptised great numbers of his subjects began to follow his example, although under the guidance of his new teachers, acting upon Gregory's instructions, he placed no constraint whatever upon their conduct. When the Christian faith had been firmly established in Canterbury, Augustine went to Arles, and in accordance with instructions received from the pope was consecrated by the Archbishop Virgilius (Bede wrongly calls him Aetherius) to be the first

archbishop of the English race. Upon his return he dispatched Laurence and Peter to Rome to inform the pope of what had taken place and to ask for guidance in a number of doubtful matters. The messengers did not set out from Rome on their return before June 22, A.D. 601; they brought with them a number of letters which will be dealt with later, and also a pall for Augustine, relics, vestments, and books; and they were accompanied by several more monks, among whom were Mellitus and Justus, afterwards archbishops, and Paulinus, the first bishop of York. After Augustine's consecration, he restored, with the King's assistance, another old Roman church in Canterbury, which he dedicated to Christ and made his cathedral. This church was burnt down in A.D. 1067. He also founded the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards called S. Augustine's, but this was not finished in his lifetime.

This is the substance of Bede's account of Augustine's doings after his landing. But something must be said about the order of the events. The traditional date of Ethelbert's baptism is Whitsun-eve, which in A.D. 597 was June 1; just a week, as noted above, before S. Columba's death. If the missionaries landed early in the year, this would seem a possible date. It has been argued, however, that two letters sent by Gregory to Ethelbert and Bertha by Mellitus in A.D. 601 imply that the king was still a heathen. It is true that Bertha is distinctly reproved for not having induced Ethelbert to become a Christian much earlier, but

the general impression left by the letters on most minds is certainly that the king had been converted. Bertha is told to confirm him in his attachment to the Christian faith, and he himself is urged to keep the grace given him by God, to spread the Christian faith, to drive out the worship of the idols, and overthrow the temples. It is difficult to see how the king's own conversion, short of a direct statement, could be more plainly implied. Now with regard to other dates, Gregory, writing in A.D. 598 to the bishop of Alexandria, speaks of Augustine's mission and consecration, and says that he has just received letters describing his success, and that more than 10,000 English people had been baptised at the previous Christmas. The traditional day of Augustine's consecration, mentioned by Thorn, his mediæval biographer, was November 16. The sequence of events would thus seem to be that Augustine landed early in the year A.D. 597, that he settled in Canterbury, used S. Martin's church, and made converts almost immediately; that the king was baptised at Pentecost; that Gregory's permission for Augustine's consecration was then obtained, and the consecration took place on November 16; that Augustine returned from Arles before Christmas, and was ready to baptise great numbers who wished to follow the example of the king at that season. If this were the course of events the year A.D. 597 was indeed an eventful year for the English race. There is some difficulty in the rapid sequence of events. It has been supposed that Augustine waited to keep Easter in

Gaul, but Bede's narrative seems to imply a longer period than seven weeks between his landing and the king's baptism. He may have landed earlier, though it would be more probable that he should cross in the spring rather than in the winter. Again the consecration would naturally have taken place on a Sunday, but November 16 was not a Sunday in A.D. 597, and this makes an additional difficulty. But on the whole the difficulties of any other theory seem to be greater. In any case we must suppose that Ethelbert and perhaps many of his subjects were strongly predisposed to accept the queen's religion, so perhaps the reproof administered to her by the pope was not quite deserved.

The replies sent by Gregory to Augustine's questions are of great interest and importance, but only the substance of most of them can be given here. There were nine questions in all, and they may be taken in order.

1. The first question was about the use of the offerings of the faithful. Gregory replies that the Roman custom was to divide all offerings into four portions, one for the bishop and his household, one for the clergy, one for the poor, and one for the repair of the churches. But as Augustine, as a monk, would live with his clergy, they should have all things in common, as in the early church. Clerks however below the order of subdeacon might marry and have stipends.

2. The second question and answer are so important that they may be given in full. Augustine's question: The faith being one, are

there different customs in different churches, and is one custom observed in the masses of the holy Roman Church, and another in the Church of Gaul? Pope Gregory replied: My brother, you know the custom of the Church of Rome, in which you remember your rearing. But I should like you carefully to select whatever you have found either in the Church of Rome, or in that of Gaul, or in any other, which may better please Almighty God, and to introduce, by an excellent arrangement, into the Church of the English, which is still new to the faith, what you have been able to gather together from many Churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. From all the several Churches, therefore, select the things that are pious, and religious, and right, and gather them as it were into a bundle, and store them in the minds of the English to form a custom.

Some remarks must be made about this question and answer.

(1) Augustine must have become familiar with the Gallican or non-Roman Liturgy during his journey through Gaul. This Liturgy is Oriental in character, and differs considerably from the Roman Liturgy. It is thought by some to have been introduced from the East in the second century at the time of the founding of the church at Lyons, but this view is now generally discarded. M. Duchesne thinks that it came through Milan towards the end of the fourth century. Another view is that the Gallican Liturgy was never 'intro-

duced' from the East at all, but that it is the original Western liturgy. According to this view the Roman Liturgy is the result of a reformation that took place at Rome in the fourth century, while the original liturgy held its ground in the provinces. On this theory the features which now appear Oriental are really simply primitive. However this may be (and the subject is full of difficulties) it was only of what he had seen in Gaul that Augustine was thinking. The Keltic liturgies[1] were Gallican in character, but he could hardly have had an opportunity of learning anything about them when he wrote. And there is no evidence that he availed himself of Gregory's permission to form an eclectic liturgy: it is on the contrary practically certain that he and his followers continued to use the Roman forms to which they had been accustomed.

(2) Gregory's answer shows a breadth of view and a tolerant liberality rare in any age, and unparalleled in his own. Uniformity has been a passion of the Roman see, and here is a pope urging diversity in matters of no small importance. This phenomenon is so remarkable that M. Duchesne, in his earlier edition of the *Origines*, disputes the authenticity of these answers altogether, not believing that such sentiments could have been those of a pope, and especially such a pope as Gregory, who did so much for the consolidation of the papal authority. M. Duchesne, partly following

[1] The scanty remains of the Keltic services are collected by Mr Warren in his *Liturgy and Ritual of the Keltic Church*, Oxford, 1881.

Mommsen, has changed his opinion, and the question of the genuineness of these answers need not be discussed here, but the fact that such doubts should arise is a striking testimony to the versatility of the genius of the great pope.

(3) Gregory here as in other letters of the same time treats 'the Church of the English' not as a mere mission, but as a fully constituted local Church, with power to decree rites or ceremonies. This however will be touched on again.

3. 'What should be the punishment for stealing from a church?' Gregory replies that it should be in accordance with charity and reason, and the Church should make no gain by it.

4. 'May two brothers marry two sisters?' Answer: they certainly may do so.

5. 'In what generation may cousins marry, and may men marry their stepmothers and sisters in law?' Gregory answers that the Roman law allowed the marriage of first cousins, but not the law of the Church. Second cousins may marry. It must be noted that the later Church law about the marriage of cousins was much stricter than this, and there is a letter of Gregory to Felix bishop of Messana, in which he says that he only gave this permission while the English Church was weak, and intended later to prohibit marriage within the seventh degree This letter is thought to be spurious, but even in early times the English Church did not avail itself of Gregory's permission. The second part of Augustine's question is strange, and Gregory of course answers it by a decided negative, but it was

probably suggested by some of those difficult cases which usually occur in the conversion of a heathen people, for Gregory adds that those who had entered upon such unions before baptism, as was the case with many of the English, were to be warned to abstain, but not deprived of Communion.

6. 'If bishops cannot easily come to a consecration, on account of distance, may bishops be consecrated by a single bishop?' It must be noted that the Council of Nicæa had ordained that consecrations should be performed by not less than three bishops, but consecration by a single bishop had not been declared invalid. Gregory answers that the Bishops of Gaul cannot come to England, and that as Augustine is the only bishop there he must for the present consecrate by himself, but he is to make provision for a sufficient number of bishops in the future. It is interesting to note that in A.D. 1076 Cyriac, archbishop of Carthage, wrote to Gregory VII under similar circumstances, and the reply then made was that a bishop should be chosen and sent to the pope to be consecrated. As a matter of fact in England Augustine consecrated the three bishops who succeeded him at Canterbury, Laurence, Mellitus, and Justus, without assistants, Justus consecrated Paulinus, Paulinus consecrated Honorius, the fifth archbishop, and Ithamar Deusdedit, the sixth archbishop, also without assistants, not to mention other cases, such as the early consecrations of Theodore. No objection appears to have been raised, but the calling in of two British bishops to assist in the consecration of Chad, and the mention

of the eleven assistants in the case of Wilfred, and seven in the case of Cuthbert shows that the rule of the Church was recognised.

7. 'How ought we to act with the bishops of Gaul and of Britain?' Gregory answers that Augustine has no authority over the bishops of Gaul, who are under the bishop of Arles, but that he may assist the latter in correcting any faults. But all the bishops of Britain are entrusted to Augustine's authority. It is not quite clear what either Augustine or Gregory meant by this question and answer, and possibly they did not quite understand each other. Augustine had been accused of arrogance for supposing that he was to have any jurisdiction in Gaul. But his question does not imply that he supposed anything of the sort, and Gregory's answer may mean that he was aware of irregularities in the Gallican church, and that he would have been glad if Augustine, without encroachment, could have done anything to improve the state of affairs. With regard to the 'bishops of the Britains,' Augustine may probably have meant the Keltic bishops with whom he was soon to be brought into contact, and Gregory has been censured for assuming that he had the right to place them in this unqualified way under Augustine's jurisdiction. But Gregory very probably knew little or nothing about them, and he may not have been thinking about them at all, but only about the bishops whom Augustine himself would consecrate, and his answer may have been the same concession of a superior position to Augustine himself which he makes in the letter

about the English hierarchy which will be mentioned below.

8. and 9. The two last questions have to do with matters of ceremonial purity. The questions may have been suggested by some of those special difficulties which are apt to arise in the conversion of heathen peoples, and the answers show the high spiritual tone and practical common sense which were characteristic of Gregory.

With these answers the pope sent other letters. Those to Ethelbert and Bertha have been already mentioned. It may be noted here that in writing to the king Gregory bids him 'drive out the worship of idols and overthrow the temple buildings.' But in a letter to Mellitus, written after his departure from Rome and sent after him while still on his journey, the pope sends a message to Augustine to advise him not to destroy the temples, but only the idols in them ; the buildings are to be purified and turned into Christian places of worship. The heathen festivals also are not to be abolished, but changed into Christian feasts. This conclusion the pope says that he has arrived at after anxious thought, so perhaps he may have changed his opinions somewhat since his letter to Ethelbert, but the advice in the second letter is only permissive, and perhaps he would not have thought it suitable to a newly converted king. He clearly realises the great difficulty of the problem, one of the most serious that a Christian missionary has to solve. We do not know exactly how Augustine acted in this matter, but as Bede tells us that Earconbert, the grandson of

Ethelbert, who succeeded in A.D. 640, was the first English king who caused idols to be relinquished and destroyed, we may infer that the missionaries adopted as tolerant a policy as possible. In another letter to Augustine the pope speaks of the gift of the pall, and propounds a scheme of bishoprics. The pall was a vestment the later form of which may be seen in the arms of Canterbury and other archiepiscopal sees. It appears to have been worn commonly by bishops in the East and in Gaul from about the fourth century as a sign of their episcopal dignity. But it was specially conferred by the emperor, and then by the pope, acting at first for the emperor, upon distinguished prelates. Eventually the right to bestow the pallium was confined to the pope, and the rule was gradually established that it must be received by metropolitans before they could exercise metropolitan authority. The vestment itself is made of the wool of the lambs of the convent of S. Agnes, and it is placed for a night on the tomb of S. Peter, to symbolise a sort of transference of the commission 'Pasce agnos meos.' At one time the popes insisted that the metropolitans should come to fetch their palls in person, but this was given up. In the time of S. Augustine we see the later rule in process of formation. Gregory writes to him that he sends the pall, to be worn only at Mass, so that he may ordain twelve bishops, etc. Boniface V. writes in similar terms to Justus, and Honorius I. sent palls to archbishop Honorius and to Paulinus in order that either of them might ordain a successor to the other. But in spite of the claim

clearly implied here Paulinus had consecrated Honorius to be archbishop before receiving the pall, and this as well as many other similar consecrations was accepted at Rome as perfectly valid without a word of remonstrance.

The scheme of bishoprics proposed by Gregory was simple. The bishop of London was to be metropolitan, and was to have twelve suffragans, and, when it should be possible, a bishop should be ordained for York, who should also be a metropolitan and if that part of the country should accept Christianity, might also have twelve suffragans. During Augustine's lifetime the bishop of York should be subject to him: afterwards the two metropolitans were to be independent of each other, but were to take counsel so as to act in harmony, and the senior in consecration was to have precedence. Some unnecessary scorn has been expended upon Gregory's scheme, which is supposed to show that he knew little or nothing of the actual condition of the English at the time. He very probably had little detailed information on the subject, but his plan was not very ridiculous, for within about a century the number of bishops in the Southern province had become, and long remained, very much what he had contemplated. Circumstances delayed the formation of the Northern province: the pall was sent to Paulinus, but did not reach him at York, and Egbert became in A.D. 732 the first archbishop of that see, with a number of suffragans which was, and after many centuries still remains, lamentably small; but this was not Gregory's fault. The obstinate

heathenism of Essex delayed the permanent foundation of the see of London until the primacy was too firmly fixed at Canterbury to be moved. The division of the English Church into two provinces has been in some ways a source of weakness, but it may have averted worse evils, and the country is certainly too large to be conveniently included in a single province.

Little is known about Augustine's work after his consecration except with regard to his unsuccessful negotiations with the British Church, and even about this Bede is careful to state that he was relying in great measure upon tradition. Through Ethelbert's assistance Augustine held a conference with 'the bishops and teachers of the nearest British province' at a place called Augustine's oak. The province has been generally supposed to have been what is now known as South Wales, and the place Aust on the Severn; but if the province were 'West Wales,' that is the peninsula now known as Devon and Cornwall, the place was more probably near Cricklade. Augustine is said to have worked a miracle, and a second larger conference was held, attended by seven British Bishops, and by representatives of the great monastery of Bangor Iscoed. There has been much speculation as to the sees of these seven bishops, but we really do not know in the least who they were or where they came from. The result of the conference is the most certain thing about it. The British are said to have been offended because Augustine did not rise to greet them, and to have rejected all his proposals and

refused to have him for their archbishop. Augustine's terms, as stated by Bede, were simple and moderate enough: they were three: first that the British should keep Easter at the proper time. The meaning of this will be explained later on: the question was destined to cause much friction, but as Augustine's object was that the two Churches should co-operate in the work of converting the English, he can hardly be blamed for stipulating that they should observe the greatest of Christian festivals at the same time. The second demand was that the British should 'complete the ministry of baptism' according to the custom of the Roman Church. What this could have meant we do not know. There is no hint anywhere else that anything was amiss in the British manner of baptizing. The practice of single instead of triple immersion, the omission of the use of unction, and the neglect of Confirmation have been suggested as possibilities, but none of these seems to be a satisfactory explanation. Perhaps Augustine had some reason to suspect a serious defect in the British practice which did not really exist. The third demand was that the British should join in preaching the word of God to the English nation. Perhaps this last condition was the main cause of the failure of the negotiations. The differences about Easter and about the Tonsure (which was not mentioned by Augustine) did not prevent the Scotic missionaries in Northumbria from co-operating with those who observed the Roman practice, although in this case there were more serious difficulties of Church

government in the background. But the British Christians, as appears later, were animated by an implacable though not unnatural hatred of all that was English, and a proposal to modify their own customs in order to evangelise their bitterest enemies was not likely to be welcome to them. It has often been stated that the real cause of the failure of the negotiations was an unwillingness on the part of the British to accept the supremacy of Rome, which Augustine is supposed to have insisted on. This is pure invention: there is not a particle of evidence that any idea of the kind occurred to either side.[1] If it is asked: who was more to blame? it may be fairly safe to say that, human nature being what it is, there must have been faults on both sides; but on the face of the narrative as it stands the unwillingness to co-operate was on the British side. At all events the fact is certain that the older Church stood aloof, and took no part whatever in the conversion of the English, and the foundation of the English Church.

Little more is known of Augustine's work. He died on May 26, apparently in the year A.D. 604, though there is some evidence for the year A.D. 605. Shortly before his death he consecrated three bishops, Laurence to succeed him at Canterbury, Justus for Rochester, which was in the kingdom of Kent, and Mellitus for London, which was in Essex. This last extension was due to the influence of Ethelbert over his nephew Sabert, who was King of

[1] For some remarks on the question of Roman supremacy, see Note B. at the end of this chapter.

Essex, and it was short-lived. But the English Church after only seven years' work was firmly and permanently founded in the kingdom of Kent. Augustine's mission has actually been sneered at by some modern writers as having effected very little, but if all missions had done anything like as much, there would be very little heathenism left now. It was a splendid result of a devoted life.

There has been a similar depreciation of Augustine's character. It has been said that he must have been faint-hearted, because he returned from Gaul for fresh instructions, and that he must have been arrogant, because he did not win over the British Bishops. The narrative as given above shows how little foundation there is for these suppositions. The point that has been most pressed is that he asked Gregory's advice about some details which are usually left to be decided by individual judgement. Therefore, it is argued, he was a man of a little mind. But men of little minds do not accomplish great works, and in the early stages of mission work little things may be for a time of considerable importance. We really do not know exactly what sort of man Augustine was. Bede had no such detailed information about him as he had about Aidan and Wilfrid, and he could not give us so lifelike a picture. What we do know about Augustine is that the greatest man of his age chose him to do the work which he would fain have done himself, and that he did it with absolute devotion and wonderful success.

It will be convenient to continue here the history of

the Church in Kent and the missions that immediately sprang from it as far as the date of the coming of Theodore. The English kingdoms were sufficiently distinct to make it difficult to narrate the history of their conversion in strictly chronological order, and it will perhaps conduce to clearness to take the work of Augustine and his successors as a whole before touching on the Scotic missions. Augustine was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by the three bishops whom he had himself consecrated. Laurence was archbishop from A.D. 604 to A.D. 619, Mellitus from A.D. 619 to A.D. 624, and Justus from A.D. 624 to A.D. 627. Very little is known of the work of the first two. Laurence continued the efforts of Augustine to come to an understanding with the Keltic churches: he wrote to the 'bishops or abbots' of the Scots to express his disappointment that they had proved as unfriendly as the Britons, for 'bishop Dagan, when he came to us, not only refused to eat with us, but refused to eat at all in the same lodging where we ate.' He had also learnt from the abbot Columban when he came into Gaul that the Scots were at one with the British in their usages. This Columban was one of the most famous of the Keltic missionaries. He went to Gaul about the year A.D. 585, founded a monastery at Luxeuil, and laboured with great success among the Franks and Burgundians in the neighbourhood of the Jura and Vosges. Later on he preached to the Suevi and Alemanni about the Lake of Constance, and then crossed the Alps, founded a monastery at Bobbio, and contended against the Arianism of the Lombards.

He wrote strongly in defence of the Keltic computation of Easter, and Laurence may easily have become acquainted with his works, and perhaps his words imply that he had met Columban himself when passing through Gaul. Laurence also wrote to the British bishops, but without any good result. Communications with Rome were maintained, for Mellitus was present at a council there in A.D. 610, and brought back letters from Boniface IV. In A.D. 613 the church of SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards S. Augustine's, was consecrated by the archbishop, and Augustine's body was translated to the northern porch. The first abbot Peter had been drowned when on an embassy in Gaul, his body being eventually laid in the church of the Blessed Virgin at Boulogne, and he had been succeeded by the abbot John. The only extension of the influence of the Church of which there is any information during this period was in East Anglia. Redwald, the king of that country, was baptised when on a visit to Ethelbert, but on his return his wife and some of his counsellors persuaded him to return to heathenism. He consequently attempted to combine the two religions, and had a temple in which there was an altar for the Christian Sacrifice side by side with one on which he sacrificed to his former objects of worship. Ealdwulf, his great nephew, who became king in A.D. 664, and was alive in Bede's day, remembered seeing this temple in his boyhood.

King Ethelbert died, after a long and prosperous reign of fifty-six years, in A.D. 616, and was buried by the side of his wife Bertha in the porch or chapel

of S. Martin, on the south side of the church of SS. Peter and Paul. It is not very much that is known about his life and character, but it is enough to show that he was a wise and tolerant king, who, when he had once embraced the Christian religion, supported it to the best of his power. His liberal spirit and his desire for the progress of his people are shown not only by his treatment of the missionaries, and his acceptance of the new religion, but also by the fact that he was the author of the earliest extant set of written laws which embody the old English customs; and the first place in these is given to affairs of the Church. The value of his support of the new religion was shown by what happened after his death. His son Eadbald was hostile to Christianity, perhaps because, in accordance with heathen custom, he had offended against the marriage law of the Church by taking to himself his father's widow, Ethelbert having married again after Bertha's death. The danger of the situation was aggravated by the death of Sabert King of Essex, whom Ethelbert had persuaded to become a Christian. His three sons, who succeeded him, had never really accepted the new religion, and on their father's death they openly relapsed into idolatry. Perhaps it was as a pretext for getting rid of the Christians altogether that according to tradition they demanded of the bishop Mellitus that he should administer to them the Holy Eucharist, and when he resolutely refused to do so unless they would be baptised, they drove him from the kingdom. He retired into Kent, and

the three bishops resolved to leave England altogether. Mellitus and Justus actually went to Gaul to watch events, and according to the story which came to Bede Laurence was about to follow them. But he spent the night before his departure in the church of SS. Peter and Paul, and when after many prayers he had fallen asleep, the Chief of the Apostles appeared to him, and scourged him, with reproaches for his intended desertion of his flock. The next day Laurence made yet another appeal to King Eadbald, showing him the marks of the scourge, and he prevailed. Eadbald renounced his marriage and was baptised, and his later history shows that he was sincere. There is no need to suppose either miracle or deception; the main facts of the story are independent of either, and it would easily assume the form in which it appears in Bede; but that the English Church was for a moment in a most critical condition is clear. Mellitus and Justus returned after a year's absence, but the former could not regain a footing in Essex, nor had Eadbald sufficient influence to restore him. In A.D. 619 he succeeded Laurence as archbishop. About the five years of his primacy Bede has nothing to tell us, except a story about a conflagration at Canterbury, and that letters were received from pope Boniface, though neither Laurence nor Mellitus appears to have had the pall. Mellitus suffered from the gout, and even if he had been in his full vigour there was probably little opportunity to do more than consolidate the work that had been accomplished in Kent. In A.D. 624 he was succeeded by Justus, the

only surviving bishop of the English Church. His translation from Rochester was announced to pope Boniface V., and the letter in which Justus described the results of his work probably contained some expression of disappointment, for the pope's reply commends his patient endurance, and is full of encouragement to persevere. The pope sent with his letter a pall, to be used only in celebrating the sacred mysteries, and permission to ordain bishops as need might require. Justus accordingly ordained Romanus to succeed him at Rochester.

And now at last a great extension of the Church was about to begin. For twenty eight years it had been practically confined to the little kingdom of Kent. The next ten years saw the planting of the Christian faith in the three great kingdoms of Northumbria, East Anglia, and Wessex. Mercia and Essex had still another thirty years to wait.

The Anglian people who had settled in the lands north of the Humber formed two kingdoms, Deira, which corresponds with the modern Yorkshire, and Bernicia, a long strip of country extending about half way across the country from the eastern sea, and reaching from the Tees to the Firth of Forth. When Ælli, the King of Deira, whose name has been mentioned in the story about Gregory and the slave boys, died in the year A.D. 588, the King of Bernicia seized the kingdom, and Edwin the infant son of Ælli was driven out. Æthelfrid succeeded his father on the throne of both kingdoms, and by a great victory in A.D. 603 over Aidan, the King of Dalriada, whom S. Columba had crowned, and by

another victory over the Britons at Chester in A.D. 613, he made Northumbria a great power. It was after this latter victory that the monks of Bangor Iscoed was massacred, a judgement upon them, some of the English Christians thought, for their rejection of Augustine; and the battle finally broke up the British power by separating the Britons of Strathclyde from those of Wales, as the latter had already been separated from 'West Wales' in Devon and Cornwall by the advance of Wessex. The dispossessed Edwin grew up in exile, sheltered at first, according to Welsh tradition, by the King of North Wales, and afterwards pursued by the hate of Æthelfrid from one place to another. In A.D. 616 he was at the court of Redwald of East Anglia, who refused, under circumstances which will be narrated later, to give him up to the emissaries of Æthelfrid, and knowing that this would provoke war, fell upon the Northumbrian king on the banks of the river Idle, before he had fully collected his forces, and defeated and slew him. Thus Edwin was raised to the throne of both the Northumbrian kingdoms, and just as he had himself been driven into exile, so now the sons of Æthelfrid, who were also Edwin's nephews, for Æthelfrid had married his sister Acha, found a refuge with the Scots, with results to English Christianity which will appear later on. Three of them, Eanfrid, Oswald, and Oswy, followed Edwin on the Northumbrian throne.[1]

[1] For this somewhat puzzling family history, see the genealogical table in Note C. at the end of this chapter.

The religious history of Kent was now to some extent to be reproduced in Northumbria. In A.D. 625, soon after Justus became archbishop, Edwin desired for his second wife the sister of Eadbald king of Kent, Æthelburh, a name more familiar in its Latinised form Ethelburga. This princess was known also by the pet name of Tata, which still survives in a meadow at Canterbury called Tatta's Leas. Eadbald shewed the sincerity of his conversion by declining to give his sister to a heathen, and Edwin thereupon promised that the princess and her attendants and clergy should have the free exercise of their religion, and that he would not refuse to embrace it himself if he should be convinced of its truth. Thereupon the marriage took place, and on July 21, A.D. 625, Paulinus was consecrated bishop by Justus to accompany the princess. Pope Boniface V. must have been promptly informed of these facts, for before his death in the following October, he had written letters of exhortation to both Edwin and his queen. But perhaps these letters have been wrongly ascribed to him, and were really written by his successor. No result followed immediately upon the preaching of Paulinus, but on the Easter Day of the next year Edwin was deeply moved by a narrow escape from assassination. An envoy from a Wessex prince, on being admitted to an audience, struck at the king with a dagger, and the king was only saved by the self devotion of one of his thegns, who threw himself between and was himself killed. On the same Easter night the queen bore a daughter, Eanfled, of

whom much will be heard later, and when Paulinus told the king of his prayers on her behalf he was so far moved as to promise in return that he would give up idolatry if he should be successful in the war which he purposed to make against the Wessex king who had tried to assassinate him, and he even allowed Paulinus to baptize his little daughter. Accordingly on the eve of Pentecost Eanfled was baptized, the first Northumbrian to be admitted into the Christian Church, with eleven others of the royal household. Edwin's expedition against Wessex was completely successful, and on his return he gave up idolatry, as he had promised, and devoted himself seriously to receiving instruction in Christian doctrine. The story which Bede tells of the way in which his mind was finally made up, is shortly this: When Edwin was under Redwald's protection he received private information that Redwald had yielded to Æthelfrid's repeated demands and threats, and had determined to kill him or give him up. Edwin was sitting in the dusk meditating in despair on this news, when a stranger came to him, and after inquiring the cause of his sadness, asked what he would do for anyone who would relieve him of his anxiety. Edwin promised that he would follow his instructions in every thing, and the stranger laid his hand upon his head, and bade him remember that sign, and disappeared. Shortly afterwards the friend who had given him the first information came to tell him that Redwald had changed his mind, and would protect him. The battle on the Idle, mentioned above, was the result.

And now, when Edwin was again sitting alone meditating on the choice of religions which lay before him, Paulinus approached and laying his hand upon his head bade him recognise that sign, and the king's determination was complete. Bede evidently believed that there was a supernatural element in these events, but it is very plausibly conjectured that the stranger in East Anglia might well have been Paulinus himself. The fact that Redwald had to some extent embraced Christianity makes it not unlikely that a Christian missionary from Kent may have been at his court, and Paulinus may have utilised the crisis in Edwin's fortunes to establish an influence over him. Bede certainly had no suspicion that this might have been the case, but in an age when the supernatural was constantly expected the story which reached him may easily have had as its basis a very simple foundation of fact. Edwin now formally brought the question before the Witenagemot, now first mentioned in history: he held council, Bede says, with the wise men. This is the first 'parliamentary debate' on record, and it is full of interest. Coifi the chief priest gave his opinion first, and declared himself favourable to a change of religion for the somewhat inadequate reason that his devotion to the service of the gods had not brought him the place in the king's favour and the general prosperity which he considered to be his due. But the thegn who spoke next struck a higher note, and made the celebrated comparison which Wordsworth has embodied in the beautiful sonnet 'Man's life is like a sparrow,

mighty king.' Human life, he said, is like a sparrow swiftly flying through the warmed and lighted hall; for a few moments he is safe from the storm and then passes from the winter into the winter. Even so this life of men appears for a little while; but what follows it and what went before it we do not know at all. If the new teaching has brought any certainty about this, we should do well to follow it. When others had spoken in the same strain, Paulinus was invited to speak of the God whom he preached, and when he had done so Coifi proposed that they should destroy their temples and altars, and, when the king had professed his adhesion to the Christian faith, offered to be the first to profane the temples where he had worshipped. Calling for a war horse and weapons, which as a priest he was forbidden to use, he rode out to the temple of Goodmanham, not far from York, and was the first to fling his lance at the sacred buildings, which were then promptly destroyed by his companions. The multitude, it is said, when they first saw the priest, thought him mad, but there does not appear to have been any opposition, and the whole story seems to indicate that the heathen religion had no very strong hold on the beliefs and affections of the people.

King Edwin was baptized at Easter, April 12, A.D. 627, at York with all his nobles, and a great number of his people. A temporary church had been hastily built of wood, and dedicated to S. Peter, but the construction of a more stately edifice of stone, enclosing the former chapel, was immediately begun,

and was finished by the next king, Oswald. York became the episcopal see of Paulinus, but he was an indefatigable missionary, and probably spent most of his time in directly missionary work. Bede tells us of one visit to the king in Bernicia, when he was engaged for thirty-six days from morning to night in catechising and baptising, and of many visits to places in Deira, where he used to baptise in the river Swale, for little was done at first in the way of church building. The stone altar of one church, however, which was destroyed in the heathen invasion in which Edwin was killed, still existed in Bede's time. In Bernicia, however, we are expressly told that before Edwin's death no church or altar or even cross had been raised. The work of Paulinus was not even confined to Northumbria: he also preached much in Lindsey, now Lincolnshire, and in the city of Lincoln he built a stone church, no doubt on the site of the present S. Paul's, which is short for Paulinus. In this church he consecrated Honorius to be the fifth archbishop of Canterbury. To one of his South Humbrian converts, who was baptised by him in company with many others in the river Trent, in King Edwin's presence, we owe a description of his personal appearance, given to the abbot of Partney, and repeated by him to Bede. Paulinus was a man of tall stature, somewhat bent, with black hair, and spare face, and a very thin hooked nose, looking at the same time venerable and formidable. He was accompanied by a most devoted assistant, James the Deacon, who carried on his work after Edwin's death, and long survived.

The missionary work of Paulinus in Northumbria went on without interruption for about six years. It is impossible to estimate exactly how much he accomplished. That great numbers were baptised is certain, and that as much instruction was given as one devoted bishop could give, and a willing people could receive is equally certain; but with the exception of James we do not know what assistants Paulinus may have had, and it is clear that the preaching of one man for six years could not suffice for the adequate instruction of all the Northumbrians. There must have been in any case much left for his successors to do, but that a firm and solid foundation was laid during these years is a fact about which there can be no manner of doubt.

The planting of the Church in Northumbria was the first great work accomplished outside Kent by Gregory's missionaries. The conversion of another great English kingdom was begun soon afterwards. The half Christian inclinations of Redwald of East Anglia, spoken of above (page 64), could hardly have had much effect upon his people. But Edwin, very soon after his own baptism, in the year A.D. 627 or A.D. 628,[1] was successful in persuading Redwald's son and successor, Earpwald, to embrace Christianity. Earpwald was soon afterwards killed by a heathen—apparently because of his change of religion—and three years of disorder followed. Then the late king's half brother Sigbert, whom his

[1] For the difficult East Anglian chronology see Plummer's notes, *Bede*, vol. ii. pp. 106, 107: The A.S. Chronicle gives A.D. 636 as the date of the foundation of Dunwich. This seems too late.

stepfather Redwald had driven into exile, made himself master of the kingdom. Sigbert had become a Christian in Gaul, and was, Bede says, a most religious and learned man. He had no doubt received instruction in one of the cathedral or monastic schools which flourished at that time in Gaul. He at once promoted Christianity in his kingdom, and a suitable teacher was ready to hand. A Burgundian named Felix, who had been ordained in foreign parts, and who may have been connected with the Irish Burgundian mission of S. Columban, desired missionary work, and put himself at the disposal of archbishop Honorius, who, perhaps in response to an appeal from the king, sent him to preach in East Anglia. Later writers say that Honorius made him a bishop, but the expression of Bede that he had been 'ordained' abroad, probably means that he was already a bishop when he came.[1] The king gave him Dunwich, afterwards swallowed up by the sea,[2] as the seat of his bishopric, and he worked in East Anglia with great success for seventeen years. In connection with this mission we find the first mention of the educational work of the English Church, a work which began in the very first days of the existence of the Church, and which happily continues in full vigour to the present day. King Sigbert, we are told, wishing to imitate the

[1] Stubbs, however, ascribes his consecration to Honorius. (*Reg. Sacr. Angl.* Oxf. 1858).

[2] The sea has been steadily encroaching on this piece of coast probably since the time of Felix. The fourteenth and sixteenth centuries were specially fatal to Dunwich.

good system that he had seen in Gaul, founded a school in East Anglia for the instruction of children in literature, and bishop Felix supplied them with masters and teachers after the custom of the men of Kent. This statement shows that Kent, even before the coming of Theodore, who, as will be seen later, did much for education, was already famous for its schools. These were no doubt, like those of Gaul, which Sigbert wished to imitate, attached to the cathedral churches and the monasteries.

A powerful religious influence of a somewhat different kind was exercised in East Anglia by an Irish monk named Fursey. He came into the country in the course of the ascetic wanderings to which so many Irish pilgrims devoted themselves, and was honourably received by the king. His preaching and example converted many to the Christian faith, and he founded a monastery at Burghcastle, which he afterwards left in the charge of his brother and other companions whom he had brought with him. Fursey himself passed on to Gaul and died in a monastery which he had founded at Lagny, on the Marne. His religious influence was of the ascetic and imaginative type characteristic of Irish Christianity, and the visions of angels and purgatorial fires which he used to relate were of a kind that very powerfully affected the popular religion of the Middle Ages. They were so real to him that one of his hearers, who told the story to a monk still living in Bede's time, had seen the sweat pouring from him on a cold day as he related them.

It will be convenient to mention here, before returning to Northumbria, the few facts that we know of the history of East Anglia and of Kent to the time of Theodore. Sigbert did not reign long in the former country. He retired to a monastery, but he was not allowed to end his days in peace. The country was attacked by the Mercian king Penda, and the East Anglians, who had more confidence in Sigbert than in his successor, brought him out against his will to lead their army, though he refused to bear any weapon except a staff. The East Anglians were completely defeated and both their kings were slain. The next king, Anna, was evidently an earnest Christian, but he is chiefly known through the zeal for the monastic life shown by the ladies of his house. His four daughters all ultimately became nuns. The most famous was Ædilthryth or Etheldreda, the foundress of Ely, of whom more will be said later; another was Sexburga, wife of Earconbert King of Kent, who founded the monastery of Minster in the isle of Sheppey, and ultimately became abbess of Ely, where she was succeeded by one of her daughters, while another became a nun at Brie. Anna's sister in law and step daughter also took the veil in Gallican monasteries, and the sister of the former was Hilda the famous abbess of Whitby. On one occasion that we know of the Christian influence of Anna and his family had important results. The King of Wessex, as will be narrated later, became a Christian in A.D. 635, but his son Coinwalch, who succeeded him, had remained a heathen, and after

his accession the position of Christians in Wessex must have been an anxious one. But Coinwalch was soon disturbed. He had married Penda's sister, and ventured to divorce her, and the warlike Mercian king marched upon Wessex and drove him out. He took refuge for three years at Anna's court, and there accepted the Christian faith, to which he remained true after his restoration to his kingdom. Felix died in A.D. 647 after an episcopate of 17 years, and he was succeeded by Thomas, his deacon, a native of the Fen district. He was the second Englishman advanced to the episcopate, and the fact that a native could be found fit to succeed the first East Anglian bishop is an indication of good missionary work. Thomas, after five years, was succeeded by a Kentishman, Berctgils, who took the name of Boniface,[1] and lived till A.D. 669, the year of Theodore's arrival in England. The close connection between Kent and East Anglia is shewn by his selection. King Anna lost his life in the same way as his predecessor. Penda again invaded the country, again bore down all opposition, and again the East Anglian king fell in battle. That the country fell under Mercian influence appears from the fact that Anna's successor, his brother Æthelhere, had to fight on Penda's side against Northumbria in the following year, A.D. 654, when both kings fell in the great battle on the Winwaed.

Now to return to Kent. In A.D. 624, as has been

[1] With Boniface the succession of bishops consecrated by Augustine and his successors came to an end.

stated above, Justus was translated from Rochester to Canterbury, and in the following year Paulinus went to York. Justus died in A.D. 627, and he was succeeded by Honorius, who had been one of the disciples of pope Gregory, and, according to an inscription in the monastery of S. Andrew at Rome (now S. Gregorio) a member of that monastery. He may have been one of the original companions of S. Augustine, but this is not certain. There was now no bishop of the Roman mission in England except Paulinus, for Romanus, whom Justus had consecrated to succeed himself at Rochester, had been sent on a mission to Rome and was drowned in the Italian sea. Honorius therefore went to Paulinus at Lincoln, and was consecrated by him there, as has been mentioned on page 73.

Honorius was archbishop for 26 years, and the history of his archiepiscopate would probably be full of interest, if we knew more about it, but Bede only gives the bare outlines of Kentish history during this period. It was in about the fourth year of his office that he sent Felix to East Anglia, and two years later Paulinus returned from Northumbria, under circumstances which will be narrated in the next chapter, and became bishop of Rochester. Shortly after this letters arrived from pope Honorius, accompanied by palls both for Honorius and for Paulinus, whom the pope supposed to be still bishop of York. In his letters the pope says that he sends the palls in order that the survivor of the two metropolitans may be able to consecrate a successor

to the other, without the inconvenience of having to send to Rome. The theory is clearly implied that without the pall they would have to send to Rome for a new archbishop, but of course as a matter of fact Honorius had already been consecrated by Paulinus without any reference to Rome, and the pope accepts this fact without remonstrance. The pope further implies that he sent the palls in response to a request from King Edwin, but it is not clear what the request actually was. In A.D. 640 King Eadbald was succeeded by his son Earconbert, the first English king, Bede says, who ordered the destruction of idols throughout his whole kingdom, and also the observance of Lent as a matter of civil law. This is one of the few mentions of idolatry in Bede's writings, and it shows that, as might be expected, it lingered for some time in the Christian kingdoms. The evidence of the laws and penitentials of a later date shows that heathen practices continued to be more prevalent than would be gathered from reading the Christian chroniclers, who would no doubt have thought it useless or inexpedient to dwell on the subject. In A.D. 644 Paulinus died, and a Kentishman, Ithamar, was consecrated by Honorius as his successor. Ithamar was the first English bishop, and Bede says that in life and learning he did not fall behind his predecessors. From this time forward most of the bishops were Englishmen, as were the two already mentioned whom Honorius consecrated for East Anglia. Honorius died in A.D. 653, and for some reason of which we know nothing, the see of Canterbury

was left vacant for eighteen months, when a West Saxon, who took the name of Deusdedit, was consecrated by Ithamar of Rochester. Ithamar himself dying not long afterwards the new archbishop consecrated Damian, a South Saxon, as his successor. Thus within a period of ten years, half a century after the coming of Augustine, five Englishmen were found worthy of the office of a bishop. So early an establishment of a native episcopate is out of the reach of most modern missions. Of Deusdedit himself nothing further is known. He died on July 14, A.D. 665, on the same day as King Earconbert, and the long vacancy after his death was filled by Theodore. It is now time to turn back to the fortunes of Christianity in Northumbria.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

A. *Authorities.* Almost the whole of our information about this period of Church History is derived from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (see note to ch. i). This continues to be the main authority until A.D. 731, when the book was completed. For some account of Bede's life and writings see chapter vi. Mr Plummer's invaluable notes supply what can be added of illustration and supplement from other sources. Original documents relating to the English Church are collected in vol. iii. of *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, by Haddan and Stubbs. Later traditions about S. Augustine are to be found in several mediæval writers: in a life by Goscelin (*c.* 1100), in the Bollandist *Acts of the Saints*, May 26; in Thorn's *Chronica* (*c.* 1400), printed in Twysden's *Decem Scriptores*, London, 1652; and in Elmham's *History* (*c.* 1415), printed in the Rolls Series.

Of modern books Dr William Bright's *Chapters of Early English Church History*, Oxford, 1878, revised edition 1897, is the most complete. It goes down to A.D. 709 and it is invaluable to the serious student. Dr Hunt's *The English Church from its Foundation to the Norman Conquest*, the first volume of *The History of the English Church*, edited by Stephens & Hunt, covers all this period. It is not on so large a scale as Dr Bright's book, but it is not inferior in learning or literary distinction, and it would be difficult to say more in its praise. The writer of this sketch desires to acknowledge the immense debt which he owes to Dr Stubbs, Mr Plummer, Dr Bright, and Dr Hunt. *The Mission of S. Augustine*, by Dr A. J. Mason, Cambridge, 1897, is most useful and interesting. It contains some excellent translations of the passages of Bede which deal with S. Augustine's mission. See also Collins' *Beginnings of English Christianity*, and Browne's *Conversion of the Heptarchy*. The lives of most of the principal characters mentioned in these pages are to be found in the Dictionary of Christian Biography, and the Dictionary of National Biography. Some of them are of great value, especially the articles in the former work signed by Dr Stubbs. Kemble's *Saxons in England*, and Green's *Making of England* are useful for some points, and for the history of monasticism Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, edited by Gasquet, may be consulted, but with caution. For Gregory the Great, see his *Life* by Mr Duddon.

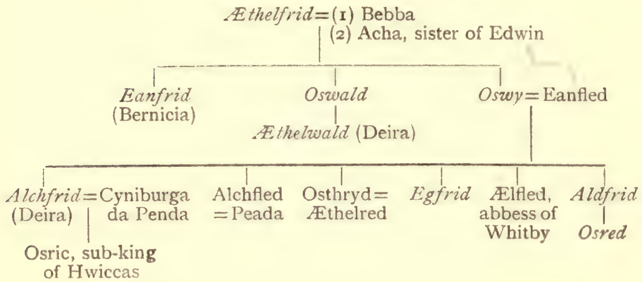
B. The idea that the supremacy of Rome could have been a subject of dispute between Augustine and the British Christians rests upon a complete misapprehension of the position of the Roman see in the Western Church at that time. The Keltic Churches were further away from Rome than the rest of Western Christendom, and their communications with the rest of the Church had for more than 100 years been reduced to very small proportions. But there is not the smallest particle of evidence to shew that their attitude towards the Roman see differed from that of the rest of the Western Church : all the evidence that exists is to exactly the opposite effect. What the position of the Roman see was at the time

when intercourse between the Keltic churches and the Continent became largely interrupted is admirably expressed by Professor Bury (*Life of S. Patrick*, page 61). 'At the end of the fourth century the Bishops of Rome, beyond their acknowledged primacy in Christendom, possessed at least two important rights which secured to them a large influence in the ecclesiastical affairs of the western provinces of the Empire. The Roman see was recognised by imperial decrees of Valentinian i. and Gratian as a court to which clergy might appeal from the decisions of provincial councils in any part of the western portion of the Empire. Of not less practical importance was another distinctive prerogative, which, though not recognised by any formal enactment, was admitted and acted upon by the churches of the West. The Roman Church was regarded as the model church, and when doubtful points of discipline arose, the bishops of the Gallic or other provinces used to consult the Bishop of Rome for guidance, not as to a particular case, but as to a general principle. The answers of the Roman bishops to such questions are what are called *decretals*. . . . The motive of the custom is evident. It was to preserve uniformity of discipline throughout the Church, and prevent the upgrowth of divergent practices. But those who consulted the Roman pontiff were not in any way bound to accept his ruling. The decretal was an answer to a question; it was not a command. Those who accepted it were merely imitating the Roman see; they were not obeying it.

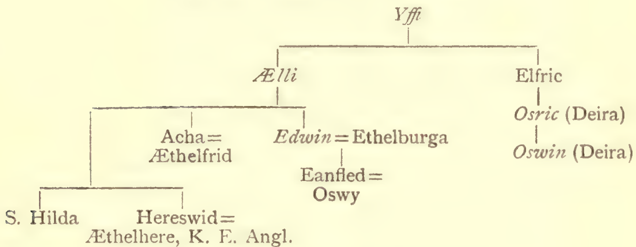
'The appellate jurisdiction, and the decretals which were gradually to be converted from letters of advice into letters of command, were the chief foundations on which the spiritual empire of Rome grew up.' Professor Bury adds: 'It is probable that excommunication by a Roman bishop was also recognised as universally binding. The question whether the popes had the right of annulling sentences pronounced by provincial councils on bishops depends on the question of the authenticity of the Council of Sardica.'

C.

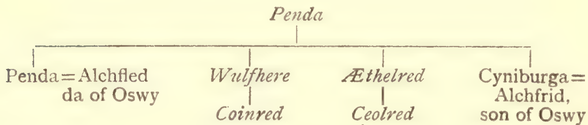
ROYAL FAMILY OF BERNICIA



ROYAL FAMILY OF DEIRA



ROYAL FAMILY OF MERCIA



CHAPTER III

AIDAN AND THE SCOTIC MISSION

THE missionary work of Paulinus in Northumbria has been already described; it remains to narrate its sudden and tragic close. Shortly before Edwin's baptism there had come to the throne of the Mercians a most strenuous prince, as Bede calls him, named Penda. The Mercians had been hitherto rather a tribe or collection of tribes than a kingdom, and they appear to have been under the supremacy of Northumbria. They now became a great power, destined in the next century to be the predominant power in England. Penda was already fifty years of age, but for nearly thirty years more he was the terror of all the neighbouring states. Wessex, still probably suffering from the effects of Edwin's invasion, was the first to be attacked, and then Penda attempted a bolder stroke. Edwin exercised a predominant power in England that had never been known before. All the kingdoms of the English except Kent, as well as those of the Britons, acknowledged his supremacy: he had defeated his hereditary foe, Cadwallon, King of Gwynedd or North Wales, and driven him to seek shelter in Ireland: he had subdued the Picts to the north of Bernicia, and given his name to their stronghold

which was henceforth known as Eadwinesburg or Edinburgh: he had established in his own kingdom a state of order and security which the English had hitherto never known, so that it was said in Bede's day that a woman with a newly born child might pass from sea to sea, and that none would do her harm: he even affected imperial state, and the Roman ensign, the Tufa, a bunch of feathers fastened on a spear, was borne before him through the streets of York. It seemed as though the unity of England, which was finally accomplished after many struggles through the supremacy of Wessex, would be realised under the Northumbrian predominance. The power of Edwin, while it was unbroken, was a fatal bar to Penda's ambitious schemes. And so he was ready, in the year A.D. 633, to take advantage of the hatred which Cadwallon, who had recovered his kingdom, naturally bore to the power which had inflicted so great disasters upon himself and his race, and the champion of heathenism allied himself with the Christian king of North Wales, and met Edwin on October 12, 633, at Haethfelth or Hatfield Chase, not far from Doncaster. Edwin's army was completely routed, and he himself was slain. The year that followed was disastrous to Northumbria. Penda, indeed, had no intention of trying to subdue the great kingdom: we hear incidentally that he burnt a royal lodge and a church at a place called Campodunum, so that only the stone altar survived, but otherwise he was occupied in consolidating his own power south of the Humber, and he left Northumbria to the vengeance of his Christian ally, who spared neither

sex nor age, as though he cherished the wild design of exterminating the English race. Paulinus bowed before the storm, and without more knowledge of the facts we can hardly venture to criticise his decision. Bede, at all events, does not hint at any blame. He returned by sea to Kent with the widowed queen and her two children, her daughter Eanfled, who was now to be brought up at the Kentish court, and a little son, who with a grandson of Edwin by his first marriage was afterwards sent for greater security to Gaul, where both died in infancy. The fugitives were kindly received by King Eadbald and archbishop Honorius, and Paulinus was placed in the see of Rochester, where he ended his days. The memory of this sad return was long kept alive in Canterbury by the large gold cross and the chalice which Paulinus brought with him from York, and in Rochester by his pall which he bequeathed to the church in which he died. Meanwhile the kingdom of Northumbria, which had been united under Edwin and his two immediate predecessors, broke up again into its two divisions of Bernicia and Deira. During Edwin's reign, the sons of Æthelfrid, whom he had defeated, lived in exile among the Scots, just as Edwin himself had been in exile during their father's reign. Now on Edwin's death they returned to Bernicia, and the eldest, Eanfrid, became king. In Deira, Edwin's cousin Osric succeeded him. Both the new kings were Christians, for Osric had been baptized by Paulinus, and Æthelfrid's sons had learnt the Christian faith from the Scots. But on their

accession both repudiated Christianity. This could not have been to conciliate their oppressor, who was himself a Christian: it was more probably the result of a heathen reaction caused by the misfortunes of the kingdom and Cadwallon's cruelties. In any case it was of no avail: Osric ventured to attack Cadwallon in York, where he had established himself, and was defeated and killed, and later on Eanfrid, coming to sue for peace, was murdered by the same tyrant. But this last act of treachery and cruelty on Cadwallon's part led to his overthrow. Æthelfrid's next son, Oswald, collected a small army, and established himself in a strong position called Heavenfield behind the Roman wall, some miles north of Hexham, and awaited Cadwallon's attack. Unlike his brother he had no intention of posing as a champion of paganism. On the night before the battle, as we are told by Columba's biographer, Adamnan, whose predecessor in the abbacy of Iona heard the story from Oswald's own lips, he had a vision of S. Columba standing in the midst of his camp and promising him victory. In the morning he caused a cross of timber to be hastily constructed, and held it upright with his own hands while the soldiers fixed it in the ground, and then in a loud voice called upon his army to kneel down and call upon the Lord for protection against their cruel enemy, as knowing that they had taken up a just war for the safety of their nation. Then in the early dawn they attacked the far larger British host and scattered it. Cadwallon was overtaken and killed some miles from the battle

field, by a little stream called Denisesburn, perhaps the stream now called Rowley Water.[1] The victory was complete, and the whole of Northumbria accepted Oswald as king. In Bernicia he was the undisputed heir, and as son of Edwin's sister, Acha, he had a claim on the allegiance of the Deirans even apart from his success. It was also a victory for Christianity. It is true that the defeated Britons were also Christians, but the circumstances of the battle were such as to make it impossible for any pagan opposition in Northumbria, if there were any, to raise its head. The cross which Oswald had raised as a standard long remained to bear witness to his appeal, and splinters from it were believed to have miraculous efficacy. Later on the Hexham monks offered the Holy Sacrifice there yearly on the day of Oswald's death, and in Bede's time a church had been built for their worship. The spot, Bede says, was rightly honoured, for as far as he could learn neither cross nor church nor altar had been before erected in the whole Bernician province. The work of Paulinus had been carried on mostly in Deira, and there it was continued without interruption even through the terrors of the invasion. When Paulinus left Northumbria he left behind him his devoted deacon, James, who for at least another

[1] There is some difficulty about the exact date of the battle. The Northumbrians refused to recognise the memory of the two apostate kings, and the 'hateful year' was reckoned as part of Oswald's reign. Bede does not mention the date of his *de facto* accession, but on the whole it seems probable that the battle was fought at the end of A.D. 634. For the site and date, see Plummer's note, in his edition of Bede, vol. ii, pp. 121-123.

thirty years laboured with much success in the church of York, teaching and baptizing many. He lived principally near Catterick, where he left his name to a village which cannot now be certainly identified, and after the restoration of peace he became particularly known for his skill in the Roman manner of singing, that is the plain song known as Gregorian, which was brought by Augustine to Canterbury. But although a solid foundation had been laid in Deira, and although Oswald's appeal to his army shows that even in Bernicia a considerable knowledge of Christianity had been instilled by the work of Paulinus, much remained to be done before Oswald's desire could be accomplished, that the whole nation over which he ruled should receive the Christian faith. Missionaries were urgently needed to carry on the work which had been so well begun, and Oswald turned as a matter of course to those from whom he had learnt himself. He sent to Iona, then under the rule of the abbot Seghine, the fourth in succession from Columba, and asked for a bishop to be sent; for in the early days of the Church a new mission was always, if possible, placed under the direction of a bishop, in order that from the first the apostolic ministry might be instituted, and provision made for such episcopal acts as Confirmation, and Consecrations. The story was told in Bede's time that on receiving this request the brethren of Iona sent one of their number who was of a somewhat stern disposition, who, finding no great readiness among the Northumbrians to accept his teaching, quickly

returned, and reported to the assembled chapter that he could effect nothing. And while they deliberated, a monk named Aidan gently suggested to the unsuccessful missionary that he might have been too hard upon untaught men, and have neglected the apostolic method of feeding them at first with milk. And this discernment so impressed the brethren that they agreed that Aidan himself should be sent. Bede does not pledge himself for the truth of this story, but there is nothing improbable in it, and at all events soon after Oswald's accession Aidan was consecrated bishop at Iona, either by bishops resident in the monastery or by some called in for the purpose (see page 10), and began a ministry in Northumbria which forms one of the most beautiful and inspiring episodes to be found in the history of Christian missions. Aidan's character is painted by Bede in glowing terms. He was a man, we are told, of the highest gentleness, piety, and moderation, one who fulfilled his own precepts and cared nothing for the world. He spent a large part of each day in study and devotion. His most conspicuous virtues were peace, charity, gentleness, humility, fearlessness in reproof of the powerful, clemency in consoling the weak and defending the poor: to sum up, he was one who strove to fulfil in deed all the precepts of the evangelists, apostles, and prophets. Under ordinary circumstances it would be necessary to accept such an estimate as this with a good deal of reserve. But there are many considerations which seem to show that the picture is hardly overdrawn. Bede

had excellent means of knowing what Aidan was like. Aidan died in A.D. 651, Bede was born in A.D. 672, and the latter spent his whole life in the country in which all the work of the former lay. Many of those whom Aidan taught must have been known to Bede, and the impression left by his life and teaching was still fresh. Sufficient time had not elapsed for the growth of legend—indeed there is a striking absence of the mythical element in what is told us about the Scotic mission. And while Bede had the fullest information, he was not naturally inclined to take an over favourable view of the character and work of the Scotic missionaries. The Keltic Christians were divided from those who had received their teaching from Rome by certain differences of practice which caused great heartburnings, and in some cases absolute schism, and the division still existed when Bede wrote. Some modern historians have spoken of the whole controversy with scorn, as being concerned with mere trivialities. But the main point in dispute was not so very trivial; it was of far greater practical importance than many of the things which cause bitter dissensions at the present day; and it certainly did not appear trivial to Bede, and he was on the opposite side to Aidan. It is a striking testimony to Bede's tolerance and breadth of view that he was able to recognise so ungrudgingly the virtues of an opponent, but he could not have been naturally inclined to exaggerate them, and so his evidence gains in weight. We may thankfully accept Bede's estimate of Aidan's character, and

what he says about his life and methods of working is no less significant. The choice of the island of Lindisfarne as the headquarters of the mission is characteristic. The Roman mission had naturally gone to York—Gregory had assumed as a matter of course that London and York, the two great centres of population, would be the two metropolitan sees—but apart from the fact that York was in the southern kingdom, it was the instinct of the Keltic monks to avoid the centres to which the Romans naturally gravitated. The general choice of islands for the Scotic monasteries was dictated both by the need of security and by a love of solitude. In Aidan's case only the latter motive would have been operative, and Lindisfarne had the advantage of combining freedom from distraction with a ready access to Oswald's court at Bamborough. The monastery over which Aidan presided as bishop and abbot was on the model of that of Iona, to which it looked up as its head. It was not a centre of diocesan organisation, which indeed hardly existed, but a missionary settlement, to which the bishop and his monks might retire for rest and spiritual refreshment in the intervals of their missionary journeys, and in which the work of training missionaries might go on continuously. As in other Keltic monasteries the monks lived in separate huts or cells, having a refectory and other buildings in common, and devoting their time, while on the island, to devotion, study, and agriculture. But Aidan himself was constantly travelling. He went from place to place on foot, only

using a horse when compelled by necessity, and addressing himself to all whom he met, whether rich or poor. A constant supply of Scotic monks came from Iona or elsewhere to assist him in his work, so that the country was continually traversed by missionaries who preached to all who would listen, while those who were priests baptised the converts. There was little or no organisation, but some churches were built, and monasteries founded, where English boys were instructed by their Scotch teachers. The churches were no doubt of the rudest description. Aidan's own church on Lindisfarne was replaced by his successor by a building which appeared to him suitable for an episcopal see, but even this was only built of wood, with a roof of rushes. It was not until the time of the seventh bishop that it was covered with lead. Nor did the building of a church mean anything like a parochial system. The primitive building would be used for preaching and the administration of the Sacraments when one of the missionaries came on his rounds, and then left until another visit. The Church in Northumbria did not advance under Aidan beyond the first stage of missionary work, but the devotion and success of the missionaries in that particular kind of evangelisation has seldom if ever been surpassed. And although the time had not come for organisation, Aidan did not neglect the most essential need of an infant Church—the training of a native clergy. He could count on a plentiful supply of Scotic missionaries as long as they were needed, but he also founded a school at Lindisfarne

where twelve English youths were always being trained for the sacred ministry. And when gifts were made by rich men to the mission, such parts of them as were not given to the poor were expended on the ransom of slaves who might be educated for the future service of their countrymen. And this life of activity was counterbalanced by a deep devotion. Besides his periods of retirement at Lindisfarne and elsewhere, he practised constant meditation and study. All who went with him on his journeys, whether monks or laymen, were held bound by the same obligation; the reading of the Scriptures and learning psalms being their special duty. This was Aidan's own daily practice, wherever he might be, and even on the rare occasions when he attended a royal banquet, he would hurry away early to read or pray. With him activity and contemplation went hand in hand. Aidan, like Paulinus, had the advantage of the active support of a king who was both powerful and devout. When he began his work in Northumbria he was imperfectly acquainted with the English language, and Oswald, who had learnt the Scotic tongue during his long exile was accustomed to interpret while the Bishop preached.[1] A most beautiful spectacle, Bede says; and indeed it would be difficult to find an instance in history of

[1] Very little is said by Bede, or by mediæval writers generally, about the way in which people who naturally spoke different languages communicated with each other. His narrative does not suggest that the Scotic missionaries found much difficulty in making themselves understood in Northumbria.

a more hopeful field for missionary work than Northumbria offered in the seventh century. It is seldom indeed that two such bishops as Paulinus and Aidan have been supported by two such kings as Edwin and Oswald. The latter indeed appears to have been able to combine the devotional habits of a monk with the active energy of the strenuous race of kings from which he sprang. He was said to have often remained in prayer from the time of Matins, which would not be later than three in the morning, until daybreak, and that the gesture which he used in prayer, of spreading out his hands with the palms upwards, had become so habitual to him that he was accustomed to sit with his hands so laid upon his knees. The habit of prayer did not desert him even in the hour of battle, and on the fatal field of Oswestry, when all further resistance was vain, his last words were a prayer for the souls of his soldiers. Whence, says Bede, it passed into a proverb: The Lord have mercy on our souls, as Oswald said when he fell to the earth. He was humble and affable to the poor and the stranger, as well as lavish in his bounty, both towards the poor and in the service of the Church. On one Easter day, it was said, he had taken his seat with Aidan at the banquet, when the thegn who had been specially appointed as one of the staff of royal officers to care for the relief of the poor brought news that a great number of poor folk had assembled in the streets and were asking an alms; whereupon the king not only bade that the food set before himself should be carried out to them, but

also that his own silver dish should be broken up and divided amongst them. And Aidan, in delight at so pious a deed, seized his hand and exclaimed 'May this hand never decay.' And indeed, Bede adds, his hands are still preserved in a silver casket in Saint Peter's church in the royal city of Bamborough, and venerated with fitting honour by all. Later chroniclers add other stories of Oswald's goodness, and the belief in the miracles worked at his tomb and by his relics spread far beyond his own land. And Oswald was at the same time a wise and powerful King. He succeeded in effecting a closer union between the provinces of Bernicia and Deira than had ever existed before. He was the natural heir to the throne of the northern province, as the eldest surviving son of Æthelfrid, and as the son of Edwin's sister Acha he had, at a time when strict hereditary succession was regarded as of little consequence, a very good claim to that of Deira. His victory over Cadwallon must have made him very acceptable to both provinces. And while he was stronger on the throne of the united kingdom than any of his predecessors, his supremacy was recognised, Bede says, by all the nations and provinces of Britain, by Britons, Picts, Scots, and English alike. No doubt Bede was more likely to overstate than to understate his power, but there was undoubtedly a real recognition of superiority, and in one case, at least, this must have contributed to the spread of Christianity. For about the time of the coming of Aidan to Northumbria a new and independent mission came

from Rome. A certain Birinus, whom tradition afterwards affirmed to have been a monk in S. Gregory's monastery of S. Andrew, offered himself to pope Honorius as a missionary to the English, promising that he would sow the seeds of the most holy faith in the furthest parts of the English, whither no teacher had gone before him. At the pope's command he was consecrated bishop by Asterius, archbishop of Milan,[1] and sent to England. He does not appear to have been accredited to the church at Canterbury, or to have held any communication with the Archbishop; perhaps because it was his intention to break entirely new ground, and address himself only to those who had been altogether untouched by the previous mission; perhaps also because the pope, who, as has been seen, had sent letters to Edwin and a pall to Paulinus which arrived some time after Edwin's death, may have received the news of the Northumbrian disaster and the retirement of Paulinus, and may have thought that the whole English mission had been overwhelmed. Anyhow Birinus landed in Wessex, and finding the whole population completely heathen, judged it unnecessary to go further. He had clearly been sent as a purely missionary bishop, and left free to select any field for his labours that was not already occupied. He soon won, like Augustine and Paulinus, a royal convert. Cynegils, who had already reigned for twenty four years, listened to his teaching, and his

[1] Bede calls him bishop of Genoa. He died at Genoa, and perhaps acted as bishop of that see.

willingness to accept it would not be diminished by the fact that the Christian Bretwalda Oswald was at that very moment a suitor for his daughter's hand. Cynegils had been prepared for baptism when the two kings met at Dorchester, near Oxford, on the banks of the Thames. Before the marriage took place Oswald was sponsor to his father in law, and lifted him up, according to the usual rite, as he stepped out of the sacred font. That he exercised an active influence in the whole matter is natural enough, and seems to be implied in Bede's further statement that both kings gave to the same bishop the city of Dorchester for his episcopal see. Oswald's sanction as Bretwalda can hardly have been necessary in a matter so purely domestic, but perhaps a common fear of Mercia may have drawn Northumbria and Wessex closely together, or Oswald may have helped in making purchases of land necessary to the donation. The West Saxon bishopric thus founded at Dorchester was transferred after not so many years to Winchester, and must not be confused with the later Mercian bishopric which existed for a time in the same place (see below, page 171), and was ultimately transferred to Lincoln. Birinus worked there for about fifteen years. Bede says that by his pious labours churches were built and dedicated and many people called to the Lord. But we possess no detailed account of the conversion of Wessex. Bede had little information about the south of England, and what he had does not seem always to be perfectly trustworthy. But the history of the conversion of Wessex, if we

knew more about it, would be full of interest, for not only was it the kingdom destined two centuries later to unite the whole of the English people under its rule, but its close contact with the British in the west brought it into nearer relations with the Keltic Church. The prince who a few years before had attempted to assassinate Edwin, the son and colleague of Cynegils, Cuichelm, was baptised not long after his father, and Birinus after a few years baptised also Cuichelm's son Cuthred. But when Cynegils died in A.D. 643 he was succeeded by another son, Coinwalch, who was still a heathen, and who became a Christian, as has been already narrated on page 77, through his exile in East Anglia. After the death of Birinus, Coinwalch obtained the services of a Frankish bishop named Agilbert, who was passing through his country from Ireland, where he had been residing for some time for the purpose of studying Scripture, for the Irish monks were already famous for their learning and devotion. Where Agilbert had been consecrated bishop is not stated, but for several reasons it was probably in Gaul. If so, he was probably not consecrated to a particular diocese, or he could hardly have left it to study in Ireland. More will be said about Agilbert later on,[1] but the further progress of events in Northumbria must be first noted.

When Oswald first established his power in Northumbria, Penda of Mercia appears to have been occupied elsewhere, but it was hardly probable that they should remain very long at peace. A

[1] See page 118.

twelfth century life of Oswald says that he defeated Penda and drove him into Wales, where, as before, he acted in concert with the Welsh. What is certain is that there was a great battle at Maserfield on August 5, A.D. 642, in which Oswald's army was destroyed, and he himself slain. The place is almost undoubtedly Oswestry in Shropshire, the name Oswald's Tree (*i.e.* Cross) being derived from a cross set up either by Oswald himself, or by those who came after him, to mark the battlefield. Penda ordered his head and limbs to be cut off and hung on stakes, and a year later they were borne off by his successor Oswy. His head was laid in the cemetery of Lindisfarne, and when in the ninth century the monks fled inland from the Danes, they enclosed it in S. Cuthbert's coffin, and bore it with them until they finally reached Durham, where it now rests. His bones were translated some thirty years after the battle to the monastery of Bardney in Lindsey, where the monks, unwilling at first to receive the remains of one whom they regarded as a foreign conqueror, were soon induced by a miraculous column of light to pay them every honour. This was but one of innumerable miracles ascribed to the relics of the saint: his fame spread over Europe, and many legends testify to the effect produced by his holy life and heroic death.

The battle of Maserfield appears to have been as complete a Northumbrian defeat as that of Hatfield, and Oswald was not inferior to Edwin as a ruler or a Churchman. But his defeat and death did not produce the deplorable results to his country

which followed the former battle. The progress of the Christian religion was not materially checked, nor was the prosperity of the country greatly affected. One important political result did indeed follow. The whole of Northumbria had been united under Oswald's rule, but Deira now claimed again to have a king of her own. Oswald's son Æthelwald could not have been more than seven years of age, and according to the ordinary practice in such cases he was set aside in favour of his uncle Oswy, who apparently succeeded without question in Bernicia. But in Deira the representative of the other branch of the royal house, Oswin, the son of the unfortunate Osric, shortly afterwards became king. Oswy was probably in no position to raise any objection. Penda appears to have marched northwards after his victory ravaging the country far and wide, and to have endeavoured to humble the Northumbrian power by striking at the royal city of Bamborough. It was too strong a fortress to be captured by assault, but Penda collected great masses of combustible materials from the villages which he destroyed in the neighbourhood, and piled them against the walls on the landward side. Then after waiting for a favourable wind he set the mass on fire, in the hope of burning the whole town. Aidan, in retreat upon the island of Farne, two miles away, saw the flames and smoke mounting to the sky, and is said to have raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and to have exclaimed: 'Behold, Lord, what evils Penda is working.' Upon which the wind immediately changed, and driving the flames back

upon the besiegers, caused them to abandon the siege. No further information about the hostilities has come down to us, but the fact mentioned above, that a year after the battle of Maserfield, Oswy was in a position to carry off his brother's relics from the field of battle, which was far beyond his own borders, seems to shew that the Northumbrian power had been by no means crushed. It was possibly with a view to uniting more closely the two royal families that Oswy sought the hand of his kinswoman Eanfled, the daughter of Edwin, who had remained in Kent since she had been brought there by Paulinus in A.D. 633. He sent a priest named Utta to fetch her, and although Utta made the journey to Kent by land, it was not thought safe for the princess to return the same way, and she came back to Northumbria, as she had left it, by sea. Before setting out Utta had asked for Aidan's blessing, who also gave him a vessel of consecrated oil, and bade him to pour it on the sea, if, as he anticipated, a storm should come on. And so it fell out, and the storm was appeased. This tale, Bede says, came to him from no doubtful authority, but from a very faithful priest of his own church, who had it from Utta himself.

The relations of Aidan to the new King Oswy were very much less intimate than those in which he had stood to his brother Oswald. In fact, for reasons of which we have no explanation, he appears to have transferred his activities to the southern province, and his personal affection and intimacy to King Oswin. It was probably not possible to be a

persona grata at both courts. And King Oswin was a man of great attractiveness. He was, Bede says, of great stature and of a manly beauty; he was pleasant in speech and civil in manners, and bountiful to all alike whether noble or ignoble. His royal gifts of body and mind caused him to be beloved by all, and the best born men of the neighbouring provinces were eager to enter his service. But his most striking virtue was humility, and this Bede illustrates by a story which ascribes to the king a submissiveness, and to Aidan a contempt of earthly things and an undiscriminating benevolence which appear to us somewhat extravagant, but which were qualities highly prized in a rude and simple age.

Causes of dissension were not wanting between the two Northumbrian kings, though we do not know what they were. In A.D. 651 they both collected armies with the intention of making war. But before it came to actual fighting Oswin recognised that he was the weaker, and determined to disband his army and wait for better times. He himself went into hiding, with a single faithful attendant, at the house of one of his thegns, whom he believed that he could trust. But his treacherous host betrayed him to Oswy, who basely caused him to be put to death. Oswy afterwards repented of this deed, and at the request of his wife Eanfled, who was Oswin's second cousin, gave land to found a monastery at Gilling, the place of his death, in order that daily prayers might be offered there both for the murdered king and for the author of

his death. The first abbot was a kinsman of Oswin, named Trumhere, who had been educated and ordained among the Scots, and who afterwards became the third bishop of the Mercians. Oswy reaped no benefit from his crime. He did not succeed in making himself king of Deira, even if he attempted to do so; and the next king was at least as unfriendly as Oswin could have been. He was Æthelwald, the son of Oswald, the natural heir to both the kingdoms, now about sixteen years of age. In spite of the fact that he was Oswald's son his elevation to the throne may well have been due to the influence of Penda, whose interest it was to keep the kingdoms separate; and, as will be presently seen, the new king remained neutral in the great final struggle between Mercia and Northumbria.

On the twelfth day after the death of the king he loved, on August 31, A.D. 651, a day ungratefully ignored by the English Church, Saint Aidan himself passed away. He fell ill near Bamborough, where he had a little church and a bedchamber on the king's estate. He may have been on one of his evangelising journeys, for he was accustomed to make the king's 'villas' his centres whence he used to go out and preach in the surrounding country. He was either seized by a sudden sickness, so that he could not be borne to his chamber, or he remained outside for the sake of fresh air, for an awning was attached to the western side of the church, and there he died, leaning against the wooden beam which served as a buttress. And it was said that

when later on Penda in one of his raids into Northumbria burnt the village and the church, this beam could not be consumed. It even survived a second conflagration, and being placed as a relic inside a third church it became an object of veneration, and the cause of many wonderful cures.

Aidan was succeeded as bishop by Finan, who was also a Scot consecrated at Iona. This was in the natural course of things. Aidan's death must have been a great loss to the Church in many ways, but there was at all events no want of activity under his successor, and the results of Aidan's work were soon to make themselves felt even outside the region of his own activity. Although he himself never appears to have extended his influence outside of Northumbria, even as Augustine's work was practically confined to Kent, the Northumbrian Church, within a few years after his death, was instrumental in beginning the conversion of all the central and some of the eastern districts of England. The first occasion of this extension was given, as in Northumbria, by marriages between members of the royal families. During the intervals when Penda was not raiding Northumbria, some friendly intercourse between the kingdoms took place, and so it came about that Alchfrid, Oswy's eldest son, married Cyniburga,[1] one of Penda's daughters, and

[1] Cyniburga was one of five of Penda's children who died in the odour of sanctity. She is said to have taken the veil with her sister Cyneswith at Castor in Northamptonshire. They are connected with the alleged endowment of Peterborough by Oswy and their brother Wulfhere, and their bodies were translated to Peterborough.

became intimate with his son Peada, who was king under his father of the 'Middle Angles' in the district around Leicester. Peada, in his turn, desired to marry Oswy's daughter Alchfled, but it was made a condition of the marriage, as in the case of Edwin and Ethelburga, that he and his people should become Christians. He accordingly received instruction, and attracted, as Edwin's thegn had been, by the doctrines of the resurrection and of immortality, and moved by the persuasions of his brother in law, he declared his wish to accept Christianity apart from the question of his marriage. He was accordingly baptised by Finan together with his whole train in the king's town called 'Ad Murum,' near Newcastle, and returning he took with him four priests, three Englishmen and a Scot, who proceeded to preach with great success and to baptize many converts. Two of these priests, Cedd and Diuma, will be heard of again. Nor were their ministrations confined to Peada's own country, for although Penda had no intention of becoming a Christian himself, he did not forbid the preaching of the Christian religion to any in Mercia who might wish to hear. He reserved his hatred and contempt for those whose works were not consistent with the faith that they professed. These things took place about two years before Penda's death. They do not necessarily imply a change in his attitude towards Christianity, for although his hand had been heavy on the Christian kingdoms there is nothing to indicate that he felt any special animosity against their religion.

At about the same time that the first missionaries entered Mercia, another kingdom came under Christian influence. Nothing has been heard of Essex since the death of Sabert (page 65) and even the names of the kings are uncertain. But at this time the king, who was named Sigbert, was on terms of close friendship with Oswy, and often came to visit him in Northumbria. Oswy, who evidently had a real zeal for his religion, often discoursed with him on religious matters, dwelling especially on the folly of idolatry, and the unity and omnipotence of God; and at length, after much consultation with his own people, the king and his attendants were baptised by Finan in the same town 'Ad Murum' which had so lately witnessed the baptism of Peada. On his return from Essex Sigbert asked for teachers to instruct his subjects, and Oswy summoned Cedd from the work which he had begun in Mercia, and sent him with another priest into Essex. Here they gathered together a Church, and after a time Cedd returned home, and conferred with Finan at Lindisfarne, and Finan on hearing the report of his successful work summoned two other bishops, and consecrated Cedd to be bishop of the East Saxons. This explicit information about Cedd's ordination is noteworthy, because one among the many absurd fables which have been current about the history of this time is that the Scotic Church was not episcopal but presbyterian in its organisation. This passage of Bede, even if it stood alone, would be a sufficient refutation of this; and it may be particularly noticed that in this

case Finan was careful to observe the canonical practice of having three consecrators. This, as has been noted before, was not considered always necessary among the Kelts, nor did Gregory insist upon its being observed in the early days of the English Church, but the rule was evidently known, even in Scotland, and acted upon when it was possible. The bishops summoned in this case were no doubt Scots from Iona or elsewhere. It should also be noted that Bede had not the least doubt of the validity of the Keltic Orders, though, as will be seen, Theodore and Wilfrid appear to have had some scruples about recognising them.

On his return to Essex we are told that Cedd fulfilled his work with greater authority, making churches in different places, and ordaining priests and deacons to assist him in teaching and baptizing. It has been supposed that a germ of a parochial system is visible here, and it is very probable that individual priests may have been stationed in charge of the churches here mentioned. But a complete parochial system was not founded, as has been sometimes imagined, all at once, but grew up by slow degrees.[1] Cedd himself made the principal centres of his work at two monasteries, one at a place called Ythancaestir, probably Othona, an old Roman station now covered by the sea between the Blackwater and the Crouch, the other at Tilbury

[1] The fact that the word 'parochia'—parish—was used in Bede's time and afterwards for a bishop's 'diocese' has caused some confusion, and this is one of the reasons why it has been thought that the 'parochial system' was of earlier date than was really the case.

on the Thames. Nothing is said of any connection of Cedd with London, though Mellitus before him and his own successors are called bishops of London. Perhaps at this time London was more dependent upon Mercia than upon Essex, or it may have been practically independent. Cedd did not spend the whole of his time in his diocese. He made frequent visits to Northumbria, and was held in high esteem by Æthelwald the king of Deira the son of Oswald, who had one of Cedd's brothers as his chaplain. The king invited Cedd to accept a grant of land for the foundation of a monastery, where he himself might resort for purposes of devotion during his life, and where he might be buried after his death. For he believed, says Bede, that he would receive much help from the daily prayers of those who would serve God in that place. Cedd, in accordance with the instincts of one who had been brought up by Scotic saints, chose Lastingham, then a wild and desolate mountain spot, as the site of his monastery, and he proceeded to consecrate it to its holy uses, in accordance with Scotic custom, by fasting and prayer. He spent the season of Lent there, fasting strictly, on every day except Sunday, until the evening, and then taking only a little bread, one hen's egg, and a little milk and water. He was called away by the king before he had completed the fast, but another of his brothers supplied what was wanting. The idea that desert places were in a special way the abode of evil spirits is partly the explanation of this Scotic practice. From this time until his death

Cedd divided his time between Essex and Lastingham, and when he died in the year of the great plague, as will be narrated later on, he was succeeded as abbot by his brother Ceadda or Chad.

King Sigbert did not long survive his conversion to Christianity. He was murdered by two brothers, his thegns and kinsmen, who had no other reason to give for their crime than that they were angry with the king because he spared his enemies, and forgave injuries. If the king had put the precepts of the Gospel into practice in such a way as to arouse the opposition of the old heathen spirit, he well deserves the title of Sigbert the Good which was bestowed on him. But there may have been some more personal reason for his murder. One of these two nobles had contracted an unlawful marriage, and the bishop, after trying remonstrances in vain, had excommunicated him. This is the only instance mentioned in Bede of the exercise of this power, and in this case the offender had not only been cut off from spiritual privileges, but the bishop had also forbidden all who were willing to hear him to enter the house of the offender or to accept his hospitality. The king however had disregarded this injunction, and had accepted an invitation to a banquet. On coming away he met the bishop, and being pricked in conscience leapt from his horse, and throwing himself at the bishop's feet asked pardon for his fault. The bishop also dismounted, and touching the king with the wand that he bore in his hand solemnly told him that as he had been unwilling to abstain from entering the

house of that abandoned man, in that same house he would have to die. The story certainly indicates a sternness on the part of the bishop not unusual among the Kelts and their pupils, but it must also be remembered that the legends of S. Patrick show how the temper of the early teachers was liable to be misrepresented by those who came after them, and that prophecies very frequently make their appearance after the event.

The death of Sigbert did not however cause a heathen reaction. His successor, Suidhelm, was also a Christian. He was baptized, whether before or after his accession is not stated, by Cedd himself in East Anglia, at Rendlesham in Suffolk, and Æthelwald the king of East Anglia (who must not be confounded with the king of Deira spoken of above), was his godfather. This shows that there was friendly intercourse between the two kingdoms, and very probably the East Anglian king had exerted his influence, as was so often the case, in favour of Christianity, but what the particular circumstances were, and why Cedd should have performed the ceremony outside his own diocese instead of the East Anglian bishop Boniface, does not appear.

There is little more to be said about Essex. It was one of the weaker kingdoms, and has very little history. At the beginning of this period we found it under the influence of Kent. It seems to have become little more than a dependency of Mercia. So we are told that when in the plague year, A.D. 664, one of the Essex kings abandoned

the Christian faith, and with a great number of his nobles and people began to restore the deserted temples, and to revive idolatry, Wulfhere the king of Mercia, to whom the kings of Essex were then subject, sent the Mercian bishop Jaruman to bring back the king and people to the faith, and in this he was entirely successful. Bede had his information about this from a priest who had accompanied and assisted Jaruman in the work. These things must have taken place shortly after the death of Cedd, for he came back to his diocese [1] after the Council of Whitby in A.D. 664. King Wulfhere did not behave so well in providing a successor to Cedd as he had done in contending against heathenism, as will be seen later.[2]

Here however we have been anticipating, in order to put together the few facts that are known about the history of Essex. The narrative of events in Northumbria must now be resumed.

The attacks of Penda upon Northumbria, which were not long intermitted on account of the marriages of his son and daughter to children of the Northumbrian king, were now drawing to their close. The events which led to the last decisive battle are somewhat obscure. Bede says that Oswy endeavoured to buy off Penda's raids by offering

[1] That is, he returned to his see, 'ad sedem suam.' Bede H. E. iii. 26. But this may very well mean Lastingham, where he died before the end of the year. Dr Browne suggests that the king who apostatized—Sighere—may have ruled over London and its neighbourhood,—London not being mentioned at all in the account of Cedd's work. Browne, *Conversion of the Heptarchy*, p. 155.

[2] See page 118.

him all the treasures that he could collect, but that Penda refused them. A passage of Nennius speaks of great wealth having been extorted by Penda, which on the face of things seems more probable. But in any case Oswy's position must have been a very uncomfortable one. His younger son Egfrid, who afterwards succeeded him on the throne, was a hostage in Mercia; Æthelwald of Deira was openly on Penda's side; East Anglia was practically under Penda's control, and its king Æthelhere was in some way that Bede does not explain the cause of the final contest; and the Welsh annals make it clear that Penda could always rely upon British support when he wished to attack Northumbria. Two years after his son Peada's conversion to Christianity, in the year A.D. 655[1] Penda advanced with a great host, and Oswy, though with far inferior forces, determined to resist to the uttermost, vowing in case of victory to devote his daughter to the religious life, and to give twelve estates for the building of monasteries. The great battle was fought near the river Winwaed, at a place which cannot be identified with any certainty: it is not even clear whether it was in Bernicia or Deira. Æthelwald of Deira was with Penda's host, and guided its movements, but during the actual battle he withdrew and awaited its result at a safe distance —an undignified position not worthy of his father's son. The battle was sufficiently decisive: Penda

[1] Bede gives the date in one place as A.D. 654. But other passages show that the year A.D. 655 is more probable. See Plummer's note on Bede iii. 24, where the place of the battle is also discussed.

himself and almost all of the thirty chieftains who fought under his command perished, and the river, which was in flood, drowned more of the fugitives than fell by the sword. The victory on the Winwaed produced almost as great a change in Oswy's position as that of Heavenfield had effected for his brother Oswald. Before the war he had been master of Bernicia only, and even that on a precarious tenure. Penda had repeatedly penetrated into the heart of his kingdom, and he was hemmed in on all sides by Penda's allies: on the north the Picts, on the west the Britons, and on the south his treacherous nephew in Deira. But after Penda's defeat everything was changed, and Oswy's suppremacy was unchallenged. He subdued a great portion of the Picts and Scots, though we do not know when or how. The whole of Northumbria fell naturally into his hands: Æthelwald, in spite of his prudent conduct on the eventful day, could hardly hope to retain his position:[1] he disappears from history, and Alchfrid, Oswy's eldest son, takes his place as king of Deira under his father. And this was not all, for Mercia itself fell for the three years which followed Penda's death under Oswy's immediate rule. The South Mercians, or Middle Angles, on the south of the Trent, remained for a time under Peada, but not many months elapsed before he was nefariously murdered, through

[1] Or had Æthelwald been already turned out of Deira in favour of Alchfrid? If so there was a sufficient reason for his joining Penda. But if he had already lost his kingdom he would hardly have hesitated in the battle itself.

the treachery, it was said, of his wife, Oswy's daughter; but no further explanation is given of this mysterious tragedy. Together with Mercia Oswy probably practically controlled East Anglia and Essex. Kent and Wessex were out of the sphere of his influence or ambition, but with the former kingdom at all events we find him on a later occasion on conspicuously friendly terms. After the state of unrest in which Penda's propensities must have kept all his neighbours the hegemony of Oswy doubtless proved a most welcome relief. Owsy punctually fulfilled the vow which he had made. He gave twelve 'possessions' of ten hides each, six in Bernicia and six in Deira (which shows that he was now for the first time in practical possession of the southern province), for the building of monasteries, and he sent his little daughter Ælfled, then less than one year old, to the monastery of Hartlepool, of which the celebrated Hilda the great-niece of Edwin was abbess. Thence she passed with Hilda two years later to one of the new houses founded by Oswy at Streaneshalc, afterwards called Whitby by the Danes, and in the course of time herself became abbess of that famous house. But the consequences of the victory to the advance of Christianity were not confined to Northumbria. There was henceforward no more open resistance on the part of heathenism to the new faith. Pagan reactions were at an end, and Mercia, the last of the great kingdoms that remained heathen, was now thrown open to the labours of Christian missions. The first step was

to appoint a bishop, and Diuma, who was already working in Middle Anglia, was chosen. He does not appear to have survived long, and he was succeeded by another Scot, named Ceollach, who however gave up his bishopric and returned to Scotland, possibly in consequence of the change of government to be spoken of shortly. His place was taken by Trumhere, already mentioned on page 105, and the fourth bishop was Jaruman, who died in A.D. 667, shortly before the arrival of Theodore. Under these four bishops, all of them of Scotic consecration, the work of evangelising Mercia went steadily on, and it is therefore to northern missionaries that the merit of converting the central district of England is mainly due, although the country was no longer under Northumbrian rule. Three years after the battle on the Winwaed the Mercian leaders rebelled against Oswy's government, and set Wulfhere, the young son of Penda, whom they had kept in hiding, on the throne. Wulfhere was a Christian, and during the seventeen years of his reign was on the whole a good friend to the Church. Through his influence the king of the last kingdom that remained heathen received baptism, though his people did not follow his example. Wulfhere had made war successfully with Coinwalch of Wessex, and took from him the Isle of Wight and a district of Hampshire. These he bestowed on a less dangerous rival, Æthelwalch, the king of the isolated and comparatively insignificant kingdom of Sussex. At the same time he induced the king to come to Mercia and receive baptism,

acting himself as his sponsor. But Æthelwalch, although his queen had also been baptised, appears to have done nothing to promote the spread of the new religion among his subjects. Wulfhere's interference in Essex has already been mentioned, but in another matter his action was less praiseworthy. The appointment of Agilbert to the West Saxon see of Dorchester has been mentioned on page 100. He appears not to have been very successful in mastering the English language, for after a time, perhaps in A.D. 660, the king, 'weary of his barbarous speech,' brought into his province another bishop named Wini, who had also been consecrated in Gaul, but who spoke English, and made him bishop of the royal city of Winchester. Agilbert refused to accept this arrangement, and returned to Gaul, where he became bishop of Paris. But Wini did not remain long undisturbed. For some unknown reason he also was driven out by Coinwalch, and going to the king of Mercia 'he bought from him the see of London for a price.' No comment is made by Bede on this extraordinary piece of simony, and Wini ended his days in that see. Politically the affair shows that Wulfhere exercised a predominant influence in Essex.

The work of the Keltic missions has now been sketched. The events which led to their amalgamation with the Roman missions will form the subject of the next chapter.

NOTE TO CHAPTER III

Authorities. In addition to the original authorities already mentioned, the *Saxon Chronicle* (Rolls Series, or in *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, edited by Plummer, Oxford, 1892) and *Florence of Worcester*, London 1848, Engl. Hist. Soc. begin to give some information. The life of S. Fursey used by Bede, is in the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, Jan. 16, also in *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Edinburgh and London, 1888. A twelfth century *Life of S. Oswald* is printed with the works of Simeon of Durham in the Rolls Series, and a twelfth century *Life of Oswin* in *Miscellanea Biographica*, Durham, 1838, Surtees Society, but they add little or nothing to our knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONFERENCE AT WHITBY AND THE GREAT PLAGUE

BEFORE narrating the events of the important year, A.D. 664, which has now been reached, it will be useful to take a general survey of the state of Christianity in England. All the English kingdoms, with the insignificant exception of Sussex, had now formally accepted the new religion. No doubt very much practical heathenism remained, but it never again became the dominant force. This work had however been effected by separate and independent missions, and Church organisation had not yet advanced beyond the missionary stage. An English Church could hardly be said yet to exist. There was no central authority, and no common organisation. There were in the year A.D. 664 six bishops in England. In Kent there was the archbishop Deusdedit and his suffragan Damian of Rochester. East Anglia was in close relation to Kent, and the bishop Boniface would have acknowledged the archbishop as his metropolitan. In Wessex Agilbert had been driven out and nobody had yet taken his place. The other three bishops were of Scotic consecration. In Northumbria Colman had come from Iona to succeed Finan in

A.D. 661. Cedd was in Essex, and Jaruman in Mercia. These bishops do not appear to have had any relations with Canterbury at all. There had not been friction because there had been no contact to speak of. Northumbria was the only country in which both Keltic and Roman missionaries were working at the same time. And here, as was inevitable, certain differences of practice were making themselves felt. There were two things in particular which made it difficult to work together, a difference in the time of keeping Easter, and a difference of tonsure, the former being of far the greater importance. This complicated question which has already been mentioned (page 60), must now be shortly discussed. In the first place it must be noted that no principles whatever were involved. It was merely an unintentional divergence of practice entirely due to absence of communications. Considering the complicated nature of the astronomical and mathematical calculations necessary for determining the date of Easter it is surprising, not that outlying and isolated parts of Christendom should diverge from the practice of the rest, but that so great a degree of uniformity should have been attained. Earlier in Church history there had been a real difference of practice. The Christians of Asia, alleging the authority of S. John, kept as their Easter the day of the Jewish Passover, that is the fourteenth day of the first month—the day of the full moon. Hence they were called Quartodecimans. The other parts of the Church, where Jewish associations were less strong, wished rather to avoid the actual day of the

Passover, and naturally kept their Easter on the first day of the week, which was observed all through the year in memory of the Resurrection. This question was set at rest at the Council of Nicaea, which decreed that Easter Day should always be a Sunday—the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The differences now became merely differences of calculation, and there were three special ways in which such differences might arise. First, the time of the vernal equinox had to be ascertained, and the Kelts placed the equinox four days later than the Romans. If the full moon fell between these dates there would be a difference of a lunar month between the Easters, and this actually happened in A.D. 631. Secondly, the time of the full moon had to be found. This was done by taking a cycle of years at the end of which the sun and moon will be approximately in the same positions. The Kelts were at this time still using an older cycle for their calculations, which had been supplanted at Rome by the cycle of nineteen years. Thirdly, the question of the greatest practical importance was whether, when the fourteenth day, the day of the full moon, fell on a Sunday, this were to be reckoned as Easter Day, or whether it were necessary to wait until the next Sunday. The difference thus arising was expressed by saying that the Kelts kept their Easter from the fourteenth to the twentieth days of the moon, and the Romans kept theirs from the fifteenth to the twenty-first days. This difference would occur frequently, and it led to the Roman Easter being in cer-

tain years one week later than that of the Kelts.

The other chief question at issue, that of the tonsure, was regarded as of quite subordinate importance, and was not insisted upon by S. Augustine, but as it affected the appearance of clergy it was a mark of difference which could not fail to attract attention. The custom that the clergy and the religious should shave the whole or part of the head arose very early in the Church, though it is not possible to trace its origin. It was probably connected with the idea that long hair was the sign of a freeman, and that the 'slaves of God' should have their hair shorn. At this time there were three principal methods of doing this. (1) In the East the whole head was shaved, and the authority of S. Paul, probably through a misinterpretation of Acts xviii. 18, was given for this. So it will be seen later on that when Theodore, who had this Eastern tonsure, was selected to be archbishop of Canterbury, he had to let his hair grow for four months in order that he might receive the 'coronal' tonsure. (2) The Kelts shaved the front part of the head from ear to ear, but let the hair fall down behind. Some of them claimed the authority of S. John for this as well as for their Easter, but their opponents ascribed the practice to Simon Magus. It was not peculiar to the Kelts of the British Isles, and may very well, like the mode of computing Easter, be an older practice which had been superseded at Rome. (3) The Romans shaved a circle on the top of the head, so that their hair

formed a crown. It was called the tonsure of S. Peter, and was thought to be a memorial of the Crown of Thorns.

Some ridicule has been expended upon the fact that these questions caused so serious a division in the early English Church. The present age, however, can hardly afford to assume any airs of superiority in this matter, or to regard it as strange that small matters of detail should excite strong feeling. And, as has been remarked before, the Easter question, at all events in comparison with some of those which now divide the Church, was by no means unimportant. It rather indicates a good deal of tolerance that the question did not become acute in Northumbria at an earlier date. During Aidan's lifetime, Bede tells us, everyone bore the difference of usage patiently because of the holiness of his life, which caused him to win the affection of all, even of the archbishop Honorius and Felix of East Anglia, who would naturally feel most strongly on the question of uniformity. And moreover Aidan's life of alternate missionary labour and devotional retirement would bring him but little into contact with those from whom he would differ. It was after Aidan's death that the question became acute. His successor Finan was, perhaps willingly but at all events inevitably, brought into active controversy. The supporters of the Roman usages were strong, and tended to become stronger. One of them, named Ronan, himself a Scot, but one who had travelled in Italy and Gaul, was a keen controversialist, and made great efforts to bring the bishop over to his

opinions, with the very natural result that he remained more obstinately attached to his own views than before. One of the two, Bede tells us, though it is not clear which he means, was a man of somewhat bitter temperament, which would account for the result. And indeed the Scots in Northumbria were the less likely to make concessions, inasmuch as the controversy had become a burning question to them at home. The Scots in the south of Ireland had already been persuaded, about the year A.D. 634, to adopt the Roman customs, and Cummene, one of their most learned men, had addressed an able defence of their action to Seghine, the abbot of Iona. But a long time was still to elapse before his views were accepted in the north. Besides Ronan, there was also the group influenced by Jacob or James, the deacon of Paulinus, who had remained steadily at his post, and above all there was the influence of the queen Eanfled and her court, especially her chaplain Romanus who had come with her from Kent. The king indeed still adhered to the practices in which he had been brought up, but it happened, it is said, more than once during these years that the king had finished his Lenten fast and was observing Easter while the queen and her attendants were keeping Palm Sunday. It is clear that such a state of things could not go on permanently. The crisis came after the death of Finan in A.D. 661, when he was succeeded by another monk from Iona, named Colman. He was, as the event showed, an uncompromising supporter of the Keltic usages, but it was not

probably anything that he did that brought matters to a head, but rather the inconveniences which arose from the differences in the royal family, which might easily have become national dangers. For not only were the king and queen at variance, but the king's eldest son also, the under king of Deira, Alchfrid, was on the side of the Roman party. This was due to the influence of the celebrated Wilfrid, about whom something must now be said.

The figure of Wilfrid is one of the most brilliant and attractive that meet us during this period, which is indeed rich in striking personalities. Information about him is also abundant. We possess a full account of his life written by his disciple and constant companion Eddi, and Bede has given in his Ecclesiastical History two sketches of his life, in one of which he follows Eddi, except with regard to a few particulars, while in the other he is mostly following independent sources of information. We have therefore two authorities of first rate importance, for there must have been little in Wilfrid's life that Eddi did not know, and although Bede was not brought into so close contact with him, every detail of his life must have been fairly accurately known at Jarrow. And it must be remembered that Bede was thirty six years old at the time of Wilfrid's death, and that Wilfrid had certainly visited Jarrow, perhaps very frequently, when Bede was a monk there. It is not however at all easy to reconcile these accounts, or to read between the lines. Bede's statements appear sometimes quite inconsistent with

those of Eddi, and where this is the case it is difficult to balance their authority. Eddi had more immediate information, but on the other hand we cannot for a moment suspect Bede of intentionally misrepresenting facts, while we do not feel at all sure about Eddi. Both writers indeed appear to have omitted facts which it would have been natural to record, and which they could hardly have helped knowing. Bede's reticence, particularly, about some critical moments in Wilfrid's career is very noticeable, and perhaps it can only be accounted for by supposing that he deliberately abstained from mentioning facts which he thought had better be forgotten. We must therefore be prepared to find a good deal that is perplexing in Wilfrid's career.

Wilfrid was born in the year A.D. 634, and his youth was marked, according to his biographer, by such indications of moral and intellectual eminence as his after life would lead us to expect. He was the son of a man of good position, and at the age of fourteen he was sent to the Northumbrian court, and thence entered the monastery of Lindisfarne, of which Aidan was still abbot. That he profited by the studies of the house may be taken for granted, but he did not then receive the tonsure, and after a few years he left the monastery with the full approval of the brethren in order to make an attempt to visit Rome. Bede suggests as his motive that he was already dissatisfied with the Scotic usages practised at Lindisfarne, but in this case the monks would hardly have approved of the step he was taking, and indeed it is not necessary

to explain why a talented, active, and ambitious youth should have desired to visit the tombs of the Apostles. The queen Eanfled, who had sent him to Lindisfarne, was ready to help him again, and she sent him to her cousin Earconbert in Kent, not long before the death of the archbishop Honorius in A.D. 653. While he was still at the Kentish court, waiting for an opportunity, there came thither another young Northumbrian, afterwards famous as the founder of Wearmouth and Jarrow, Benedict Biscop, also smitten with the desire to see Rome. The king sent them forth together, but when they reached Lyons Wilfrid won so great favour with the archbishop that he desired to adopt him, and to marry him to his own niece. Wilfrid stayed for a time, and Benedict went on to Rome without him, but Wilfrid soon followed, and probably arrived in Rome in A.D. 654. He devoted himself especially to the study of the Gospels, of the Paschal question, and of other matters connected with Church discipline, and then returning to Lyons spent three years with the archbishop. Perhaps he might never have seen England again, but at the end of that time his patron fell a victim to the disordered state of Gaul, being put to death in circumstances of which little is known. Wilfrid himself appears to have had a narrow escape, and he returned to England about the year A.D. 658. He soon entered into close relations of friendship with Alchfrid, the King of Deira, and confirmed his adhesion to the Roman side in the Easter controversy, to which he had already been drawn by Coinwalch, King of

Wessex. Alchfrid gave Wilfrid land for a monastery at Stamford, near York,[1] but not long after, probably in this very year A.D. 661, in which Colman succeeded Finan as bishop, and the controversy drew to a head, transferred him to the famous house with which his name is inseparably connected, the monastery of Ripon. The circumstances of this change show how Alchfrid's opinions had been modified.[2] Not long before he had given an estate at Ripon to Eata, one of the twelve youths whom Aidan, in the early days of his episcopate, had received from their parents to be brought up for the service of God, and who was then the abbot of the monastery of Old Melrose. Among the monks who colonised the new house was Cuthbert, afterwards the most famous and most deeply venerated of all the northern saints. It is said that a vision in which he beheld the soul of S. Aidan borne to heaven by angels first determined the active and high-spirited shepherd boy to enter the monastic life, and he was already conspicuous among the brethren for his studies, prayers, and labours. When Alchfrid first established these monks at Ripon it is clear that he was no strong adherent of the Roman Easter, but in A.D. 661 he made it a condition

[1] Perhaps it was Stamford in Lincolnshire, for although this is in Mercia Alchfrid may very well have held lands there through his marriage with Cyniburga, the daughter of Penda.

[2] Eddi says that Alchfrid changed his opinions through the influence of Coinwalch, King of Wessex. Why Coinwalch should have been interested in what was mainly a Northumbrian question does not appear. What is known of his life does not suggest that he was likely to know or care much about any Church matters.

of their remaining that they should conform, but they preferred to withdraw, and Wilfrid took their place. It is noticeable that Eddi, who was a monk at Ripon, and must have known about this transaction, does not think fit to mention it. When Wilfrid was established at Ripon the Roman party was reinforced by another important champion. It has been mentioned that Agilbert, the bishop of the West Saxons, had to leave his see in consequence of a difference with the king (see page 118). He was a friend of Alchfrid and of Wilfrid, and he came to spend some time on a visit to them. While at Ripon he ordained Wilfrid to the priesthood, at Alchfrid's request. Apparently Colman was entirely ignored, which shows how acute the differences between the two parties had become. It was clearly necessary that some settlement should be come to, and the famous Conference at Streaneshalc or Whitby was the result. This conference was not a Church Council, nor was any kingdom except the two parts of Northumbria concerned directly in it, but it comprised all the important persons who have just been mentioned as concerned in the controversy, and it was inevitable that the decision arrived at should affect the Church throughout the country. On the Scotic side were King Oswy, who had perhaps already made up his mind to desert the cause which he had hitherto sustained, Colman and his Scotic followers, Cedd, the bishop of the East Saxons, who attended as abbot of Lastingham, and the abbess Hilda. Against them were King Alchfrid, Agilbert with

his presbyters Agatho and Wilfrid, Jacob the deacon, and Romanus, the queen's chaplain. The arguments used on both sides are given at length by Bede, but his account is not likely to be based upon any accurate report of the proceedings, and he doubtless puts into the mouths of the disputants the arguments which from his knowledge of the controversy he supposed, or which tradition affirmed, to have been used. In three points Bede's account agrees with the shorter narrative of Eddi, that is, in the appeal of Colman to the authority of S. John, in that of Wilfrid to the Nicene Council, and in Oswy's unwillingness to offend S. Peter; and these three points at least may be taken as historical. But though the words may be Bede's own, he was thoroughly familiar with all parts of the controversy, and he is not likely to have omitted any important part of the arguments used. According to Bede's account Oswy began the discussion with a few words about the importance of uniformity, and called on his bishop Colman to state first the reasons for his practice. Colman appealed to the tradition of those who had gone before him, and asserted that his Easter had the authority of S. John. Then Agilbert was called upon, but he asked that Wilfrid might speak in his stead, so that an interpreter should not be necessary. It will be remembered that it was his failure to master the English tongue which had caused him to leave Wessex, and as Cedd was acting as interpreter to the Conference Agilbert may not have wished his arguments to be presented by an opponent. The

cause, we may be sure, did not lose anything in force and clearness through being expounded by Wilfrid, but, if Bede's report of his arguments truly represents what he said, his manner of stating his points was not very well calculated to conciliate opponents. He began by the statement that his Easter was observed not only at Rome, but throughout the whole Christian world, and that it was mere folly for a portion only of the inhabitants of two remote islands to set themselves against such an agreement on the part of the Church. Colman replied that it ought not to be called folly to follow the example of the beloved disciple. To this Wilfrid rejoined that it was necessary to S. John to avoid scandalising the Jewish converts, as S. Paul had also done, and that he therefore kept Easter on the day of the Jewish Passover, whether it were a Sunday or not, but that S. Peter had ordered at Rome that Easter should be kept on a Sunday from the fifteenth to the twenty first day, and that the successors of S. John in Asia had come to conform to this rule, which was finally established by the Council of Nicaea. But the Scots, he said, followed neither S. Peter nor S. John, for they kept Easter on a Sunday, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth days. Colman then appealed to a spurious canon of Anatolius, bishop of Laodicaea, in A.D. 270, and urged that Columba and his successors, being men of saintly life and miraculous powers, could not have been mistaken. Wilfrid, accepting the canon of Anatolius, sought, not very successfully, to show that it supported his

case, and while admitting to some extent the sanctity of Columba, averred that his authority could not stand against that of the Prince of the Apostles, to whom the Lord had given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This was the concluding argument, and Oswy taking him up asked both disputants whether they were agreed about our Lord's charge to Peter, and being answered in the affirmative ended the debate by saying: 'This is that doorkeeper whom I am unwilling to contradict, lest when I come to the doors of the kingdom of heaven there be none to open them.'

These last words, Eddi says, were spoken with a smile, and probably Oswy intended them to be taken more as jest than earnest. He may not have been able or willing to set forth clearly all the reasons for his decision, but the whole narrative suggests that his mind may have been made up from the first. Another long debate followed on the subject of the tonsure, but we have been spared the details of this. In the discussion on the Easter question the first thing that attracts attention is that the arguments on both sides are unhistorical. Neither S. Peter nor S. John were really authorities on either side. But behind these arguments there lay a matter of really vital import. The Scotic case rested entirely upon an unintelligent local conservatism. Colman has really nothing to allege except that he did what Columba had done, and Wilfrid touched the real point at issue when he said, perhaps somewhat discourteously, that it was folly for a part of the inhabitants of two remote islands, in a matter

involving no principle, and yet one in which it was important that there should be uniformity, to set themselves against the practice of the Catholic Church throughout the rest of the world. To do so was to sacrifice unity and efficiency to mere eccentricity. 'If the English Church' says Mr Wakeman, 'was to be a great national force, it must be united and organised; if order and government were to rule in the place of isolated effort and personal influence, if bishops were to be governors and administrators as well as leaders, it could only be by obeying knowledge rather than ignorance, by preferring catholic tradition to local custom—in a word, by subordinating Celtic to Roman Christianity. . . . Behind the arguments used lay the real questions which were involved—isolation or unity, law or chaos, culture or ignorance, progress or backwardness. The power of Rome was on the side of civilisation. Wilfrid's audacious appeal to the conclusive authority of S. Peter in Rome may have been unhistorical, but it expressed at that time a great and profound truth—*i.e.* that Roman tradition and papal authority were the forces which, in the coming ages, were to conquer the barbarian world, and consecrate it to the service of Christ. The decision of Whitby meant that the Church of England had determined to take her part in that noble work.' The question of conformity was now practically settled for all the English speaking peoples, although Northumbria alone was formally concerned in the Whitby conference. But the Scotic mission in England, and the connection with

Iona came to an end. Colman had no idea of submitting to the decision, and giving up the usages to which he had always been accustomed. With those who still adhered to him, probably for the most part men who had themselves come from Iona or were Scots by race, he withdrew to Iona, and four years later to Ireland. The difficulties experienced in his monastery on Inishbofin have been already mentioned on pages 34, 35. His place as bishop was taken by Tuda, who had been educated and consecrated bishop in the south of Ireland, where, as has been mentioned above, the catholic usages had been already accepted. The post of abbot of Lindisfarne was however taken by Eata, the abbot of Melrose. This appointment was made at Colman's special request, and this is a pleasing indication that the personal element did not enter into this controversy. Indeed Bede specially notes that Oswy esteemed Colman very highly. Colman took with him some of the bones of his revered predecessor Aidan, and ordered the rest to be buried in the sacristy of the church of Lindisfarne. The personal loss which the English Church sustained through the decision of Whitby was not a very great one. Cedd and his brother Ceadda or Chad, Eata, Cuthbert, and the bulk of the disciples of the Scots accepted the decision without further dispute, and it practically disappears from English Church history. On the other hand the gain was great. Unity was not even yet an accomplished fact, but the obstacle which made it impossible was removed, and the door was opened for order and organisation and efficiency

and beauty to take their due place in the life of the Church. That in the course of the next century there was a sad decline from the burning missionary zeal, the simplicity, and the unworldly devotion of the first Scotic teachers is only too true, and when Bede praises in glowing language the evangelical virtues of Aidan and his followers we feel that he is sadly contrasting them with the clergy and monks of his own day. But these virtues were not bound up with the maintenance of the Scotic customs, and it was indeed to a great extent the very laxness of organisation characteristic of the Keltic system which both gave free play to the virtues of such men as Aidan, and made the decline of their successors more easy. But in bidding farewell to the Scotic missionaries we must not forget the greatness of the debt which the English Church owes to them. 'The old Scotic Church of Northumbria,' to quote again Dr Bright's words, 'could not but pass away, for it could not provide what Northumbria then needed: it had but a temporary mission, but that mission it fulfilled with a rare simplicity of purpose. It brought religion straight home to men's heart's by sheer power of love and self sacrifice: it held up before them, in the unconscious goodness and nobleness of its representatives, the moral evidence for Christianity. It made them feel what it was to be taught and cared for, in the life spiritual, by pastors who before all things were the disciples and ministers of Christ, whose chief and type was a S. Aidan.'

The Conference of Whitby must have been held

early in the year A.D. 664. Later on in the same year England began to be devastated by a terrible pestilence, which continued its ravages, to a greater or less extent for some five and twenty years. It fell heavily upon the monasteries, and carried off many leading men in the Church. The king of Kent, Earconbert, and the archbishop, Deusdedit, died on the same day, the 14th of July. Cedd had returned to his abbey of Lastingham after the Conference, and died there, being succeeded as abbot by his brother Chad. Cuthbert also fell ill, and recovered, but the provost of Melrose, Boisil, died, having employed the last seven days of his life in reading with Cuthbert the Gospel of S. John. Cuthbert succeeded him as provost, and gave himself up to missionary work in the country around Melrose, travelling about the wild country as S. Aidan had done, on foot or on horseback, but not abating the ascetic nature of his life. The results of the plague in causing an apostasy in Essex have been already mentioned on pages 112, 113, and probably the same sort of thing, to a somewhat less degree, occurred elsewhere. Another victim was Tuda, the new Northumbrian bishop, and probably Damian of Rochester died from the same disease. At all events we hear no more of him. Thus towards the end of the year A.D. 664 it is probable that the only bishops left in England were Jaruman in Mercia, Wini in Wessex, and Boniface in East Anglia. In any case the work of unifying and organising the Church after the settlement of the great points of difference would have taxed the powers

of her rulers to the utmost. In the deserted and disorganised condition in which the first attack of the plague left her, the best hope of recovery was in the appearance of a man of commanding ability and character, while at the same time the disappearance of so many of the leading men made the task of a great organiser in many ways easier. The man who could use the opportunity was not wanting, and the work of Theodore will form the subject of the next chapter.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV

Authorities. The *Life of Wilfrid*, by Eddius Stephanus (Eddi or Haedde) mentioned in the text, is printed in Historians of York, i., ed. Raine, Rolls Series. Other later lives of Wilfrid are also to be found there. Some important extracts from Eddi's life are in Haddan and Stubbs. There is a very interesting article upon Eddi's life and its discrepancies from Bede by Mr B. W. Wells in the *English Historical Review* vi. (1891) p. 535. Bede mentions S. Cuthbert in his history, and he also wrote a life of him, founded on an earlier life. Both of these are in *Baedae Opera Historica Minora*, London, 1841, English Historical Society. All the modern historians mentioned in former notes give an account of the Easter question, but that in Mr Plummer's note to his edition of Bede, vol. ii. p. 348, may be especially recommended.

CHAPTER V

THEODORE AND THE WORK OF CONSOLIDATION

IT is not at all clear what were the exact steps taken in order to fill the vacancy in the Northumbrian bishopric caused by Tuda's death. According to the narrative of Eddi the two kings Oswy and Alchfrid took counsel with the Witan after Colman's retirement—Tuda is not mentioned—and it was unanimously agreed that Wilfrid should be the new bishop, and should have his see in the southern province, at York. Wilfrid did not wish to be consecrated in England, and from his point of view this was very natural. Of the few remaining bishops perhaps Boniface of East Anglia was the only one who in Wilfrid's eyes was free from objection on account of schism or intrusion. He was accordingly sent by Alchfrid to Agilbert, now bishop of Paris, and was consecrated by him and eleven other bishops with peculiar pomp at Compiègne. But he lingered in foreign parts either before or after his ordination, and on his return to Northumbria he found his see occupied by another. Tired of waiting, Oswy had chosen Chad, who had succeeded his brother Cedd as abbot of Lastingham, and sent him to Kent to be consecrated. Finding however that Deusdedit was dead

and that no successor to him had been appointed, Chad turned aside into the kingdom of Wessex, and was consecrated bishop by Wini and two British bishops, no doubt from the neighbouring province of West Wales. This is a most interesting fact, as it is the only instance of co-operation between the English and British Churches with which we meet during this period. Wilfrid, finding Chad in possession, withdrew to his monastery at Ripon. These were no doubt the main facts. But there are considerable difficulties in the details. Bede says very distinctly and twice over that Alchfrid caused Wilfrid to be consecrated as bishop for himself and his people, that is, in the natural sense of the words, for the people over whom he himself ruled. If this were so, Wilfrid was not intended to be the bishop of the whole of Northumbria, and Oswy's action in choosing Chad would not necessarily have been intended to exclude Wilfrid from his bishopric. About this time, however, Alchfrid fell into disgrace with his father, apparently because of some treasonable action on his part, for Bede mentions him in one passage as one among the enemies against whom Oswy had to contend. We are told that Alchfrid intended to accompany Benedict Biscop on his second journey to Rome, but that his father would not permit him to do so. At any rate Alchfrid disappears from history,[1] and Deira came more directly under

[1] Alchfrid died in or before the year A.D. 670, the first year of Egfrid's reign, for this is the date mentioned on the Bewcastle Cross, which was raised to Alchfrid's memory. This most interesting

Oswy's rule, though his younger son Egfrid, who succeeded him, may have ruled Deira before his father's death. If this happened, as is probable, before Wilfrid's return, it would have been quite natural for Chad, even if he had been consecrated for a part of Northumbria only, to assume the direction of the Church in the whole of the country, and Wilfrid on his return, finding the southern kingdom practically absorbed, may have considered it vain to protest.[1] There is another difficulty connected with the consecration of Chad. If he went to Kent before the news of the death of Deusdedit reached Northumbria, both Wilfrid's election and his must have followed very closely

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monument is remarkable for the great beauty of its ornament, which appears to be akin to some of the best Lombard work, and is perhaps due to a Greek artist. The inscriptions on it, in Runic characters, form the earliest example known of English writing. One of them states that the cross was erected in memory of 'Alchfrid once king and son of Oswy,' and the words are added 'Pray for the high sin of his soul.' What this alludes to is not known, but it may refer to the cause of his disappearance from history. Bede would probably not be anxious to record the failings of one who had done so much for the Church. There is a very interesting account of the Bewcastle Cross in Browne's *Conversion of the Heptarchy*: see also Stephens, *Runic Monuments*, i. 398 *seq.*, and Sweet, *Oldest English Texts*, p. 124.

[1] What part of the country did Alchfrid rule? It is generally assumed that he was sub-king of Deira, and York was the capital of Deira. Eddi says that Wilfrid was chosen and consecrated to be bishop of York; Bede says that he was to be bishop for Alchfrid and his subjects. So it would be natural to suppose that Chad was in the first instance meant to be bishop in Bernicia. But Bede says twice that Chad was chosen for York. Possibly Alchfrid's sub-kingdom did not include York. It seems impossible to reconcile all the statements that have come down to us.

upon the close of the Whitby Conference, for Deusdedit died on July 14. But if this were so, it disposes of the theory that Chad's election was due to Wilfrid's long delay in Gaul. Bede's words can indeed be taken to mean that it was thought possible in Northumbria that a new archbishop had already been appointed, but this also, considering the share which, as will be presently seen, Oswy took in the matter of providing a new archbishop, seems strange. The exact details are probably not now to be ascertained, but of the main facts—that Wilfrid was sent, mainly through Alchfrid's influence, to be consecrated in Gaul to be bishop of his own subjects, and that when he returned Chad had been consecrated in Wessex, and was acting as bishop of the whole of Northumbria, and that Wilfrid thereupon retired to Ripon—of all this there can be no doubt.

Meanwhile steps had been taken to fill the still more important vacancy at Canterbury. As a matter of fact the metropolitan see remained for nearly five years without a bishop, and even the circumstances which are about to be mentioned do not fully explain the length of this interval. Some little delay there would naturally be at first, owing to the disorganisation that must have been produced by the plague, and by the fact that the king and the archbishop died on the same day. It was probably some little time before the important step was taken which shall be narrated in Bede's own words. 'In these times,' he says, 'the most noble kings of the English, Oswy king of the province of the

Northumbrians, and Egbert of the Kentishmen, held counsel among themselves as to what was to be done about the condition of the Church of the English; for Oswy, although educated by the Scots, had truly understood that the Roman was the Catholic and Apostolic Church; and they took, with the election and consent of the holy Church of the race of the English, a good man and a presbyter fit for the episcopal office, by name Wighard, of the clergy of the bishop Deusdedit, and sent him to Rome to be ordained bishop; in order that, when he had received the grade of archbishop, he might be able to ordain catholic bishops for the churches of the English throughout the whole of Britain.'

There are many interesting things to notice in this passage. First there is the co-operation of the two kings in choosing a bishop whose appointment would hitherto have been regarded as a matter to be settled by the Kentishmen alone. Oswy, of course, was the predominant influence in England at this time. Although he no longer directly ruled Mercia, he was by far the most powerful monarch in the country, and the friendly relations with Kent which Eanfled's connection with that kingdom made natural seem never to have been interrupted. And the young king who had just succeeded to the throne might very naturally have sought his advice. But there is more than this. It is pretty clear that the state of the Church was the object of serious concern, as it well might be, to the most enlightened of the English rulers, and that the

need of greater unity and efficiency had been brought home to their minds.

And Oswy's action seems to indicate that the decision of Whitby was no mere accident, but part of a great scheme of Church reform. Then again we wonder, but our curiosity is not satisfied, what was the form in which the election and consent of the holy Church of the English was expressed. Bede tells us hardly anything about the exact mode by which episcopal appointments were made. He is generally content to say that a king, or later on that Theodore, made such a man a bishop, intending evidently to describe the predominant influence at work. Thus he has told us that Alchfrid sent Wilfrid to Gaul to be ordained bishop, while Eddi tells us explicitly that Wilfrid was chosen in the Witanagemot with the consent of both the kings. What the process was in the present case, and how far the Church outside Kent had anything to do with the election of Wighard, we cannot tell. Then the sending of the bishop elect to the pope for consecration was an entirely new departure. The scarcity of bishops in England might have been a sufficient reason for his being sent abroad, but even Augustine had not been consecrated by the pope, though he well might have been, but in Gaul. The mission to Rome, with the inconveniences of delay that it must involve, must have had for its motive a desire that the new archbishop should come to his work with a new and special prestige, and that his consecration should serve as a conspicuous illustration of the fact that the English Church was to be

in the future in the fullest communion and sympathy with the see of S. Peter. And the reason given by Bede that the new archbishop should be able to ordain catholic bishops for all the English Churches seems to indicate that some doubt had been thrown on the regularity if not on the validity of previous consecrations, and to recognise to some extent the papal claim, hitherto as has been seen but vaguely hinted at, to confer upon metropolitans the right of exercising their powers.

Wighard and his company arrived safely in Rome and presented to the pope Vitalian their message and the valuable gifts of gold and silver plate which they had brought with them. But Rome proved fatal to them as to many other northerners, and soon after their arrival, before there was time for the consecration of Wighard to take place, both he and most of his companions succumbed to pestilence. The pope thereupon wrote to Oswy to tell him what had happened. It is significant of the part which Oswy took in the whole affair that the pope's letter is addressed to him alone, and that the king of Kent is not mentioned. The pope sends relics in return for the gifts that had been sent to him, with a special message for the queen, and treats of the question of Easter observance. But the important part of his letter is that he speaks of Wighard merely as the bearer of the king's gifts and message, and says that on account of the distance he has not yet been able to find a suitable man to be bishop 'according to the tenor of your letter.' Here he plainly implies that Oswy had simply asked him to

choose a bishop, whereas Bede says very distinctly that Wighard had been definitely chosen, and that the pope was asked to consecrate him. It has generally been assumed that the pope took advantage of the peculiar circumstances to claim an authority which did not properly belong to him, and to appoint a bishop when he had not been asked to do so; that he acted in fact in the same sort of spirit in which his great successor Innocent III. acted in the case of Stephen Langton. We have not however sufficient evidence to assert this: we do not know what the exact contents of Oswy's letter were, but it may well be that the final decision was left in the hands of the pope. At all events it is clear that the pope's action was not in any way resented in England, and his nominee was ultimately received with an enthusiasm which his services to the Church more than justified.

The Pope certainly acted with care and good judgment in making his choice. He first selected Hadrian, the abbot of a monastery in the south of Italy, an African by birth, a man learned in sacred literature, and with an excellent knowledge of both Latin and Greek. Hadrian declined the position, not, as the event showed, from any reluctance to serve the Church in so remote a land, but from genuine modesty, and offered to find a substitute. He first recommended a monk named Andrew, whose health proved unequal to the task, and then, after the post had been again pressed upon him, he bethought himself of an eastern monk named Theodore, who was then in Rome, having possibly come with the Emperor Constans II., who had been

in Italy in A.D. 663. Theodore was sixty six years of age; he was a native of Tarsus, and well instructed in both secular and divine literature, and the Greek and Latin tongues. To send a man with such antecedents, who was not yet even a sub-deacon, to rule the English Church, must have seemed a hazardous experiment, and the pope evidently had some hesitation about it, but Hadrian must have known Theodore's character, and the event proved the wisdom of the choice. The Pope consented, on the condition that Hadrian himself should accompany Theodore to England, with the special task of attending to his doctrinal teaching, and taking precautions that he should not, 'after the manner of the Greeks' teach anything contrary to the faith. The pope's suspicions, though they proved to be unnecessary, were not altogether unnatural. It was not a general distrust, in all probability, of Eastern doctrine that moved him, but a fear of the particular heresy of the Monothelites, by which the Eastern world had been for some time disturbed. This heresy was the latest form of Monophysitism, the doctrine that there was but one nature in Christ, which had been decisively condemned at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 451, and was now revived in the more subtle form of holding that Christ had only one will. Only ten years before this time, Vitalian's predecessor, Pope Martin IV., had been very cruelly treated and banished to the Crimea by the Emperor Constans II. for refusing to accept this heretical doctrine; and the pope's anxiety lest it should get a foothold in England was fully justified. Theodore,

however, as a matter of fact, had no heretical leanings, and it will be seen that the Catholic doctrine on this subject was affirmed by the English Church under his guidance a few years later at the Council of Hatfield. Theodore was ordained sub-deacon in November, A.D. 667, and then he had to wait four months in order that his hair might grow, and that he might receive the 'coronal' tonsure. For he had been tonsured in the manner which was usual in the East, and named after the apostle S. Paul. He was finally consecrated bishop by the pope on Sunday, March 26, A.D. 668. This was nearly four years after the death of Deusdedit, and more than another year elapsed before he reached England. He did not start until May 27, and then he and Hadrian went by sea to Marseilles, and thence to Arles, where the bishop kept them until permission for their further advance had come from Ebroin, the powerful mayor of the palace to the king of Neustria. Theodore then proceeded to Paris, where he was hospitably entertained during the winter by Agilbert, who must have had much to tell him about the state of affairs in England. We may be certain that Wilfrid's brilliant abilities received ample recognition, and this may explain Theodore's later action with regard to the Northumbrian bishopric. Meanwhile news of Theodore's arrival in Paris reached king Egbert, and he sent his reeve to conduct him with Ebroin's consent to England. Hadrian, who had been visiting the bishops of Sens and Meaux, was detained for some time longer in Gaul, because Ebroin

suspected him of having a political mission. He probably thought that the emperor was desirous of making friendly overtures to the English kings with a view to strengthening his influence in the West. Benedict Biscop, who had again visited Rome when Theodore was about to set out, was sent with him to England by the pope, and on his arrival was made abbot of the monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul at Canterbury, but when Hadrian came Benedict returned to Rome, and Hadrian became abbot in his room. Theodore advanced from Paris to Quentavic, or Étaples, and was again delayed there by illness, and he did not actually reach Canterbury until May 27, the exact anniversary of the day upon which he had left Rome. It had taken nearly five years to provide an archbishop. The long delay does not seem to have been the fault of anyone in particular, but nobody was particularly expeditious, and there were many unavoidable delays. The long interval was perhaps rather favourable than otherwise for the work that Theodore had to do. It was work that required the greatest energy, resolution, and tact on his part, and these qualities were not wanting, but still he could not have accomplished what he did unless he had been loyally supported by the secular authorities, and their support would not have been so readily given had it not been brought home to them that a a vigorous and organised government was absolutely necessary for the well being of the Church. If the long vacancy at Canterbury helped to impress this conviction upon them the time was not wasted.

The nature of the task that lay before the new archbishop has been already sufficiently indicated. The great needs of the Church were that her unity should be secured by a strong central government, that the efficiency of her work should be promoted by an improved organisation, and that a high standard of learning and devotion should be set up for the clergy. In all these respects the twenty one years of Theodore's rule produced a wonderful change. They were not years, except as far as Wilfrid's career was concerned, of striking and dramatic events, but if we compare the condition of the English Church in A.D. 690 with its condition in A.D. 669 we cannot but wonder at the results that had been brought about. Before narrating the details, as far as they are known, of the history of these years, it may be well to summarise what was actually effected by Theodore on the lines of reform that have been just mentioned.

First, he gave a real unity and cohesion to the Church. This was his great work. The unity of the Church was secured and expressed partly by Theodore's exercise of his own authority as metropolitan. This had never been a reality before. Gregory's scheme had provided for two provinces in England, with their metropolitans at London and York, but there had never yet been an archbishop at York, for the pall did not reach Paulinus until after he had left that see. The successors of Augustine were now irremoveably fixed at Canterbury, but their authority had not been recognised outside the kingdoms of Kent and East

Anglia, and possibly to some extent Wessex. Under Theodore all the English dioceses became one ecclesiastical province, and they all apparently accepted his authority without question. 'He was the first among the archbishops,' says Bede, 'to whom the whole Church of the English consented to submit.' There was no doubt about the reality of the power which Theodore exercised; he was indeed somewhat arbitrary in its use, and he seems to have stretched it beyond the limits of the natural authority of any metropolitan; but strong government was what the Church most needed at that time, and there was little resistance to most of his measures. Our information is not sufficiently in detail to inform us how far the proper forms were observed, or whether Theodore often acted in an irregular manner: Bede is content to tell us that he 'made' one person a bishop, or that he 'deposed' another, without giving any hint as to whether the regular forms of election or synodical condemnation were observed. If there were complaints they have not been, except in one conspicuous case, placed on record.

But Theodore's own authority as metropolitan depended, of course, upon his position as chief bishop of the province. Without a regular provincial government there is no metropolitan. And the government of a province is by a synod, of which all the bishops of the province are the constituent members, although other persons, according to ancient custom, may attend, and take some part in the work. The mind of the whole Church as to the necessity and

authority of the provincial synods had been abundantly expressed by the œcumenical councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, as well as by other less authoritative councils. And as soon probably as the thing was at all possible the first provincial synod of the English Church was held under Theodore's presidency, an event of which it is difficult to overrate the importance, even from a political point of view. The Council of Hertford was, to quote Dr Stubbs, 'an event of the highest historical importance as the first constitutional measure of the entire English race.' From the political point of view the unity of the English Church preceded and greatly contributed towards the possibility of the unity of the English nation. From the ecclesiastical point of view the English Church from this moment ceased to be an aggregate of more or less independent missions, and became an organised whole, in full communion with the rest of the Catholic Church, and governed on the same principles and by the same methods. Moreover the English Church was also from the beginning something more than a new province; she had also a national character. When about sixty years later the archbishopric of York was at length constituted, the two provinces formed, as Gregory had intended, the Ecclesia Anglicana, and recognised no superior authority except that of the universal Church, and the universally acknowledged primacy of Rome. From the time of the Council of Hertford onward the unity of the English Church was an accomplished fact.

The more efficient internal organisation of the Church was another matter, and one in which serious practical difficulties had to be met. The great needs were an increase in the number of bishops, and better provision for the cure of souls. As long as there was only a single bishop in each kingdom except Kent, the area of episcopal activity was too great for efficient supervision, and not only this, the newly won unity of the Church was liable to be continually endangered by political complications, and by the practical independence which each bishop might, if he were supported by his own secular authorities, assert for himself. It was natural that the greatest difficulties should arise in this direction. But, as will be seen, even in this matter much was effected during Theodore's lifetime, and more in no long time after his death. It has been one of the great misfortunes of the English Church that the subdivision of dioceses which he began has been down to the present time so imperfectly carried out. With respect to the cure of souls within the dioceses it is not possible to say exactly how much was done by Theodore himself. It has been often said that he founded the parochial system. This is altogether a mistake. The parochial system did not need a founder. It grew up gradually, and the first indications of it are earlier than Theodore's time, and its full developement much later. But he must have promoted its growth, and his Penitential, which will be spoken of directly, seems to imply its existence in a fairly advanced form in Kent. At all events a parochial system was the natural and certain result

of a complete system of diocesan episcopacy, as distinguished from the Scotic monastic system, and Theodore's work went far towards destroying even the traces of the latter in England.

Besides what he did for the unity and organisation of the Church, Theodore also raised the standard of intellectual culture and of morals, especially among the clergy. It has been seen that Canterbury (see pages 75, 76) was already an educational centre, and through the work of Theodore and Hadrian it became a place whence learning and education were diffused not only throughout England, but ultimately over Europe. A crowd of scholars, Bede tells us, were collected there, and they received instruction, not only in the Sacred Scriptures, but also in the Latin and Greek languages, in verse making, astronomy, the calculation of the ecclesiastical seasons, and apparently medicine. Music also began to be much cultivated in the English Church. The knowledge of the ecclesiastical melodies, at this period already approaching their greatest perfection of beauty, had hitherto been confined for the most part to Kent, but now Eddi, afterwards the biographer of Wilfrid was brought by him from Kent to teach music to the Northumbrians, and the mentions of the subject by Bede show that the art was cultivated with zeal and success. The recent labours of the learned Benedictines of Solesmes have recovered for our own generation much of the very music then in use, in its original beauty and purity, and we can well imagine the enthusiasm with which these exquisite

melodies must have been received by a people by no means insensible to art. Of all this culture Canterbury was now the centre, and thence it spread far and wide, so that Bede tells us that under Theodore all who wished to learn could find someone to instruct them in the Scriptures. Some of Theodore's pupils, he adds, who were alive in his own day, could speak Latin and Greek as easily as English. When it is remembered how rare an accomplishment a good knowledge of Greek was in the West, not only at this time but centuries later, and if we go on to compare the Latin of Bede with that of Gregory of Tours, we shall be better able to appreciate the debt which the learning of the middle ages owes to Theodore. For it must be remembered that this culture did not die with him or with his own pupils. All the learning of Canterbury passed to Bede, and to the school at York, and thence, at the end of the period covered by this volume, the most distinguished disciple of that school, Alcuin, invited to the court of Charles the Great, spread the culture which is one of the glories of the early English Church over the wide dominions of the Carolingian empire.

The discipline of both clergy and laity was of even greater importance than their education. In the case of a heathen nation rapidly converted to Christianity grave moral disorders are certain to occur. Nor will they be confined to the laity or to merely nominal adherents. The principal cause of the slow growth of a native ministry in modern missions is the weakened moral fibre which is the

legacy of heathenism. The English, however, as has been seen, were from a very early date almost entirely dependent upon a native ministry. It is not surprising that the most serious offences against morals should have been found even in the ranks of the clergy and in the monasteries. At the same time systematic efforts were made to check the existing evils, and to raise the moral standard, mainly by an elaborate system of ecclesiastical penalties, which are known to us by collections called the Penitentials. One of these bears the name of Theodore, and it professes to be a collection of the answers made by him to questions on points of discipline, and compiled by his authority. Some of the opinions contained in it can hardly be Theodore's own, but the substance of it may very well be his. It consists of lists of sins with the appropriate penalties suitable to each, penalties purely ecclesiastical, and based on the power which the Church has ever exercised of visiting the offences of her members by exclusion from communion or public worship, and such tokens of penitence as the observance of periods of abstinence. The penitentials resemble the early English laws in having a graduated scale of penalties. Offences were punished by English law by compensations in money, but the amount of compensation varied with the rank of the person injured. A theft for instance from a thegn required a higher compensation than a theft from a common man. In the Penitentials there is a similar scale of penalties, but the higher responsibility of the higher position

is the thing taken into account. For the same offence the priest has to do a heavier penance than the layman, and the bishop than the priest. The catalogue of offences points, as might be expected, to the common occurrence of grave moral delinquences such as are natural to a heathen and barbarous community, but it also shows that the Church was contending with a grave austerity against the evils of the time. And if the disciplinary system constructed for this end appears to us somewhat over minute and mechanical, it probably corresponds pretty accurately to a real need of the age. It is not to undervalue the noble ideals and the unworldly devotion of the Keltic missionaries if we admit that their asceticism was too extreme and too much inclined to become morbid to act as a sufficient check on the lives and passions of ordinary men. Even in the cloister a more moderate and in some ways a more wholesome ideal was required, and it was to a great extent supplied.

After this general survey of the work done by Theodore for the English Church we may now proceed to a narrative of the chief events of his archiepiscopate. Soon after his arrival he undertook a general visitation of the whole Church throughout England, accompanied by Hadrian. He passed through the whole of the island, Bede says, which was inhabited by Englishmen, and was most willingly received and listened to by all. One of his most important duties was to fill up the vacant bishoprics. At Rochester he consecrated Putta,

a skilled musician, but apparently a man of no great strength of character. In East Anglia Bisi succeeded Boniface, and in Wessex, which had been without a bishop since Wini had departed, Leutherius or Lothere, took his place.[1] It was however in Northumbria that the most important change was carried out. Ceadda or Chad, as has been seen, was now administering the whole Northumbrian diocese. Wilfrid does not appear to have made any attempt to interfere with or disturb him. Part of the time that had elapsed since his return he spent at Ripon, where he exerted himself with success in promoting conformity to the Catholic customs, and another part in acting as bishop in other parts of the country which were destitute of their chief pastors. In Kent he had ordained many priests and deacons, among them Putta, afterwards bishop of Rochester, and he brought away from that country the man who was afterwards to be his biographer, Eddi, to teach singing in the north. He also, after Jaruman's death, performed episcopal duties in Mercia, at the invitation of Wulfhere, who would willingly have retained

[1] Bede says that King Coinwalch suffered great losses from his enemies, and remembering how he had recovered his kingdom after his acceptance of the faith of Christ ascribed his present misfortunes to the absence of a bishop, and sent envoys to Agilbert at Paris to beg him to return. Agilbert naturally preferred to remain at Paris, but he sent his nephew Leutherius, a priest, who was warmly received by the king and the people, and sent to Theodore for consecration. The idea of having two bishops appears to have been dropped on Agilbert's departure. Wini had his see at Winchester, Lothere at Dorchester; and his successor Haedda finally settled at Winchester.

the services of so distinguished a bishop permanently. But Wilfrid did not desire this, and when Theodore came to Northumbria he was at Ripon. About what happened then our two authorities, Bede and Eddi, do not agree. The facts that are certain are that Wilfrid took Chad's place at York, and that Chad, after some supposed defect in his Orders had been made good by Theodore, became bishop of the Mercians, and fixed his see at Lichfield. Eddi says that he was taken away from York because he had intruded himself into Wilfrid's diocese, and had been consecrated by Quartodecimans, *i.e.* by the two Keltic bishops who had assisted Wini, and that he was ordained afresh by Theodore through all the Orders, which would mean that his ordination as deacon and priest was also considered invalid. Bede on the other hand says nothing about Wilfrid, but says that when Theodore maintained that Chad had not been duly consecrated Chad humbly replied that 'if you know that I have not rightly undertaken the episcopate I willingly depart from my office, for I never judged myself worthy of this; but for the sake of obedience being bidden I consented though unworthy to undertake this.' But Theodore, hearing the humility of his reply, said that he ought not to give up the episcopal office, but he himself consummated his ordination anew in the catholic manner. It is clear that some fault was found with Chad's ecclesiastical position, and that this was made part of a scheme for placing Wilfrid at York, and transferring Chad elsewhere, but beyoud this the details are uncertain.

Theodore had undoubtedly heard much of Wilfrid, and he would naturally think him to be the very man who would best further his ends as bishop at York; and it is equally clear that he did not know much of Chad, but that when he came into contact with him he was able to recognise his saintly character, and to desire that his services as bishop should be continued to the Church. It is also probable that he wished to emphasize the necessity of cordially accepting the catholic customs by repudiating the canonicity or validity of Keltic Orders, but whether this was a pretext for making the change he desired, or the main motive seems doubtful. The distinction between what is irregular and uncanonical and what is invalid was often at this time imperfectly recognised, and we cannot therefore be sure what were the exact defects alleged against Chad's position, or how they were supposed to have been made good.[1] Up to this time no one appears to have called in question the perfect regularity of the Orders of the Scotic and British Churches.

What more is known about Chad may be related here. He did not live more than two years to preside over the Church in Mercia. In his manner of working he imitated Aidan, whose disciple he had been. In Northumbria he had spent most of his time in directly evangelistic work, going round

[1] Theodore's Penitential ii. 9 (Haddan and Stubbs, iii. p. 197), says that those who have been ordained by bishops of the Scots or Britons, who are not catholics in Easter or in tonsure, are not united to the church, but must be again confirmed by a catholic bishop by imposition of hands.

the towns and villages and country districts always on foot. When he went to Mercia Theodore insisted upon his using a horse, and assisted him to mount it for the first time with his own hands. Like Aidan he had near his church at Lichfield a house for retirement and devotion, where he spent his time with seven or eight monks when not engaged in pastoral work. Like the other Scotic saints he was deeply impressed with a sense of the terror of the Divine judgements. During thunder storms it was his practice to go into the church and repeat psalms and prayers until the storm was over, and when asked by his disciples the reason of this he quoted the eighteenth psalm, and said that such visitations were designed by God to recal to the mind the terrors of the last Judgement. The story of his death is beautiful and characteristic. The plague had visited Lichfield, and carried off many of the brethren, and it chanced that Chad was left alone in his little monastery with one monk named Owine.[1] This man had come with Æthelthryd or Etheldreda, the daughter of king Anna, and afterwards the wife of king Egfrid, and the foundress of Ely, from East Anglia, and was the head of her household. But he determined to

[1] The slab of Owine's tomb was discovered at Haddenham, where tradition says that he lived, at the base of the village cross. It bears the inscription 'Grant thy light, O God, to Owine and rest.' Dr Browne, whose books cited in the lists of authorities at the ends of the chapters contain a great deal of very valuable archæological information, calls attention to the fact that most of the earliest English monumental remains contain prayers for the departed, a practice universal in the early church.

renounce the world, and came to Chad's monastery at Lastingham with nothing but an axe and a hatchet, for as his learning was not sufficient for the study of the Scriptures he was determined to devote himself with the greater diligence to manual work. On a certain day he was engaged in his usual outdoor work while Chad was praying in the oratory, when he heard the sweet sound of singing voices descend from heaven upon the oratory where the bishop was, and after an interval ascend to heaven again. And while he wondered what this could mean, he saw the bishop open the window, and clap his hands, as was his custom, to summon him, and when he came he bade him call the seven brethren of the monastery. When they came he bade them observe the virtues of mutual love and peace, and diligently to follow the precepts of their rule. And he added that the day of his death was at hand. 'For,' he said, 'that gentle guest who was wont to visit our brethren has deigned today to come also to me, and to call me from the world.' Then he told them to return to the church and pray for his death and remember their own. Shortly afterwards he was taken with sickness, and on the seventh day, the second day of March, after he had received the Lord's Body and Blood, his holy soul was released from the prison of the body. He was buried first near his cathedral church of S. Mary, and afterwards removed to the church of S. Peter. In his place as bishop Theodore ordained Winfrid, a good and modest man, who had long been Chad's deacon.

Meanwhile other changes had taken place. King Oswy ended his honourable reign in A.D. 670,[1] in the 58th year of his age. He had desired before his death to visit Rome in Wilfrid's company, but this was not to be. He was succeeded by his son Egfrid, then twenty five years old, the last king, as will be seen, under whom Northumbria was prosperous. He was a friend and patron to Benedict Biscop, and lived for some time on excellent terms with Wilfrid, now at the height of his activity. This took a different direction from that of Chad. Eddi tells us, perhaps with a good deal of exaggeration, that Wilfrid found the cathedral church at York in a most dilapidated state: and indeed it is probable enough that Chad had not devoted much attention to it, and as he was bishop for so short a time he could not be held altogether responsible. Wilfrid restored this and also erected magnificent churches at Ripon and Hexham. The still existing crypt of the latter church is one of the most interesting monuments of this time. The church at Ripon was dedicated with a magnificent ceremonial, and public worship in general began probably to wear a far more dignified aspect. We are also told that Wilfrid was indefatigable in travelling about his diocese to baptize and confirm, and that he ordained priests and deacons to assist him in all places. Some allowance must be made for the enthusiasm of a biographer, but there is no reason to doubt that Wilfrid was

[1] Bede's date is A.D. 670. The true date is more probably A.D. 671. See Plummer's *Bede*, ii. p. 211.

most energetic and successful in the performance of his duties as bishop.

In Kent also there was soon a new king, Lothere, who succeeded Egbert in A.D. 673 and reigned until A.D. 685. He is the last Kentish king but one whose name will be mentioned, for Kent becomes from this time of little political importance, and has no history to speak of. Two mentions of invasion during Lothere's reign indicate weakness. It was very shortly after the new king's accession that the greatest event of Theodore's episcopate took place. The Council of Hertford met on the 24th September, A.D. 673. It was a purely ecclesiastical Council: Theodore was apparently strongly enough settled in his position to dispense with any special support on the part of the secular authorities, and this was a Council which had no reference to the affairs of any particular kingdom, but represented the English Church as a whole. It was the first provincial synod of the province of Canterbury, for the province of York, though contemplated by Gregory's scheme, had never yet come into actual existence. The constituent members of the synod were the bishops of the province, but many other 'masters of the church,' learned in 'the canonical statutes of the fathers' were present. This was in strict accordance with primitive and catholic precedent. Of the six suffragan bishops four, Bisi, Putta, Lothere, and Winfred, all of whom had been consecrated by Theodore himself, were present; Wilfrid sent representatives, and Wini is not mentioned. The main object of the Council was probably to emphasise

the acceptance by the English Church as a whole of the standards of practice maintained by the Catholic Church throughout the world; and, in particular, to secure, as far as might be, that the irregularities in organisation which had naturally been caused by the lax system of the Keltic missionaries should not recur. Consequently the point most insisted upon was the strengthening of the diocesan system, and the enforcement of the bishop's authority within the definite area assigned to him. The acts of the Council are given by Bede in Theodore's own words. He first asked the bishops whether they would agree to observe all the things which had been canonically decreed by the fathers, and when all had consented to this he produced a book of the canons, in which he had noted ten points specially necessary for the time. This book was, no doubt, the translation into Latin of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon which had been made not long before by Dionysius Exiguus. The ten special points illustrate both the condition of the Church and Theodore's policy. The first canon enjoyed uniformity in keeping Easter. This was already an accomplished fact, but it was natural that it should be thus formally sanctioned by a conciliar decree. The second forbade any bishop to invade the diocese of another. The special mention of this point shows that this obvious rule had not been quite strictly observed, and indeed some cases are on record in which bishops appear to have acted with little regard for the rights of the diocesan. The third canon forbade the bishops to interfere

unnecessarily with monasteries, which seems to point to the existence of some friction even at this early date between the regulars and seculars. The fourth canon forbade the monks themselves[1] to wander from place to place, that is, from monastery to monastery, except by the permission of their own abbot. The lax monastic system of the Scots lent itself very readily to the sort of wandering spoken of here, and it is easy to see that in an age when zeal had cooled down it would become an intolerable abuse. Indeed, stringent measures had to be taken later on in various parts of Europe to check the wandering Irish monk. Theodore evidently saw the danger, and tried to meet it at the outset. The next canon extends the same limitations to all clerks. No clerk leaving his own bishop is to be received elsewhere without letters of commendation from his own bishop, on pain of excommunication. The sixth canon deals further with the same matter: bishops and clerks when travelling are to be content with the hospitality given them, and are not to officiate in other dioceses without the bishop's consent. The seventh canon is an important one: it orders that, as the general rule, laid down by the Nicene and other councils, if two synods in the year was too difficult, one synod at least should be held every year on the first of August at a place called Cloveshoch. This place cannot be certainly identified, but it was probably in the Mercian dominions,

[1] A various reading is 'bishop monks,' *episcopi* for *ipsi*; but it is almost certain that there were not bishops in the English monasteries, as there were in Ireland.

and it is known that synods were held there in A.D. 716, 742, and 747, the last being of special importance; but if even this modified rule had been at all strictly observed, there could hardly fail to be more information on the subject extant. The eighth canon regulates the precedence of bishops. The ninth is one of the most important, but it was not carried. Theodore wished the synod to declare that 'the number of bishops should be increased as the numbers of the faithful grow.' This was a matter which events showed that he had very much at heart, but it was the thing which he found it most difficult to carry out. It is evident that there must have been strong opposition on the part of the bishops present, and possibly the belief that this question would be brought forward may have been the cause of Wilfrid's absence from the council. It is not difficult to understand the reluctance of the bishops to have their sees divided. Hitherto the bishop in an independent kingdom had been practically independent of any external authority; even now, when the metropolitan authority of Canterbury had been generally acknowledged, to be merely one of several Mercian or Northumbrian bishops was quite a different thing from being the one bishop of the Mercians or Northumbrians. It was most desirable in the interests not only of the efficiency but also of the unity of the Church that the bishops should cease to have so much independence, but it is not surprising that they should have failed to recognise this. The tenth and last canon forbade divorce in all cases except the one mentioned

in S. Matthew's Gospel, and forbade remarriage after divorce in all cases whatever. The acts of the Council were confirmed with all formality by the subscriptions of all the bishops.

In spite of Theodore's failure to carry the bishops with him in the matter of dividing the dioceses, he was soon able to take a first step in this direction. Not long, apparently, after the Council, Bisi, the East Anglian bishop, became too infirm to perform his duties, and two bishops instead of one were consecrated in his place, their sees being fixed at Dunwich, now long submerged off the Suffolk coast, and Elmham, in the centre of Norfolk.[1] Unfortunately for the Church in East Anglia this division was not permanent. The Danish invasions broke into the succession of East Anglian bishops for nearly two centuries: Dunwich was altogether abandoned, and a single line of bishops continued with some interruptions at Elmham until after the Conquest, when the see was transferred to Thetford, and soon afterwards to Norwich. East Anglia still continues to be one of the most impracticable of the English bishoprics. Not very long after this, perhaps in A.D. 675, the simoniacal bishop of Essex, Wini, died, and Theodore was able to give the diocese a more worthy prelate. Earconwald was

[1] There are two Elmhams in East Anglia, and there are very interesting remains in both places. North Elmham, in Norfolk, would have been the more natural place for the second see, but there is something to be said for South Elmham, which is not far from Dunwich. For a discussion of this question and for much interesting archæological information see Browne's *Conversion of the Heptarchy*, pages 77 seq.

already well known in Essex for the holiness of his life, and he had founded for himself a monastery at Chertsey, as he founded later on another monastery for his sister Ethelburga, of whom many miracles are narrated. He now became the second founder of the see of London. Since the retirement of Mellitus in A.D. 616 there has been no bishop in the largest town in England. Neither Cedd nor Wini appear to have made it their see. From this time it takes a place in the work of the Church more worthy of its secular importance, though not that which Gregory had intended. Little more, however, is heard of either the see of London or the kingdom of Essex during this period.

In Mercia several important changes took place. Winfred, the bishop whom Theodore had consecrated, was deposed by him after a few years on account of some disobedience, and retired to his monastery, where he ended his life 'in the best conversation.' Sexulf, the founder and abbot of Medehampsted, the later Peterborough, took his place. This is Bede's account, but he does not tell us either what the disobedience was, nor how Winfred was deposed. It may be conjectured that the disobedience may have had something to do with a design for dividing the bishopric, but whether the deposition was accomplished by the canonical sentence of a synod, or in some more high handed manner, we do not know. Anyhow it was not very long before a subdivision of the diocese was affected. Æthelred succeeded his brother Wulfhere on the throne in A.D. 675, and he appears to have supported the

Church loyally during his long reign. He was king until A.D. 704, when he became a monk, and he died abbot of Bardney in Lincolnshire in A.D. 716. The early years of his reign were, however, not peaceful. In A.D. 676 he invaded Kent, and devastated Rochester, and the destruction of the property of the Church led the bishop, Putta, to leave his see, and betake himself to the Mercian bishop, Sexulf, who gave him a church and a little estate, probably at or near Hereford, where he spent the rest of his life, teaching church music, and perhaps discharging some episcopal duties. Hence he is sometimes reckoned as the first bishop of Hereford. The see of Rochester does not appear to have recovered for some time, for Putta's successor also resigned because of its poverty. Not long afterwards, in A.D. 679, there was trouble between Mercia and Northumbria, and a battle was fought on the Trent, in which a young brother of Egfrid, the king of Northumbria, was killed. It is a striking testimony to Theodore's influence that he was able even after this event to make peace between the two kings, who were brothers-in-law, for Æthelred had married Egfrid's sister. It was perhaps in consequence of this war that Mercia once more recovered Lindsey, which had gone backwards and forwards between the two kingdoms for many years. Except for these events Æthelred's reign in Mercia is nearly a blank. Early in the reign, however, Theodore was able to subdivide the vast diocese. A late authority states that five dioceses were formed, of which the sees were probably at Lich-

field, Worcester, Leicester, Stow, and Dorchester, which last place had now passed from Wessex to Mercia.

It was in Northumbria that the greatest difficulties connected with the subdivision of dioceses arose, and we must now go back a few years to deal with the state of affairs in that kingdom. Wilfrid, as has been seen, took the place of Chad at York in A.D. 669, as sole bishop of Northumbria, and acted with his accustomed vigour and efficiency. These were years of great activity for the Church in Northumbria. The great Saint Cuthbert had come from Melrose to assist Eata at Lindisfarne. Benedict Biscop had founded the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, which were to have so great an influence in the English Church. The bishop was in high favour with the saintly queen Etheldreda already mentioned on page 77, and indeed with all men. Then in A.D. 678 there was a sudden catastrophe. It is curious to notice how little Bede says about it. His account is simply this: There arose a dissension between the King Egfrid and the most reverend bishop Wilfrid, and the bishop was driven from his see, and two bishops put in his place. This is all that we learn directly from Bede, although he must have known the facts, and undoubtedly used Eddi's biography. Eddi has plenty to say about the matter, but his impartiality and accuracy are not above suspicion. It is a striking testimony to the lofty impartiality of Bede that historians have not been able to agree about the causes of his reticence. Some have supposed him to have been hostile to

Wilfrid, others have thought that he was silent in his interest. It is noticeable that he does not mention Theodore in connection with the transaction, although he must have had something to do with it, and it is perhaps a safe conclusion that Bede thought that one or perhaps several persons whom he esteemed had not acted well in the matter, and that posterity might be satisfied with an outline of the facts. According to Eddi Theodore came to Northumbria, and arranged with the king, who had been excited against Wilfrid by the animosity of his second wife Ermenburg, to divide the diocese in Wilfrid's absence, and to ordain two new bishops for parts of Northumbria, as well as one for the province of Lindsey, at that moment under Northumbrian rule. Wilfrid demanded an explanation in a Northumbrian gemot, and redress being refused appealed to the pope. This is the outline of the story, which must be accepted as substantially correct in the absence of other information. But some of the details are more than suspicious—for instance, Eddi says that Theodore was bribed by the king and queen, which is absurd,—and the whole account must be received with caution. Eddi also omits, what Bede incidentally supplies, the probable cause of the king's enmity. Queen Etheldreda, although twice married, had a great longing for the monastic life, and about A.D. 672 obtained the reluctant consent of the king to enter the monastery of Coldingham, where his aunt Ebba was abbess. Wilfrid undoubtedly encouraged her, and gave her the veil. After a year Etheldreda retired to the fen country which

she had received as a dowry from her first husband, and founded the celebrated monastery of Ely, where she passed the rest of her life in ascetic retirement. Egfrid married again; if it were with the sanction of the Church it could only have been on the ground that the first marriage, not having been consummated, was null and void. Details are wanting, but it is clear that in Wilfrid's probable attitude towards these events there were abundant occasions for the enmity of the king and the new queen. It is very probable that the king and his new queen were jealous of Wilfrid's great power and his rich possessions at Ripon, Hexham, and elsewhere. The fact that so much of them had been given by his brother Alchfrid and his first queen Etheldreda may also have been a sore point with the king, and it is certain that the question of Wilfrid's possessions was one which was often raised during all the rest of his life. As to Theodore's part in the matter, we know how anxious he was for the division of dioceses, and if he took advantage of Wilfrid's disgrace at court to exercise his powers as metropolitan in a very high handed way it would not be out of keeping with what we know of his conduct on other occasions.

Much has been said on the subject of Wilfrid's appeal to Rome. It was a very natural act on his part: the principle of an appeal from a metropolitan to a patriarch had been recognised at the Council of Chalcedon, and although the African and Gallican Churches had both resisted appeals to Rome in the fifth century, the power of the popes had grown con-

siderably since that time, and Wilfrid might also have argued that a Church so recently founded by the Roman see might well be considered as still in need of some special supervision. Moreover, if he had suffered grave injustice, as there is reason to think was the case, it is difficult to see by what other means he could possibly hope for any redress. But opinion in England was certainly adverse to admitting any interference in the affairs of the English Church. Wilfrid's appeal seems to have been considered as a practical abdication of his position, and his whole diocese was forthwith divided among three new bishops, without leaving any part for Wilfrid himself. And even if Eddi's account of Wilfrid's reception on his return cannot be implicitly trusted, it is at all events clear that people who would naturally have a great opinion of Roman authority, such as Benedict Biscop, did not take Wilfrid's part, and also that, although he was twice restored to a part of his former authority, the repeated papal decrees in his favour were never really carried out.

On leaving England Wilfrid was carried by stress of weather to Fresia, where he was hospitably entertained during the winter by the king of the country. The Fresians were still heathens, and Wilfrid did his best to convert them, with great success, according to his biographer. But when some twelve years later another English missionary, Wilbrord, attempted the conversion of the Fresians, there do not appear to have been many traces of Wilfrid's work left. Still we may readily believe that he did

as much as any one man could do in so short a time. By going to Fresia Wilfrid escaped some dangers. His enemies, according to Eddi, had sent messengers to Ebroin, the mayor of the palace, who had delayed Theodore's journey through Gaul, to ask him to seize Wilfrid. This he was very willing to do, having a private grudge of his own against him for having helped his enemy the king of Austrasia. But he only succeeded in laying violent hands on Winfrid, the deposed bishop of Mercia, who happened to have come to Gaul at that time. What could have brought Winfrid there, unless he also wished to appeal to the Pope, we cannot say. Ebroin then attempted to induce the Fresian king to give Wilfrid up, but without success, and at length he reached Rome in safety, though constantly pursued, according to Eddi, by the machinations of his enemies. The acts of a council are extant which is supposed to have been held at Rome about this time, in which the affairs of the English Church, and particularly a scheme of bishoprics, are dealt with. These acts are probably a forgery in the interest of the see of Canterbury; but a council was held soon after Wilfrid's arrival to deal with his particular case. Eddi gives a detailed account of what took place. A legate from Theodore was present, and the council finally decreed that Wilfrid should recover his original bishopric, and that the intruders should be expelled, but that then Wilfrid with the assistance of a council at York should choose bishops to assist him, who should be ordained by Theodore. Before he left Rome Wilfrid was present at a large

council which met at Easter A.D. 680 to condemn the Monothelites, and Wilfrid signed the acts of the synod as bishop of York, professing the orthodox faith on behalf of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, as well as the English. Armed with the papal decrees he then returned to England. About his reception in Northumbria Bede says practically nothing, and Eddi says too much. Bede contents himself with the remark that though he could not be received in his fatherland or his diocese because of the king's enmity, he could not be diverted from the work of preaching the Gospel, and he goes on to describe his work in Sussex. Eddi informs us that when he presented his decrees to the king and the Northumbrian gemot there arose an outcry that the decrees had been bought—the pope's competence to intervene is not said to have been questioned—and, apparently without any voice being raised on his behalf, Wilfrid was cast into prison and kept there for nine months. There is a great deal of detail in the account which may be regarded as more or less ornamental, but it is difficult to suppose that the main facts were inventions. Why Bede should pass them over in entire silence can probably never be satisfactorily explained. When he was released from prison Wilfrid went for a short time first to Mercia, and then to Wessex, but he was expelled from both countries in succession through the intrigues of Queen Ermenburg. He then sought refuge in Sussex, where a great opportunity for evangelistic work presented itself, and was nobly used. The king of Sussex,

Æthelwalch, had been baptized at an earlier date (see page 117), but his people were still heathen and uncivilised. There was a tiny settlement of five or six Scotic monks at Bosham, but none of the people had any desire to imitate them or to listen to their preaching. Wilfrid however won popularity by helping the people in great straits. There had been no rain in Sussex for three years, and a famine was the natural result. There was abundance of fish, but the people had never learnt to catch anything except eels. Wilfrid taught them to join eel nets together, and a plentiful supply of fish was the result. Also it fell out that the first day appointed for a public baptism was the day upon which rain first began to fall, and the people eagerly embraced the Christian faith. The king gave Wilfrid an estate at Selsey, and he founded a monastery there which afterwards became the see of a bishop. Later on an exiled prince of Wessex, named Cadwalla, attacked Æthelwalch, and defeated and slew him, and became himself king of the South Saxons. He also befriended Wilfrid, and gave him the fourth part of the Isle of Wight to be made Christian. In such works Wilfrid spent five years before his return to Northumbria. Such is the outline of Bede's account of the conversion of the last English kingdom which had remained heathen. There is no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the facts, but Sussex was a long way from Jarrow, and Bede's information was not of the best. There are difficulties about the dates, and some of the details, such as the three rainless years in Sussex, are suspicious. The South

Saxons had no bishop after Wilfrid, Bede tells us, until they came under the bishop of the West Saxons some years afterwards, and the work of conversion was probably a very gradual process. And now, before dealing with Wilfrid's return to Northumbria, there are several matters which must be noticed.

After Wilfrid had been driven from his bishopric, but before he had lodged his appeal, an embassy had come from Rome on another matter. Benedict Biscop had made a fourth visit to Rome to obtain various things for his monastery at Wearmouth, and especially a letter of privilege, obtained by the king's desire from the pope, to confirm the liberties of the house. When he returned, the pope sent with him a distinguished musician, John, the precentor of S. Peter's, and abbot of S. Martin's at Rome, both to give instruction in music and ritual, and to ascertain the faith of the English Church with regard to the Monothelite controversy. He took with him the acts of a Council that had been held at Rome in A.D. 649 to condemn the Monothelite doctrine, in order that they might be accepted by the English Church. Accordingly a council was summoned by Theodore which met at Hatfield in Hertfordshire on September A.D. 680. Theodore, of course, presided; he is styled the archbishop of the island of Britain and the city of Canterbury, and the other bishops sat with him as the constituent members of the council; but other learned men were present. It was not likely that there would be any difference of opinion with regard to the matter

in hand. The Western Church never concerned itself very greatly about the metaphysical subtilties that were so congenial to the Eastern mind, and the doctrines of the Monothelites were little likely to penetrate to so remote a part of the West as Britain. The Council unanimously declared their adhesion to the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and explicitly accepted the decrees of the five General Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and the second of Constantinople. They also accepted the acts of the Roman Council of A.D. 649 which were specially laid before them. It is to be noticed that the confession of faith includes the assertion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*, thus following the example of the Spanish Councils which had added these words since A.D. 589, although a Roman Council in the early part of this very year said nothing of the doctrine of the double Procession. The addition is ascribed by Dr Bright to the influence of Hadrian, who being an African would be likely to follow S. Augustine on this point. The council does not appear to have touched on the question of Wilfrid's position, or dealt with any other contentious business; its work was entirely a confession of faith, for which indeed we may be very grateful, for it emphasises the fact that from the earliest days the English Church has held the faith and recognised the authority of the whole Catholic Church. The sixth General Council, which was held at Constantinople in the following year, finally put an end to the particular controversy about which the English

Church had been asked to express itself. John the Precentor now set out on his return journey. He had been very busy since he had reached England. He had taught 'the course of singing' as it was practised at S. Peter's at Rome, not only at the monastery of Wearmouth, but at very many places throughout the province, and Church musicians had flocked to hear his instructions from all sides. The plainsong music of the Church was at that time approaching the period of its highest perfection, and in all matters concerning music, ritual, and ceremonial, the Church of S. Peter at Rome was becoming the model for Europe. The English Church, by its widespread missionary work, had no small share in diffusing its influence. John himself never again sang over the tombs of the Apostles; he died on his way through Gaul, and his body was borne to Tours to rest under the protection of his patron S. Martin. The copy of the acts of the council of Hatfield which he was bearing to Rome was carried by other hands to the pope, and received by him, we are told, with great gladness.

In the next year, A.D. 681, the number of Northumbrian bishops was still further increased. On Wilfrid's appeal to Rome Bosa had become bishop of York, and Eata, the abbot of Lindisfarne, had been placed in charge of the two northern sees, Lindisfarne and Hexham. In A.D. 681 Tunbert was made bishop of Hexham, and another bishop was consecrated for the Pictish territory that was then subject to the English. Three years later Tunbert was deposed; for what particular offence,

and by what process, canonical or irregular, we are not informed. Egfrid desired that Cuthbert might be his successor, and he was elected by an assembly which met at Twyford on the Alne, over which Theodore presided. But it was more easy to elect Cuthbert than to gain his consent. He had come to Lindisfarne, as has been already mentioned, to assist Eata, but he had retired more and more from the common life of the monastery, and had for some time lived a hermit's life of ever increasing seclusion on the desolate little island of Farne, in a hut sunk in the ground, so that nothing but the sky could be seen from it. The entreaties of the king and the monks at last prevailed, but in order that he might not have to leave Lindisfarne, Eata went to Hexham. Cuthbert was consecrated at York by Theodore and six other bishops at Easter, A.D. 685, and he served for two years as bishop of Lindisfarne. His episcopate showed that his long ascetic seclusion had not blunted his human sympathies or diminished his practical ability. He adorned his episcopate, Bede says, with apostolic virtues. Burning with the love of God he remembered that He who said Thou shalt love the Lord thy God said also Thou shalt love thy neighbour. He was patient and gentle to all who sought his counsel, holding it as an act of prayer if he could give to weak brethren the help of his exhortation. His preaching was clear and plain, full of dignity and gentleness. He seemed to know beforehand what to say and to whom and when to say it, and when he bade others do a thing he showed the way by doing it himself. The grace of

'compunction' kept his mind fixed on heavenly things, and in celebrating the Holy Sacrifice his voice was ever broken by tears. His devotion was of that extremely ascetic and contemplative type which was held in the highest honour by the men of his own and succeeding ages, but he combined with it, as was not always the case with the saints of the middle ages, a warm human sympathy and practical philanthropy. It is not surprising that his memory should have been cherished in the north of England for many centuries more than that of any other saint. The accounts of Cuthbert's last days are too long to quote in full, and too characteristic to bear curtailment. He retired to Farne when he felt his health giving way, and remained there alone during a great part of his last illness. Only when he had reached the extreme point of weakness did he allow the abbot of Lindisfarne and other brethren to wait on him. The last day of his life he passed in prayer, which he continued until after midnight. He then received the Holy Eucharist, which was then reserved in both kinds for the sick, and early on the morning of March 20 he passed away. He had desired to be buried at Farne, but had at last consented to be borne to Lindisfarne, and there his body was laid in a stone coffin by the altar of S. Peter's church. When in A.D. 875 the brethren fled before the Northmen Cuthbert's body with S. Oswald's head began the wanderings which ended in the glorious church of Durham.

Meanwhile, soon after Cuthbert's consecration, a great disaster had befallen Northumbria. Egfrid

appears to have entertained hopes of a further extension of his power towards the north. In the year A.D. 684 he had sent an army to Ireland, to make an invasion which was apparently unprovoked, and in A.D. 685 he himself led an army against the Picts. He was enticed into an ambush at Nechtanesmere, probably Dunnichen, near Forfar, and lost his own life and the greater part of his army. This crushing defeat put an end to the period of the greatness of Northumbria. The Picts who had been subject to the northern kingdom regained and retained their independence, and the bishopric which had been founded among them a few years before was given up. The English who were settled among the Picts were driven out or reduced to servitude, and the hold of Northumbria even upon Lothian and Strathclyde was shaken. Some of its ascendancy was recovered seventy years later, but the great days of Northumbrian rule never returned. Egfrid was succeeded on the throne by his half brother Aldfrid, an illegitimate son of Oswy, who had been in exile in Ireland, and had there devoted himself to study, especially of the Scriptures. But he was a man of practical ability as well as a scholar, and under his wise rule the kingdom recovered to a great extent from its great disaster, though within narrower boundaries.

The death of Egfrid removed the greatest obstacle to Wilfrid's return. Bede tells us, with his usual reticence, that in Aldfrid's second year Wilfrid recovered his see and bishopric, on the invitation of the king himself. Eddi gives a much

fuller account of what took place. He says that Theodore wished to be reconciled to Wilfrid, and invited him to meet him at the house of Bishop Earconwald, in London. He then wrote to Aldfrid and Æthelred, the kings of Northumbria and Mercia, and to Ælfled the daughter of Oswy, who had succeeded Hilda as abbess of Whitby. It was in consequence of this action that Wilfrid was invited to return to Northumbria. He was not, however, restored to his original position. Bosa gave up to him the see of York, and he had charge of the dioceses of Hexham and Lindisfarne after the deaths of Eata and Cuthbert, but only until new bishops were consecrated. The church of Ripon was also given back to him. It is clear that the arrangement was a compromise, and from what followed a few years later it appears to have been one with which Wilfrid was by no means satisfied. The new bishop of Hexham was S. John of Beverley, a man who had studied under Theodore at Canterbury, and had been a monk at Whitby. He became the object of greater reverence in the north of England than any other saint except Cuthbert, and Bede regarded him with special affection, having been ordained by him both deacon and priest.

His reconciliation with Wilfrid is the last thing that we know about the great career of Theodore. He died on September 19, A.D. 690, at the age of 88, and as the south porch of the church of SS. Peter and Paul, where former archbishops had been laid, was now full, he was buried within the church.

He had accomplished his work for the English Church. Its unity and organisation had been secured. It is seldom that it is given to any man to see so great and so permanent results accomplished in his lifetime. The corporate constitution of the English Church was now complete. 'No longer' to quote Mr Wakeman 'a mere collection of mission stations, monastic in arrangement and independent in government, the Church now presented the appearance of a united society, organised under a definite head, independent of local political divisions, yet closely connected with the different governments of the nations among which she was planted.' This, and more than this was mainly the work of Theodore. But the highest tribute to his memory is contained in the words in which Bede sums up his account of his labours: 'In his episcopate the churches of the English received more spiritual benefit than they could ever gain before.'

But while recognising the importance of Theodore's work we must not forget the debt which the Church owes to his great contemporary Wilfrid. To him it is mainly due that the English Church as a whole was, by adopting the Roman Easter, united to the whole of the Western Church, and so placed in the path of progress. It was he also who won over the last strongholds of heathenism in this country, and set an example, nobly followed by many who came after him, of devoted missionary work abroad. He also set an example at home as the builder of noble churches, the founder of great monasteries,

and the organiser of a well ordered community life. And even his spirited resistance to the subdivision of his diocese, and his appeals to Rome, the parts of his career which have been most sharply criticised, may have saved the Church from a serious danger. The growth of a sort of papal authority in the see of Canterbury might have seriously interfered with the due exercise of the functions of the episcopate. But the kind of action which appears to have been taken on more than one occasion by Theodore does not seem to have been repeated, and while a due freedom was retained in the English Church to arrange her own internal affairs without interference from without, the metropolitical powers of Canterbury were confined within reasonable bounds.

The remainder of Wilfrid's life can only be briefly sketched. Five years after his restoration to the diminished see of York, that is in the year A.D. 691, disagreements with King Aldfrid led to his second exile. Being again accused, Bede says, he was driven from his bishopric by the king and many bishops. It is curious that we are often told of accusations brought against Wilfrid, but what the accusations were is always obscure. Eddi says that there were three great grounds of difference: first, that property belonging to the Church of S. Peter—at York or more probably at Ripon—was unjustly kept from him: secondly, that Wilfrid's own monastery was made into a bishop's see: this is generally taken to mean that the king wished to make Ripon into a separate bishopric. It had already been the seat of

a bishop for a short time, for Eadhed, who was consecrated to the bishopric of Lindsey by Theodore A.D. 678, had to retire when Mercia recovered this province three years later, and was set over the Church of Ripon. He had apparently given way to Wilfrid, but a renewed attempt may have been made to deprive Wilfrid of the church which he especially loved. It has however also been suggested that Hexham is the monastery meant by Eddi, and that Wilfrid was still aggrieved by the fact that it remained a separate bishopric. The third cause of disagreement mentioned by Eddi is that Wilfrid was required to accept the decrees of archbishop Theodore: *i.e.* apparently the decrees by which Northumbria had been subdivided. As there is no further information on the subject it is impossible to be certain about what took place, but it is only natural to suppose that Wilfrid was not satisfied with the very partial restoration of his property and powers which had been conceded to him, and that friction with the king and the other bishops would easily arise. On leaving Northumbria Wilfrid was honourably received by King Æthelred in Mercia, and was soon put in charge of a vacant diocese, probably that of Leicester, which fell vacant—as did also Lichfield—in A.D. 691. Here he worked for eleven years. At the end of that time in A.D. 702 a great council of the English Church was held at a place which Eddi calls Onestrefeld or Edwinspath. It was probably Austerfield near Bawtry. Why the council was summoned at this particular juncture does not appear. Wilfrid had written to Rome, and

letters from Rome may have come back, but they are not mentioned as causes of the council. The archbishop Bertwald, who had been consecrated in succession to Theodore on June 29, A.D. 692, and most of the bishops were present, and Wilfrid appeared to plead his cause. The main facts which come out of Eddi's description of the proceedings—our only authority—are that the general tone of the meeting was strongly hostile to Wilfrid; that he declined to accept the 'decrees of Theodore' except with reservations; that many wished to deprive him of all his property and offices, and that he was finally offered the monastery of Ripon if he would be content with that and ask for nothing more. Wilfrid finally again appealed to Rome, and this was treated as making his case worse. He returned to Mercia, where Æthelred remained his friend, and then, in spite of his advanced age, set out again for Rome, accompanied by Acca, afterwards bishop of Hexham. On his way he visited the scene of his former missionary labours in Fresia. One of his disciples, Wilbrord, had carried on the work which he himself had begun, and was now Archbishop of Utrecht. At Rome envoys from the archbishop also appeared, and after a committee had held seventy sessions on the whole affair, which seems almost incredible, the pope John VI., again pronounced in his favour, but being probably desirous not to irritate English feeling, directed that a synod in England should endeavour to come to a settlement.[1]

[1] Eddi was present at Rome during these proceedings, and writes about them in the first person. He must have learnt from Wilfrid's

On his way home Wilfrid fell dangerously ill at Meaux, but eventually reached England in safety. Archbishop Bertwald was now well disposed towards him, and he also had the support of his old protector Æthelred, who had now resigned his crown, and become Abbot of Bardney. Aldfrid refused to be reconciled, but he died in A.D. 705, and an arrangement became possible. A council was held on the Nidd, in which the archbishop took the leading part, though otherwise it was a purely Northumbrian gathering.[1] The result was a compromise, and one less favourable to Wilfrid than that by which he was restored in A.D. 686. He

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lips the whole history of these years. His account of them ought to shed a flood of light upon the methods of the papal court, and its relations to the English Church, and also upon the relations between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in England. But there are so many inconsistencies and so much confusion in his narrative, and he writes so much as a partisan, that it is difficult to draw any certain conclusions. Bede used Eddi's work, and had independent sources of information, but on many of the points that we should like to know about he prefers to be silent. The substance of Eddi's narrative is given very fully in Dr Bright's *Early English Church History*.

[1] The archbishop seems to have had a real desire to effect a satisfactory settlement. When Aldfrid died the kingdom was seized by Eadwulf, whom the Chronicle does not recognise ; he too would have nothing to do with Wilfrid, but he was killed after a couple of months, and Osred, Aldfrid's son, a boy of eight years old succeeded. Soon afterwards this council was held. The archbishop read the pope's letters, but the three Northumbrian bishops, Bosa of York, John of Hexham, and Eadfrid of Lindisfarne were still hostile to Wilfrid. Then Ælfled, the abbess of Whitby, a daughter of Oswy, testified that Aldfrid had repented on his deathbed of his treatment of Wilfrid, and finally the compromise described above was arrived at.

did not on this occasion recover the bishopric of York, although it soon became vacant by the death of Bosa, but John of Beverley was transferred to York from Hexham, and Wilfrid recovered only this latter bishopric, together with the monastery of Ripon and his other monasteries and possessions in Northumbria. In this position he remained until his death three years later. Being warned by a recurrence of the illness that had attacked him at Meaux that his life was drawing to a close, he made careful arrangements for the disposal of his monasteries and his treasures. As he was visiting his monasteries in Mercia in A.D. 709 he was seized by his last illness, and died at Oundle in his seventy sixth year. He was buried in his church of Ripon. With him the most brilliant period of the early English Church came to an end. He was the last of the great men of the period of the conversion of England. The century which follows was in some respects no doubt a time of consolidation and quiet advance, but it contains few great names or striking incidents, and in some ways it was a time of falling away from the high ideals of the first age. Its history will not detain us long.

NOTE TO CHAPTER V

Authorities. The original sources for the life of Wilfrid have been mentioned in the note to Chapter IV. For a modern account of his life there is nothing better than the article by Canon Raine in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, and the account in Dr Bright's *Early English Church History*.

Dr Hunt gives a shorter sketch in his history, but one that is very lucid. Dr Browne's *Theodore and Wilfrith* (S.P.C.K. 1897) contains much valuable archæological information. The rest of the book is rather controversial than historical. *Theodore's Penitential* is in Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii.

CHAPTER VI

THE EIGHTH CENTURY

OUR knowledge of the eighth century is very small indeed compared with our knowledge of the period with which we have hitherto been occupied. This is partly because our great authority now fails us. Bede did not, it is true, complete his Ecclesiastical History until the year A.D. 731, but he tells us little about the years that had elapsed since the death of Theodore in A.D. 690, although his own recollections would have furnished him with abundant material. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that Bede did not think the events of these later years worthy of being recorded on the same scale as that earlier history which narrates the Conversion of the English kingdoms. And indeed in what we know of the history of the century there is a remarkable dearth of striking or important incidents. Nor is there the same amount of personal interest. The greatest names of the period are those of Aldhelm, Egbert, Bede, Boniface, and Alcuin, but the two last belong more to continental than to English history. On the political side the matter of most importance was the gradual decline of Northumbria, and the rise of Mercia under Æthelbald and Offa. In the history of the Church

the main points to notice are the decline in zeal in the monasteries, which led to serious evils which the Council of Cloveshoch in A.D. 747 attempted to remedy, and the establishment, in consequence of the rise of Mercian power, of the short lived archbishopric at Lichfield ; and in connection with this last event the first appearance in A.D. 786 of papal legates in England. The greatest interest of the period lies, however, not in events but in the development of the life of the Church, especially in connection with the monasteries. And here there is both a good and an evil side to notice : an evil side in that deterioration and falling away from early ideals which has just been mentioned, and a good side in the manifold activities which were fostered in the monasteries, and especially in the learning which they produced, and in the missionary enterprise which is one of the chief glories of this period of English Church History. It will perhaps be a convenient arrangement to mention first, very shortly, the principal facts which the history of this century has to offer us, and then to deal with the inner life of the Church and the activities to which it gave rise.

First may be taken the succession of the archbishops. Theodore was succeeded, as has already been mentioned, by Bertwald, after a considerable delay. He was not chosen until two years after Theodore's death, and then he went abroad for consecration, presumably because it was thought that it would add to his prestige, and he was not consecrated by the archbishop of Lyons until another

year had elapsed. The date of his consecration was S. Peter's Day A.D. 693. We do not know much of Bertwald except on the occasions already mentioned when he had to do with Wilfrid. The next three archbishops were appointed under Mercian influence. Tatwin, a good and learned Mercian priest, succeeded Bertwald in A.D. 731, and died three years later. Nothelm, a priest of London, who had assisted Bede by procuring for him information and documents from Canterbury and Rome, was archbishop from A.D. 735 to A.D. 739. The reception of a pall from the Pope is mentioned in the case of both these archbishops, and they do not appear to have consecrated bishops until they had received it, so that by this time the theory that the pall was necessary before a metropolitan could exercise his powers was probably recognised in England.[1] On Nothelm's death, Cuthbert, a good and energetic bishop, was translated from Hereford. He presided at the provincial council at Cloveshoch in A.D. 747, of which more will be said presently. He died the next year, and was succeeded by Bregwin, who was not a Mercian. He died in A.D. 765 [2] and was succeeded in the following year

[1] The palls of Bertwald and Tatwin rest upon the authority of Simeon of Durham, but there is no particular reason to doubt the fact. Cuthbert's pall is first mentioned by Ralph de Diceto.

[2] Cuthbert was the first archbishop to be buried in Christ Church, his cathedral church. Former archbishops had been buried in the north porch of the church of SS. Peter and Paul (S. Augustine's). Theodore and Bertwald were buried in the church itself, because the porch was full. A special privilege is said to have been obtained by Cuthbert from pope Gregory III for his burial in Christ Church, and

by Jaenbert, the abbot of S. Augustine's. It was he who had to give up in A.D. 787 a large portion of his province to the new archbishopric of Lichfield. He died in A.D. 790, and Æthelheard, his successor, was not consecrated till A.D. 793. He lived until A.D. 802, having received back in that year all the rights of the province of Canterbury.

The affairs of the chief kingdoms must now be shortly noticed. Wessex was gaining unity through this period. It had hitherto been much divided, being under the rule of many princes of the royal house, who owned what was often a very doubtful allegiance to the king. Cadwalla, who has been mentioned above, page 177, and his successor Ini did much to consolidate the kingdom. Cadwalla resigned the crown in A.D. 688, and went on pilgrimage to Rome, the first of English kings to make that journey, and he was baptised there and died, still wearing his chrisom, the white garments of his baptism, in the following year. Ini reigned until A.D. 726, when he also resigned his kingdom, and went on pilgrimage to Rome. He had pushed the boundaries of Wessex further to the west, reaching Exeter and driving the British to a great extent out of Somerset. Ini is chiefly remembered for his code of laws, which are partly civil and partly ecclesiastical. About the same time a code of laws dealing entirely with ecclesiastical matters was put forth by Wihtred, the king of Kent. These laws assert very strongly the freedom of the Church,

the monks of SS. Peter and Paul took this much amiss, and tried to carry off his body and that of his successor by force.

and give a very high place of importance to ecclesiastical persons. Both codes illustrate the very close connection and harmonious working of Church and State ; throughout this period, and indeed as far as the Norman Conquest, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities appear to have worked in perfect harmony, and without caring to define their several spheres of action. Bishop and alderman sat side by side in the Witanagemot, and transacted secular and ecclesiastical business together without apparently any difficulties. The circumstances of the conversion of the English produced a closeness of relations between Church and State which can hardly be paralleled elsewhere. It was a state of things which could not be permanent, but while it lasted it seems to have worked very smoothly. The chief ecclesiastical event which marked Ini's reign was the division of the vast West Saxon diocese. For some reason Theodore had not succeeded in accomplishing this before his death, though there can hardly be any doubt that he must have desired it. And there appears to have been a good deal of friction before it was carried out. But in A.D. 705 a decree of a synod made the country west of Selwood Forest into a separate diocese with its see at Sherborne. The other see remained, of course, at Winchester. A few years later another bishopric was formed for the South Saxons, with its see at Selsey. The first bishop of Sherborne was the great scholar Aldhelm. He had studied at Canterbury under Hadrian, and then at Malmesbury, where a monastery had been

formed by an Irish scholar named Maidulf. Of this monastery Aldhelm became abbot, and he made there a school of learning like that of Canterbury, and by his intercourse with learned men elsewhere and by his great reputation he must have done much to bring the Church in Wessex, which was in danger of isolation, into a closer connection with the rest of Christendom. He wrote much himself in Latin, in a style which seems to us intolerably turgid, but which was much admired in his own age; but he may also be reckoned as one of the founders of English literature, for he composed and sang English poems for his country people. He took some part in two controversies of his time: he wrote strongly in Wilfrid's favour in a letter to his clergy urging them to be faithful to him—it is not certain at what exact point in the history; and he made a contribution to the settlement of the Easter question. This will be a convenient place to sketch the further progress of that controversy. We have seen in Chapter IV. how the question was finally settled as far as the English themselves were concerned. The decision of the Council at Whitby, although it referred directly to Northumbria only, was not challenged; the Scots who would not accept the decision withdrew; and the first canon of the Council of Hertford affirmed the Catholic rule for the whole English Church. It was not very long before the Scots themselves began to give up their peculiar usage. In the South of Ireland, as has been before noted, they had done so in the early part of the seventh

century. Adamnan, the abbot of Iona, the biographer of his great founder S. Columba, was on very friendly terms with Aldfrid the king of Northumbria, and twice visited that country. On his second visit he went to Jarrow, where he must have seen Bede. He was converted to the Catholic usage, and on his return home endeavoured to bring over the Scots to the same way of thinking. He had some success in the north of Ireland among those who did not belong to the Columban monasteries, but his own monks refused to conform. After his death there was a schism at Iona, and for the first time an abbot was elected, apparently by the advocates of change, who was not of the family of the founder. The new ideas spread, and in A.D. 710 Naiton the king of the Picts wrote to Ceolfrid the abbot of Jarrow for information on the subject. The long answer which is found in Bede's History was doubtless written by Bede himself. It had the effect of bringing over the Picts to the Catholic practice. In A.D. 716, according to Bede, the monks of Iona were persuaded by Egbert, an Englishman of noble birth, who had long lived the life of an ascetic in Ireland, and had done much to promote missionary work, to give up the Keltic custom ; but it is clear that they were not all persuaded, for the schism continued, and rival abbots were elected until A.D. 772. The Columban monks who adhered to the old custom were driven out of his dominions by Naiton in A.D. 717, but Iona itself lay outside his authority. Bede, writing in A.D. 731, speaks of the Picts and Scots as being in full communion

with the English Church, but regards the Britons as still obstinate and bitterly hostile.[1] The conformity of the British was evidently brought about by very slow degrees. In A.D. 705, just before he became bishop, Aldhelm was commissioned by a synod to write to Geraint, the king of Damnonia, i.e. Devonshire and Cornwall, and press the Catholic practice upon him, and the letter is still extant. Bede says that it induced many Britons who were subject to Wessex to conform, and perhaps they could hardly help themselves; but it was still some time before the British Church as a whole was brought over. In the second half of the eighth century there are several entries in the

[1] The relations between the English, Scotic, and British Churches are so often misunderstood, that it may be well to quote Bede's exact words: He says in his summary of the state of the Church in his own time: 'The nation of the Picts has a treaty of peace at this time with the race of the English, and delights to partake of catholic faith and truth with the universal Church. The Scots who inhabit Britain [that is, the Scots of the S.W. of the modern Scotland, who had come over from Ireland] are content with their own territories, and do not form any hostile or treacherous designs against the English race. The Britons, although for the most part they hate the English race with a hatred peculiar to themselves, and impugn the constitution of the whole Catholic Church by keeping Easter wrongly and by evil customs, still through Divine and human opposition are able to obtain what they desire in neither matter; for although they are in part independent, still to some extent they are in subjection to the English.' Bede, *H.E.* v. 23.

Elsewhere he says: 'It is the custom of the Britons at the present day to account the faith and religion of the English as nothing, and not to communicate with them in anything more than with pagans.' *H.E.* ii. 20. Cf. *H.E.* i. 22; ii. 4. Cf. Aldhelm *Ep. ad Geruntium Regem* (the letter mentioned in the text above) *Bonifacii. Epp.:* xliv. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 268.

Welsh annals recording the conformity of one part after another of the Welsh nation, but an echo of the controversy can be traced at all events to the middle of the ninth century.

From Wessex we turn to Mercia. Ceolred, who was king from A.D. 709 to A.D. 716 was a bad man and came to an evil end. His successor Æthelbald was no better as far as his personal character went, and S. Boniface, of whom more will be said hereafter, wrote to reprove him for his dissolute life. But he was liberal in gifts to religious foundations, and he was present at the Council of Cloveshoch in A.D. 747 which made an attempt to reform the evils existing in the Church. Mercia also grew powerful during his reign, chiefly at the expense of the West Saxons, but at the end he was defeated by them at Burford, and was killed by his own followers in A.D. 757. Under Offa, who succeeded soon afterwards and reigned until A.D. 796 Mercia reached the highest point of her power. Her boundaries were extended to the Humber and the Thames, and East Anglia, Essex, and Kent were entirely dependent, while the other two great kingdoms were greatly influenced by the Mercian king. Offa was a liberal benefactor of churches, and he founded the great abbey of S. Alban's.[1] It was however probably from political rather than

[1] The story told by Matthew Paris about the foundation of S. Alban's is so transparently legendary that doubt has been thrown on the fact of the foundation by Offa. But there are also early charters which are not certainly spurious, and on the whole there seems to be no reason to doubt that Offa did found the Abbey. See Haddan and Stubbs, iii. pp. 469, 478.

from religious motives that he took the step by which his name is specially distinguished in Church History. It was clearly an advantage with a view to the consolidation of Mercia that the ecclesiastical organisation of central England should be independent of the southern parts, even though Kent may have been pretty completely under Mercian control. The opportunity for making the change came with the arrival of two papal legates George and Theophylact, both Cardinal Bishops. There is no exact information as to the precise causes which induced Pope Hadrian I to send these legates. The legatine system, which was a most powerful instrument in the consolidation of the papal power, was fully established on the Continent, but this is the only occasion until A.D. 1062, the very eve of the Norman Conquest, on which we have information of a formal mission of legates to England. The omission to send them was not due to any unwillingness on the part of the English to receive them, but England was untroubled by heresy, it supplied a constant stream of pilgrims to Rome, it fully acknowledged the primacy of S. Peter by the journeys which the archbishops were accustomed to make to obtain their palls, it stood out of the current of European struggles, and the popes may have thought it best to leave well alone. The legates on this occasion had no reason to complain of their reception. Simeon of Durham only says about them that they were sent by Pope Hadrian to renew the faith and the peace which S. Gregory had sent us by Augustine the Bishop, and they were worshipfully received.

It can hardly however be supposed that the pope would have taken the trouble to send legates of such dignity merely to renew a peace which had not been broken. Offa had relations with the court of Charles the Great and with Rome, and it is more than probable that he asked for the mission as the best means of bringing about his own designs. At all events it served that purpose. The legates on their arrival visited the archbishop at Canterbury, and then went on to the court of Offa, where they also met the king of Wessex. One of them proceeded thence to Northumbria, to visit Eanbald, the archbishop of York, and a legatine council was held in the northern province, at which the pope's letters were read, and twenty decrees accepted. The great scholar Alcuin was present at this council, and he accompanied the legate back to Mercia. A second council was then held at Chelsea, probably in A.D. 787, at which Jaenbert of Canterbury and his suffragans, and also Offa and his Witan were present. The same twenty decrees were accepted. They deal with many subjects, and one or two interesting points may be noticed about them. 'Canons' are here mentioned for the first time in English Church History. They are ordered to live 'canonically,' while monks have to live 'regularly.' The first institution of Canons is commonly ascribed to Chrodegang bishop of Metz about A.D. 750, but similar attempts had probably been made before. The intention was to bring the secular clergy under some sort of canon or rule, and to make them share to some extent a

community life without taking the vows or submitting to all the restrictions of monks. The attempt to bring the clergy in general under such a rule was not successful, and 'canons' became colleges of priests attached to particular churches. Another decree orders the payment of tithes. This was already an ecclesiastical obligation, and the participation of the king and his Witan in these councils made it a secular obligation as well. Probably the question that caused most interest was that of the new archbishopric. Nothing indeed is said about this in the still extant report of their proceedings which the legates made to the Pope; but perhaps the transaction was not yet completed, and other authorities state definitely that the separation was effected at this council. Higbert the bishop of Lichfield was raised to the rank of metropolitan, and apparently had as his province seven out of the twelve dioceses into which the southern and central portion of England was divided. No great resistance seems to have been offered on the part of Canterbury, and it would probably have been in vain. Higbert received a pall, and ranked as equal in dignity with the archbishop of Canterbury. In return for the Pope's complaisance in this matter Offa promised a yearly payment to Rome, for the poor and to maintain the lights at S. Peter's. This was the probable origin of the later payment of Peter's Pence, a tax of a penny on every hearth, which was established by law about the close of the ninth century. Higbert was, however, the only man who enjoyed the dignity of being archbishop

of Lichfield, and he did not retain it even until his death. Offa died in A.D. 796, and his son Kenwulf had to put down a rebellion in Kent. In this he received the support of the archbishop of Canterbury, Æthelheard, who had been an abbot in Mercia, and he probably thought that the support of Canterbury was of greater value to him than an archbishop at Lichfield. He applied to Pope Leo, and Æthelheard went to Rome, and received a restoration of the rights of his see in A.D. 802, and in the following year this was acknowledged by a Council at Cloveshoch. So ended the third archbishopric.

The secular history of Northumbria during this century need not detain us. After the death of Aldfrid in A.D. 705 there were fourteen kings duly elected before the close of the century, and not one of them died in the peaceful possession of his crown. Two retired into the religious life, and the rest were killed or deposed. The unsettled state of affairs which this implies could not have been favourable to the growth of religion, and yet some notable work was done for the Church. All the bishops and archbishops of York during the century appear to have been excellent men. Bosa was succeeded in A.D. 705 by S. John of Beverley, who retired in A.D. 718, after consecrating as his successor a second Wilfrid, who, we are told, was honoured and beloved by all. On his retirement in A.D. 732 Egbert became bishop until A.D. 766. In A.D. 735 he received a pall from the pope, and became the first archbishop of York, for Paulinus, as we have seen above, never really

held that position. Egbert was a member of the royal family, and during a part of his episcopate his brother Eadbert was king of Northumbria. Egbert appears to have been an excellent archbishop, and to have done his best for the well-being of the Church, but his best known work is the institution of the School at York, of which more will be said presently in dealing with the work of Bede, whose pupil Egbert had been. Egbert was succeeded as archbishop by his kinsman Ethelbert, who had been head of the school, and had collected many books for the library. There were two more archbishops before the close of the century, Eanbald I, who succeeded in A.D. 780, and Eanbald II, who succeeded in A.D. 796. In spite of this line of worthy prelates there were many evils and abuses in the Northumbrian Church, of which we learn a good deal from a letter from Bede to Egbert, and from the attempts made by councils to reform them. Some of these abuses will be noticed in connection with the subject of monasticism, and the various activities connected with the monastic life, which must next occupy our attention.

Some of the characteristics of Scotic monasticism, as distinguished from that type which prevailed in the Western Church after the time of S. Benedict of Nursia, have been already noticed in an earlier chapter (see page 33 ff.). In considering the history of the English monasteries it has to be remembered that those which were founded by S. Augustine and his followers conformed to the Benedictine type,

although during this period none of them probably carried out in all points the strict Benedictine rule. Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop appear to have attempted to introduce this in the monasteries which they founded, but even in these traces of the Scotic system are to be found. The points in which English monasticism was principally affected by Scotic influence seem to have been the following. There was a tendency to the extreme and sometimes extravagant asceticism which was so eminently characteristic of Keltic Christianity, and which was quite opposed to the sober restraint of the Benedictine rule. Side by side with this there was a far greater laxity of rule, illustrated, for example, by the canon of the Council of Hertford which forbade monks to wander from monastery to monastery without the leave of their own abbot. The Scotic system of separate cells for the monks maintained itself to a great extent against the common dormitories of the Benedictines, and allowed greater opportunities both for independence and for asceticism. And further the free election of the abbot by the monks gave way in very many instances to the Scotic practice by which the headship of a monastery became practically hereditary in certain families. All these characteristics may have assisted the achievements which are the glory of the first age of English monasticism, while at the same time they rendered more easy that decline and secularisation which had already begun when Bede wrote. One other characteristic of these early monasteries, which came from

Gaul and not from Ireland, must be noticed. They were frequently double monasteries, that is, there was a monastery of men and a monastery of women in the same place, and to a certain extent under the same government. This was in early times a common arrangement in the East, and it came thence to Gaul. Sometimes the abbot but more commonly the abbess, was the head of the whole establishment, and the latter was the rule in England, where all or almost all of the female monasteries appear to have had a monastery of men in connection with them. One motive for this was no doubt that the nuns preferred the ministrations of priests who were also monks. The amount of communication between the two houses seems to have been different in different cases. Sometimes men and women used the same church ; sometimes they had separate churches. At Wimborne the abbess gave orders to the men through a window, and there was no other intercourse except that priests came to say Mass in the women's church and withdrew as soon as the service was over. At Whitby the abbess Hilda appears to have communicated freely with the men. There is no hint of any irregularities having occurred in consequence of the near neighbourhood of the two establishments.

The debt that Christianity in England owes to the early monasteries is incalculable, but there are three great departments of religious activity in which their influence must be particularly noted. About one of these—the special facilities which the monastic system, in the form in which it came into

England from the north, afforded for pioneer missionary work,—enough has perhaps already been said. Two other great works accomplished by the monasteries during this period were the promotion of learning, literature, and education, and the support of foreign missions. The first of these may be illustrated by a short sketch of the lives of three celebrated men, Cædmon, Bede, and Alcuin.

Cædmon was a herdsman in the service of the monastery of Whitby. He lacked the gift of song which was common among his fellows, and when at their feasts the harp was passed round and came near to his turn, he used to rise sadly and go away. One night he had done this and had gone to sleep in the stable that was under his care, when a man appeared to him in a dream and said: Cædmon, sing me something. I cannot sing, he replied, and I have come hither from the feast because I could not sing. Still, said the other, Thou hast something to sing to me. What, said Cædmon, ought I to sing? Sing, he said, the beginning of created things. Then he immediately began to sing verses which he had never heard to the praise of God the Creator. On the next day he told what had happened, and the abbess Hilda caused him to enter the monastery and become a monk, and receive instruction in the sacred history of both the Old and New Testament; and all things that he learnt he turned after a time into song. The beautiful story of Cædmon's death which is given by Bede, affords us an interesting glimpse of the internal life of a monastery. Cædmon

had been ailing for a fortnight, but was not thought to be seriously ill. One night however he asked his attendant to make his bed in the infirmary, which was near his cell. The attendant complied, although with surprise, as he did not seem to be near his death. Cædmon joined in cheerful conversation with the other patients in the infirmary until midnight, and then he asked whether they had the Eucharist there. It was of course the custom in England, as generally in the early Church, to reserve the Holy Eucharist for the sick, and at Whitby it was apparently reserved in the infirmary itself. They answered: Why do you, who are talking so cheerfully with us, need the Eucharist? Nevertheless, he said, bring me the Eucharist. And when he had taken It into his hand, he asked whether they were all at charity with him. Then he fortified himself with the heavenly Viaticum, and asked how long it was to Lauds, and hearing that it was not long, Let us wait, he said, for that hour, and signing himself with the sign of the holy cross, he fell asleep and so ended his life.

Such is Bede's account of Cædmon. His own life was no less beautiful in its piety and simplicity, while it was of immeasurably greater importance in the history of learning. It was spent almost entirely in the monasteries which Benedict Biscop founded at Wearmouth and Jarrow, and almost all that we know about it is contained in Bede's own modest autobiography which concludes his greatest work. 'These things about the ecclesiastical history of the Britains, and especially of the race of the

English, I, Bede, a servant of Christ, and priest of the monastery of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul at Wearmouth and Jarrow, have composed as I have been able to learn them either from ancient literature, or from the tradition of our elders, or from my own knowledge. I was born in the territory of the aforesaid monastery, and at the age of seven I was given by the care of my relations to be educated by the most reverend abbot Benedict, and afterwards Ceolfrid; and thereafter I have passed the whole time of my life in the same monastery, and have given all my pains to meditation on the Scriptures: and amid the observance of monastic discipline and the daily care of singing in the Church, it has ever been my delight either to learn or to teach or to write. In the nineteenth year of my life I was admitted to the diaconate, and in the thirtieth year to the priesthood, both by the ministry of the most reverend bishop John' (S. John of Beverley) 'at the bidding of the abbot Ceolfrid.' Then, after a long list of his writings, which comprise commentaries on the greater part of the Scriptures, lives of Saints, the lives of the abbots of his monastery, books on hymns, metre, and some of the natural science which existed in his day, as well as the five books of the Ecclesiastical History, he concludes with these words: 'And I beseech thee, good Jesus, to grant to me, to whom thou hast given to drink in with delight the words of thy knowledge, that through thy goodness I may at length attain unto thee the fountain of all wisdom, and appear for ever before thy face.' Two stories that have come down

to us about Bede illustrate the simple and earnest devotion that manifests itself in all his writings. During a great visitation of the plague about the year A.D. 686, when Bede was thirteen or fourteen years old, almost all the brethren at the monastery of Jarrow perished, and there were none left who could read or recite the antiphons and responses except the abbot himself, Ceolfrid, and one little lad nourished and taught by him 'who is now' says the narrative 'a priest of the same monastery.' It could have been no other than Bede himself. The abbot, in his deep sorrow, ordained that they should say the psalms without antiphons, except at Vespers and Matins. But when this had been done for a week he could bear the loss no longer, and with no little labour he restored the whole course of psalmody with the help only of the boy, until others could be trained to take part in the singing. And later Alcuin, writing to the monks of Wearmonth[1] says: It is told that our master and your patron the blessed Bede said 'I know that angels visit the canonical hours, and the congregations of the brethren. What if they do not find me among them? Will they not say Where is Bede? Why comes he not to the prescribed devotions with the brethren?' The death of Bede was such as befitted the purity and devotion of his life. It is described by an eye witness, Cuthbert, afterwards abbot of the two monasteries. To abridge it is to impair its beauty, but it can only be given in outline here. In the year A.D. 735, when he was 62 years of age, his strength began to fail before

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 471.

Easter, but he still continued to teach his disciples, and to chant the psalms, and in English poetry, in which he was skilled, he sang verses on the approach of death. He also laboured to complete two literary tasks on which he was engaged, a translation of part of S. John's Gospel into English, and some extracts from the works of Isidore. On the Tuesday before Ascension Day he told his disciples to learn speedily, for he would not be long with them, and he passed the night in giving thanks. On the morning of Wednesday he bade the scribes write speedily, and they did so until the third hour, when all but one went to join the Rogationtide solemnities, when the relics of the Saints are borne in procession. The boy who remained, Wilbert, said: 'There is still one chapter wanting, and it seems hard for thee to be questioned further.' 'Nay,' he said, 'it is easy, take thy pen and mend it, and write quickly;' and he did so. At the ninth hour he said 'I have a few treasures in my casket, that is some pepper, napkins, and incense; call the priests of the monastery that I may distribute to them such gifts as God has given me.' When he had done this he besought them to offer masses and prayers for him, which they gladly promised to do. And he said: 'It is time for me, if it be his will, to return to my Maker. The time of my departure is at hand, for my soul desires to see Christ my king in his beauty.' This and many like things he said, and passed the day in gladness till evening. Then the same boy Wilbert said: 'There is still one sentence, dear master, not written down.' And he said, 'Well then write it.' And

after a little space the boy said: 'It is finished. And he answered: 'Well, thou hast spoken truth, It is finished. Take my head in thy hands, for it much delights me to sit opposite my holy place where I used to pray, that so sitting I may call upon my Father.' And thus upon the floor of his cell singing 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' he breathed his latest breath. 'And so,' says Mr Plummer, 'he passed away, the very model of the saintly scholar-priest; a type in which the English Church has never, thank God, been deficient, and of which we have seen in our own day bright examples in the person of men like Richard William Church and Henry Parry Liddon.'

But Bede's place in history is more than a bright example of the combination of saintliness and learning. He lived at a time when in the break up of the Roman empire and the reconstruction of Europe culture and civilisation seemed to have fallen to their lowest point. At this moment he gathered up in himself, from the traditions of Canterbury and from the books and knowledge that flowed into his monastery from the Continent and from Ireland all the learning of his age, and this he transmitted to the school at York to be carried back at the end of the century by Alcuin to the court of Charles the Great, and to form one of the most important elements of the Carolingian revival. 'By promoting the foundation of the school of York,' says Dr Stubbs, 'he kindled the flame of learning in the West, at the moment that

it seemed both in Ireland and in France to be expiring.' It is difficult to overestimate the debt which learning owes to Bede. He himself wrote much on many subjects. There are few books of the Holy Scriptures on which he has not left commentaries, which show a wonderful range of theological reading. He also wrote on grammar, prosody, rhetoric, and such natural science as existed in his time. But his most enduring literary work was in history, and no lapse of time can efface the charm or diminish the value of the Ecclesiastical History of the English People, to which we owe nine tenths of our knowledge of the planting and early growth of Christianity in England.

Bede is only known to have left his monastery once. Two years before his death he visited his old pupil Egbert at York. Egbert had perhaps been already elected to the bishopric, and when he was consecrated in the following year Bede wrote him a letter which is one of our most valuable sources of information with regard to the condition of the Church in Northumbria at that time. More will be said about this letter below. But before leaving the subject of the York School a few words must be said about Alcuin, although the most important part of his life belongs not to English but to Continental history. He was a Northumbrian of noble birth who became a pupil of Egbert and his successor Ethelbert at York. In A.D. 781 he went to Rome to bring Eanbald's pall, and he met Charles the Great, who invited him to live at his court and superintend the work of promoting

education in his dominions. In this great and most fruitful task—and especially in founding and organising schools in connection with the monasteries and great churches—he spent most of the next fifteen years, and he then retired to S. Martin's at Tours, where he died in A.D. 804. His correspondence with Charles the Great is one of the most valuable contemporary records that have come down to us.

In his important work on the continent Alcuin did not forget his native country. He was well informed about what went on in England, and he did his best by means of correspondence to reform abuses. Thus he wrote many letters to the bishops, clergy, and monasteries of Northumbria, urging the latter especially to observe their rule and live virtuously. He also wrote repeatedly to Eanbald II, archbishop of York, and to Æthelred king of Northumbria, on the state of the Church, and to press upon them moral and religious reform. Nor did he confine his interest to the Northern province, for he wrote with great freedom to Æthelheard archbishop of Canterbury, admonishing him about his duties and reproving him for deserting his Church.[1]

Alcuin was not the only Englishman who did a great work on the Continent. The missionary efforts of the early English Church are one of its chief glories. Wilfrid's pioneer work in Fresia has been already mentioned. Not many years afterwards a Northumbrian named Egbert, who had

[1] The most important letters are in Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii.

gone with Ceadda to Ireland and led an ascetic life there, was seized with a desire to evangelise the peoples from whom the English had sprung. He was ready to start but was stopped by what he believed to be a Divine intimation. He sent out, however, in A.D. 690 a mission of twelve Englishmen, headed by a Northumbrian priest named Wilbrord. He began, amid great difficulties, evangelising work among the Fresians, and was consecrated to be archbishop by pope Sergius in A.D. 696. His see was ultimately fixed at Utrecht. Before he died at the age of 82 he had seen the fruit of his labours in the establishment of an organised Church among the Fresians. Many other Englishmen are known to have laboured in the Low Countries and in Germany, but the greatest of all was S. Boniface, known as the Apostle of Germany. His English name was Winfrid, and he was born at Crediton about the year A.D. 680. Like Bede he entered a monastery at the age of seven, and a distinguished career was undoubtedly open to him in his own country. But when he was between thirty and forty years of age he devoted himself to missionary work, and laboured first in the partly Christianised countries of Fresia and Thuringia, and then among the heathen Hessians. He was consecrated bishop by Gregory ii in A.D. 723. His life after this was one of marvellous activity and success, and he obtained a most commanding influence in Europe. His archiepiscopal see was fixed in A.D. 743 at Maintz. In his old age he made an expedition to preach to some of the Fresians who were still

heathen, and on June 5, A.D. 755, his party was attacked by a body of heathens, and he and most of his companions were slain. He was buried in the monastery which he had founded at Fulda. It is to be noted that although the great work of his life was carried on in Germany he maintained a regular correspondence with many friends in England, and he was assisted in his work by numbers of men and women from the English monasteries.

The revival of learning and the promotion of missionary work are two of the greatest debts which the Church owes to the monasteries of this period. But the monastic life of the time had a darker side. It has been pointed out that the laxity of the Scotic system involved possibilities of rapid decline, and the letter of Bede to Egbert which has been mentioned above shows that this decline had in many cases taken place. It is easy to see how the close connexion of monasteries with the families of their founders, which was the most striking characteristic of the Scotic system, might lead to abuses. In Bede's time a number of pseudo-monasteries had sprung up. Rich landowners turned their houses into monasteries in order to escape the public burdens, but continued to live with their wives and treated the monasteries as their private property. Or their wives, without submitting to monastic restrictions, became heads of nominal nunneries. And even in the older and more famous houses complaints about secularity and luxury are common. Apart from the monasteries Bede

complains most of the want of due episcopal supervision, which caused great numbers of the people to be left without instruction or spiritual care. It must not be supposed that no efforts were made to reform these disorders. The most important attempt was that made by the Council of Cloveshoch in A.D. 747. This council laid down admirable principles for the guidance of bishops and priests in their pastoral work. Bishops were exhorted to devote themselves to the cure of souls and to live in a manner worthy of their high calling. They were to go through their dioceses once in every year, summoning the people to meet them in every place, to give them instruction, and to warn them especially against pagan superstitions. They were to examine carefully those whom they ordained. Priests were to free themselves from secular cares, and be very careful of their own lives and devotions; they were to be diligent in baptizing, teaching, and visiting in the places assigned to them by their bishops—this seems to show that a parochial system was already in an advanced stage of formation—and they were to be especially careful to teach in English the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the words used in the celebration of Mass and the office of Baptism; they were to observe uniformity in their instructions and were above all to teach that without faith it is impossible to please God. When they baptized infants they were to provide for their proper instruction in the Christian faith. In the Church services they were to avoid what was secular and pretentious, and use the ecclesiastical melodies, or if they could

not sing they were to read in a simple and natural manner. The feasts of the Church and all that belonged to them, the office of Baptism, the celebration of Mass, the method of singing were to be 'according to the written exemplar which we have from the Roman Church.' The Lord's Day was to be observed as a day of worship, and secular affairs laid aside as far as possible; and the people were to be often invited by their priests to come together to hear the word of God and attend the Sacraments of the Mass. The observance of the Rogation Days, the Ember seasons, and the feasts of S. Augustine and 'our father' Gregory was specially enjoined. The laity were to be exhorted to frequent communion. Nothing could be more admirable than these exhortations: if the bishops and clergy of the English Church had kept them more in mind the state of religion in this country would be very different from what it is. With regard to the monasteries the Council evidently did not feel that it was possible to take any very heroic measures, but there are signs that attempts would be made to enforce the Benedictine rule, to eliminate by degrees the secular elements, to reform great abuses, and to bring the monasteries more under the supervision of the bishops. To this end the bishops were to warn all abbots and abbesses in their dioceses to live according to rule, they were to visit also the 'monasteries of seculars,' if they were worthy to be called monasteries, and do what they could for their reformation. Monks and nuns were to be subject to their rule, to lead a quiet and regular life, without

dissension, and to wear a simple and befitting dress. Secular persons were to be kept out of monasteries as far as possible, and they were not to be the haunts of 'poets, harp players, musicians, or buffoons.' Feasting, drunkenness, and other vices were to be guarded against. Secular persons were not to be professed as monks or nuns without probation, lest they should throw up their profession and cause scandal. Monastic persons were to live in their monasteries and not among the laity. All monks and ecclesiastics alike were specially warned against drunkenness, one of the most conspicuous vices of the English before the Conquest, and special exhortations urge the duty of alms, the use of the Psalter, and the Holy Communion.

There is not much evidence to show whether the decrees of the Council of Cloveshoch had much practical effect. The evils complained of undoubtedly continued to exist, as may be seen from the letters of Alcuin referred to above, and the struggle to improve the monastic life is a conspicuous feature of English Church history to the time of the Norman Conquest and afterwards. But in the next century the Danish invasions went far to destroy the monasteries—good and bad—altogether. Even before the end of this century the inroads had begun. In A.D. 789 Lindisfarne was sacked and in A.D. 794 Jarrow met the same fate. Iona was attacked in A.D. 795, and again in A.D. 806. The effect of the Danish ravages on the Church was profound, but its history belongs to the next century.

The decrees of Cloveshoch show at all events

that earnest efforts were being made during this century to contend against the evils of the time. The fact that King Æthelbald with his great men was present at the Council may show that he had taken to heart the earnest remonstrances made to him by Boniface and five German bishops. Letters also from Pope Zacharias were read at the Council exhorting the English to amend their lives. And it may be reasonably assumed that Bede's letter to Egbert had stirred the consciences of many.

This letter throws so great light on the condition of the Church in Northumbria that it will be worth while to give in conclusion a short sketch of its contents. Bede begins by an exhortation to study and devotion as the necessary accompaniments to active work, and recommends the society of godly men in terms which suggest that such advice was not unnecessary even for a bishop. He then dwells on the unwieldy size of Egbert's diocese, which would make it impossible for him to visit all the villages even once a year. The bishop must therefore do his best to ordain a sufficient number of priests to preach, celebrate and baptize, and he should take the utmost pains to provide religious teaching for the people. Even if this were done the fewness of the bishops is a great evil, for there are many villages which do not see a bishop to confirm for many years together. Those who believe that the Holy Ghost is given in Confirmation cannot acquiesce in this state of things without great danger to themselves and their flocks,

especially as all have to contribute to the support of the bishops. Avarice is the cause of all evil: if a bishop through love of money takes a diocese larger than he can go through in a year, it is fatal to himself and dangerous to his flock. The great remedy therefore is to have more bishops. Gregory had ordained that there should be twelve in the northern province, and this should be carried out, and York should become an archiepiscopal see. (This was effected in A.D. 735.) It is however hard to found new bishoprics because of the undue increase in the number of monasteries. Many of these are monasteries only in name; for the last thirty years it has been customary for landowners to turn their houses into nominal monasteries, not with any intention of leading the regular life, but to obtain privileges. Such houses should be suppressed, and their revenues devoted to founding new sees, and it is the duty of the bishops to see to this. Egbert must provide more teachers for the people, to instruct them in good works and devotion, in the value of the sign of the cross, and of daily communion, as practised in Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and all the East. In Northumbria even the more religious communicate only at Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter, whereas elsewhere, as Egbert had himself seen at Rome, very many communicate on all Sundays and Saints' Days. Finally Bede utters a solemn warning against avarice, as the besetting sin of his time.

The most remarkable thing about this letter is that it is so painfully appropriate not only to the

seventh century of English Church History but to the present time. The sham monasteries have indeed long disappeared: a fate was in store for them which Bede did not anticipate: before the end of the century in which he wrote they were being swept away by the fire and sword of the Danish invasions. But the other evils which he laments are with us still, and in many respects in an aggravated form: the small number of the bishops, the unwieldy dioceses, the villages which do not for years together see their chief pastor, the bishops with large revenues who cannot go through their dioceses even once a year, the practical disbelief in the gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation which has caused it to be regarded as a mere renewal of baptismal vows, the utter neglect of Communion in the case of the vast majority, and the low standard of frequency even in the more devout as compared with the practice of other parts of the Christian Church—all these things we know only too well as among the great blots upon the Church of our own time. In looking back at the first days of her life we should be moved to humility and thankfulness: humility, because in so many hundreds of years she has done so little to fulfil the glorious promise of the period of her foundation, and because the worst faults which hindered her work then are still uncured: thankfulness, because her candlestick has not been moved out of its place, and because there have not been wanting at any time, and certainly not in our day, some men at least among her sons not altogether unworthy to

be the successors of Augustine, Aidan, Theodore, Wilfrid, and Bede.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VI

Authorities. After the period covered by Bede the best authority for Northumbrian history is Simeon of Durham (Rolls Series) who has preserved some ancient records. General authorities are the Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester (Eng. Hist. Soc.) and William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum and Gesta Pontificum (Rolls Series). Contemporary documents are in Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii. Dr Bright's History unfortunately ends with Bede; Dr Hunt's is the best modern guide. See also articles in Dict. Christian Biogr., especially those by Dr Stubbs on Boniface and Offa.

NOTE.—No attempt has been made to be consistent in the spelling of proper names. The ordinary modern spelling has been used for names still in common use, or very familiar, such as Edwin and Etheldreda. Other names are given in the form in which they most commonly appear in the pages of Bede and other early authorities.

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