



CHAPTER XI APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
— Matthew xxviii. 20.



N THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THIS WORK, we noticed that the missionaries who introduced the Christian faith into Britain were Hid, Cyndav, Mawan, and Arwystli Hen, the three former being of Jewish extraction, and the last a Roman,—and that this took place when St. Paul was in the imperial city. Moreover, we made it probable that Arwystli was none other than the Aristobulus mentioned by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans (chap. xvi.

verse 10.)

Be that as it may, it is expressly stated that Aristobulus was consecrated bishop for Britain by St. Paul himself, and that he established churches and ordained presbyters and deacons in the island. Here, therefore, we have a distinct recognition of one of the first links in the chain of British succession. There can be no doubt that the "men of Israel," his companions, were in holy orders, though the source of their commission is not so clearly ascertained. Probably, as the foundations of the Roman Church were jointly laid by St. Peter and St. Paul[1],—the one as the Apostle of the Gentiles, taking care of the Gentile Christians, whilst the other, as the "Apostle of the Circumcision", applied himself to the Jewish converts[2], that they were ordained by St. Peter.

The high position and dignity to which Arwystli was raised as the spiritual instructor of Bran, would, simply considered, lead us to infer that his notions and feelings imparted their peculiar tinge to the ordinances of the infant Church. We must remember, on the other hand, that his fellow missionaries were more in number, and that Hid is plainly described as the chief teacher of the Cymry in the Christian faith[3].

In accordance, therefore, with these circumstances, we find that Jewish prejudices prevailed over those of the "man of Italy". This is evident from the fact, that swearing by the ten commandments was the form of oath which the Christians first adopted in this country[4]. The memory of Moses is also invested with peculiar prominence in the compositions of Taliesin: one poem is entitled "The Rod of Moses[5]," whilst another bears the name of "the Plagues of Egypt[6]," and a third is an Eulogy on the men of Israel[7].

We have already seen that a Druidical temple, which is supposed to have been converted into a Christian church, received in consequence the appellation of the tumulus of Moses[8]. Now, a mere intimacy with the Asiatic or Gallic churches could not have implanted in the breasts of the Cymry predilections so purely judicial;—how else may they be accounted for, except as the genuine traditions of Hid, Cyndav, and Mawan?

But this disposition of mind, no doubt tended to the establishment of the intercourse which subsisted between the British and Oriental Churches. "Many godly men from Greece " are said

to have visited Cymru as early as the reign of Cyllin[9], the son of Caradog, when in all probability Aristobulus was yet living, since his death, according to Cressy, is dated as late as AD 99. At any rate, we cannot suppose that the four missionaries were all dead at the time, and that the Church was then founded anew.

Mavvan, especially, must have been young when he first came over. But even if they were all gone to their rest, or Hid, Cyndav, Mawan, and the twelve saints of Eurgain, were mere presbyters or deacons, still we dare not think that Aristobulus would have so far disregarded the charge of St. Paul as not to provide for the transmission of the apostolical commission in the Church over which he presided[10].

To have been satisfied with the succession observed by the college of Bards would be tantamount to the rejection altogether of episcopal ordination, which is a distinct and essential doctrine of Christianity. Truly the succession of bishops was in possession of the British communion in the time of Irenseus, about AD 169, or he, who expressly appealed to it against the pretensions of heretics and in favour of the claims of Catholicism, would never have included the Christian Celts indiscriminately within the pale of true churches[11].

Though there is no necessity for believing that intimacy with the Oriental Christians effected any fundamental alteration in the ecclesiastical usages of Britain, yet it may have to a certain extent remoulded the character of some, and also introduced others altogether new. Irenaeus evidently identifies the creed and traditions of the British Church with those of the East.— Neither have the Churches which are established in the Germanies, the Iberias, or among the Celts otherwise believed, or otherwise handed down[12]. And notwithstanding the bias of his companions, the authority of Aristobulus was venerated for some time, if we may infer from the Triads which bear the name of the Apostle who sent him.

Nevertheless, congeniality of feeling excited at first generally among the British Christians by the Jewish emissaries, would naturally recommend to them the Asiatic ordinances, and perhaps induce them to embody some in their own ritual. This will account for the fact that in aftertimes they referred their traditions to St. John, and swore by his gospel[13]. We certainly know that Britain and Asia did at one time agree, especially in regard to the time of keeping Easter. If our Church derived this custom from the East, it must have been anterior to the council of Nice[14], and the reason why the Cymry continued to observe the same afterwards is easily explained on the supposition that they were not represented in that council[15].

Whether the Greeks in the time of Cyllin introduced their orders into Britain, we are not prepared to assert : it seems as if the incorporation of the Church with the Bardic system, would hardly admit of such a proceeding. But we are informed, that there were then many godly men from Rome, as well. Did their influence at all affect the customs of the native Church? Of this we have no practical evidence in the customs themselves, which, on the contrary, turned out at a subsequent period to be materially different from those of Rome[16].

It may be, that the domination of the Romans in temporal matters operated unfavourably upon the Cymry in that point. We have seen how they kept themselves throughout, more or less, a distinct people, using their own law; and may they not accordingly have exhibited a spirit of similar jealousy in regard to religion? That there was a sort of rivalry between the two nations on this head is sufficiently apparent from the antagonist claims of Llandaf and Caerleon to be the principal seat of the Cambrian Church.

We have it on record, however, that Lleirwg communicated with the Bishop of Eome on the subject of the Church; but, we trust that we have clearly explained the nature of that communication both from the Triads and from the letter of Eleutherius Himself[17]. The pope, in the very commencement of his epistle, seems to betray a consciousness of British antipathy to the imperial laws, and, therefore, as if to remove every pretext of jealousy on the part of the clergy of this

island, which might exist in consequence of that circumstance, he repudiates all necessary connection between the Church and State of Rome[18].

Further, in commissioning persons of British descent, one known to be a relative of Lleirwg, to bring over his reply, and to aid the king in his projects, he proves how careful he was to cultivate a Catholic union between the Churches of Britain and Rome, without subjecting either to a compromise of liberty and independence. It is true that the native prelates are made to assert at the conference with Augustine, that they had received their ceremonies from Eleutherius[19]; from the foregoing considerations, however, we can conclude such to have been a mistake, arising naturally from a vague or confused idea of the change which took place in the external aspect of the Silurian Church consequent upon the application of Lleirwg.

Nevertheless, we cannot doubt that the principal stream of ordination was now derived immediately from Rome, for both Dyvan and Fagan were successively appointed bishops of Llandaf. We can furnish the names of all the prelates who henceforward filled this see. Adelfius, who subscribed to the decrees of Aries, AD 314, we have elsewhere attempted to identify with Edelfed, the fourth bishop of Llandaf, and with Cadvrawd the son of Cadvan, great-grandson of Caradog[20].

And here we may mention the testimony which the council alluded to affords to the existence and validity of the Apostolical succession at this time in Britain. It consists in the fact that bishops from this country were summoned to attend, and permitted to vote in an assembly, which has always been regarded as most legitimate in its constitution.

In the fifth century, a succession from their favourite Apostle St. John, was introduced among the Christians of Cymry, by Garmon and Bleiddian[21]. They consecrated Dyvrig[22], who afterwards exercised the authority of a metropolitan, and consequently was enabled to confer the same ordination upon other bishops and clergy within his province. And as he held Llandaf and Caerleon together for some time, there was wanting the usual rivalry of the two sees to mar the uniform transmission of this eastern succession. His immediate successors in both sees traced their spiritual descent from the fountain head of Christendom, having been admitted into episcopal orders by the Patriarch of Jerusalem[23].

The same can be said of Padarn, bishop of Llanbadarn Vawr, so that, if he afterwards assisted in the imposition of hands, the Cambrian chain would be proportionally less complicated. It does not appear that anything materially affected the succession as now established until the time when the rival sees of Wales submitted respectively to the jurisdiction of Canterbury.

We subjoin a list of the prelates who successively filled the oldest see in Great Britain, from the time of Lleirwg until the final union of the Anglo-Saxon and Cambrian Churches in the twelfth century.

1. Dyvan.—A.D. 17[^]-180.
2. Fagan.
3. Elldeyrn.
4. Edelfed {Adelfius, present at the Council of Aries, a.d. 314.)
5. Cadwr.
6. Cynan.
7. Ilan.
8. Llewyr,
9. Cyhelyn.
10. Gwythelyn.

11. Festydd[24]. (Probably Fastidius, Britannorum Episcopus, AD 420, or 430; or, Faustus, Reiensis Episcopus, AD 463. Query, the son of Gwrtheyrn, who condidit locum magnum super ripam fluminis, quod vocatur Benis.)
12. Dyvrig. Consecrated by Garmon and Bleiddian.
13. Teilo.
14. Oudoceus.
15. Berthgwyn.
16. Trychan.
17. Edilvyw.
18. Grecielis.
19. Aidan. Slain by the "infidel Saxons," AD720.
20. Elwog.
21. Cerenhir.
22. Nudd.
23. Cadward.
24. Nobis, or Nywys.
25. Oyveiliawg. Consecrated AD 872.
26. Libiau.
27. Gulfrid.
28. Marchlwys, or Marchluid. In the time of Hywel Dda.
29. Pater, or Padarn. AD 943.
30. Rhodri ab Morgan. Poisoned.
31. Gwgan. Died AD 982.
32. Bledri. Became bishop in 983.
33. Joseph. Consecrated, Oct. 1st. 1022.
34. Herwald, or Herwallt. Consecrated in 1050, died 1104.
35. Urban. Consecrated AD 1108.

Notes to Chapter 11

1 Iren. adv. Hoeres. lib. iii.c. 3, p. 232. Epiph. Hseres. xxvii. p. 51, vid. Ham. Dissert, v. c. i. p. 256. Cai. adv. Pvocul. Dionys. Ep. ad Rom. Apud Euseb. lib. ii. c. 25, p. 68.

2 There seems to be some foundation for this hypothesis in the Acts of the Apostles (xxviii. 23-31) where we read that St. Paul, at his first coming to Rome, being rejected by the Jews, turned to the Gentiles, declaring to them the salvation of God, who gladly received it ; and that he continued thus preaching the Gospel for two years together. According to the Apostolic Constitutions, Linus was ordained bishop of Rome by St. Paul, and Clemens by St. Peter, which would lead us to believe in like manner that they were thus appointed to succeed the Apostles in the superintendence of their respective flocks. It is a matter of fact that in the Church of Jerusalem, till the destruction of the temple, none were admitted but Jewish converts.—See Cave's Life of St. Clemens.

3 Page 57.

4 "There are three sacred objects to swear by. (See p. 71).—Afterwards were introduced the ten commandments, the gospel of John, and the holy cross."— Myr Arch. vol. iii. p. 314.

5 Myv. Arch. vol. i. p. 41.

6 Ibid. p. 40.

7 Ibid. 40.

8 Pages 71, 172

9 Page 63.

10 See the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Could the Bishop of Ephesus, who seems to have personally known some of the saints of Britain, have had any part in giving their Church a bias towards Asia? There are not wanting authorities which allege that Timothy was over in this country, and that he even baptized King Lucius. (See Uslur, cap. Iii.)

11 Adv. Ha;res. lib. iii. c. 3.

12 Adv. Hajies. lib. iii. cap. 3.

13 Beda, Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 25 ; Myv. Arch. vol. iii. p. 314.

14 It was decreed at this council that the paschal festival should be held throughout Christendom on one and the same day.

15 See page 84.

16 Bed. lib. ii. c. 2

17 Chap. Ii.

18 "Leges Romanas et Caesaris semper reprobare possumus."

19 "Auctorizabant suas ceremonias nou solum a sancto Eleutheii Papa, primo iustiuitore suo, ab ipsa pene infaiitia Ecclesise dicatas, varum a sauctis patribus suis, Dei amicis, et apostolorum sequacibus, hactenus observatas; quas non deberent mutare propter novos dogmatistas."—Gotcelinus in Histor. Major, cap. 32.

20 Pages 78, 82.

21 Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of St. John, was bishop of Lyons, the oldest church in Gaul, and the source whence were derived the ministry and ecclesiastical rites of that country.

22 Genealogy of the Saints; Liber Landavensis, p. 621.

23 Page 133, Does Gwynvardd Brycheiniog (1160-1230) allude to this event when he says: "Before the relics of Devvi Greece shall tremble.

24 The list of the bishops prior to Dyvrig is from a MS. of the late lolo Morganvvg. Another book gives Medwy as the third. It may be well to observe that Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11, may be recognised among the Archbishops of London in Godwin's list, under the names of Obinus (or Dovinus in another list) Cadur, Conan, Hillary, Guitelnus, and Fastidius. Another list, in lolo Morganwg's hand-writing, gives thirteen bishops of Llandaf prior to Dyvrig, ten of whom are in Godwin's catalogue of the bishops of London. Underneath this list is written, See "Nicholl's Paper."—Liber Landavensis, Chronological Series, &c. p. 623.

