

## I.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONJECTURES ON THE KIRKMADRINE  
EPIGRAPHS. BY JOHN DOWDEN, D.D., F.S.A. (Scot.).

The *Proceedings* of learned Societies have often, with much advantage to further research, recorded the results of inquiries which are yet in but a very imperfect condition. On the obscure and difficult questions often raised by archæological studies, even conjectures that have little positive evidence in their support may be ventilated with no discredit. In the pages of *Proceedings*, such as those of this Society, facts and speculations are brought under the notice of investigators in the same or similar fields of research. And eventually corrections come to be made, deficiencies supplied, over-statements toned down and modified, what is worthless in the guess-work dismissed, while what is solid remains. It is with a sense that some such explanation is needed by way of apology that the following notes are submitted for consideration and criticism.

I. The two inscribed stones found at Kirkmadrine, in the parish of Stoneykirk, Wigtownshire, were brought to the knowledge of the learned world by Dr Arthur Mitchell.<sup>1</sup> They are generally admitted to be, if not the very earliest, among the earliest of the inscribed Christian monuments of Great Britain. There has, so far as I am aware, been no one who disputes the judgment of Dr Joseph Anderson,<sup>2</sup> when he declares them to be "the oldest inscribed Christian monuments in Scotland." Plaster-casts of these stones, procured by the prompt liberality of Sir James Simpson, may be found in the Museum of this Society. The stones have been pictured in Dr John Stuart's great work,<sup>3</sup> and in Dr Anderson's *Scotland in Early Christian Times* (second series, p. 254).<sup>4</sup>

Putting aside from consideration in the present paper the form and character of the sacred monogram inclosed within a circle (which appears

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Arthur Mitchell, K.C.B.

<sup>2</sup> *Scotland in Early Christian Times* (second series), p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii. plate lxxi.

<sup>4</sup> Also copied from Stuart in Hübner's *Inscriptiones Britannicæ Christianæ*, and in Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 1978, and (more accurately) in Dowden's *Celtic Church in Scotland*, p. 17.

on both sides of one of the stones, and on one side of the other) and what is doubtless the remains of the formula A ET  $\omega$  at the top of the principal stone (though the character of these is of the highest importance in helping to determine the approximate date of the monument), we turn to the inscription below the monogram on the principal stone (fig. 1). It is well cut, well preserved, and in all but one place (the end of the fourth line, where the stone appears to have been broken or frayed away) leaves no doubt as to the lettering. It runs as follows:—

HICIACENT  
SCIETPRAE  
CIPVISACER  
DOTESIDES  
VIVENTIVS  
ETMAVORIVS

At the end of the fourth line, the letter that is given as 's' has been encroached on (it would seem) by the wearing away of the stone. Whether there was ever any letter in this line following what is represented above as 's' we are unable to say. Certainly it would seem that the fifth and sixth lines were inscribed *after* the slab of stone had lost a portion of its edge. And it may be that the same is true of the fourth line. The sculptor, as it seems to me, was supplied with a rude stone, by no means regularly dressed, and had to fit his inscription as best he could.

The sense of the inscription (with the exception of doubts raised by the four last letters of the fourth line) is perfectly obvious. Dr Stuart (followed by others) supplies the letter 't' at the end of the fourth line, and reads as follows:—

HIC IACENT  
SANCTI ET PRAE  
CIPVI SACER  
DOTES IDES [T]  
VIVENTIVS  
ET MAVORIVS



Fig. 1. Inscribed Stones at Kirkmadrine. (From a Photograph taken by Mr M'Harrie for the Author.)

Dr Anderson and Hübner<sup>1</sup> read the last word as MAIORIVS, the doubt arising from the ligature of the 'A' with the next letter, thus *AV*.

The only question I am disposed to raise as to *the reading* is with regard to the explanation of the last four letters of the fourth line. The introduction in such a place of *id est*, in the sense of 'that is,' is so extraordinary, and so entirely contrary to the usage of Christian inscriptions, that nothing but the most cogent necessity would induce me to accept it. I must leave to those who have made a special study of early Christian epigraphy to say whether any example of it can be found; and I will only remark, that among hundreds of early Christian inscriptions that I have read there is no trace of such an unnatural construction. In a brief inscription like this, where the sense is perfectly obvious without these supposed words, and where usage is (I think) wholly against their introduction, I feel compelled to reject *id est* as the true interpretation.

The conjecture I have to offer is that IDES is the whole, or a part, of the proper name of one of the *sacerdotes* buried in that place.<sup>2</sup> If we think that, like the other names, it should have a Latin form of termination in 'vs,' we might read 'IDES[vs],' assuming that the stone at the time when it was sculptured admitted of this addition; but the assumption does not seem to me well founded.

It may be added that 'Id' is a common component of Cymric proper names. Thus we find Idno, Idwal, Idwallon, Iddog, Iddew, Iddon, Idloes, Idcant, Idnerth.<sup>3</sup> It is to the Romano-British Church of Wales and Cumbria that we naturally turn for illustrations of the name. For this reason, and also because of the apparently very early date of this monument, it would probably be idle to look to Ireland for illustrations of the word; yet it may be worth mentioning that we find Id as the name of one of two brothers with whom St Patrick came in contact.<sup>4</sup> We also

<sup>1</sup> *Inscriptiones Britannicæ Christianæ.*

<sup>2</sup> This suggestion was made by the writer of the present paper in *The Celtic Church in Scotland* (1894), p. 16. See also Appendix iv. pp. 333-4.

<sup>3</sup> These (Idwal and Idnerth were British Bishops) and others will be found in Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*. W. J. Rees, *Cambro-British Saints*. Rice Rees, *Welsh Saints*, and *Brut-y-Tywysogion* (Rolls Series).

<sup>4</sup> Whitley Stokes' edition of the *Tripartite Life of St Patrick*, vol. i. 94.

find a Bishop of Ath Fadat in Leinster recorded at 14th July in the *Martyrology of Gorman* (edited by Whitley Stokes for the "Henry Bradshaw Society") whose name was Id. And we find Idnae, the son of Attarae, in the *Félire of Ængus* (Stokes' edit., p. clvi); while Ide (one of the variants of Ite) appears in Irish hagiology.<sup>1</sup> We see, then, that Id is a frequent component of Celtic names, whether Cymric or Gaelic.

As to Viventius, I think it is worth calling the attention of future investigators to an entry in an old Gallican Martyrology, published by Martène (*Ampl. Collect.*, vi. 658 *sq.*), where we read "*Febr.*, xiv. Cal. Mart., in Britannii Faustini, Viventiæ." Could there be a transcriptional error here of Viventiæ for Viventii?

II. *SACERDOTES*.—The three (or two) ecclesiastics to whom the monument was erected are described as being "sancti et præcipui sacerdotes." I have avoided translating *sacerdotes* by our English word *priests*, because this latter word—(naturally enough, as being etymologically only *presbyter* 'writ small')—suggests to us a rank and status among the clergy which, at all events in the Church during the period within which the Kirkmadrine stones must have been sculptured, was subordinate to the rank and status of a bishop. There is the danger of importing into the fourth or fifth century a sense of the word *sacerdos* which was then comparatively rare and highly exceptional. Indeed, while in the later, mediæval, period the word *sacerdos* has almost invariable reference to one whom we should now call a *priest*, in the fourth and fifth centuries *sacerdos* was applied with incomparably greater frequency to a *bishop*, and that, be it observed, without any qualifying epithet.

So far as I know, we do not possess any full and careful examination of the history of the change in the common usage of the word *sacerdos*. Nor am I able now to undertake to deal in a complete way with the history of the use of the word. But even a reference to such a familiar work as the Glossary of Du Cange (s.v. *sacerdos*) will suffice to put the student of the epigraphy and literary remains of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries on his guard. "Formerly, and in the Primi-

<sup>1</sup> Todd and Reeves, *Martyrology of Donegal*, 17.

tive Church," he tells us, "this name [*sacerdos*] was employed for bishop, as the writings (*passim*) of Cyprian, Augustine, &c., testify." Du Cange and his Benedictine editors give pertinent examples from the writings of Ambrose, Gregory of Tours, Fortunatus (in his Life of St Martin), and from the Theodosian Code, which need not be transcribed here.<sup>1</sup> The editor of the works of Paulinus of Nola (Migne, *Lat. Patrol.*, vol. lxi. col. 596) goes so far as to say, "Primis Ecclesiæ sæculis *sacerdotis* nomen *episcopis solis* tribui solitum"; and adds, "Mos iste paulatim fractus, et inde ad presbyteros vox *passim* delata." The question that I have set myself is, How was the word used during the fourth century and down to the middle of the fifth?<sup>2</sup> The answer to that question is, that the ordinary and general use of the word *sacerdos* within the period referred to (and, indeed, for many years later) is to signify a bishop, and that only in comparatively rare and highly exceptional cases is it applied to one of lower rank. In fact, so common was this use of *sacerdos*, that when dealing with writings as late as these of Leo the Great (Bishop of Rome A.D. 440-461), the learned brothers Ballerini think it necessary to warn the reader in the words, "Sacerdotis nomen non *semper* pro Episcopo, sed *nonnunquam* etiam pro Presbytero accipitur."<sup>3</sup>

The mode of language which we are about to consider is the general language of the everyday life of the period—the language of historical writing, of epistolary correspondence, of monumental inscriptions. It would be quite foreign to our purpose to enter upon the technical theological notions connected with the *sacerdotium*, as treated of by the professed theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries. There is no question as to their using the term at times in a comprehensive sense; indeed, so comprehensive as to include not only the presbyterate, but also the diaconate. Thus we find Optatus of Milevis (in the second half of the fourth century) asking, "Quid commemorem Diaconos in *tertio*? quid presbyteros in *secundo sacerdotio* institutos?" (*Contr. Donatist.*, i. 35). While we have St Leo the Great, whose writings (as

<sup>1</sup> Du Cange also illustrates the use of *sacerdotium* for the Episcopate.

<sup>2</sup> I add a few illustrations from a later period.

<sup>3</sup> *S. Leonis Magni Opera*, tom. ii. col. 315.

we shall see) swarm with illustrations of *sacerdos* used with distinct and exclusive reference to bishops, censuring the practice of some bishops who, while they chose Sundays for the ordination of bishops, were content that *presbyters* and *deacons* "quolibet die dignitatem *officii sacerdotalis* accipere" (*Epist.* iv.).<sup>1</sup> Other occasional passages showing the comprehensive use of the term could be cited.<sup>2</sup> But the question I put is—When we meet the word *sacerdos* in narrative relations, in forms of address, and in inscriptions, what is its probable meaning?

Those who are familiar with the writings of Cyprian will recall numerous passages where he uses *sacerdos*, *sacerdotium*, and *sacerdotalis* exactly as a writer of the mediæval period would use *episcopus*, *episcopatus*, and *episcopalis*. And, as is well known, no early writer has insisted more firmly or persistently than Cyprian on the difference in office, rank, and authority between the *episcopus* and *presbyter*.<sup>3</sup> But a writer of such early date as Cyprian is not so serviceable for our purpose as authors who lived in the fourth or fifth centuries. I turn, therefore, in the first place, to writers who were contemporaries with our St Ninian, from whose time the Kirkmadrine stones cannot, at latest, be very far distant. The stones may possibly belong to the time of Ninian: they cannot reasonably be assigned to a date much later than that of his death, if we are to give any value to the testimony afforded by the form of the symbols and the character of the lettering.

1. Sulpicius Severus wrote at the close of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. I first thought of turning to his works because he was the biographer and friend of St Martin of Tours, whom St Ninian is said to have visited, and from whom, as we are told, he

Edit. Cacciari, tom. ii. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. xx. c. 10), when he argues that *Apoc.* xx. 6 refers to all Christians "non utique de solis episcopis et presbyteris, qui proprie jam vocantur in ecclesia sacerdotes."

<sup>3</sup> That this is Cyprian's usual *modus loquendi* is not questioned. Two or three passages have been referred to (*Epist.* xl., *Epist.* xliii. 3, *Epist.* xx. 2, edit. Oxon.), which by some have been construed as making exceptions to his usual style. In one of these (*Epist.* xx. 2) it has been inferred that Cyprian attributes the *sacerdotii vigor* to deacons as well as presbyters. But the inference in all these cases seems due to a misinterpretation of the text.

obtained masons for the construction of his church at Candida Casa.<sup>1</sup> In the critical Vienna edition of Sulpicius (1866), the editor, C. Halm, notes five examples under the head "sacerdos = episcopus."<sup>2</sup> Of these it may suffice to cite two passages. In the passage where St Martin is described as bursting into the palace at Treves to plead for the life of some officers of the court condemned to death, and consenting to take part in the consecration of Felix as Bishop of Treves, we read "postridie Felicis *episcopi* ordinatio parabatur, sanctissimi sane viri et vere digni, qui meliore tempore *sacerdos* fieret" (*Dialog.* ii. [iii.] 13). Again, the Spanish and Aquitanian bishops in synod condemned Priscillian and his adherents, the two bishops Instantius and Salvianus, at Saragossa. Then we read: "Instantius et Salvianus, damnati iudicio *sacerdotum*, Priscillianum, etiam laicum, sed principem malorum omnium, una secum Cæsaraugustana synodo notatum, ad confirmandas vires suas *episcopum* in Abilensi oppido constituunt, rati nimirum, si hominem acrem et callidum *sacerdotali auctoritate* armassent, tutiores fore esse" (*Chron.*, ii. 47).

2. Rufinus, like Sulpicius, was a contemporary of Ninian. His translation (somewhat paraphrastic in its character) of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius has in the modern world, naturally enough, fallen into obscurity and neglect since the publication of the original Greek. But for our purpose he is an admirable witness. He died in the early years of the fifth century (A.D. 410 ?).

We shall see later on that Rufinus uses on one occasion the peculiar expression "præcipuus sacerdos," which (in the plural) is used of the ecclesiastics commemorated at Kirkmadrine. But we have first, to observe that Rufinus' rendering of Eusebius abounds in passages where *sacerdotes* (without any epithet) is used of ecclesiastics holding the rank of bishops, or where *sacerdotium* is used for the 'sacred office' exercised by a bishop, and *sacerdotalis* for 'episcopal'; while, when he has occasion to refer to one who would now be called a *priest*, he uses, invariably (unless I am mistaken), the word *presbyter*. A few examples

<sup>1</sup> *Vita Niniani*, cc. ii. iii. (*Historians of Scotland*, vol. v. pp. 143, 144).

<sup>2</sup> *Chronica*, ii. 31; *Ibid.*, 46; *Ibid.*, 47; *Dialogus*, ii. 12; *Dialogus*, iii.



may be given.<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked, in passing, that the interpretation of the Greek by Rufinus is often so loose and inexact that a reference to the original text of Eusebius is in many cases not helpful; but of the sense of Rufinus there need be no doubt.

(a) Describing the joy of the Christians when liberty was given by Constantine for the exercise of their religion, Rufinus writes, "Congregabant in unum *sacerdotes*," etc. (lib. ix. cap. 10).<sup>2</sup>

(b) Concerning the opinion (springing up in Arabia) that the soul died with the body, but would rise again with the body at the resurrection, we read as follows:—"Ad quem morbum ab ecclesia depellendum cum ingens *episcoporum concilium* convenisset, iterum Origenes rogatur ab omnibus interesse, et facere sermonem. Cumque coram omni *sacerdotum concilio* disputaret," etc. (lib. vi. cap. 27).<sup>3</sup>

(c) A passage where *sacerdos* is very clearly distinguished from *presbyter* is found in Rufinus' translation of the epistle of a Council of Antioch condemning Paul of Samosata: "Dionysio et Maximo et omnibus, qui per universum orbem sunt, *sacerdotibus et coepiscopis* una cum presbyteris et diaconis," etc. (lib. vii. cap. 26).<sup>4</sup>

(d) The title of chapter 9, book v., is "Enumeratio sub Commodo *sacerdotum*," where the corresponding Greek is Οἱ κατὰ Κόμοδο ἐπισκοπεύσαντες. In the Latin text of the chapter we read of Julian, who "apud Alexandriam *sacerdotium* suscepit." And this is the mode of speech in which Rufinus very commonly indicates the succession of bishops in the various sees. Thus:—

(e) "In urbe vero Roma, duodecim Anacletus annis in *episcopatu* exactis *sacerdotii sedem* Clementi tradidit" (lib. iii. c. 14). And, of the see of Alexandria, "succedit Cerdon tertius in *sacerdotium*" (c. 21). And, again, of the churches in Asia, "quibus temporibus apud

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the Bâle edition of *Eusebii Pamphili . . . Opera* (1549).

<sup>2</sup> This corresponds to the passage in lib. x. cap. 3 of the Greek text, where we have ἐπισκόπων ἐπὶ ταῦτ' συνηλύσεις.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Greek, lib. vi. 37, where no words occur corresponding either to *episcoporum* or *sacerdotium*, the text simply reading συγκροτηθείσης οὐ σμικρᾶς συνόδου κ.τ.λ.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Greek text (lib. vii. c. 30). Διονυσίῳ καὶ Μαξίμῳ καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην πᾶσι συλλειτουργοῖς ἡμῶν ἐπισκόποις καὶ πρεσβυτέροις καὶ διακόνοις κ.τ.λ.

Asiam supererat adhuc et florebat ex apostolorum discipulis Polycarpus Smyrnorum ecclesiæ *episcopus*, et Papias similiter apud Hierapolim *sacerdotium* gerens" (c. 35).

(f) The adjective 'sacerdotalis' is used with a similar reference. Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, is said to have died, "octo annis *sacerdotali* functus *officio*" (lib. vi. c. 16).

It may be added that Rufinus, in the two additional and original Books, which he appended to the nine Books of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, employs language of the same kind.

(g) Thus "Liberius . . . in urbe Roma per idem tempus *sacerdotio* fungebatur" (lib. x. c. 22). And, again, "Cum quadragesimo et sexto anno *sacerdotii* sui Athanasius quievisset," etc. (lib. xi. c. 3).

(h) Relating the well-known story of the election of St Ambrose to the bishopric of Milan, Rufinus tells how a sudden cry arose among the people, "Ambrosium *episcopum* postulantes," and declaring that there would be no peace or unity "nisi Ambrosius sibi daretur *sacerdos*" (lib. xi. c. 11). It would be easy to multiply examples, but these will suffice to show the manner of Rufinus. I cannot profess that I have read the whole of Rufinus with minutely close attention, but I am able to say that I have not noticed a single example of *sacerdos* being applied to anyone but a bishop.

So far, I have dealt with writers of the close of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. I now come down later; for, though I see no reason why the Kirkmadrine stones should not have been inscribed during the time of the Roman occupation, it may be well to leave a margin.<sup>1</sup> The writings of Pope Leo I. abound in illustrations of the use of *sacerdos* as applied to bishops. In fact, *sacerdos* seems in his writings to be the ordinary term of courtesy applied to persons holding episcopal rank, though *episcopus* is used when strict formality is required.

Thus, in Epistle I.<sup>2</sup> (A.D. 440 or 446?), complaining to the African

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the margin should be wide if Hübner's remark be accepted: "Literarum forma saeculo quinto sextove videtur convenire."

<sup>2</sup> The numbering of the Epistles follows Cacciari's edition, *St Leonis Magni Opera Omnia* (Romae, 3 tom. 1753 1755).

bishops (*per Caesariensem Mauritaniam*) of unfit or unqualified persons who were too often raised to the episcopate, Leo writes: "Cum in ordinationibus *sacerdotum* quædam apud vos illicite usurpata crebrior ad nos commeantium sermo perferret; ratio pietatis exegit," etc., and he goes on to say that he entrusts the matter "Fratri et *Consacerdoti* nostro Potentio."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the same Epistle, after alleging the Apostle's rule, "ut, inter alias electionis regulas, is *Episcopus* ordinetur, quem unius uxoris virum fuisse aut esse constiterit," he adds, "tam sacra semper habita ista præceptio ut etiam de muliere *sacerdotis* elegendi eadem intelligeretur servanda conditio." In other words, not only should the bishop to be elected be "the husband of one wife" (*i.e.*, should not have married a second time), but that his wife should not have been a widow when he married her. Later on, in the same Epistle, he objects to the great multiplication of bishops in North Africa, as it lessened the *dignitas sacerdotalis*, and forbids their being appointed to every little village (*in quibuslibet castellis*), adding that where the people were few in number "*presbyterorum cura sufficiat*." This illustration is particularly interesting, as it brings out the distinction between the *sacerdos* and the *presbyter*. It would be easy to cite several other illustrations from the same Epistle. And indeed, throughout the Epistles, so frequent is the use of *sacerdos* as applied to bishops, that the warning of Peter and Jerome Ballerini already referred to (p. 252) is by no means unnecessary.

To go through St Leo's epistles would be wearisome; but a few further examples illustrative of Leo's general manner may be referred to. (1) In A.D. 449 Leo desired that the Emperor Theodosius would convene an Ecumenical Council in Italy, and, in reference to the Eutychian controversy, urged on him "ut omnia in eo statu esse jubeatis, in quo fuerunt ante omne judicium *donec major ex toto Orbe Sacerdotum numerus congregetur*."<sup>2</sup> Again, of the Nicene decrees it is said "quæ a totius mundi sunt *sacerdotibus* constituta" (*Epist. xli.*). (2) The occupants of metropolitan sees are "*metropolitani sacerdotes*"

<sup>1</sup> Potentius was one of the Mauritanian bishops.

<sup>2</sup> The corresponding passage in the Greek translation is ἕως ἄν ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου μείζων ἀριθμὸς συναχθῆι τῶν ἐπισκόπων.

(*Epist.* x.). (3) A provincial synod is “synodus provincialium sacerdotum” (*Epist.* vi.); compare “sacerdotes vestræ provinciæ” (*Epist.* x.). (4) Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, lately deceased, is “sacerdos ad ecclesiam, cui bene præfuit” (*Epist.* lx.); while the writings of three former archbishops of Alexandria are referred to as “beatæ memoriæ, Athanasii, Theophili, et Cyrilli, Alexandriae sacerdotum scripta” (*Epist.* xc.) Again, in a passage where there is every motive for exalting the position and dignity of Flavian, who had been done to death by Dioscorus, Leo describes the latter as one who “in sanguine innocentis et catholici sacerdotis pollutas jampridem . . . manus intinxit” (*Epist.* xcv.).

Hilarius succeeded Leo as Bishop of Rome (A.D. 461–467). Eleven epistles of his have been preserved.<sup>1</sup> In these the same usage is observable. The well-known ecclesiastical rule that there should not be two bishops of one see is expressed by his injunction, “ne duo simul in una ecclesia sacerdotes” (*Epist.* ii. 4). Bishops consecrated without the consent of the metropolitan of Tarragona (to whom he writes) are “sacerdotes ordinati præter notitiam atque consensum tuæ dilectionis” (*Epist.* iii.).

It is worth noting, by the way, that we find a Viventius among the bishops of Gaul to whom Epistle xi. of Hilarius is addressed. The dates will scarcely allow us to identify him with the Viventius (or Viventiolus) who was Bishop of Lyons as late, at least, as A.D. 517, nor, of course, with the Gallican Bishop Viventius, who was one of the three authors of the first Book of the Life of St Cæsarius of Arles, who died A.D. 542. We find thus that probably three bishops of Gaul bore the name which appears in the Kirkmadrine epigraph. If the Kirkmadrine stone is not to be connected with the period of Ninian, may it not be connected with the missions of the Bishops Germanus and Lupus, from Gaul, whose labours and influence, as we know, made a deep impression on the British Church of the fifth century? Nothing more, however, is suggested here than that the *name* was well known among the ecclesiastics of Gaul.

A particularly valuable and happy example, of probably about the

<sup>1</sup> Migne's *Lat. Patrol.*, tom. Iviii.

same date, will be found in a *Life of St Hilary of Arles* (who died A.D. 440), written by an unknown 'disciple' of his. Speaking of Hilary's appointment to the bishopric, the author writes:—"Effectus nomine *sacerdos* qui jampridem erat virtutum decoratus insignibus." (Migne, *Lat. Patrol.*, vol. 50 [2], col. 1228.)

Of the few well authenticated facts concerning religion in Britain during the fifth century, we must count the two visits of St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, to Britain, to counteract the spread of Pelagianism. The first visit was in A.D. 429, when Germanus was accompanied by St Lupus, Bishop of Troyes; the second was in A.D. 447, when he was accompanied by Severus, Bishop of Treves. Some forty years after the death of Germanus (who died in A.D. 448), his *Life* was written by Constantius, a presbyter of Lyons. Now, in this *Life* we find, in the case of the first visit, the two bishops taking their place in the narrative as the "beatissimi sacerdotes," and again, as the "apostolici sacerdotes." Similarly, in the account of the second visit, Germanus and Severus appear as the "sacerdotes" or the "beatissimi sacerdotes."<sup>1</sup>

It would be natural to consult any British literature of the period; but the only British writings that can probably be assigned to the period within which the Kirkmadrine stones must have been erected, or at all events only shortly after, are the now generally accepted writings of St Patrick. The sense of *sacerdos* in these writings is doubtful, though the word is patient of the sense that prevailed at the time in contemporary literature abroad. Indeed, I may go further and say that to those who are familiar with the theological notions of the period, at least the second of the two passages about to be cited is more readily understood when we take *sacerdos* as equivalent to *episcopus*. But it is worth observing that within the first few lines of the *Confession* we find the three words *diaconus*, *presbyter*, and *sacerdos*. The writer, in the well-known passage, says:—"Patrem habui Calpornum *diaconum* filium quendam [*al. quondam*] Potiti, filii Odissi *presbyteri* qui fuit [in] vico Bannavem Taberniae"; and then he tells how he, with many thousands, was carried into captivity into Ireland, "quia a

<sup>1</sup> The passages will be found in Haddan and Stubbs' *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 16-19.

Deo recessimus, et praecepta eius non custodiimus, et *sacerdotibus* nostris non oboedientes [*al. inobedientes*] fuimus qui nostram salutem admonebant" (Whitley Stokes' *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, etc., vol. ii. p. 357).

The other example is in St Patrick's *Epistle to the Christian Subjects of Coroticus* (*ibid.*, p. 376), where he describes Coroticus as one "qui Deum non veretur, nec *sacerdotes* ipsius, quos elegit, et indulisit illis summam divinam sublimem potestatem 'quos ligarent super terram ligatos esse et in celis.'" In this place also, it may be observed, some twenty lines higher up the page, a *presbyter* is mentioned as the bearer of a letter sent by Patrick.

But what is of real importance is the notion current in ancient times that "binding and loosing" (as the theologians spoke) properly belonged only to the *episcopus*, though the power was by him sometimes delegated to the *presbyter*. Thus Pacianus, Bishop of Barcelona, a contemporary of our Ninian, in his third epistle, uses the expression "datam episcopis potestatem ut quae ligassent in terris ligata essent in coelis," etc.;<sup>1</sup> while the practice of the Church may be illustrated by the canons of the second and third Councils of Carthage forbidding presbyters to reconcile penitents, even in private, without the permission of the bishop, "nisi absente episcopo et necessitate cogente," and in no case whatever in the public service of the Church. The exact date of these African Councils is a little uncertain, but they may be placed about the close of the fourth century. An enactment of a like spirit is that of the Council of Orange in Gaul (A.D. 441), where Hilary of Arles presided, when the bishops agreed to allow presbyters to reconcile heretics, "in mortis discrimine positos," if the bishop were absent.<sup>2</sup> From these and other passages it may be inferred as probable that St Patrick (at least in the second passage) uses *sacerdos* in the sense then most common, *i. e.*, as equivalent to *episcopus*. But even the first passage (cited from the *Confession*), where neglect of *obedience* to their *sacerdotes* is imputed as the offence for which the Britons were allowed to be punished by the

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Morinus (*Commentarius historicus de disciplina in administratione sacramenti Poenitentiae*, lib. i. cap. iv. § 5. See also § 6).

<sup>2</sup> *Concil. Arausic.*, i. cap. 1.

harrying of the Irish (were we to judge only by the then generally prevailing meaning of the word *sacerdos* as meaning *episcopus*), gives very good sense. If this view be accepted, we have the testimony of Patrick that in North Britain, in his boyhood, there were *sacerdotes* with episcopal authority. If this were so in the neighbourhood of Alcluith (Dunbarton), why not also in the region that we now know as Wigtownshire?

Different minds will form different estimates of the value of what has been here said of the probable sense of *sacerdos* in the writings of St Patrick, and for the purpose in hand I am content if these two passages are regarded as making neither one way nor the other.

*The later use of Sacerdos.*—When we reach the close of the sixth century we are sensible of a considerable change in the ordinary *modus loquendi*. The contrast between the writings of Gregory the Great and Leo the Great in this respect is sensibly felt. Indeed, in Britain, by the middle of the sixth century, if Haddan and Stubbs are right in assigning the First Epistle of Gildas to a date not later than A.D. 550,<sup>1</sup> the words *sacerdos*, *sacerdotalis*, and *sacerdotium* seem used sometimes, at least, with a comprehensive reference to both presbyters and bishops. It appears to be so where the writer refers to the “*sacerdotalis episcopatus vel presbyterii sedes*,”<sup>2</sup> and is clearly so where (a few lines later) he in effect identifies “*episcopatus officium vel presbyterii*” with “*sacerdotia*.” Yet, elsewhere, with obviously a special reference to bishops, in his invective he exclaims, “*O inimici Dei et non sacerdotes, veterani malorum et non pontifices, traditores et non sanctorum Apostolorum successores*.”<sup>3</sup> I suspect it was the ambiguity already attaching to the word that induced Gildas in his Second Epistle to use the phrase “*summi sacerdotes*” when he wished to be precise.<sup>4</sup> But, as is well known, these epistles are, in the view of other competent authorities, to be assigned to a date half a century or more later than the date adopted by Haddan and Stubbs.

But even in so late a writer as Bede there are many passages where

<sup>1</sup> Hadden and Stubbs' *Councils*, etc., vol. i. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

*sacerdos* is used exclusively of bishops. These passages may be found collected in Mr C. Plummer's scholarly edition of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Oxford, 1896), where the Anglo-Saxon version gives in some cases the sense as 'biscope,' 'biscopa.'<sup>1</sup>

III. *PRAECIPUI SACERDOTES*.—The epithet *praecipuus* is uncommon as associated with *sacerdos*. I have as yet been successful in finding only two instances in addition to the Kirkmadrine epigraph. (1) The expression occurs in the *Sacramentarium Leonianum*, printed in the first volume of Muratori's *Liturgia Romana Vetus* (Venetiis, 1748). The Sacramentary which bears the name of St Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome (440–461), may for our purposes be sufficiently described as a collection of the variable parts of the mass for festivals and other holy days in the Church at Rome. Many of the prayers, etc., may in their origin be considerably earlier than Leo, and some are certainly later; but we need not hesitate to accept the opinion that the work represents substantially the service in the Church at Rome about the time of this Pope.<sup>2</sup> In this Sacramentary we are given parts of seven or eight different masses for the festival of St Xystus (*Natale Sancti Xysti*), Bishop of Rome, who suffered martyrdom on 6th August 258. The passages in these masses, so far as they are pertinent to the question before us, may be transcribed.

(a) "Verè dignum. Quoniam inter innumeras toto mundo martyrum palmas, quibus Urbis hujus praecipue coronatus est ambitus, etiam hunc nobis venerabilem diem beati Xysti *Sacerdotis* et Martyris tui sanguine consecrasti Per," etc.

(b) "Verè dignum. Natalem diem sancti Martyris et *Sacerdotis* tui Xysti debita festivitate recolentes, qui Apostolici Pontificatus dignus in sua aetate successor," etc.

(c) "Verè dignum. Qui sancto Martyri tuo Xysto, ac *praecipuo Sacerdoti*, non solum passionis triumphum, sed ut etiam subjectis sibi ministris ecclesiae proficeret, contulisti," etc.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> So far as the argument of this paper is concerned, it is not affected by assigning the Leonine Sacramentary as a whole to a later date with l'Abbé Duchesne (*Origines du Culte Chrétien*, chap. v.).



(d) "Verè dignum. Qui sanctum Xystum, *Sedis Apostolicae Sacerdotem*, hodierna die felici martyrio coronasti," etc.

(e) "Verè dignum. Tibi enim festiva solemnitas agitur, tibi dies sacrata celebratur, qua sancti Xysti *Praesulis Apostolici* natalitia praelibantes," etc.

(f) "Verè dignum. Adest enim nobis sancti *Sacerdotis* et Martyris tui, Xysti, desiderata festivitas," etc.

(g) "Verè dignum. Cognoscimus enim, Domine, tuae pictatis effectus, quibus nos adeo *gloriosi Sacerdotis* et Martyris tui, Xysti, semper honoranda solemnia," etc.<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed that in not one of these passages is Xystus referred to as *episcopus*. In one (e) he is *Praesul Apostolicus*. In the other six he is *Sacerdos*, with or without a qualifying adjective or phrase. Here, then, we have *Sacerdos* used of a Roman Bishop.

When I first began to investigate this subject I was inclined to think that *praecipuus* was used somewhat in the same way as *summus*, of which as an epithet of *sacerdos* (when the reference is to a bishop) examples may be found; and that the expression *praecipuus sacerdos* formed a kind of official designation. But, seeing how very numerous are the examples of the use of *sacerdos* (without any epithet) as applied to a bishop, in writings of the fourth and fifth centuries, I hesitate. I would only say that, as yet, I am not aware of any instance where *praecipuus sacerdos* is used of one whom we know to have been only a presbyter.

Before leaving the testimony of the Leonine Sacramentary, it may be worth while to note another example in the same collection of the use of *sacerdos* for a bishop. It will be found in the services for 23rd November (ix. Kal. Dec.), the Festival of St Clement, reputed to be (after St Peter) the first, and certainly among the earliest of the bishops of Rome. Among the several liturgical forms assigned to this day we find *Clemens sacerdos et martyr* occurring three times; *sacerdos egregius et martyr insignis* once; *martyr et pontifex* once.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that in the speculations of the theologians of the

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Liturg. Rom. Vet.*, tom. i., coll. 389-392.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, tom. i., coll. 459, 460, 461.

fourth and fifth centuries we find the view that a measure, though not the fulness, of the *sacerdotium*, or of the *gratia sacerdotalis*, was bestowed upon the clergy who were designated presbyters. Indeed, as already observed (see p. 252), we find passages in ecclesiastical writers where even a *deacon* is regarded as sharing in the *sacerdotium*.<sup>1</sup> Again, the Laws of Theodosius and Valentinian (*circa* A.D. 430) speak of priests as *secundi sacerdotes*, and Leo the Great speaks of them as *secundi ordinis sacerdotes*. But still, in ordinary language, when *sacerdos* was not thus qualified, the presumption is that a bishop is intended. It was perhaps something in the same way as we in common parlance use the word 'officer' when speaking of a military man. If we said that A. B. is 'an officer of the 1st Dragoon Guards,' or 'an officer in the Royal Artillery,' we should be commonly understood to mean a *commissioned officer*, although the number of non-commissioned officers is in each case far larger than that of the commissioned officers.

(2) The second example I have found of *praecipuus sacerdos* is from Rufinus' translation of Eusebius (*lib. vii. c. 24*). The expression being so rare, the whole chapter may be transcribed.<sup>2</sup>

"Tunc Dionysius de Alexandria rogatus venire ad concilium et senectutis impedimento et incommoditate corporis inhibetur: per epistolam tamen praesentem se reddit, et quid fidei ac venerationis erga Christum teneret, exposuit. Caeteri vero ecclesiarum pastores diversis è locis et urbibus, velut adversum latronem quendam Christi gregibus insidiantem, conveniunt Antiochiam. In quibus insignes et caeteris praecellentes erant Firmilianus à Caesarea Cappadociae, Gregorius et Athenadorus fratres, Ponti provinciae *sacerdotes*, Helenus Sardensis ecclesiae *episcopus*, et Nicomas ab Iconio, et Hierosolymorum *praecipuus sacerdos* Hymenaeus, et vicinae huic urbis Caesareae Theoctecnus. Sed et Maximus Bostrensis *episcopus* dignus eorum consortio cohaerebat. Multi vero alii, quos longum est enarrare per singulos. Sed et *presbyteri quam plurimi et diaconi* ad supra dictam urbem causa compescendi, imo delendi novi hujus dogmatis convenerunt."

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, too, speaks of the Diaconate as *tertius sacerdotii ordo* (*Epist. xvi.*, edit. Vallarsii). See also Epistles liii. and xxii.

<sup>2</sup> The italics are, of course, not in the original.

The corresponding passage in the Greek will be found in *lib.* vii. (end of cap. 27 and beginning of cap. 28). But Rufinus' rendering, or paraphrase, is so loose and inexact that it need only be observed that Eusebius uses the general word *ποιμένες*, followed by the personal names and the names of the various episcopal sees. Like his paraphraser, he adds *presbyters* and *deacons* in a separate sentence. It is plain that Rufinus, according to his common practice, uses *sacerdos* and *episcopus* indifferently. In the Greek, it may be added, there is nothing corresponding to *praecipuus*, which seems to have been added in the sense of *distinguished, exalted, eminent*. I am not disposed to urge that there was necessarily any distinctly official sense attaching to the epithet; but, at the same time, if *sacerdos*, at the period when the Kirkmadrine stones were erected, was with a very wide generality used for *bishop*, and (comparatively) rarely for a *presbyter*, the addition of such an epithet as *praecipuus* would tend towards fixing the sense in which *sacerdos* would have been then understood.

IV. *How the early Christian epigraphs of Britain and Gaul bear on the question of the sense of SACERDOTES.*—One naturally inquires for illustrations of the use of *sacerdos* on the early inscribed stones of Britain. On turning to Hübner's *Inscriptiones Britanniae Christianae* it is disappointing to find, in addition to the Kirkmadrine stone, but one example of the use of this word (No. 42); nor does the word in this case appear as part of an epitaph. At Llanthety church, in Brecknockshire, there is built into the wall a stone bearing the words, in extremely rude characters, *Gurdan* (or, as Hübner conjectures it should be read, *Gjurdan*) *sacerdos*. It is impossible to draw any inference from this.<sup>1</sup> It may, however, be observed that we find some examples of the use of *Presbyter* as *MERACIVS PBR HIC IACIT* (No. 145). See also No. 197.

The use of *EPISCOVVS* on a stone at Llanafanfawr, in Brecknock-

<sup>1</sup> It has been pointed out that there appears the name of Gurvan (with the variants Gurven, Gwruwen, Gurnuen), one among the bishops of Menevia (St David's), who has been assigned by some to the beginning of the ninth century. But there is nothing but a certain similarity in the names to identify him with the person who is recorded on the stone. See the Bishop of Oxford's *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum* (2nd edition), p. 217, and the authorities referred to in Smith and Wace's *Dict. of Chr. Biogr.*, s.v. Gurnuen.

shire (No. 37), is of no interest for our purpose, if Westwood is right in assigning it to a date as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Le Blant's *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* is more fruitful. He has transcribed five inscriptions, in each of which, according to his judgment, *sacerdos* is used for a bishop. One of these inscriptions (No. 242) is on a monument erected by Cyril, fourteenth Bishop of Treves (who died about A.D. 458), to the memory of two of his predecessors in that see, Eucharius and Valerius, who, it should be observed, like the *sacerdotes* at Kirkmadrine, were buried under one stone.<sup>2</sup> Another example of two bishops buried in one tomb will be found further on.

The FAVSTVS DEVOTO CORDE SACERDOS (No. 595) is regarded by French scholars<sup>3</sup> as the bishop of that name, who was a signatory of the second council of Mâcon in A.D. 585.

St Remigius (or Remedius), Archbishop of Rheims, known as the 'Apostle of the Franks,' who died A.D. 530 (?), is referred to in the epigraph (No. 651), in which occurs the line:—

ECCE SACERDOTIS SACRI MICAT ALBA REMEDI

Possibly (as I think) more near the date of the Kirkmadrine stone is the inscription (No. 509) on the lid of a sarcophagus now in the museum at Arles, which is taken to be that of Concordius, Bishop of Arles, a signatory at the first council of Valence, A.D. 374. The epigraph is followed by the monogram with alpha and omega, and the not infrequent symbol of two doves, one on each side.<sup>4</sup>

In another epigraph (No. 22) we find a certain Viventiolus,<sup>5</sup> "Vir

<sup>1</sup> *Lapidarium Walliae*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> "Membra Sacerdotum quae ornat locus iste duorum," etc.

<sup>3</sup> For the authorities, see Le Blant.

<sup>4</sup> The inscription runs through seven hexameter lines. The name CONCORDIUS occurs, followed by—

QVI TENERIS PRIMVM MINISTRUM FVLSIT IN ANNIS  
POST ETIAM LECTVS CAELESTI LEGE SACERDOS  
TRIGINTA ET GEMINOS DECIM VIX REDDIDIT ANNOS

etc.

<sup>5</sup> Here is a diminutive of the name Viventius, which appears on the Kirkmadrine stone.

potens meritis nosterque sacerdos" (*sic*), whom Le Blant would identify with Viventolus, Bishop of Lyons, who convened a council at Lyons in A.D. 517.

Again, *Sacerdos* appears on the monument (No. 21) of Rusticus, another Bishop of Lyons (? *circ.* A.D. 493-498), who is buried in the same tomb with another whose name is obliterated. Towards the close of the inscription they are styled ANTESTES (*sic*) SVMMI PARES MERITIS.

Again (No. 25), on the tomb of St Nicetius (Nizier), Bishop of Lyons (*circ.* A.D. 552-573), we read, ECCE SACERDOTVM TENVIT QVI IVRA SACERDVS.

It may be added that *sacerdotium* seems used in the cognate sense of *episcopate* or *episcopal office* (No. 3) on the tomb of St Tetricus, Bishop of Langres, who died A.D. 572.

Le Blant's collection records a considerable number of epigraphs from the tombs of presbyters where the 'PRESBYTER' or 'PRESBITER' is either written in full (as in No. 60 and No. 371), or given in the contracted form 'PBR.' (Nos. 389, 489); or 'PRB.' (No. 373); or 'PRBR.' (No. 377); or 'PRBS.' (No. 375). In one case (No. 88) Le Blant considers *sacerdos* to signify a priest; but apparently for no other reason than that he has been unable to identify the proper name 'Hermer' with any known bishop; nor is there any clue to the date of the inscription.

V. As it is now admitted by all historical inquirers that, so far as related to the ecclesiastical orders of the ministry, the Christian Church in the Britain of early times did not differ from the rule of the rest of Western Christendom, the question before us can be discussed in a purely historical and antiquarian spirit. From positive documentary evidence we know but little of the condition of Christianity in the northern part of the Roman occupation; but there is not the slightest reason to suppose that it differed materially, as regards the system of organisation, from that of the southern provinces. No sooner was Christianity tolerated by Constantine than as early as A.D. 314 we find three British bishops among the signatories of the council of Arles.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The signatures in the most authentic list are "Eborius Episcopus de civitate Eboracensi, provincia Britannia; Restitutus Episcopus de civitate Londinensi, provincia suprascripta; Adelfius Episcopus de civitate Colonia Londinensium;

Stillingfleet (*Antiquities of the British Churches*, pp. 75 sq.) has shown good reason for supposing that only certain bishops, as representatives of their brethren, were summoned from each civil province to attend ecclesiastical councils held at a distance from their homes.<sup>1</sup> We do not find that British bishops were present at the Council of Sardica (A.D. 334 or 337 ?), but we have express testimony that Britain was one of the countries whose bishops wrote accepting the decision of that Council in opposition to the Arians.<sup>2</sup>

Next we find Hilary of Poitiers, then an exile in Phrygia, writing (A.D. 358 or 359) a letter to his episcopal brethren in Gaul, expressing the hope that they and their brethren, "provinciarum Britanniarum episcopi," would come to an approaching council in a conciliatory spirit. Then we have the testimony of Sulpicius Severus (*Chron.*, ii. 41) that when the emperor offered to pay the expenses of bishops attending the Council of Ariminum (Rimini), to accept of his offer seemed unbecoming (*indecens*) to the bishops of Aquitaine, Gaul, and Britain. Yet three of the British bishops, on account of their poverty, accepted the emperor's offer, preferring to profit from the public purse than to be burdensome to their brethren, who had made a collection on their behalf. In a word, we find the bishops of Britain (*i.e.*, in the sense of the provinces of Roman Britain) a recognised factor in the general church-life of Christendom. We have no material for judging of their numbers. Of their places of residence we know nothing beyond what appears in connection with the subscription to the Council of Arles, in the beginning of the century. But it seems difficult to doubt that, with the imperial decrees in favour of Christianity, wherever Roman influence was felt, through either its civil or its military system, there the recognised church system of the day would rapidly spread. There is not the

exinde Sacerdos presbyter, Arminius diaconus." Some think that Adelfius was from Lincoln (*Lindensium*), the error being that of the scribe, or from Caerleon-upon-Usk (*Legionensium*). A. W. Haddan considers the latter the more probable. See Smith and Cheetham, D.C.A., s.v., *Arles, Councils of*. Stubbs concurs (*Councils*, etc., vol. i. 7).

<sup>1</sup> This subject is discussed with ability by Collier, *Ecc. Hist. of Great Britain* (Lathbury's edit.), vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius, *Apol.*, c. Ar. 1.

slightest evidence for supposing that the northern province as far as the *vallum* of Antonine was not at least nominally Christian before the close of the fourth century, or that it did not possess the general church organisation of the time. There is nothing in either Bede's short notes, or even in Ailred's incomparably less valuable *Life*, that would lead us to think that Ninian settled himself at Candida Casa as in a heathen land. That place was only his headquarters, and the military basis of operation, so to speak, for his missionary expeditions among the Southern Picts north of the *vallum* who were then heathens.

The chronology of the life of St Patrick is (within certain limits) full of disputable points; but we cannot be far wrong if we say that, either towards the close of the fourth century or not long after the beginning of the fifth, Patrick was carried off, with other captives, by the heathen Irish. He tells us of several thousands (*tot millia hominum*) being carried off at the same time, because of their faults,—“because we were disobedient to our *sacerdotes*.” Now if Bannavem Taberniae is to be placed on the estuary of the Clyde (whether on the northern or southern shore need not here be discussed), we have evidence of the existence of a very large Christian population in that quarter. At the same time we find Ninian settled as a bishop at Candida Casa. There is nothing, it seems to me, improbable in the existence of a succession of bishops in Wigtownshire. Ailred's *Life of Ninian* has little historical value; but he assures us that he had before him, and followed closely, not only Bede's account, but a book on the life of St Ninian, *barbario* (a.l. *barbarice*) *scriptus*. According to his account, on Ninian's return to his native land, he was received with an enthusiastic welcome from people evidently Christians. A great multitude of people went out to meet him; there was great joy among all, and the praise of Christ sounded on all sides, for they held him for a prophet (*cap. ii.*). And Ninian is then described as labouring, in the first instance, at the correction of errors in doctrines among the Christian people of the place. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that before Ninian's arrival there may have been an ecclesiastical settlement at the place now known as Kirkmadrine; or it may be that that settlement was made under Ninian's direction. Nor, taking the word *parochia* in its common

meaning during the fourth and fifth centuries (and indeed much later) as equivalent to a district supervised by a bishop,—not what we now mean by a ‘parish,’—there is nothing incredible in the statement, “cepit deinde sacer pontifex ordinare presbiteros, consecrare episcopos, ceterasque ecclesiasticorum graduum distribuere dignitates, totam terram per certas parrochias dividere.” On the contrary, after his training at Rome and his visit to Martin of Tours, he would most naturally extend, if he did not introduce, ecclesiastical arrangements which he had found everywhere among the churches of the continent. The darkness of succeeding centuries has destroyed any other positive evidence, if such ever existed, and the inroads of the paganism and strife of the early Saxon period swept away almost all traces of the ecclesiastical organisation of earlier days.

The monastic bishop was a very common feature of the ancient Christianity of Ireland, and of the Irish settlements in Scotland and elsewhere. Whether the monastic bishop (subject to the abbot) was a feature of the Welsh and ancient British Church is more open to dispute. On the one hand, there is the weighty authority of Haddan and Stubbs (*Councils*, etc., i. 143) that “There is no trace at any time in that country (Wales) of any system resembling the Irish and Scotch (namely, of government by abbots, with bishops as subordinate officers, discharging episcopal functions, but without jurisdiction), or, indeed, of any other system whatever than that of a diocesan episcopate.” The opposite view is taken, and supported with considerable force, by the latest writer on the history of the ancient Church in Wales,—Mr J. W. Willis Bund (*The Celtic Church of Wales*, 1897, pp. 220 *sq.*). It may be that the evidence for a bishop in the ancient British Church being subject to the abbot of a monastery is not very considerable, but there seems much more to be said in favour of the view that British bishops were frequently themselves the heads of monasteries (a system which, it may be remarked, coexisted in Ireland and some of the Irish missions, together with the Columban system of the bishop performing episcopal offices in subjection to the abbot). In fact, there is no question that the practice was common, the only point for doubt being whether such bishops always enjoyed a diocesan jurisdiction. The



extraordinarily large number of bishops in the Irish Church has a parallel in some of the ancient Welsh records. Thus, at the synod of Llandde-wibrefi (referred to in the *Life of St David*), we find, as has been pointed out by Mr Bund, one hundred and eighteen bishops. "The number of bishops is far too large to be consistent with any idea of (an exclusively) diocesan episcopacy, or to be capable of any other explanation than that of a monastic episcopacy. The most reasonable explanation is, that most of the early churches, both in Ireland and Wales, were monastic, if not actually monasteries; that each monastery had a bishop as part of the establishment." (*The Celtic Church of Wales*, p. 235.) Now, if it be felt difficult to assent to the supposition of some rude division of this south-western region into districts under episcopal supervision, we may yet suppose that a monastic establishment was existent at Kirkmadrine, with a bishop at its head. But whether we lean to the notion of a quasi-diocesan arrangement, or to that of a monastery with an episcopal head, the evidence that has been exhibited in this paper will, it is thought, satisfy the student that the *praecipui sacerdotes* of Kirkmadrine possessed the ecclesiastical grade of bishops.

The stone itself, of great antiquity, commemorates two or (as I think) three deceased *praecipui sacerdotes*. If these ecclesiastics succeeded one another, it would push back the lifetime of the earliest of these, presumably, by several years. Examples in Le Blant (see p. 266) show that in the ancient Church of Gaul, the burial of successive bishops in one tomb, and under one monument, was not unknown. I am inclined to believe that in the case before us we have another example of the practice. But it is just possible that these *praecipui sacerdotes* were contemporaries. Mr Bund (p. 238) shows some reason for supposing that *groups* of bishops in one place (well known in Irish records) was not wholly unknown in the ancient British Church.

Before concluding this paper, I would call attention to the fact that in a list of heads of the British Church who are said to have conferred with Augustine of Canterbury (*circa* 601), which is to be found in the *Iolo MSS.* (143, 548), we find representatives from two places which have never been identified except by entirely unsupported conjecture, viz., Wig and Morganwig. Where all is left to guess-work, perhaps

another guess may be hinted at, for which I must freely admit nothing is to be said except the resemblance of the form Wig with the same element in our word Wigtown.

There has been perhaps too great a tendency among antiquarians to limit their consideration in dealing with the ancient British Church to the confines of modern Wales, while we know that it extended along the eastern seaboard of Britain, at one time as far as the northern boundary of the kingdom of Cumbria. But this guess, to which no weight is attached, must not be allowed to detract from the general argument of this paper, which it does not affect.

I have to thank Dr Anderson for his kindly supplying the description of the stone which appears in the following appendix ; and I would also express my obligations to the Rev. William J. Lowrie, of Stony-kirk, for the assistance he afforded me in procuring the photograph, which has been reproduced, and for other information as to the present condition of the stones.

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#### APPENDIX.

By JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D.

The two stones shown in the foregoing reproduction of a photograph by Mr M'Harrie on p. 249 are now fixed against the west wall of the old and disused church of Kirkmadrine, which has been recently restored and roofed. A porchlike structure added at the west end contains the stones, which are visible through the bars of an iron gate. This is better than their former position as gateposts in the entrance to the burying ground, but when it was proposed to place them under the protection of the Ancient Monuments Act, provision might have been made for their future preservation under complete cover, protected alike from the deteriorating influences of weather and from possibility of injury.

They are narrow oblong slabs of indurated schist, the larger measuring about 6 feet 9 inches in length, with an almost uniform width in the upper part of 16 inches, but widening considerably towards the lower

part, the thickness throughout being about 4 inches. One edge is rounded as if water-worn, the other straight but apparently undressed. The surface is also undressed, but smooth and apparently natural. The smaller stone, which is longer and thinner than the other, is also more irregular on both edges, one of which is much straighter than the other and more rounded, as if water-worn. The surface is apparently undressed, but smooth and tolerably level. The total length of the stone is about 7 feet, and the greatest width 14 inches. The thickness scarcely exceeds  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Both monuments have holes drilled in them in consequence of their old use as gateposts.

No. 1 has on the front an incised inscription and a cross within a circle. On the back it has a cross within a circle but no inscription. The circle on the front is 14 inches in diameter. The cross within it is equal armed, the arms reaching almost to the circumference of the circle and expanding slightly towards the extremities. The upper limb of the cross formerly showed the loop of the monogram attached to the top, as the cross on the front of the other stone shows it, but a flake has been detached from this part of the stone at some comparatively recent date, so that it is no longer clearly perceptible. Above the circle and between it and the sloping top of the stone, is a single line of inscription showing the formula  $\Lambda \text{ ET } \omega$ . The lower part of the Omega was distinctly visible when the cast of the stone was made in 1861, but the stone has now scaled off in that part, the fracture carrying with it also the vertical stroke of the letter  $\tau$  in the word  $\text{ET}$ , which was ligatured to the prolonged middle bar of the letter  $\epsilon$ .

Below the circle comes the main part of the inscription in six lines extending across the face of the stone from side to side. The letters are majuscules, normal in form, carefully spaced, and clearly cut, but not divided into words. They average a height of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and including the five spaces between the six lines the inscription covers a vertical space of 16 inches. In the first line the last two letters of the word  $\text{IACENT}$  are ligatured. In the second line the word  $\text{SANCTI}$  is represented by the three letters  $\text{SCI}$  with the mark of contraction over them. In the fifth line the  $\text{NT}$  ligature is repeated, and in the sixth line the word  $\text{ET}$  is ligatured in the same manner as in the part of the

inscription above the circle, and there is a triple ligature for the MAV or MAI of the last word. The three last lines are shorter than the first three, on account of a vertical break in the stone which has removed a splinter from the right side of about 2 inches in width extending, from the top of the fourth line downwards, to a point considerably below the last line, where it runs out to the surface. It is evident that this break was there when the inscription was carved, so far as the two lower lines are concerned, which are spaced so as to end clear of the break. But it is possible that the break did not then extend upwards to the level of the top of the fourth line as it does now, for the lower curve of the final s in that line runs into the break, while those in the two lines under it are set back so as to clear it. If the fourth line did extend over the part now broken away there was room for one or even two additional letters; but this raises questions more likely to be decided on epigraphic than on merely circumstantial evidence.

No. 2 has at the top a cross formed from the monogram, within a circle of 9 inches diameter, and below it an inscription in three lines. The letters are more rudely carved, and the peculiarity of the inscription is, that it consists merely of two names coupled by the conjunction ET, without any further specification or preceding formula, so that it appears as if it had been intended to be read on with No. 1.

There is no distinctive feature in the epigraphy of either of the inscriptions which could warrant a very close approximation to their date. In Gaul the range of the monogram combined with the formula A ET  $\omega$  does not extend beyond the fifth and the first half of the sixth centuries. Here, the form of the monogram is peculiar, the loop at the top of the cross being a modification of the Roman R and not of the Greek Rho. This must be regarded as indicating a secondary stage of the development of the cruciform symbol, and Le Blaut states that the cross, as distinguished from the monogram placed at the commencement of the epigraph, does not appear in Gaul before the commencement of the sixth century. In the circumstances, I think that it would be hazardous to assign to these stones a date earlier than somewhere in the second half of the fifth century.