

The Church in our mother-country was planted there, if not by Apostles themselves, certainly by those who were taught by and conversed with Apostles. We have the most ample testimony to that effect; as well as evidence of the fact that the Church of Christ, both in Britain and Ireland, was an independent Church. It certainly had no connection, and scarcely any intercourse, with the Church of Rome for about five centuries from its first formation. Its sympathies and associations did not lie in that direction at all; and there is proof, from certain marked peculiarities in religious worship and usages, that the Britons derived their first ministers, and their first knowledge of Christianity, from the Eastern Christians. When, at the end of the sixth century, Gregory, bishop of Rome, sent over the celebrated missionary, Augustine, into Britain, the latter found a Church there, struggling, it is true, with many difficulties, but still a vigorous and independent church. Its Bishops affirmed distinctly that they owed no subjection to Rome; that they had a metropolitan amongst themselves; and that they were determined to adhere to those rules and usages which had prevailed amongst them from the beginning.

And the whole Church of our mother-country remained in this state of independence and purity for about five centuries more; when the universal dominion acquired in those dark ages by the Church of Rome, extended to the Churches of our parent countries also. They, like others, came under that despotism for a time; and like others, they admitted its corrupt doctrines and superstitious practices. Not, however, without much conflict and a frequent resistance. That yoke always sat heavily upon the British people; they were always restive under that usurped dominion. If, indeed, the chains of that spiritual despotism had been firmly riveted, and there had been a universal and cordial acceptance of those corrupt tenets, the Reformation in England in the sixteenth century would not have been so easy and general a thing as it proved to be.