

Augustine,* the monk, and some others, into England, for the conversion of the Saxons, who, excepting a few in the north of England, among whom some of the Scots had labored, were still heathens. To this he was no doubt partly incited by good motives; for having seen some Anglo-Saxon captives at Rome, and understanding them to be pagans, he was moved with compassion for them, and determined on sending the gospel to their countrymen. But when we consider his unbounded ambition, we are constrained to believe that the extension of his own power and influence lay as near his heart as the spiritual good of the Anglo-Saxons. He struggled more than any of his predecessors for universal power in the church, and his anxiety to secure that power is plainly marked in his strife with John, bishop of Constantinople, who was his principal rival, and in his gross flattery of the tyrant Phocas, who had been raised to be emperor, though he did not live to reap the reward of his adulation; the title of universal bishop, which he had aimed at receiving, being conferred by Phocas on one of his successors. To mark the progress of that corruption which afterwards pervaded the church, it may be mentioned that Gregory, so far as his influence extended, loaded the church with superstitious rites and observances. Amongst other things, he introduced new and corrupted modes of administering baptism and the Lord's supper. Litanies were sung to the saints—temples erected to their memory—and numerous festivals were appointed to be kept in honor of them. This was done to please the pagans, who had been always accustomed to festivals in honor of their deities.

Augustine, who had been sent into Britain, showed himself to be an apt disciple of such a master, and made it evident that he was more intent upon bringing Britain under the influence of Rome than any thing else. Although his mission was particularly to the Saxons, among whom he and his companions no doubt wrought much good notwithstanding the gospel they preached was much obscured by the corruptions of Rome, he soon proclaimed himself the sole archbishop of the whole of Britain, and strove to bring the churches among the old Britons to a conformity with the rites of Rome, on which he was more bent than inculcating the doctrines and precepts of the gospel. He introduced disputes with regard to the manner of administering baptism, and particularly with regard to the time of keeping Easter, which the Scots and the old Britons had been accustomed to keep at a different time than it was kept at Rome. He thus "cast the church into a sea of trouble;" but notwithstanding all his endeavors, and even threatenings, they refused to make any alteration.

It was shortly before this time that the feast of Christmas was introduced to the notice of the Scots.

Buchanan, after mentioning the drinking, and other vices which accompanied it, says, "The very image of the ancient Saturnalia (Pagan feasts dedicated to Saturn) was here revived." "Our countrymen call this feast *Iule*, substituting the name of (Julius) Cesar for that of Saturn. The vulgar persuasion is that the nativity of Christ is celebrated by these ceremonies; though it is evident enough that the lasciviousness of the Bacchannalia is more truly renewed than the memory of Christ's birth." Aikman, in a note on this passage, remarks that "The transference of pagan jollities to a Christian festival, in the celebration of Yule—Christmas—is well known; it was the instructions of the Popes to their missionaries, not to alter the heathenish rites, but to accommodate them to the holidays of the church." Dr. Jamieson, in his Scottish dictionary, thinks it was originally the Gothic pagan feast of *Yule* or *Zul*.

Lawrence, who succeeded Augustine, followed in his footsteps, and earnestly urged uniformity to the Romish customs; but he was not only resisted in his attempts, but even treated with contempt, for in a letter which he wrote to the church of Scotland, dated 605, preserved by Bede, and quoted from him by Spottiswood, in which he laments that they did not walk after the customs of the universal church; he complains most bitterly that Dagan, a Scottish bishop, who had gone into England, refused not only to eat with him and his companions, but even to stay in the same lodging with them—thus treating the dignified emissaries of Rome as if they had been excommunicated persons.

The Scots were on several occasions admonished from the chair of St. Peter, with regard to the time of keeping Easter and some other such matters, but the Popes of these, and also of succeeding ages found the Scotch to be intractable in all matters of mummery and ceremonial.

A festival, in commemoration of our Lord's suffering and resurrection, seems before this time to have been observed by the Scots, under the name of Pasch, although it is uncertain at what time it was introduced into Scotland. They kept it, however, at a different time from the Romish church, as the Greek church does to this day, and when urged to conform to Rome, they defended their practice on the ground that such was also the practice of the disciples of the Apostle John. Some of these labored in Greece and the East; Polycarp, for instance, was bishop of Smyrna; and that there was some communication with Scotland is not altogether improbable, for there is an old tradition handed down by several of the Scottish historians, that, about the year 370, a number of religious Greeks, from Patrae, a city of Achaia, were shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland, and afterwards settled there. This festival has been called Easter in England, since the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons; and is another instance of the Romish practice of ingrafting holidays upon heathen festivals. Easter was the name of a Saxon goddess, whose fes-

* Those who are not very well versed in ecclesiastical history may perhaps need to be reminded, that there was another Augustine, the one so celebrated in the history of the church for his great piety, as well as for his opposition to the heresy of Pelagius, in the early part of the fifth century.