

in opposition to Claudius: Indeed, it is remarked by the modern Protestant historian of the Irish Church—"it appears plainly that, by the close of the 8th Century, the grossest corruption, in this particular, had become prevalent."* The same author remarks also, that "the language used in Divine Service in these countries in the earliest ages, appears to have been always the Latin, as far as we can learn from any evidence that remains of ancient documents relating to the subject."†

But it is quite unnecessary to enter into further proofs, in order to show that the whole system of Christian doctrine, held by the ancient Irish Church, was essentially the same with that held by all the other branches of the Universal Church in those times, as well as by the Roman Catholic Church in the present day. It would be easy to show, indeed, that the Irish Church, as well as other national churches, had its own peculiarities as to *local customs*, which are merely matters of *discipline*, and do not affect any article of the Christian *Faith* or doctrine. It will be remembered that I am speaking of the earliest period in the Church History of Ireland, long before the commencement of any connexion with England, and consequently we have here a complete refutation of the assertion, that the Papal Supremacy, and other doctrines, were first introduced into Ireland in the 12th Century. I have endeavored to investigate this subject in a historical point of view, and to state the facts of the case, which are equally open to the impartial inquiry of Protestants and Catholics. My object is the pursuit of truth, without reference to preconceived opinions of any kind. But the facts of Church History have a very important connexion with the discovery of religious truth. Human opinions are constantly changing, but authentic facts remain always the same. Now Christianity itself is a *fact*, and not a mere *opinion*—it is not an idea communicated to each individual mind, but it is a divine revelation made to the world 1800 years ago, and transmitted by the Church to each successive generation. And therefore, while we are attempting to ascertain, by historical evidence, what was the religious system delivered to the Irish Church by St. Patrick, in the 5th Century, we are really going back to the fountain

* King, Vol. I. p. 368.

† Ibid. p. 369.