

three had been instructed at Rome, and were directed thence back into their own country, and according to the histories of their lives, were all honored with the episcopal character. St. Kieran Saigir (who is commemorated on the 5th of March) proceeded St. Patrick in preaching the gospel to the Ossorians and was seventy-five years of age on St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland. Hence it is easy to understand what is said of St. Palladius, that he was sent bishop to the Scots believing in Christ; though the number of Christians among them must have been then very small. St. Prosper, in his book against the *Author of the conferences*, having commended pope Celestin for his care in delivering Britain from the Pelagian heresy, adds, that "he also ordained a bishop for the Scots, and thus, whilst he endeavored to preserve the Roman island Catholic, he likewise made a barbarous island Christian." Usher observes that this can be understood only of Ireland; for though part of North-Britain was never subject to the Romans, and the greatest part of it was then inhabited by the Picts, yet it never could be called a distinct island. It is also clear from Tertullian, Eusebius, St. Chrysostom, and others, that the light of the gospel had penetrated among the Picts beyond the Roman territories in Britain, near the times of the apostles. These people, therefore, who had lately begun to receive some tincture of the faith when our saint undertook his mission, were doubtless the Scots who were settled in Ireland.

The Irish writers of the lives of St. Patrick say, that Palladius had preached in Ireland a little before St. Patrick, but he was soon banished by the king of Leinster, and returned to North Britain, where they tell us he had first opened his mission. It seems not to be doubted that he was sent to the whole nation of the Scots, several colonies of whom had passed from Ireland into North Britain, and possessed themselves of part of the country, since called Scotland. After St. Palladius had left Ireland, he arrived among the Scots in North Britain, according to St. Prosper, in the consulate of Bassus and antiochus, in the year of Christ 431. He preached there with great zeal, and formed a considerable church. The Scottish historians tell us, that the faith was planted in North Britain about the year 200. in the time of king Donald, when Victor was pope of Rome. But they all acknowledged that Palladius was the first bishop of that country, and style him their first apostle. The saint died at Fordun, the capital town of the little county of Mernis, fifteen