

commendation, as the appointment of a single bishop could confer no great advantage on a numerous congregation, as the advocates of this opinion pretend it to have been.

As Ailbe, Declan, Ibar, and Kieran, are the ecclesiastics who are designated as the predecessors of Palladius in the episcopal dignity, abundant authority can be produced to show that they were posterior in time. Of these saints notice will be taken in their proper place; let it suffice for the present, that the high antiquity which is assigned to them, cannot be sustained.

With the inquiry into the origin of Christianity in Ireland, another subject arises, to which an undue importance is given by modern controversy. While the advocates of Catholicity, on the one hand, ascribe to some western region the origin of the true faith in Ireland, the abettors of the Reformed creed strive to point out its day-star in the East.

Until a discrepancy of belief be shewn to have existed at this early period in the Eastern and Western Churches, the controversy cannot be interesting, nor can it serve the cause of Protestantism, as both Churches agree on those doctrines which separate the Reformed Church from them. The cause of this desire to fasten the origin of the Irish Church on those of the East, is obvious, as the supremacy of the Holy and Apostolic See is so formidable to the right of private judgment, which is set up in opposition to that unerring authority, which has during ages preserved unity of faith and discipline. It would then be an agreeable surprise to the abettors of Protestantism, to find the Irish Church, had she received her faith from the East, involved, perhaps, in the heterodox subtleties with which the fervor of eastern imagination had frequently injured the sublime doctrines of the New Law.

As the superstitions of the Irish people seem to be of eastern origin, it will not be deemed improper to treat of its peculiar form, as adopted in Ireland previously to the introduction of Christianity.

While in other countries the ritual of Paganism prescribed ordinances of a cruel and sanguinary character, Ireland seems to have been free from the gross and revolting practices which its dupes observed in the performance of their sacrifices. Instead of the worship of the sun, moon, and the elements, the religion of the Gallic Druids was idolatrous, and in theory consisting of a multiplicity of deities, the chief of whom was Apollo, Mercury, Mars, and a mass of images or idols. Among the principal deities of Ireland, we find the name of Bel, Mann, and other names relative to the sun. That Bel was the sun, is universally admitted; and it is well known to those skilled in the topography of the country, that many places by their names designate the localities where the worship of the sun was observed. As to the practical part of religion, the use of