

Alexandria, had the same authority in some of the eastern provinces. There was no Bishop, whether at Rome or elsewhere, who, at this period, pretended to any authority beyond his own diocese or province.

The evidences of the Church's existence in Britain crowd upon us as we advance down the stream of history. The Picts and Scots had, however, made frequent incursions into the country, and had made sad havoc of the Church, though they had by no means been able to destroy it. The Saxons, who were heathens, had been invited by the Britons to assist them against these dreaded enemies; but had, in their turn, conquered some parts of the country.* At length, in 596, - centuries after the first establishment of the Church in Britain, - Gregory, surnamed the Great, Bishop of Rome, sent the celebrated Augustine to preach the Gospel to the Anglo-Saxons. Augustine found Bertha, Queen of Ethelbert, King of Kent, a Christian; and by her his mission was favored. Ethelbert himself was converted, and many of his subjects were baptized by Augustine and his followers. Some years after his arrival in England, Augustine took a journey towards the western counties, whither the British Church had been driven; and having asked for a conference with it, was met on the banks of the River Severn by seven Bishops, their most learned men from Bangor, Isceod, the chief nursery of the Church, and Dinoth, their Abbot. He made proposals to them to unite with him and his followers in the work in which they were engaged. But the terms of his proposal were such as they could not accede to. He proposed to them to give up many of their established customs, and to put themselves in subjection to the Bishop of Rome. To this Dinoth answered in these words: "Be it known without doubt unto you, that we all are, and every one of us, obedient and subjects to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every one in his degree, in perfect charity, and to helpe every one of them, by worde and deed to be the children of God: and other obedience than this I do not know due to him whom you name to be Pope; nor to be Father of Fathers; to be claimed and to be demanded; and this obedience we are ready to give and to pay to him and to every Christian continually. Besides, we are under the government of the Bishop of Kaerleon-upon-bake, who is to oversee under God over us, and to cause us to keep the way spiritual."† This surely is the language of one belonging to an independent branch of the Church, owning no subjection whatever to Rome. Bede also informs us that "they (the British Bishops) would not own Augustine as Archbishop over them."‡ Augustine is said to have shewn much disappointment at this unfavorable close of a scheme of union, for which he had taken so much pains.

* Gillias, § 19.

† Spelman, Concilia, vol 1, p. 3.

‡ Bede, Lib. ii. cap. 2.