

extend the limits of their countries. And what shall we say of the Romans themselves who secure their empire only by the power of their armies? Neither are they able, with all their force, to extend their empire beyond these nations; whereas the kingdom of Christ and his name reach much farther: he is every where believed in and worshipped by all the nations above mentioned.*

Origen, another Father, who flourished early in the third century, thus writes: "When did Britain, before the coming of Christ, consent to the worship of one God?"† This certainly implies, that, in his time, the Britons were known to be Christians, and had, through the profession of Christianity, been brought off from their former idolatry. In the fourth century, the eloquent Chrysostom thus testifies to the same truth: "The British isles, situated beyond the sea, and lying in the very ocean, have felt the power of the word, for even there Churches are built and altars erected."‡ And again, "Into whatsoever Church thou shalt enter, whether amongst the Moors, or the Persians, or the inhabitants of the islands of Britain, thou hearest John declaring, 'It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.'"§

That this was acknowledged by the other branches of the Christian Church as a true and independent branch, cannot be denied; for we find it represented in the Council of Arles, in France; by Restitutus, Bishop of London; Eborius, Bishop of York; and Adelfius, Bishop of Lincoln. This Council was held as early as the year of our Lord 314.|| Again, we find the British Bishops summoned, along with the Bishops of Gaul, to the Council of Sardica, in 347, by Constantine and Constantius.¶ They were likewise present at the Council of Ariminum.*

Now, from these indisputable facts, it must be evident to all, that, at this very early period, an independent branch of the Church existed in Britain, just as in St. Paul's time there were branches of the Church at Rome, at Corinth, &c. The Church of Britain was then governed, as it is now, by its Bishops, who were in subjection to their Archbishops, as at present: of whom there were the three, of London, York, and Caerleon, or Usk. There was no Church in Christendom founded by the Apostles which had not from them a succession of Bishops; and these were in all provinces subject to a Primate of their own number. Thus the Bishop of Rome was at this period Primate of the middle and southern parts of Italy; the Bishop of Milan, of the northern part; †† and the Bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch and

* Tertullian adv. Judæos, ch. viii.

† Origen in Ezek. Tom. iv.

‡ Chrys. Tom. vii. p. 635.

§ Chrys. Tom. iii. p. 696.

|| Simond. Concil. Gallie, Tom. i. p. 9.

¶ Athanas. Apol. ii. p. 720.

** Usher Brit. Ant. Eccl. 104 and 105.

†† Ruffin. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 1. Ch. 6. Fleury Hist. Eccl. Lib. viii. § 41.

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