

restrict the numbers of the Episcopate, according to the measure of man's liberality or the adventitious circumstances of man's favour. Turning, then, from these Apostolic examples, we may find the fullest corroboration in the accounts of the further establishment of the Church by the primitive Christians.

Africa, perhaps, furnishes the best authenticated and most noted example of what, no doubt, was then the universal practice. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 250, bears witness, incidentally, to the existence of thirty-one dioceses, and these during the fires of persecution instituted by Decius, Gallus, and Valerius, and shortly after, as called by him, we find two successive Synods, composed respectively of seventy-two and eighty-five Bishops. It has been computed that the average extent of these dioceses was about twenty-two miles in length and breadth. A further step brings us to the time of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, about the year 400, when, in the Northern or Christian portion of the continent of Africa, extending from Libya to the Straits of Gibraltar, there were not less than 466 Dioceses, more than *three* times as many as those of the whole Anglican communion now scattered *throughout the various portions of the globe*. This, we might say, is the history of other parts of the primitive Church. Constantinople had about 600 dioceses of different extent. It has been shown also that throughout the various Syrian Provinces, the average dimensions of a diocese were from 20 to 35 miles square. We may take two more examples furnished us by the earliest practices of our own double source. In England, three Archbishops or Metropolitans were in existence, probably as early as 179, viz.: York, London, and Caerleon, the bishops of which Sees were present at the Council of Arles, A. D. 314, and though definite information cannot be had respecting the whole Island, we have seven Bishops present at the conference with Augustine, five of whom belonged to Wales, and there is reason for believing that there were three more, eight in all, leaving an average diocese to each, at the lower estimate, of about 35 miles square. There is every presumption to conclude that a similar practice held throughout the entire British Church. "Indeed," says Bingham in his *Antiquities*, "it would appear that there were *more* bishops in England and Wales at the time of the Saxon Invasion," (A. D. 450) "*than there are at the present day.*" Passing over to Ireland, we find the record that the number of Bishops in that Island amounted sometimes to 300. We learn,