

of Man, which was annexed to the province of York by king Henry VIII. Every diocese is divided into archdeaconries, whereof there are sixty in all; each archdeaconry into rural deanries, which are the circuit of the archdeacon's and rural dean's jurisdiction, of whom hereafter; and every deanry is divided into parishes<sup>r</sup>.

A PARISH is that circuit of ground in which the souls under the care of one parson or vicar do inhabit. These are computed to be near ten thousand in number<sup>s</sup>. How antient the division of parishes is, may at present be difficult to ascertain; for it seems to be agreed on all hands, that in the early ages of christianity in this island, parishes were unknown, or at least signified the same that a diocese does now. There was then no appropriation of ecclesiastical dues to any particular church; but every man was at liberty to contribute his tithes to whatever priest or church he pleased, provided only that he did it to some: or, if he made no special appointment or appropriation thereof, they were paid into the hands of the bishop, whose duty it was to distribute them among the clergy and for other pious purposes according to his own discretion<sup>t</sup>.

MR Camden<sup>u</sup> says England was divided into parishes by archbishop Honorius about the year 630. Sir Henry Hobart<sup>w</sup> lays it down that parishes were first erected by the council of Lateran, which was held *A.D.* 1179. Each widely differing from the other, and both of them perhaps from the truth; which will probably be found in the medium between the two extremes. For Mr Selden has clearly shewn<sup>x</sup>, that the clergy lived in common without any division of parishes, long after the time mentioned by Camden. And it appears from the Saxon laws, that parishes were in being long before the date of that council of Lateran, to which they are ascribed by Hobart.

<sup>r</sup> Co. Litt. 94.

<sup>s</sup> Gibson's *Britan.*

<sup>t</sup> Seld. of tith. 9. 4. 2 Inst. 646. Hob. 296.

<sup>u</sup> in his *Britannia.*

<sup>w</sup> Hob. 296.

<sup>x</sup> of tithes. c. 9.