

Poetry.

ENDURANCE.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small." Prov. xxiv. 10.

Faint not beneath thy burden, tho' it seem Too heavy for thee, and thy strength is small; Tho' the fierce raging of the noonday beam On thy defenceless head untemper'd fall.

Tho' sad and heart-sick with the weight of woe, That to the earth would crush thee—journey on; What tho' it be with faltering steps and slow, Thou wilt forget the toil when rest is won.

Nay! murmur not, because no kindred heart May share thy burthen with thee—but alone Still struggle bravely on tho' all depart; Is it not said that "each must bear his own?"

All have not equally the power to bless; And of the many, few could cheer our lot; For "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, And with its joy, a stranger meddeth not."

Then be not faithless, tho' thy soul be dark; Is not thy Master's seal upon thy brow? Oft hath his presence saved thy sinking bark, And thinkest thou He will forsake thee now?

Hath he not bid thee cast on him thy care, Saying he careth for thee? Then arise! And on thy path, if trod in faith and prayer, The thorns shall turn to flowers of Paradise.

ORIGIN AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER VI. THE REFORMATION.

The author trusts that sufficient has now been said to prove both the antiquity and independence of the Church of England. For we have seen that it was founded, if not by the apostle St. Paul himself at least shortly after the apostolic times; that it was flourishing in the second, third, and fourth centuries; and, in the latter, was represented by British prelates at different Councils. That in those days there was no attempt on the part of the bishops of Rome to arrogate to themselves the right of universal supremacy, but that all the apostolical Churches of that period were independent of each other, and of equal rank and authority. The unanimous tradition of the early Church points out the Apostle St. Paul, as the one by whom the doctrines of the Cross were preached in Britain. This fact is fully proved by the testimony of ancient writers. Gildas, a native of Britain and abbot of Bangor, speaking of the birth of our Lord in the days of Tiberius, and the fatal victory of the Romans over Boadicea, which took place about the middle of the reign of Nero, says, "in the mean time—that is the interval between these two events—"Christ, the true sun afforded his rays to this island shivering with icy cold." Eusebius when showing that the apostles preached their doctrine in the remotest cities and countries, adds particularly "that some passed over the ocean *επι τας καλομενας βρεττανικας νησους*, to those which are called the British Islands." Tertullian A. D. 190, says,—"There are places in Britain inaccessible to Roman arms which were subdued to Christ." Origen A. D. 230, asks,— "When did Britain before the coming of Christ unite in the worship of one God?" and again says, "the power of God our Saviour is ever with them in Britain who are divided from our world," and St. Chrysostom says,— "The British Islands situated beyond our sea, and lying in the very ocean, have felt the power of the word, for even there Churches are built and altars erected." The Roman Catholic Church has made a blunder from which she cannot recover herself, at a time when she had not so fully developed her anti-Christian form when she did present some comeliness, her custom was to appeal to antiquity for the validity of all her acts, other branches of Christ's Church have taken her at her word, and proving her to be a dispenser of lying wonders and cunningly devised fables, have so hunted her from her old battle ground of antiquity that she is now obliged to cheat her followers into a belief that she now possesses full and absolute power to change times and customs and add to the Word of God such new doctrines as best tend to support the Supremacy of her Pope. Yes, the Roman Catholic Church which claims to be mistress of all Churches, now declares that our Lord and his Apostles left only the seeds of religion which Rome through her Popes was to develop into full bloom, notwithstanding the declaration of an apostle, that we are not to credit any other doctrine than that which he preached, though preached by an angel. We have also proved that the British Church had existed as a distinct and independent Church for some centuries previous to the arrival of the Romish missionaries; and that however much this nation may be indebted to the latter for their zealous efforts in behalf of the pagan Saxons, by which means many embraced Christianity; yet that by far the greater proportion of the Saxons were converted by prelates of British origin. That the latter prelates refused to yield their independence, by submitting to the authority of the Church of

Rome, their obedience to that See having never been demanded till the close of the sixth century; but that after a long resistance, the British, as well as the Saxons, conformed to her discipline, and received her corruptions as they were successively introduced into the Church. That it was not till about the middle of the eleventh century that the pope acquired much spiritual power, or claimed any civil authority in these kingdoms; that one sovereign after another resisted and protested against the encroachments of the Romish see; but that at length, through the pusillanimous conduct of King John, the Church of England lost her independence in the thirteenth century, and with her independence much of her remaining purity of doctrine. That even after this period, when the power of the Roman pontiff had reached its utmost extent in this country, the resistance manifested against papal encroachments by different monarchs who afterwards succeeded to the throne, plainly shows, that the English, however oppressed, never wholly lost sight of their independence either in Church or in State. That in the fourteenth century Wickliffe appeared; and that after his translation of the Bible, many humble and pious individuals, in England as well as in other countries, lifted up their voice, though at the peril of their lives, against the corruptions and abuses of the papal system, which at length increased to such an extent, that in the sixteenth century they finally issued in the Reformation of the Church of England by which it is to be understood, not the separating from any other Church, or the introduction of any new religion, but the casting off the corruption of the old, and its restoration (as nearly as could be approached) to that pure and Scriptural model of primitive antiquity, viz. "the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

"Nor can we," to use the words of an eloquent divine, "sufficiently admire the loving kindness of Almighty God, who allowed the seeds indeed of Reformation to be sown among us by Wickliffe, yet then, notwithstanding the powerful human aid which he had, and his great popularity, caused them to lie, as it were, in the earth, until those which were less sound should by length of time decay, and again, that he placed so many impediments in the way of our final Reformation (for what man does rapidly, he does rashly,) and held back our steps by the arbitrariness of Henry; and when we were again going down the stream of the times too readily, checked us at once by the unexpected death of Edward, and proved us by the fire of the Marian persecution, and took away by a martyr's death, those in whom we most trusted, and then finally employed a number of labourers in the restoration of His temple,—of whom none should yet be so conspicuous that the edifice should seem to be his design, or that he should be tempted to restore the decayed part according to any theory of his own, but rather that all things should be made according to the pattern which He had shown us in the Church primitive. Had our reform taken place at first, we had been Wickliffites; under Edward, we had been a branch of the Zuinglian, or Calvinist Church; now we bear no human name—we look to no human founder; we are neither of Paul nor of Apollon, but have been led back at once to the distant fountains, where the waters of life fresh from their source, flowed most purely."

And therefore, since truth, which is of divine origin, must necessarily be older than error, which is of human invention; so, the doctrines of the Church of England, being derived from the word of truth, must necessarily possess a greater antiquity than those peculiar to the Church of Rome; which, indeed, have been rejected by the former only on account of their comparative novelty, and contrariety to the primitive Church, and to the word of God. Had the Church of Rome adhered to the latter, had she only continued to walk in those "good old paths," Protestants would never have been heard of, much discord and bloodshed would have been saved, and the Reformation would never have been required.

IRISH CHURCH.

[Extracted from "The Irish Church, or the History and Polity of Popery in Ireland."—By Edward Taylor Dartnell, Esq. London: Published for the Protestant Association by Hatchards, Rivingtons, Seeleys, Shaw, Dalton and Jackson, 1850.]

Considerable doubt exists as to when and by whom Christianity was first introduced, popular error having assigned it to St. Patrick, but long before his time Ireland had obtained considerable notoriety for her progress in Christianity. Tertullian,* the most ancient of the Latin Fathers, who wrote about the year 201, states, that in his time Christianity had reached it. There is an ancient poem extant by Oliol Ollum, king of Munster, who reigned about the year 220, which shows that, if not himself a Christian, he was acquainted with the Christian doctrine. Among the early Milesian princes, Cormac Ulfadha stands pre-eminently forward as a warrior, a scholar, and a legislator, and it is alleged that he was converted to Christianity some years before his death, which took place A. D. 273. St. Chrysostom, writing in the

year 388, states,* that "the British Isles had then felt the worth of the Word, for there, also, were churches established and altars erected," and there we should hear "all men everywhere discoursing matters out of the Scriptures." Gennadius,† who must have written about the year 493, also records their connexion with Christianity in the year 336.

Even at this early age Ireland gave birth to at least one distinguished divine,—Celestius,‡ the great supporter of Pelagius and his doctrines, took root in Ireland, and were not extinct so late as the year 640. Pelagius is, by some writers, also said to have been an Irishman.§ From Ireland those doctrines extended to England, and there gained so much ground that Germanus and Lupus were sent thither from Rome, A. D. 429, for the purpose of counteracting them. They were accompanied on this occasion by St. Patrick; and, in consequence of their reports to the then Bishop of Rome—Celestine, Palladius || was ordained first Bishop, and sent by him "to the Irish believing in Christ." He arrived in Ireland A. D. 431, but could not obtain even a hearing for his doctrine, and was forced to fly the country. The mission of St. Patrick shortly followed. He was selected to succeed Palladius, landed in Dublin, 432, and preached the following Easter at the Royal Palace of Tara, before the king, Leogaire. His labours were eminently successful; and, having established churches in every part of the island, he founded the see of Armagh, and died on the 17th of March, 465.

Having thus traced the early history of Christianity in Ireland, and arrived at the period when it was universally received there, we must make a brief allusion to an offset of the Irish Church to which we shall hereafter have occasion to refer.—In the year 258, Carbery Riada, the son of Conary II., established an Irish settlement in Argyleshire, which was recruited in the year 503 by his descendants, in conjunction with Hy Nial, a powerful Irish chief. Having extended their power to the Western Isles, they became in time independent of Ireland and sole masters of the country. The celebrated Irishman St. Colum, or Columkill, was descended from the Hy Nial family. He entered the Priesthood, and founded the monastery of Doire Calgah, near Lough Foyle, and of Dairmagh, in Meath. The royal saint next turned his attention to the instruction of his fellow-countrymen in North Britain, and having obtained from his relative, Conal, their king, a grant of the small island of Hy, or Iona, he sailed for the spot with twelve of his disciples in the year 563, and having erected a monastery and church there, at once proceeded to diffuse that knowledge of Christianity which they had acquired in infancy. He died at Iona, in the year 597.

This branch of the Irish Church was subsequently extended to England. During the reign of Edwin, king of Northumberland, his nephew Oswald was educated in Ireland and there embraced the Christian faith. On his accession to the throne he applied to his early instructors for missionaries, and an Irish monk of Iona, Aidan, was sent, on whom the king bestowed the small island of Lindisfarne as the seat of his see.—Thenceforth numbers of Irish flocked to Britain, preaching Christianity in the provinces over which Oswald reigned; churches were built, and monasteries and schools endowed by Royal bounty, and the English received their religious tenets at the hands of their Irish instructors.¶

But these were not the only men whom Ireland sent forth to diffuse the blessings of Christianity, civilization, and literature in those early ages, and to improve their own knowledge by intercourse with the sages of other lands. There are traces of a very early intercourse between Ireland and the Eastern Churches; they were long identical in doctrine, and in succeeding ages, even when literature was undergoing a gradual decline in other lands, the character of the Irish colleges was extended far and wide. The famous school of Lismore, among other eminent men, produced the well-known Catuldu. Numbers of foreign scholars came from every part of Europe for education there,** and in the great plague which devastated the country, A. D. 664, many natives of England, both of noble and lower rank, who had repaired to Ireland "to pursue a course of sacred studies and lead a stricter life," were amongst its victims†† Irish scholars were invited to Britain for the purposes of education. Three Irish Bishops filled the see of Lindisfarne in succession. The prevailing

acquaintance with Grecian literature was such that the Greek character was adopted in many cases, and will be found in some of the earliest of our Irish manuscripts. The celebrated Virgilius, who left Ireland about the year 745, won the regard of Pepin the father of Charlemagne. He was accompanied on his route by a Greek Bishop, named Dubda, and even at a later period a Greek Church existed in the county of Meath.* St. Chrysostom † tells us, that the intercourse of the Irish Church was kept up with the East, even in the ninth century, when her clergy "repaired to Constantinople to inquire of certain ecclesiastical traditions and the perfect computation of Easter." And a French writer, Erin of Auxerre, ‡ in the same century, observes, "What shall I say of Ireland, who despising the dangers of the deep is migrating with almost her whole train of philosophers to our shores?" Columbanus founded the monastery of Luxeuil, in France, which was chiefly inhabited by Irish monks, but they were driven from thence with their bold denunciations of Royal profligacy, passed into Italy, and founded there the monastery of Bobbio. The poet Sedulius, another eminent Irish Divine, flourished in the fifth century, and his namesake, the author of "Commentaries on St. Paul," at a later date.—Saints Donatus, Cummianus, Aidan, Gall, Fiacre, Fursa, Levin, Fridolin were all honours to their country, and so were S. S. Ultan and Foillan, who founded a monastery in France. Saint Killian became Bishop and Patron Saint of Salzburg, and the celebrated Johaunes Scotus Erigena needs only to be named. Saint Eungal's knowledge of astronomy has excited the surprise of more enlightened ages. He was highly esteemed by both Charlemagne and his successor, Lothaire, who appointed him master of the public school of Pavia. To these names we must add Clement, whom Charlemagne placed at the head of a seminary in France, and Albinus, whom he appointed to preside over a similar establishment in Pavia. Many other names might be added to the list, did our limits permit it.

Having thus shown the high state of literature in those early times, and that Ireland shone a brilliant light amidst the universal darkness of Europe we shall now inquire into the nature of her religious faith, and the extent of her spiritual subjection to the see of Rome. We are told that St. Patrick § exercised himself much in reading the Scriptures¶ from the very earliest age of puberty, and "found the sacred treasure in the holy volume."|| He was "a true and eminent cultivator of the evangelical field, whose seed appears to have been the Gospel of Christ," which he taught everywhere, impressing upon his hearers that these were not his words, but those of God and the apostles, and the prophets that had never lied. He who believeth shall be saved, but he who believeth not shall be damned.¶¶ Thus did he make the Scriptures his rule of faith, and so did the Irish Church, for ages subsequent. In the religious institutions of Lindisfarne, of which Aidan was the first bishop, "all such as went with him, whether clergy or laity, were obliged to exercise themselves either in reading the Scriptures or in the learning of the Psalms," and the people flocked anxiously on the Lord's-day to the churches and monasteries, not for the feeding of their bodies, but for the hearing of the Word of God.*** Of Saint Columbanus it is stated, that, "so within his breast were laid up the treasures of the Holy Scriptures, that within the compass of his youth-years he composed an elegant exposition of the whole book of Psalms.†† Whilst such was the practice of the Irish clergy, of the people at large it is recorded, that "although without the laws of other nations, yet so flourishing in the vigour of Christian doctrines that it exceeds the faith of all the neighbouring nations," and "so great was the character of Ireland as a place where the Scriptures were especially cultivated, that Agilbert, a learned Frenchman, "went and remained there sometime for that sole purpose," for there "they observed only those works of piety and chastity which they could learn in the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings.†††

The sacrifice of the mass, the real presence, and the withholding of the cup from the laity, are peculiar characteristics of the Church of Rome. On all these points the Irish Church held differently. The Synod of St. Patrick declares, "that he who deserveth not to receive the sacrament in his lifetime, how can it help him after his death?" St.

* Liber adv. Judaeos, cap. 7. Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo verò subdita. (Quoted by O'Halloran and Moore, in their respective Histories of Ireland.)

† The learned Dr. O'Connor, the reverend Librarian of Stowe, cited by Moore in his "History of Ireland," vol. i. p. 132.

* Chrysostom Opera, Tract, "Quod Christus sit Deus," Editio Saville. T. vi. p. 635, t. viii. p. 111. * Britannice Insulae, virtutem verbi senserunt; sunt enim etiam illic fundatae ecclesiae, et erecta altaria." And again, in his Twenty-eighth Sermon on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, xii. (iii. 696). — "In quacunq; ecclesiam ingressus fueris, sive apud Mauros, sive apud ipsas Britannicas Insulas, &c.

† O'Connor's "Prolegomena," i. p. 78.

‡ Gennadius' "Catalogue of Illustrious Men."

§ Garnier's "Dissertation upon Pelagianism," cited by Moore in his "History of Ireland," vol. i. p. 207; also Vossius' "History of Pelagianism," lib. i. cap. 3.

|| Chronicles of Prosper. "Ad Scotos in Christum credentes, ordinatus a Papa Celestino, Palladius primus Episcopus mittitur." Cited by Moore, vol. i. p. 207.

¶ Bede, lib. iii. cap. 5.

** Bonaventura Monus.

†† Bede, cited by Moore, vol. i. p. 251.

* Usher, Epist. Hib. Sylloge. Note 16.

† Chrysostom Opera, Saville edition. Tom. viii. p. 324.

‡ Erin of Auxerre ad Carol. Calo. Cited by Moore, vol. i. p. 299. "Quid Hiberniam memorem, contempto pelagi discrimine, pene tota cum grege philosophorum ad littora nostra migrantem."

§ Jocelin's Life of Saint Patrick, c. xii. — "Ab ipso primario pubertatis."

¶ Secundinus, the nephew of Saint Patrick, who wrote a Latin poem in honour of the Saint, in which he says of him, — "Sacrum invenit thesaurum sacra in volumine," and describes him as, — "Verus cultor et insignis agri Evangelici Cujus semina videntur Christi Evangelia."

¶¶ St. Patrick's Opuscula, p. 30.

*** Bede's Ecclesiastical History. Liber III. chapters 5. and 26.

†† Jonas's Life of Columbanus, Cap. i.

††† Bede, lib. i. cap. 1. — "Tunc legendarum gratia Scripturarum in Hibernia non parvo tempore demoratus." And lib. iii. iv.