

Original Poetry.

THE MARTYRDOM OF IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, A. D., 107.

(Concluded from our last.)

XLI.

The disciple in his master's ways
Has sworn with zeal to tread,—
O'er ways in which perfected souls
Have evermore been led!
"Clean be your hearts and bright your faith"
The holy martyr cries;
Beware of those blasphemers (1.)
Who go about with lies;

XLII.

Who the saving cross and passion
Of our Blessed Lord defame;
Who deny the awful mystery,
That for us in flesh He came.
Herbs (2) of the Devil are they—
Heresies; pastures strange:
These are the streams of poison;
There Christ's flock may not range.

XLIII.

Be one and undivided;
If to Christ you would be found
Faithful and true disciples,
Your Bishops rally round.
Put far the vain delusion
That the schism-maker's pure;
If he turn not to the fold again,
His damnation is secure. (3.)

XLIV.

Then with one heart together
To the one (4) altar go:
The flesh and blood of Christ above,
Partake ye here below.
Eucharist holy—medicine
Of immortality;
Food of the soul, its life, its light—
Help to eternity!

XLV.

But see that with your Bishop
The holy rite be done; (5.)
Flee far from all divisions—
They are the plague begun.
Where Bishops, priests and Deacons are
There let the people be;
For there (6) is Christ and there His Church,
To which let all agree.

XLVI.

And friendly, remember
It is more than to believe,
To be a true disciple—
It is, sublime to live;
To soar o'er all terrestrial things
To worlds unseen on love's strong wings.

XLVII.

Thus in the words of faith
Exhorting all around,
He passed through many cities,
In chains his body bound:
For vain the pagans hoped, (7)
By the tedium of the way,
His holy purpose for to bend,
His resolution away.

XLVIII.

Not knowing Christian firmness,
The hoped strike with dread
The scattered flocks of Syria (8)
Thus pictured in their head.

(1.) He refers to the destructive heresy of those who denied the reality of our Lord's incarnation, and, consequently, the reality of His sufferings and atonement for us. They were named Docete. See I John iv. 3, and all his Epistles *passim*.

(2.) Herbs &c. A favourite metaphor with Ignatius, to signify false doctrine; *ἡνα μὴ τοῦ διαβόλου βοτάνης τις ἐρεθῇ ἐν ὑμῖν*, Eph. 10. That no herb of the devil may be found in you. *ἀλλοτριὰς δὲ βοτάνης ἀπέχεσθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν αἵρεσις*, Trall. 6. To abstain from strange pasture, which is heresy. *ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν κακῶν βοτάνων*, Philad. 3. Abstain from those evil herbs (which Jesus Christ cultivates not, since they are not planted by the Father).

(3.) If this sentiment seems to any "a hard saying," I am not to blame for it; since even in my poor rhyme, I have no patent for misrepresentation. After all, it is an atom more "bigotted and uncharitable than the saying of St. Paul, that *δύσχεσται αὐτοὶ αἰρέσεις* are 'works of the flesh' and that those who do them shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Gal. v. 20, 21. Has not the frightful extent of this sin softened the vices of its guilt? Hear Ignatius himself: "Be not deceived, my brethren: if any one follows him that makes a schism, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Ep. ad Philad. 3. *Ὁδὲ μαρτυροῦν αἶνα ταύτην δύνασθαι ἐξαλείφειν τὴν ἀναδίαν*, Jacobson, Patres Apostol. vol. 2, p. 49. Not even by the blood of martyrdom can this sin be wiped away. On the same page are quoted the words of *Cyprian*, another Bishop and Martyr, on this subject: "Quali delictum est, quod nec baptismo sanguinis potest ablati; quali crimen est, quod martyrio non potest expiari!" How grievous a sin which cannot be cleansed by the baptism of blood! how enormous a crime which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

(4.) "Wherefore come ye all together as unto one altar."—*Magnes*. 7. "Give diligence, therefore, to partake all of the same Eucharist. For there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of His blood; one altar, as there is also one Bishop, &c." Philad. 4. Bingham, Antiq. l. 8, c. 6, s. 17., notes the opinion of some learned men, that, at first, when the number Christians was small there was in each diocese but one altar, in the Cathedral Church; and that though there might have been communion tables in the lesser churches, yet the holy elements were consecrated by the Bishop, and sent round to the various inferior Churches. This would indeed have been a most powerful testimony for unity. At any rate, Ignatius's words have become a proverb, "one church, one altar, one Bishop."

(5.) "Except a man be within the altar he is deprived of the bread of God." Eph. 5. "Do nothing without the Bishop, &c." *Magnes*. 7. "He that doeth anything without the Bishop, &c. is not pure in his conscience." Trall. 7. "He that doeth anything without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil."—*Smyrn*. 9.

(6.) "Without these (Bishop's) Priests, and Deacons there is no Church." Trall. 3. Whosoever shall appear, there let the people also be."—*Smyrn*. 8.

(7.) This is Dr. Cave's conjecture as to the reason of the circuitous route by which Ignatius was taken to Rome. (Vid. Cave in *vita* Ig.)

(8.) As Bishop of Antioch, the chief city of Syria, he calls himself "Bishop of Syria." Rom. ii. 9.

Through Troas and Philippi,
On foot through Macedon,
To Epidamnus' famous port
He wearily passed on.

XLIX.

But his spirit was not broken:
Long before the mighty Paul (1)
Had through those places travelled—
Still his steps were seen in all;
And the martyr followed in them;
The high apostle's lot
He coveted, and braver grew
At each remembered spot.

L.

And warmer zeal inspired his words
Of exhortation meet;
While thus the pagans' wily scheme
Turned to their own defeat.

LI.

At length they pass the Acria
They're in the Tyrrhene sea;
Puteoli is now in sight
Where Ignatius wished to be:
For, oh, he longed intensely
In every step to tread
Of holy Paul, who once to Rome
In bonds was this way led. (2)

LII.

But a fierce storm hindered;
And in a day and night,
By faving winds being hurried,
The martyr's goal's in sight.
Add holy gladness brings it
To his sublimed breast
Who longs to leave the world,
And with his Saviour rest.

LIII.

Answer it is to many prayers
Offered full earnestly;
That, for the sake of perfect love,
Partaker he might be
Of Jesus' Baptism—for the cross
Prepared to count the world but loss.

LIV.

Rudely the Leopards hurried him;
(So were his fierce guards named;)
For now the feast was nearly o'er
Of the Saturnalia famed;
Gladly the Bishop hasted
When, lo, the Saints come now, (3)
Who thank the Lord for sight of him,
But grieve, he's come to die.

LV.

Much they desire, and much they hope
To calm the furious rout;
To allay the wanton rage of those
Who for his life—blood shout.
But Ignatius by the Spirit knew
The thoughts that were within;
And prayed they would not stay his soul
To Christ now entering in.

LVI.

And then they kneel together,
O last, O solemn prayer!
Burning the hearts, and awed the thoughts
Of the group kneeling there.
He prayed to the Son of God
To send the brethren peace,
To cast around all Christian hearts
"The bonds of perfectness."

LVII.

The last Amen is uttered
The last deep sigh is given,
And violence drags him to the scene
From which he mounts to heaven.
He falls among the lions
Rises the deafening roar
Of men more savage than the beasts,
Now smeared with sacred gore.

LVIII.

A momentary struggle
A momentary pain,
And Ignatius rises to his Lord
To join the martyr's strain.

(9.) Acts of the Apostles, *passim*.

(10.) Acts xxviii. 13.

(11) *Frater pro dilectione sua cupidi sunt ad conveniendum et visitandum confessoribus bonos, quos illustravit jam gloriosis initis Divina dignatis.* (Cyprian. Ep. 5., quoted in Jacobson, vol. 2, s. 71.) "The brethren out of their love, are eager to come and see good confessors, whom the Divine Mercy has vouchsafed to honour with a glorious beginning."—"Confession" of Christ's name was the beginning, it led to Martyrdom. Those accused but not condemned to death, were called *Confessors*.

ORIGIN AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

(Continued from our last.)

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE SUBMISSION OF KING JOHN TO THE PAPAL SEE TO THE DEATH OF WICKLIFFE IN 1384.

At this period the Roman Pontiffs while they styled themselves with feigned humility, the servant of the servants of the Lord, nevertheless pretended to be universal monarchs of Christendom, both in temporals and spirituals, and treated not only the kings of England, but all the other sovereigns of Europe, as their vassals and subjects. The papal power had indeed now reached its utmost extent in this country; but the yoke was still felt too galling to be submissively endured, as will presently appear by the conduct of John's immediate successors. During the reign of Henry III., the demands for money by the court of Rome were so exorbitant, that the patience of England became at last exhausted, and the barons, in order to save the nation from farther plunder, issued an order to seize all persons bringing any bulls or mandates from Rome. They also sent ambassadors with a letter, to lay the grievances of the Church of England before the Council of Lyons, which concluded with the following bold and resolute expressions: "We can no longer with any patience,

bear the aforesaid oppressions; which, as they are detestable to God and man, are intolerable to us, neither will we any longer endure them."* Edward I. also resisted the authority of the Romish see; for having levied a tax on the clergy in order to carry on the wars in which he was engaged, Boniface VIII. directly issued a bull forbidding all Princes to levy any tax on that body, and the clergy to pay any such tax without permission from the holy see; but Edward being determined not to yield, took such measures that, notwithstanding the threat of excommunication, he succeeded in carrying his point.

Edward II. likewise, in the year 1341, went to the pope, remonstrating against the encroachments of that court upon the rights of the crown; and Edward III., when summoned by Urban V. to do him homage for the kingdom of England, supported by his parliament, positively refused to comply with the demand. An act of parliament passed in this reign, also declared that no one should be admitted to a benefice by a bull from the pope. These several facts plainly show, that the authority of the Romish see, whether in temporal or spiritual matters, was always considered in the light of usurpation in this country, and that notwithstanding all her encroachments, Englishmen never wholly lost sight of their independence, either in Church or in state.

The cause of Edward III. against the pope at this time met with an able and zealous defender in the person of Wickliffe, one of the best and most learned men of the age in which he flourished.

This celebrated individual, who has been called "the Morning Star of the Reformation," came into general notice about the year 1370. Until he appeared, the people generally seem to have made little difficulty in receiving every principle and usage which came recommended to them from Rome: but Wickliffe showed them that they had thus unwillingly admitted into their religion many things at variance with the holy Scriptures.† In order to prove this, and to dispel the spiritual darkness which brooded over the land, he translated the Bible from the Vulgate into the national tongue—for the word of God was then literally a sealed book. It was indeed to be found in Latin in large libraries; but very few even professed scholars even thought of reading this sacred volume;‡ which sufficiently accounts for the easy introduction of those errors which had gradually found their way into the Church. Wickliffe, however, having completed "his great and good work," the pleasure of the Most High prospered in his hand. An eager appetite for scriptural knowledge was excited among the people, which they would make any sacrifice, and risk any danger, to gratify.

"Entire copies of the Bible, when they could only be multiplied by means of amanuenses, were too costly to be within reach of very many readers; but those who could not procure the volume of the book, would give a load of hay for a few favorite chapters, and many such scraps were consumed upon the persons of the martyrs at the stake. They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floor of their houses, and put their lives in peril, rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up all night, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading, or hearing others read, the word of God: the would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy. Thus was the angel come down to trouble the water, and they only wanted some providential crisis to put the nation into it, that he might be made whole."*

The time in which Wickliffe lived proved also most favourable for the propagation of his opinions. The great schism of the West, which took place in 1378, and continued for fifty years, had then just commenced; and the extraordinary spectacle exhibited by the papal see,—of two infallible heads of the Church anathematizing one another,—could not fail to open the eyes of Christendom to the unwarranted pretensions of both.† Wickliffe protested strongly against the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the other errors of the Church of Rome, and men of all ranks embraced his opinions; even the king's son, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, became his disciple and protector; and thus powerfully defended, he was allowed to die in peace, at his rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, in 1384. His voice, however, long continued to sound in England, from his numerous writings, especially from his translation of the Bible, by which means, as Dr. Lingard (the Romish historian) confesses, "a spirit of inquiry was granted, and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution, which, in a little more than a century, astonished and convulsed all the nations of Europe."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE DEATH OF WICKLIFFE TO THE REFORMATION.

After the death of Wickliffe, his doctrines were propagated with much zeal by his followers, who obtained the name of Lollards. This appellation was one which had originally been given in the Low Countries to the persecuted Franciscans, and other enthusiasts, from their practice of singing

hymns,—*lollen*, or *lullen*, in one of the old German dialects, signifying to sing, as a mother when she lulls her babe.* The writings of Wickliffe were also carried into Bohemia by one of the natives of that country, whom the marriage of their princess with Richard II. brought into England; and it was from their perusal that John Huss imbibed those opinions concerning the papal Church for which he afterwards suffered heroically at the stake; and he again prepared the way for Luther.

In the reign of Richard II. an act was passed by parliament called the *statute of premunire*, providing against the encroachments of the papal see, or the prerogatives of the Crown with respect to the presentation of benefices; "which presentment," it was declared, "belonged only to the king's court, of the old right of his crown, used and approved in the time of all his progenitors, kings of England;" and farther, threatening with severe penalties all those who either "purchased, or caused to be purchased or pursued in the court of Rome, or elsewhere, any such translations, processes, sentences of excommunication, bulls, instruments, or any other things whatsoever which touched the king, against him, his crown, and his regality, or his realm."

This statute, which was passed in the year 1393, gave such a blow to the Church of Rome, that it never recovered itself in this land, but daily decayed, till its final destruction.† The Lollards at this time still continued a numerous body, but were prevented from forming themselves into a regular society by the persecuting laws with which Henry IV. consented to arm the clergy, in return for the assistance he had received from them in his usurpation of the throne; the only instance in English history wherein their conduct as a body was disloyal. Henry passed an act in 1399, called the *statute de heretico comburendo*, i.e. for the burning of heretics; by which all persons "were required to renounce their heresies, and deliver in all their heretical books, and submit themselves to the Church, on pain of being burnt alive."

It is true that Wickliffe and his followers (more particularly the latter) held some erroneous opinions, and that the Lollards were very dangerous at this time, as the greater part of them held sentiments, which, both on account of their moral and political consequences, required to be repressed. "It is worthy of notice, however," as Southey observes, "that in all the records which remain of this persecution, in no one instance has the victim been charged with such principles. In every case they were questioned upon those points which make the difference between the Reformed and the Romish religion; in every case they were sacrificed as burnt offerings to the mass."‡ Transubstantiation was made the test of heresy, and a denial of this doctrine was followed by the penalty of the stake. Sir William Sautre, the rector of St. Osyth's, London, was the first victim under the new statute, and the first martyr for the Reformation in England. The chief charges against him were, that he refused to worship the cross, and denied the doctrine of transubstantiation; and for this, by the brutal direction of Archbishop Arundel, he was degraded from all the clerical orders with which he had been invested, and condemned to be burnt alive. The second victim who perished for a denial of the same doctrine (transubstantiation), was John Badby, a tailor. When he was fastened to the stake, before the fire was kindled, the Prince of Wales (afterwards Henry V.) rode up to the pile, and entreated him to save himself from so painful a death by renouncing his heresies, promising him an annuity for life if he would comply. The poor man, with expressions of the warmest gratitude to the prince, declared that he firmly believed his opinions to be true, and that he could not renounce them even to save his life. The fire being then put to the wood, when he felt the violence of the flames, he cried aloud for mercy. The prince thinking that the pain he had felt had overcome his fortitude, commanded the flames to be extinguished, and renewed his entreaties to him to recant. But this humble sufferer remaining invincible in his resolution to endure any torment rather than renounce the truth, the fire was kindled, and he was reduced to ashes.§ During the reign of Henry V. these persecutions still continued; and soon after his accession to the throne, the Council of Bonstance was held, partly for the purpose of putting down the Lollards, and partly with the view of healing the schism in the papacy, which had then so long continued. This council, by whose execrable sentence Huss and Jerome of Prague were burnt alive, also commanded that the remains of Wickliffe should be dug up and committed to the flames. The order was accordingly executed; his grave was opened, and his bones were dragged forth from the place where they had reposed forty years reduced to ashes, and cast into the river Swift.

But "as there is no counsel," says Fox, "against the Lord, so there is no keeping down of verity; it will spring and come out of dust and ashes,—as appeared right well in this man. For, though they digged up his body, burnt his bones, and drowned his ashes, yet the word of God, and truth of his doctrines, with the fruit and success thereof, they

* South's Book of the Church, p. 344.

† See Statute of Premunire, Fuller's Church Hist. b. iv. pp. 145-147.

‡ Book of the Church, p. 383.

§ Fox, pp. 477-480.

* Matt. Paris, p. 665.

† Blunt in the Reformation, p. 95.

‡ Ibid. p. 85.