

Poetry.

THE DREAM OF THE HOLY ROOD.
AN ANGLO-SAXON RELIGIOUS POEM.

'Twas many a year ago,
I yet remember it,
That I was hewn down
At the wood's end,
Stirred from out of my dream.
Strong foes took me there.
They made me for a spectacle,
They bade me uplift their outcasts:
There men bore me upon their shoulders
Until they set me down upon a hill;
There foes enough fastened upon me.
There saw I the Lord of mankind
Hasten with mighty power,
Because he would mount on me.
There then I dared not,
Bow down or burst asunder.
There I saw tremble
The extent of the earth.
I had power all
His foes to fell.
But yet I stood fast.
There the young hero prepared himself
That was Almighty God.
Strong and firm of mood,
He mounted the lofty cross,
Courageously in sight of many.
When he willed to redeem mankind.
I trembled when the hero embraced me,
Yet dared I not bow down to earth,
Fall to the bosom of the ground.
But I was compelled to stand fast,
A cross was I reared.
I raised the powerful king,
The Lord of the heavens:
I dared not fall down.
They pierced me with dark nails,
On me are the wounds visible!

They reviled us both together,
I was all stained with blood
Poured from the man's side.

The shadow went forth
Wan under the welkin.
All creation wept;
They mourned the fall of their king,
Christ was on the cross.
Yet thither hastening,
Men came from,
Unto the noble one,
All that beheld I,
With sorrow I was overwhelmed.

The warriors left me there,
Standing defiled with gore:
I was all wounded with shafts.
They laid him down limb weary,
They stood at the corpse's head;
They beheld the Lord of heaven,
And he rested himself here awhile,
Weary after his mighty contest.

The history of this noble example of the piety of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, is not less interesting than is the poem itself remarkable for its scriptural truth and its touching, or rather sublime simplicity. As we find it in a recent work of Mr. Daniel Wilson. *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*,* it is as follows:—From time immemorial, an ancient stone cross, carved with an inscription in unknown characters, had existed in the parish church of Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire. In an evil hour, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which met at St. Andrew's, in July 1642, recognized in this venerable relic, a snare of Satan, a delusion of the man of sin, a monument of idolatry, and decreed its immediate demolition. It was cast down and broken to fragments—happily somewhat of veneration lingered round the remains, and a hundred and thirty years later Pennant found them still sharing the shelter of the sacred edifice. Soon after this, however, they were cast out into the churchyard, where exposure to the weather and wanton mutilation would very soon have completed the destruction ordered so long before, had it not fortunately happened that a new incumbent was presented to the living, who could appreciate their claims to respect. By this gentleman, Dr. Duncan, not only were the fragments collected with care, and re-erected in the friendly shelter of the manse garden, but careful drawings were taken from them, and accurate copies of the inscription placed in the hands of antiquaries. The unknown characters were soon found to be Anglo-Saxon Runes, and Runic scholars were not wanting who could, or thought they could, decipher their long concealed mysteries. First, a learned native of Scotland, Mr. Thorleif G. Repp, reading the letters correctly enough, proceeded to weave them into imaginary words and sentences, from which he gathered that the inscription, or a portion of it recorded "a gift for the expiation of an injury, of christpason, or baptismal fount, of eleven pounds weight, made by the authority of Therfusian fathers, for the devastation of the field"—and as no one knew any better, such was its accepted meaning. In 1836, however, Professor Finn Magnuson, a learned Dane, published a revised translation, in which, while he confirmed the somewhat startling opinion of Mr. Repp, that the inscription was in a language consisting both of Anglo-Saxon and old Northern words, he arrived at still more precise, but unfortunately very different conclusions. In this state of things one of the most learned of living Anglo-Saxon scholars, Mr. J. M. Kemble,

* *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* by Daniel Wilson Hon. Sec. Soc. of Antiquaries, Scotland. Edinburgh, 1851.

undertook the task of extorting their meaning from these ambiguous Runes. First of all he repudiated the Scandinavian languages as an aid to the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon inscriptions, then following out his own views he produced the translation, differing entirely from either of those already referred to, and which represented the fragments of the inscription as portions of a poetical composition. Alas for Mr. Repp's christpason, these characters he read KRIST WAES ON RODI.—Christ was on the Rood or Cross—and so on of the rest.—Mutilated as were the remains, and wrongly pieced together by the zealous antiquary who preserved them, Mr. Kemble made out as many as twenty-two perfect lines, more or less connected. And now it may be asked, what security have we that the third learned version of this inscription is in any degree more trustworthy than the preceding two. Herein is the climax of the tale:—Long after Mr. Kemble had published his version, in a dusty monkish library at Vercelli, in the Milanese, a MS volume, consisting chiefly of Anglo-Saxon homilies, was accidentally brought to light; it contained, mingled with the prose, some religious poems—and one of these, entitled the Dream of the Holy Rood, extending to 310 lines, not only contained the whole of the lines translated by Mr. Kemble, but all that was wanting to connect and complete them!

The sleeping christian is represented suddenly startled by the vision of the Cross, the instrument of man's salvation, which appears in the sky, attended with angels, and manifesting by various changes, its sympathy in the passion and the glory of the Redeemer—at length the cross itself addresses the sleeper, and describes its feelings on being made the instrument of the suffering Son of God. It is from this beautiful part of the poem that the verses have been selected for inscription on the Ruthwell cross, and the fragments still legible are those printed in italics above. It would be difficult to find in modern sacred poetry, a more noble conception, or more affecting expression than some of these rude lines present to us.

CHARGE

Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Montreal, by FRANCIS FULFORD, D.D., Lord Bishop of Montreal, at the Primary Visitation, held at the Cathedral Church, on the 20th January, 1852.

(Continued from our last)

It is not now my purpose to go into the details of this argument, but I will just refer to a passage in the late "Apostolical letter of Pope Pius IX, re-establishing the Episcopal Hierarchy in England.

After alluding to "the power of governing the Universal Church entrusted by our Lord Jesus to Pontiff," it sets forth "the records of England bear witness that from the first ages of the Church the Christian religion was carried into Britain, and that it afterwards flourished there very greatly; but that towards the middle of the fifth century after the Anglo-Saxons had been called into that Island, not only the commonwealth, but religion also was seen to fall into the most deplorable condition. But it is recorded that our most Holy Predecessor, Gregory the Great, immediately sent thither the Monk Augustine." The first connection of the Church in England with the Church and the Bishop of Rome was commenced by the Mission of Augustine, thus referred to in the Pope's letter.—At the same time it is a well-established historical fact that though the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants were heathens and idol-worshippers, yet that there still existed in the mountains of Wales, and the West of England, where they had been driven by their conquerors, a primitive Church, the same which the Pope mentions as having "from the first been carried into Britain and which flourished there very greatly;" which Church was presided over by seven bishops of their own, whom met Augustine in conference soon after his arrival, in the year 596. Moreover they asserted their right to continue their own ecclesiastical customs, having never read in the Bible, or been taught as an Apostolic rule, that they owed any special obedience to the See of Rome. And it is furthermore a circumstance not to be forgotten that Gregory the Great himself the very Bishop of Rome, who sent over this Missionary to the Anglo-Saxons, most pointedly declares the unlawfulness of any one Bishop setting up a claim to Supremacy, or assuming the title of Universal Bishop. "Therefore (he says writing to the Emperor Mauritius) I am bold to say, that whoever uses or affects the style of Universal Bishop has the pride and character of Anti-Christ, and is in some measure his harbinger in this haughty quality of mounting himself above the rest of his order. And indeed, both the one and the other seem to split upon the same rock. For as pride makes Anti-Christ strain his pretensions up to Godhead, so whoever is ambitious to be called the only or universal prelate, prefers himself to a distinguishing superiority, and rises, as it were, upon the ruins of the rest." And again he writes, "if that Universal Prelate should happen to miscarry, the whole Church must sink with him."*

It would be easy to bring a multitude of examples to prove that whatever deference may generally have been paid by the Western Church (for the Eastern Church has in all ages witnessed against

* Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Book 2.

the Papal claims) to the Bishop of Rome, as being the chief Ecclesiastical authority in the ancient capital of Empire, still obedience or submission to his authority or decisions, was never held as a necessary article of faith, or his supremacy acknowledged; but I will only instance one special case, and that occurring in the middle of the third century; when under the presidency of no less a man than St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, a Synod of 85 African Bishops, with the Priests and Deacons, (much people also being presented) was assembled at Carthage, to determine the question of the validity of the Baptism of Heretics; and it was unanimously decided against the judgment of Stephen, then Bishop of Rome, and the custom of that Church.* And the great St. Augustine differing from Cyprian upon a point connected with the same question, quotes approvingly Cyprian's own words to show, that no one Bishop has a right to impose his opinion, as binding upon the rest. "Non solum ergo mihi salvo jure communionis adhuc verum querere, sed et diversum sentire concedit. Neque enim quisquam nostrum (inquit Cyprianus) episcopum se episcoporum constituit, aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendum necessitatem collegas suos adigit."† And it does seem extraordinary if it be as binding on the conscience to believe in the supremacy of the Pope as it is in the atonement of Jesus Christ, that it is left in Scripture to be supported by the slender testimony of one or two passages of doubtful interpretation; and that St. Paul in all his preaching never hints at such a necessity, while he specially sets it forth as a claim to consideration, and mark of his faithfulness, that he had withstood St. Peter to the face when he thought him in error‡ "And is it not marvellous (asks Dr. Barrow, in his matchless and unrefuted treatise on this subject) that Origen, St. Hilary, St. Cyril, St. Chrysostome, St. Hierome, St. Austine, in their commentaries and tractates upon those places of Scripture, "Tu es Petrus," "Pascere oves," where on they now build the papal authority, should be so dull and drowsy as not to say a word concerning the Pope."§

The rejection of this unwarranted usurpation of authority over all other Churches by the Bishop of Rome, was the first actual step, and practically the most important one, in the Reformation of the English Church in the 16th century; and being thus set free from all foreign jurisdiction, and consequently from any necessary submission to every custom, or belief in every doctrine, which may happen at the time to be in force at Rome and to have the papal sanction, the Church in England was able to consider in detail what further reforms either in doctrine or discipline were required. It was not a work completed at once, or by one generation of men; but in the end it resulted in two inestimable blessings, which we now possess as our inheritance, which have preserved to us "the truth once delivered to the saints;" and which, I trust, we shall faithfully hand down to those that come after us.

The first and greatest of these blessings was the Bible, which now once more received its due reverence and regard; and, having been translated into the language known and used by the people, was placed by command in all churches and places of public worship, that it might be read by all for their guidance and comfort, and be referred to by all who, respecting any matters of faith or doctrine wished to "search the Scriptures to see whether these things were so."|| And it is the great excellence of the Church to which we belong, that in all her formularies and articles, she shrinks from no enquiry, and fears no comparison with the Written Word; and teaches expressly in her 6th Article, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation."

The other blessing I refer to is "The Book of Common Prayer," which serves not only as our guide and assistant in public worship, and in most simple and spiritual language leads us with one mind and one voice to praise and worship God; but it also provides us with confessions of faith and standards of doctrinal truth, by means of which the maintenance of a full and pure system of Christian belief is always preserved, and the Gospel-message necessarily set forth before men.

The weakness of man, is so extreme, the temptation to evil so great, and false doctrine so agreeable to our natural inclination, that we may truly bless God that we have not been left, each of us to search out for himself, without such a guide to help us, the great and essential truths contained in the Word of God.** And when we number up the

* Poole's Life of St. Cyprian, p. 396.

† St. Augustine: Opera, Tom. 9 110. "He not only therefore grants to me the right, without any breach of our full communion, to search out the truth in this particular, but also to differ from him. For none of us (says Cyprian) sets himself up as a Bishop of Bishops, or binds down his colleague, by any tyrannical assumption of authority, to a compulsory obedience."

‡ Gal. 2. 11. § Christian Initiates, vol. 4. p. 160.

|| Acts, xvii. 11.

** "Q. What need we catechisms, while we have the Bible?"

amount of the ever varying and increasing interpretations affixed to the same passages of Scripture and affecting most important doctrines: and when we so often hear of the falling away of whole congregations, as well as of individuals, from the faith which once they believed and maintained, we ought not lightly to estimate the mercy of God in allowing us, together with the free use of the Written Word, to possess "the Book of Common Prayer." It is true, that notwithstanding the assistance and guidance thus provided for us, there will still be evils to correct, and deficiencies to deplore;—there may be also some seasons of less light and less holiness than others, and individual pastors may be untrue to their profession, and teach that which is contrary to the mind of the Church and her continued faithful testimony. But as a Church, she can scarcely fall away; she bears her own unfailing witness to the same great principles and doctrines; and through the influence of her own expositions in "the Book of Common Prayer," after a time, either forces back, as it were, her erring ones to believe and confess the truth, thus set forth, "as it is in Jesus," or causes them to go out from her, because they do not belong to her. The influence of such an authorized exposition of the Church, so simple, so scriptural, to which the Clergy are required to subscribe their unfeigned assent, and pledge themselves to conform, and which serves as the general Liturgy to be used in all our places of worship, cannot but be most beneficial, as a standard of doctrine, and witness of the identity of that Reformed Faith, which it embodies. Any mere subscription to a confession of Faith, or Articles of Religion, by the Clergy at their Ordination, or institution to a charge, can never produce the same results. Such a subscription is an act complete in itself, and testifying to the opinions of the subscribers at the time, but carrying with it no perpetual check, and bearing no audible testimony in case of subsequent unfaithfulness. Notwithstanding the many trials and persecutions which the Church of England has undergone during the last three centuries, notwithstanding the violent controversies, which occasionally, as now, have been raised within her own communion, yet she still holds fast to the same great Catholic Truth, continues faithful to the principles upon which she was reformed, believes only what the Church has always believed, and preserves her unity with the whole body of Christ, "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."†

A. Because the Bible contains all the whole body of religious truth, which the ripest Christian should know, but are not all of equal necessity to salvation with the greatest points, and it cannot be expected that ignorant persons can cull out these most necessary points from the rest without help. A man is not a man without a head and heart, but he may be a man if he lose a finger or a hand, but not an entire man, nor a comely man without hair, nails, and nature's ornaments. So a man cannot be a Christian or a good and happy man, without the great, most necessary points in the Bible, nor an entire Christian without the rest. Life and death lieth not on all points alike, and the skilful must gather the most necessary points for the ignorant; which is a catechism."

Q. But are not the articles of our Church, and the confessions of Churches, their religion?

A. Only God's Word is our religion as the divine rule; but our confessions, and books, and words, and lives, show how we understand it.—Baxter's Catechism.

† Ephes. ii. 20.

(To be continued.)

Advertisements.

DR. MELVILLE,
CORNER OF YORK AND BOLTON STREETS,
TORONTO.
November 13th, 1850. 16-1f

DR. BOVELL,
John Street, near St. George's Church,
TORONTO.
April 23rd, 1851. 39-1f

MR. S. J. STRATFORD,
SURGEON AND OCULIST,
Church Street, above Queen Street, Toronto.
The Toronto Dispensary, for Diseases of the EYE, in
rear of the same.
Toronto, May 7, 1851. 41-1ly

T. BILTON,
MERCHANT TAILOR,
No. 2, Wellington Buildings, King Street,
TORONTO.

J. P. CLARKE, Mus. Bac. K. C.
PROFESSOR OF THE PIANO-FORTE,
SINGING AND GUITAR,
Residence, Shuter Street.
Toronto, January 13th, 1837. 5-1f

JOHN CRAIG,
GLASS STAINER,
Flag, Banner, and Ornamental Painter,
HOUSE PAINTING, GRADING, &c., &c.
No. 7, Waterloo Buildings, Toronto.
September 4th, 1851. 6-1f