

Original Poetry.

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

(Continued from our last.)

XIX.

The Apostles brave successor— He well deserved the name! And in the sky of holy church A star of light became.

XX.

Now little need of searching Was to the maddened crew, Since forth Ignatius freely came, With martyr spirit true. For he had truly learned In holy warfare long, "How sublime a thing it is, "To suffer and be strong."

XXI.

He stands before the tyrant No fear has touched his heart To martyr souls such courage Doth mighty grace impart.

XXII.

Then angry spake th' Emperor— "Deceived, unhappy man, Say, who art thou that dares, Despite our law and bribe, To teach this superstition A malefactor's creed; Or, urged by some foul demon Art thou in very deed?"

XXIII.

Then brave replied Ignatius— "Let no one dare to call THEOPHORUS (1), "unhappy;" He's the happiest of all. Nor let them say "deluded;" For the spirits of the deep (2) Far from the servants of our God An awful distance keep.

XXIV.

But if I'm called unhappy As the evil spirits' foe, The foe of those delusions Which o'er darkened minds they throw— Then truly dost thou call me: For Christ, the heavenly King, I have within, and by his aid Their snares away I fling."

XXV.

"Now, who is this Theophorus?" Comes from the sinner's chair. "He who," replied Ignatius, "Within him Christ doth bear." "And think'st thou," said Trajanus, "Not in us the gods do dwell, Who for us fight, and make our troops In battle to excel?"

XXVI.

"Oh! blindness," says the holy man, "Call'st evil spirits gods? Are Gods the heathen demons, Which howl in hell's abodes? Oh! glorious truth, one God there is, One God and only one; And high o'er things created Is His supernal throne:

XXVII.

And hear ye demon-darkened hearts, The high deliv'ring Word, The saving mystery revealed By heaven's eternal Lord;— One CHRIST there is, God's only Son, Saviour alone of all: Oh, may his kingdom I enjoy, Freed from each demon thrall!"

XXVIII.

"And meanest thou Him crucified?" "Him," was replied, "I mean Who hath crucified and trodden The body of my sin— Who places evil powers beneath Those who carry Him within."

XXIX.

"Then dost thou bear the crucified?" Glad is the confessor's "Yes!" For I will dwell and walk in them His saints thus doth he bless."

XXX.

Now swells the rage of lawless power But oh, how impotent! The old man's spirit faints not, Before it is not bent. Cruel is Trajan's sentence, "Since Ignatius maintains, He bears within the crucified; Let him be bound in chains."

XXXI.

To the great Rome let soldiers Him speedily convey, And throw him to the lions, To make a holiday.

XXXII.

Then joy did fill the martyr's heart, Spread radiant o'er his face 'Twas the answer to his longing, Granted by God's high grace. (3) For now he'll be conformed (4) To the image of God's Son, And with the high apostles He shall be now as one.

(1) All Christians were called Theophoroi—"Temples of God," literally, "those who carry God:" they were also called "Christophoroi—"Temples of Christ;" in allusion to 2 Cor. vi. 16.

(2) The deep. Luke 8, 31. τὴν ἀβυσσόν. Grotius and Hammond show that it means the evil spirits' place of punishment. The same word is in Rev. ix, 11, xx 1. (compared with 2 Peter ii. 4); and other places.

(3) Philip i. 29. "Unto you it is given (ἐχαρίσθη given as a matter of favour,) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." The apostles "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Acts v. 41.

(4) "Suffer me to imitate the sufferings of my God." Ep. ad Rom. Sect. 6, of Philip iii 10.

XXXIII.

With joy the holy Bishop Cries, "Thanks, O Lord, to Thee! Who punishest in perfect love: Proof of Thy love to me." Then gladly he accepted The bonds (1) about him cast; And prayed he for his widowed Church, While pious tears fell fast.

XXXIV.

Forthwith he sails from Antioch A bloody death to meet; But as he longed to die for Christ, The thoughts of it were sweet. After much painful sailing, They touch at on their way, Smyrna, the See of Polycarp; Where he makes some delay.

XXXV.

With gladness doth he visit. This Christian bishop true, For they together had been St. John's disciples two. And, as of old Elijah Let, in his heavenward flight, Descend upon Elisha The cloak of prophet's might;

XXXVI.

So now Ignatius earnest prays, And from the varied store Of sacred gifts on him conferred, Gives to his brother more. For high apostles chose him To fill St. Peter's throne; And their choice, by gifts prophetic Doth the Holy Spirit own. (2).

XXXVII.

But not alone to Polycarp Is the martyr's care confined,— The scattered flocks of Jesus Are present to his mind; The persecutor's arm Is already lifted up, And bitter is the portion Prepared for them to sup.

XXXVIII.

Like helpless sheep all scattered, Bereft of shepherds care, In vision doth he see them; Then rises strong his prayer: That the great Bishop of all souls From coming storm would hide His little flock, or His elect Would strengthen to abide.

XXXIX.

And despite his cruel keepers, The heavy galling chain; He writes to all the churches (3.) Of the "faithful martyr's" gain. For wheresoever Ignatius, Bishops and people thronged, If haply he might give the gifts For which they so much longed— Gifts of Apostle's mighty grace, Soon to have scarce on earth a trace.

XL.

Christ, their divinest Master, He told them, went before In all the ways of suffering, The battle's edge he bore: And they must close adhere to Him Through blood and fiery pain; The same red cup of agony With steady patience drain.

(To be continued.)

(1) He calls them "Spiritual jewels"—"most becoming ornaments"—"the fitting ornament of saints, the crowns of those who are truly chosen of God and our Lord."

(2) "And preaching through countries and cities, they [the apostles] appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be Bishops and Ministers, (i. e. Deacons,) over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit." 1 Ep. of Clement to the Cor. Sect. 42. Of these, we may reasonably believe, that many possessed Spiritual gifts, when, as is plain from the Acts and Epistles, even the laity enjoyed them in such abundance. The head of an important church, like Antioch would need them. In his "Martyrdom," Sect. 3, we read—communicating to him (Polycarp) spiritual gifts." "The cities of Asia attended this holy man by their Bishops, and Priests, and Deacons, all hastening to him, if by any means they might receive some part of his Spiritual gift." In Ep. and Ephes. Sect. 20., he intimates that revelations were given him; promising to write to them more largely on certain points, "especially if the Lord shall make it known unto me by revelation." And Ep. ad Trall. Sect. 4. "I know many things in God: but I refrain myself, least I should perish in my boasting." Sect. 5. "Am I not able to write unto you of heavenly things? But I fear lest I should learn you who are but babes in Christ." Some of those (at Rome) who were most zealous for his safety, and promised to calm the people, that they should not desire the destruction of the just, he commanded to hold their peace: for he presently knew this by the Spirit.—Martyrdom of Ig.

(3) Seven brief epistles to six different churches and one to Polycarp. These are amongst the most precious remains of antiquity.

ORIGIN AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

(Continued from our last.)

Augustine being anxious to reduce the British clergy under subjection to his authority, and thus to extend the power of the Roman pontiff, shortly after assembled a council for this purpose, but failed in his attempt, for we are informed by the venerable Bede, that the demands of Augustine were at once rejected, and all foreign jurisdiction over their Church was repelled by the unanimous voice of the assembled bishops, who declared that "they owed no obedience to the pope of Rome, but were under the government of the bishop of Caerleon-upon-Uske, who was their overseer under God."

Augustine then convened a second synod at a place since called Augustine's Oak, in Worcestershire, which was attended by Dinoh, the learned abbot of Bangor, and seven British bishops. Augustine demanded that they should yield submission to certain decisions of the Romish Church with

respect to the time of keeping Easter, and some other matters; but the British bishops refused to comply, as they perceived that their liberties were struck at, and that these terms were required as a mark of submission, which they considered an unprecedented encroachment upon their privileges. "And for the business of the paschal controversy they were so far from paying any deference to the Roman custom, that they continued their ancient practice of observing Easter on a different Sunday from Rome for some ages after, notwithstanding all the arguments that the pope or his party could use against them. For which reason they were treated as schismatics by the agents and emissaries of Rome; which is an evident demonstration that they did not then acknowledge any thing of the popes patriarchal power over them."

In the essentials of their common faith, however, they appear to have been agreed; but in those points which the absolute authority of Rome had established, they differed. On this subject Fuller observes, in speaking of Augustine. "He found here a plain religion (simplicity is the badge of antiquity) practised by the Britons, living some of them in the contempt, and many more in the ignorance of worldly vanities. He brought in a religion spun with a coarser thread, though guarded with a finer trimming, and made luscious to the senses with pleasing ceremonies, so that many who could not judge of the goodness were courted with the gaudiness thereof. We are indebted therefore," he adds, "to God for his goodness in moving Gregory; Gregory's carelessness in sending Augustine; Augustine's forwardness in preaching here; but above all, let us bless God's exceeding great favour, that that doctrine which Augustine planted here but impure, and his successors made worse with watering, is since, by the happy Reformation, cleared and refined to the purity of the Scriptures."

It appears, therefore, that the British who were converted in an earlier and less corrupted period, were possessed of a purer faith than that introduced by Augustine among the Saxons, who as Southey observes, received Christianity "with its latest ceremonial additions and doctrinal corruptions."

A comparison, however, between the writings of Gregory, and the doctrines put forth by the Council of Trent in 1545, will sufficiently show how much the errors of the Church of Rome have increased since the period of the sixth century.—But whatever may have been the superstitions or abuses introduced by Augustine, there can be no doubt that his mission proved generally of great advantage to the Saxons; for besides the number of those who were converted by his exertions, his preaching had the effect of lessening Saxon prejudices against Christianity, of which favourable opening the British clergy eagerly availed themselves, to spread the knowledge of the truth among their heathen conquerors; an attempt which, during their persecution by the latter, they had been unable to make, nor was it likely, had they even ventured to do so, that the Saxons during the severe contest in which they had previously been engaged, would have been disposed to receive their instructions. But this obstacle having ceased to exist, many a British preacher came forth from the deep glens and woods of the island, and proclaimed the glad tidings of the Gospel to the benighted heathen. Among the most celebrated of these were Kentigern, St. Asaph, and St. Columba who distinguished themselves towards the close of the 6th century; and Finan, Aidan, Chad, Diuna, &c., through whose zealous efforts (after the arrival of Augustine) united with those of the other British prelates or Irish missionaries, the greatest part of Soxon England was converted. Indeed "only two counties north of the Thames, viz., Norfolk and Suffolk, can be said to have been subjected to Roman direction, during the transition from Paganism to Christianity; and those two were largely indebted to domestic zeal for their conversion.—Every other county from London to Edinburgh, has the full gratification of pointing to the ancient Church of Britain, as its nursing mother in Christ's holy faith."

The southern counties of England, however, (exclusive of Cornwall), were chiefly converted by the labours of the Romish missionaries; and thus, within less than a century after the arrival of Augustine, Christianity became the religion of all the Saxon states. Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, and Ireland, were already Christian, the Saxons never having overrun those countries.

These facts clearly prove that we were not (as the Romanists assert) originally or chiefly indebted to Rome for our Christianity; the Church having existed here several centuries before the arrival of Augustine, and the Anglo-Saxons even having been converted for the most part by prelates of British origin. And they also show that, notwithstanding all the efforts of Augustine to subdue the independence of the British Church, she still maintained from the mountains of Wales and Cornwall her dignified position, free and pure as the gales from those hills by which she was surrounded.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS TO THE SUBMISSION OF KING JOHN TO THE PAPAL SEE.

The British Church, after a long resistance, at length yielded an unwilling submission to the

Romish see; conformed, as well as the Saxons, to her ceremonies and discipline, and received her corruptions as they were gradually and successively introduced into the Catholic Church. For instance image-worship by the second Council of Nice, in 787; transubstantiation by the fourth Council of Lateran, 1215 (which was also the first general council in which was recognized the supremacy of the papal see; the denial of the cup to the laity, by the Council of Constance in 1414; the doctrine of purgatory by the Council of Florence in 1438; and other novelties which were not admitted as articles of belief till the Council of Trent in 1545.

Some of the above doctrines, it is true, may previously have been broached by individuals; but the Church of Rome was not chargeable (strictly speaking) with these errors until she authoritatively adopted them, and required an assent to them as a term of communion.

The Church of England, however, began very early to protest, as she still continues to do, against such corruptions; for in 787, when it was declared by the second Council of Nice that image-worship was to be observed by Christians (which decision was approved by the Church of Rome,) the English bishops, in a letter drawn up by the learned Alcuin, which disproved the council with great evidence from the holy Scriptures, pronounced that such a worship "was a usage altogether execrated by the Church of God;" and Charlemagne, having afterwards assembled a great council of British, Gallican, German, and Italian bishops, at Frankfort, to consider the subject more fully (at which two legates from the bishop of Rome were also present,) the decrees of the said general council of Nice, notwithstanding Pope Adrian's countenance were "rejected," "despised," and "condemned."

The ninth and tenth centuries are chiefly remarkable for the degraded state of Christianity in Britain and throughout all Europe; and during a time when the ignorance and corruption of both clergy and people were so great, errors and superstitious practices naturally gained an easy admittance into the Church. Alfred the Great, however, carefully avoided acknowledging the supremacy of the Roman see; nor do we read of any "civil authority claimed by the pope in these kingdoms till the era of the Norman Conquest (1066,) when the then reigning pontiff, having favoured Duke William in his projected invasion, by blessing his host, and consecrating his banners, took that opportunity also of establishing his spiritual encroachments."

The first legate ever sent from Rome to England was during this reign; but William, when afterwards summoned by Gregory VII. to do homage for his kingdom, refused, declaring that he held his kingdom of God only and HIS OWN SWORD, nor would he suffer any bills or letters from Rome to be produced without the sanction of his authority. William Rufus was not more subservient, for he retained the vacant bishoprics and abbeys in his own hands, in opposition to the pope.

The Crusades, however, which commenced during this reign, greatly increased the power of the Roman pontiffs. Henry I. had some difficulty in protecting the liberties of the Church of England. He carried on a long dispute with the pope about the right of granting investitures (or appointing to ecclesiastical benefices;) and he also forbade all appeal to the court of Rome, which was declared to be "unheard of in his kingdom, and altogether contrary to its usages." However, during those civil wars which took place in the reign of his successor Stephen, the Roman see was permitted to make farther advances in her usurpations; and appeals to the pope, which had always been strictly forbid by the English laws, became common in every ecclesiastical controversy. Henry II. being resolved to check this increase of papal power, summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon in 1164; and by the sixteen articles there ratified, called the Constitutions of Clarendon, he establishes his independence of the pope, and his jurisdiction over the clergy. Some years after, however, he submitted to be scourged at the tomb of Thomas à Becket, and made likewise other concessions, in order to obtain a reconciliation with the see of Rome, although the Constitutions of Clarendon still remained the law of the realm.

At length, during the reign of King John, after a long and arduous struggle for independence, which had continued more or less since the days of Augustine, the Church and kingdom of England were laid prostrate at the feet of the Roman pontiff. The king, having refused to permit the pope to usurp his right of nominating a primate to the vacant see of Canterbury, his holiness, indignant, placed the kingdom under an interdict; by which act, the nation was suddenly deprived of all the rites of public worship. "No bell was heard, no taper was lighted, no service was performed, no church opened, only baptism was performed, and confession, and the sacrament for the dying. The dead even were denied Christian burial, or they were kept unburied

* See Soames's Brampton Lectures. † See the 2d canon of the Council of Frankfort, A.D. 794. ‡ Blackstone's Commentaries, b. iv. p. 105. § Hume's Hist. of England. || Hume's Hist. of England, p. 433.