

THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER ON THE CHURCH.

(From *The Churchman's Gazette, New Westminster.*)

We offer no apologies to our readers for occupying so large a portion of our present number with copious excerpts from a remarkably able address of the Bishop of Manchester on the kindred subjects of the relation of our English Church to the Church of Rome, and the English Reformation. It is one of the most instructive results of the diligent research which has marked the scholarship of the present generation to throw upon that relationship a clearer light by which the historical position of our Church as an independent national branch of the Catholic Church of Christ has been abundantly vindicated, and the true character of the Reformation brought out. The very word "reformation" itself has by the enemies of our Church been wrested out of its true meaning and made to signify the establishment of a brand-new Church; whereas to an etymologist, the construction of the word is sufficient to show that the process it expresses necessarily implies continued existence on the part of the subject of it and historical research is making this more evidently manifest every day.

It naturally suits the Romanist (and other Dissenters, as well as many amongst our own people fail to see how they play into the hands of Rome by endorsing the sentiment) to assert the civil origin of the English Church in the 16th Century. The Romanist knows full well that if this assertion could be established the English Church must at once lay down her arms and accept a position no better than that of the very newest Sect. For once, the chain of continuity is broken, then, so far as concerns primitive and Scriptural Christianity, three hundred years are no better than three days as a foundation upon which to build a Church.

The various modern religious bodies are aware of this, and conscious of their own deficiency, join hands with Rome in degrading the Church's claim, because the admission of it for one single day would involve a wide-spread exodus from their ranks. The Romanists are aware of it, and persistently deny our claim because they know that uncertainty upon this point is the most fruitful source of perversions from our ranks, while it is also the last thread that binds thousands of their own people to the Papacy.

There can, therefore, be no more interesting or important question for Churchmen to consider than their Church's claim to independence, and historical continuity, and we earnestly commend to them our quotations from the Bishop of Manchester's address, not merely for a cursory perusal, but for a careful study. There must, we should hope, be very few amongst our own people who are satisfied to believe that their Mother Church has no higher claim to their regard and veneration than a brief existence of three hundred years, and no better foundation than the self will of a dissolute monarch.

The Reformation was prepared, he said, in England, as elsewhere, by a great increase of religious knowledge, but assuredly the first steps were taken towards its outward triumph in connection with that great controversy on the Papal supremacy which was occasioned by King Henry's divorce. People were scandalised when they found their monarch summoned to appear before a foreign tribunal. However little they might care about their monarch's private concerns, the pretension of the Pope to summon Henry VIII. before his legates within the limits of this kingdom filled them with sur-

prise and indignation. Such a pretension would hardly have been tolerated in the days of King John, but in the beginning of the 16th century its revival was an anachronism and a mistake. The Bishop continued after quoting historical evidence; it will thus be seen that, so far as the Papal claims were concerned, the Kings and Parliaments of England had repudiated them in law and act, and had claimed for the Church of England an independent national existence, hundreds of years before a reformation of religion was thought of. Nor was the action of the Church less clear and decisive than that of the State with reference to the same subject. The protests of the Church of England against Papal aggression began with the refusal of the seven British Bishops to acknowledge the Pope as their superior "when urged to do so by Augustine on his first arrival in England." In the national Anglo-Saxon Synod of Osterfield, A. D. 701, Wilfrid, the champion of the Pope's cause, reproached the members of the Synod with having openly opposed the Pope's authority for 22 years together, but it was decreed by the Council in spite of these reproaches, that "the See of Rome could not interfere with an Anglican Council." Certain canons of Augsburg, which enforced with much emphasis the authority of the Roman Pontiff, "were brought before the National Council at Cliffat-Hoo, in the year 747, as a guide for synodical proceedings in England." But the Council answered by enacting a constitution which based itself on the canons respecting episcopal independence of the first General Councils of the Catholic Church. "Every Bishop," it runs, "should be earnest in defending the flock committed to him, and the canonical institutions of the Church of Christ, with all his might against all sorts of rude encroachments." Archbishop Danstan again, in 969, had been commanded by the Pope to restore a nobleman to the bosom of the Church who had been excommunicated for an atrocious offence. But the Archbishop refused, declaring in Synod, "When I see tokens of penitence in that person whose cause is now under consideration I will willingly obey the precepts of the Pope, but so long as the offender continues in his sin, and claiming immunity from ecclesiastical discipline, insults my authority and rejoices in his evil deeds, God forbid that I should do so." "And the Archbishop maintained his determination until the offender submitted to penance."

These spirited protests against Roman aggression in the matter of discipline were echoed by others, not less emphatic, against growing corruption in Roman doctrine and practice. In the 37th of the Canons of Ælfric, "usually assigned to the year 957," it is declared that "houstel is Christ's body, not corporally but spiritually;" and again it is affirmed in an Easter Homily of Ælfric Patta, Metropolitan of York:—"This sacrifice of the Eucharist is not our Saviour's Body in which he suffered for us, nor His Blood which he shed upon our account, but it is made His Body and Blood in a spiritual way." Once more, with respect to the practice of solitary Masses, an Anglo-Saxon Canon determines as follows:—"Mass priests ought by no means to sing mass alone by themselves without other men. He ought to greet the bystanders, and they ought to make the responses." He ought to remember the Lord's declaration in the Gospel: "When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Such protests as these were summarily quashed when William the Norman, by the aid of the Pope, succeeded in overthrowing the Saxon monarchy. The Conqueror arbitrarily expelled the Anglo-Saxon Archbishop and many other prelates, and caused his own Norman favorites to be uncanonically set in their thrones. Also in the very first Council held under the Conqueror, at Winchester, A. D. 1070, we find that the native Archbishop has been replaced in the chair

of president by a Papal Legate. - The usurper Stephen, Henry II., and the miserable King John made further concessions to the Pope, in return for the aid which he gave them in their necessities. Things came at length to such a pass that Matthew Paris complains that "the daughter of Zion was become, as it were an harlot; that persons of no merit or learning came menacing with the Pope's bull into England, hectoring themselves into preferment, trampled upon the privileges of the country, and seized the revenues designed by our pious ancestors for the support of religion, for the benefit of the poor, and for the entertainment of strangers." Soon, however, the tide turned, and the Norman Church of this land became almost as emphatic in its protests against Papal aggression as the Anglo-Saxon Church had been in earlier times. When, in the reign of Henry III., Rastand, the Papal Legate, attempted at a synod in London to exercise unwarrantable jurisdiction over the English Church, Falco, Bishop of London, declared that "he would bear to have his head cut off before he would consent to such slavery on the part of our Church;" and Watter, Bishop of Worcester, speaking under the stress of a feeling not less indignant, added that "he would sooner be condemned to be hanged than that our holy Church should be subject to such an overthrow." Again, Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, successfully upheld the liberty of the English Church and the authority of the English law. The Pope, Martin V., "required him to endeavor to obtain a repeal of the statutes of pœnence which forbade appeals to Rome." Chicheley refused, whereupon the Pope issued a bull to suspend the Archbishop from his office. This bull the Archbishop wholly ignored, and he was supported in his resistance by the Lords spiritual and temporal, the University of Oxford, and the Commons, who addressed the King in favor of Chicheley.

Nor was this opposition to Rome confined to individual Churchmen. The English Church in its synods expressed unequivocally its sense of the spiritual independence of the National Church. In the Synod of London, held in 1246, in the reign of Henry III., when the Pope had the support of the crown, the subject of Papal interference was brought before the assembly, and it was decided that "contradiction should be signified to the Pope, and that an appeal should be made to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and to a General Council." Again, in the reign of Henry VI., in the year 1439, when Chicheley was Archbishop of Canterbury, a bull from Rome was laid before the Provincial Synod, with a view to its adoption by the English Church. "But this Papal instrument the Synod absolutely refused to confirm, or even allow." I have thus shown you very clearly, I think, that not only the English State, but also the English Church, before the Conquest and after it, protested repeatedly and with emphasis against the Papal claim of supremacy over the "holy Church of England." After referring at length to what was a critical period in the history of those protests, which challenged special attention, the Council held at Clarendon, in the reign of Henry II., to determine the question whether the Archbishops and Bishops should observe the ancient customs of the kingdom, the Bishop quoted Lord Selborne to the effect that "if the authorized doctrine and practice of the Church of England at the present day should be compared with that of the Christian Church generally—including the Church of Rome—in the days of Augustine, it would require a strong application of the theological microscope to discover any real substantial differences between them. Almost if not absolutely everything which the Church of England has since rejected as usurpation or corruption was then unknown." Now, the Bishop added, in the light of this fact, what shall we say of the English Reformation?