

their youngest brother, this child of their father's second wife, could be the Desire of all nations, the Messiah. They came on one memorable occasion with the Virgin Mary, desiring to speak with Jesus, when He asked the question, "Who are My brethren?"

They are mentioned in Acts i. 14, after the Apostles, and Mary the mother of Jesus: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." That passage alone is perfectly conclusive that our Lord's brethren were not Apostles, not among the Twelve, for the thirteenth verse has just mentioned those that were Apostles: "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James."

We assume, therefore, from this examination of the subject, that there were four persons of Apostolic character who bore the name of James, viz., the son of Zebedee, the son of Alphæus, James the Less or the Little, and James our Lord's brother, the Bishop of Jerusalem.

F. H. MORGAN.



ART. IV.—ST. AIDAN (635-651).

BRILLIANT hopes had centred in the mission of Augustine to England (597-604); but at the end of twenty-three years after his death, outside Kent one kingdom had been lost, and not a single kingdom had been gained for Christianity. At length the marriage of Ethelburga, the sister of Eadbald, King of Kent, with Edwin, the King of Northumbria, led to the conversion of that country. Paulinus, consecrated by Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the episcopate in 625, accompanied her to her northern home. Edwin for a long time delayed the fulfilment of one of the conditions on which Eadbald had given to him his sister, which was that he should examine the evidences of the Christian religion, and embrace it if he should find it better than his own. At length he was induced by the restless importunity of Paulinus, with the whole nation, publicly to accept the Gospel, and to level with the ground the altars and temples of idolatry.

Paulinus was, as Bede informs us, very successful in persuading the inhabitants to cast away their idols to the moles and the bats, and to acknowledge the God who made them, and the Saviour who redeemed them. He also, as Bede writes

(ii. 16), "preached the Word to the province of Lindsey, which is the first on the south side of the river Humber, stretching out as far as the sea; and he first converted to the Lord the governor of the city of Lincoln, whose name was Blecca, with his family. He likewise built in that city a stone church of beautiful workmanship." The roofless walls of it were standing in Bede's day. In this church, represented by one misnamed St. Paul's, which stands not very far from the cathedral, Honorius, the fifth Archbishop of Canterbury, was consecrated by Paulinus in 628.

But this time of prosperity soon passed away. Edwin was slain in battle with Cadwallon, King of North Wales, who had united his forces with those of Penda, the heathen King of the Mercians, for the purpose of avenging on him his defeat at Morpeth, and Edwin's subsequent successful invasion of his country. Cadwallon, though a Christian, did not show any respect to the Christianity which had grown up among our Saxon forefathers, but laboured to exterminate the whole English race within the boundaries of Britain. Paulinus, with the widowed queen, fled from persecution, and accepted from Honorius the vacant see of Rochester.

But the hour of deliverance of the persecuted Church at length arrived. In the Battle of Heavenfield, near Hexham, in 635, Oswald, the nephew of Edwin, scattered in ignominious flight the vastly superior army of Cadwallon, and secured the triumph of Christianity in Northumbria.

This illustrious king, long known in the Northumbrian counties as St. Oswald, endeavoured to live the life of heaven upon earth. Bede has painted his character in the most brilliant colours: "When raised to that height of dominion, wonderful to relate, he continued humble, kind and generous to the poor and strangers." He had been taught to despise the pleasures and vanities of this passing scene, and, while ruling an earthly kingdom, "learned to hope for a heavenly kingdom unknown to his progenitors." He often continued in prayer from the hour of matin lauds till it was day; and by reason of his constant custom of praying or giving thanks to the Lord, he was wont always, wherever he sat, to hold his hands turned up on his knees."

The first object of Oswald was to restore the national Christianity. With a view to it he first sought a bishop, and naturally made application for him to the Northern Celtic Church in the island of Hi, or Iona, which had for many years been his home. Columba had been obliged to emigrate from Ireland about the middle of the sixth century on account of a feud in which he had been engaged, and, having built a monastery in Iona, made it the centre of missionary work. The

traveller in that lonely island, beaten by the surges of the Atlantic, standing amid time-worn ruins, and amid scenes the same in their main features as when the saints of Iona lived and moved in them more than twelve hundred years ago, finds the love of antiquity, natural to all unperverted minds, intensifying his admiration of that Christian zeal which led them to persevere with so much energy in diffusing the blessings of a Christianity not borrowed from Rome, that, in a space of time almost without precedent, many of the rude inhabitants of Scotland embraced the Christian faith.

Bede informs us (iii. 5) that, in answer to Oswald's application, there was first sent unto him a man of an austere disposition, who, after preaching for some time to the nation of the Angles, and meeting with no success, returned home, and in an assembly of the elders reported that he had not been able to do any good in instructing the nation to whom he had been sent to preach, because they were of a stubborn and barbarous disposition. "Then said Aidan, who was also present at the council, 'I am of opinion, brother, that you did not at the first, conformably to the Apostolic discipline, give them the milk of more gentle doctrine, till, being by degrees nourished with the Word of God, they should be capable of greater perfection.'" The eyes of all were turned on the speaker. They saw at once that he was the right man. He was therefore ordained, and was sent to preach to the unbelievers.

Aidan, carrying with him the remembrance of his old home, took up his abode, in the summer of 635, in Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, situated off the coast of Northumberland. Bede states that, "as the tide ebbs and flows twice a day, it is enclosed by the waves of the sea, like an island; and again twice in the day, when the shore is left dry, it becomes contiguous to the mainland." Sir Walter Scott, in "Marmion" (c. 2), gives this description of it:

For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle.

The Celtic Church had established monasteries in these bleak and desolate islands partly, no doubt, for the sake of security and for devotional retirement, but partly also with a view to the success of their missionary work. The heathen on the neighbouring continent would be led to think that Christianity must be superior to their own religion, because it led these missionaries to renounce all which they considered attractive—all those comforts which men commonly prize most highly. "Aidan had here," says Bede, "nothing of his own besides his church and a few fields about it."

Bede dwells with feelings of admiration in several places on Aidan's character and work during his episcopate of sixteen years. He had taken great pains, as he tells us, to obtain full information from those who knew him. Aidan ought to occupy a high place in our hagiology. His character was encircled, like the New Jerusalem, within and without, with a pure and holy light, a glory not of earth.

"It was (iii. 5) the highest commendation of his doctrine to all men that he taught by the life which he and his followers lived; for he cared neither to seek nor to love anything here below." Bede (iii. 17) commends whatever is praiseworthy in his actions, and preserves the memory of them for the benefit of his readers—his love of peace and charity; his continence and humility; his superiority to anger, avarice, pride, and vainglory; his diligence in reading and watching; the authority with which as a priest he reprov'd the haughty and powerful, and the tenderness which he showed in comforting the afflicted and relieving and defending the poor. He adds: "To say all in a few words, as far as I could ascertain from those who knew him, he took care to omit none of the duties enjoined in the apostolical or prophetic Scriptures, but to perform them to the utmost of his ability." Occasionally (iii. 16) he would retire for the sake of prayer and meditation to the island of Farne, now called the House Island, about a mile and a half from the shore off Bamborough, which, unlike Lindisfarne, "is girt about on all sides by the deep and boundless ocean." In Bede's time it was usual to show the spot where he used to sit and meditate. When he and his companions travelled on their mission work, as was their custom, on foot, we are told that they were employed in reading the Scriptures or in learning Psalms. This was their daily work. Whenever they met anyone, whether rich or poor, if they were unbelievers, they endeavoured to convert them, or if they were believers, they sought to build them up in their most holy faith, or to promote their meetness for the heavenly kingdom. We are informed (iii. 5), "that he never spared the wealthy from fear or favour, if they erred on any point, but corrected them with a sharp rebuke. Whatever gifts of money he received from the rich, he distributed to the poor, or bestowed in ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold as slaves. He afterwards made many of those whom he had ransomed his disciples; and, having instructed them, advanced them to the order of the priesthood."

The connection of Aidan with Lindisfarne might well excite our warmest interest, because it brings before us the living and breathing image of a piety seldom seen in this world of impurity and imperfection. We may well, on this

account only, unite with Alcuin, the tutor of Charlemagne, in the description which he has given of it in a letter to Ethelred, the King of Northumbria, and his nobles, on the state of the Church. He writes that "no place in Britain is more worthy of reverence than this Holy Island of Aidan and his successors."¹ But we must look to the consequences of that mission if we would know all the reasons for regarding this island with a peculiar interest. We learn from Bede (iii. 3) that a large number of devoted clergy, who had come from Scotland, were constantly issuing from Lindisfarne, and were conveying the message of Eternal Life to those who were perishing in their iniquity. "Churches were built in several places; the people flocked together to hear the Word; possessions and lands were given of the king's bounty to build monasteries; the younger English were by their Scottish masters instructed; and greater care and attention were bestowed upon the rules and observance of regular discipline." Their labours extended over the whole northern realm, from the Humber to the City of Edinburgh.

Aidan preached by the silent eloquence of a holy life. We cannot doubt that this sanctity, this heavenly-mindedness, this superiority to the sordid and debasing pursuits and pleasures of the world, this missionary zeal exhibited by Aidan, as well as by his successors, Finan and Colman, and by those devoted clergy who caught the reflection of the brightness of his character, contributed largely to the rapid propagation of the Gospel, not only in Northumbria, but also, ultimately, in the country of the East Saxons, and in the Midland districts of England. The reason was that it brought religion home to the hearts of men, and supplied them with good evidence of the truth of Christianity. Bede states (iii. 26) that, "the whole care of these teachers was to serve God, not the world; to feed the soul, and not the belly." "For this reason," he adds, "the religious habit was at that time in great veneration, so that wheresoever any cleric or monk happened to come, he was joyfully received by all persons as God's servant; and if they chanced to meet him as he was on the way, they ran to him, and bowing, were glad to be signed with his hand, or blessed with his mouth. Great attention was also paid to their exhortations, and on Sundays the people flocked eagerly to the church or to the monasteries, not to feed their bodies, but to hear the Word of God; and if any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants flocked together forthwith to hear from him the Word of life. For the priests and clerks went into the villages on no other account than to preach, baptize, visit

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, "Ecclesiastical Councils," iii. 493.

the sick, and, in a few words, to take care of souls." This fervent piety and Christian zeal had drawn the attention of the whole of England to the Church in Northumbria. The words, "But enough has been said on this subject," with which Bede concludes this passage, seem the expression of his indignation on account of the departure of the moral grandeur and simplicity of those days after the year 664, when the Church of Rome having triumphed over the Scoto-Irish Church, at the Council of Whitby, on the question of the time of the observance of Easter, had driven it into exile from England, and had introduced a love of display and a sumptuous style of living which greatly hindered the progress of the Gospel.

While, however, we speak of the work of Aidan and his successors, we must not forget to give the ancient British Church, which had found refuge in Wales and Cornwall after the invasion of the Saxons, a large share, through the former, in the conversion of the Teutonic conquerors of this island. We may, in fact, regard the British Church as the instrument in God's hands in reviving and extending indirectly the knowledge of the true faith which might otherwise have decayed in consequence of the comparative failure of Augustine's mission in Kent, because, by sending forth missionaries to Ireland about the middle of the sixth century, she had revived the spiritual life in that country after the time of St. Patrick. St. Columba had obtained his knowledge of Christianity from Finnian of Clonard, who had been instructed by the saints of the ancient British Church, David, Cadoc, and Gildas. This Church had thus stimulated that piety and Christian zeal which led first to the mission of Columba, and in the next century to the mission of Aidan and of his successors, Finan and Colman.

The saintly Oswald, the coadjutor of Aidan in his work, fell in battle with the heathen Penda. He was one of those laymen, numerous in those days, who, having first sought to make sure his own salvation, laboured to diffuse the light of the Gospel among his fellow-countrymen, and with a view to the attainment of that end, to exhibit all the graces and virtues of the Christian character. We cannot doubt that Aidan and he often conversed on spiritual and eternal realities, and thus kindled and kept alive that love to the Saviour, and that desire to imitate His character, which made them useful in their day and generation.

The prospect of carrying on the good work seemed at first to be buried in the grave of Oswald. But the heathen was not to be permitted to triumph. Oswin, the son of Osric, Edwin's cousin, and Oswy, the brother of Oswald, divided the dominions of the latter between them. Oswy had enough to do to pre-

serve his dominions from Penda, who had pressed forward, hoping by a single blow to destroy the independence of Northumbria by the capture of Bamborough, which, as Bede informs us, has its name from Bebba, formerly its queen. We seem to see Penda before us, as Bede (iii. 16) has described him, breaking up the cottages which he found in the neighbourhood of the city, bringing an immense quantity of beams, and planks, and thatch from the roofs, with which he surrounded the city to a great height on the land side, and then, taking advantage of a favourable wind, firing the mass, in the hope of burning down the town. Bede next shows us the figure of Aidan in the Farne Island, already described, distant two miles from Bamborough. When he saw the flames and the smoke carried by the boisterous wind above the city walls, with tears streaming down his cheeks, and hands uplifted to heaven, he said, "Behold, Lord, how great mischief Penda does!" Immediately the wind changes, drives back the flames on those who had kindled them, scorching some, and terrifying all of them, so that they desisted from any further attempt against the city, which they understood to be under the Divine protection. The consequence was, that Penda very soon abandoned his design of conquering Northumbria.

Another royal layman must now pass before us. Bede (iii. 14) has described him. Oswin was of a graceful aspect, tall of stature, affable and courteous; and was most bountiful to all men, as well to the noble as the ignoble. He was also remarkable for his piety. These qualities had so endeared him to all who knew him, that even persons of the highest rank from all provinces were anxious to be enrolled among his followers.

Bede selected his humility as the grace for which he deserved special commendation; and he gives an example of it. Aidan seems to have been drawn especially towards one who exhibited those Christian graces which most dignify and adorn human nature. Oswin had given a horse to Aidan, because he did not wish him to perform his journeys on foot. Soon afterwards, a poor man asked alms of Aidan. The latter at once dismounted, and ordered the horse with the royal trappings to be given to the beggar. Oswin, hearing of what he had done, said to him, "Why would you, my lord bishop, give the poor man that royal horse which was necessary for your own use? Had not we many horses of less value, which were good enough for the poor?" Aidan immediately answered, "What is it you say, O king? Is that foal of a mare more dear to you than that son of God?" Immediately afterwards they entered the banqueting-hall. The bishop sat in his place; but the king, who had just returned from hunting, stood warming himself with his attendants at the fire. Suddenly, calling to

mind what the bishop had said to him, he ungirt his sword, and approaching him hastily, fell down at his feet, beseeching him to forgive him. "From this time forward," he said, "I will never speak any more of this, nor will I judge as to what or how much of our money you bestow on the sons of God." Aidan was much agitated at the sight, and, raising him, said that he would be entirely reconciled to him if he would sit down to meat and cease to be sorrowful. The king immediately began to be cheerful; but the bishop became so melancholy that he shed tears. The priest, who was sitting by him, asked him, in the language of his country, why he wept. "The matter is," Aidan replied, "that the king will not live long. I never before saw a king so humble. I conclude that he will soon be snatched out of this life, because the nation is not worthy of such a ruler."

This prognostication was soon verified. Oswin was treacherously murdered by the order of Oswy. This tragedy seems to have hastened Aidan's death. We find that twelve days after the murder of Oswin, he was staying at the royal residence at Bamborough, from which he was in the habit of making preaching excursions. The attack of illness (Bede, iii. 17) came upon him so suddenly that there was no time to remove him to the house. A tent was therefore set up for him at the west end of the church, which touched the church wall. Leaning against a post which was placed outside to strengthen the wall, the good bishop breathed his last on the 31st of August, 651.

We shall not have dwelt in vain on the character and work of St. Aidan if we have learnt from him and those whom he trained the importance of personal holiness as a means of ministerial usefulness. This was, as we have seen, to some extent, the secret of their success. Like them, "we must be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine as lights in the world." As the poet says:

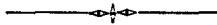
Nay, conduct has the loudest tongue; the voice
Is but an instrument on which the man
May play what tune he pleases: in the deed—
The unequivocal authentic deed—
We find sound argument, we read the heart.

We must remember also that, as Professor Bright states, "Aidan neither sought nor received any sanction from Rome or Canterbury . . . that he would never have admitted the principle that all episcopal jurisdiction must be derived from Rome, or that a pope had a right to make an English archbishop supreme over all the bishops of Britain."¹ He and his

¹ "Early English Church History," p. 138.

successors owed obedience to the Irish Church, and recognised the Abbot of Iona as the chief of the mission. At one time it seemed, from the rapid progress made by Aidan and his followers, that they would be completely successful, and that a National Church, independent of Rome, would be established in this country. But after the Council of Whitby, already referred to, one province after another, influenced by the decision of Oswy in regard to the Roman time of keeping Easter, transferred its allegiance to the Roman Pontiff. The truth was that the missionary enterprise of the Scoto-Irish Church from Iona was, like the charge of the Highlanders, brilliantly successful for a time, but unable to effect the permanent conquest of the country. The Roman Church was superior to it in organization. When we contemplate the history of the following ages, we must exclaim, "How has the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!" The Latin tone and spirit introduced after the Council of Whitby fostered spiritual despotism, and the close connection now established between the Church of England and the Church of Rome had an injurious effect on English Church freedom. We often, as we read the history of the following times, heave a sigh over their degeneracy, and long for the restoration of the good old days of Aidan and his followers. But we cannot suppose that they have lived and died in vain; we have no doubt that they have contributed to shape our spiritual destinies. We owe a debt of gratitude to them, as we have seen, for the conversion of a great part of England. Aidan's name has been comparatively forgotten in this later age. His glory has been eclipsed by other orbs in our spiritual firmament. But the memory of the just is blessed. His work shall live in records more durable than brass or marble, when the monuments of human greatness have mouldered into dust.

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ART. V.—IS LIFE WORTH LIVING ?

ONE of the many marvellous things about that ancient collection of literature which we reverence under the general name of the Holy Scriptures, is the fact that in them we may find the reflection of every possible and conceivable phase of human experience and feeling. And not merely that, but each of our passions and sorrows is gently led by teaching or by story to a happy, a wholesome, and a fitting result. In what age, for example, have there not been instances of the moody and ungrateful discontent of Jonah? Which of us