

blindness, and being saved nationally (which, of course, cannot take place while the *Church period* is going on, where there is neither Jew nor Greek), shall turn to the Messiah, who will reign over the house of Jacob for ever. Thus converted, Israel shall have a different position from the Church of the Firstborn—into it (the latter) now, and in the past, both Jew and Gentile are admitted as individuals, as living stones, and this shall have been completed before Elijah the prophet comes to fulfil his mission to Israel and to prepare them for the Lord.

Viewed in this light, what a new importance is imparted to missionary work! and what intense reality! We are not engaged in operations which in the days of our children or grandchildren may pave the way for our Master's coming and rear gradually in the course of generations a temple for our God—we should work like those who listen every moment for the sound of the chariot-wheels—we ourselves may be—yes, I will venture further—we may *expect* to be among the workers who shall see the headstone brought out with shoutings. This view of the meaning of the words "the fulness of the Gentiles" brings the end of our work very near—"known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world"—we know not how soon this work shall be accomplished and the exact number of those among the Gentiles brought into His Church. How this should stimulate us to burning enthusiasm in our Master's cause! Perhaps an earnest prayer offered by one who reads these words may bring down a blessing upon some worker in the Mission Field, and so be the means of bringing in the last one to complete the *πλήρωμα*; and then, what remains to hinder the coming of our Lord!

J. H. TOWNSEND.



ART. IV.—CHAUCER'S RELIGIOUS SYMPATHIES.

IT is clear, from the "Canterbury Tales," that Chaucer had a very low opinion of the established religion of his time. Again and again we find him attacking clerical abuses, and pouring scorn upon the pride, worldliness, and venality of the Churchmen of his day. Professor Reed, in his excellent work on English literature, says: "The writings of Chaucer have an interest in connection with ecclesiastical history; for, abounding as they do in keen and earnest satire of clerical and monastic abuses, they have truly been reckoned among the means by which popular sentiment was animated and prepared

for the great change of the Reformation." Nor was Chaucer alone in his keen and earnest satire of clerical and monastic vices. In the same age we find men of a like spirit who lashed ecclesiastical abuses with an unsparing hand, such as Gower, Longlande, the author of "The Vision of Piers Ploughman," Froissart, Grossteste, Bradwardine, Wycliffe; and Chaucer would hardly have run the risk of attacking the corruptions of the all-powerful Church and clergy if he had not sympathized in some measure with the views and feelings of these men. How keenly he attacks them! With what ridicule and contempt he covers them! This acute observer of life describes them as licentious, profligate, and avaricious, "full of dalliance and fair language," "easy to give penance," knowing well "the taverns in every town," begging at the beds of sick men, and asking of the housewives "mele and cheese or ellis corne," swindling even the poorest widow out of her mite.

The poor man's money gone to fat the friar,
as Tennyson puts it in his "Sir John Oldcastle," and all the while, amid the farrago of old stories with which they pleased their gaping audience, taking up the hypocritical cry, "*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*" Some writers assert that Chaucer greeted Wycliffe's reforming work with joy, and that it is his character he delineates in his poem of "The Good Parson."

A true good man there was of religion,
Pious and poor, the parson of a town,
But rich he was in holy thought and work,
And thereto a right learned man, a clerk
That Christ's pure gospel would sincerely preach,
And his parishioners devoutly teach.
Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
As proven oft, to all who lack'd a friend.
Loth for his tithes to ban or to contend,
At every need much rather was he found
Unto his poor parishioners around
Of his own substance and his dues to give,
Content on little, for himself, to live.

He waited not on pomp or reverence,
Nor made himself a spiced conscience,
The love of Christ and His apostles twelve
He taught; but first he followed it himself.¹

¹ A German writer contends that Chaucer and Wycliffe were friends. Warton and others claim him as an Oxford man; and if he studied there it is more than probable that he sat at the feet of Wycliffe, who lectured as Professor of Divinity, and imbibed the doctrines of the great Reformer. His remarkable familiarity with the Bible, and the knowledge he displays of divinity, would afford some ground for this view, or at all events might be adduced as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that he was at least acquainted with Wycliffe, then labouring at the great work which he gave to the world a few years later, the translation of the Bible into English.

The students of Oxford in that day were, as we learn from his pictured page, as strongly marked out into reading men and fast men as they are in our own day. Among the motley company that rode out of the Tabard hostelry, bound for the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, there was "a clerk of Oxenforde," lean and logical, who would rather have had twenty red or black bound books at his bed's head than wear the richest robes or revel in the sweetest joys of music; and in contrast to this enthusiastic bookworm and scholar, the Miller in his tale gives a full-length portrait of the dissolute "parish clerk Absolon," who, clad in hosen red and light-blue kirtle, with a snowy surplice flowing around his dainty limbs, and the windows of St. Paul's carved upon his shoes, minced through the service of the parish church. And there can be no doubt as to which of them has the sympathies of the poet. It may be said that it was his object to present a picture of society as it existed in his day, and that in doing this he was obliged to paint the monks and other ecclesiastics as he found them, and to give voice to the popular sentiment concerning them. But this would not account for the heartiness with which he performs that duty, nor for his evident liking for the poor parson. It would not make it necessary for him to bite so sharply and deal such heavy blows as he does. He evidently likes his work. There is a manifest pleasure in the castigation which he administers. He knows they deserve it, and he has no mercy.

They were stirring and eventful times in which Chaucer lived. Edward III. and the Black Prince had won the splendid victories of Cressy and Poitiers, and the banner of St. George had been borne in triumph beyond the waters of the Ebro and to the very walls of Florence. And while our arms triumphed abroad, the arts of peace were cultivated at home. The people tilled the soil, adorned and enriched their towns, and gave themselves to the extension of commerce. And the revival of commerce was followed by the revival of learning. The English mind was waking up from the slumber of ages. Colleges were founded in connection with the two Universities, and many students might be heard within them in high and sometimes fierce debate on the merits of Nominalism and Realism, the great subjects of disputation all over Western Europe in that age. At this period was formed the language which we speak—a language which in strength, richness, and aptitude for all the highest purposes of the poet, the philosopher, and the rhetorician is excelled by the copious and forcible tongue of Greece alone. And with the formation of our language our literature arose. It was an age of show and splendour. Great lords kept princely state in the country, and when they went

abroad they were attended with a great retinue of servants. Religion was picturesque, and appealed emphatically to the senses, with bishops and abbots and cathedrals, and sweet-smelling incense and gorgeous processions and pilgrimages on a large scale, with their usual attendants of bells, bagpipes, and buffoons, to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, or that of Our Lady at Walsingham. The yeoman kept open house; the city merchant feasted kings; the outlaw robbed jolly abbots, or transixed deer in the noble's park; ladies and fine gentlemen, with hawks on their wrists, rode forth in brilliant array for a day's sport. It was a shallow, unreal, artificial, conventional age. Pleasure ruled in the hearts of men, and religion was a thing of outward show and pretence, a bowing of the knee and a smiting of the breast, while the inner life of the soul grovelled in the slavish degradation of its original state. Fiction, romance, legends of saints, cloistered seclusion, and systems of formalities—these were the food of the human mind. For six hundred years the Romish Church had been riveting chains of slavery upon the necks of men, and every day the yoke was becoming more galling. But a change is at hand. Amid all this brilliant life and pageantry and pleasure there is a restlessness which augurs good for the time to come. The spirit of inquiry begins to manifest itself. The incipient glow of the coming day is faintly seen gilding "the misty mountaintops" of the east, and it hardly needs the prophetic gift to declare: "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come." Now appeared the "Canterbury Tales." And there can be no doubt that a man like Chaucer would enter heartily into the great questions of the day; and a movement like Wycliffe's, which stirred the community from end to end, would interest him immensely. Both of them attacked the vices of the friars, but each in doing so followed the bent of his own genius. Chaucer, it has been remarked, aimed at the fraternity the shafts of his wit, while Wycliffe planted against them the artillery of reason and Scripture. Every third man one met in the street, we are told, was a Lollard. Poor and rich, nobles and commons, were excited on this particular question raised by the last great Schoolman, and shall we suppose that the poet, the keenest observer and the sharpest critic of all England, was unmoved? If the "Canterbury Tales" were written to expose the absurdities of pilgrimages, and to show that the piety they assumed was a sham and a pretence, it is not strange that Chaucer should paint in the brightest colours the character of one who was not a sham, but a real man. A glance at the poor parson's character shows that its traits are just those which Wycliffe looked for in the

poor priests who preached the new doctrines on the highways and in the hamlets of England. The parson was a good man, "holy of thought and werk," and

Christ's pure Gospel would sincerely preach.

The pilgrims recognised him as a Lollard, when he rebuked the host for profanity. The host said he smelt a Lollard in the wind, and expected a "predication," or sermon. The Shipman hastened to tell his tale, saying :

Here shall he not preche,
He shall no Gospel glosen here ne teche.
We leven all in the great God, quod he,
He wolde sowen some difficultee,
Or springen cockle in our clene corne.

This episode shows clearly that the poor parson was one of Wycliffe's priests, for any other man would have hastened to deny the imputation put upon him by the host and the sailor.

At last the parson is called upon for a tale. He has heard the "fables" of the other pilgrims, and tells them candidly that they need expect no such things from him :

Thow getist fable noon i-told for me,
For Poul, that writeth unto Timothè,
Reproveth him that weyveth sothfastnesse,
And tellen fables, and such wretchednesse.

The references seem to be to those words of the Apostle, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith." "Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. . . . But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." "Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 1-7; 2 Tim. iv. 2-4). In these passages St. Paul reproveth the circulation of fables or false doctrines, argues against celibacy and abstinence from meats, and exhorts to the faithful discharge of ministerial

duties. They are just the passages that the Roman clergy would at that time have ignored and avoided. The parson says :

If that you list to here
 Moralitee and vertuuous matere,
 And then that ye wol geve me audience
 I wold ful fain at Cristes reverence
 Don you plesance leful, as I can.

There is nothing here to remind one of the other men of religion, nor is there when the good man continues, and prays "Jesu for His grace" to send him wit to point out to his fellow-travellers the way

Of thilke parfit, glorious pilgrimage,
 That hight Jerusalem celestial.

And then, when he learns from those who are present that they will gladly hear him, he gives them an address on penitence which, though containing many sentiments at variance with those held by the great Reformer, is, on the whole, in keeping with his Wycliffian character. He discourses on sin in general, the seven deadly sins in particular, and on penance, confession, and kindred themes. It has been held by many writers on Chaucerian literature that much of "the *Persone's Tale*," as it is called, is apocryphal and the work of the monks, who thus sought to identify the great poet with their beliefs and teachings. The opinion now generally held by the best judges is that, after omitting large portions of the tale, which are incongruous, the brief sermon on penitence—not penance—which remains is Chaucerian in diction and symmetrical in form, and is entirely at one with the doctrines and views held and promulgated by him whom we must always think of as the other great literary light of the period. It seems reasonable, then, to conclude that if not by profession and before the world, in his heart at least Chaucer was a Wycliffite.

There are, no doubt, many admirers of Chaucer who are not admirers of Wycliffe, and who have no sympathy with the great work which he accomplished. He did not, indeed, come up to the present standards of Protestantism, but he prepared the way for the reformers who came after. He cut down the briars and thorns, and cleared away the rubbish, that impeded men's progress in their movements towards a higher life; he filled up the valleys, levelled the hills, removed obstructions, and let light in upon the foulness and quagmires and pitfalls that lay about everywhere, and in which so many had perished without remedy. Like John the Baptist, Wycliffe was the pioneer in a great work, but he still retained some of the errors against which protest was afterwards so emphatically made by men who had more light and saw deeper into the

truth. To a great extent he was under bondage to his times. And what is true of Wycliffe is, in a larger degree, true of Chaucer. Neither of them must be judged in the light of the Reformation, much less in the light, so full and glorious, of the present day. It would be unfair to judge of Chaucer by the standard which we apply to Shakespeare, and still more by that which we apply to Wordsworth or Tennyson. It is safe, however, to say that his sympathies were with reform, and it is by no means improbable that he accepted the doctrines of his great contemporary, the master spirit in the assault upon the dominant Church, the first translator of the whole Bible into the English tongue, the creator, with Chaucer himself, of the English language and literature, the man who has been well called "the Morning Star of the Reformation."

WILLIAM COWAN.

ART. V.—THE LINCOLN JUDGMENT.

ON the second of last month the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council pronounced their decision upon the appeal brought to them against so much of the Archbishop of Canterbury's judgment delivered on November 21, 1890, in the suit of Read and Others *v.* the Bishop of Lincoln, as was in favour of the accused Prelate. The one-sided hearing of the appeal—for it will be remembered that the Bishop declined to appear—took place in June and July of last year, so that the Judicial Committee spent more than twelve months in making up their minds. In an article contributed to this Magazine by the present writer in January, 1891, the appeal (which had not then been lodged) was alluded to as inevitable, but the hope was expressed that it would fail all along the line. This is what has actually occurred; and the vast majority of Churchmen will agree that the result is to be hailed with thankfulness and satisfaction, as conducive not only to the peace, but also to the well-being of the Church.

The points on appeal to the Judicial Committee were five in number. The Archbishop had adjudged Bishop King to have been guilty of no ecclesiastical offence in having been a party to the following ceremonies: (1) The administration of a mixed chalice of wine and water; (2) the ablution of the paten and chalice after the service; (3) the singing of the *Agnus Dei* after the consecration of the elements; (4) the adoption of the eastward position before the Prayer of Consecration; and (5) the use of lighted candles on the Communion Table in daylight.