

THE
LIVES
OF
REFORMERS.

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PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY, AND VICAR OF BOLDRE,
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Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

THE LIFE
OF
ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

SECTION I.

THOMAS CRANMER was “born at Aslacton, in Nottinghamshire, on the second of July, 1489. His father was a gentleman of small fortune; but the head of a family which had long lived in reputation in those parts. He was a lover of country diversions; and seems to have given his son an early taste for them.

The circumstances indeed of Mr. Cranmer’s youth were not such, as usually usher in the life of a scholar. No man could manage a pack of hounds better; or handle the long-bow with more dexterity; or with the cross-bow take a surer aim. In horsemanship he so excelled; that after he was an archbishop, he scrupled not to ride the roughest horse in his stables.

But amusements with him were only relaxations. He gave himself up to study with equal eagerness; and his proficiency in country diversions showed merely the versatility of his genius. The experiment, however, is dangerous; and the example not to be followed by those, who are not well assured they have his strength of parts, and steadiness of temper to secure them from an extreme.

At the usual age Mr. Cranmer was sent to Cambridge; which was not then the seat of the muses. Schoolmen were the classics of that age; and nothing was heard from the chairs either of science, or religion, but what would have inspired an improved mind with disgust. This solemn trifling, which was then called learning, engaged Mr. Cranmer at least ten years.

About the year 1520 Martin Luther began first to draw the attention of mankind. Many reformers, before his day, particularly Wicliff, Huss, and Jerome of Prague, at different periods, had seen, and exposed with great acuteness, and strength of argument, the corruptions of the church of Rome. But it pleased God to use these inquisitive minds only as the dawning of that day, which he intended gradually to open. The corruptions of the church therefore having not yet received any effectual check, continued to spread; and, in the days of Luther, had grown to an enormous height. Venality, and rapacity were the reigning characteristics of the sovereign pontiff; and of that band of ecclesiastics, who retained under him. The very idea of religion was lost; except where it was necessary to uphold some parading ceremonies of the church; which were all the remains now left of christianity. Mor-

als were never thought of; and so far were the ruling powers from being hurt by the scandalous lives of the clergy, that they invented every method to exempt them from the jurisdiction of all courts, except their own. In them, every trespass found the gentlest treatment. An easy fine would satisfy even for murder.

Nor is it surprising, that the inferior clergy should lay aside all decency of manners, when they looked up to such pontiffs, as had long filled St. Peter's chair; particularly Alexander VI, and Julius II. Even Leo X, flattered by the wits of the age, as the reviver, and patron of arts, and letters, though an elegant prince, was a detestable ecclesiastic.¹

We need not wonder therefore, if so complex a system of corruption, as the Roman hierarchy appears to have been, at that time, needed little developing. Luther's doctrines spread rapidly through Germany: and though it was the single corruption of indulgences, which gave the first impulse to this disgust; yet from one error the minds of men presently passed to another; and the tenets of Luther were eagerly embraced, not only by the lower classes of people; but even by some of the princes of the empire; particularly by the elector of Saxony, one of the best, and by his sufferings shown to be, one of the most magnanimous, princes of his time.

But though the ardent, and intrepid spirit of Luther had thus awakened a great part of Germany from its lethargy; yet his opinions found their way but leisurely into other parts of Europe. In England they were received with great caution. Serious men began to see the corruptions of the clergy; but they were afraid to question the infallibility of the pope. They were convinced of the propriety of seeking truth in the bible: but examined with great timidity the doctrines it contained.

Indeed, as far as appears, the writings of Erasmus introduced the first idea of systematic reformation in England. This reformer was a man of a very different temper from Luther: and yet in his way perhaps he contributed as much to discountenance the corruptions of the Romish church. Luther, fearless in the path of truth, was animated, rather than daunted, by opposition. Erasmus, cautious, and respectful to authority, shrank from danger; and sought truth only in the regions of tranquillity. Luther, in vehement language, talked of extirpating error, root and branch.—Erasmus wished only to open the eyes of men; and to leave them by degrees to reform themselves: he satisfied himself with exposing what was wrong; but did not presume to point out what was right. Luther's opposition ran ever in the form of fierce invective, or serious argument. Erasmus, though always in earnest, chose commonly to clothe his sentiments in ridicule. Luther was remarkable for

¹ They who wish to see the causes, which advanced the reformation, drawn out at length, may find them detailed with great perspicuity, and elegance in the life of Charles V. by Dr. Robertson. Vol. II. page 147, oct. ed.

the boldness of his measures; and a course of intrepid action: while Erasmus, trusting to his pen, never ventured abroad as the champion of religion; but defended it from his closet: and the art of printing getting then into use, his opinions soon made their way into the different parts of Europe.

Thus it happened, through the providence of God, that these two men, though in different ways, were equally adapted to the work of reformation. If Luther were the more spirited reformer on the spot; Erasmus was better qualified to make proselytes at a distance. If Luther's rough, and popular address were better suited to the multitude; the polished style, and elegant composition of Erasmus, found readier access to the gentleman, and the scholar.

The works of this celebrated writer began to be received in England at the time, when Mr. Cranmer was a student at Cambridge; and all men, who pretended to genius, learning, or liberality of sentiment, read them with avidity. To the general scholar, they opened a new idea—that of thinking for himself; and to the student in divinity, they pointed out the scriptures as the only source of religious truth. The sophistry of the schools began apace to lose credit; and the universities soon produced ingenious men, who thought they could not employ their time better, than in studying the naked text of the scriptures, which at length drew on a freedom of inquiry. These students were commonly known by the name of scripturists.

Mr. Cranmer ranked himself very early in this class of men; and with great assiduity applied to the study of the scriptures. The more he studied, the more enlightened he grew: he daily saw more reasons for rejecting the false aids, in which he confided; and began to entertain many doubts, and suspicions, which he yet kept to himself.

His mode of study was calculated for improvement, rather than for ostentation. He read few books; but made himself a thorough master of those, he did read. A general scholar he thought another name for a superficial one. His character as a student, is thus marked by one of his biographers, "*In percurrentis, conferendisque scriptorum judiciis, tardus quidem lector, sed vehemens erat observator. Sine calamo nunquam ad scriptoris cujusquam librum accessit: ita tamen ut memoriam interim, haud minus quam calamum, exerceret*²."

An imprudent marriage, at this early period of his life, interrupted his studies; and threw him out of his preferment in Jesus college; of which he had been elected a fellow. He was now reduced to difficult circumstances. The slender income of a lectureship, which he obtained in Magdalen col-

² Melch, Adam vitæ Theol.

lege, seems to have been the whole of what he now enjoyed. But though it produced him little emolument, it tended greatly to increase his reputation. His lectures, which were considered as ingenious, and learned compositions, were always attended by a numerous academical audience of every description. They were chiefly directed against the Romish superstitions. "He rubbed the galled backs," says Fuller, "and curried the lazy hides of many an idle, and ignorant friar." I know not that these expressions give us a just idea of Mr. Cranmer's talents. They imply a sarcastic manner which was not his. Strong sense, and argument were the only weapons he employed.

He had scarce been married a year, when his wife died: and such was his reputation in the university, and particularly in his own college, that, on this event, he was re-elected into his former station.

He had soon an opportunity of showing his gratitude. Some agents of Cardinal Wolsey being employed to draw together a body of learned men from both the universities to fill the college of Christchurch in Oxford, which that prelate had just founded; Mr. Cranmer, among others, was applied to; but he did not care to leave his old friends, to whom he had been lately so much obliged; though a better income was offered, and a more promising road to preferment.

In the year 1526³ he took the degree of doctor in divinity. The scripturists, it is evident, had great influence in the university at this time; as we find Dr. Cranmer appointed one of the examiners in theology.

In this situation he did very eminent service to religion by allowing no student to proceed to his degree, who did not appear to be well acquainted with the scriptures. His strictness however was tempered with so much gentleness, and benignity, that the disappointed candidate, unless a very disingenuous man, plainly saw, that the examiner's conscience drew from him a reluctant severity.

The university however soon felt the good effects of Dr. Cranmer's attention. The young divines caught a new object of pursuit; and entirely changed their mode of study. He would often afterwards say, that in the course of his life, he had met with many eminent scholars, who had told him with great ingenuity, how much they thought themselves obliged to him for the check he had formerly given them at Cambridge, "Had it not been for that, they would add, we might have persisted, all our lives, in our early prejudices."

³ Strype is mistaken in fixing it in 1523.

SECTION II.

While Dr. Cranmer was thus employed, about the year 1529, an epidemical distemper, attended with many symptoms like the plague, broke out at Cambridge. A great alarm was spread: the schools were shut up, and every man endeavoured to provide for his own safety by flight. Dr. Cranmer retired into Essex, to the house of Mr. Cressy, a gentleman of fortune at Waltham; whose sons had been his pupils, at Cambridge; and whose education he still continued to superintend. Those circumstances were the foundation of all his future fortunes.

That great ecclesiastical cause, king Henry's divorce, was at this time in agitation. The legatine court, which should have decided that business, was just dissolved, and had left the affair in its old uncertainty.

Henry's devotion to the see of Rome had made him thus far submit with patience to its delays.—But his eyes were now in a great measure opened. He began to see that Clement, whose character was a compound of dissimulation and timidity, had been acting a double part; and that while he openly pretended everything in favour of the divorce, he was in fact no other than the dupe of the emperor. With this clue the English ministry was able to unravel the mazes of the pope's duplicity: and this last affair, the dissolution of the legatine court, and the avocation of the cause to Rome, after so many affected delays, at length convinced even Henry himself, that the pope meant nothing in earnest.

While the monarch, vexed at this new disappointment, was revolving in his mind the indignities he had suffered, he relaxed himself with a short journey, *or progress* (as these journeys were then called) through some of the southern counties. On his return, he spent a night at Waltham; where his retinue, as was usual on such occasions, were lodged among the neighbouring gentlemen. Fox, provost of King's college in Cambridge, and Gardiner, afterwards the celebrated bishop of Winchester, then attended the king; and were invited, with some others, to the house of Mr. Cressy, where they passed the evening with Dr. Cranmer. The conversation turned on the only topic, which was then discussed among courtiers, the unhandsome behaviour of the court of Rome: and on all sides the pope's dissimulation, and the king's forbearance, were spoken of, with acrimony, and admiration.

Dr. Cranmer, who seemed to have digested the whole business in his mind, said, he thought a method might be pursued, which would tend to bring the matter to a happy issue. When all with great eagerness desired to know what he meant, he told them, his idea was, to collect the opinions of all the universities in Europe on this simple question, Whether it was lawful to marry a brother's wife? Their approbation of the marriage, he said, would

satisfy the king's scruples; or their disapprobation of it would bring the pope to a decision.

Dr. Cranmer's opinion seemed very plausible both to Fox, and Gardiner; who failed not, the next morning, to mention it to the king. It struck Henry at once; who with that indelicacy which was natural to him, cried out with an oath, that "Cranmer had gotten the right sow by the ear."

He was immediately sent for; and had a long conference with the king; which ended in Henry's commands to put his sentiments in writing, both with regard to the divorce itself; and the manner in which he proposed to conduct it.

The great merit of Dr. Cranmer's proposal, which is not immediately evident, seems to consist, not so much in charging the judges, as in narrowing the question. Instead of inquiring, whether the pope's dispensation gave legality to Henry's marriage with his brother's wife? he wished to inquire simply, whether such a marriage was not contradictory to the divine commands? If the universities determined, that it was not so, the king must then give up his scruples, and keep his wife. Of this however he was under no apprehension. But if the universities determined that such a marriage was unlawful; the king might then, if the pope were refractory, do without him; saying, the marriage was in itself null.

Henry therefore being resolved to adopt this new plan, began next to adjust the proper mode of executing it. He read Dr. Cranmer's papers with great attention; and was persuaded, that he, who had shown himself so much a master of the case, was the only person, in whose management of it, he could thoroughly confide. At the same time he thought an obscure ecclesiastic had not dignity of character enough to represent his person abroad. He joined therefore in commission with him the earl of Wiltshire, and the bishop of London; recommending him, in a particular manner, to the friendship of the former.

The Earl of Wiltshire, with whom Dr. Cranmer ever afterwards maintained a strict friendship, was one of the greatest ornaments of the English court. In a public character he had appeared to advantage, once in Spain, and a second time in Germany. At home he had borne with equal credit, the offices of treasurer of the house-hold, and lord privy seal. In private life, his manners were very amiable. He was one of the most learned men of his age: and one of the best philosophers: and though a courtier, and a statesman, had employed much of his time in the study of the scriptures, which he made the rule of his life. To his request it was owing, that Erasmus composed his valuable treatise on a preparation for death. But what still made this excellent man more celebrated than all his virtues, was his being the father of Ann Bolleyn; who was, at this time, well known to be the intended consort of Henry.

In the year 1530 the three commissioners set out on this extraordinary occasion; bending their course first to Italy, where they found success in some of the universities, which were even dependent on the pope. Dr. Cranmer offered to dispute the matter fairly in the Rota.

The pope, at first, was very angry; declaring to those about him, that he would not suffer his power to be discussed by friars; alluding probably to the undignified character of Dr. Cranmer. But finding afterwards of what consequence he was, he became very desirous of attaching him to his interest; and with this view conferred on him the office of penitentiary-general of England, with full powers to bind and loose. Dr. Cranmer could not avoid accepting the pope's favour; but as it was a power he never meant to use, he considered it as a very insignificant sinecure.

At the end of the first year, the three delegates having traversed the universities of Italy, the commission was dissolved; and a new one made out, directed solely to Dr. Cranmer, who was styled *Consiliarius regis, et ad Cæsarem orator*. It bears date January 24, 1531. No disgust seems to have been taken at the other commissioners; but as Dr. Cranmer was the person, on whom the king chiefly relied, it is probable he had from the first, determined to intrust the matter solely to him, as soon as his character had acquired a little consequence.

Very great success attended his commission. Few scruples were raised; and he had little more to do, than to collect the hands and seals of such universities, as favoured the king's intentions; which were, on the matter, almost all he applied to.

This expedition so readily projected, and so cheerfully undertaken, does not perhaps place Dr. Cranmer in the most advantageous point of light. There were good political reasons, no doubt, to induce the king to wish for a divorce. His marriage with Catharine was by no means generally approved, either at home, or abroad: the legitimacy of Mary, in treaties of marriage with neighbouring princes, had been questioned; and the terrible effects of the late civil wars in England, occasioned by disputed titles, were wounds not yet entirely healed. Male issue to the king, which might prevent such consequences, was therefore very desirable to all men.

But reasons of state, however admissible in a cabinet, should never be supposed to influence a churchman. We allow, that Dr. Cranmer might think the marriage wrong; but though it possibly might be a point of conscience with the king, it could however be none with him; and there was manifestly a difference between advising not to do a thing; and advising to undo it, when already done; at least in a matter of so disputable a nature. He knew, that, in the old testament, the marriage of a sister was allowed; and among the patriarchs often practised: and that the marriage of a brother's wife, was

in some cases, enjoined. The new testament was silent on the subject. There could therefore be no moral turpitude in it: nor anything but the common law, and usage of nations to restrain it.

On the other hand, the baseness, and ungenerous behaviour, which followed the contrary part, were evident at sight. To repudiate a woman, with whom the king had cohabited near twenty years as his wife; and to illegitimate a daughter, bred up in the highest expectations, and now marriageable, were acts of such cruelty, that it seems to indicate a want of feeling to be in any degree accessory to them. To this may be added, that the notoriety of the king's passion for Ann Bolleyn, which all men believed to be—if not the first mover, at least the principal spring of his pretended scruples, threw a very indelicate imputation, on all who had any concern in the affair. No serious churchman, one would imagine, could be fond of the idea of administering to the king's passions. It is with concern therefore that we see a man of Dr. Cranmer's integrity and simplicity of manners, acting so much out of character, as to compound an affair of this kind, if not with his conscience, at least with all delicacy of sentiment; and to parade through Europe, in the quality of an ambassador defending everywhere the king's *pious intentions*.

But the cause animated him. With the illegality of the king's marriage, he endeavoured virtually to establish the insufficiency of the pope's dispensation; and the latter was an argument so near his heart, that it seems to have added merit to the former. We cannot indeed account for his embarking so zealously in this business, without supposing his principal motive was to free his country from the tyranny of Rome, to which this step very evidently led. So desirable an end would, in some degree, he might imagine, sanctify the means.

This was not the only foreign business in which Dr. Cranmer was employed. He was entrusted with many private dispatches from the king. He had matters of trade also to negotiate for the merchants of England. Once he was obliged to furnish himself with camp-equipage, and attend the emperor, who had taken the field against the Turks. In every employment he showed himself to be a man, whose knowledge was by no means totally confined to his profession; but was of a more general cast, than the simplicity of his character led men to suppose.

If Dr. Cranmer began to think favourably of the reformation before he left England, he became during his stay abroad, an entire convert. That freedom, with which men discussed religious opinions in Germany, was very agreeable to a man of his liberal turn; and he felt himself every day sitting looser to those prejudices, which had hitherto involved him. Osiander, whom he found at Nuremburg, contributed, among others, very much to en-

lighten his mind. The unrestrained conversation of this reformer appeared to him, at first, as a kind of libertinism: it sounded harshly in his ear; and he would ask, if such an opinion were false, how it could possibly possess itself of the minds of the greatest, and most learned men of all ages, through such a tract of time? Osiander carried him boldly still higher into antiquity. Tell me not, said he, what Austin says, and Jerome; but what Peter says, and Paul. Read your bible; and say honestly, whether such and such doctrines are not plainly repugnant to such and such passages of scripture?

SECTION III.

In the midst of these researches the attention of Dr. Cranmer was suddenly recalled to other objects. He received a message, informing him, that the king intended to reward his services by bestowing on him the see of Canterbury, then vacant by the death of Dr. Warham.

Whatever exalted ideas Dr. Cranmer might entertain from the king's favour, it is very certain he was both surprized and perplexed at this message. Two things especially occurred to him as matter of great difficulty. The first was the oath, he was obliged to take to the pope, which appeared to him as an insuperable obstacle. The other was a more private concern. He had engaged abroad in a second marriage; and however liberal his own sentiments might be on that subject, he knew the prejudices of the world ran strongly against him. I call them prejudices only, because, I think, it does not appear, that the *secular* clergy, at that time, were absolutely required to take the vow of celibacy.

Whether he urged his scruples to the king (who in a matrimonial business could not surely be a rigid casuist) does not appear. It is certain however that the affair of the marriage was made easy to him; and that the king's message brought him immediately to England. History does not fix the time of his return with any precision. Lord Herbert says, he was present at the king's marriage with Ann Bolleyn; which the latest accounts celebrate on the 25th of January, 1533. Archbishop Parker says, he actually performed the ceremony. Fox says, it was impossible, for he was certainly then in Germany. The controversy is scarce worth deciding.

In however contemptible a light the pope's authority was, at this time, considered, the new archbishop, it seems, could not legally be consecrated without bulls from Rome. Henry, it may be imagined, might have dispensed with this form; but to get rid of forms is often the last work of reformation. The price of the commodity however was greatly fallen. The popes formerly exacted more than a thousand pounds of our money, for their bulls of consecration; but the new archbishop, or rather the king, who seems to have managed the matter, contrived to procure them for less than half that sum.

With regard to the oath of fidelity to the pope, which the archbishop was obliged to take at his consecration, he protested, that he took it in no sense, but such as was wholly consistent with the laws of God—the king's prerogative—and the statutes of the realm—that he did not bind himself from speaking his mind freely in matters of religion—the government of the church; and the rights of the crown—and that he meant, on all occasions, to oppose the pope's illegal authority; and condemn his errors.

This oath, taken in a sense so very opposite to its real intention, has often been alleged against the archbishop; and indeed it seems rather to injure

the feelings of a delicate mind. His friends however suppose they sufficiently apologize for his behaviour, by observing, that he made his exceptions in an open manner, without any mental reservation; and that he fully satisfied those, who were empowered to administer the oath.

Thus was a private churchman raised, at one step, to the first dignity of his profession; and though the truth of history hath obliged us to confess, that he took some steps, not quite so direct, as might be wished, in this hasty advancement; yet we cannot, by any means, consider him as a man who had formed any settled plans of ambition, which he was resolved at all hazards to support; but that, in what he did amiss, he was rather violently borne down by the king's authority. His mildness and simplicity were unequally matched with the impetuosity of Henry; who having no scruples of his own, considered little the scruples of others. To this may be added, that the primate thought himself strongly attached by gratitude to his prince. And indeed the errors of this excellent person, as we shall have other occasions to observe, were less owing to the temptations of vice, than to the weakness of some unguarded virtue.—Thus much at least may be said in apology for those parts of his conduct, at this time, which seem rather to require one.

As to the king, his placing so good a man at the head of the church, deserves little praise. If we may judge from the general tenor of his character, which was throughout unprincipled, and inconsistent, he meant nothing more than to advance a man, who had shown himself so ready a casuist; and was able to take so vigorous a part against the church of Rome, which Henry was at this time determined to oppose.

Very soon after his consecration, the primate was called on to finish the great cause of the divorce by passing a final sentence.

The queen had retired to Amptill, a royal mansion near St. Alban's; where she lived with great discretion; and drew the pity and respect of the whole nation by the decency, and dignity of her sufferings. The town of Dunstable, which lay almost in sight of her windows, was appointed by Henry, with his usual indelicacy, as the place, where the archbishop and his associates, were to sit in consistory. As Henry well knew the queen would not answer the summons; the vicinity of the place, being of no consequence, had the appearance of an additional affront.

The queen treated the summons she received, with that indignation which was expected; and being pronounced contumacious, a final sentence of divorce was passed.

There was something also very indelicate in placing the primate at the head of this court, as he had already taken so principal a part in the cause. It gave great offence to the queen, and shocked the archbishop himself: but Henry, who had no idea of decency, would hear no reason against it,

Within a few weeks after the divorce, on the 7th of September, 1533, the princess Elizabeth was born; and the king ordered the archbishop to be her godfather.

SECTION IV.

The definitive sentence which had passed in England, it may easily be supposed, occasioned much clamour at Rome, where menaces of excommunication, in a very lofty tone, were thrown out. In return, the king and the primate joined in an appeal to a general council; a theme, then very popular, both among protestants and papists. This appeal they notified to the pope, who was then at Marseilles. It was entrusted to the care of Bonner, afterwards the celebrated bishop of London; who executed his commission with his usual vehemence. The incensed pope, on the other hand, equally impetuous, talked of throwing the minister headlong into a cauldron of molten lead: on which, Bonner, alarmed at the idea, precipitately retired.

Francis I. was, at this time, joined in bonds of the strictest amity with England. The part which Henry had taken in the affairs of Europe, after the fatal battle of Pavia, had riveted the generous heart of the French monarch to him with more than political friendship. Francis had seen, with real concern, the progress of the breach between Henry and the See of Rome; and had resolved to take this opportunity of an interview with the pope, to endeavour to repay his obligations to the king of England, by bringing his disagreeable difference with the pontiff, if possible, to an accommodation. He made the attempt: but found the pope full of resentment; and it was with the utmost difficulty, that he at length prevailed on him to promise, that Henry might still expect a favourable sentence from the conclave, if he would make his submission before a short day, which was appointed. But this was only half the obstacle. Henry was as lofty as the pope; and could as ill brook submission, as the other could bear control.

There happened to be in the French king's retinue at Marseilles, a churchman of very eminent abilities, Bellay, Bishop of Bayonne. An accidental circumstance had just thrown the eyes of all men upon him. The night before the pope made his public entrance, it was discovered, that the president of the parliament, who had been appointed to receive him with a Latin oration, had unluckily chosen a subject which would certainly give the pontiff offence: and yet there was no time for a new composition. In this article of extremity, when the whole business of the ceremonial was deranged, Bellay offered his service to speak extempore; and did it with such uncommon propriety and elegance, that he was marked from that time, as a man of the first genius in France.

This person the French king made choice of to persuade Henry into the agreement, he had just made with the pope. The bishop knew mankind, and could adapt himself to their foibles. Henry was well tinctured with the erudition of those times; and affected greatly the character of being a patron of learning. Bellay knew him thoroughly; and drawing the discourse from

business to letters, would often put him in mind of the great reputation he had in Europe for learning; and how much the whole catholic cause was indebted to his pen. By artfully insinuating these topics, he at length engaged Henry to accept the accommodation, which Francis had made for him; and to send a courier with his submission to Rome.

This treaty with the pope was not transacted so secretly, but in part it transpired, and gave the first alarm to the protestant party; whom it entirely convinced of the fickleness of the king's temper, and of the slender grounds they had for the certainty even of a bare toleration. None was more distressed than the archbishop: but with his usual calmness, and caution he held his peace; and trusted for the protection of religion to that Almighty Hand, which had begun the reformation of it.

In this suspense the minds of men remained many weeks; and they whose principles waited on every change, began already to waver; and to talk publicly of the precipitancy of the late innovations, which ran the risk of throwing the kingdom into such a ferment, as could not easily be allayed.

At length the long expected courier arrived from Rome; and produced a new agitation in the minds of men. All was now declared to be over; and such a breach made with the pope, as could never again be healed.

The account of the matter was this. Contrary winds had detained the courier, it seems, beyond his day. The bishop of Bayonne, (who, after all his services in England, had himself undertaken a voyage to Rome to negotiate with the pope) pressed his holiness to make some allowance for the uncertainty and danger of winds, and seas; especially as it was then in the depth of winter: and to suspend a definitive sentence for one week only. But the emperor's influence, and the pope's own irascible temper prevailed for hastier measures. Nay, even the usual forms of business were accelerated; and after a shorter hearing than, in such a case, was commonly allowed, a definitive sentence was passed, confirming the king's marriage with Catharine; and declaring him excommunicated, if he did not put away his present queen.

Two days after the definitive sentence had passed, the king's submission arrived. The pope stood aghast: but it was now too late: the sentence could not be reviewed; the cardinals of the opposition holding firm to the established rules of the conclave.—If any event could authorize man to point out the immediate finger of God, this certainly might.

Many historians have entertained doubts of the king's sincerity in this business: and it is certain the parliament, at this time, was beginning to take measures not very agreeable to the popish interest. But however this may be reconciled, it is difficult to say, what Henry's meaning could be, if it was not pure. He had already felt his own strength; and was under no necessity

either to amuse or temporize: nor was duplicity among those faults, which are commonly laid to his charge.

While affairs with the court of Rome were thus depending, the emissaries of the popish party allowed themselves unbridled licence in England. We are amazed that such a prince as Henry could bear to be told in his own chapel, *That unless he restored religion, dogs should lick his blood, as they had licked the blood of Ahab*. But there was a grossness in the manners of those times, which we must carry along with us in all our inquiries into them. The actions of men were perhaps more restrained, than they are now: their tongues were certainly more licentious; and Henry, who had no idea of delicacy himself, was less offended, than might be imagined, at the gross indelicacy of others:

But of all the efforts of the popish clergy, at this time, the delusions of the maid of Kent were the most extraordinary. This enthusiast, falling into artful hands, was managed in such a way, as to draw the attention of the whole kingdom. Her prophecies were uttered in very free language; and she poured the vengeance of heaven, with a very liberal hand, on the king, and his abettors. Her impostures were at length detected; and she suffered death with her accomplices.

SECTION V.

The parliament, in the meantime, took vigorous measures in support of religious liberty. Such a spirit was raised in the commons, that they debated freely on the great question of the supremacy of the pope—a question, which, if ever moved before, had been always treated with the utmost distance and timidity. It was carried however now against the see of Rome with a very high hand.

In older times, when parliaments questioned only some exorbitant claim of the pope—his power to raise money in England, or to confer benefices on foreigners; however spirited such inquiries appeared at the time, posterity saw they had been carried on without foresight. A few branches might be lopped off: but as the trunk itself was left standing, it was able, at the returning season, to shoot as vigorously as before.

One would have imagined, that an act so destructive of popery, as the act of supremacy, would, at least, have been retarded by some dissenting voices, among so many, who were friends to the see of Rome in their hearts. But though it met with opposition, yet it was much less opposed than could have been imagined; and by few persons of consequence. Lee of York, Tunstal of Durham, and Stokesly of London, all papists, and two of them bigoted, acceded to it. Gardiner was even strenuous in its support. “The *realm* and the *church*, (said he, with that subtlety which was characteristic in him) consist of the same people. And as the king is head of the *realm*: he must therefore be head of the *church*.”

This act was obtained chiefly by the abilities of the primate, who discovered such a fund of learning, and good sense on the question; and delivered his sentiments in such a flow of natural and easy eloquence, that he silenced opposition, and gave his cause all the lustre, which reason and argument could give.

When the prejudices of men began to cool; and the consequences of this very important act were seriously considered, all sober men of every denomination acknowledged the utility of it. They hoped a more orderly clergy would now succeed; whose manners might be more easily inspected; and whose conduct would be amenable to civil authority. They hoped an end would now be put to those contests between the civil and ecclesiastical powers, which had often cost the nation so dear. They saw a way opened for the redress of many grievances, which could not easily approach the court of Rome at so remote a distance; and so entrenched in forms. In short, they foresaw a variety of advantages from the simplicity of the government, as it was now established; and from the abolition of that gross absurdity in every political system, an *imperium in imperio* [a state within a state].

The protestants had still farther cause for rejoicing. They considered this act, as the only thing, which could open a way to reformation. For though in itself it had no immediate connection either with doctrine, or discipline; yet without it, no step could be taken towards the reformation of either. Besides, they thought the abrogation of the decretals was a great step towards the introduction of the Bible; and imagined, they should be able, through so wide a breach, to push out every error, and every corruption of the church.

When this celebrated act passed; another, as a kind of appendage to it, passed also—the act of succession; which settled the crown on the children of the present queen; declaring Mary, the daughter of Catharine, in effect illegitimate.

This act involved in ruin two excellent men, Fisher bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More. The parliament had declared the denial of the king's supremacy to be high treason: and imposed a test oath to be taken by all people in office; and indeed universally, if required. Fisher refused it; and More, when questioned, talked in very ambiguous language. He might as well have spoken plainly. Henry, impatient of control, considered his ambiguity as guilt. The primate laboured with every application of his interest, and talents, to preserve these victims of lawless power. With More he had lived on terms of great familiarity; and was prompted to employ even casuistry to save him. "On one hand, said he, you are *doubtful* as to the point in question. On the other, you are *certain*, you ought to obey your prince. Let *doubt* then give way to *certainity*."—More smiled, and laid his head upon the block.

This was not the only innocent blood, which was shed at this time. That queen, for whose sake Henry had put away a wife with whom he had lived twenty years, was herself in little more than three, become the object of his aversion; and was condemned to death on the merest surmise. A few unguarded expressions were the utmost, that could be proved against her. She was a lady of a gay and lively temper; and in such dispositions, little, verbal levities are not only consistent with the purest manners; but even sometimes perhaps indicative of them. Henry however wished not to find her innocent; and indiscretion had the force of crime.

Among the many suspicious circumstances, which attended this very mysterious affair, it was not one of the least, that during the discussion of it, the archbishop was directed, by an order from the king, to keep his house at Lambeth. The popish party were universally bent against the queen; and, it was supposed, were afraid of the primate's interposition and influence.

Henry however, when it served his purpose, introduced him as an actor in the affair. The life of the queen was not all the king aimed at. Her daughter, the lady Elizabeth, must also be declared illegitimate, to make way for the posterity of his future consort. To this end, he resolved, on the strength of some surmise of a precontract, to be divorced from her, before he put her to death. But though the earl of Northumberland, who was supposed to be the other party, made the most solemn allegations, that no such contract had ever existed, yet the king was determined she should be found guilty; and the archbishop was to be his instrument. To him, it is said, the queen made a private confession of her crimes; and the comment of history on her confession is, that having been sentenced to be burnt, or beheaded, as the king pleased, she was terrified into a confession to avoid the more rigorous part of the sentence. On the strength however of this confession; the archbishop passed a sentence of divorce.

Immediately after this sentence, she was beheaded; and the king, void of every idea, not only of feeling, but of decency; the very next day, married Jane Seymour. By this precipitancy however he made a better apology for the unfortunate Ann Bolleyn, than the most zealous of her advocates could have done.

When we consider the whole of this black affair—the want of legal evidence to prove any crime—yet a sentence of death passed in consequence of that insufficient proof—a precontract supposed, which was to void the marriage—and yet the crime of adultery still charged—the terrifying mode of the sentence—and above all the king's known attachment to another lady—we are surprised to find a man of the archbishop's character submitting, in any shape, to be an actor in so complicated a scene of barbarism, cruelty, absurdity, and injustice. The confession had certainly all the appearance of being extorted—by both parties the contract was denied on oath—and if both parties had even confessed it, it is probable, that the archbishop might have found strong arguments to prove, in any other instance, that a consummated marriage was a more inviolable bond than a precontract; and still more so, if the parties first contracting had given up their mutual vows. The whole, in short, has the appearance of a dishonest submission to a tyrant's passions; and we can apologize for it only as we have done for some other of this prelate's compliances, by supposing that his meekness was violently borne down by the king's impetuosity.

Indeed the plenitude of a king's power was never so thoroughly impressed on the minds of men, as in this reign; though it took in future reigns, as far as such jargon can do, a more systemized form. The *Vox Dei*, which was afterwards too freely supposed to issue from the people, was however now supposed to issue solely from the throne. When therefore we find these great condescensions to a prince in men of eminent characters, we

must not measure them by the liberal notions of later times; but must make some allowances for those high ideas of kingly power, which prevailed in those periods, in which they lived.

It is true, we are told, the primate made a spirited application to the king in the queen's favour: but on this apology, it is probable, none of his advocates will be very forward to expatiate. The more innocent he thought her, the more guilty he must think himself.

How far his acting *ex officio* was an apology, let those define, who think themselves obliged to perform the functions of an office, which requires unlawful deeds.

SECTION VI.

Queen Ann's death was considered by the popish party as the signal of victory. They had little conception, that the protestants could unite under any other leader, who could have interest with the king. But they formed a wrong judgment; and had the mortification to see the primate's influence in no degree diminished. All therefore, who wished well to a reformation, looked up to him, as the only person, who was capable of conducting it. And indeed he was every way qualified to answer their wishes. By prudent caution, discrete forbearance, and pure simplicity of manners, he was able to oppose and counteract the designs of some of the most artful men of his time. For there are seasons, when simplicity will have the advantage of art; and will mislead even the designing man; who judging from his own feelings, considers a plain and open behaviour as a mask.

It was very necessary indeed that the protestant cause should have at least one able leader: for except the archbishop himself, there was not a man who favoured it, and had the power to conduct it. The earl of Essex, it is true, who was then secretary of state, was a man of great ability. No one had taken a juster measure of the times; or understood with more exactness, that difficult part of the ministerial office, the management of parties. But Essex sat at another helm, which called for all his address; and he could rarely assist the archbishop, however well-inclined, except when the affairs of the church coincided with the business of the state: nor was he enough acquainted with theological matters to give a consequential opinion in any of the intended alterations of religion.

Among the bishops of those times, who favoured the reformation, were Latimer bishop of Worcester, Shaxton of Salisbury, and Barlow of St. David's. These were the primate's natural coadjutors; but none of them was able to give him any material assistance.

Latimer possessed every virtue that could adorn a Christian prelate. No man opposed vice more successfully; or kept the clergy of his diocese in better order. But in traversing the arts of party, he had no address. Perfectly sincere himself, he had little comprehension of the duplicity of others; and seemed to think, that nothing was requisite to give either a party, or an individual, a proper direction, but a genuine display of truth. He considered only what was right to be done; not what the times could bear.

Shaxton had lived more in the world than Latimer; but was still a worse associate to the archbishop. He had an unaccommodating sourness about him; which was continually taking, or giving offence. His moroseness was marked strongly in the lines of his visage; which almost prejudiced men at sight against every proposal he could make. Nor was he without a tincture

of pride, and self-importance; which are bad in any man, worse in a churchman, and worst of all in a reformer.

Barlow was as little depended on by the archbishop as either of the other. He was a man of sense and learning; but was so indiscrete, so totally unguarded, and his conversation so full of levity, that the primate was always afraid of any communication with him on matters of business: and would sometimes say, on coming to the conclusion of a long debate; "This is all very true; but my brother Barlow, in half an hour, will teach the world to believe it is but a jest,"

Perhaps indeed it was not to be regretted, that the primate had no associate. Under the wise councils of one prudent man the arduous business of reformation probably prospered better, than it could have done in the hands of many. In the whole system of human affairs, it is certainly the nicest point to conduct the religious opinions of the public. The more quietly, and gently every change is introduced, the better. Altercation is fatal to the attempt; and altercation is generally found in a multiplicity of voices. A multiplicity of opinions succeeds a multiplicity of voices. The passions armed with religious zeal soon enter the lists; and all is presently confusion.

The wisdom, and decisive judgment of a single leader prevented this. By attending carefully to times, and seasons, and throwing out only such innovations as he found men were able to bear, the prudent archbishop introduced imperceptibly the most consequential changes.

His difficulties however were very great. To form a religious establishment out of the general confusion, in which all things were now involved, appeared a work of infinite perplexity. That flux of opinions, which the reformation occasioned, was an endless source of discord: and the more men receded from that central point of authority, which had drawn them together; the wider they spread from each other. Every man had his favourite tenet, in which he thought the sum of christianity consisted; little sects began to form themselves; and the primate soon found how impossible it was to impress the large idea of religion upon the narrow mind of party.

The same diversity of opinion which distracted the people, was found among the leaders. Every one had his own creed; and the mischief was, that no man thought it a hardship to impose his own creed on others. Some thought the ceremonies only of the Romish church were antichristian; and adhered with firmness to its doctrines. Others rejected the doctrines; but were dazzled with the splendour of its ceremonies. Some again thought it prudent, as a conciliating measure, to retain everything that could be retained with innocence: while others cried out loudly for utter extirpation; and thought the farther they got from popery, the nearer they advanced to truth.

The difficulties, in the way of reformation, which arose thus from the different opinions of protestants, were still greatly increased by the opposition of papists. This large body of men, it may easily be imagined, were more than ordinarily inflamed by the turn, which affairs were likely to take against them, If they were before formidable for their numbers, they now became more so, when embodied in a suffering cause, supporting one common end, and availing themselves of all those arts which are generally made use of by the instruments of declining party. Among these arts, the most obvious, and the most effectual, was, to foment jealousy, and discord among the various sectaries of the new religion; to which of themselves they were sufficiently inclined,

But the difficulties, which arose from the popish party, would have been more easily surmounted, if the king had not been at its head. The fame, which Henry had acquired, as *defender of the faith*, had invariably attached his haughty mind to the doctrines of popery. The supremacy indeed flattered his ambition; and he was glad, as far as that was an object, to coincide with the circumstances of the times: but he was careful to have it believed, that he was no convert to the opinions of the new faith; and that his heart had not received the least impression against the religion of his forefathers. Whatever advantage therefore the protestants gained during this reign, they were entirely indebted for it, either to the pride, the caprice, or the interest of the king.

Amidst all these difficulties, the archbishop endeavoured gradually to mature in his own breast every part of the great scheme he had in view, before he ventured to bring it forward.

He began, in the spirit of equity, with redressing the abuses of his own courts; though together with these abuses, he retrenched his own fees, and those of his officers. This gave the public an early and favourable impression of his designs.

The great number of idle holidays, with which, the calendar was charged, became the next object of his censure. The archbishop himself, to the astonishment of those around him, sat down to a hot supper on the eve of St. Thomas of Canterbury. As these holidays interfered with seed time and harvest, it was generally not unpopular to abolish them.

It was popular also, as well as highly necessary, to regulate the public discourses of the clergy. The pulpit eloquence indeed of that time was little more than a gross attempt to exalt the power of the church. The good archbishop saw its abuse; and endeavoured to make it the vehicle of instruction. But the regulations he yet made were few. With his usual caution he felt his

ground, as he proceeded; and it was not till long afterwards, that he completed his intention on this head, by the publication of the homilies.

How exceedingly a reformation in preaching was wanted, we may judge from the following extracts from sermons, which we may suppose were the best the times produced, as they were thought worthy of being made public. In one of these sermons, the priest inveighing against irreverence to the ministers of religion, tells the following story: “St. Austin,” says he, “saw two women prating together in the pope’s chapel, and the fiend sitting in their necks, writing a long roll of what the women said. Presently letting it fall, St. Austin took it up; and asking the women, what they had said, they answered, Only a few paternosters. Then St. Austin read the Bill, and there was never a good word in it.”—In another sermon we are told, “that four men had stolen an abbot’s ox. The abbot did a sentence, and cursed them. Three of them were shriven, and asked mercy. The fourth died, without being absolved. So when he was dead, his spirit walked by night, and scared all who stirred from their houses after sunset. It happened that once, as a priest went in the night, with God’s body, to a sick man, the spirit met him, and told him who he was, and why he walked; and prayed the priest to tell his wife to make amends to the abbot, that he might absolve him; for he could have no rest till then. So this was done, and the poor soul at length went to rest.”—In a sermon upon the mass, the people are told, that, among the benefits arising from it, “On the day they hear it, all idle oaths, and forgotten sins shall be forgiven. On that day they shall not lose their sight; nor die a sudden death; nor wax aged: and every step thither-ward, and homeward, an angel shall reckon.”—The immediate tendency of such discourses was obvious.

SECTION VII.

Thus far the primate, however cautious, ventured with less hesitation. What he had yet done was little more than fell under his own proper authority. But it required more address to strip the popular opinions of the times of that error, and absurdity, which adhered to them. Some steps however were taken, which at least narrowed a few of the grossest of the popish doctrines.

Tradition was not expressly disavowed; but the Bible, and creeds were made the rule of faith.—Images were not forbidden; but the people were instructed to consider them only as incentives of devotion.—Prayers to saints were allowed; but Christ's sole mediation with the Father was insisted on.—Sprinkling holy water, scattering ashes, and creeping to the cross, were tolerated; but the people were assured, they made no atonement for sin.—The existence of purgatory was not disputed; but all indulgences, and mercenary pardons were declared invalid,

How far indeed the archbishop himself was enlightened, cannot easily be known at this day: but it is probable, that whatever had been his own private opinions, he would not have ventured farther in public than he now did.

The doctrine of transubstantiation was left precisely as it stood. Our ecclesiastical writers all agree, that the primate himself held that opinion, till within a few years of his death; which is the more surprising, as Wicliff near two centuries before, had said much to bring it into discredit. How firmly attached the primate was to it, at this time, appeared on the following occasion.

John Lambert, a man of eminent piety, having denied the real presence, was cited before the archbishop; who with a mixture of mildness and gravity, expostulated with him, on his maintaining so unscriptural an error. Lambert retired modestly; but it appearing afterwards, that he was not converted, the affair was carried before the king. The king, resolving himself to confute so notorious a heretic, cited him to enter into free debate on the subject. The royal pedant entered the place of combat, surrounded by his bishops, and nobles. The archbishop sat at his right hand, and assisted at this very extraordinary disputation. Lambert being confounded with an assembly so little suited to the freedom of debate, yielded an easy victory to the king; who triumphing over him in the true spirit of a polemic; condemned him to the stakes. We do not find that the archbishop took any part in his death; it were to be wished he had rid his hands of the disputation likewise.

The primate showed the same attachment to the doctrine of transubstantiation on another occasion. Vadian, a learned foreigner, having written a treatise against the corporeal presence, thought it a proper work for the archbishop of Canterbury to patronize, and presented it to him; concluding

that his grace's opinions on that subject, were as liberal as his own. But the archbishop was not a little displeased. He informed Vadian, that his book had not made a convert of him; and that he was hurt with the idea of being thought the patron of such unscriptural opinions.

In the year 1538, the archbishop finished a great work, which he had long had in hand, the printing of an *English* bible.

Wicliff was the first Englishman who undertook to render the Holy Scriptures into his native tongue. But Wicliff's translation was now obsolete; and to be found only as a matter of curiosity in a few libraries. In the year 1526 Tindal translated and printed the New Testament in the Low Countries. But his translation, which was rather a hasty performance, was very incorrect; and nobody was more sensible of its deficiencies than Tindal himself. He was public spirited enough to have amended the faults of it, by a new edition: but his finances were too scanty for such an undertaking. The zeal of Tunstal bishop of Durham, furnished him the means. Tunstal, though a papist, was the most moderate of men; and being desirous of removing a stumbling block as quietly as possible, he privately bought up the whole impression at his own expense, and burnt it*. This money being returned into Tindal's hands, enabled him to republish his work in a more correct form. By the great industry however of the popish party this edition also was in a good measure suppressed: and indeed it was at best an inaccurate translation; being the performance only of a single man, who laboured also under many disadvantages.

This version however, inaccurate as it was, the archbishop made the basis of the work, he now intended; and the method he took, was to send portions of it to be corrected by the bishops, and other learned divines; reserving to himself the revisal of the whole.

Stokesley, bishop of London, was the only prelate, who refused his contribution. "It is no wonder," (said one of the archbishop's chaplains, with more humour than charity) "that my lord of London refuses to have any hand in this business: it is a testament, in which he knows well he hath no legacy." This bible, through the means of the lord Essex, was licensed by the king; and fixed to a desk in all parochial churches.

The ardour, with which, we are informed, men flocked to read it, is incredible. They, who could, purchased it; and they who could not, crowded

* A copy of this impression, supposed to be the only copy remaining, was picked up by one of the late lord Oxford's collectors; and was esteemed so valuable a purchase by his lordship, that it is said he settled 20£ a year for life on the person who procured it. Lord Oxford's library being afterwards purchased by Osborn, at Grey's Inn gate, this curious book was marked by the undiscerning bookseller at fifteen shillings only; at which price Mr. Ames bought it. When Mr. Ames's books were offered to the public by Mr. Langford, in May 1760, this book was sold by auction for fourteen guineas and a half. In whose hands it is now, I have not heard.

to read it, or to hear it read, in churches; where it was common to see little assemblies of mechanics meeting together for that purpose after the labour of the day. Many even learned to read in their old age, that they might have the pleasure of instructing themselves from the scriptures. Mr. Fox mentions two apprentices, who joined, each his little stock, and bought a bible, which at every interval of leisure, they read; but being afraid of their master, who was a zealous papist, they kept it under the straw of their bed. Such was the extasy of joy, with which this blessing was received at that time—when it was uncommon.

Soon afterwards, under the authority of convocation, the archbishop took a farther step. The creed, the Lord's prayer, and the Ten Commandments were allowed to be taught in English. A plain exposition also of the more obvious points of faith, and practice, was published in a treatise, which was generally called the *Bishop's book*, from the hands through which it went: its real title was, *The institution of a Christian's man*. It was afterwards enlarged, and published under the royal license; and then became the *King's book*.

These were the principal steps, which the archbishop took in the business of reformation—all taken between the years 1533 and 1538. His difficult circumstances allowed no more. It is wonderful indeed he did so much: for except in the matters of supremacy, and transubstantiation, the king and he had very different sentiments on every topic of religion: and the passions of Henry, those gusts of whirlwind, made it dangerous for anyone to oppose him. But the archbishop, though he tried this hardy experiment oftener than once, never lost his favour.—In the business of monasteries he risked it most.

Henry had already laid his rapacious hands on some of the smaller houses; and finding the prey alluring, he determined to make a second, and more daring attempt. The larger houses afforded his avarice a more ample range. The affair was brought into parliament; and men seemed to think they were at liberty to speak their opinions freely. They agreed, that the wealth of the church was a dead weight on the nation—that it debauched the clergy; and drained the people—and that it was just, and right, to lay public hands on this useless mass of treasure.—At the same time having been shocked at seeing the King appropriate to himself, as he had lately done, the piety of ages; or lavish it in wanton donations on the avarice of his courtiers; they cried, “Let us strip the clergy of their wealth; but let us pass a law, that it may be employed in some national service.”

Of the party which held this language, the archbishop was at the head. With great earnestness he spoke in this cause; and proposed various schemes for throwing this mass of sacred treasure into some useful channel. He mentioned the endowment of schools; the maintenance of scholars at the

universities; the foundation of hospitals, and alms-houses. “Nay, rather, said he, than suffer it to be consumed in private channels, let us expend it on high-roads.”

One of his schemes was new and seems to have been happily conceived. He proposed to institute colleges of priests in every cathedral, composed of students, just removed, and well recommended, from the universities. Here they were to apply themselves to divinity under the eye of the bishops; who being thus acquainted with their worth and abilities, might collate them from these seminaries to parochial charges.

But this, and all his other beneficial schemes were overruled. The King was determined to apply this wealth to other uses; and hinted his intentions to the house in a very intelligible manner. The royal hint gave a sudden change to the deliberations of parliament. Every man trembled at the idea of opposition. Simple terror effected then, what venality hath since effected. Essex immediately gave way. The boldest speakers were silent. The primate’s was the last mouth, which opened in this cause.—His honest zeal showed the goodness of his heart; and that was the reward of his labour.

SECTION VIII.

The opposition, which the king met with in this business from the protestant party, is thought by many historians to have lessened the archbishop's influence; and to have thrown weight, at this time, into the opposite scale. It is certain, the bishop of Winchester, and other leaders of the popish party, began now to assume unusual spirits, and to appear with more importance at court.

The bishop of Winchester was one of those motley ministers, half statesman, and half ecclesiastic, which were common in those needy times, when the revenues of the church were necessary to support the servants of the crown. It was an invidious support; and often fastened the odium of an indecorum on the king's ministers; who had, as ministers always have, opposition enough to parry in the common course of business: and it is very probable, that Gardiner, in this very ground, hath met with harder measure in history, than he might otherwise have done.

He is represented as having nothing of a churchman about him, but the name of a bishop. He had been bred to business from his earliest youth; and was thoroughly versed in all the wiles of men, considered either as individuals, or, embodied in parties. He knew all the modes of access to every foible of the human heart; his own in the meantime, dark, and impenetrable. He was a man, "who, as Lloyd quaintly says, was to be traced like the fox; and like the Hebrew, to be read backwards:" and though the insidious cast of his eye indicated, that he was always lying in wait, yet his strong sense, and persuasive manner, inclined men to believe he was always sincere; as better reasons could hardly be given, than he had ready on every occasion. He was as little troubled with scruples, as any man, who thought it not proper entirely to throw off decency. What moral virtues, and what natural feelings he had, were all under the influence of ambition; and were accompanied by a happy lubricity of conscience, which ran glibly over every obstacle.— Such is the portrait, which historians have given us of this man; and though the colouring may be more heightened in some than in others; yet the same turn of feature is found in all.

This prelate being at the head of the popish party, and aided by the duke of Norfolk's influence, thought he had now an opportunity to strike a blow, which might be fatal to the protestant cause. The times favouring him, he insinuated to the king, that the measures he was now pursuing had placed him in a very precarious situation with regard to foreign powers—that the German protestants would in all probability be crushed—and that if this should be the case, it was very likely from the temper and situation of men and things, that his majesty would see a very formidable league excited

against him by the popish princes—that it was prudent at least to guard against such an event—and that it might easily be done by enacting some laws in favour of the old religion, which might show Christendom, that he had not set his face against the church; but only against the supremacy of the pope.

This language in a prudential light, was more than plausible; and it had its full effect on Henry; especially as it coincided with his own apprehensions. For the enterprising spirit of Charles V, then in league with the pope, seemed to be carrying everything with a full tide of success in Germany; and to have nothing so much in contemplation as to re-establish, through Europe, the spiritual dominion of the pope.

An alteration in the public faith was then a matter of easy decision. The king's inclination alone was sufficient to enforce it. The duke of Norfolk therefore, as had been agreed, informed the house of the king's wish to show his regard to the old religion; and as it would be agreeable to his majesty to have everybody think as he did, the duke presumed, that nobody wished to think otherwise.

The king's ideas were received with reverence, and the whole house became immediately zealous papists; and passed an act, which had been framed by Gardiner, in favour of some of the more peculiar doctrines of the Roman church—transubstantiation—communion in one kind—vows of chastity,—the celibacy of the clergy—private masses—and auricular confession. This act, which passed in the year 1539, is known by the name of the act of the *six articles*; and was guarded according to the supposed degrees of guilt, by fines, forfeitures, imprisonment, and death.

The good archbishop never appeared in a more truly Christian light, than on this occasion. In the midst of so general a defection, (for there were numbers in the house, who had hitherto shown great forwardness in reformation), he alone made a stand. Three days he maintained his ground; and baffled the arguments of all opposers. But argument was not their weapon; and the archbishop saw himself obliged to sink under superior power. Henry ordered him to leave the house. The primate refused: "It was God's cause, he said, and not man's." And when he could do no more, he boldly entered his protest.—Such an instance of fortitude is sufficient to wipe off many of those courtly stains, which have fastened on his memory.

As the primate himself was a married man, it hath been said, he was particularly interested in this opposition: and it is certain, that as soon as the act passed, he sent his wife, who was a niece of Osiander's, into Germany. But Mr. Strype gives us good reason to believe that his chief objection to any of these articles, was the cruelty of the penalties, with which they were guarded; so alien, he thought, to the spirit of Christianity.

It is amazing that the very extraordinary freedom, which the archbishop took on this occasion, did not entirely ruin him in the king's favour. Indeed all men expected to have seen him sent immediately to the tower. But Henry's regard for him was so far from being lessened, that he ordered the duke of Norfolk, with the earl of Essex, and others, to dine with him the next day at Lambeth; and comfort him, as the king phrased it, under his disappointment.—“My lord archbishop, said Essex, you were born in a happy hour. You can do nothing amiss. Were I to do half of what you have done, my head must answer it:”—A prophetic speech as it afterwards appeared!

This singular visit, at Lambeth, though so well intended by the king, was the source of great mortification to all. The conversation, after dinner, falling on the late ministry, and Woolsey's name being mentioned, Essex could not forbear drawing a parallel between the archbishop and the cardinal. The cardinal, said he, through the violence of his temper in managing a debate, would often change his friends into enemies: whereas the mildness of the archbishop often makes his enemies, his friends. The duke of Norfolk adopted the remark; and surely, (said he with a sarcastic sneer,) nobody knew the cardinal better than my lord Essex, who was once his menial. Essex answered with some warmth, that he was not the only person in company, who had served the cardinal; at least, who had shown an inclination to serve him: for if fame spoke truth, the great duke of Norfolk himself had offered to be the cardinal's admiral, if ever he should attain the papacy. The duke of Norfolk firing at this, started up, and with a vehement oath, cried out, he lied. Essex preparing to resent the affront, the archbishop got up, and with the rest of the company interfering, composed the quarrel at that time: but the duke laid it up in one of those secret chambers of his memory, where those affronts are registered, which nothing but blood can expiate.

The arguments, which the archbishop had used in parliament against the act of the six articles, had been represented to the king in so strong a light, that he expressed a great desire to see them; and the archbishop accordingly had them fairly copied out for his inspection. The fate of the volume, in which they were contained, occasioned some perplexity.

Among the amusements of the English monarchs of those times, that of bear-baiting on the river Thames was in high esteem. In this diversion Henry happened to be engaged, when the archbishop's secretary took boat at Lambeth, charged with his master's book to Westminster. The waterman had orders to keep as far as possible from the tumult; but whether led by curiosity to see the pastime, or through some unavoidable accident, he found himself presently in the midst of the crowd; and by a mischance still greater, the bear making directly to his boat; climbed up the side, and overset it. The secretary

was soon taken up; but recovering from his surprize, he found he had lost his book. He hoped it might have sunk to the bottom; but he discovered afterwards, that it had fallen into the hands of some ignorant persons, who had conveyed it to a popish priest. The priest conceiving it to be a satire on the six articles, determined to carry it to the council. The secretary, in the meantime, suspecting what might happen, applied to lord Essex, as his master's friend. He had scarce told his story, when the priest appeared, at the door of the council-chamber, with the book under his arm. Lord Essex addressing him in an angry tone, and telling him that the book belonged to a privy-counsellor; the priest delivered it up, with many humble gesticulations; and was glad to get off without farther question.

SECTION IX.

The act of the six articles, was a signal to the whole popish party. They now plainly saw their power; and had only to exert it properly. The parliament and convocation were the scenes of action. Here the primate almost single opposed them. A few of the bishops lent him aid; but it was feeble. They were either uninterested in the cause; or men of no abilities in business. One or two of them, from whom he expected assistance, deserted him. But the severest loss he felt, at this time, was that of his great friend, the earl of Essex.

The interest of that eminent statesman declined with that of the protestants; and he paid at the block, the penalty of his master's offences. The dissolution of monasteries had given general disgust. The alms, and hospitality of the monks, indiscriminately administered, had through a course of ages invited sloth; and these channels of ready supply being now stopped, the necessitous found it irksome to exchange a life of idleness for a life of industry. A general discontent soon finds a mouth to express it. Clamour grew loud; and the king's government, uneasy. Something must necessarily be done.

Among all the arts of expediency laid up in the cabinets of princes, the readiest is to sacrifice a minister. The death of Cromwell was represented to the king as the best mean of composing the people. But though prudential reasons may necessitate a prince to discard a minister, yet guilt only, and that nicely examined, can authorize an act of blood. The hand of a tyrant however generally throws aside the balance. It is a nice machine; and requires pains, and temper to adjust it. The sword is an instrument more decisive; and of easier dispatch. Henry's was always stained with blood—often with innocent blood—but never with blood more innocent than that of Essex.

Among the many friends of this great man, several of whom had tasted largely of his bounty, not a single person endeavoured to avert his ruin, but the primate. He with generous friendship wrote to the king; united himself with the falling minister; and endeavoured, at the hazard of his own safety, to inspire his royal master with ideas of justice. But the fate of Essex was decreed; and so light a thing, as a whisper from the still voice of justice, could not avert it.—History unites in marking the duke of Norfolk, and the bishop of Winchester, as the secret contrivers of this base affair.

The primate and Essex had ever maintained a uniform friendship for each other, through every period of their power. It was a friendship pure from jealousy on both sides. Amidst all the jarrings of court faction, nothing ever disturbed it. Each knew the integrity of the other's intentions; and each supported the other's schemes with an exertion of all his interest. In some things

perhaps the zeal of Essex for his friend was apt to carry him too far; and the primate had oftener than once occasion to repress it.

A priest near Scarborough, sitting among his companions, over his beer, at the door of a country ale-house; and somebody happening to mention the archbishop; “That man, said the priest, as great as he is now, was once but an ostler; and has no more learning, than the goslings yonder on the green.” Essex, who had his spies in every quarter, was informed of what the priest had said. A messenger was immediately dispatched for him; and he was lodged in the Fleet.

Some months elapsed, when the archbishop, who was entirely ignorant of the affair, received a petition from the poor priest, full of penitence for his imprudence, and of supplication for mercy.

The primate having inquired into the business sent for him. “I hear, said he, you have accused me of many things; and among others, of my being a very ignorant man. You have now an opportunity of setting your neighbours right in this matter; and may examine me, if you please.”

The priest, in great confusion, besought his grace to pardon him: he never would offend in the same way again.

“Well then, says the archbishop, since you will not examine me, let me examine you.”

The priest was thunderstruck; making many excuses; and owning he was not much learned in book-matters.

The archbishop told him, he should not then go very deep; and asked him two or three of the plainest questions in the bible; Who was David’s father? and who was Solomon’s?

The priest confused at his own ignorance, stood speechless.

“You see, said the archbishop, how your accusation of me, rises against yourself. You are an admirable judge of learning and learned men.—Well, my friend, I had no hand in bringing you here, and have no desire to keep you. Get home; and if you are an ignorant man, learn at least to be an honest one.”

Soon after, the earl of Essex came to the primate; and with some warmth told him, he might for the future fight his own battles—that he had intended to have made the priest do penance at Paul’s cross; but his grace’s misjudged lenity had prevented him.

“My good lord, said the primate, taking him by the hand, be not offended. I have examined the man myself; and be assured from me he is neither worth your notice, nor mine.”

Notwithstanding however the loss of his great associate, the archbishop did not despair. An attempt was made in convocation to revive some popish

ceremonies. A sort of ritual was produced, which consisted of ninety articles. The archbishop unaided went through the whole; and reasoned with such strength of argument as brought over many to his opinion. Whom he could not convince, he silenced.

The next field, in which he appeared, was the house of lords, where he himself made the attack by bringing in a bill to mitigate the penalties of the six articles. This was a bold attempt, and drew on him the whole force of opposition. The bishops of Rochester and Hereford; who had promised to assist him, gave way, as the debate grew warm; and begged the archbishop to follow their example. It was in vain, they told him, to persist. He could not benefit his cause; but he might ruin himself. The archbishop, with that spirit which he always exerted, where religion was concerned, declared himself careless of any consequence.

His perseverance had an effect, which he durst not have hoped for. The laity were entirely exempted from the penalties of the act; and the clergy were in no danger, till after the third conviction. The primate obtained also that no offences should be cognizable, after they had lain dormant a year. It is not improbable, that he was indebted for this victory to the book, which he had sent to the king; the rigour of whose opinions it might, in some degree, have qualified.

In another effort also the primate obtained an advantage. He prevailed with the king to allow the use of a few prayers in the English tongue; which was the first attempt of the kind, that had been made.

On the other hand, he had the mortification to see the use of the bible taken away. Winchester brought the affair into convocation. In the debate which ensued, the translation was chiefly objected to. "Let the people have their bible, said Winchester, but let it be a correct one; and let not error and heresy be spread by authority." He proposed therefore to have the bible carefully examined; and with this view to have it put into the hands of the bishops; where he doubted not he had influence to suspend it, as long as he pleased. The primate saw his policy, and with all his weight opposed him. He wished to preserve the present translation even with all its inaccuracies; which he thought better than to run the risk of a new one. But he could not prevail. One point however he gained. Instead of putting the bible into the hands of the bishops; he got it put into the hands of the two universities, which he supposed would be less subject to popish influence.

He was right in his conjecture; for the universities were very speedy in their revision. But the primate had the old battle to fight again. Though a more correct bible was produced, yet the same opposition was still made to its publication; and new topics of argument were introduced. The archbishop however had now encouraged a considerable party to second him; and the

affair was combated with great vigour. But the opposition of the popish party became so formidable, that the archbishop was again entirely deserted. Single however, as he had done before, he still bore up against his adversaries; and persevered, till by dint of perseverance he obtained a limited use of the bible, though it was never publicly allowed during the remainder of Henry's reign.

SECTION X.

While the primate was acting this great and noble part in parliament, an unexpected event placed him in a very delicate and dangerous situation.

At an early hour, in the morning, an unknown person, of the name of Lascelles, desired a secret admittance to him; and with much hesitation opened an affair, which the archbishop would often say, gave his spirits a greater agitation than he ever felt before, or after.—The affair was no less than the discovery of the queen's incontinence.

The primate with his usual caution weighed the information; and the proof on which it rested; and he had the more time for deliberation, as the king was then on a progress. If the information were justly founded, it was both wrong, and dangerous, to conceal it—if unjustly, it was equally so to divulge it.—The dilemma was difficult.

The business was perplexed also by a circumstance of peculiar delicacy. The queen was niece to the duke of Norfolk, who was at the head of the popish party; and the good primate, who had seen with what sinister arts that class of men had carried on their schemes, was apprehensive, that such a story as this, might have too much the air of retaliation, and the malignity of party; and if it should prove false, would fix an imputation on his character, which he had ever been careful to avoid. His enemies, he knew, were always on the watch against him; and might, for aught he knew, have taken this very method of doing him an injury.

Thus distracted by a view of the affair in every light, he went at last to the lord chancellor, and the earl of Hertford, whom the king had left with a commission of regency, during his absence; and to them he unbosomed his distress.

After the first impression of terror was over, with which the privacy of such an affair naturally struck every one, who was connected with the tyrant, the chancellor, and lord Hertford were both of opinion, that as the affair rested on such undoubted evidence, it was less hazardous to divulge, than to conceal it. This point being settled, the more arduous one still remained of informing the king. The primate thought it best, that all three should join in the information; and give it that weight, which no single person could give. The two lords, on the other hand, were of a different opinion. As the intelligence, they said, had been given to the primate, and they had only been consulted, the information would come most naturally from him. Besides, they remarked, it was more respectful to keep a matter of so delicate a nature in a single hand; and if so, the primate's ecclesiastical character, and well-known judgment made him the properest messenger of bad news; as when he had given the wound, he could pour in balm to heal it.—In conclusion,

the meekness of the archbishop gave way; and he took upon himself alone the task of carrying the unwelcome truth to the king.

It was indeed an unwelcome truth. The king at this time, had so little conception of the queen's dishonesty, and loved her with such entire affection, that he had lately given public thanks for the happiness he enjoyed with her.

The method which the primate took, was, to draw up the whole affair on paper, with all the evidence, on which it rested, and present it to the king in private.

Henry took the information, as we may suppose he would. His fury broke out in vehement execrations, and threats against those, who had been the contrivers of such villainy. And yet even in his rage he seems to have spared the archbishop, as a man who might be imposed on; but could not intend deceit. By degrees however, as his royal fury subsided, and he examined the evidence coolly, it made a deep impression on him; and passions of another kind began to rise. In short, the queen and her accomplices were tried, condemned, and executed. A little before her death she confessed her guilt to the archbishop; and the full voice of history bears testimony to the justice of her sentence.

About the time, in which the archbishop was concerned in this affair, he was engaged in another, almost equally invidious; the visitation of All-souls-college in Oxford. That society was in much disorder. Their dissensions gave great offence; and the irregularity of their manners, still greater. They are taxed, in the language of those times, with their *scandalous computations*, *commessations*, and *ingurgitations*. The archbishop, as visitor, was called in by one of the contending parties; and he found it no easy matter to compose their heats and restore good manners. With his usual vigour he went through the disagreeable task; and having mixed as much lenity as possible, with his censures, he reviewed their statutes; and made such additions as he hoped would prevent any misbehaviour for the future.

In the year 1542, which was the year after these troublesome affairs, happened the battle of Solway-moss; where the Scottish army received a total defeat. Many of their nobility being taken prisoners, were sent to London, and committed to the care of the most considerable persons about the court. The earl of Cassilis, was sent to Lambeth. Here he found himself in a school of philosophy, and religion, where everything great and noble, and liberal abounded. Cassilis himself had a turn for literature; and soon became enamoured with this amiable society. The gentleness, and benevolence of the archbishop in particular attracted his esteem; and brought him to think

more favourably of the reformers; to whose opinions he soon became a thorough convert. Scotland had not yet received the tenets of the reformation: and the archbishop would often say, "That when it should please God to enlighten that country, he hoped the intimacy which had subsisted between him and the earl of Cassilis, might not wholly be without effect." And in fact it proved so: for some years afterwards, when the reformed opinions got footing in Scotland, nobody contributed so much to establish them, as that nobleman.

SECTION XI.

Though it might be supposed that the queen's death would have weakened the popish cause, yet we do not find that it produced any such effect. Many remarked, that after the first heat of the rupture with Rome, the king had been gradually returning towards it; and that, with regard to all the doctrines of popery, he was, at this time, more zealous than he had ever been: and they accounted for it very plausibly by observing, that as his passions began to cool, the religious fear took more possession of him.

The popish party, it is certain, at this period assumed unusual spirits; and thought they had influence enough to obtain any point.

One morning the primate was surprised with a message from the king, who lay off Lambeth in his barge, and wished immediately to speak with him. As he came on board, the king called out, "I can now inform you, who is the greatest heretic in Kent and ordering the barge to row gently up the river, he seated the archbishop by him, and produced a large book, which, he said, contained an accusation of several of the Kentish ministers against their diocesan.

The archbishop, who was not very present in the article of surprise, gazed first at the king, and then at the book, and could not, in some minutes, collect an answer. The king bad him not be distressed: "I consider the affair, said he, merely as a combination of your enemies; and as such I shall treat it."

Commissioners were soon after appointed to examine the evidence against the primate; and at the head of the board the king, with his usual indelicacy, placed the primate himself. The archbishop was shocked at this designation; and could barely be prevailed on to appear once at the opening of the commission. It sufficiently showed however, how the king stood affected; and saved the archbishop's advocates the trouble of any laboured defence. Each of the accusers endeavoured with what art he was able, to withdraw himself from a business, which was likely to bring him so ungrateful a return.

The chief contriver of this whole affair was the bishop of Winchester, who with great assiduity, had collected a variety of passages from sermons, and other discourses in which it was supposed, the archbishop had shown more regard to the *new learning* (as protestantism was called) and the professors of it, than the laws then in force allowed.

Among other agents whom Winchester employed, he drew over by his insinuating arts, two persons, who were very nearly connected with the archbishop himself; Dr. Thorndon, suffragan of Dover, and Dr. Barber, a civilian. Each of them had been promoted by the archbishop, and held an office under him; and both had been always treated by him on the footing of intimate

friends. Barber even lived in his house; and had a pension settled on him, that he might be ready with his advice on every occasion. When the proofs therefore of this confederacy were put into the primate's hands, we may suppose his astonishment on finding a letter from each of these persons, containing a variety of matter against him, which his familiarity, and unreserved freedom with them, had easily furnished.

Soon afterwards, when these two persons happened both to be with the archbishop, at his house at Beckesburne; "Come your ways with me, said he, leading them into his study; I must have your advice in a certain matter." When he had carried them to a retired window in the room, "You twain, he resumed, be men, in whom I have had much trust; and you must now give me some council. I have been shamefully abused by one or twain, to whom I have showed all my secrets. And the matter is so fallen out, that they have not only disclosed my secrets; but also have taken upon them to accuse me of heresy; and are become witnesses against me. I require you therefore to advise me, how I shall behave myself to them. You are both my friends; what say you to the matter?"

Whether they had any suspicion of the archbishop's meaning, does not appear. As the question however was put, they could not avoid pronouncing with great severity against such villainy. The primate then drawing the letters from his bosom, "Know you, said he, these papers, my masters?—You have condemned yourselves. God make you both good men. I never deserved this at your hands. If such men as you, are not to be trusted, there is no fidelity to be found. I fear my left hand will accuse my right." Having said this, he added, after a pause, that they might rest assured, he would take no steps to punish their baseness; but he thought it fit to discharge them from his service.

The king however treated the archbishop's accusers with more severity; and threw many of them into prison. This alarming Gardiner, he wrote a letter to the primate in the following abject style.

"Gentle father, I have not borne so tender a heart towards you, as a true child ought to bear; though you never gave me occasion otherwise; but rather by benefits provoked me to the contrary. I ask mercy of you with as contrite a heart, as ever David asked of God.—I desire you to remember the prodigal child. I am full sorry for my fault; heartily confessing my rashness, and un-deliberate doings. Forgive me this fault; and you shall never hereafter perceive, but that at all times I shall be as obedient, as ever was child to his natural father. I am yours, and shall be yours; and that truly while I live. Good father, I have given myself, unto you, heart, body, and service. And now remember that I am your true servant."

This letter, though it appears from Winchester's future life, to have been a mere artifice, so wrought on the gentle nature of the primate, that hearing

the king was resolved to lay Winchester's letters before the house of lords, he went to him, and at length prevailed on him, not to give the bishop any further trouble; but to let the matter drop.

The event of this accusation checked the ardour of the archbishop's enemies for some time; but it revived again in about two years, on the death of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk.

With this nobleman the king had preserved, through life, a friendship, of which it was not thought his heart was susceptible; and on hearing of his death, he pronounced a short eulogy on his memory, which was beyond the most laboured panegyric. The news was brought to him in council: "God rest his soul! (said the king, with much emotion:) he was an honest man. I have known him long; and never knew him speak a bad word behind the back of any man." Then turning round the board with a sarcastic air, "Of which of you, my lords, added he, can I say as much?"

The duke's amiable manners had long engaged the esteem of the archbishop; whose virtues, in return, were equally admired by the duke. A very sincere friendship subsisted between them; and it was thought the persuasive arguments of the primate had drawn the duke to think favourably of the reformers, whose friend and patron, he was generally esteemed.

Though the duke had ever been a cautious man; and interfered little in public affairs; yet considering his favour with the king, the popish party thought his death of great advantage to their cause. They conceived, that it might both weaken the protestant interest; and tend also to lessen the king's regard for the primate.

Elated with these hopes, the bishop of Winchester, and his emissaries, beset the king, now yielding to age and infirmity; and endeavoured to awaken his religious fears. "In vain might wise laws struggle with heresies, if the patrons of those heresies were above law. Of his majesty alone redress could be had. He was God's vicegerent to rectify the abuses of the times; and might be assured, the sword was not put into his hands in vain: he was accountable for the trust."

From hints they proceeded to plainer language; and at length, in direct words informed the king, that while the archbishop sat in council, nothing effectual could be consulted about religion. They prayed his majesty therefore to give leave for the primate to be sent to the Tower; and it would then be seen, how ample a charge against him would appear. The king pondered, and consented.

That very evening as it grew dark, Henry sent for the archbishop to Whitehall. He was walking pensively in a long gallery, when the archbishop entered. "My lord of Canterbury, said the king, I have given permission to have

you sent to the Tower. Some lords of council have dealt with me to that purpose. They have grievous things to lay to your charge, which they dare not utter, while you have free admission to the board.”

The archbishop expressed his readiness to have his conduct inquired into, in whatever manner the king thought fit: and offered to go, with great alacrity, to the Tower, till he had fully answered the accusations of his adversaries.

The king interrupting him as his manner was, with a burst of vociferation, expressed his surprise at the primate’s simplicity: but immediately softening his voice, told him, that it was much easier to keep him from the Tower, than to deliver him out of it. “You will be sent for, said he, in the morning, by the council; and dealt with haughtily. If the lords talk of committing you, desire you may first hear your accusers. If they deny this, appeal to me; and take this ring; which you may show them as a token.”

At eight the next morning, the archbishop was accordingly called before the council; and was kept some time standing at the door. Being admitted, he punctually followed the king’s directions; and when the lords insisted on sending him to the Tower, he appealed to the king, who had taken the affair, he told them, into his own hands. As he said this, he produced the ring, which was a token very well known.

Every one present was confounded; and the lord Russel starting up, cried out with an oath, “I told you, my lords, how it would be; and that the king would never suffer him to be committed.”

When the affair was brought before the king, he made a short business of it. Striding haughtily round the room, and throwing an eye of indignation, first on one, and then on another; “I thought, said he, I had a discreet council; but I see I am deceived. How have ye handled here my lord of Canterbury? What made ye of him? a slave; shutting him out of the council chamber among serving men.—I would have you to understand, by the faith I owe to God, (laying his hand solemnly on his breast) that if a prince can be beholden to a subject, I am to my lord of Canterbury; whom I account as faithful a man towards his prince, as ever was prelate in this realm: and one to whom I am sundry ways beholden: and therefore he that loveth me, will regard him.” Having said this he strode out; and left the lords endeavouring which should apologize to the primate in the highest strain of compliment. Next day the king sent several of them, as was customary with him, after such dissensions, to dine with the archbishop at Lambeth.

There is something singular in this whole affair. It is difficult to say, whether Henry was at first in earnest, and afterwards changed his resolution; or whether he took this method to check the forwardness of the archbishop’s enemies.

While this scene was acting in the council, a part of the same plan was preparing in parliament. There Sir John Goswick, in a studied harangue, accused the archbishop of being an upholder of heretical opinions; with which he had greatly infected the county of Kent. Henry being informed of this motion, called a gentleman in waiting, and sent Sir John this message: "Tell that varlet Goswick, that if he do not presently reconcile himself to my lord of Canterbury, I will punish him for the example of others. What knows he of my lord's preaching in Kent? Was not he, at that time, in Bedfordshire?"—The message was very intelligible ; and had its full effect.

SECTION XII.

But it was not only in matters of religion that every advantage was taken against the archbishop; the most trivial cavils were often made. He had enemies ready for any species of calumny; and Sir Thomas Seymour, who had abilities to object to nothing else, was able to object to the meanness of his house-keeping. On this head, he threw out insinuations to the king. Henry heard him with apparent indifference; and carelessly answered; “Ay! Seymour! and does my lord of Canterbury keep as little hospitality, as you say? In good faith, I thought the contrary:”

The king said no more, but took an early opportunity to send Sir Thomas, on some frivolous message, to Lambeth, about dinner-time. When he came there, he was carried through the great hall, where a bountiful table was spread, though only in its ordinary manner. From thence he was conducted upstairs to the archbishop, where he found a large company just sitting down to dinner; among whom the archbishop, in his usual hearty manner, insisted that Sir Thomas should take a place.

The next time the king saw him, “Well, said he, Seymour, what cheer had you at Lambeth? for I suppose my Lord would keep you to dine.”

The poor man, confounded at the question; and seeing plainly the king’s meaning, threw himself at his feet, and begged his Majesty to pardon the foul slander, with which he had aspersed the archbishop. He then frankly mentioned all he had seen; and concluded with saying, he believed nobody in the realm, except his highness himself, kept such a table.

“Ah! good man! said the king; all he hath, he spendeth in house-keeping: and if he now keep such a table, as you say, it being neither term, nor parliament, he is meetly visited, at those times, I warrant you.—But,” added the king, assuming a severer tone, “I know the bottom of all these falsities. You want to have a finger in church matters, do you? But you may set your heart at rest: while I am king, there shall be no such doings.”

These insinuations with regard to the archbishop’s great economy, seem in some degree to have been credited by Sir William Cecil; who in a letter, told the primate freely, what was current at court—that he, and all the bishops were immensely rich—and that they had nothing in view, but raising princely fortunes for their families.—The archbishop’s answer to Cecil is so ingenuous; and bears so strong a stamp of honesty, that it is well worth transcribing.

“After my hearty commendations, and thanks, as well for your gentle letter, as for the copy of the pacification; and for your good remembrance of the two matters, which I desired you not to forget; the one concerning the bishop of Cologne’s letters; and the other concerning Mr. Mowse; for whom I give you my most hearty thanks.

As for your admonition, I take it most thankfully; as I have ever been most glad to be admonished by all my friends; accounting no man so foolish, as he that will not bear friendly admonition. For myself I fear not that saying of St. Paul, which you quote against me, half so much as I do stark beggary. I took not so much care about my living, when I was a scholar at Cambridge, as at this present: and if a good auditor had my accounts; he would find no great surplusage to grow rich on.

As to the rest of the bishops, they are all beggars, except one man; and I dare well say, he is not very rich. If I knew any bishop that were covetous, I would surely admonish him.

To be short, I am not so doted, as to set my mind upon things here; which I can neither tarry long with, nor carry away with me. If time would have served, I would have written longer; but your servant, making haste, compelleth me to leave off; beseeching almighty God to preserve the king, and all his council; and send him well from his progress.

“Your own ever,

“T. Cantuar”

These invidious reports with regard to the avarice of the bishops, are commonly ascribed to the avarice of the courtiers, who were desirous of adding the revenues of the bishoprics to the spoils of the monasteries. The wealth of the bishops therefore was the fashionable court-topic of that day: and every patriot declaimed on the expediency of stripping them of their temporalities, and settling pensions on them; that they might not be encumbered with secular affairs.

Henry knew well the meaning of this language; and alluded to it, when he told Sir Thomas Seymour, he *wanted to have a finger in church matters*.

But though Henry would not allow his courtiers to strip the clergy of their possessions, he was very well inclined to do it himself. His method was to oblige the bishops to make disadvantageous exchanges with crown lands. In this way he stripped the see of Canterbury, during archbishop Cranmer’s time, of 150*l.* of annual rent; and the archbishop would often hint, that if he were less hospitable than his predecessors, a reason might be given.

During the short remainder of Henry’s reign, the archbishop met with no farther disturbance of any kind; his enemies being now convinced of the king’s resolution to screen him from all attacks. Indeed the protection, which Henry at all times afforded him, in opposition to his own irritable and implacable temper, the genius of his religion, and the bias of bigotry, makes one of those strange contradictions, which we sometimes meet with, but cannot account for, in the characters of men.

It is somewhat singular, that Henry, on one of these late attacks, observing the mildness of the primate’s temper, the acrimony of his adversaries, and

the danger he must necessarily run, when deprived of the protection of his prince, gave him for his arms, as if in the spirit of foresight, three pelicans feeding their young with their own blood: and added, in an odd jumble of coarse metaphor, "That he was likely to be tasted, if he stood to his tackling."

The last act of this reign was an act of blood; and gave the archbishop a noble opportunity of shewing how well he had learned that great Christian lesson of forgiving an enemy.

Almost without the shadow of justice, Henry had given directions to have the duke of Norfolk attainted by an act of parliament. The king's mandate stood in lieu of guilt; and the bill passed the house with great ease.

No man, except the bishop of Winchester, had been so great an enemy to the archbishop, as the duke of Norfolk. He had always thwarted the primate's measures; and oftener than once had practised against his life. How many would have seen with secret pleasure the workings of Providence against so rancorous an enemy; satisfied in having themselves no hand in his unjust fate! But the archbishop saw the affair in another light: he saw it with horror; and although the king had in a particular manner interested himself in this business, the primate opposed the bill with all his might; and when his opposition was vain, he left the house with indignation; and retired to Croydon,

While the king was pushing on the attainder of the duke of Norfolk, with such unjust, and cruel precipitancy, he was himself hastening apace to the grave. He had long been an object of disgust; and terror. His body was become a mass of fetid humours; and his temper was so brutal; that if he had not been diverted by a stratagem, he would have put his queen to death, only for differing from him on a point of theology—a queen too, whose daily employment it was, to sit for hours on her knees before him, dressing the offensive ulcers of his legs. His attendants approached him with trembling. One or two of them ran the risk of losing their heads, only for intimating their fears about his health. It was prognosticating his death and amounted nearly to high-treason.

Disease at length subdued this brutal spirit. When he was now almost in the article of death, Sir Anthony Denny ventured to hint, with great delicacy, that his physicians thought his majesty's life in some danger. Henry took the admonition patiently, for he felt nature speaking a less ceremonious language within. He was just able to order the archbishop to be called.

When the primate came, he found the king speechless, extended on a couch, his eyes glazed, and motionless. His attendants had ventured now to throw off all disguise; and the real sentiments of the heart, on this great occasion, were visible on every enlightened countenance. The archbishop's sensations were very different. His were the painful feelings, which arise from pity mingled with a high sense of gratitude, where there could be no

real esteem; and where, in an hour of the greatest distress, there was no possibility of being of service. With an eye melting in tenderness, he leaned over the dying king; and sympathized with every pang. Henry did not yet seem entirely deprived of intellect. The primate begged him to give some sign of his dying in the faith of Christ. Henry made an effort to grasp his hand, and expired.

SECTION XIII.

The death of Henry, which happened in the year 1547, opened a new scene. On producing his will, it appeared, that sixteen of the leading men of the kingdom were appointed regents. They were restrained by many limitations; but under these, a majority were allowed *to govern the kingdom as they thought fit*. This happy clause overturned all the rest. Henry had composed the regents, as equally as he could, of both parties in religion; and hoped, that by keeping things, during his son's minority, in the same hesitating situation, in which he had left them, he might prevent their running into extremes. But it happened otherwise. A majority plainly inclined to the protestant cause, either from conscience, or interest; and they thought themselves fully authorized by the precept of the will, *to govern the kingdom as they thought fit*. The earl of Hertford, the king's uncle, was created duke of Somerset, and chosen protector. The other regents immediately became cyphers.

The archbishop, though placed at the head of the regency, rarely interfered with state affairs; and gave little interruption to the ambition of his compeers. In ecclesiastical matters he took the lead: and everything that was done, in this department, during Edward's reign, may be considered as done by his authority.

But it would interfere too much with the nature of such a work as this, to enter into a minute detail of all the changes, which were made in religion. Such a detail appears more properly in works appropriated to these inquiries.¹ Here it is proposed only to illustrate the character of this excellent prelate; and it will be enough to touch so far on the changes he made, as to throw a proper light on his wisdom, prudence, learning, moderation, and firmness.

The first step he took, regarded the settlement of the supremacy; a point, which he had exceedingly at heart, as the foundation of everything else. He formally therefore petitioned the young king, that as he had exercised the office of archbishop under his father, he might be permitted to exercise it under him: and he would perform no episcopal duty, till his new licence was made out.—This example, he proposed should be enforced on the clergy.

Thus authorized he proceeded to the affairs of religion. But before anything was done, he thought it right to show the necessity of doing something: and to this purpose a general visitation was made. Abuses of all kinds were inquired into—corrupt doctrines; corrupt practices; superstitious ceremonies; the lives of the clergy; and the manners of the laity. The visitors had

¹ See Jewel's apology, Burnet's hist. of the reform. Heylin's eccles. hist &c.

authority to proceed a step farther. In flagrant cases a few censures were passed; and a few injunctions given. The idea was to restrain, rather than to abolish, the old system.

Among other things it was thought expedient to suspend preaching. Amidst the licence of the times, no species of it deserved more reproof, than that which had gotten possession of the pulpit. Many of the monks had been secularized; and bringing with them into their churches their old monastic ideas, the popular divinity of those times was, if possible, more opposite to scripture, and more offensive to common sense, than it had ever been in the darkest reign of popery. In the room of preaching, a book of homilies was published, and ordered to be read in churches. The use of scripture also was allowed; and that the people might have an explanation of it at hand, the commentary of Erasmus was authorized.—These changes had great efficacy; moderate as they appeared, and aiming rather to undermine the foundations of popery, than to overturn them by any open assault.

The minds of the people indeed were, in a good degree, prepared for them; and it is said, nothing contributed more to loosen their prejudices, than a popular paper, which was published, about the close of the late reign, entitled, *The supplication of the poor commons to the king*. It was levelled chiefly at the ignorance, and immorality of the Romish clergy; and being written in a masterly manner; and interspersed, with a variety of lively anecdotes, it was much read; and tended greatly to give the people just ideas of the clerical office. Among other stories the following very curious one is related. “A certain court-chaplain, who had great preferment, observed, as he was travelling, a church upon a fair hill, beset with groves, and fields, the green meadows lying beneath on the banks of a river, garnished with willows, poplars, and alders. He was mightily taken with the place, and calling out to his servant, Robin, said he, this benefice standeth pleasantly. I would it were mine. Why, Sir, said his servant, it is yours; and immediately named the parish—If your highness had so many swine in this realm, as you have men, would you commit the keeping of them to such swineherds, as did not know their swine-cots, when they saw them?”

The dread, in which the Romish clergy were at that time thrown, from what had been already done, is strongly expressed in the following language. “These dumb dogs have learned to fawn upon them, who bring them bread; and to be wonderful frisky when they are cherished: but if they be once bid to *couch*, they draw the tail between their legs, and get them strait to their kennel: and then, come who will, they stir no more, till they hear their sire pope cry out, hey, cut, or long tail. So afraid are they of stripes, and lest they

should be tied up so shortly that they cannot range abroad; nor worry, now and then, a lamb.”

Then follows a long account of their rapacity, of which many instances are given. Among others, we are told, “it was no rare thing to see poor people beg at Easter, to pay for the sacrament, when they receive it. Nor is it less common to see men beg for dead bodies, that they may pay the priest’s dues. It is not long since, in the city of London, a dead body was brought to the church to be buried; being so poor, that it was almost quite naked. But these charitable men, who teach us that it is one of the works of mercy to bury the dead, would not bury this dead corps, without their dues. So they caused it to be carried into the street, till the poor people, who dwelled there, begged so much as the dues came to.”

The apostrophe of these suppliants to the king was very noble, and spirited. “If you suffer Christ’s poor members to be thus oppressed, expect the righteous judgment of God for your negligence. Be merciful therefore to yourself, as well as to us. Endanger not your own soul by the suffering of us poor commons. Remember that your hoar hairs are a token, that nature maketh haste to absolve your life. Defer not then, most dread sovereign, the reformation of these enormities. For the wound is even unto death. Whoredom is more esteemed than wedlock. Simony hath lost its name. Usury is lawful gains. What example of life do the people show this day, which declares us more to be the people of God, than Jews, and Mahometans

The leaders of the popish party easily saw the tendency of the primate’s measures; and gave them what opposition they were able. The Bishop of Winchester never appeared in a more becoming light. With equal firmness, and plausibility, he remonstrated. The commencement of a minority, he said, was not a time to introduce novelties. To alter the religion of a country was a serious business; and required the utmost deliberation. No act of legislature, he observed, had yet passed; and it was great presumption to publish things under the king’s name, with which, it was well known, neither he, nor the protector, were at all acquainted. But even if bare decency were consulted, it was very offensive to all sober men to see the wisdom of ages cancelled in a few months.—The paraphrase of Erasmus, he remarked, was written at a time when the pen of that writer was very licentious. It contained many points of doctrine, which, he presumed, the protestants themselves would not willingly inculcate; and he would maintain, that it contradicted the homilies in many particulars. As for the homilies, though he did not doubt their being well intended, yet they were certainly very inaccurate compositions; and ran into length on many curious points of doctrine, which tended rather to mislead, than to inform the people.—For himself, he said, he was careless of all

consequences, which the freedom of his speech might draw upon him. The last scene of his life was now on the stage; and he only wished to conclude it properly.”

There was an energy, and greatness in this language, superior to anything, that had ever fallen from Gardiner: and if that had been the last scene of his life, we must have acknowledged the dignity of its conclusion. In his objections also there was more than a show of reasoning; and the promoters of reformation had but an indifferent ground for a defence. They answered with the plainness and simplicity of honest men (which was the best defence they could make), that they were assured their amendments were right on the whole; and that if some things were objectionable, these too should be amended, as soon as possible.

This was a better answer; and more in the spirit of reformation, than their replying, as they afterwards did, to the arguments of Winchester, by throwing him into prison. This violent measure may well be reckoned among the errors of those times. The archbishop indeed does not appear to have had any hand in this affair. It issued solely from the council; and was intended probably to remove Winchester from the parliament, which was then about to be assembled. In every light, political or religious, it was a harsh, discordant measure; and very unworthy of the liberal cause, which it was intended to serve.

SECTION XIV.

On the 4th of November 1547, about nine months after Henry's death, a parliament was assembled; and the leaders of the protestant cause hoped to make it the instrument of still more essential alterations, than any they had yet made. Indeed, the bias of the nation leaned more to this side. Such a change appeared in the opinions of men, since the last parliament of Henry, that no one could imagine the two assemblies were composed of the same people. In every debate the protestant took the lead; and drew over a majority. In that age of novelty, when the general principles of men were unfixed, it was an easy matter to persuade those, who were incapable of rational inquiry. The convocation, animated by the archbishop, showed the same spirit; and digested business for the parliament. The act of the six articles was repealed: communion in both kinds was allowed: tradition was discredited: lent was considered as a political institution: the liturgy was ordered to be new modelled; an easy catechism to be framed; and the canon law to be reformed.

These things however were not all done at this time: but I mention them together, as the principal acts of parliament, and of convocation, during this short reign.

In framing the catechism, and new modelling the liturgy, and the canon law, the archbishop had the chief hand. The last indeed he had attempted in the late reign: but the prevalence of the popish party obliged him to leave that useful work unfinished. He now undertook it in earnest: and not being satisfied with making it an accurate, and judicious performance, he endeavoured to make it even elegant. Dr. Haddon was esteemed at that time, the best latinist in England; and the archbishop engaged him to revise the language of his performance. Several of Haddons corrections may yet be seen in the original manuscript; which is still extant in Bennet-college in Cambridge.

Mulieruni a partu; is altered into *Levatarum puerperarum:* and *cuicunq hoc prærogativum est,* into *cuicunq hoc peculiare jus tribuitur, quod prærogativum vocant.*—But such was the fatality attending this useful work, that it was prevented taking effect in Edward's, as it had been in Henry's reign: it was not sufficiently prepared to be brought forward, before that king's immature death.

The archbishop endeavoured also to confine the office of confirmation, as much as he could to adults. He saw little use in administering it to children. But when people were come to years of discretion, and seriously desired to

renew their baptismal vow, he thought the solemnity of such an ordinance, at that time, might make a strong impression.

Some other changes he made of smaller import; but still with that admirable caution, and prudence, which marked all his proceedings.

His caution however did not pass wholly uncensured. Many of his friends conceived, that he might have taken hastier steps. The zeal of Calvin in particular took offence. That reformer wrote his sentiments very freely to the archbishop; and wished him to push matters with a little more spirit. He put him in mind of his age, which could not long allow him to continue his useful labours; and feared, that on his death, an opportunity would be lost, which might never be recovered. The archbishop answered his letter with great kindness—reminded him of the many difficulties he had still to oppose; and endeavoured to convince him of the great imprudence of less cautious measures.

While the primate was thus abolishing the essentials of popery, it may be supposed, he did not suffer it's pageantry to pass unobserved.

The frequency of processions was become a great abuse. Men began to think nothing was religion, but what was an object of sight. This shows how much they have to answer for, who introduce needless ceremonies into the offices of any religious establishment. The minds of the people at the time we are now describing, fascinated with pomp, and splendour, saw with less reluctance the foundations of popery shaken, than the ostentatious ceremonies abolished of carrying palms on Palm-Sunday, or ashes on Ash-Wednesday.

Mr. Hume treating these alterations with levity, attributes them to the morose humour of the reformers; and insinuates, that it is happy when superstition, (which is generally with him another word for religion), takes this inoffensive turn.—When Mr. Hume rears the standard of infidelity, and boldly combats the truths of religion, he acts openly, and honestly: but when he scatters his careless insinuations, as he traverses the paths of history, we characterize him as a dark, insidious enemy.

During the debates on these subjects, a very extraordinary phenomenon appeared in the house of lords—the archbishop of Canterbury at the head of the popish peers, and popish bishops, contending eagerly against the whole force of the protestant interest. The point in dispute, was the propriety of granting a large parcel of collegiate, and chantry lands to the king's use. Had it been intended to employ this grant in any useful work, the archbishop would readily have given his vote for it: but he knew well what direction it would take; and he wished the lands rather to continue as they were, hoping

for better times, than have them fall into the hands of rapacious courtiers. He had the mortification however to see his opponents prevail.

While this bill was depending in the house, the two universities, which were clearly comprehended in the letter of it, became very apprehensive; and made powerful intercession at court to avert the danger. Whether the primate interested himself in their favour on this occasion, does not appear: it is rather probable that he did, as we find him interesting himself for them on many other occasions.

They were, at that time, little more than nurseries of sloth, superstition, and ignorance; and not many degrees raised above the monkish institutions, which had lately been suppressed. Many ingenious men, and scholars of great reputation, were among them; but they were yet so thinly scattered in the several colleges, as to have little influence in forming the general character of the universities: and they who wished well to these foundations, easily saw this corruption must terminate in their ruin; and desired to avert it. The archbishop always thought himself much interested in the welfare of both the universities, but of Cambridge in particular; and though he does not appear to have had any legal power there, yet such was his interest at court, and such was the general dependence of the more eminent members of that society upon him, that scarce anything was done there, either of a public, or a private nature, without consulting him. It was his chief endeavour to encourage, as much as possible, a spirit of inquiry; and to rouse the students from the slumber of their predecessors; well knowing, the *libertas philosophandi* was the great mean of detecting error, and that true learning could never be at variance with true religion. Ascham, and Cheke, two of the most elegant scholars of that age, were chiefly relied on, and consulted by the archbishop in this work.

SECTION XV.

While the primate was acting this great, and good part, and on all occasions discovering the utmost mildness and candour, the truth of history calls on us to acknowledge, that on one unhappy occasion, he appeared under a very different character; that of a bigoted persecutor. It is very true indeed, that he went not voluntarily into this business, but acted under a commission to inquire into heretical opinions.

When the errors of the church of Rome were scrutinized, private judgment, although the basis of all liberal inquiry, gave birth, as might naturally be supposed, to a variety of strange enthusiastic opinions. Many of these were unquestionably absurd enough; and some of them destructive of moral goodness: as that, the elect could not sin—that although the outward man might transgress, the inward man remained immaculate—that the regenerate have a right to what they want; and some others equally detestable.—They were opinions however of a less offensive nature, that drew upon them the archbishop's severity.

Joan Bocher, and George Paris were accused, though at different times, one for denying the humanity of Christ; the other for denying his divinity. They were both tried and condemned to the stake: and the archbishop not only consented to these acts of blood; but even persuaded the aversion of the young king into a compliance. "Your majesty must distinguish (said he, informing his royal pupil's conscience) between common opinions, and such as are the essential articles of faith. These latter we must on no account suffer to be opposed."

It is true, these doctrines, especially the latter, in the opinion of the generality of Christians, are subversive of the fundamentals of Christianity. To deny the divinity of Christ seems to oppose the general idea which the scriptures hold out of our redemption. On the other hand, many particular passages, which describe the humanity of Christ, seem to favour the doctrine: and some there are, who hold it even in this enlightened age. At worst therefore, we must consider it, as an erroneous opinion. To call it heresy, when attended with a good life, is certainly a great breach of Christian charity. Is it not then astonishing, that a man of the archbishop's candour could not give it a little more indulgence? If any opinions can demand the secular arm, it must be such only, as lead to actions, which injure the peace of society. We are surprised also at seeing the archbishop so far depreciate his own cause, as to suppose that one man incurred guilt by acting on the same principles, which entitled another to applause: and that he who in the opinion of one church, was the greatest of schismatics himself, should not

even in common justice indulge, in all the more speculative points of religion, toleration to others.

Nothing even plausible can be suggested in defence of the archbishop on this occasion, except only that the spirit of popery was not yet wholly repressed.

There are however, among protestant writers at this day, some who have undertaken his vindication. But I spare their indiscretion. Let the horrid act be universally disclaimed. To palliate, is, to participate. With indignation let it be recorded, as what above all other things has disgraced that religious liberty, which our ancestors in most other respects so nobly purchased.

From this disagreeable view of the archbishop let us endeavour to bring ourselves again in temper with him, by viewing him as the friend and patron of the distressed. The suffering professors of protestantism, who were scattered in great numbers about the various countries of Europe, were always sure of an asylum with him. His palace at Lambeth might be called a seminary of learned men; the greater part of whom persecution had driven from home. Here among other celebrated reformers, Martyr, Bucer, Aless, Phage found sanctuary. Martyr, Bucer, and Phage were liberally pensioned by the archbishop, till he could otherwise provide for them. It was his wish to fix them in the two universities, where he hoped their great knowledge, and spirit of inquiry, would forward his designs of restoring learning: and he at length obtained professorships for them all. Bucer and Phage were settled at Cambridge; where they only showed what might have been expected from them, both dying within a few months after their arrival. But at Oxford Martyr acted a very conspicuous part; and contributed to introduce among the students there a very liberal mode of thinking.

Aless had been driven from Scotland, his native country, for the novelty of his opinions. The cause in which he suffered, added to his abilities and learning, so far recommended him to the university of Leipsic, to which he retired, that he was chosen a professor there. At this place he became acquainted with Melancthon, who having written a treatise on some part of the controversy between the papists, and protestants, was desirous of consulting the archbishop on a few points; and engaged Aless, otherwise not averse to the employment, to undertake a voyage into England for that purpose. In the course of the conference, the archbishop was so much taken with his simplicity, and learning, that he settled a pension on him; and retained him in his family.

The misfortunes of the times drew Alasco also into England, where the archbishop became an early patron to him; and showed on this occasion at least, the candour and liberality of his sentiments, by permitting a person,

who held many opinions very different from his own, to collect his brethren, and such as chose to communicate with him, into a church. At the head of this little assembly Alasco long presided; exhibiting an eminent example of piety, and decency of manners.

Among other learned foreigners John Sleiden was under particular obligations to the archbishop. Sleiden was, at that time, engaged in writing the history of the reformation; a work from which much was expected; and which the archbishop, by allowing him a pension, and opportunities of study, enabled him to prosecute with less difficulty, than had attended the beginning of his labours.

Leland, the first British antiquarian, was also among the primate's particular friends. Leland had a wonderful facility in learning languages; and was esteemed the first linguist in Europe. The archbishop soon took notice of him, and with his usual discernment, recommended him to be the king's librarian. His genius threw him on the study of antiquities; and his opportunities, on those of his own country. The archbishop, in the meantime, by procuring preferment for him, enabled him to make those inquiries, to which his countrymen have been so much indebted.

Among others, who were under obligations to the archbishop's generosity, was the amiable bishop Latimer, who, not choosing to be reinstated in his old bishopric and having made but an indifferent provision for his future necessities, spent a great part of his latter life with the archbishop, at Lambeth.

Besides this intimacy with learned men at home, the archbishop held a constant correspondence with most of the learned men in Europe.

The great patron of Erasmus had been archbishop Warham; than whom, to give popery its due, few churchmen of those times led a more apostolical life. When Cranmer succeeded Warham, Erasmus was in the decline of age. He found, however, during the short time he lived, as beneficent a friend under the new archbishop, as he had lost in the old one.

The primate corresponded also with Osiander, Melancthon, and Calvin. His foreign correspondence indeed was so large, that he appointed a person with a salary at Canterbury, whose chief employment it was, to forward, and receive his packets.

Among the most eminent of his correspondents was Herman, archbishop and elector of Cologne. This prelate had been early impressed with the principles of the reformation by Melancthon; and had used all his influence to introduce them in his electorate. But he met with powerful opposition; the pope and emperor combining against him, the former in his spiritual, the latter in his temporal capacity. So potent a combination crushed him. Terms indeed were offered; but he would hearken to no dishonourable compromise.

“Nothing, he would say, can happen to me unexpectedly. I have long since fortified my mind against every event.” Instead of a splendid life therefore, at variance with his opinions; he chose a private station; in which he enjoyed the pleasures of study; the friendship of good men; and the tranquillity of a good conscience.

SECTION XVI.

In the year 1549, the archbishop was engaged in a controversy of a very singular kind, on the following occasion.

The dissolution of monasteries, having thrown the landed interest of the nation, into new hands, introduced also a new kind of culture; which at first occasioned a scarcity. Mr. Hume, speaking of this matter, with great judgment remarks, “that no abuse in civil society is so great, as not to be attended with a variety of beneficial consequences; and in the beginnings of reformation, the loss of these advantages is always felt very sensibly; while the benefit resulting from the change, is the slow effect of time; and is seldom perceived by the bulk of a nation.” Thus, on the present occasion, the bad effects of a new mode of culture were experienced, before its advantages took place; and the people expressing dissatisfaction in all parts, in some flamed out into acts of violence. Among other insurrections, one in Devonshire was very formidable. The insurgents felt the effects of famine, but in an age of ignorance they could not trace the cause. The discontented priests, who swarmed about the country, presently assigned one. “The famine was a judgment for the abolition of the holy catholic religion; and till that was restored, the people must not look either for seed-time, or harvest.”

Such language changed riot into enthusiasm. The banner of the cross was reared; and the insurgents, marking themselves with the five wounds of Christ, called their march, *the pilgrimage of grace*.

Their first attempt was on Exeter, which they surrounded with their tumultuary forces. The town was reduced to extremity; but still resisted; encouraged chiefly by a brave old townsman, who bringing all his provision into the street, “Here, cried he, my fellow-citizens, take what I have, among you. For myself, I will fight with one arm, and feed on the other, rather than suffer these ruffians to enter.”

As the rebels were thus checked by the firmness of Exeter, they employed this time of inactivity in sending petitions and articles to the king, in which they demanded the ceremonies of the popish worship to be restored—the new liturgy to be abolished—the use of the bible to be forbidden—and, in short, everything to be undone, that had already been done.

General answers were given to these demands; but the rebels continuing still unsatisfied, Lord Russel was sent against them with a body of forces. He fell on them, as they lay before Exeter; and gave them a severe defeat.

But though their spirit was broken, their prejudices continued. The archbishop therefore engaged in the humane part of bringing them to reason: hoping that their sufferings had, by this time, abated the ardour of their zeal.

The articles of their petitions, relating to religion, which were fifteen in number, the archbishop undertook to answer. The first rough draught of this work, which is of considerable length, is still extant in the library of Benet-college, in Cambridge, and is published by Mr. Strype in his appendix to the life of archbishop Cranmer. It contains a very extensive compass of learning; and is written with great strength of argument: but its principal recommendation is, its being so admirably adapted to the capacity of those, to whom it was addressed. Nothing can show more judgment or knowledge of the manners of the lower people;—I shall give the reader a few passages from this very masterly work, as a specimen.

The rebel articles begin with the phrase, *We will have*.

“In the first place, says the archbishop, I dislike your beginning. Is it the fashion of subjects to say to their prince, *We will have*? Would any of you, that be householders, be content that your servants should come upon you with harness on their backs, and swords in their hands, and say, *We will have*?

“But leaving your rude, and unhandsome manner of speech, I will come to the point. You say *you will have all the holy decrees to be observed*. But I dare say, very few, or none of you, understand what you ask. Do you know what the holy decrees be? As *holy* as they may be called, they be indeed so wicked, and full of tyranny, that the like were never devised. I shall rehearse some of them, that you may see how holy they be.—One decree saith, *That all the decrees of the bishop of Rome ought to be kept as God’s word*. Another, that *whosoever receiveth not the decrees of the bishop of Rome, his sin shall never be forgiven*. A third, that *although the bishop of Rome regard neither his own salvation, nor any man’s else, but puts down with himself, headlong innumerable people, by heaps, into hell; yet may no mortal man presume to reprove him therefore*. I cannot think that you be so far from all godliness, as to desire decrees, which be so blasphemous to God; and so far from all equity and reason. For I dare say, that the subtle papists when they moved you to stand in this article, that *all holy decrees should be observed*, never showed you these decrees: for if they had, they knew right well, you would never have consented to this article.

“But now let me show you, what a miserable case you should bring yourselves into, if the king’s majesty should assent unto this first article. For among these decrees, one is, that *no priest shall be sued before a temporal judge for any manner of cause or crime; but before his bishop only*. Another is, that *a priest may sue a temporal man either before a temporal, or a spiritual judge, at his pleasure*. I cannot deny, but these be good, and beneficial decrees for the liberty of the clergy. But I suppose none of you will think it an indifferent decree; that a priest shall sue you, where he list:

but if he had slain one of your sons or brothers, you could have no remedy against him; but only before the bishop. What mean these papistical priests, think you, that stirred you up to ask such decrees to be observed, but craftily to bring you under their subjection; and that you yourselves ignorantly asking ye wist not what, should put your heads under their girdles.

“Surely, if ye had known these decrees, when ye consented to this article, ye would have torn the article in pieces: for by this article ye would have all the ancient laws of the realm to cease, and those decrees come in their room. Or otherwise, by your own article ye would condemn yourselves to be heretics.

“How ye be bewitched by these false papists? Why do ye suffer them to abuse you by their subtlety? Why do ye not send them to the king, like errant traitors, saying unto him, ‘Most mighty prince, we present here unto you heinous traitors against your majesty, and great deceivers of us, your true subjects. We have erred; and by ignorance have been seduced to ask, we wist not what. Have pity on our ignorance; and punish these abominable traitors.’

What was in your minds to ask such a thing as this? and so presumptuously to say, *We will have it?* I trust there be not in you so much malice, and devilishness, as the article containeth: but that you have been artfully suborned by wicked papists to ask, you know not what.

“If you had asked, that the word of God might be duly observed, and kept in this realm, all that be godly would have commended you. But as you ask Romish decrees to be observed, there is no godly Englishman, that will consent to your article. But clean contrary, a great number of godly persons within this realm, for the love of God, be daily humble suitors to the king’s majesty, that he will weed out of his realm all popish decrees, laws and canons, and whatsoever else is contrary to God’s word. And is any of you so far from reason, as to think he will hearken to you, who say, *We will have Romish laws;* and turn his ear from them, who are humble suitors for *God’s word?*”

From these few extracts, which are taken from the archbishop’s answer to the first article, the reader may judge, in how admirable a way he answered the remaining fourteen. The whole work indeed may be a model to those, who wish to make themselves masters of that mode of reasoning, which is adapted to the people.

SECTION XVII.

The extensive correspondence abroad, in which the archbishop was engaged, and the many applications, he received from all parts, put him, at this time, (about the year 1546) on a scheme, which he had greatly at heart—the union of all the protestant churches in Europe.

They were all united against the pretensions of the church of Rome: but in no other point were they perfectly harmonious. Their widest differences however regarded the sacraments, divine decrees, and church government. On each of these heads they held their several opinions with obstinacy enough on all sides.

Of these dissensions the papists took the advantage. “Let the protestants alone, (was the cry) they will soon quarrel with the same acrimony among themselves, which they have already shown towards us: and it will presently appear, that there can be no criterion of religion, nor peace to Christendom, but in the bosom of a mother-church.”

Such sarcastic reflections hurt the archbishop; as he conceived they injured religion. He earnestly wished therefore to remove this block of offence; and to give the cause he revered, that support, which next to truth, he thought union alone could give it. How noble would be the coalition, he would say, if all the members of protestantism should unite in one mode of church government; and in one confession of faith!

In the southern parts of France, in Holland, and in Germany, the reformation flourished chiefly under Calvin, Bullinger, and Melancthon. To these eminent reformers the archbishop applied with much earnestness; entreating them to join their endeavours with his, in forwarding this great scheme; and proposed England as a place, where they might hold their consultations with the most convenience, and the most security. The good archbishop wanted the experience of later times to convince him, how great an impossibility he attempted. He was not aware that when private judgment becomes the criterion, it will show itself of course in different creeds, in different modes of worship, and in different forms of church government; which latter will always take their complexion from the state.—How little could be expected from this interview, Melancthon’s answer might early have convinced him. That reformer, in strong language, applauded the primate’s intention, and heartily wished it might succeed. “But, added he, the model you ought to go upon, is certainly that confession of faith, which we signed at Augsburg.”—However liberal that confession might be, there was certainly no liberality in the imposition of it.

Calvin seems to have expected very little from this business. He answers only in general terms. He professes that he would cross ten seas with

cheerfulness for the good of Christendom, or of the church of England alone; but, in the present case, he pleads his inability; and recommends the whole business to the hands of God.—This reformer saw deeper into the affair, than our good archbishop: he not only saw the impracticability of it; but probably thought, with many other learned men, that if the thing had even been practicable, it was by no means advisable: as different sects would naturally be a check on each other, and might preserve the church of Christ from those impurities, which the despotism of the Roman hierarchy had unquestionably introduced; and which another despotic hierarchy might introduce again.

During the course of this projected union, a question arose of great importance; and which indeed threw many difficulties in the very vestibule of it. The question was, whether, in drawing up a confession of faith, definite, or general terms, should be adopted? The primate, with his usual candour, pleaded for the greatest latitude. “Let us leave the portal,” said he, as wide “as wide as we can; and exclude none, whom it is in our power to comprehend.” He was opposed in this argument chiefly by Melancthon; who, though a mild and gentle reformer on most occasions, wrote with too much animosity on this; making lip in zeal, what he wanted in candour.

Here ended the projected union of the protestant churches. The troublesome times, which afterwards broke out in England, put an end to all farther thoughts of the design; after the archbishop had laboured in it full two years to no purpose.

SECTION XVIII.

But although the primate's moderation failed of its effect abroad, it had fuller scope among the sectaries at home.

When the bible was first opened, after men had so long been deprived of it, they were satisfied with reading it simply, and gathering from it a rule of life and manners; overlooking questions of difficulty in the general comfort derived from its promises; and troubling nobody with their particular opinions. This is ever the golden age of religion. But men soon begin to look higher. The vulgar can read their bibles and learn their duty. The learned must do something more. They must unravel knotty points. They must broach novel doctrines, which the people must be made to receive, as points of importance. They must contradict, and oppose: they must show themselves, in short, to be able champions of religion; and fit to appear at the head of sectaries.

Much of this spirit had already gotten abroad in England; and a variety of causes concurred in stirring it up. Besides the different tenets, which began to appear among the English protestants themselves; disgusted papists artfully threw in their subtleties, and distinctions; and a multitude of religionists from Germany, Switzerland, and Holland, led by their pastors, brought over with them multifarious and contradictory creeds. It was then as common for men to migrate for the sake of religion, as it is now for the sake of trade. In a word, all this mass, digesting together, began to ferment.

If sectaries (united in leading principles, and differing only in a few indifferent forms, or speculative points) would keep their opinions to themselves, their differences, as Calvin seemed to think, might serve the cause of religion, instead of injuring it. But the forwardness of teachers in imposing all their own whimsical dogmas on others, instead of keeping to the great truths of religion, is the grand mischief. It is this, which distracts the people; who being thus accustomed to hear a different doctrine every day, begin to think of religion itself, which appears so variable an object, with less reverence.—Much of this intemperate zeal had at this time possessed the teachers of religion; and it became very evident, that practical Christianity had lost ground, in proportion, as the science of theology was more studied.

To provide for the peace of the church, in opposition to this growing evil, the council appointed the archbishop to draw up a set of articles. The affair was delicate. The liberty of private judgment being the basis of the late secession from the church of Rome, every restraint upon it seemed an opposition to the leading principle of the reformation. A restraint however on the clergy seemed to be no breach of liberty. It was only what every church might justly impose. Nothing more therefore was intended on this

occasion, but to draw such a line, as would keep pastors within the pale of their own congregations; or at least prevent their disturbing the established church.

Among the various opinions, which distracted men at this time, besides the tenets of popery, which were yet far from being silenced, were those concerning justification, faith, good works, free will, and predestination.

The doctrine of supererogation, and the scandalous sale of indulgences, had brought good works into such discredit, that many well-disposed teachers, with a view to oppose this evil the more effectually, laid the chief stress on faith. The Antinomian pastors, refining on this, denied the benefit of any works at all. This again gave just offence to others; who to rid themselves of this mischief, ran into the other extreme; and not content with showing the necessity of good works, they inculcated their meritorious, and sufficient efficacy.

Again, on the topics of free will, and predestination, the same variety of opinions distracted the people. Some teachers left the will at perfect liberty. Others thought it more scriptural to allow it only free to sin; while good works, they conceived, proceeded merely from the grace of God. Others again, and in particular a sect styled the Gospellers, would admit no qualifying at all in the doctrine of predestination; but resolved all into the absolute decrees of God.

Amidst this variety of doctrine, the archbishop endeavoured to draw up such a set of articles, as would best provide for the peace of the church. It was a nice affair, and he thought it prudent on this occasion, as he had done before on a similar one, to use such moderation, perhaps such well-timed ambiguity, as might give as little offence as possible.

Such was the origin of that celebrated test of orthodoxy, which is now known by the name of the 39 articles of the church of England.—Those framed by the archbishop indeed consisted of 42: but in all succeeding settlements of the church, what was now composed on this head, was not only made the groundwork; but was, in many parts, almost verbatim retained.

In this work it is not known that the archbishop had any coadjutor. It is improbable however that a man of his candour and modesty would engage in a work of this kind without many consultations with his friends: and it is commonly supposed, that Ridley, bishop of London, was particularly useful to him. Ridley was a man of exemplary piety, and learning; and what was still more necessary in the present work, a man of sound judgement, and great moderation.

The chief objection, at this time of day, against the articles, seems to be their treating at all of matters of such mysterious import. Let us endeavour, to settle, as we please, the doctrines of foreknowledge, predestination, and

other points, equally abstruse; we shall find ourselves, at the close of the argument, only where we began. As these deep questions however were the chief points debated at that time, the archbishop was under a necessity of taking notice of them. At this day it is less necessary; and therefore articles accommodated to the present times, would probably be formed on a different plan. Few will think the articles thus framed by archbishop Cranmer, in the infancy of the church, are complete, and perfect: though every candid person will see many difficulties, that would follow an attempt to make them more so. If such an attempt could be successfully prosecuted, no doubt all good men would rejoice in it. In the meantime, they will admire the wisdom, and moderation of that person, who framed them, as they are, in the midst of so much prejudice, confusion, and contrariety of opinion.

One of the most offensive articles, to subscribers in general, is the 17th on *predestination and election*. But its title is its most offensive part. It is certainly to be wished, that such doctrines had been left untouched; as they seem to be matters only of private opinion. But whatever were the archbishop's real sentiments on this subject, he seems to have been very hesitating, and perhaps intentionally ambiguous, in the imposition of them on others. The severe doctrine of reprobation seems to be strongly disavowed under the pointed terms of *a most dangerous downfall, leading to desperation, or unclean living*. And how it is possible to hold an absolute election, without mixing with it the doctrine of reprobation, is not easy to conceive. Yet still, as if the article, in the matter of election, had gone too far, it concludes with asserting, that *we must receive God's promises, in such wise as they be generally set forth in holy scripture*. So that, in fact, the article, fairly analyzed, seems to assert nothing, after all its circumlocution, but that the doctrine of reprobation is very pernicious; and that as to God's election, and promises, whatever may be said about them, we must resolve all at last into a belief of what is generally said in scripture.

But whatever imperfections the articles may really have, they have been charged with many, which they certainly have not. Of one very great instance of disingenuity I cannot forbear taking notice. It is contained in a celebrated writer on English history, whose acrimony on all occasions, in which religion is concerned, I have already remarked. After throwing out many severe things against the spirit of the reformers at this time, and giving his reader an idea of the articles, which archbishop Cranmer now composed.—“Care,” says he, “is taken to inculcate not only, that no heathen, however virtuous, can escape an endless state of the most exquisite misery; but also, that anyone who presumes to maintain, that a pagan can possibly be saved, is himself

exposed to the penalty of eternal perdition¹,”

The article alluded to in this passage, he tells us, is the 18th. Now the truth of the matter is, that this article has nothing at all to do with the heathen world, either here, or hereafter. It does not in any shape even hint at them. The early reformers most probably supposed, as all charitable Christians do now, that the heathen world were as much the objects of God’s mercy, as Christians themselves; and that Christ, who is called the *lamb slain, from the foundation of the world*, died for their sins, as well as ours. The article barely asserts, that no religion can promise salvation to mankind, except the Christian; which is so far from damning pagans, that it virtually implies, Christ died for them, as well as for us.

¹ Hume's hist, 4to. Vol. III. p. 334, 1st. edition.

SECTION XIX.

Nor was this good prelate so entirely engrossed by his cares for the general welfare of the church, as not to pay a close attention to the particular affairs of his own province. He made himself well acquainted with the characters of all the clergy in his district. His visitations were not things of course; but strict scrutinies into the state of ministers, and their parishes. In disposing of his benefices, he endeavoured, as much as he could, to suit the pastor to his flock. After his death was found, among his papers, a list of several towns thus endorsed: *Memorandum; these towns to have learned ministers*. In these places, it is probable, he knew the people were more than commonly addicted to popery: or that they had gotten among them some popish priests of more than ordinary subtlety, who had misled them.

He was very exact also in the residence of the clergy; and granted dispensations with caution. He had a strict eye also on their doctrine. To some he recommended the homilies; and to others proper topics for their discourses.

He himself also preached often, wherever he visited. In his sermons to the people he was very plain and instructive; insisting chiefly on the essentials of Christianity. In his sermons at court, or on public occasions, he would declaim, with great freedom and spirit, against the reigning vices of the times. His idea, however just, seems to have been, that the lower orders wanted principles more than practice; and the higher, practice more than principles.

Sir Richard Morrison, a gentleman who had been much employed in embassies abroad, both under Henry the eighth and Edward the sixth, gives us this character of the archbishop's sermons, of which he was a frequent auditor. "The subjects of his sermons, for the most part, were, from whence salvation is to be fetched; and on whom the confidence of man ought to lean. They insisted much on doctrines of faith; and works; and taught what the fruits of faith were; and what place was to be given to works. They instructed men in the duties they owed their neighbour; and that every one was our neighbour, to whom we might any way do good.

They declared, what men ought to think of themselves, after they had done all; and lastly, what promises Christ hath made; and who they are, to whom he will make them good. Thus he brought in the true preaching of the gospel, altogether different from the ordinary way of preaching in those days, which was to treat concerning saints—to tell legendary tales of them—and to report miracles wrought for the confirmation of transubstantiation and other popish corruptions. And such a heat of conviction accompanied his sermons, that the people departed from them with minds possessed of a great hatred of vice; and burning with a desire of virtue."

Bishop Burnet also, who had seen the greatest part of a sermon, which the archbishop had preached at court, on a fast day, in the year 1549, tells us, that “it is a very plain, impartial discourse; without any show of learning, or conceits of wit. He severely expostulates, in the name of God, with his hearers for their ill lives, their blasphemies, adulteries, mutual hatred, oppression, and contempt of the gospel; and complains of the slackness of government in punishing these sins; by which it became, in some sort, guilty of them.”—From this account of the archbishop’s preaching, it seems, that whatever speculative opinions he might hold, no man could have a juster idea of the great truths of the gospel; nor of those topics, on which its ministers ought chiefly to insist.

Nor did his own diocese alone engross his care. His advice was generally taken in filling up vacant sees in his province. He lived, of course, harmoniously with all his bishops; and was seconded by them in all his schemes of reformation. He recommended nothing more seriously to them, than to examine candidates for holy orders with the greatest care; and to follow the apostle’s advice in *laying hands suddenly on no man*.

It was common at that time, when any see became vacant, for every courtier to be on the watch to procure some rich grant out of its temporalities. The archbishop was as watchful on the other side; and when any scheme of this kind was on foot, he was generally successful in traversing it.

He was commonly consulted also in the choice of Irish bishops. We have many of his recommendations still extant. “The foremost, (says he, on an occasion of this kind,) of those, I propose, is Mr. Whitebread of Hadley, whom I take, for his good knowledge, special honesty, fervent zeal, and polite wisdom, to be most mete. Next to him Mr. Richard Turner, who besides that he is witty, and merry withal; (qualities not unbecoming the gravity of a clergyman, if they be discretely used) has nothing more at heart than Jesus Christ, and his religion; and in lively preaching of the word declareth such diligence, faithfulness, and wisdom, as for the same deserveth much commendation. There is also one Mr. Whitacre, a man both wise, and well learned, chaplain to the bishop of Winchester, very mete for that office; if he might be persuaded to take it upon him.”

Nor did the good primate confine his cares even to those of his own country: he extended them to the reformers of all nations, French, Dutch, Italians, and Spaniards, who had fled to England on account of religion. To him they all applied for that assistance, which he readily afforded.—He was at great pains in forming them into different societies; and in procuring churches and little establishments for them; in which, without any restraint, they chose their own pastors, and united in their own mode of worship.

This kindness was afterwards remembered: and when England became a persecuted country, contributed not a little to procure for its refugees, in many places, that generous treatment, which it had once afforded.

SECTION XX.

After a successful administration, the protector Somerset, unhappily assuming too much consequence, exposed himself to an envious party, which had long been collecting against him. It was formed under the machinations of the Earl of Warwick, afterwards duke of Northumberland; a man totally unprincipled; guided only by his ambition; and equally versed in the arts of attaching a party, and supplanting a rival. All the protector's friends, one after another, he drew from him by specious pretences; and when he made his first grand movement in the secession to Ely house, he had the pleasure to look round the assembly, and see, that scarce one man of consequence was absent, except the archbishop of Canterbury.

Him no arts of seduction could allure. He knew Northumberland's bad designs; and Somerset's honest meanings. Each had ambition: but while that of Somerset was gratified with a few trivial trappings, Northumberland's dark schemes threatened ruin to the empire.

Nor was the primate merely neutral in this affair. He wrote to the seditious chiefs at Ely house with such a spirit, as shook their resolutions; and would have broken the confederacy, had it been headed by a less daring leader, than the duke of Northumberland. It appears from the primate's letter, that he was more intimately acquainted with those secret springs, which governed their motions, than they could have wished, or supposed.

But although the primate's remonstrance probably checked Northumberland's designs, as his first manoeuvres seem evidently marked with irresolution; yet he gave way only to attack with greater vigour: and, in the end, Somerset, though allied to the crown, shrouded by the affection of his prince, the favour of the people, and his own innocence, was unable to grapple with the pernicious arts of this subtle rival; and was brought to the scaffold for the foibles, and inaccuracies of his life, which were magnified into crimes.

After the duke of Somerset's death, the archbishop had no weight in public affairs. Northumberland was as little the patron of religion, as he had hitherto been of public peace; and though he found it convenient to make protestantism his profession; yet all men knew, that, neither it, nor any species of religion, had possession of his heart.

The archbishop and he were never on terms. Often would Cecil say, "Your grace must temporize with this man, or we shall do nothing." As often would the primate answer, "He would endeavour to do his utmost." But the integrity of his heart generally faltered in the attempt.

It was a difficult matter indeed, to keep terms with Northumberland. The archbishop had every reason to think him as much his own private

enemy, as the enemy of the public. The ears of the young king were continually beset with the duke's insinuations: and though Edward was not forward in listening to any stories against the primate; yet enough was said to weaken all the counsels, and defeat all the plans, which he proposed.

Among the many mortifications, which he met with from Northumberland, it went nearest his heart to see the little care that was taken in filling vacant sees, and other great benefices of the church. His own recommendations of proper persons had little weight; and he was grieved to find all those low interests prevailing, which would of course introduce great indifference among the ministers of religion. It was the constant endeavour of Northumberland to keep the king, as little as possible acquainted with business of every kind; and as much out of the way of those, who were likely to give him information. Among all the old ministers, none but Cecil had access to the cabinet—Cecil, whose courtly arts carried him to the very limits of sincerity—perhaps rather beyond them. With him the archbishop entrusted a list of such persons, as he thought most proper to succeed to any vacancy; and the wary minister, by observing opportunities, obtained preferment for many of them.

The last affair of a public nature, in which the archbishop was engaged, during this short reign, was the exclusion of the princess Mary, in favour of Lady Jane Grey. Friend as he was to the reformation, he opposed this violent measure with all his might; and pleaded the oath he had taken in favour of the princess. The whole power of Northumberland had no weight with him. The king himself who had been wrought into a thorough conviction of the utility of excluding his sister, assailed him with every argument, that tenderness, and affection could suggest. The primate's constancy at length gave way; and he consented to hear the matter explained by the judges of the realm. The judges of the realm with great learning showed him, that his late oath could not lawfully bind him. The archbishop modestly professed his ignorance of law; and took a new one: while the friends of his memory wish they had any veil to throw over his conduct in this discreditable affair, which became afterwards indeed a source of the deepest affliction to himself.

Northumberland's great plan was now matured. The king, who had thus far been an instrument, became, from this time, an incumbrance; and was laid aside with as little ceremony, as if he had been an actor in a drama. Thus at least run the suspicions of history.

The king's death was a very sincere affliction to the archbishop, not only as a public calamity; but as a private loss. The archbishop was his godfather, and loved him with a parent's affection; and though his high

station would not allow him to take any part in the prince's education, yet Cheke, and all his other tutors, thought themselves in some degree accountable to the archbishop; and used to acquaint him with the progress of their royal pupil. We have a letter from Dr. Cox still preserved; in which he tells the archbishop, in the language of the times, "that the prince discovered great towardness, and all honest qualities: that he should be taken as a singular gift of God: that he read Cato, Vives, and Æsop; and that he conned very pleasantly." Erasmus's character of him is rather curious. Erasmus seems to have known little more, than that he was a very modest boy. But as he was a king likewise, the panegyrist thought it proper to clothe his sentiment (for he had but one) in great pomp, and variety of expression. "Senex, juvenis convictu, factus sum melior, ac sobrietatem, temperantiam, verecundiam, linguæ moderationem, modestiam, pudicitiam, integritatem, quam juvenis a sene discere debuerat, a juvene senex didici."

SECTION XXI.

After the death of Edward, which happened in the summer of the year 1553, we find the archbishop engaged in all the irresolute measures, succeeding that period, till the settlement of Mary. With the commencement of her reign his troubles began.

When he observed the turn, which affairs were likely to take, one of the first things he did, was to order his steward to pay every farthing that he owed; saying, "In a short time perhaps we may not be "able." When the accounts and receipts were brought to him, "I thank God, said he, I am now mine own man; and with God's help am able to answer all the world, and all worldly adversities."

He was first assaulted, as is usual, by calumny, and invective. A thousand stories were propagated, which were founded commonly on some little known circumstance, or occurrence; and half the story being true, gave a degree of credit to the other half, which was false. Many of these reports he suffered to die away unnoticed; leaving his life and actions to confute them. But one, which concerned the interests of religion, he thought it proper to obviate in a public manner. The affair was this.

Mass, it seems, had been said in the cathedral church of Canterbury by some zealous priest, immediately on the change of government; and the report ran, that it had been done by the archbishop's order: as indeed, before anything was legally altered, it could not well be supposed otherwise. Many people believed it, who were much hurt with it; and the primate was surprised to find, with what malicious expedition a story, so wholly opposite to the character he had ever maintained, could circulate not only among his enemies, but among his friends.

He determined therefore to stop it; and immediately drew up, and published, a declaration, in which he expressed his abhorrence of the mass as a species of idolatry—and professed his entire approbation of all the changes that had been made in the last reign. This paper was considered, by the advocates for reformation, as an instance of true Christian fortitude, well becoming the first protestant ecclesiastic. By worldly men, it was looked on as a piece of indiscrete, and intemperate zeal.¹

It was however more than the temper of the government could bear. The archbishop was called before the Star-chamber, severely questioned, and thrown into the Tower. The objected crime was treason: but his late bold declaration had, at least, precipitated the measure. The parliament

¹ "It was by his own indiscrete zeal, that he brought on himself the first violence, and persecution." Hume's reign of Mary. Chap. I.

made no difficulty in attainting him: and indeed his compliance in the affair of Lady Jane was a very justifiable foundation for an attainder.

This was a measure, which was little expected by the archbishop; and touched him nearer than anything could have done. If he had suffered for his doctrines, he might have had the comfort of a good conscience; but to suffer as an evildoer, was a mortification he could not bear.

It was true, indeed, that the queen had pardoned many, who were more concerned in the late settlement of the crown in favour of Lady Jane, than he had been. Few indeed, who were at all obnoxious, could be less so: and his services to Mary, in the time of her father, which were frequent, and disinterested, deserved surely a grateful remembrance. But his remonstrances, though couched in the humblest, and most penitent language, had for some time, no effect. At length however he obtained his pardon; most probably because it was more agreeable to the genius of the government, that he should suffer for heresy, than for treason. On the former pretence, he was still confined.

He might however have avoided question either on one account, or the other, if he could have prevailed with himself to leave the kingdom; as many church-men had done. Even after his imprisonment, he might probably have found the means of an escape. Some indeed imagined, it was what his greatest enemies desired, as the easiest means of getting the disposal of the see of Canterbury. But from the beginning, he never would think of flight; and all the persuasions and tears of his friends were ineffectual. "Had I been in any other station, (he would say) except this, in which Providence hath placed me, I should certainly have fled. I approve the flight of others. If we are persecuted in one city, we are authorized to fly to another. But I am the only person in the kingdom, who cannot do it with decency. I have had the principal hand in all the changes of the last reign, and I cannot, without great impropriety, avoid appearing in their defence."

The gloomy temper of the government, in the meanwhile, became wholly apparent. So much violence attended every proceeding, in which religion was concerned, that it was easy to foresee, no measures either of charity, or of decency, would be observed. The queen delighted in being called a virgin sent from heaven to revenge the cause of God. Under such a title nothing but bigotry, superstition, and all their dire effects, could be expected.

How well Gardiner, who was her chief minister, was qualified to correct the sternness of her temper, may be conceived from an anecdote, still preserved among the gross improprieties of those times. His almoner going one day to the Fleet- prison, then full of protestants, with a basket of

bread from the bishop, forbad the keeper, at his peril, to give one morsel of it to any of the heretics: If you do, added he, “my lord will certainly do you some shrewd turn.”

Rigorous however as Mary was in the affairs of religion, in state matters she was lenient enough. No blood was shed, but of those whose offences placed them clearly beyond mercy.

The duke of Northumberland was the first victim; than whom no man ever suffered more unlamented.

The archbishop had the satisfaction to hear that his friend Sir Thomas Palmer, died in the protestant faith; though he had been persuaded, with other state-prisoners, to hear mass.

Palmer was one of the best bred men of the age, in which he lived. To his accomplishments, both natural and acquired, he had added the advantages of foreign travel; which was rare in those days. His youth had been spent with too much licence; and he had been greatly misled by the insidious arts of Northumberland: but in other respects he was well esteemed; and in his latter life especially seems to have added the virtues of a Christian to the accomplishments of a gentleman. “I have learned more (said he, as he stood on the scaffold) in a dark corner of the Tower, than in travelling round Europe.” Then walking up to the axe, stained with the blood of Northumberland, who had just suffered, “I thank God, (said he) I am not afraid to die.”

SECTION XXII.

While this scene of blood was acting, the archbishop continued in the Tower, still unmolested. The lenity of the government towards him, was matter of general surprise; as the public commonly supposed he would have been the first victim. But many things remained yet to be adjusted. The great point however was to give a triumph to popery in a public disputation.

In the year 1553, a convocation met at St. Paul's, by the queen's order, to settle the doctrine of the real presence by a fair, and candid disquisition. Weston, dean of Westminster, was chosen prolocutor. A few articles were proposed for subscription: and the disputation was adjourned to Oxford, where it was intended, that the three bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, should enter the lists with a select body of popish disputants.

These fellow-sufferers were all, at that time, confined together in a small apartment in the Tower. Their straitened accommodations however were amply made up to them by the comfort of each other's company. They carried their bibles with them; and on these they employed their prison hours; fortifying their faith, and extracting topics of consolation. These are the scenes, in which we are to look for the triumphs of religion. Where its great principles are firmly rooted in the heart, human joys, and human griefs, and human fears, are trivial things.

The convocation had been adjourned to the end of the year 1553: but the several members of it did not meet at Oxford, till the following April. There also, at the same time, the three bishops were carried by the lord Williams of Thame.

From their treatment, on this occasion, it was easy to foresee, what measures they were likely to expect. They had hitherto been confined, it is true, in a very narrow compass; but as the Tower was then crowded with prisoners, better accommodations could not well be allowed. In other respects however they had received marks of attention. What they wanted, had been readily furnished; and their own servants were suffered to attend them.

But as soon as this new measure took place, they experienced a different treatment. The little baggage they had, was stopped: their servants were discharged: they were conducted to Oxford with ignominy; and were thrown into the common jail.

The time appointed for the grand disputation at length arrived. Delegates from both universities joined the members of convocation; and the whole body, to the number of thirty-three, assembled at St. Mary's church. There being dressed in their academical robes, they seated themselves in

great state, around the high altar, and the archbishop was sent for. He was brought into the church by the mayor, and bailiffs, under the guard of a company of billmen. They who had known him in his better days, saw him now greatly changed. Instead of that glow of health upon his cheek; that brisk, and active step, which showed the vigour of his constitution, he was now become, through ill-usage, and confinement, a pale, enfeebled old man. Clad in a plain habit, with a staff in his hand; he came forward, through an opening in the crowd, paying the prolocutor, and his assessors, great respect. They offered him a seat: but he declined it.

The prolocutor then addressed him, on the happiness of religious unity; and told him, the intention of the present meeting was to draw him if possible, again to the church. "These articles, (said he, holding out a paper), were agreed on by convocation, which, we hope, you will have no objection to subscribe."

The archbishop, receiving the paper, joined the prolocutor in a most ardent wish for Christian unity; when it could be obtained, he said, with a good conscience.

Having read the articles, which contained the doctrine of the real presence, drawn up, according to the determination of the church of Rome; he shook his head, and said, he feared that paper would not afford a sufficient foundation for the religious unity, which all so much desired. He offered however, if the paper were left in his hands, to give a fuller answer to it by the next morning. This was permitted. At the same time, it was agreed, that each point of difference should afterwards be the subject of a regular disputation.

On the next day, which was Sunday, the archbishop declared in writing, his sense of the articles; and the Monday following was appointed to discuss the questions, on which the two parties differed.

I mean not however here to enter into a detail of this disputation; which was carried into great length; and at this day would be tedious, uninteresting, and uninstrucive. Neither archbishop Cranmer, nor bishop Ridley, I think, acted with so much propriety on this occasion, as bishop Latimer. The papists, it seems, pushed them with the authority of the fathers; some of whom talk of the sacrament of the Lord's supper in a language, to speak slightly of it, uncommonly figurative. Cranmer and Ridley not caring to deny so respectable an authority, seem to have been at a loss how to evade it: while Latimer with more Christian simplicity, rid himself of the difficulty at once; "I lay no stress on the fathers, (said he), except when they lay a stress on scripture."

At the close of the disputation the archbishop complained greatly of the shortness of the time allowed for discussing a subject of such importance:

and wished also, that he might be allowed to oppose, as well as to answer; which was absolutely necessary, he said, in a fair discussion of a question. But he was not heard on either of these points: from which, he observed, it evidently appeared, that nothing less was intended, than a fair investigation of truth,

But in whatever light the arguments of these protestant bishops may appear at this day, their Christian fortitude will ever be admired. In their own times it was thought matter of great rejoicing, and Christian triumph. Soon after the disputation was over, the three bishops received the following spirited letter from Dr. Taylor, in the name of all their suffering brethren.

“Right reverend fathers in the Lord, I wish you to enjoy continually God’s grace and peace through Jesus Christ. And God be praised for this your most excellent promotion, which ye are called unto at present; that is, that ye are counted worthy to be allowed among the number of Christ’s records, and witnesses. England hath had but a very few learned bishops that would stick to Christ *ad ignem*. Once again I thank God heartily in Christ for your most happy onset, most valiant proceeding, most constant suffering of all such infamies, hissings, clappings, taunts, open rebukes, loss of living, and liberty, for the defence of God’s cause, truth, and glory. I cannot utter with pen how I rejoice in my heart for you three such captains in the forewarn, under Christ’s cross, in such a skirmish when not only one or two of our dear Redeemer’s strongholds are besieged; but all his chief castles, ordained for our safeguard, are traitorously impugned. This your enterprise, in the sight of all that be in heaven; and of all God’s people on earth, is most pleasant to beheld. This is another sort of nobility, than to be in the forefront in worldly warfares. For God’s sake pray for us, for we fail not daily to pray for you. We are stronger, and stronger in the Lord; His name be praised ! And we doubt not, but ye be so in Christ’s own sweet school. Heaven is all; and wholly of our side. Therefore gaudete in Domino semper; & iterum gaudete, & exultate.

Your assured in Christ,
Rowland Taylor.”

On the 26th of April 1554, the archbishop was condemned. From that time, a more rigorous treatment, than he had yet experienced, took place. It is said, he was scarce allowed the necessaries of life; though it is probable such accounts may be exaggerated. His wants however could not be well answered, if we may judge from an anecdote still preserved; which informs us that he received with great thankfulness, a small supply of linen, sent him privately by a friend in London.

On the 11th of November following, a new parliament met; which the

protestants of those times supposed, was made pliant by Spanish gold. But there is no occasion for the surmise; parliaments in those days had little idea of opposing the inclinations of the court.

By this parliament the pope's legate was invited into England: and on his arrival, the nation was reconciled in form to the holy see; the legate absolving all the perjuries, schisms, and heresies, of which the parliament, and the convocation had been guilty.

After this, religious affairs were modelled. The latin service was restored; the use of the scriptures abrogated; and popish priests appeared in public with that consequence, which the government allowed. Bishop Ridley, characterizing the times, says *Papismus apud nos ubiq; in pleno suo antiquo robore regnat.*

Among other instances of popish zeal, the archbishop was informed, that his book on the sacrament had been publicly burnt, "Ah!" (said he,) "they have honoured it more than it deserved: I hear they burnt it with the new testament." And indeed this was the fact: for they burnt at the same time, the late translation of the testament, on the pretence that it was spurious.

The convocation in the meantime petitioned for a revival of the sanguinary laws. They had already been anticipated; and several protestants had been put to death, without any colour of justice; and when a member of the convocation, with more candour than his brethren, observed, that the proceedings against these people could not be justified, "Why then," said the prolocutor tauntingly, "let their friends sue for redress."—This parliament however put things on a different establishment; and the favourers of persecution were now allowed legally to follow their inclinations.

SECTION XXIII.

While the protestant sufferers were lingering in various prisons, a very unseasonable dispute got footing among some of the warmest of them, on the arduous subject of free-will, and predestination. It was carried on with such animosity, that confessions were drawn up on both sides; and signed by numbers, who were at that time even under sentence of death. Each party clamoured loud, that their antagonists were likely to do more harm in the Christian world, than the papists themselves; in as much as their opinions were as bad, and their example much better. Nay to such a height of frenzy did their contentions run, that the keeper of the Marshalsea was often obliged to separate them.

During the course of this ill-timed controversy, the archbishop was applied to, for his countenance, by the predestinarians, to whose tenets he was thought most inclined. But the prudent primate discountenanced both parties, as much as he could; considering, no doubt, such controversies to be especially ill-judged among dying men.

Nor were the endeavours of others wanting to calm the rage of this offensive zeal. Many of their more moderate brethren endeavoured to set before them the impropriety of their behaviour: and one of them put the matter in a very strong light: “There should be no more bitterness, (said he,) in a Christian controversy, than in a love “letter.” Philpot, afterwards an eminent martyr, wrote a very pathetic dissuasive to them on this subject; exhorting them “to meet each other” with the kiss of charity—to reach out cheerfully the hand of peace—to take up their cross together, and ascend mount Calvary with hearts full of benevolence.”

I give a detail of this strange dispute, both as a curious anecdote of human nature, and as a very instructive lesson. If a speculative opinion could fasten with so much violence, and produce so much animosity, in the minds of pious men, suffering together in one common cause, and even in the article, as it were, of death—how cautious ought they to be on polemical subjects, who have perhaps less piety, who live at their ease, and are not tied by any of these strong obligations to forbearance.

While the English protestants were thus suffering at home, such of them as had the good fortune to escape abroad, enjoyed more repose.—Among the Lutherans indeed they met with some unkind treatment. Their liberal tenets, with regard to the Lord’s supper, were very disgusting to those reformers, who still maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation. The leaders however of the Lutheran churches, particularly Melancthon, who was a man of candour and moderation, brought their hearers to a better temper; and instructed the populace at Wesel, and Francford, where this

inhospitable disposition chiefly appeared, that although the English exiles might differ from them in a few points, they were however embarked with them in the same common cause of religious liberty, and ought certainly to be treated as brethren.

At Basil, John Fox designed, and almost finished his *Acts and monuments of the church*. The industry of this man is astonishing. He was principal corrector to one of the greatest printing houses in Europe; that of Operin at Basil. But notwithstanding his daily employment, he found leisure to carry on this vast work: and what is still more, though he was not able to keep a servant to do his menial offices, the whole was transcribed with his own hand. From a work of this kind, we are not led to expect any elegance: yet they who have examined this writer with most accuracy, have acknowledged, that although his zeal may have led him into some exaggerated accounts, where he relies only on hearsay; yet in all matters, where he appeals to authority, or record, he may be fully depended on.

At Strasburgh, bishop Jewel laid the plan of his excellent *Apology for the church of England*; though he did not finish it till happier times—a work, in which its many admirers found it hard to say, whether candour, and humanity; or sense, learning, and a well-tempered zeal for religion, were more conspicuous.

Here too William Turner, physician to the protector Somerset, published a work, entitled *A dispensatory of spiritual physic*. It was levelled against the papists; and was written with a sarcastic vein of humour. Such sallies of wit and ridicule, though rather below the dignity of suffering religion, served however to divert the universal melancholy, which reigned at that time. Turner published also another work of the same kind, which he called, *The hunting of the Romish fox*.

The celebrated Scotch reformer, John Knox, published also, at this time, an exhortation to the people of England, suited to their calamitous state. It abounds more with enthusiasm, than manly sense. Knox had thus early put in his pretensions to a prophetic spirit, which flowed afterwards in more plentiful effusions from him.

SECTION XXIV.

A full year had now elapsed, since the archbishop's disputation at Oxford, and condemnation for heresy. During this interval the Spirit of persecution, with a fiery sword in one hand, and a cross in the other, was let loose in all its terrors. The progress however of this violent reign marks only the Almighty's ordinary mode of providence. When the Christian religion was first preached, the malice of its enemies immediately arose, as if to try, and prove it; and Seal its truth by the blood of its martyrs. And now when religion was restored, after so long an age of darkness, the providence of God seemed to direct in the same manner that it should be purified and proved by persecution.

Among the numbers, at this time, who died for their religion, were the bishops of London and Worcester; who were delivered over to the secular arm under a commission from Pole the cardinal-legate.

As they were carried to the stake, they passed under the window of the prison, in which the archbishop was confined; and looked up for a parting view. The archbishop was engaged at that time, in a conference with a Spanish friar; but hearing a tumult in the street, he came to the window. They were not yet out of sight. He just lifted up his eyes and hands, and sent after the venerable sufferers, a fervent ejaculation for God's assistance in this last great trial.

More ceremony however was thought necessary in the primate's case, than had been used in theirs. Pole's authority was not sufficient. A commission therefore was sent for to Rome.

In virtue of this commission, the archbishop was convened before the bishop of Gloucester, to whom it was delegated, on the 12th of September, 1555. His books, and opinions; his marriage, and invasion of the privileges of the sovereign pontiff, were all summarily recapitulated; and he was cited to appear at Rome in eighty days, and answer for himself. As he did not appear in that time, he was declared contumacious; and a commission was dispatched to England, to degrade, and deliver him over to the secular arm.

Many of our historians exclaim loudly at the absurdity of declaring him contumacious for not appearing at Rome; when it was well known, that, during the whole time, he was detained a prisoner at Oxford. And, no doubt, the thing bears the face of absurdity. But it would be endless to censure, and deride, all the formalities of law, which are pertinaciously retained in every country, after the real use hath expired.

The ceremony of his degradation was performed by Thirlby bishop of Ely.

Thirlby, in Cranmer's better days, had been honoured with his particular friendship, and owed him many obligations. Besides those of greater value, in the way of preferment, "there was nothing he was master of, (we are informed) which was not at Thirlby's command. Jewel, plate, instrument, map, horse, or anything else, though a present from the king, if his friend once took a fancy to it; the generous archbishop would immediately give it him. And though many times the doctor for civility's sake would instantly refuse it; yet Cranmer would send it him the next day by a special message. Insomuch that it grew into a proverb, that Dr. Thirlby's commendation of anything to my lord of Canterbury, was a plain winning or obtaining it."

As this man therefore had long been so much attached to the archbishop, it was thought proper by his new friends, that he should give an extraordinary test of his zeal, For this reason the ceremony of the degradation was committed to him. He had undertaken however too hard a task. The mild benevolence of the primate, which shone forth with great dignity, though he stood dressed in all the mock pageantry of canvas robes, struck the old apostate to the heart. All the past came throbbing into his breast; and a few repentant drops, began to trickle down the furrows of his aged cheek. The archbishop gently exhorted him not to suffer his private affections to overpower his public. At length, one by one, the canvas trappings were taken off, amidst the taunts, and exultations of Bonner, bishop of London, who was present at the ceremony. The archbishop made some hesitation when they took his crozier out of his hands; and appealed as others had done, to the next general council.

Thus degraded, he was attired in a plain frieze-gown, the common habit of a yeoman at that time; and had, what was then called, a *townsman's cap*, put upon his head. In this garb, he was carried back to prison; Bonner crying after him, "He is now no longer my lord!—He is now "no longer my lord!"

Full of that indignation, which public wrongs, not private, inspired, he wrote a letter from his prison to the queen; in which he expostulated with her for sinking the dignity of the crown of England to such a degree, as to have recourse to foreigners for justice on her own subjects. He showed her, with great force of reason, the many inconveniences, which arose from thus submitting to a foreign yoke; and opened the designs of the clergy, who had introduced, he told her, this slavery again, with the sole view of establishing themselves in their ancient independent state. He put her in mind also of the oath she had taken to her own kingdom; and of the oath which she had taken to the pope; and begged her to consider, whether there was not some contradiction between them.—He concluded with telling

her, that he thought it his duty to enter his protest against the destructive measures, which her *government* was then pursuing.

This letter was carried to the queen by the bailiffs of Oxford. She immediately put it into the hands of cardinal Pole; with whom she seems, on all occasions, to have left the disposal of her conscience. Pole in a letter, dated from St. James's, November 6, 1555, answered it at full length. His very elaborate discourse on this occasion makes the 89th article of Mr. Strype's appendix.

From the time of Cranmer's degradation, the behaviour of the popish party towards him, was totally changed. Every one, who now approached him, put on an air of civility, and respect. Elegant entertainments were made for him. He was invited frequently by the dean of Christ-church to parties at bowls; an exercise, of which he had always been fond: and no liberty, or indulgence, which he could desire, was denied. In the midst of these amusements, he was given to understand, that the queen was greatly disposed to save him: but that she had often been heard to say, she would either have Cranmer a catholic, or no Cranmer at all—that, in short, they were authorized in assuring him, that if he would only conform to the present changes in religion, he might, if he pleased, assume his former dignity—or, if he declined that, he might enjoy a liberal pension in retirement.

Among all the instances of diabolical cruelty we scarce find a greater than this. The whole rage of the popish party seemed to be centred against this upright man. His soul they had damned: his body they were determined to burn; and to complete their triumph, they wanted only to blast his reputation. With this view, these wicked arts were put in practice against him; which succeeded, alas! too well. Cranmer, who was sufficiently armed against the utmost rage and malice of his open enemies, was drawn aside by the delusions of his false friends. After the confinement of a full year within the melancholy walls of a gloomy prison, this sudden return into social commerce dissipated the firm resolves of his soul. A love of life, which he had now well mastered, began insensibly to grow upon him. A paper was offered him, importing his assent to the tenets of popery; and in an evil hour his better resolutions giving way, he signed the fatal snare.

SECTION XXV.

Cranmer's recantation was received by the popish party with joy beyond expression. It was immediately printed and published; and then, cruel work wanting now only its last finishing stroke, a warrant was expedited for his execution, as soon as possible: while he himself was yet kept ignorant of their purpose.

Some writers say, that the recantation was published unfairly; and a modern attempt has been made to invalidate that recantation, which the papists sent abroad.¹

But even on a supposition this had been the case, as, in some degree, it probably might, yet a very poor defence can be established on this ground. Cranmer certainly subscribed his assent to the tenets of popery in general terms: and, unless the zeal of his friends could rid his memory of that stain, it is of little consequence to say he did not subscribe them in the detail. A much better apology may be grounded on the weakness of human nature. They, who look into themselves, must pity him; and wish to throw over him the skirts of that tender veil, with which the great Friend of mankind once screened the infirmities of the well-intentioned: *the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.*

But no apology could vindicate him to himself. In his own judgment, he was fully convicted. Instead of that joy, which gives serenity to the dying martyr, his breast was a devoted prey to contrition and woe. A rescued life afforded him no comfort. He had never till now felt the power of his enemies. Stung with remorse and horror at what he had done, he consumed his days, and nights in anguish. "*I have denied the faith: I have pierced myself through with many sorrows;*" were the melancholy notes, which took possession of his mind; and rang in his ears a constant alarm. Then would recur, in a full tide of compunction, the aggravating thoughts—that he, who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing in the true faith, should be among those who had deserted it—that he, who had been so long the leader of others, should now set them so dreadful an example—and that he, who had always been looked up to with respect, should at length be lost, and abandoned among the herd of apostates!

Overwhelmed with grief, and perplexity, whichever way he turned his eyes, he saw no ray of comfort left. To persevere in his recantation, was an insupportable thought: to retract it, was scarce possible. His paper was abroad in the world; and he himself was in the hands of men, who could easily prevent his publishing, or speaking, anything counter to it, if they should suspect he had such an intention.

¹ See Winston's enquiry into the evidence of archbishop Cranmer's recantation.

He had yet received no intimation of his death; though it was now the 20th of March; and by the purport of the warrant, he was to be executed the next day.

That evening Dr. Cole, one of the heads of the popish party, came to him; and from the insidious, and ambiguous discourse of this person, he had the first intimation, though yet no direct one, of what his enemies intended.

After Cole had left him, he spent the remaining part of the evening in drawing up a repentant speech, together with a full confession of his apostacy; resolving to take the best opportunity to speak or publish it; which he supposed indeed the stake would first give him. But, beyond his expectation, a better was afforded.

It was intended, that he should be carried immediately from prison to the stake; where a sermon was to be preached. But the morning of the appointed day being wet, and stormy, the ceremony was performed under cover.

About nine o'clock the lord Williams of Thame, attended by the magistrates of Oxford, received him at the prison-gate; and conveyed him to St. Mary's church; where he found a crowded audience waiting for him.— He was conducted to an elevated place, in public view, opposite to the pulpit.

He had scarce time to reflect a moment on the dreadful scene, which he saw preparing for him, when the vice-chancellor, and heads of houses, with a numerous train of doctors, and professors, entered the church. Among them was Dr. Cole; who paying his respects to the vice-chancellor, ascended the pulpit.

Cole was a man of abilities; and was considered, according to the mode of those times, as an elegant scholar. His discourse indeed seems to have been an excellent piece of oratory.

After a proper preface, he showed the reasons, why it was thought necessary to put the unhappy person before them to death, notwithstanding his recantation. On this head he dwelt largely, and said full as much, as so bad a cause could be supposed to bear. Then turning to his audience, he very pathetically exhorted them to fear God, and tremble; taking occasion from the example before their eyes, to remind them of the instability of all human things; and of the great duty of *holding fast their profession without wavering*. This venerable man, said he, once a peer, a privy-counsellor, an archbishop, and the second person in the realm, renounced his faith, and is now fallen below the lowest.

He addressed himself last to the degraded primate himself. He con-
doled with him in his present calamitous circumstances; and exhorted him
to support with fortitude his last worldly trial.

Cranmer's behaviour, during this discourse, cannot be better described,
than in the words of a person present; who, though a papist, seems to have
been a very impartial spectator.²

"It is doleful, (says he,) to describe his behaviour; his sorrowful coun-
tenance; his heavy cheer; his face bedewed with tears; sometimes lifting
up his eyes to heaven in hope; sometimes casting them down to the earth
for shame. To be brief, he was an image of sorrow. The dolour of his heart
burst out continually at his eyes in gushes of tears: yet he retained ever a
quiet, and grave behaviour; which increased the pity in men's hearts, who
unfeignedly loved him, hoping it had been his repentance for his transgres-
sions."

The preacher having concluded his sermon, turned round to the whole
audience; and, with an air of great dignity, desired all, who were present,
to join with him in silent prayers for the unhappy man before them.

A solemn stillness ensued. Every eye, and every hand were instantly
lifted up to heaven.

Some minutes having been spent in this affecting manner, the degraded
primate, who had fallen also on his knees, arose in all the dignity of sorrow;
and thus addressed his audience.

"I had myself intended to have desired your prayers. My desires have
been anticipated; and I return you, all that a dying man can give, my sin-
cerest thanks.—To your prayers for me, let me add my own."

He then, with great fervour of devotion, broke out into this pathetic
exclamation.

"O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner.
I who have offended heaven, and earth more grievously, than tongue can
express, whither shall I fly for succour?—On earth all refuge fails me. To-
wards heaven I am ashamed to lift my eyes.—What shall I then do? Shall
I despair?—God forbid!—O good God! thou art merciful, and refusest
none, who come unto Thee for succour. To Thee therefore I fly. Before
Thee I humble myself.—My sins are great: have mercy upon me! O
blessed Redeemer! who assumed not a mortal shape for small offences—
who died not to atone for venial sins.—Accept a penitent heart, though
stained with the foulest offences. Have mercy upon me, O God! whose
property is always to have mercy. My sins are great: but Thy mercy is still
greater.—O Lord, for Christ's sake, hear me—hear me, most gracious
God!"

² The letter, from which most of the following account is taken, was found among
Fox's MSS, and is taken notice of by Strype.

While he thus prayed, the people spontaneously caught the fervour; and joined audibly with him. The whole scene was highly solemn, and affecting.

Having concluded his prayer, he rose from his knees; and taking a paper from his bosom, continued his speech to this effect.

“It is now, my brethren, no time to dissemble. I stand upon the verge of life—a vast eternity is before me.—What my fears are, or what my hopes, it matters not here to unfold. For one action of my life at least I am accountable to the world—my late shameful subscription to opinions, which are wholly opposite to my real sentiments. Before this congregation I solemnly declare, that the fear of death alone induced me to this ignominious action—that it hath cost me many bitter tears—that in my heart I totally reject the pope, and doctrines of the church of Rome—and that”—

As he was continuing his speech, the whole assembly was in an uproar. Lord Williams gave the first impulse to the tumult; crying aloud, “Stop the audacious heretic.” On which several priests and friars, rushing from different parts of the church, with great eagerness seized him; pulled him from his seat; dragged him into the street; and with much indecent precipitation, hurried him to the stake, which was already prepared. Executioners were on the spot, who securing him with a chain, piled the faggots in order round him. As he stood thus, with all the horrid apparatus of death about him, amidst taunts, revilings, and execrations, he alone maintained a dispassionate behaviour. Having now discharged his conscience, his mind grew lighter; and he seemed to feel, even in these circumstances, an inward satisfaction, to which he had long been a stranger. His countenance was not fixed, as before, in abject sorrow, on the ground; he looked round him with eyes full of sweetness, and benignity, as if at peace with all the world.

A torch being put to the pile, he was presently involved in a burst of smoke, and crackling flame: but on the side next the wind, he was distinctly seen, before the fire reached him, to thrust his right hand into it, and to hold it there with astonishing firmness; crying out, “This hand hath offended! This hand hath offended!”—When we see human nature struggling so nobly with such uncommon sufferings, it is a pleasing reflection, that, through the assistance of God, there is a firmness in the mind of man, which will support him under trials, in appearance beyond his strength.

His sufferings were soon over. The fire rising intensely round him, and a thick smoke involving him, it was supposed he was presently dead. “His patience in his torment, (says the author of the letter I have just quoted) and his courage in dying, if it had been in testimony of the truth, as it was of falsehood, I should worthily have commended; and have matched it with the fame of any father of ancient time. Surely his death grieved every one.

Some pitied his body tormented by the fire; others pitied his soul, lost without redemption for ever. His friends sorrowed for love; his enemies for pity; and strangers through humanity.”

The story of his heart’s remaining unconsumed in the midst of the fire, seems to be an instance of that credulous zeal, which we have often seen lighted at the flames of dying martyrs.

SECTION XXVI.

Such was the end of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, in the 67th year of his age, after he had presided over the church of England above twenty years.

In whatever point of light we view this extraordinary man, he is equally the object of our admiration.

His industry, and attention were astonishing. When we consider him as a scholar, his learning was so profound, and the treatises, which he wrote, were so numerous, that we cannot conceive he had any time for business. And yet when we consider the various scenes of active life, in which he was engaged—in the council—in the convocation—in the parliament—in his diocese—and even in his own house, where he had a constant resort of learned men, or suitors, we are surprised how he procured time for study.

He never indeed could have gone through his daily employments, had he not been the best economist of his time.

He rose commonly at five o'clock; and continued in his study till nine. These early hours, he would say, were the only hours he could call his own. After breakfast he generally spent the remainder of the morning either in public, or private business. His chapel-hour was eleven; and his dinner-hour twelve. After dinner he spent an hour either in conversation with his friends; in playing at chess; or in, what he liked better, overlooking a chess-board. He then retired again to his study, till his chapel-bell rang at five. After prayers, he generally walked till six, which was, in those times, the hour of supper. His evening meal was sparing. Often he eat nothing: and when that was the case, it was his usual custom, as he sat down to table, to draw on a pair of gloves, which was as much as to say, that his hands had nothing to do. After supper, he spent an hour in walking, and another in his study, retiring to his bed-chamber about nine.

This was his usual mode of living, when he was most vacant; but very often his afternoons as well as his mornings, were engaged in business. To this his chess-hour after dinner was commonly first assigned, and the remainder of the afternoon, as the occasion required. He generally however contrived, if possible, even in the busiest day, to devote some proportion of his time to his books, besides the morning. And Mr. Fox tells us, he always accustomed himself to read and write in a standing posture; esteeming constant sitting very pernicious to a studious man.

His learning was chiefly confined to his profession. He had applied himself in Cambridge to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages; which though esteemed at that time as the mark of heresy, appeared to him the only sources of attaining a critical knowledge of the scriptures. He had

so accurately studied canon-law, that he was esteemed the best canonist in England: and his reading in theology was so extensive, and his collections from the fathers so very voluminous, that there were few points, in which he was not accurately informed, and on which he could not give the opinions of the several ages of the church from the times of the apostles. "If I had not seen with my own eyes, says Peter Martyr, I could not easily have believed, with what infinite pains and labour, he had digested his great reading into particular chapters, under the heads of councils, canons, decrees, &c."

His parts were solid, rather than shining; and his memory such, that it might be called an index to the books he had read; and the collections he had made.

Henry the eighth had such an opinion of him, as a casuist, that he would often say, "He could have no difficulty, while Cranmer was at his elbow." And indeed we cannot better account for the constant regard, which that capricious monarch showed him, than by supposing it proceeded from the opinion the king had of the archbishop's being so useful to him. It was not an unusual thing for Henry to send him a case of conscience at night (and Henry's conscience was very often troubled) desiring an answer the next morning. On such slender notice, we are told, the archbishop would often collect the opinions of twenty, or thirty writers on the subject; and within the limited time would send all the extracts, together with his own conclusion on the whole.

Henry, who was deeper in school-divinity, than in any other kind of learning, would take great pleasure also in disputing with the archbishop; and notwithstanding the roughness of his manners, would often indulge that sort of familiarity, which emboldened those about him, to use freedom with him. The archbishop at least was seldom under any difficulty on that head; while the king on his part always paid much deference to the primate's learning and abilities, (though the primate was the only person to whom he did pay any deference) and would sometimes do it at the expense of those, who thought themselves on an equality with the most learned. The bishop of Winchester in particular the king would sometimes delight to mortify; and to set him on the wrong side of a comparison with the archbishop.—We have an instance preserved.

The king once engaged the two prelates in a dispute on the authority of the apostolical canons, in which he himself bore a part. The archbishop sustained the negative. As the dispute proceeded, the king, either sensible of the primate's superiority, or affecting to appear so, cried out, "Come, come, bishop Winchester, we must leave him, we must leave him. He is too old a truant for either of us."

He was a sensible writer; rather nervous, than elegant. His writings

were entirely confined to the great controversy, which then subsisted; and contain the whole sum of the theological learning of those times.

His library was filled with a very noble collection of books; and was open to all men of letters. "I meet with authors here, Roger Ascham would say, which the two universities cannot furnish."

At the archbishop's death the greater part of his original MSS. were left at his palace of Ford near Canterbury; where they fell into the hands of his enemies.

In the days of Elizabeth, archbishop Parker, who had an intimation, that many of them were still in being, obtained an order from Lord Burleigh, then secretary of state, in the year 1563, to search for them in all suspected places; and recovered a great number of them. They found their way afterwards into some of the principal libraries of England; but the greatest collection of them were deposited in Bene't-college in Cambridge.

SECTION XXVII.

But the light, in which archbishop Cranmer appears to most advantage, is in that of a reformer, conducting the great work of a religious establishment; for which he seems to have had all the necessary qualifications. He was candid, liberal, and open to truth in a great degree. Many of his opinions he reconsidered and altered, even in his advanced age. Nor was he ever ashamed of owning it; which is in effect, he thought, being ashamed of owning, that a man is wiser today than he was yesterday. When his old tenets with regard to the Lord's supper were objected to him, he replied with great simplicity; "I grant that formerly I believed otherwise than I do now; and so I did, until my lord of London (Dr. Ridley) did confer with me, and by sundry arguments and authorities of doctors, draw me quite from my persuasion."

To the opinions of others also he was very indulgent. One fact indeed, mentioned in his life, the death of G. Paris is a glaring instance of the contrary. Something, no doubt, so good a man would have to say for himself, if we could hear his plea, in vindication of so barbarous, and horrid a piece of bigotry: but as the naked fact now stands, we can only express our astonishment, that a single action should so grossly run counter to every other action of his life.

The uncommon caution of his temper likewise qualified him greatly as a reformer. In his conversation he was remarkably guarded. "Three words of his," says Lloyd, "could do more than three hours discourse of others." In acting he always felt his ground, as he proceeded; and had the singular wisdom to forbear attempting things, however desirable, which could not be attained. He rarely admitted any circumstances into his schemes, which ought to have been left out; and as rarely left out any which ought to have been admitted. Hence it was, that he so happily accomplished the most difficult of all works, that of loosening the prejudices of mankind. Hence it was, also, that the ground which he took, was so firm, as scarce to leave any part of the foundation he laid, under the necessity of being strengthened.

The sweetness of his manners also contributed not a little to the completion of his designs. He was a man of a most amiable disposition. His countenance was always enlightened with that cheerful smile, that made everybody approach him with pleasure. It is indeed surprising, how much he was beloved, and how few enemies he made, when we consider that his whole life was a constant opposition to the opinions and prejudices of the times. Whom he could not persuade, he never disobliged. A harsh measure he considered only as another name for an imprudent one. When he could not go on smoothly, he would retreat a few steps, and take other ground,

till he perceived the obstruction was removed.

The composure of his temper was another happy ingredient in his character as a reformer. It was rarely on any occasion either raised or depressed. His features were by no means an index to the times. His most intimate friends could form no conjecture from his outward behaviour (which was always flowing with benignity) whether he had met with anything either in parliament, or in council, to disturb him.

One can scarce on this occasion avoid a comparison between him, and his successor archbishop Laud. Both were good men—both were equally zealous for religion—and both were engaged in the work of reformation.—I mean not to enter into the affair of introducing episcopacy in Scotland; nor to throw any favourable light on the ecclesiastical views of those times. I am at present only considering the measures which the two archbishops took in forwarding their respective plans. While Cranmer pursued his with that caution and temper, which we have just been examining; Laud, in the violence of his integrity, (for he was certainly a well-meaning man) making allowances neither for men, nor opinions, was determined to carry all before him. The consequence was, that he did nothing, which he attempted; while Cranmer did everything. And it is probable, that if Henry had chosen such an instrument as Laud, he would have miscarried in his point: while Charles with such a primate as Cranmer, would either have been successful in his schemes, or at least have avoided the fatal consequences that ensued.—But I speak of these things merely as a politician. Providence, no doubt, over ruling the ways of men, raises up, on all occasions, such instruments as are most proper to carry on its schemes; sometimes by promoting, and sometimes by defeating, the purposes of mankind.

SECTION XXVIII.

Nor was the good archbishop less formed for a private, than a public station. While we revere the virtues of the reformer, we admire the minister of the gospel.

His humility was truly apostolical. He was averse to the sounding titles of the clergy; and when these things, among others, were settled, he would often say, "We might well do without them." A familiar expression of his, on an occasion of this kind, was often afterwards remembered. He had signed himself in some public instrument, as he was obliged indeed legally to do, by the style of *primate of all England*. At this the bishop of Winchester took great offence: intimating, that there was no necessity for that innovation; and throwing out a hint, as if it were an encroachment on the king's supremacy. "God knows," said the archbishop, (when he heard of the invidious things, which Winchester had said) "I value the title of primate, no more than I do the *paring of an apple*." The expression was afterwards often quoted by those, who were disinclined to all dignities in the church; which they would call in contempt the *parings of Cranmer's apples*.

The placability of his temper was equal to his humility. No man ever possessed more Christian charity. The least sign of penitence in an enemy restored him immediately to favour; and the archbishop was glad of an opportunity of showing the sincerity of his reconciliation. This was so well known to be a part of his character, that the archbishop of York having long, in vain, desired his concurrence in a business, to which Cranmer was averse; "Well, my lord, (said York,) if I cannot have my suit in one way, I will in another. I shall presently do your grace some shrewd turn; and then, I doubt not, but I can manage so, as to obtain my request."

But the archbishop's mildness and placability never appeared in so strong a light, as when contrasted, as they often were, with the vehemence of Henry's passions.

A person of great rank at court, who was the archbishop's secret enemy, and had oftener than once done him ill offices, came to him, one day, to request his interest with the king. The primate with great readiness undertook his cause. "Do you know," said the king, surprised at his request, "for whom you are making suit? Are you acquainted with the man's disposition towards you?" "I always took him, (said the archbishop,) for my friend." "No, (replied the king;) he is your mortal enemy: and so far am I from granting his request, that I command you, when you see him next, to call him knave." The archbishop begged his majesty would not oblige him to use language so little becoming a Christian bishop. But Henry vociferated again, "I command you, I say, to call him knave; and tell him that I

ordered you.” The primate however could not be persuaded, by all his majesty’s eloquence, to call the man knave: and the king, though in great agitation at first, was obliged, at last, to give up the matter with a smile.

He was a very amiable master in his family; and admirably preserved the difficult medium between indulgence, and restraint. He had, according to the custom of the times, a very numerous retinue; among whom the most exact order was observed. Every week the steward of his household held a kind of court in the great hall of his palace, in which all family affairs were settled; servants’ wages were paid; complaints were heard; and faults examined. Delinquents were publicly rebuked; and after the third admonition discharged.

His hospitality and charities were great, and noble: equal to his station; greater often than his abilities.

A plentiful table was among the virtues of those days. His was always bountifully covered. In an upper room was spread his own; where he seldom wanted company of the first distinction. Here a great many learned foreigners were daily entertained; and partook of his bounty. In his great hall a long table was plentifully covered, every day, for guests, and strangers of a lower rank; at the upper end of which were three smaller tables, designed for his own officers and inferior gentlemen.

The learned Tremellius, who had himself often been an eye-witness of the archbishop’s hospitality, gives this character of it: “*Archiepiscopi domus, publicum erat doctis, et piis omnibus hospitium; quod ipse hospes, Mecaenas, et pater, talibus semper patere voluit, quoad vixit, aut potuit; homo ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΟΣ nec minus ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΟΣ.*”

We have seen his character aspersed for want of hospitality. In part the aspersion might have arisen from an attempt he made, with the assistance of the other bishops, to regulate the tables of the clergy, which had lately taken an expensive turn. This expense was introduced by the regular clergy, who could not lay aside the hospitable ideas of their monasteries; though a country benefice would by no means support them. The regulations published on this occasion, ordered, that “an archbishop’s table should not exceed six divers kinds of flesh; or as many of fish, on fish-days.—A bishop’s should not exceed five: a dean’s four: and none, under that degree, should exceed three. In a second course, an archbishop was allowed four dishes—a bishop three—all others two—as custards, tarts, fritters, cheese, apples and pears. But if any inferior should entertain a superior, either of the clergy, or laity, he might make provision according to the degree of his guest. If any archbishop, or other ecclesiastic, entertained an ambassador, his diet need not be limited.—It was farther ordered, that of the greater fish, or fowl, as haddock, pike, tench, cranes, turkeys, swans,

there should only be one in a dish: of less kinds, as capons, pheasants, wood-cocks, but two. Of the still less fowls, an archbishop might have three; all under him only two.”

Among other instances of the archbishop’s charity, we have one recorded, which was truly noble. After the destruction of monasteries, and before hospitals were erected, the nation saw no species of greater misery, than that of wounded, and disbanded soldiers. For the use of such miserable objects, as were landed on the southern coasts of the island, the archbishop fitted up his manor-house of Beckesburn in Kent. He formed it indeed into a complete hospital; appointing a physician, a surgeon, nurses; and everything proper, as well for food, as physic. Nor did his charity stop here. Each man, on his recovery, was furnished with money to carry him home, in proportion to the distance of his abode.

To obviate all the cavils of the papists against archbishop Cranmer, would be to enter into the general argument against them. His apostacy, his marriage, and his opinions, are questions all of common controversy. On the particular miscarriages of his life I have everywhere touched as they occurred; and have by no means spared them, when they appeared to deserve censure. The general objection, which seems to bear the heaviest upon him, is founded on the pliancy of his temper. Saunders, one of the bitterest of his enemies, sarcastically calls him *Henricianus*; and his friends indeed find it no easy matter to wipe off these courtly stains. Without question, many instances of great condescension in his character strike us; but a blind submission to the will of princes was probably considered among the Christian virtues of those days.

On the other hand, when we see him singly, and frequently, oppose the fury of an inflamed tyrant—when we see him make that noble stand against bigotry in the affair of the six articles—or when we see him the only person, who durst inform a passionate and jealous prince of the infidelity of a favourite wife, we cannot but allow, there was great firmness in his character; and must suppose, that he drew a line in his own conscience to direct him, in what matters he ought, and in what matters he ought not, to comply with his prince’s will.

He left behind him a widow and children; but as he always kept his family in obscurity, for prudential reasons, we know little about them. They had been kindly provided for, by Henry the eighth, who without any solicitation from the primate himself, gave him a considerable grant from the abbey of Welbeck in Nottinghamshire; which his family enjoyed after his decease. King Edward made some addition to his private fortune: and his heirs were restored in blood by an act of parliament, in the reign of Elizabeth.

THE END