

BISHOPS AND CLERGY OF
OTHER DAYS.

OR,

THE LIVES OF TWO REFORMERS AND
THREE PURITANS.

BY THE

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LONDON:
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
IPSWICH : WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

1868.

BISHOP LATIMER.

CHAPTER V.

LATIMER'S TIMES.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY—THREE DISTINCT PERIODS IN LATIMER'S LIFE—FIRST PERIOD WHEN POPERY WAS SUPREME—SECOND PERIOD WHEN RELIGION WAS IN A STATE OF TRANSITION—THIRD PERIOD WHEN PROTESTANTISM WAS FULLY DEVELOPED—CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH PERIOD—FOLLY OF OVERESTIMATING THE OLDEN TIMES—IMMENSE DEBT OWING TO THE REFORMATION—DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF OUR REFORMERS—INJUSTICE OF DECRYING AND UNDERVALUING THEIR WORK.

THE name of Bishop Latimer is well known to all readers of English Church history. There are, probably, few who have not heard or read that three hundred years ago there was such a queen of England as “bloody Mary,”—and that men were burnt alive in her reign because they would not give up Protestantism,—and that one of these men was Bishop Latimer.

But I want Englishmen to know these things better in the present day. I want them to become thoroughly familiar with the lives, the acts, and the opinions of the leading English Reformers. Their *names* ought to be something better than hackneyed ornaments to point a platform speech, and rhetorical traps to elicit an Exeter Hall cheer. Their *principles* ought no longer to be vague, hazy shadows “looming in the distance,” but something clear, distinct, and well defined before our mind's eyes. My desire is, that men may understand that the best interests of this country are bound up with Protestantism. My wish is, that men may write on their hearts that the well-being of England depends not on commerce, or clever politicians, or steam, or armies, or navies, or gold, or iron, or coal, or corn, but on the maintenance of the principles of the English Reformation.

The times we live in call loudly for the diffusion of knowledge about English Church history. Opinions are boldly broached now-a-days of so startling a nature, that they make a man rub his eyes, and say, “Where am I?” A state of feeling is growing up among us about Romanism and Protestantism, which, to say the least, is most unhealthy. It has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Nothing is so likely to check this state of feeling as the production of a few plain facts. If you want to convince a Scotsman, they say you must give him a long argument. If you want to convince an Englishman, you must give him plain facts. Facts are the principal commodity I have brought together in this biographical paper. If any one expects to find in these pages private speculations, or oratorical display, I

am afraid he will go away disappointed; but if any one likes plain facts, I think I shall be able to supply him with a few.

Does any reader doubt who is a true member of the Church of England? Are you perplexed by the rise and progress of what are foolishly called “Church-views”? Come with me today, and pay a visit to one of the Fathers of the English Church. Let us put into the witness-box one of the most honest and out-spoken bishops of the days of the English Reformation. Let us examine the life and opinions of good old Latimer.

Does any reader doubt what is the true character of the Church of Rome? Are you bewildered by some of those plausible gentlemen who tell you there is no fundamental difference between the Anglican and Romish Churches? Are you puzzled by that intense yearning after so-called “Catholic” principles, which distinguishes some misguided churchmen, and which exhibits itself in “Catholic” teaching, “Catholic” ceremonies, “Catholic” books of devotion, and “Catholic” architecture? Come with me today, and turn over a few old pages in English history. Let us see what England actually was when Romish teachers instructed the English people, and had things all their own way. Let us see what the Church of Rome does when she has complete power. Let us see how she treats the friends of an open Bible, of private judgment, and of justification by faith. Let us see how the Church of Rome dealt with Bishop Latimer.

In examining the history of Bishop Latimer, the times in which he lived demand attentive consideration. It is impossible to form a just estimate of a man’s conduct unless we know the circumstances in which he is placed, and the difficulties with which he has to contend. No one is aware of the whole extent of our obligations to the noble band of English Reformers, who is not acquainted with the actual state of England when they began their work, and the amazing disadvantages under which that work was carried on.

Latimer was born in the reign of Henry VII. He lived through the reigns of Henry VIII., and Edward VI., and was put to death in the reign of Queen Mary. He began life at a period when Popery bore undisputed sway in this country. He witnessed the beginning of the breach between Henry VIII. and Rome, and the establishment of a transition state of Religion in England. He lived to see the full development of Protestantism under Edward VI., and the compilation of a Liturgy and Articles very slightly differing from those we have at this day. About each of these three periods, I must say a few words.

The period of Latimer’s life when Popery was supreme in England, was a period of utter spiritual darkness. The depth of superstition in which our worthy forefathers were sunk is enough to make one’s hair stand on end. No doubt there were many Lollards, and followers of Wycliffe, scattered over the land, who held the truth, and were the salt of the nation. But the fierce

persecution with which these good men were generally assailed prevented their making much progress. They barely maintained their own ground. And as for the mass of the population, gross darkness covered their minds.

Most of the priests and teachers of religion were themselves profoundly ignorant of everything they ought to have known. They were generally ordained without any adequate examination as to learning or character. Many of them, though they could read their breviaries, knew nothing whatever of the Bible. Some, according to Strype, the historian, were scarcely able to say the Lord's prayer, and not a few were unable to repeat the ten commandments. The prayers of the Church were in the Latin language, which hardly anybody understood. Preaching there was scarcely any, and what there was, was grossly unscriptural and unedifying.

Huge nests of ordained men were dotted over the face of England, in the shape of Abbeys and Monasteries. The inhabitants of these beautiful buildings were seldom very holy and self-denying, and were often men of most profligate and disreputable lives. Their morals were just what might have been expected from "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." They did next to nothing for the advancement of learning. They did nothing for the spread of true religion. Two things only they cared for, and those two were to fill their own pockets, and to keep up their own power. For the one purpose they persuaded weak and dying people to give money and land to the Church, under the specious pretence that they would in this way be delivered from purgatory, and their faith proved by their good works. For the other purpose they claimed to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven. To *them* confession of sins must be made. Without *their* absolute and extreme unction, no man could be saved. Without *their* masses no soul could be redeemed from purgatory. In short, *they* were practically the mediators between Christ and man; and to injure them was the highest offence and sin. Old Fuller tells us for example, that in 1489, a certain Italian got an immense sum of money in England, by "having power from the Pope to absolve people from usury, simony, theft, manslaughter, fornication, and adultery, and all crimes whatsoever, except smiting the clergy and conspiring against the Pope." (i. 532. Tegg's edition.) Such were Romish priests in Latimer's youth, when Popery was last rampant in England. To say that they were generally ignorant, covetous, sensual, and despotic tyrants over the souls and bodies of men, is not saying one jot more than the truth.

When priests in Latimer's youth were men of this stamp, we shall not be surprised to hear that *the people* were utterly ignorant of true religion. It would have been miraculous indeed, if it had been otherwise, when they had neither sound preaching to hear, nor Bibles to read. A New Testament could not be bought for less than £2 16s. 3d., and the buyer was in danger of being considered a heretic for purchasing it. The Christianity of the vast majority

was naturally enough a mere name and form. The Sabbath was a day of sport and pastime, and not a day of solemn worship. Not one in an hundred perhaps could have rightly answered the question, "what shall I do to be saved," or given the slightest account of justification, regeneration, sanctification, the office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit. A man's only idea of the way to heaven generally was, to do as the priest told him, and to belong to "the true Church!" Thus the blind led the blind, and all wallowed in the ditch together.

All the practical religion that the mass of the laity possessed, consisted in prayers to the Virgin Mary and saints, paying the priests to say masses, pilgrimages to holy places, and adoration of images and relics. The list of their superstitious practices would make an appalling catalogue. They hastened to the church for holy water before a thunderstorm. They resorted to St. Rooke in times of pestilence. They prayed to St. Pernel in ague. Young women desiring to be married, sought the help of St. Nicholas. Wives, weary of their husbands, betook themselves to St. Uncumber. One hundred thousand pilgrims visited the tomb of St. Thomas a'Becket, at Canterbury, in one year, in order to help their souls towards heaven.

In one year at Canterbury Cathedral, there was offered at Christ's altar, £3 2s. 6d.; on the Virgin Mary's, £63 5s. 6d.; and, on Thomas a'Becket's, £832 12s. 3d. The *images* worshipped were often gross cheats as well as idols. The *relics* worshipped were as monstrous and absurd as the images. As to the bones of saints, there were whole heaps which had been venerated for years, which proved at length to be bones of deer and pigs. These are dreadful things to tell, but they ought to be known. All these things the Church of Rome knew, connived at, sanctioned, defended, taught, and enforced on her members. This was the state of religion in England three hundred and fifty years ago, when the English Reformers were raised up. This was English Christianity in the childhood and youth of Hugh Latimer!

The second period of Latimer's life, during which England was in a state of transition between Romanism and Protestantism, presents many curious features.

We see, on the one hand, a reformation of religion begun by a king from motives which, to say the least, were not spiritual. It would be absurd to suppose that a sensual tyrant like Henry VIII. came to a breach with the Pope for any other reason than that the Pope crossed his will. We see his pretended scruples about his marriage with Catherine of Aragon bringing him into communication with Cranmer, and Latimer. We see him, *at one time*, so far guided by the advice of these good men that, like Herod, he does many things that are right, and calculated to advance the cause of the Gospel. He makes Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, and shows him favour to the end of his days. He allows the Bible to be printed in English and placed

in churches. He commands images to be broken, and puts down many gross superstitions. He boldly denies the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy. He dissolves the monasteries, and puts to open shame the wickedness of their inmates. All this we see, and are thankful. We see him, *at another time*, defending Popish dogmas, and burning men who, like the martyr Lambert, denied them. We see him putting forth the famous Six Articles, which reasserted transubstantiation, private masses, clerical celibacy, vows of chastity, auricular confession, and the denial of the cup to the laity. Worst of all, we see in him the marks of a proud, self-willed, sensual man all his life long, and an utter want of evidence that his heart was ever right in the sight of God. The employment of a man who was guilty of such inconsistencies, to do God's work, is among the deep things of God's providence. We cannot understand it. We must wait.

Turning, on the other hand, from Henry VIII. to the first English Reformers, we see in them strong indications of what Fuller calls "a twilight religion." We see them putting forth books in Henry VIII.'s reign, which, though an immense improvement and advance upon Romish teaching, still contain some things which are not Scriptural. Such were "The Necessary Erudition," and the "Institution of a Christian Man." We see them, however, gradually growing in spiritual knowledge, perhaps unawares to themselves, and specially as to the error of transubstantiation. We see them continually checked and kept back, partly by the arbitrary conduct of the king, partly by the immense difficulty of working side by side with a Popish party in the Church, and partly by the great ignorance of the parochial clergy. Nevertheless, on comparing the end of Henry VIII.'s reign with the beginning, we see plain proof that much ground was gained. We learn to admire the overruling power of God, who can use a Henry VIII. just as He did a Nebuchadnezzar or Sennacherib, for the accomplishment of His own purposes. And last, but not least, we learn to admire the patient perseverance of the Reformers. Though they had but little strength, they used it. Though they had but a small door open, they entered in by it. Though they had but one talent, they laid it out heartily for God, and did not bury it in the ground. Though they had but a little light, they lived fully up to it. If they could not do what they would, they did what they could, and were blessed in their deed. Such was the second period of Latimer's life. Never let it be forgotten that, at this time, the foundations of the Church of England were excavated, and vast heaps of rubbish removed out of the way of the builders who were to follow. Viewed in this light, it will always be an interesting period to the student of Church history.

The last period of Latimer's life, which comprises the reign of Edward VI., is, in many respects, very different from the two periods to which I have already adverted. The cause of English Protestantism made immense

progress during Edward's short but remarkable tenure of power. It was truly said of him by Hooker, that "He died young, but lived long, if life be action." Released from the bondage of a tyrannical king's interference, Cranmer and his friends went forward in the work of religious reformation with rapid strides. Bonner and Gardiner were no longer allowed to keep them back. Refusing to take part in the good work, these two Popish prelates were deposed and put to silence. Faithful men, like Ridley and Hooper, were placed on the episcopal bench. An immense clearance of Popish ceremonies was effected. A Liturgy was compiled, which differed very slightly from our present Prayer-book. The forty-two Articles of religion were drawn up, which form the basis of our own thirty-nine. The first book of Homilies was put forth, in order to supply the want of preachers. An accuracy and clearness of doctrinal statement was arrived at, which had hitherto been unknown. Learned foreigners, like Bucer and Peter Martyr, were invited to visit England, and appointed Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge. How much further the Reformers might have carried the work of reformation, if they had had time, it is useless now to conjecture. Judging by the changes they effected in a very few years, they would probably have made our Church as nearly perfect as a visible Church can be, if they had not been stopped by Edward's premature death.

There was, however, one thing which the Reformers of Edward the Sixth's reign could not accomplish. They could not change the hearts of the parochial clergy. Thousands of clergymen continued to hold office in the Church of England, who had no sympathy with the proceedings of Cranmer and his party. There was no getting rid of these worthies, for they were ready to premise anything, sign anything, and swear anything, in order to keep their livings. But while they yielded compliance to Cranmer's injunctions and commands, they were graceless, ignorant, and semi-Papists at heart. The questions which Bishop Hooper found it necessary to put to the dean, prebendaries, and clergy of the diocese of Gloucester on his first visitation, and the answers which he received, furnish us with a sad illustration of the state of English clergymen in Edward the Sixth's time.

Facts such as these are painful and astounding; but it is most important that we should know them. They explain at once the ease with which Bloody Mary restored Popery when she came to the throne. Parochial clergymen like those just described were not likely to offer any resistance to her wishes. Facts such as these throw great light on the position of Cranmer and the Reformers of Edward the Sixth's days. We probably have little idea of the immense difficulties both within and without which beset them. Above all, facts such as these give us some idea of the condition of religion in England even in the brightest portion of Latimer's times. If things like these were to be seen when Latimer was an old man, what must have been seen

when he was young? If ignorance like this prevailed under Edward VI., how thick must the darkness have been under Henry VIII.!

I must dwell no longer on the subject of Latimer's times. The subject has been already exhausted in Hooper's biography, and I do not wish to weary my readers by a dry and tedious repetition of facts. But I firmly believe that a knowledge of these facts is absolutely essential to a right understanding of the English Reformation, and I therefore hope that the few which I have given will not prove useless.

On calm consideration, I trust my readers will agree with me, that it is the height of absurdity to say, as some do now-a-days, that this country has been a loser by getting rid of Popery. It is really astonishing to hear the nonsense talked "about merry England in the olden times," the "medieval piety," the "ages of faith," and the "devout habits of our Catholic forefathers."

Walter Scott's fascinating writings and Pugin's beautiful architectural designs, have lent a false glare to Romanism in England, and induced many to doubt whether our Reformation really was a gain. The state of English society, which Scott has sometimes made so interesting by his pen, and Pugin by his pencil, is a far more beautiful thing in poems and pictures than it ever was in honest reality. Depend upon it, that "distance lends enchantment to the view." We may rest satisfied that Netley, and Glastonbury, and Bury, and Fountains, and Melrose, and Bolton Abbeys are much more useful now in ruins than ever they were in Henry the Seventh's days. Few Englishmen probably have the least idea how much we have gained by the Reformation. We have gained light, knowledge, morality, and religious liberty. Few have any clear idea of the fruits which grew on the tree of Popery when last it flourished in England. Those fruits were ignorance, superstition, immorality, and priestly tyranny. God was angered. Souls were lost and the devil was pleased.

I trust again my readers will feel with me, that it is most unfair to suppose that the acts and writings of the English Reformers under Henry VIII. are any real criterion of their matured opinions. It is as unfair as it would be to measure the character of a grown up man by his sayings and doings when he was a child.—Cranmer and his helpers under Henry VIII. were in a state of spiritual childhood. They saw many points in religion through a glass darkly. It was not till the reign of Edward VI. that they put away childish things. We must beware therefore, lest any man deceive us by artfully-chosen quotations drawn from works published in the beginning of the English Reformation. Judge the Reformers, if you will, by their writings in the reign of Edward VI., but not by their writings in the reign of Henry VIII.

I trust, lastly, my readers will agree with me, that it is most unreasonable to decry the early English Reformers, as men who did not go far enough. Such charges are easily made, but those who make them seldom consider

the enormous obstacles the Reformers had to surmount, and the enormous evils they had to remove. It is nonsense to suppose they had nothing more to do than to pare the moss off an old building, and whitewash it afresh. They had to take down an old decayed house, and re-build it from the very ground. It is nonsense to criticise their proceedings, as if they voyaged over a smooth sea, with a fair wind, and a clear course. On the contrary, they had to pilot the religion through a narrow and difficult strait, against current, wind, and tide. Put all their difficulties together,—the arbitrary, profligate character of Henry VIII., and the tender years of Edward VI.—the general ignorance of the population—the bitter enmity of dispossessed monks and friars—the open opposition of many of the bishops, and the secret indifference of a vast proportion of the clergy,—put all these things together, weigh them well, and then I think you will not lightly regard the work that the early Reformers did. For my own part, so far from wondering that they did so little, I wonder rather that they did so much. I marvel at their firmness. I am surprised at their success. I see immense results produced by comparatively weak instruments, and I can only account for it by saying, that “God was with them of a truth.”

CHAPTER VI.

LATIMER'S LIFE.

BORN AT THURCASTON, IN LEICESTERSHIRE, 1485—FELLOW OF CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE, IN 1509—BEGINS A BIGOTED PAPIST,—CONVERTED THROUGH BILNEY'S AGENCY—PREACHES PROTESTANTISM AT CAMBRIDGE—IS PATRONIZED BY HENRY VIII.—APPOINTED RECTOR OF WEST KINGTON, WILTS, IN 1531—PREACHES AT BRISTOL—MADE BISHOP OF WORCESTER IN 1535—LABOURS AS BISHOP—RESIGNS HIS BISHOPRIC IN 1539—HIGHLY ESTEEMED BY EDWARD VI.—COMMITTED TO TOWER IN QUEEN MARY'S REIGN—BURNED AT OXFORD 16TH OCTOBER, 1555.

THE next branch of my subject to which I shall invite the attention of my readers, is the story of Bishop Latimer's life.

Hugh Latimer was born about the year 1485, at Thurcaston, near Mount Sorrel, in the county of Leicester. He has left such a graphic account of his father and family in one of his sermons preached before Edward VI., that I must in justice give it in his own words. He says, "My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own. He had only a farm of three or four pounds a year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for one hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able, and did bring the king a harness, with himself and his horse, when he came to the place where he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness, when he went to Blackheath-field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pounds apiece, and brought them up in godliness and the fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor." (Works, i. 101. Parker's Soc. edition.) Such is the good bishop's homely account of his own family. It is only fair to observe that Latimer is one among the thousand examples on record, that England, with all its faults, is a country where a man may begin very low, and yet live to rise very high.

Latimer was sent to Cambridge at the age of fourteen, and in 1509 was elected a fellow of Clare Hall. We know very little of his early history, except the remarkable fact, which he himself has told us, that up to the age of thirty he was a most violent and bigoted Papist. Just as St. Paul was not ashamed to tell men that at one time he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," so the old Protestant Bishop used often to tell how he too had once been the slave of Rome. He says in one of his sermons, "I was as obstinate a Papist as any was in England, insomuch that when I should be made bachelor of divinity, my whole oration went against Philip Melancthon and his opinions." (Works, i., 334.) He says in another sermon, "All the

Papists think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself was of that dangerous, perilous, and damnable opinion till I was thirty years of age. So long had I walked in darkness and the shadow of death.” (i., 137.) He says in a letter to Sir Edward Baynton, “I have thought in times past that if I had been a friar and in a cowl, I could not have been damned nor afraid of death; and by reason of the same I have been minded many times to have been a friar, namely when I was sore sick or diseased. Now I abhor my superstitious foolishness.” (i., 332.)

Latimer’s testimony about himself is confirmed by others. It is recorded that he used to think so ill of the Reformers, that he declared the last times, the day of judgment, and the end of the world must be approaching. “Impiety,” he said, “was gaining ground apace, and what lengths might not men be expected to run, when they began to question even the infallibility of the Pope.” Becon mentions that when Stafford, the divinity lecturer, delivered lectures in Cambridge, on the Bible, Latimer was sure to be present, in order to frighten and drive away the scholars. In fact his zeal for Popery was so notorious, that he was elected to the office of cross-bearer in the religious processions of the University, and discharged the duty with becoming solemnity for seven years. Such was the clay of which God formed a precious vessel meet for His work! Such were the first beginnings of one of the best and most useful of the English Reformers!

The instrument which God used in order to bring this furious Papist to a knowledge of Christ’s truth, was a student named Bilney. Bilney was a contemporary of Latimer’s at Cambridge, who had for some time embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, and was finally burned as a martyr at Norwich. He perceived that Latimer was a sincere and honest man, and kindly thought it possible that his zeal for Popery might arise from lack of knowledge. He therefore went boldly to him after his public onslaught on Melancthon, and humbly asked to be allowed to make a private confession of his own faith. The success of this courageous step was complete. Old Latimer tells us, “I learned more by his confession than before in many years. From that time forward I began to smell the Word of God, and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries.” (i., 335.) Bilney’s conduct on this occasion seems to have been most praiseworthy. It ought to encourage every one to try to do good to his neighbour. It is a shining proof of the truth of the proverb, “A word spoken in season, how good is it!”

Hugh Latimer was not a man to do anything by halves. As soon as he ceased to be a zealous Papist, he began at once to be a zealous Protestant, and gave himself up, body, soul, and mind, to the work of doing good. He visited, in Bilney’s company, the sick and prisoners. He commenced preaching in the University pulpits, in a style hitherto unknown in Cambridge, and soon became famous as one of the most striking and powerful preachers of

the day. He stirred up hundreds of his hearers to search the Scriptures and inquire after the way of salvation. Becon, afterwards chaplain to Cranmer, and Bradford, afterwards chaplain to Ridley, both traced their conversion to his sermons. Becon has left us a remarkable description of the effects of his preaching. He says, "None, except the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, went away from it without being affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue." (Becon's Works, vol. ii. 224. Parker's Society Edition.)

The consequences of this faithful discharge of ministerial duty were just what all experience might lead us to expect. There arose against Latimer a storm of persecution. Swarms of friars and doctors who had admired him when he carried the cross as a Papist, rose up against him in a body when he preached the cross like St. Paul. The Bishop of Ely forbid his preaching any more in the University pulpits at Cambridge; and had he not obtained permission from Dr. Barnes to preach in the church of the Augustine Friars, which was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, he might have been silenced altogether. But the malice of his enemies did not stop here. Complaints were laid against him before Cardinal Wolsey, and he had more than once to appear before him and Tonstall, Bishop of London, on charges of heresy. Indeed, when the circumstances of the times are considered, it is wonderful that Latimer did not at this period of his life share Bilney's fate, and suffer death at the stake.

But the Lord, in whose hand our times are, had more work for Latimer to do, and raised up for him unexpected friends in higher quarters. His decided opinions in favour of Henry the Eighth's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, brought him into communication with Dr. Butts, the King's physician, and ultimately secured to him the favour and patronage of the King himself. In the year 1530 he was made one of the royal chaplains, and preached before the King several times. In the year 1531 the royal favour procured for him an appointment to the living of West Kington, near Chippenham, in Wiltshire; and, in spite of his friend Dr. Butts' remonstrances, he at once left court, and went to reside upon his cure.

At West Kington Latimer was just the same man that he had been latterly at Cambridge, and found the devil just as busy an adversary in Wiltshire as he had found him in the University. In pastoral labours he was abundant. In preaching he was instant in season and out of season, both within his parish and without. This he had full authority to do, by virtue of a general license from the University of Cambridge. But the more he did, the more angry the idle Popish clergy round West Kington became, and the more they laboured to stop his proceedings. So true is it that human nature is the same in all ages. There is generally a dog-in-the-manger spirit about a graceless minister. He neither does good himself, nor likes any one else to do it for him. This

was the case with the Pharisees: they “took away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered.” (Luke ii. 52.) And as it was in the days of the Pharisees, so it was in the days of Latimer.

On one occasion the mayor and magistrates of Bristol, who were very friendly to him, had appointed him to preach before them on Easter-day. Public notice had been given, and everybody was looking forward to the sermon with pleasure, for Latimer was very popular in Bristol. Suddenly there came out an order from the Bishop forbidding any one to preach in Bristol without his license. The clergy of the place waited on Latimer, and informed him of the Bishop’s order, and then, knowing well that he had no such license, told him “that they were extremely sorry they were deprived of the pleasure of hearing an excellent discourse from him.” Their hypocritical compliments and regrets were unfortunately ill-timed. Latimer had heard the whole history of the affair. And he knew well that these smooth-tongued gentlemen were the very persons who had written to the Bishop in order to prevent his preaching.

For four years, while vicar of West Kington, the good man was subjected to a constant succession of petty worrying attacks, and attempts to stop him from doing good. He was cited to London, and brought before Archbishop Warham, and detained many months from home. He was convened before Convocation, and excommunicated and imprisoned for a time. But the protecting care of God seems to have been always round him. His enemies appear to have been marvellously restrained from carrying their malice to extremities. At length, in 1535, the King put a sudden stop to their persecution by making him Bishop of Worcester. That such a man should make such an appointment is certainly very wonderful. Some have attributed it to the influence of Lord Cromwell; some to that of the Queen Anne Boleyn; some to that of Dr. Butts; some to that of Cranmer, who was always Latimer’s fast friend. Such speculations are, to say the best, useless. “The King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters He turneth it whithersoever He will.” (Prov. xxi. 1.) When God intends to give a good man a high office, He can always raise up a Darius to convey it to him.

The history of Latimer’s episcopate is short and simple, for it only lasted four years. He was the same man in a Bishop’s palace that he had been in a country- parsonage, or a Cambridge pulpit. Promotion did not spoil him. The mitre did not prove an extinguisher to his zeal for the Gospel. He was always faithful—always simple-minded—always about his Father’s business—always labouring to do good to souls. Fox, the historian, speaks highly of “his pains, study, readiness, and continual carefulness in teaching, preaching, exhorting, visiting, correcting, and reforming, either as his ability could serve, or the tithes would bear.” But he adds, “the days then were so

dangerous and variable that he could not in all things do what he would. Yet what he might do, that he performed to the uttermost of his strength, so that, although he could not utterly extinguish all the sparkling relics of old superstition, yet he so wrought that though they could not be taken away, yet they should be used with as little hurt and as much profit as might be.”

In 1536 we find Bishop Latimer appointed by Archbishop Cranmer to preach before the Convocation of the Clergy. No doubt this appointment was made advisedly. Cranmer knew well that Latimer was just the man for the occasion. The sermons he preached are still extant, and fully justify the Archbishop’s choice. Two more faithful and conscience-stirring discourses were probably never delivered to a body of ordained men. They will repay an attentive perusal.

“Good brethren and fathers,” he said in one place, “seeing we are here assembled, for the love of God let us do something whereby we may be known to be the children of light. Let us do somewhat, lest we, which hitherto have been judged children of the world, prove even still to be so. All men call us prelates; then seeing we be in council, let us so order ourselves that we be prelates in honour and dignity, that we may be prelates in holiness, benevolence, diligence, and sincerity.

“Lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, and spy what things are to be reformed in the Church of England. Is it so hard, so great a matter, for you to see many abuses in the clergy, and many in the laity?”—He then mentions several glaring abuses by name: the state of the Court of Arches and the Bishop’s Consistories—the number of superstitious ceremonies and holidays—the worship of images and visiting of relics and saints—the lying miracles and the sale of masses,—and calls upon them to consider and amend them. He winds up all by a solemn warning of the consequence of Bishops neglecting notorious abuses.—“God will come,” he says. “God will come: He will not tarry long away. He will come upon such a day as we nothing look for Him, and at such an hour as we know not. He will come and cut us in pieces. He will reward us as He doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren— where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. These be the delicate dishes prepared for the world’s well-beloved children. These be the wafers and junkets provided for worldly prelates: wailing and gnashing of teeth.”—“Ye see, brethren, what sorrow and punishment is provided for you if ye be worldlings. If you will not then be vexed, be not the children of the world. If ye will not be the children of the world, be not stricken with the love of worldly things; lean not upon them. If ye will not die eternally, live not worldly. Come, go to; leave the love of your profit: study for the glory and profit of Christ; seek in your consultations such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at last somewhat that may please Christ. Feed ye tenderly, with all diligence, the

flock of Christ. Preach truly the Word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be ye the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine in the world to come, bright as the stars, with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” (Works, vol. i., p. 50.) Such was a sermon before Convocation by Latimer.

In 1587 we find Bishop Latimer placed on the Commission of Divines for the publication of a book to set forth the truth of religion; the result of which Commission was “the Institution of a Christian man.” The same year we find him putting forth some injunctions to the prior of Worcester Convent, a monastic house not yet dissolved, in which, among other things, he commands the prior to have a whole Bible in English chained in the church. He orders every member of the convent to get himself an English New Testament; he directs a lecture of Scripture to be read in the convent every day, and Scripture to be read at dinner and supper. Shortly afterwards he published injunctions to the clergy of his diocese, in which he commands every one of them to provide himself with a whole Bible, or at any rate with a New Testament, and every day to read over and study one chapter, at the least. He also forbids them to set aside preaching for any manner of observance, ceremonies, or processions, and enjoins them to instruct the children in their respective parishes. All these little facts are deeply instructive. They show us what an Augean stable an English diocese was in Henry the Eighth’s day, and what enormous difficulties a reforming Bishop had to overcome.

In 1538 we find Latimer pleading with Lord Cromwell, that Great Malvern Abbey might not be entirely suppressed. He suggests that it should be kept up, “not for monkery,” which he says, “God forbid,” but “to maintain teaching, preaching, study, and prayer;” and he asks whether it would not be good policy to have two or three of the old monastic houses in every county set apart for such purposes. This was a very wise design, and shows great foresight of the country’s wants. Had it been carried into effect, Durham, St. Bees, Lampeter, King’s College, London, and the London College of divinity, would have been unnecessary. The rapacity of Henry the Eighth’s courtiers, who had an amazing appetite for the property of the suppressed abbeys, made the suggestion useless.

In 1539 Bishop Latimer’s episcopate was brought to an end by the enactment of the six Articles already referred to, in which some of the leading tenets of Romanism were authoritatively maintained. He strenuously withstood the passing of this Act in opposition to the King and the Parliament; and the result was that he was compelled to resign his bishopric. It is related, that on the day when this happened, when he came back from the House of Lords to his lodgings, he threw off his robes, and leaping up, declared to

those who stood about him, that he found himself lighter than he had been for some time.

The next eight years of Latimer's life appear to have passed away in forced silence and in retirement. We read little of anything that he did. We do not exactly know where he spent his time, and whether he returned to his old living at West Kington, or not. The probability is, that he was regarded as a dangerous and suspected man, and had much difficulty in preserving his life. The only certain fact we know is, that he was at length committed to prison as a heretic, and spent the last year of Henry the Eighth's reign in confinement in the Tower.

When Edward VI. came to the throne, in 1547, Latimer was at once released from prison, and treated with every mark of respect. His old bishopric of Worcester was offered to him, and the House of Commons presented an address to the Protector Somerset, earnestly requesting that he might be reappointed. Old age and increasing infirmities made Latimer decline the proffered dignity, and he spent the next six years of his life without any office, but certainly not as an idle man. His chief residence during these six years was with his old friend and ally, Archbishop Cranmer, under the hospitable roof of Lambeth Palace. While here he took an active part in all the measures adopted for carrying forward the Protestant Reformation. He assisted Cranmer in composing the first book of Homilies, and was also one of the divines appointed to reform the Ecclesiastical Law, a work which was never completed. All this time he generally preached twice every Sunday. In the former part of Edward the Sixth's reign he preached constantly before the King. In the latter part he went to and fro in the midland counties of England, preaching wherever his services seemed to be most wanted, and especially in Lincolnshire. This was perhaps the most useful period of his life. No one of the Reformers probably sowed the seeds of sound Protestant doctrine so widely and effectually among the middle and lower classes as Latimer. The late Mr. Southey bears testimony to this: he says, "Latimer, more than any other man, promoted the Reformation by his preaching."

The untimely death of Edward VI. and the accession of Queen Mary to the English throne in 1553, put an end to Latimer's active exertions on behalf of the Gospel. Henceforward he was called to glorify Christ by suffering, and not by doing. The story of his sufferings, and the noble courage with which he endured them is admirably told in "Fox's Martyrs,"—a book which all churchmen in these days ought to study.

As soon as Queen Mary came to the throne, one of the first acts of her government was the apprehension of the leading English Reformers: and Latimer was among the first for whom a warrant was issued. The Queen's messenger found him doing his Master's work as a preacher in Warwickshire, but quite prepared for prison. He had received notice of what was

coming six hours before the messenger arrived, from a good man named Careless, and might easily have escaped; but he refused to avail himself of the opportunity. He said, "I go as willingly to London at this present, being called by my Prince to render a reckoning of my doctrine, as ever I went to any place in the world. And I do not doubt but that God, as He hath made me worthy to preach His Word to two excellent princes, so He will enable me to witness the same unto the third." In this spirit he rode cheerfully up to London, and said, as he passed through Smithfield, where heretics were generally burned, "Smithfield has long groaned for me."

Latimer was at once committed to the Tower, in company with Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford, and for want of room, all the four were confined in one chamber. There these four martyrs, to use old Latimer's words, "did together read over the New Testament with great deliberation and painful study," and unanimously agreed that transubstantiation was not to be found in it. From the Tower the three bishops were removed to Oxford, in 1554; and there, in 1555, Latimer and Ridley were burnt alive at the stake, as obstinate heretics.

The old Bishop's behaviour in prison was answerable to his previous life. For two long years he never lost his spirits, and his faith and patience never failed him. Much of his time was spent in reading the Bible. He says himself, "I read the New Testament over seven times while I was in prison." Much of his time was spent in prayer. Augustine Bernher, his faithful servant, tells us that he often continued kneeling so long that he was not able to get up from his knees without help. Three things he used especially to mention in his prayers at this time. One was, that as God had appointed him to be a preacher and professor of His Word, so He would give him grace to stand to His doctrine till his death. Another was, that God would of His mercy restore the Gospel of Christ to the realm once again; he often repeated these two words, "once again." The third was, that God would preserve the princess Elizabeth, and make her a comfort to England. It is a striking fact, that all these three prayers were fully granted.

Latimer's conduct at his various trials and examinations before his Popish persecutors, was in some respects wiser and better than that of the other martyrs. He knew well enough that his death was determined on, and he was quite right. Gardiner, the Popish Bishop of Winchester, had said openly, that "he would have the axe laid at the root of the tree: the bishops and most powerful preachers ought certainly to die." Bonner, the Popish Bishop of London, had said, "God do so to Bonner, and more also, if one of the heretics escape me." Acting on this impression, Latimer told Ridley before the trial, that he should say little.—"They talk of a free disputation," said he, "but their argument will be as it was with their forefathers: 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.'"—Acting on this impression, he did little at

his various trials but make a simple profession of his faith. He refused to be led away into lengthy discussions about the opinions of the Fathers, like Cranmer and Ridley.

He told his judges plainly, that “the Fathers might be deceived in some points;” and that he only “believed them when they said true, and had Scripture with them!” A wiser and truer remark about the Fathers was probably never made.

The death of old Latimer is so beautifully described by Fox, that I cannot do better than give you the account as nearly as possible in his words. I certainly shall not try to spoil it by any additions of my own, though I must abridge it considerably.

“The place appointed for the execution (says Fox) was on the north side of Oxford, in the ditch over against Balliol College. For fear of any tumult that might arise to prevent the burning, Lord Williams and the householders of the city were commanded by the Queen’s letter to be assistant, sufficiently armed; and when all things were in readiness, the prisoners were brought forth together, on the 16th of October, 1555.

“Ridley came first, in a furred black gown, such as he was wont to wear as a Bishop. After him came Latimer, in a poor Bristol frieze frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap and a handkerchief over his head, and a long new shroud hanging over his hose, down to his feet.

“Ridley, looking back, saw Latimer coming after, to whom he said, ‘Oh, are ye there?’ ‘Yea!’ said master Latimer, ‘as fast as I can follow.’ At length they came to the stake one after the other. Ridley first entered the place, and earnestly holding up both his hands, looked towards heaven. Shortly after, seeing Latimer, he ran to him, embraced and kissed him, saying, ‘Be of good cheer, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it.’

“With that he went to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and prayed; and behind him Latimer kneeled, earnestly calling upon God. After they arose, one talked with another a little while, but what they said Fox could not learn of any man.

“Then they were compelled to listen to a sermon preached by a renegade priest, named Smith, upon the text, ‘Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing.’ They attempted to answer the false statements of this miserable discourse, but were not allowed. Ridley said, ‘Well, then, I commit our cause to Almighty God, who shall impartially judge all.’ Latimer added his own verse: Well, there is nothing hid but it shall be made manifest;’ and said, ‘He could answer Smith well enough, if he might be suffered.’

“They were commanded after this to make ready immediately, and obeyed with all meekness. Ridley gave his clothes and such things as he had

about him to those that stood by, and happy was he that could get any rag of him. Latimer gave nothing, but quietly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose and his other apparel, which was very simple. And now being stripped to his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that stood by as one could desire to see. And though in his clothes he appeared a withered, crooked old man, he now stood quite upright.

“Then the smith took a chain of iron and fastened it about both Ridley’s and Latimer’s middles to one stake. As he was knocking in a staple, Ridley took the chain in his hands, and said to the smith, ‘Good fellow, knock it in hard, for flesh will have its course.’ A bag of gunpowder was tied about the neck of each. Faggots were piled around them, and the horrible preparations were completed.

“Then they brought a faggot kindled with fire, and laid it down at Ridley’s feet, to whom Latimer then spake in this manner: ‘Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out.’

“And so the fire being kindled, when Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit: Lord, receive my spirit!’ and repeated the latter part often. Latimer, crying as vehemently on the other side of the stake, ‘Father of heaven, receive my soul!’ received the flame as if embracing it. After he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared, with very little pain.”

“And thus much,” says Fox, “concerning the end of this old blessed servant of God, Bishop Latimer, for whose laborious services, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm has cause to give great thanks to Almighty God.”

Latimer lived and died unmarried, and I am not aware that any English family at this day lays claim to any connection with him. But he left behind him a name far better than that of sons and daughters, a name which will be held in honour by all true English Protestants so long as the world stands.

“Of all the Marian Martyrs,” says Fuller, “Mr. Philpot was the best-born gentleman, Bishop Ridley the profoundest scholar, Mr. Bradford the holiest and devoutest man, Archbishop Cranmer of the mildest and meekest temper, Bishop Hooper of the sternest and austere nature, Dr. Taylor had the merriest and pleasantest wit, but Mr. Latimer had the plainest and simplest heart.”

CHAPTER VII.

LATIMER'S OPINIONS.

HIS GENERAL CHARACTER AS A PREACHER—A BOLD, UNWORLDLY, KIND, AND DILIGENT MAN—IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING HIS THEOLOGICAL VIEWS—HIS OPINIONS ON SCRIPTURE, JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND OTHER LIKE POINTS—GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE DUTY OF NOT BEING ASHAMED OF EVANGELICAL RELIGION, AND OF RESISTING POPERY.

I TURN from the subject of Latimer's life, to his opinions. I have given a brief sketch of his history, from his birth to his death. My readers will easily believe that I have left many things untold.

I might dwell on the good man's *preaching*. Few, probably, have ever addressed an English congregation with more effect than he did. No doubt his sermons now extant would not suit modern taste. They contain many quaint, odd, and coarse things. They are very familiar, rambling, and discursive, and often full of gossiping stories. But, after all, we are poor judges in these days of what a sermon ought to be. A modern sermon is too often a dull, tame, pointless, religious essay, full of measured, round sentences, Johnsonian English, bald platitudes, timid statements, and elaborately concocted milk and water. It is a leaden sword, without either point or edge: a heavy weapon, and little likely to do much execution. But if a combination of sound Gospel doctrine, plain Saxon language, boldness, liveliness, directness, and simplicity, can make a preacher, few, I suspect, have ever equalled old Latimer.

I might supply many proofs of his *courage and faithfulness as a minister*. He did not shrink from attacking anybody's sins, even if they were the sins of a king. When Henry VIII. checked the diffusion of the Bible, Latimer wrote him a plain-spoken letter, long before he was a Bishop, remonstrating with him on his conduct. He feared God, and nothing else did he fear. "Latimer, Latimer," he exclaimed at the beginning of one of his sermons, "thou art going to speak before the high and mighty King Henry VIII., who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But Latimer, Latimer, remember also thou art about to speak before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Take heed that thou dost not displease Him."

I might speak of his *unworldliness*. He gave up a rich bishopric, and retired into private life, for conscience-sake, without a murmur. He refused that same bishopric again, because he felt too old to fulfil its duties, when he might have had it by saying "Yes." I might speak of his *genuine kindness* of heart. He was always the friend of the poor and distressed. Much of his time, while he stayed at Lambeth, was occupied in examining into the cases

of people who applied to him for help. I might speak of his *diligence*. To the very end of his life he used to rise at two o'clock in the morning, and begin reading and study. All this, and much more, I might tell, if I entered into more particulars in this biography.

I trust, however, I have given facts enough to supply some faint idea of what the man was. I trust my readers will agree with me, that he was one of the best bishops this country has ever had, and that it would have been well for the Church of England if more of her bishops had been like Bishop Latimer.

Let us never forget, as we think over the history of his life, that he is a glorious instance of the miracles which the grace of God can work. The Spirit can take a bigoted, fierce Papist and make him a faithful Protestant. Where the hand of the Lord is, nothing is impossible. Let us never think that any friend, relative, or companion is too much opposed to the Gospel to become a true Christian. Away with the idea! There are no hopeless cases under the Gospel. Let us remember Latimer, and never despair.

From all these topics, however interesting, I turn to one which is even more important in the present day. That topic is, the nature of Latimer's theological opinions. For dwelling on this topic at some length I shall make no apology. The circumstances of the times we live in, invest the subject with more than ordinary importance.

We live in days when very strange statements are made in some quarters, as to the true doctrines of the Church of England. Semi-Popish views about the rule of faith,—about justification,—about regeneration, —about the sacraments,—about preaching, are continually urged upon the attention of congregations, while the advocates and teachers of these views are coolly arrogating to themselves the credit of being the only sound Churchmen.

It is to no purpose that those who repudiate these semi-Popish views challenge their advocates to prove them by Scripture. The ready answer is at once given,—that, whether these views are Scriptural or not, there can be no doubt they are "*Church views*." It is to no purpose that we deny these views are to be found in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the Church of England, when honestly and consistently interpreted. We are quietly told that we know nothing about the matter. We are stupid! We are dense! We are blind! We are ignorant! We do not understand plain English They are the true men! Their views are the true "*Church views*;" and if we disagree with them, we must be quite wrong! In short we are left to infer that, if we are honest and consistent, we ought to leave our dear old Church, and give it up to the Ritualists. I appeal to the experience of every one who lives with his eyes open, and marks the signs of the times. My readers know well I am describing things which are going on in every part of the land.

Now, as matters have come to this pass, let us see whether we cannot throw a little light on the subject by looking back 300 years. Let us inquire what were the views of the men who laid the foundations of the Church of England, and are notoriously the fathers of the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. Let us put old Latimer into the witness-box to-day, and see what his opinions were upon the points in dispute. An honoured member of the Church of England at the period when the doctrines of the Church were first brought into shape and form,—a near and dear friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer,—an assistant in the composition of the first book of Homilies,—a Bishop whose orthodoxy and soundness were never called in question for a moment by his contemporaries,—if any man knows what a true Churchman ought to hold, Bishop Latimer must surely be that man. If his views are not true “Church” views, I know not whose are’

I ask my readers, then, to bear with me for a few minutes, while I give some extracts from Latimer’s works. Quotations from old writers, I am well aware, are very wearisome, and seldom read. But I want to inform the minds of Englishmen on the important question of the present day, Who is, and who is not, a true Churchman?

(1) First of all, What did Bishop Latimer think about SCRIPTURE? This is a point with which the very existence of true religion is bound up. Some Churchmen tell us now-a-days, notwithstanding the Sixth Article, that the Bible alone is not the rule of faith, and is not able to make a man wise unto salvation. No! it must be the Bible and the Fathers, or the Bible and Catholic tradition, or the Bible and the Church, or the Bible explained by the Prayer-book, or the Bible explained by an episcopally-ordained man, but not the Bible alone. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon before Edward VI., “I will tell you what a Bishop of this realm once said to me. He sent for me, and marvelled that I would not consent to such traditions as were set out. And I answered him, that I would be ruled by God’s book, and rather than depart one jot from it I would be torn by wild horses. I chanced in our communication to name the Lord’s Supper. Tush! saith the Bishop. What do you call the Lord’s Supper? What new term is this? There stood by him one Dr. Dubber. He dubbed him by-and-by, and said that this term was seldom read in the doctors. And I made answer, that I would rather follow Paul in using his terms than them, though they had all the doctors on their side.” (Works, i., 121.)

He says again, in his conference with Ridley: “A layman, fearing God, is much more fit to understand holy Scripture than any arrogant or proud priest; yea, than the Bishop himself, be he ever so great and glistening in his pontificals. But what is to be said of the Fathers? How are they to be esteemed? St. Augustine answereth, giving this rule,—that we should not therefore think it true because they say so, do they never so much exceed in

holiness and learning; but if they be able to prove their saying by canonical Scripture, or by good probable reasons; meaning that to be a probable reason, I think, which doth orderly follow upon a right collection and gathering out of the holy Scriptures.

“Let the Papists go with their long faith. Be you contented with the short faith of the saints, which is revealed to us in the Word of God written. Adieu to all Popish fantasies. Amen! For one man having the Scripture, and good reason for him, is more to be esteemed himself alone, than a thousand such as they, either gathered together, or succeeding one another. The Fathers have both herbs and weeds, and Papists commonly gather the weeds, and leave the herbs.” (Ridley’s Works, p. 114. Parker’s Edition.)

I make no comment on these passages,—they speak for themselves.

(2) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *justification by faith* This is the doctrine which Luther truly called the criterion of a standing or falling Church. This is the doctrine which, in spite of the Eleventh Article of our Church, many are now trying to obscure, by mingling up with it baptism, the Lord’s Supper, our own works, and I know not what besides. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon preached at Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire, “Christ reputeth all those for just, holy, and acceptable before God, which believe in Him, which put their trust, hope, and confidence in Him. By His passion which He suffered, He merited that as many as believe in Him shall be as well justified by Him as though they had never done any sin, and as though they had fulfilled the law to the uttermost. For we without Him are under the curse of the law. The law condemneth us. The law is not able to help us. And yet the imperfection is not in the law, but in us. The law itself is holy and good, but we are not able to keep it, and so the law condemneth us. But Christ with His death hath delivered us from the curse of the law. He hath set us at liberty, and promised that when we believe in Him we shall not perish, the law shall not condemn us. Therefore let us study to believe in Christ. Let us put all our hope, trust, and confidence only in Him. Let us patch Him with nothing, for, as I told you before, our merits are not able to deserve everlasting life. It is too precious a thing to be merited by man. It is His doing only. God hath given Him to us to be our Deliverer, and to give us everlasting life.” (ii. 125.)

He says again, in another sermon, “Learn to abhor the most detestable and dangerous poison of the Papists, which go about to thrust Christ out of His office. Learn, I say, to leave all Papistry, and to stick only to the Word of God, which teacheth that Christ is not only a judge but a justifier, a giver of salvation, and a taker away of sin. He purchased our salvation through His painful death, and we receive the same through believing in Him, as St. Paul teacheth us, saying, Freely ye are justified through faith. In these words

of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and clean taken away. For if it were for our works' sake, then it were not freely, but St. Paul saith *freely*. Whether will you now believe St. Paul or the Papists?" (ii. 147.)

He says again, in another sermon: "Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity, for as many as will believe the same. They that will not believe it, shall not have it; for it is no more, but believe and have." (i. 421.)

Once more, I say these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

(3) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *regeneration*? This, as you are all aware, is the subject of one of the great controversies of the day. Multitudes of Churchmen, in spite of the Seventeenth Article, and the Homily for Whit-Sunday, maintain that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate, and receive grace and the Holy Ghost at the moment they are baptized. In a word, they tell us, that every man, woman, and child, who has received baptism, has also received regeneration, and that every congregation in the Church of England should be addressed as an assembly of regenerated persons. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon preached in Lincolnshire, "There be two manner of men. Some there be that be not justified, not regenerate, not yet in the state of salvation, that is to say, not God's servants. They lack the renovation, or regeneration. They be not yet come to Christ." (ii. 7.) He says, in a sermon preached before Edward VI., "Christ saith, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He must have a regeneration. And what is this regeneration? *It is not to be christened in water*, as those firebrands expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter showeth that one place of Scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collection of places that maketh Scripture plain. We be born again, says Peter, and how? Not by a mortal seed, but an immortal? What is the immortal seed? By the Word of the living God: by the Word of God preached and opened. Thus cometh in our new birth." (i. 202.) He says, in another Lincolnshire sermon, "Preaching is God's instrument, whereby He worketh faith in our hearts. Our Saviour saith to Nicodemus, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But how cometh this regeneration? By hearing and believing the Word of God: for so saith St. Peter." (i. 471.)

Once more, I say these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

(4) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about the *Lord's Supper*? This, I need hardly say, is a subject about which very unprotestant doctrine is often taught in the present day. Some around us, in the face of the Twenty-eighth Article, speak of this sacrament in such a manner, that it

is hard to see the difference between their doctrine and Popish transubstantiation, or the sacrifice of the mass. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in his disputation at Oxford, “In the sacrament there is none other presence of Christ required than a spiritual presence. And this presence is sufficient for a Christian man, as the presence by which we abide in Christ and Christ in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, if we persevere in the true Gospel. And this same presence may be called a real presence, because to the faithful believer there is the real and spiritual body of Christ.” (ii. 252.) He says, in the same disputation, “Christ spake never a word of sacrificing, or saying of mass; nor promised the hearers any reward but among the idolaters with the devil and his angels, except they repent speedily. Therefore sacrificing-priests should now cease for ever: for now all men ought to offer their own bodies a quick sacrifice, holy and acceptable before God. The Supper of the Lord was instituted to provoke us to thanksgiving, and to stir us up by preaching of the Gospel to remember His death till He cometh again.” (ii. 256.) He says, in his last examination, “There is a change in the bread and wine, and such a change as no power but the omnipotency of God can make, in that that which before was bread should now have the dignity to exhibit Christ’s body. And yet the bread is still bread, and the wine is still wine. For the change is not in the nature but the dignity.” (ii. 286.) He says, in one of his Lincolnshire sermons, “Whosoever eateth the mystical bread, and drinketh the mystical wine worthily, according to the ordinance of Christ, he receiveth surely the very body and blood of Christ spiritually, as it shall be most comfortable to his soul. He eateth with the mouth of his soul, and digesteth with the stomach of his soul, the body of Christ. And, to be short, whosoever believeth in Christ, putteth his hope, trust, and confidence in Him, he eateth and drinketh Him. For the spiritual eating is the right eating to eternal life, not the corporal eating.” (i. 459.)

Once more I say, I make no comment on these passages. They speak for themselves.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of this kind to an endless length, if it were necessary or desirable. There is hardly a controverted subject in the present day on which I could not give some plain, Scriptural, sensible, sound opinion of Bishop Latimer.

Would my readers like to know what he thought about the ordinance of *preaching*? Did he think little of it, as some do in this day, and regard it as a means of grace very subordinate to sacraments and services? No! indeed he did not. He calls it “the office of salvation, and the office of regeneration.” He says, “take away preaching, and take away salvation.” He says, “this office of preaching is the only ordinary way that God hath appointed to save us all. Let us maintain this, for I know no other.” He declares that, “preaching is the thing the devil wrestled most against. It has been all his study to

decry this office. He worketh against it as much as he can. He hath made unpreaching prelates, and stirred them up by heaps to persecute this office in the title of heresy.” (i. 203, 155, 306, 349, 302.)

Would my readers like to hear what he thought about a *gorgeous ceremonial and candles in Churches*? He says plainly that these things come from the devil. “Where the devil is resident, and hath his plough going, there away with book and up with candles; away with Bible and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel and up with the light of candles, yea, even at noon-day. Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry, censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new services of man’s inventing.” (i. 71.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about the *foreign reformers*? Did he lightly esteem them, as some do now-a-days, because they did not retain episcopacy? No! indeed he did not. He says, “I heard say, Melancthon, that great clerk, should come hither. I would wish him, and such as he is, to have £200 a-year. The king would never want it. There is yet among us two great learned men, Peter Martyr and Bernard Ochin, which have a hundred marks a-piece. I would the king would bestow a thousand pounds on that sort.” (i. 141.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about *unity*? Did he think, as some do now, that it is the one thing needful, and that we should give up every thing in order to attain it? No, indeed! He says, “Unity must be according to God’s holy Word, or else it were better war than peace. We ought never to regard unity so much that we should forsake God’s Word for her sake.” (i. 487.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about *councils and convocations*? Did he regard them as the grand panacea for all ecclesiastical evils, like those around us, whose cry is, “Give us synodical action, or we die”? He says to Ridley, “Touching councils and convocations, I refer you to your own experience to think of our own country’s parliaments and convocations. The more part in my time did bring forth the Six Articles. Afterward the more part did repeal the same. The same Articles are now again restored. Oh, what uncertainty is this!” And he says, in another place, “More credence is to be given to one man having the holy Word of God for him, than to ten thousand without the Word. If it agrees with God’s Word, it is to be received. If it agrees not, it is not to be received, though a council had determined it.” (Ridley, 130; Latim. i. 288.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought of *thorough-going Protestant preaching*? Did he think, as some do now, that if a sermon contains a good deal of truth, a little false doctrine may be excused and allowed? No! indeed he did not. He says, “Many preach God’s Word, and shall preach a very good and godly sermon, but at the last they will have a

blanched almond, one little piece of Popery patched in to powder their matter with, for their own lucre and glory. They make a mingling of the way of God and man's way, a mingle-mangle, as men serve pigs in my country." (i. 290.)

I will not multiply these extracts, though it would be easy to do so. Those who have never studied the works of Latimer, published by the Parker Society, have little idea of the loss they have sustained. They are rich to overflowing with pithy, pointed Protestant truths. I will only ask my readers to remember well whose words I have been quoting, and when they were spoken.

These words were not spoken last year. They did not fall from the lips of modern Evangelical or Low Church clergymen. They were not spoken by the ministers of Park Chapel, Chelsea; or of Portman Chapel; or the Lock; or Belgrave Chapel; or by some platform orator at Exeter Hall. No: the words I have quoted are three hundred years old. They are the words of one of the best bishops the Church of England ever had. They are the words of the man who helped to compose our first book of Homilies. They are the words of the friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer. They are the words of one whom king and parliament delighted to honour.

Why was the speaker of these words not cast out of the Church of England? Why was he not reprimanded? Why was he not reviled as a man of low, unchurchman-like opinions? Why was he not proceeded against and persecuted for his views? How is it that he was persecuted only by Papists, but always honoured by Protestants? persecuted by Bonner, Gardiner, and bloody Mary; but honoured by Cranmer, Ridley, and Edward VI.?

I will give a plain answer to these questions. I answer them by saying that, three hundred years ago no man in his senses doubted that Latimer's opinions were the real opinions of the Church of England. I go on further to affirm, that the truest and best members of the Church of England, at the present day, are those whose views are most in harmony with those of good Bishop Latimer. And I say, that to tell men who love the Church of England with deep affection, that they are not sound Churchmen, merely because they agree with Latimer, and not with Laud, is to bring against them a most unfair and unwarrantable charge.

And now let me conclude this biography of Latimer with two practical remarks.

For one thing, let me earnestly exhort my readers, as individuals, *never to be ashamed of holding what are called Evangelical views within the Church of England*. Listen not to those supercilious gentlemen, on the one side, who would have you believe that if you are not high Churchmen, like themselves, you are no Churchmen at all. Listen not to those exceedingly kind friends, on the other side, who try to persuade you that the Established

Church is a regular Popish concern, and ought to be left at once. Both these are ancient tricks. Against both these tricks be on your guard.

Do not be bullied out of the Church of England by the High Churchman's assertion, that you are only a tolerated party, and have no business by his side. No doubt you live in a communion where great freedom of opinion is allowed. But to tell men of Evangelical views that they are merely *tolerated*, is a downright insult to the memory of the Reformers. Let us make answer to people who tell us so, that if they have forgotten Latimer and three hundred years ago, we have not. Let us say that we are not going to desert the Church of Latimer, in order to please men who wish to lord it over God's heritage, and have things all their own way. Sure I am that, if might should ever prevail over right, and the friends of Latimer should be thrust out of the Church by force, and the House of Commons should be mad enough to sanction it,—sure am I that the men thrust out would be better Churchmen than the men left behind.

And do not be wheedled out of the Church by the arguments of men outside, who would probably be glad to be in it if they only saw the way. When the fox, in an old fable, could not reach the grapes, he said they were sour. When the fox, in another fable, lost his tail in a trap, he tried to persuade his friends that foxes did much better without tails, and advised them to get rid of their own. Do not forget the moral of that fable; do not be enticed into biting off your own tails. Rest assured, that with all its faults and defects the Church of England has very high privileges to offer to its members. Think well about these privileges. Do not be always poring over the defects. Resolve that you will not lightly cast these privileges away.

Above all, never, never forget that Evangelical views are not only theoretically sound, and agreeable to the mind of the Reformers, but that they are also of vital importance to the very existence of the Church of England. Never has our beloved Church stood so low in this country as when Evangelical views have been at zero, and almost forgotten. Never has she stood so high as when the views of Latimer and the Reformers have been honestly preached and carried out. So far from being ashamed of Evangelical opinions, you may be satisfied that the maintenance of them is rapidly becoming a matter of life or death to your own communion. Take away Latimer's views, and I firmly believe the whole Establishment would collapse before the pressure from without, and come to the ground.

For another thing, let me entreat all English readers of this biography to *beware of countenancing any retrograde movement in this country towards the Church of Rome, and to resist such movement by every possible means, from whatever quarter it may come.*

I am sure that this warning is one which the times loudly call for. The Church of Rome has risen up amongst us with renewed strength in the last

few years. She does not disguise her hope that England, the lost planet, will soon resume her orbit in the so-called Catholic system, and once more revolve in blind obedience round the centre of the Vatican. She has succeeded in blinding the eyes of ignorant persons to her real character. She has succeeded in securing the unexpected aid of misguided men within our own Establishment. A hundred little symptoms around us tell us how real the danger is. Laud and the nonjurors are cried up, while Latimer and the Reformers are cried down. Historical works are industriously circulated, in which bloody Mary is praised, and Protestant Elizabeth blamed. A morbid tenderness towards Romanists, and a virulent bitterness towards Dissenters, have sprung up side by side. An unhealthy attention is paid to what is called mediaeval taste. Thousands of tracts are sown broad-cast over the land in which the three leading phrases to be seen are generally those three ominous words "*priest,*" "*catholic,*" and "*church.*" The use of the rosary, auricular confession, prayers for the dead, and the "Hail, Mary," are deliberately recommended to the members of the English Church. Little by little, I fear, the edge of English feeling about Popery is becoming blunt and dull. Surely I have good reason to tell my readers to beware of the Church of Rome.

Remember the darkness in which Rome kept England when she last had the supreme power. Remember the gross ignorance and degrading superstitions which prevailed in Bishop Latimer's youth. Think not for a moment that these are ancient things, and that Rome is changed. The holy coat of Tréves, the winking picture at Rimini, the mental thralldom in which the Papal States are kept, the notorious practices which go on in the Holy City to this day, are all witnesses that Rome, when she has the power, is not changed at all. Remember this, and beware.

Remember the horrible persecutions which Rome carried on against true religion, when she last had uncontrolled sway in this country. Remember the atrocities which disgraced the days of bloody Mary, and the burning of Bishop Latimer. Think not for a moment that Rome is altered. The persecution of Bible readers in Madira, and the imprisonment of the Madias, are unmistakable proofs that, after three hundred years, the old persecuting spirit of Rome still remains as strong as ever. Remember this also, and beware.

Shall we, in the face of such facts as these, return to the bondage in which our forefathers were kept? Shall we give up our Bibles, or be content to sue for sacerdotal licence to read them? Shall we submit ourselves humbly to Italian priests? Shall we go back to confessional-boxes and the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass? God forbid! I say for one—God forbid! Let the dog return to his vomit. Let the sow that was washed return to her wallowing in the mire. Let the idiotic prisoner go back to his chains. But God forbid that Israel should return to Egypt! God forbid that England should go

back into the arms of Rome! God forbid that old Latimer's candle should ever be put out!

Let us work, every one of us, if we would prevent such a miserable consummation. Let us work hard for the extension of pure, scriptural, and evangelical religion at home and abroad. Let us labour to spread it among the Jews, among the Roman Catholics, among the heathen. Let us labour not least to preserve and maintain it by every constitutional means in our own Church.

Let us cherish, every one of us, if we would prevent the increase of Romanism,—a brotherly feeling towards all orthodox Protestants, by whatever name they may be called. Away with the old rubbishy opinion, that the Church of England occupies a middle position, a *via media*, between Dissent and Rome. Cast it away, for it is false. We might as well talk of the Isle of Wight being midway between England and France. Between us and Rome there is a gulf, and a broad and deep gulf too. Between us and orthodox Protestant Dissent there is but a thin partition wall. Between us and Rome the differences are about essential doctrines, and things absolutely necessary to salvation. Between us and Dissent the division is about things indifferent, things in which a man may err, and yet be saved. Rome is a downright open enemy, attacking the very foundation of our religion. Dissent ought to be an ally, and friendly power; not wearing our uniform, nor yet, as we think, so well equipped as we are,—but still an ally, and fighting on the same side. Let not this hint be thrown away! Let us keep up a kind, brotherly feeling towards all who love the same Saviour, believe the same doctrines, and honour the same Bible as ourselves.

Finally let us pray, every one of us, if we would prevent the increase of Romanism,—let us pray night and day that God may preserve this country from Popery, and not deal with it according to its sins. It is a striking fact, that almost the last prayer of good king Edward VI., on his death-bed, was a prayer to this effect: "O my Lord God, defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion." There was a prayer in the Litany of our Prayer-book, in 1549, which I think never ought to have been cast out of it. "From all sedition, and privy conspiracy,—FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME, AND ALL HIS DETESTABLE ENORMITIES,—from all false doctrine and heresy,—from hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word and commandments, good Lord, deliver us!" To that prayer may we ever be able to say heartily, Amen, and Amen!