

BISHOPS AND CLERGY OF
OTHER DAYS.

OR,

THE LIVES OF TWO REFORMERS AND
THREE PURITANS.

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, B.A.,

Vicar of Stradbroke, Suffolk.

AUTHOR OF "EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS," ETC.

LONDON:

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

1868.



Bishop John Hooper
English Protestant Martyr
1495 - 1555AD

BISHOP HOOPER.

CHAPTER I.

HOOPER'S TIMES.

VALUE OF HISTORICAL LIGHT—SEASONABLENESS OF A REFORMER'S LIFE IN THE PRESENT DAY—CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH RELIGION BEFORE THE REFORMATION—DENSE IGNORANCE—DEGRADING SUPERSTITION—WIDE-SPREAD IMMORALITY—COVETOUSNESS AND IMPURITY OF CLERGY—A GREAT DEBT OWING TO THE REFORMATION.

IN a day of religious controversy, no one is so useful to his generation as the man who contributes a little "light." Amidst the din and strife of ecclesiastical warfare, amidst the fog and dust stirred up by excited disputants, amidst assertions and counter-assertions, a thinking man will often cry with the dying philosopher,—“I want more light: give me more light.” He that can make two ears of corn grow where one grew before, has been rightly called a benefactor to mankind. He that can throw a few rays of fresh light on the theological questions of the day, is surely doing a service to the Church and the world.

Thoughts such as these came across my mind when I chose the subject of this biographical paper: “John Hooper, the martyred Bishop, of Gloucester: his times, life, death, and opinions.” I chose it with a meaning. I have long felt that the lives and opinions of the English Reformers deserve attentive study in the present day. I thought that a picture of John Hooper would throw useful light on points of deep interest in our times.

We live in days when the Romish Church is making gigantic efforts to regain her lost power in England, and thousands of English people are helping her. None are doing the work of Rome so thoroughly as those English Churchmen, who are called Ritualists. Consciously or unconsciously, they are paving the way for her advance, and laying down the rails for her trains. They are familiarizing the mind of thousands with Romish ceremonial,—its millinery, its processions, its gestures, its postures, its theatrical, sensuous, style of worship. They are boldly preaching and publishing downright Romish doctrine,—the real presence, the priestly character of the ministry, the necessity of auricular confession and sacerdotal absolution. They are loudly proclaiming their desire for re-union with the Church of Rome. In short the battle of the Reformation must be fought over again. Ritualism is nothing but Romanism in the bud, and Romanism is Ritualism in flower. The triumph of Ritualism will be the triumph of Romanism and the restoration of Popery. Now before we go back to Rome,

let us thoroughly understand what English Romanism was. Let us bring in the light. Let us not take a "leap in the dark."

We live in times when many Churchmen openly sneer at our Reformation, and scoff at our Reformers. The martyrs, whose blood was the seed of our Church, are abused and vilified, and declared to be no martyrs at all. Cranmer is called "a cowardly traitor," and Latimer "a coarse, illiterate bully." The Reformation is said to have been "an unmitigated disaster," and a "change taken in hand by a conspiracy of adulterers, murderers, and thieves." (See *Church Times*, of March 14, 1867.) Let us study one of our leading Reformers to-day, and see what the man was like. Let us pass under review one who was a friend and contemporary of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and a leading fellow-labourer in the work of the Reformation. Let us find out how he lived, and how he preached, and what he thought, and how he died, before we believe the writers of ritualistic newspapers, and throw him aside. Once more I say, let us bring in the light.

We live in times when the strangest misrepresentations prevail about the true character of the Church of England. Scores of clergymen all over the country are not ashamed to denounce the very name of Protestantism, and to tell people that "Evangelical" Churchmen are not Churchmen at all! Forsooth, we are Calvinists, Puritans, Dissenters, Methodists, Fanatics, and the like, and ought to leave the Church of England and go to our own place! Let us bring these gentlemen to the test of a few plain facts. Let us examine the recorded sentiments, the written opinions of one of the very divines to whom we owe our Articles and Prayer-book, with very few alterations. Let us hear what Bishop Hooper wrote, and thought, and taught. Let us not hastily concede that Ritualists and High Churchmen are the true representatives of the Church of England. "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour that cometh after searcheth him." (Pro. xviii. 17.) Once more, I say, let us turn on the light.

I will begin by giving some account of *Bishop Hooper's times*.—What kind of times were they in a religious point of view? Out of the pages of Fox, Strype, Burnet, Soames, and Blunt, let me try to supply a few historical gleanings.

John Hooper was born in 1495 and died in 1555. He first saw the light in the reign of Henry the Seventh, and was burned in the reign of Queen Mary. He lived through the whole reigns of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, and was an eyewitness of all that took place under the government of those two kings. The sixty years of his life take in one of the most eventful periods of English history. It would be impossible to exaggerate the difference there was between England in 1495 and the same England in 1555. In a religious and moral view the whole country was turned upside down. When Hooper was born, the English Reformation had not begun, and the Church of Rome ruled England undisturbed. When he died, the Reformation had struck such deep root, that neither argument nor persecution could overthrow it.

What were the leading characteristics of English religion before the Reformation? In what state did the mighty change which Hooper witnessed and

helped forward, find our forefathers? In one word, what does England owe to that subversion of Popery and that introduction of Protestantism, in which Hooper was a leading instrument? Let me try to supply a short answer to these questions. They are subjects, I am sorry to say, on which most people seem to know nothing at all. The minds of the vast majority of my countrymen appear to be a total blank about the history of three hundred years ago. With all the stir made about education, the ignorance of our own country's history is something lamentable and appalling and depressing. I never can believe that Ritualism would have obtained so many adherents, if English people only knew the extent of our debt to the Protestant Reformation. They would never trifle, and tamper, and dabble with Popery, if they only knew what Popery was.

(a) Before the Reformation one leading feature of English religion was *dense ignorance*. There was among all classes a conspicuous absence of all knowledge of true Christianity. A gross darkness overspread the land, a darkness that might be felt. Not one in a hundred could have told you as much about the Gospel of Christ, as we could now learn from any intelligent Sunday-school child.

We need not wonder at this ignorance. The people had neither schools nor Bibles. Wickliffe's New Testament, the only translation extant till Henry the Eighth's Bible was printed, cost £2 16s. 3d. of our money. The prayers of the Church were in Latin, and of course the people could not understand them. Preaching there was scarcely any. Quarterly sermons were indeed prescribed to the clergy, but not insisted on. Latimer says that while mass was never to be left unsaid for a single Sunday, sermons might be omitted for twenty Sundays, and nobody was blamed. After all, when there were sermons, they were utterly unprofitable: and latterly to be a preacher was to be suspected of being a heretic.

To cap all, the return that Hooper got from the diocese of Gloucester, when he was first appointed Bishop in 1551, will give a pretty clear idea of the ignorance of Pre-Reformation times. Out of 311 clergy of his diocese, 168 were unable to repeat the ten commandments; 31 of the 168 could not state in what part of Scripture they were to be found; 40 could not tell where the Lord's prayer was written; and 31 of the 40 were ignorant who was the author of the Lord's prayer!

If this is not ignorance, I know not what is. If such were the pastors what must the people have been! If this was the degree of knowledge among the parsons, what must it have been among the people!

(b) But this is not all. Before the Reformation, another leading feature of English religion was *superstition of the lowest and most degrading description*. Of the extent to which this was carried few, I suspect, have the smallest idea.

Men and women in those days had uneasy consciences sometimes, and wanted relief. They had sorrow and sickness and death to pass through, just like ourselves. What could they do? Whither could they turn? There was none to tell them of the love of God and mediation of Christ, of the glad tidings of free, full, and complete salvation, of justification by faith, of grace, and faith, and hope, and repentance. They could only turn to the priests, who knew nothing themselves and could tell nothing to others. "The blind led the blind, and both fell into the ditch." In a word, the religion of our ancestors, before Hooper's time, was little better than an orga-

nized system of Virgin Mary worship, saint worship, image worship, relic worship, pilgrimages, almsgivings, formalism, ceremonialism, processions, prostrations, bowings, crossings, fastings, confessions, absolutions, masses, penances, and blind obedience to the priests. It was a grand higgledy-piggledy of ignorance and idolatry, and serving an unknown God by deputy. The only practical result was that the priests took the people's money, and undertook to ensure their salvation, and the people flattered themselves that the more they gave to the priests, the more sure they were of going to heaven.

The catalogue of gross and ridiculous impostures which the priests practised on the people would fill a volume, and I cannot of course do more than supply a few specimens.

At the Abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire, a vial was shown by the priests to those who offered alms, which was said to contain the blood of Christ. On examination, in King Henry the Eighth's time, this notable vial was found to contain neither more nor less than the blood of a duck, which was renewed every week.

At Bexley, in Kent, a crucifix was exhibited, which received peculiar honour and large offerings, because of a continual miracle which was said to attend its exhibition. When people offered copper, the face of the figure looked grave; when they offered silver, it relaxed its severity; when they offered gold, it openly smiled. In Henry the Eighth's time this famous crucifix was examined, and wires were found within it by which the priests could pull the face of the image, and make it assume any expression that they pleased.

At Reading Abbey, in Berkshire, the following relics, among many others, were most religiously worshipped,—an angel with one wing,—the spear-head that pierced our Saviour's side,—two pieces of the Holy cross,—St. James' hand,—St. Philip's stole, and a bone of Mary Magdalene.

At Bury St. Edmund's, in Suffolk, the priests exhibited the coals that roasted St. Lawrence, the parings of St. Edmund's toe-nails, Thomas a Becket's pen-knife and boots, and as many pieces of our Saviour's cross as would have made, if joined together, one large whole cross

At Maiden Bradley Priory, in Somersetshire, the worshippers were privileged to see the Virgin Mary's smock, part of the bread used at the original Lord's supper, and a piece of the stone manger in which our Lord was laid at Bethlehem.

At Bruton Priory, in Somersetshire, was kept a girdle of the Virgin Mary, made of red silk. This solemn relic was sent as a special favour to women in childbirth, to insure them a safe delivery. The like was done with a white girdle of Mary Magdalene, kept at Farley Abbey, in Wiltshire. In neither case, we may be sure, was the relic sent without a pecuniary consideration.¹

Records like these are so silly and melancholy that one hardly knows wheth-

¹ Strype and Burnet are my authority for the above mentioned facts.

er to laugh or to cry. But it is positively necessary to bring them forward, in order that men may know what was the religion of our forefathers before the Reformation. Wonderful as these things may sound in our ears, we must never forget that Englishmen at that time knew no better. A famishing man, in sieges and blockades, has been known to eat mice and rats rather than die of hunger. A soul famishing for lack of God's Word must not be judged too harshly if it struggles to find comfort in the most grovelling superstition.

(c) One thing more yet remains behind. Before the Reformation, another leading feature of English religion was *widespread unholiness and immorality*. The lives of the clergy, as a general rule, were simply scandalous, and the moral tone of the laity was naturally at the lowest ebb. Of course grapes will never grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles. To expect the huge roots of ignorance and superstition, which filled our land, to bear any but corrupt fruit, would be unreasonable and absurd. But a more thoroughly corrupt set than the English clergy were, in the palmy days of undisturbed Romanism, it would be impossible to imagine.

I might tell you of the habits of gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling, for which the parochial priesthood became unhappily notorious.

"Too often," says Blunt, "they were persons taken from the lowest of the people, with all the gross habits of the class from which they sprang,—loiterers on the ale-house bench,—dicers, scarce able to read by rote their paternoster, often unable to repeat the Ten Commandments,—mass-priests, who could just read their breviaries, and no more,—men often dubbed by the uncomplimentary names of Sir John Lack-Latin, Sir John Mumble-Matins, or babbling and blind Sir John." In fact, the carnal living, fat bellies, and general secularity of ministers of religion, were proverbial before the Reformation.

I might tell you of the shameless covetousness which marked the Pre-Reformation priesthood. So long as a man gave liberal offerings at the shrine of such saints as Thomas a Becket, the clergy would absolve him of almost any sin. So long as a felon or malefactor paid the monks well, he might claim sanctuary within the precincts of religious houses, after any crime, and hardly any law could reach him. Yet all this time for Lollards and Wickliffites there was no mercy at all! The very carvings still extant in some old ecclesiastical buildings tell a story in stone and wood, which speaks volumes to this day. Friars were often represented as foxes preaching, with the neck of a stolen goose peeping out of the hood behind,—as wolves giving absolution, with a sheep muffled up in their cloaks,—as apes sitting by a sick man's bed, with a crucifix in one hand, and with the other in the sufferer's pocket. Things must indeed have been at a low ebb, when the faults of ordained ministers were so publicly held up to scorn.

But the blackest spot on the character of our Pre-Reformation clergy in England is one of which it is painful to speak. I mean the impurity of their lives, and their horrible contempt of the seventh commandment. The results of auricular confession, carried on by men bound by their vow never to marry, were

such that I dare not enter into them. The consequences of shutting up herds of men and women, in the prime of life, in monasteries and nunneries, were such that I will not defile my readers' minds by dwelling upon them. Suffice it to say that the discoveries made by Henry the Eighth's Commissioners, of the goings on in many of the so-called religious houses, were such as it is impossible to describe. Anything less "holy" than the practice of many of the "holy" men and women of these professedly "holy" retreats from sin and the world, the imagination cannot conceive. If ever there was a plausible theory weighed in the balance and found utterly wanting, it is the favourite theory that celibacy and monasticism promote holiness. Romantic young men and sentimental young ladies may mourn over the ruins of such Abbeys as Battle, and Glastonbury, and Bolton, and Kirkstall, and Furness, and Croyland, and Bury, and Tintern. But I venture boldly to say that too many of these houses were sinks of iniquity, and that too often monks and nuns were the scandal of Christianity.

I grant freely that all monasteries and nunneries were not equally bad. I admit that there were religious houses like Godstow Nunnery, near Oxford, which had a stainless reputation. But I fear that these were bright exceptions which only proved the truth of the rule. The preamble of the Act for Dissolution of Religious Houses, founded on the report of Henry the Eighth's Commissioners, contains broad, general statements, that cannot be got over. It declares "that manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living is daily used and committed in abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, and that albeit many continual visitations have been had, by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living, yet that nevertheless little or none amendment was hitherto had, but that their vicious living shamefully increased and augmented."

After all there is no surer receipt for promoting immorality than "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." (Ezek. xvi. 49.) Take any number of men and women, of any nation, rank, or class,—bind them by a vow of celibacy,—shut them in houses by themselves,—give them plenty to eat and drink, and give them nothing to do,—and above all give them no Bible reading, no true religion, no preaching of the Gospel, no inspection, and no check from public opinion;—if the result of all this be not abominable and abundant breach of the seventh commandment, I can only say that I have read human nature in vain.

I make no apology for dwelling on these things. Painful and humbling as the picture is, it is one that in these times ought to be carefully looked at, and not thrown aside. Before we join in the vulgar outcry which some modern Churchmen are making against the Reformation, I want English people to understand from what the Reformation delivered us. Before we make up our minds to give up Protestantism and receive back Popery and monasticism, let us thoroughly understand what was the state of England when Popery had its own way. My own belief is that never was a change so loudly demanded as the Reformation, and that never did men do such good service to England, as

Hooper and his fellow labourers, the Reformers. In short, unless a man can disprove the plain historical facts recorded in the pages of Strype, Burnet, Soames, and Blunt, he must either admit that the Pre-Reformation times were bad times, or be content to be regarded as a lunatic. To no class of men does England owe such a debt as to our Protestant Reformers, and it is a burning shame if we are ungrateful and refuse to pay that debt.

Of course it is easy and cheap work to pick holes in the character of some of the agents whom God was pleased to use at the Reformation. No doubt Henry the Eighth,—who had the Bible translated, and made Cranmer and Latimer bishops, and suppressed the monasteries,—was a brutal and bad man. I am not concerned to defend him. But God has often done good work with very bad tools; and the grand result is all we have to look at. And, after all, bad as Henry the Eighth was, the less our Romanizing friends dwell on that point the better. His character at any rate will bear a favourable comparison with that of many of the Popes. At any rate he was a married man.

It is easy, on the other hand, to say that Hooper and his brother Reformers did their work badly, countenanced many abuses, left many things imperfect and incomplete. All this may be very true. But in common fairness men should remember the numerous difficulties they had to contend with, and the mountain of rubbish they had to shovel away. To my mind the wonder is not so much that they did so little, but rather that they succeeded in doing anything at all.

After all, when all has been said, and every objection raised, there remain some great plain facts which cannot well be got over. Let men say what they will or pick holes where they may, they will never succeed in disproving these facts. To the Reformation Englishmen owe an English Bible, and liberty for every man to read it.—To the Reformation they owe the knowledge of the way of peace with God, and of the right of every sinner to go straight to Christ by faith, without bishop, priest, or minister standing in his way.—To the Reformation they owe a Scriptural standard of morality and holiness, such as our ancestors never dreamed of. For ever let us be thankful for these inestimable mercies! For ever let us grasp them firmly, and refuse to let them go! For my part, I hold that he who would rob us of these privileges, and draw us back to Pre-Reformation ignorance, superstition and unholiness, is an enemy to his country, and ought to be firmly opposed.

CHAPTER II.

HOOPER'S LIFE.

BORN IN SOMERSETSHIRE IN 1495—EDUCATED AT MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD—A MONK AT OLD CLEVE AND GLOUCESTER—WITHDRAWS, AND RESIDES AT OXFORD—MEANS OF HIS CONVERSION TO PROTESTANTISM—OBLIGED TO FLEE TO THE CONTINENT IN 1539—LIVES AT STRASBURGH, BALE, AND ZURICH—RETURNS TO ENGLAND IN 1549, IN EDWARD SIXTH'S REIGN—NOMINATED TO BISHOPRIC OF GLOUCESTER IN 1550—CONTROVERSY ABOUT VESTMENTS WITH CRANMER AND RIDLEY—CONSECRATED IN 1551—CHARACTER OF HIS EPISCOPAL LABOURS.

I TURN from Hooper's times to *Hooper Himself*. For dwelling so long on his times I think it needless to make any apology. You cannot rightly estimate a public man, unless you know the times in which he lived. You cannot duly appreciate an English Reformer, unless you understand the state of England before the Reformation. We have seen the state of things that Hooper and his companions had to deal with. Now let us find out something about Hooper himself.

John Hooper was born in the county of Somerset, in the year 1495, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The parish in which he was born is not known, and not even a tradition has survived about it. In this respect Hooper and Rowland Taylor stand alone among the English martyrs. The birthplaces of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Rogers, Bradford, Philpot, and Ferrar, have all been ascertained. The position which his family occupied in the county is alike unknown. There is, however, good reason for believing that his father was not a mere yeoman, but a man of considerable wealth.

The early history of this great Reformer is wrapped in much obscurity. He entered Merton College, Oxford, in 1514, at the age of nineteen, under the tuition of an uncle, who was then Fellow of that College. He took his degree as B.A. in 1518, at the age of twenty-three, and never afterwards proceeded to a higher degree. These are literally the only facts that have been discovered about the first twenty-three years of Hooper's life. From 1518 to 1539,—a period of no less than twenty-one years,—we are again left almost entirely in the dark about Hooper's history. There can be little doubt, however, that it was a most momentous crisis in his life, and gave a colour and bias to the whole man for the rest of his days. Tradition says, that after taking his degree at Oxford, he became a monk—first at the Cistercian Monastery of Old Cleve, near Watchet, in Somersetshire, and afterwards in another Cistercian house at Gloucester. Tradition adds, that he became wearied and disgusted with a monastic life, and withdrew from it to reside at Oxford; though at what precise date is not known.

It is some corroboration of these traditions, that when he was sentenced to death afterwards by Gardiner, he was described as "formerly a monk of the Monastery of Cleve, of the Cistercian order." Yet it must be admitted that there is a conspicuous absence in his literary remains of any reference to his experience as a monk.

One thing, at any rate, is very certain about Hooper at this stage of his life. It was during these twenty-one years, between 1518 and 1539, that his eyes were opened to the false doctrines and unscriptural practices of Popery, though when and where we cannot exactly tell. He says himself, in a letter to Bullinger, the Swiss Reformer, that "when he was a courtier, and living too much of a court life in the palace of the King," he met with certain writings of Zwingle, and certain commentaries of Bullinger on St. Paul's Epistles, and that to the study of these books he owed his deliverance from Papacy, and the conversion of his soul. This deeply interesting letter will be found in the "Original Letters from Zurich," published by the Parker Society. To the meaning, however, of the allusion to "a court life," and "the palace of the King," the letter, unfortunately, supplies no clue.

Another fact about Hooper at this period of his history is no less certain. He was obliged to leave Oxford in 1539, when the semi-Popish statute of the Six Articles, which made Latimer resign his Bishopric, was put in operation. Fox, the Martyrologist, distinctly asserts that his known attachment to the principles of the Reformation attracted the notice of the Oxford authorities, and specially of Dr. Smith, the Professor of Divinity. The consequence was, that he was compelled to retire from the University, and appears to have never resided there again.

On leaving Oxford, in 1539, Hooper became, for a short time, Steward and Chaplain in the household of Sir Thomas Arundel. Here also again his Protestant principles got him into trouble. His master liked him, but did not like his opinions. The consequence was, that he sent him to Bishop Gardiner with a private letter, in which he requested him to "do his Chaplain some good." Gardiner, however, after four or five days' conference, could make nothing of the sturdy Reformer, and utterly failed to shake his opinions. The end of the matter was (says Fox), "that he sent Sir Thomas his servant again, right well commending his learning and wit, but bearing in his heart a grudge against Master Hooper." This grudge, unhappily, was not forgotten, and bore bitter fruit after many days.

The connection between Hooper and Sir Thomas Arundel did not last long after this. The Protestant Chaplain found that his life was not safe in England, and, like many of the good men of his day, withdrew to the Continent. There he appears to have lived for at least nine years, first at Strasburgh, afterwards at Bâle, and finally at Zurich. It was at this period of his life, no doubt, that he became established in those clear, distinct views of doctrinal truth, which he afterwards so nobly maintained in his own country. At this period, too, he formed friendships with Bullinger, Bucer, A. Lasco, and other Continental Reformers, whoever afterwards regarded him with deep affection. At this period, too, about the year 1546, he married a noble Burgundian lady, named Anna de Tzerclas, who seems to have been in every way a help-meet for him.

In 1547 Henry the Eighth died, and Edward the Sixth commenced his short but glorious reign. Soon after this Hooper began to feel it his bounden duty to

give his aid to the work of the Protestant Reformation in his own country, and after taking an affectionate leave of his Zurich friends, set out on his return to England. His parting words were painfully prophetic and deeply touching. They told him they fully expected that he would rise to a high position in his native land; they hoped he would not forget his old friends; they begged him to write to them sometimes. In reply, Hooper assured them that he should never forget their many kindnesses; promised to write to them from time to time; and concluded with the following memorable words: "The last news of all, Master Bullinger, I shall not be able to write. For there, where I shall take most pains, there shall ye hear of me to be burnt to ashes. That shall be the last news, which I shall not be able to write to you. But you shall hear it of me."

Hooper arrived in London in May, 1549, and was gladly received by the friends of the Reformation, which, in the face of immense difficulties, Cranmer and Ridley were slowly pressing forward. He came like a welcome reinforcement in the midst of an arduous campaign, and mightily strengthened the cause of Protestantism. His reputation, as a man of soundness, learning, and power, had evidently gone before him. He was very soon appointed Chaplain to the Protector, the Duke of Somerset. With characteristic zeal he devoted himself at once to the work of teaching, and generally preached twice a day, and this with such marked acceptance that the churches could not contain the crowds that flocked to hear him. Even Dr. Smith, his enemy, confessed that "he was so much admired by the people that they held him for a prophet: nay, they looked upon him as a deity."

Fox, the Martyrologist, who evidently knew Hooper well, bears the following testimony to his high character at this time, both for gifts and graces.—"In his doctrine he was earnest, in tongue eloquent, in the Scriptures perfect, in pains indefatigable. His life was so pure and good that no breath of slander could fasten any fault upon him. He was of body strong, his health whole and sound, his wit very pregnant, his invincible patience able to sustain whatsoever sinister fortune and adversity could do. He was constant of judgment, spare of diet, sparer of words, and sparest of time. In housekeeping he was very liberal, and sometimes more free than his living would extend unto. Briefly, of all those virtues and qualities required of St. Paul in a good Bishop, in his Epistle to Timothy, I know not one that was lacking in Master Hooper."

A man of this mould and stamp was rightly esteemed the very man to make a Bishop in Edward the Sixth's days. Within a year of his landing in England the prophecies of his Zurich friends were fulfilled. After preaching a course of Lent Sermons before the King, in 1550, John Hooper, the friend of Bullinger, the exile of Zurich, the most popular preacher of the day, was nominated to fill the vacant Bishopric of Gloucester. A wiser choice could not have been made. Rarely, too rarely, in the annals of the Church of England has there been such an instance of the right man being put in the right place.

Hooper's nomination, however, brought him into a most unhappy collision with Cranmer and Ridley, on a very awkward subject. He steadily refused to

take the oath which had been taken hitherto by Bishops at their consecration, and to wear the episcopal vestments which had hitherto been worn. The oath he objected to as flatly unscriptural, because it referred to the saints as well as God. The vestments he objected to as remnants of Popery, which ought to be clean put away.

A controversy arose at once between Hooper and his two great fellow-labourers, which delayed his consecration almost a whole year, and did immense harm. The more trifling and unimportant the original cause of dispute appeared to be, the more heated and obstinate the disputants became. In vain did Ridley confer and correspond with his recusant brother. In vain did Edward the Sixth and his Privy Council write to Cranmer, and offer to discharge him from all risk of penalties, if he would "let pass certain rites and ceremonies" offensive to the Bishop designate. In vain did foreign Reformers write long letters, and entreat both parties to concede something and give way. The contention grew so sharp that the Privy Council became weary of Hooper's obstinacy, and actually committed him to the Fleet Prison! At length a compromise was effected. Hooper gave way on some points, for peace sake. He consented to wear the obnoxious vestments on certain public occasions,—at his consecration, before the King, and in his own Cathedral. The objectionable words in the Episcopal Oath were struck out by the King's own hand. The prison gates were then thrown open, and to the great joy of all true Protestants, Hooper was consecrated Bishop of Gloucester on the 8th of March, 1551.

This miserable controversy between Hooper and his two great opponents, like all the disputes of good men, is a sorrowful subject. Of course it need not surprise us. The best of men are only men at their best. If Paul and Barnabas quarrelled until they parted company, and Peter and Paul came into open collision at Antioch, we must not judge our English Reformers too harshly, if they did not always agree. But it is vain to deny that this famous quarrel did great harm at the time, and sowed seeds which are bearing mischievous fruit down to this very day.

At the distance of three hundred years, I freely admit, we are poor judges of the whole case. Both parties undoubtedly were more or less in the wrong, and the only question is as to the side which was most to blame. The general verdict of mankind, I am quite aware, has been against Hooper. To this verdict, however, I must honestly say, I cannot subscribe. It is my deliberate conviction, after carefully weighing the whole affair, that Hooper was most in the right, and Cranmer and Ridley were most in the wrong.

I believe the plain truth to be, that Hooper was much more far-sighted than his excellent fellow-labourers. He looked further ahead than they did, and saw the possibility of evils arising in the Church of England, of which they in their charity never dreamed. He foresaw, with prophetic eye, the immense peril of having nest-eggs for future Romanism within our pale. He foresaw a time when the Pope's friends would take advantage of the least crevice left in the walls of our Zion; and he would fain have had every crack stopped up. He would not

have left a single peg on which Romanizing Churchmen could have rehung the abominable doctrine of the mass. It is my decided opinion that he was quite right. Events have supplied abundant proof that his conscientious scruples were well-founded. I believe, if Cranmer and Ridley had calmly listened to his objections, and seized the opportunity of settling the whole question of “vestments” in a thoroughly Protestant way, it would have been a blessing to the Church of England! In a word, if Hooper’s views had been allowed to prevail, one half of the Ritualistic controversy would never have existed at all.¹

Once delivered from this miserable controversy, Hooper commenced his episcopal duties without a moment’s delay. Though only consecrated on the 8th of March, 1551, he began at once to preach throughout the diocese of Gloucester with such diligence as to cause fears about his health. His wife, writing to Ballinger in the month of April, says: “I entreat you to recommend Master Hooper to be more moderate in his labours. He preaches four, or at least three times every day, and I am afraid lest these over-abundant exertions should cause a premature decay.” Of all the Edwardian Bishops, none seem to have made such full proof of his episcopal ministry as he did. Cranmer was naturally absorbed in working out the great scheme of Reformation, of which he was the principal architect. Ridley, from his position in London, within reach of the Court and of Lambeth Palace, was necessarily often drawn aside to advise the King and the Primate. For really working a diocese, and giving a splendid pattern of what an English Protestant Bishop should be, the man of the times was John Hooper. We need not wonder that the Government soon gave him the charge of Worcester as well as the diocese of Gloucester. The willing horse is always worked, and the more a man does, the more he is always asked to do.

The state of Hooper’s clergy evidently gave him great trouble. We have already seen that many clergymen in the diocese of Gloucester were unable to repeat the ten commandments, and could not tell who was the author of the Lord’s prayer. Moreover, they were not only ignorant, but generally hostile to the doctrines of the Reformation. However, they were ready to conform to anything, and subscribe anything, so long as they were allowed to keep their livings. Hooper therefore drew up for them a body of fifty Articles of an admirable character, and required every incumbent to subscribe them. He also sup-

¹ It is a pleasing fact, that at a later date there seems to have been a complete reconciliation between Hooper and Ridley, if indeed there ever was a real breach. When Ridley was in prison, in Queen Mary’s reign, he wrote as follows to Hooper : “My dear brother, we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds and substantial points of our religion, against which the world so furiously rageth in these days. In time past, by certain by-matters and circumstances of religion, your wisdom and my simplicity hath a little jarred, each of us following the abundance of his own sense and judgment. But now I say, be you assured, that with my whole heart, God is my witness, I love you in the truth, and for the truth’s sake!”

plied them with a set of excellent injunctions about their duties. Beside this he appointed some of the better sort to be superintendents of the rest, with a commission to watch over their brethren. It is difficult to see what more he could have done, however painful and unsatisfactory the state of things may have been. The best Bishops, with all their zeal, cannot give grace, or change clerical hearts.

The state of the laity in the diocese of Gloucester was just as unsatisfactory as that of the clergy. This, of course, was only natural. "Like pastors, like people." With them he could of necessity do little, except reprove immorality, and check it, when possible to do so. Of his firm and impartial conduct in this way, a remarkable example is given by John ab Ulmis, in one of the Zurich letters. He says, that Sir Anthony Kingston, a man of rank in Gloucestershire, was cited by the Bishop to appear before him on a charge of adultery, and was severely reprimanded. He replied with abusive language, and even forgot himself so far as to use violence and blows in the court. But Hooper was unmoved. He reported the whole case to the Privy Council in London, and the result was that the Gloucestershire Knight was severely punished for his contumacy, and fined no less than £500, a very large sum in those days.

The state of the two Cathedrals of Gloucester and Worcester appears to have been as great a trial to Hooper as the state of the parochial clergy and laity. Curiously enough, even 300 years ago, Cathedral bodies seem to have been anything but helps to the Church of England. He says, in a letter upon this subject to Sir William Cecil, the King's Secretary of State,—“Ah! Mr. Secretary, if there were good men in the Cathedral churches! God should then have much more honour than He hath now, the King's majesty more obedience, and the poor people more knowledge. But the realm wanteth light in the very churches where of right it ought most to be.” He then concludes his letter with these touching words: “God give us wisdom and strength wisely and strongly to serve in our vocations. There is none eateth their bread in the sweat of their face, but such as serve in public vocations. Yours, Mr. Secretary, is wonderful, but mine passeth. Now I perceive private labours be but play, and private work but ease and quietness. God be our help!”

After all, the best account of Hooper's discharge of his episcopal duties, is to be found in that good old book well known by the title of “Fox's Martyrs.” Fox was evidently a friend and admirer of Hooper, and writes about him with a very loving pen. But Fox may always be depended on for general accuracy. Bitterly as his many enemies have tried to vilify his great book, they have never succeeded in disproving his facts. They may have scratched the good man's face, but they have never broken his bones. Froude, a thoroughly disinterested witness, has voluntarily declared his confidence in Fox's trustworthiness. Townsend, in a lengthy preface to his excellent and complete edition of the “Acts and Monuments,” has answered *seriatim* the attacks of Fox's enemies. In short, we may rest satisfied that those flippant modern writers who call Fox “a liar,” are only exposing their own ignorance, or their hatred of genuine Protestantism.

Let us now hear how Fox describes Hooper's ways as a Bishop, so long as his episcopate lasted. He says,—

“Master Hooper, after all these tumults and vexations sustained about his investing and princely vestures, at length entering into his diocese, did there employ his time, which the Lord lent him under King Edward's reign, with such diligence as may be a spectacle to all Bishops which shall ever hereafter succeed him, not only in that place, but in whatsoever diocese through the whole realm of England. So careful was he in his cure, that he left neither pains untaken, nor ways unsought, how to train up the flock of Christ in the true Word of Salvation, continually labouring in the same. Other men commonly are wont, for lucre or promotion's sake, to aspire to bishoprics, some hunting for them, and some purchasing or buying them, as men used to purchase lordships; and when they have them are loath to leave them, and thereupon are loath to commit that thing by worldly laws whereby to lose them.

“To this sort of men Master Hooper was clean contrary; who abhorred nothing more than gain, labouring always to save and preserve the souls of his flock. Who, being Bishop of two dioceses, so ruled and guided either of them, and both together, as though he had in charge but one family. No father in his household, no gardener in his garden, no husbandman in his vineyard, was more or better occupied than he in his diocese amongst his flock, going about his towns and villages in teaching and preaching to the people there.

“That time that he had to spare from preaching, he bestowed either in hearing public causes, or else in private study, prayer, and visiting of schools. With his continual doctrine he adjoined due and discreet correction, not so much severe to any as to them which for abundance of riches and wealthy state thought they might do what they listed. And doubtless he spared no kind of people, but was indifferent to all men, as well rich as poor, to the great shame of no small number of men now-a-days. Whereas many we see so addicted to the pleasing of great and rich men, that in the mean time they have no regard to the meaner sort of poor people, whom Christ hath bought as dearly as the other.

“But now again we will return our talk to Master Hooper, all whose life, in fine, was such, that to the Church and all Churchmen it might be a light and example, to the rest, a perpetual lesson and sermon. Finally, how virtuous and good a Bishop he was, ye may conceive and know evidently by this, that, even as he was hated of none but of them which were evil, so yet the worst of them all could not reprove his life in any one jot.

“I have now declared his usage and behaviour abroad in the public affairs of the Church: and certainly there appeared in him at home no less example of a worthy prelate's life. For though he bestowed and converted the most part of his care upon the public flock and congregation of Christ, for the which also he spent his blood; yet nevertheless there lacked no provision in him, to bring up his own children in learning and good manners; insomuch that ye could not discern whether he deserved more praise for his fatherly usage at home, or for his Bishop-like doings abroad. For everywhere he kept one religion in one uniform

doctrine and integrity. So that if you entered into the Bishop's palace, you would suppose yourself to have entered into some church or temple. In every corner thereof there was some smell of virtue, good example, honest conversation, and reading of holy Scriptures. There was not to be seen in his house any courtly rioting or idleness: no pomp at all, no dishonest word, no swearing could there be heard!

“As for the revenues of both his Bishoprics, although they did not greatly exceed, as the matter was handled, yet if anything surmounted thereof, he pursed nothing, but bestowed it in hospitality. Twice I was, as I remember, in his house in Worcester, where, in his common hall, I saw a table spread with a good store of meat, and beset full of beggars and poor folk. And I asking his servants what this meant, they told me that every day their lord and master's manner was to have customably to dinner a certain number of the poor folk of the said city, by course, who were served by four at a mess, with whole and wholesome meats. And when they were served (being before examined by him or his deputies, of the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of their faith, and the Ten Commandments) then he himself sat down to dinner, and not before.²

“After this sort and manner Master Hooper executed the office of a most careful and vigilant pastor, by the space of two years and more, so long as the state of religion in King Edward's time did safely flourish and take place. And would God that all other Bishops would use the like diligence, care, and observance in their function.”

² It must be remembered that there was no poor law in those days.

CHAPTER III.

HOOPER'S LAST DAYS.

IMPRISONED ON MARY'S ACCESSION TO THRONE IN 1553—DETAINED IN THE FLEET TILL 1555—SENT TO GLOUCESTER TO BE BURNED FEBRUARY, 1555—DESCRIPTION OF HIS CONDUCT THE TWO LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE AT GLOUCESTER—ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST SUFFERINGS AT THE STAKE—GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

HOOPER'S most useful episcopal labours were brought completely to an end by Queen Mary's accession to the throne in 1553. They did not last, we may observe, longer than two years. Perhaps it is not too much to say that no Bishop of the Church of England ever did so much for his church and diocese in two years, and left so deep a mark on men's minds in a short period as John Hooper.

Edward the Sixth died in July, 1553; and as soon as his Popish sister Mary was fairly seated on her throne, John Hooper's troubles began. The sword of persecution having been once unsheathed, the famous Protestant Bishop of Gloucester was almost the first person who was struck at. He was personally obnoxious both to Bonner and Gardiner, with both of whom he had come into collision. He was renowned all over England as one of the boldest champions of the Reformation, and most thorough opponents of Popery. His friends warned him that danger was impending, but he calmly replied,—“Once I did flee and took me to my feet. But now, because I am called to this place and vocation, I am thoroughly persuaded to tarry, and to live and die with my sheep.” The threatening storm soon broke. On the 29th of August he appeared before Queen Mary's Council, at Richmond; and on the 1st of September he was sent as a prisoner to the Fleet. From that day till 9th February, 1555—a period of more than seventeen months,—he was kept in close confinement. On that day, at last, death set him at liberty, and the noble Protestant prisoner was free.

The history of these sorrowful seventeen months in Hooper's life would occupy far more space than I have at my disposal. Those who wish to know the particulars of it must study “Fox's Martyrs.” How the good Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester was cruelly immured in a filthy prison, to the great injury of his health, for nearly a year and a half,—how he was three times examined before such judges as Gardiner, Bonner, Day, Heath, and their companions,—how he was by turns insulted, browbeaten, reviled, entreated and begged to recant,—how gallantly he stood firm by his Protestant principles, and refused to give up a hair's breadth of Christ's truth,—how he was finally condemned for holding the right of priests to marry, and for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation,—all these are matters which are fully recorded by the old Martyrologist. But they are far too long to describe in a biographical paper like that which is now in the reader's hands.

The end came at last. On Monday, the 4th of February, 1555, Hooper was

formally degraded by Bishop Bonner, in the chapel of Newgate prison, and handed over to the tender mercies of the secular power. In the evening of that day, to his great delight, he was informed that he was to be sent to Gloucester, and to be publicly burned in his own cathedral city. On Tuesday, the 5th, he commenced his journey on horseback, at four o'clock in the morning, in the charge of six guards. On the afternoon of Thursday, the 7th of February, he arrived safe at Gloucester, amidst the tears and lamentations of a great crowd of people, who came out to meet him on the Cirencester road.

At Gloucester he was lodged in the house of one Ingram, opposite to St. Nicholas church. The house is still standing, and to all appearance not much altered. The city Sheriffs, two men named Jenkins and Bond, would fain have put him in the Northgate prison, but gave up this intention at the earnest intercession of the guards who had brought him from London. One day only was allowed to elapse between the saintly prisoner's arrival and his execution. The greater part of this short interval he spent in prayer. There were however some interviews, of no small interest, of which Fox has preserved a record.

Sir Anthony Kingston, whom he had once offended by rebuking his sins, came to see him, and entreated him, with much affection and many tears, to consult his safety and recant. "Consider," he said, "that life is sweet, and death is bitter. Life hereafter may do good." To this the noble soldier of Christ returned the ever memorable answer: "The life to come is more sweet, and the death to come is more bitter." Seeing him immovable, Kingston left him with bitter tears, telling him, "I thank God that ever I knew you, seeing God did appoint you to call me to be His child. By your good instruction, when I was before a fornicator and adulterer, God hath taught me to detest and forsake the same." Hooper afterwards said that this interview had drawn from him more tears than he had shed throughout the seventeen months of his imprisonment.

Last of all, as evening drew on, the Mayor, Mr. Loveday, the Aldermen, and Sheriffs of Gloucester, came to his lodging, and courteously saluted him. To them he spoke cheerfully, thanking them for their kindness, requesting that there might be a quick fire at his burning, and protesting that he should die a true obedient subject to the Queen, but "willing to give up his life rather than consent to the wicked papistical religion of the Bishop of Rome."

These interviews got over, the saintly Bishop began to prepare for his wrestle with the last enemy, death. He retired to bed very early, saying that he had many things to remember, and slept one sleep soundly. The rest of the night he spent in prayer. After he got up, he desired that no man should be allowed to come into the chamber, and that he might be left alone till the hour of execution. What his meditations and reflections were at that awful crisis, God alone knows. Tradition says that he wrote the following piece of poetry with a coal, on the wall of his chamber:—

"Content thyself with patience
With Christ to bear the cup of pain:

Who can and will thee recompense
 A thousand-fold, with joys again.
 Let nothing cause thy heart to fail:
 Launch out thy boat, hoist up the sail,
 Put from the shore;
 And be thou sure thou shalt attain
 Unto the port, that shall remain
 For evermore.

“Fear not death, pass not for bands,
 Only in God put thy whole trust;
 For He will require thy blood at their hands,
 And thou dost know that once die thou must,
 Only for that, thy life if thou give,
 Death is no death, but ever for to live.
 Do not despair:
 Of no worldly tyrant be thou in dread;
 Thy compass, which is God’s Word, shall thee lead,
 And the wind is fair.”

These lines were printed in 1559, in a volume of miscellaneous pieces by the Reformers. I give them for what they are worth.

The closing scene of Hooper’s life had now come. It is so beautifully and simply described by John Fox, that I think it best to give it in its entirety, with trifling exception, just as the worthy old Martyrologist wrote it. He says,—“On the morning of Saturday, the 9th of February, about eight of the clock, came Sir John Bridges, Lord Chandos, with a great band of men, Sir Anthony Kingston, Sir Edmund Bridges, and other commissioners appointed to see execution done. At nine of the clock, Mr. Hooper was willed to prepare himself to be in a readiness, for the time was at hand.. Immediately he was brought down from his chamber by the Sheriffs, who were accompanied with bills, and weapons. When he saw the multitude of weapons, he spake to the Sheriffs on this wise: ‘Mr. Sheriffs,’ said he, ‘I am no traitor, neither needed you to have made such a business to bring me to the place where I must suffer; for if ye had willed me, I would have gone alone to the stake, and have troubled none of you.’ Afterward, looking upon the multitude of people that were assembled, being by estimation to the number of 7,000 (for it was market-day, and many also came to see his behaviour towards death), he spake unto those that were about him, saying,—‘Alas! why be these people assembled and come together? Peradventure they think to hear something of me now, as they have in times past; but, alas! speech is prohibited me. Notwithstanding, the cause of my death is well known unto them. When I was appointed here to be their pastor, I preached unto them true and sincere doctrine, and that out of the Word of God. Because I will not now account the same to be heresy and untruth, this kind of death is prepared for me.’

“So he went forward, led between the two Sheriffs (as it were a lamb to the place of slaughter), in a gown of his host’s, his hat upon his head, and a staff in

his hand, to stay himself withal; for the grief of the sciatica, which he had taken in prison, caused him somewhat to halt. All the way, being strictly charged not to speak, he could not be perceived once to open his mouth; but beholding the people all the way, which mourned bitterly for him, he would sometimes lift up his eyes towards heaven, and look very cheerfully upon such as he knew; and he was never known, during the time of his being amongst them, to look with so cheerful and ruddy a countenance as he did at that present. When he came to the place appointed where he should die, smilingly he beheld the stake and preparations made for him, which was near unto the great elm-tree over against the college of priests, where he was wont to preach. The place roundabout, the houses, and the boughs of the trees, were replenished with people; and in the chamber over the college gate, stood the priests of the college.¹ Then kneeled he down (forasmuch as he could not be suffered to speak unto the people) to prayer, and beckoned six or seven times unto one whom he knew well, to hear the said prayer, to make report thereof in time to come (pouring tears upon his shoulders and in his bosom), who gave attentive ear unto the same; the which prayer he made upon the whole Creed, wherein he continued the space of half-an-hour. Now, after he was somewhat entered into his prayer, a box was brought and laid before him upon a stool, with his pardon (or at leastwise, it was feigned to be his pardon) from the Queen, if he would turn. At the sight whereof he cried, ‘If you love my soul, away with it! If you love my soul, away with it!’ The box being taken away, the Lord Chandos said, ‘Seeing there is no remedy, dispatch him quickly!’ Master Hooper said, ‘Good, my lord; I trust your lordship will give me leave to make an end of my prayers.’

“Then said the Lord Chandos to Sir Edmund Bridges’ son, which gave ear before to Master Hooper’s prayer, at his request: Edmund, take heed that he do nothing else but pray; if he do, tell me, and I shall quickly dispatch him.’ While this talk was going on, there stepped one or two uncalled, which heard him speak these words following:—

“‘Lord,’ said he, I am hell, but Thou art Heaven; I am a swill and sink of sin, but Thou art a gracious God and a merciful Redeemer. Have mercy, therefore, upon me, most miserable and wretched offender, after Thy great mercy, and according to Thine inestimable goodness. Thou art ascended into heaven; receive me, hell, to be partaker of Thy joys, where Thou sittest in equal glory with Thy Father. For well knowest Thou, Lord, wherefore I am come hither to suffer, and why the wicked do persecute this thy poor servant: not for my sins and transgressions committed against Thee, but because I will not allow their wicked doings to the contaminating of Thy blood, and to the denial of the knowledge of Thy truth, wherewith it did please Thee by Thy Holy Spirit to instruct me; the which with as much diligence as a poor wretch might (being thereto called), I have set forth to Thy glory. And well seest Thou, my Lord and God, what terrible pains and cruel torments be prepared for Thy creature; such, Lord, as without Thy strength none is able to bear, or pa-

¹ This gateway and the window are still standing exactly as they were when Hooper was burned.

tiently to pass. But all things that are impossible with man, are possible with Thee. Therefore strengthen me of Thy goodness, that in the fire I break not the rules of patience; or else assuage the terror of the pains, as shall seem most to Thy glory.'

"As soon as the Mayor had espied these men which made report of the former words, they were commanded away, and could not be suffered to hear any more. Prayer being done, he prepared himself to the stake, and put off his host's gown, and delivered it to the Sheriffs, requiring them to see it restored unto the owner, and put off the rest of his gear, unto his doublet and hose, wherein he would have been burned. But the Sheriffs would not permit that (such was their greediness),² unto whose pleasures (good man) he very obediently submitted himself; and his doublet, hose, and waistcoat were taken off. Then, being in his shirt, and desiring the people to say the Lord's prayer with him, and to pray for him (who performed it with tears, during the time of his pains), he went up to the stake. Now, when he was at the stake, three irons, made to bind him to the stake, were brought: one for his neck, another for his middle, and the third for his legs. But he, refusing them, said, 'Ye have no need thus to trouble yourselves, for I doubt not but God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire, without bands; notwithstanding, suspecting the frailty and weakness of the flesh, but having assured confidence in God's strength, I am content ye do as ye shall think good.' So the hoop of iron prepared for his middle was brought, and when they offered to have bound his neck and legs with the other two hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, and would have none, saying, 'I am well assured I shall not trouble you.'

"Thus, being ready, he looked upon the people, of whom he might well be seen (for he was both tall and stood also on an high stool), and beheld round about him: and in every corner there was nothing to be seen but weeping and sorrowful people. Then, lifting up his eyes and hands unto heaven, he prayed to himself. By and by, he that was appointed to make the fire, came to him, and did ask his forgiveness. Of whom he asked why he should forgive him; saying, that he knew never any offence he had committed against him. 'O Sir,' said the man, I am appointed to make the fire.' 'Therein,' said Mr. Hooper, thou dost nothing offend me: God forgive thee thy sins, and do thine office, I pray thee.' Then the reeds were cast up, and he received two bundles of them in his own hands, embraced them, kissed them, and put under either arm one of them, and showed with his hand how the rest should be bestowed, and pointed to the place where any did lack.

"Anon commandment was given that the fire should be set to, and so it was. But because there were put to no fewer green faggots than two horses could carry upon their backs, it kindled not by and by, and was a pretty while also before it took the reeds upon the faggots. At length it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place (it was a lowering and cold morning), it

² The clothes of those who were burned, seem to have been the perquisite of the Sheriffs!

blew the flame from him, so that he was in a manner no more but touched by the fire.

“Within a space after, a few dry faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with faggots (for there were no more reeds), and that burned at his nether parts, but had small power above, because of the wind, saving that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little. In the time of which fire, even as at the first flame, he prayed, saying mildly and not very loud (but as one without pains), ‘O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy upon me, and receive my soul!’ After the second fire was spent, he did wipe both his eyes with his hands, and beholding the people, he said with an indifferent loud voice, ‘For God’s love, good people, let me have more fire!’ And all this while his nether parts did burn, for the faggots were so few that the flame did not burn strongly at his upper parts.

“The third fire was kindled within a while after, which was more extreme than the other two; and then the bladders of gunpowder brake, which did him small good, they were so placed, and the wind had such power. In the which fire he prayed with somewhat a loud voice, ‘Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ And these were the last words he was heard to utter. But when he was black in the mouth, and his tongue swollen that he could not speak, yet his lips went till they were shrunk to the gums; and he knocked his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off, and then knocked still with the other, what time the fat, water, and blood dropped out at his fingers’ ends, until by renewing of the fire his strength was gone, and his hand did cleave fast in knocking to the iron upon his breast. So immediately, bowing forwards, he yielded up his spirit.

“Thus was he three quarters of an hour or more in the fire. Even as a lamb, patiently he abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards, backwards, or to any side; but having his nether parts burned, and his bowels fallen out, he died as quietly as a child in his bed, and he now reigneth as a blessed martyr in the joys of heaven, prepared for the faithful in Christ before the foundations of the world, for whose constancy all Christians are bound to praise God.” (Fox’s Acts and Monuments *in loco*.)

I leave the story of the martyr of Gloucester at this point, having traced his life from his cradle to his fiery grave. He died as he had long lived, true to his colours; and his death was every way worthy of his life.

Something I might say about the hideous cruelty with which he and his fellow sufferers in Mary’s reign were put to death. Nothing can excuse it. The times no doubt were rough and coarse. Capital punishment was fearfully common. Killing people for alleged heresy was unhappily no strange thing.

But these are poor defences of a huge crime. The blood of the English Martyrs is an indelible stain on the Church of Rome. It was a judicial murder that can never be explained away.

Something I might say about the glorious patience and courage which Hooper exhibited throughout his sufferings. As long as the world lasts, he will be a pattern of what Christ can do for His people in the hour of need. Never may we

forget that He who strengthened Hooper never changes. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Something, not least, I might say about the extreme impolicy of the Church of Rome in making martyrs of Hooper and his companions. Never, I believe, did Popery do herself such damage as when she burnt our Reformers. Their blood was the seed of the Church. The good that they did by their deaths was more than they did all their lives. Their martyrdoms made thousands think who were never reached by their sermons. Myriads, we may depend, came to the conclusion, that a Church which could act so abominably and cruelly as Rome did could never be the one true Church of God: and that a cause which could produce such patient and unflinching sufferers must surely be the cause of Christ and of truth.

But I pass away from these points, however interesting. I only hope that they may be seeds of thought which may bear fruit in men's minds after many days.

CHAPTER IV.

HOOPER'S OPINIONS.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING A REFORMER'S THEOLOGICAL VIEWS—DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE SUPPLIED IN PARKER SOCIETY'S VOLUME—QUOTATIONS FROM HOOPER'S "VISITATION ARTICLES" AND "BRIEF CONFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH"—ENCOURAGEMENT FOR EVANGELICAL CHURCHMEN—A PATTERN FOR BISHOPS—DUTY OF RESISTING PRESENT EFFORT TO UNPROTESTANTIZE ENGLAND—DUTY OF RESISTING RITUALISM—DUTY OF SUPPORTING SUCH AGENCIES AS THE CHURCH ASSOCIATION.

THE last point which I want to bring under the notice of my readers, is one which I feel to be of deep importance. I have supplied some information about Hooper's life and death. I will now ask my readers to give me their attention a little longer, while I say something about Hooper's *opinions*. I have shown you how he lived and died, let me now show you exactly what he thought, and what he taught, and what he preached. I have set before you the man, let me now set before you his doctrine.

If I left my readers under the vague impression that Hooper was a good man and a zealous man and an earnest man, but told them nothing more, I should think I had not done my duty. I want men to understand what theological views the martyred Bishop of Gloucester held. I want men to see clearly what kind of doctrine was taught by the English Reformers. What kind of things did Hooper say, and preach, and publish, and write? What kind of religion was a Churchman's religion three hundred years ago?

The answer to these inquiries is happily not difficult to find. The two volumes of Hooper's writings published by the Parker Society, make the matter plain as the sun at noon-day. There men may read in unmistakeable language the theological opinions of one of the leading Bishops of the time of the Reformation. From two documents in these two volumes, I will select fair specimens.

The first document I will quote from, is entitled "Articles Concerning Christian Religion, given by the reverend father in Christ, John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, unto all and singular deans, parsons, prebends, vicars, curates, and other ecclesiastical ministers within the diocese of Gloucester, to be had, held, and retained of them for unity and agreement, as well for the doctrine of God's Word, as also for the uniformity of the ceremonies agreeing with God's Word."

A more authoritative and weighty declaration of Hooper's opinions, it is impossible to conceive.¹

¹ It is worth noticing, that Ridley published many of the same Articles about the same time, for the clergy of the Diocese of London.

The *First Article* enjoins, “that none of the above-named clergy do teach or preach any manner of thing to be necessary for the salvation of men, other than that which is contained in the Book of God’s Holy Word, called the Old and New Testament; and that they beware to establish and confirm any manner of doctrine concerning the old superstitious and Papistical doctrines, which cannot be duly and justly approved by the authority of God’s Word.”

The *Fourth Article* enjoins, “that they and every one of them do diligently teach and preach that the Church of God is the congregation of the faithful, wherein the Word of God is truly preached, and the Sacraments justly administered, according to the institution of Christ, and His doctrine taught unto us by His Holy Word; and that the Church of God is not by God’s Word taken for the multitude, or company of bishops, priests, and such others; but that it is the company of *all* men hearing God’s Word and obeying the same, lest any man should be seduced, believing himself to be bound to any ordinary succession of bishops and priests, but only to the Word of God and the right use of the Sacraments.”

The *Seventh Article* enjoins, “that they and every one of them do diligently teach and preach the justification only by faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the merit of any man’s good works, albeit that good works do necessarily follow justification, which before justification are of no value or estimation before God.”

In the *Ninth Article*, he enjoins them, “that the doctrine of purgatory, pardons, prayer for them that are departed out of this world, the veneration, invocation, and worshipping of saints or images, is contrary and injurious to the honour of Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer, and also against the doctrine of the first and second commandments of God.”

In the *Tenth Article*, he enjoins, “that in the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, there is no transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, or any manner of corporal or local presence of Christ, in, under, or with the bread and wine, but spiritually, by faith.”

In the *Eleventh Article*, he enjoins, “that they which do unworthily come to baptism or the Supper of the Lord, do not receive the virtue and true effect of the same sacraments, although they receive the natural signs and elements.”

In the *Twenty-fourth Article*, he enjoins, “that the Sacraments are not of any force by virtue or strength of any internal work of the same, which of superstition is called *opus operatum*, but only by the virtue and means of the Holy Ghost working in the hearts of the doers and receivers by faith.”

In the *Forty-first Article*, he enjoins, “that none of you do counterfeit the Popish Mass, by blessing the Lord’s board, washing your hands or fingers after the Gospel, or receipt of the Holy Communion,—shifting the book from one place to another, laying down and licking the chalice after the

Communion, showing the Sacrament openly before the distribution of the same, or making any elevation thereof,—ringing of the sacring bell, or setting any light on the Lord's board."

In the *Forty-third Article*, he enjoins, "Whereas in divine places some use the Lord's board after the form of a table, and some of an altar, whereby disunion is perceived to arise among the unlearned, therefore, wishing a godly unity to be observed in all our dioceses, and for that the form of a table may move more, and turn the simple from the old superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass, and to the right use of the Lord's Supper, we exhort you to erect and set up the Lord's board after the form of an honest table, decently covered, in such place as shall be thought most meet, so that the minister and communicants may be seen, heard, and understood of all the people there present, and that you do take down and abolish all altars. Further, that the minister, in the use of the Communion and prayers thereof, turn his face toward the people."

Such were the visitation articles and injunctions of a Bishop of the time of the Reformation. I turn away from them with one single remark. There are dioceses at this day in England, in which it might do great good to have the injunctions of good Bishop Hooper distributed among the clergy, and urged on their attention.

The only other document that I shall quote from, is called "A Brief and Clear Confession of the Christian Faith." It deserves special attention, because it was published in 1550, the very year in which the writer was made Bishop of Gloucester. From the "Confession of Faith," I now make the following selections. I make them with considerable difficulty. The whole Confession is so good that it is hard to say what to quote and what to leave behind. I only ask you to remember that the sack is as good as the sample:—

In the *Twenty-sixth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I do believe and confess that Christ, His condemnation is mine absolution; that His crucifying is my deliverance; His descending into hell is mine ascending into heaven; His death is my life; His blood is my cleansing, and purging, by which only I am washed, purified and cleansed from all my sins: so that I neither receive, neither believe any other purgatory, either in this world, or in the other, whereby I may be purged, but only the blood of Jesus Christ, by the which all are purged and made clean for ever."

In the *Twenty-eighth Article* of the Confession Hooper says, "I believe that the holy Supper of the Lord is not a sacrifice, but only a remembrance and commemoration of this holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore it ought not to be worshipped as God, neither as Christ therein contained; who must be worshipped in faith only, without all corruptible elements. Likewise I believe and confess that the Popish Mass is the invention and ordinance of man, a sacrifice of Antichrist, and a forsaking of the sacrifice of Jesus

Christ, that is to say, of His death and passion; and that it is a stinking and infected sepulchre, which hideth and covereth the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ,—and, therefore, ought the mass to be abolished, and the holy Supper of the Lord to be restored, and set in his perfection again.”

In the *Fifty-fourth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, “I believe that the Word of God is of a far greater authority than the Church; the which Word only doth sufficiently show, and teach us all those things that in any wise concern our salvation, both what we ought to do, and what to leave undone. The same Word of God is the true pattern and perfect rule, after the which all faithful people ought to govern and order their lives, without turning either to the right hand or to the left hand, without changing anything thereof, without putting to it, or taking from it, knowing that all the works of God are perfect, but most chiefly His Word.”

In the *Sixty-fourth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, “I believe that in the holy Sacrament the signs, or badges, are not changed in any point, but the same do remain wholly in their nature; that is to say, the bread is not changed and transubstantiated (as the fond papists, and false doctors do teach, deceiving the poor people), into the body of Jesus Christ, neither is the wine transubstantiated into His blood; but the bread remaineth still bread, and the wine remaineth still wine, every one in his proper and first nature.”

In the *Sixty-fifth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, “I believe that all this Sacrament consisteth in the use thereof; so that without the right use the bread and wine in nothing differ from other common bread and wine, that is commonly used:—and, therefore, I do not believe that the body of Christ can be contained, hid, or enclosed in the bread, under the bread, or with the bread;—neither the blood in the wine, under the wine, or with the wine. But I believe and confess the very body of Christ to be in heaven, on the right hand of the Father (as before we have said), and that always and as often as we use this bread and wine according to the ordinance and institution of Christ, we do verily and indeed receive His body and blood.”

In the *Sixty-sixth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, “I believe that this receiving is not done carnally or bodily, but spiritually, through a true and lively faith;—that is to say, the body and blood of Christ are not given to the mouth and belly, for the nourishing of the body, but unto our faith, for the nourishing of the spirit and inward man unto eternal life. And for that cause we have no need that Christ should come from heaven to us, but that we should ascend unto Him, lifting up our hearts through a lively faith on high, unto the right hand of the Father, where Christ sitteth, from whence we wait for our redemption; and we must not seek for Christ in these bodily elements.”

I drop my quotations here. I have given enough to make it clear what

kind of opinions Hooper held, and what his theological views were. I know not what my readers may think of these quotations. But I will tell you what impression they leave on my mind.

On the one hand, I am deeply thankful to find that Protestant and Evangelical Churchmen are not men of new-fangled and modern opinions, but Churchmen of the stamp of the Reformation, Churchmen whose views were held by an eminent Churchman three hundred years ago. Let us take courage. Let us not be moved by the sneers, and taunts, and hard words of High Churchmen, so called. Let them call us "Puritans, Dissenters, Calvinists," or what they please. We may boldly reply that ours are the old paths, and that we are the true representatives of the Church of England. If Evangelical Churchmen are wrong, then Hooper was wrong too. If Hooper was right, then we are right. But as for a material difference between our views and those of the martyred Bishop of Gloucester, I defy any one to show that there is any at all.

On the other hand, I deeply regret that English Bishops in modern times do not speak out more frequently in the style and manner of Bishop Hooper. I know their many difficulties, and feel for them. But I heartily wish they would understand what good they might do to the Church, and to their own order, if they would take a leaf out of Hooper's book, and give as certain a sound as he did. We are astounded at the Rome-like charge of one Prelate. We are disgusted with the judicious silence of another. We are sick to death of the well-balanced statements of others. We are tired of being told, with masterly cleverness and fascinating rhetoric, that all parties are a little to blame, and all are a little to be praised; that every body is a little bit right, and every body a little bit wrong! In a word, we are wearied at finding that the bulk of modern English Bishops are honorary members of all schools of opinion. Oh, for a few more Bishop Hoopers on our Bench! Oh, for a little more plain speaking and downright Protestantism!

I know well enough that the English Bishops are Bishops of an eminently tolerant and comprehensive Church. They cannot command perfect unity, convert clergymen, or compel assent to their views, any more than parents can convert their children or clergymen their parishioners. But one thing I always will say: they might speak out more boldly than they generally do, and say out more plainly what they think is truth. If they were only more bold and outspoken, I believe they would be astonished at the good it would do. Nothing, I firmly believe, would so thoroughly rally the middle classes, gather the apathetic lower orders into the Establishment, and strengthen the whole body of the Church, as a little more plain speaking, like that of Bishop Hooper.

My task is done. I have brought together as concisely as possible the times, life, death, and opinions of one of our greatest English Reformers.

But I cannot leave off without offering a few practical suggestions to all into whose hands this paper may fall. I address them to each reader personally and directly, and I entreat him to ponder well what I say.

(1) For one thing, I charge you to *resist manfully the efforts now being made to unprotestantize England*, and to bring her once more into subjection to Popery. Let us not go back to ignorance, superstition, priest-craft, and immorality. Our forefathers tried Popery long ago, and threw it off with disgust and indignation.

Let us not put the clock back, and return to Egypt. Let us have no peace with Rome, till Rome abjures her errors and is at peace with Christ.

Read your Bible, and be armed with Scriptural arguments. A Bible-reading laity is a nation's surest defence against error. I have no fear for English Protestantism, if the laity will only do their duty.

Read history, and see what Rome did in days gone by. Read how she trampled on your country's liberties, plundered your forefather's pockets, and kept the whole nation ignorant and immoral. Read Fox, and Strype, and Burnet, and Soames, and Blunt. And do not forget that Rome never changes. It is her boast and glory that she is always the same. Only give her power in England, and she will soon put out the eyes of our country, and make her like Samson, a degraded slave.

Read facts standing out on the face of the globe. What has made Italy what she is? Popery.—What has made Mexico and the South American States what they are? Popery.—What has made Spain and Portugal what they are? Popery.—What has made Ireland what she is? Popery.—What makes Scotland, the United States, and our own beloved England, the powerful, prosperous countries that they are at present, and I pray God they may long continue? I answer in one word, Protestantism,—a free Bible and a Protestant ministry, and the principles of the Reformation. Think twice before you give ear to the specious arguments of liberalism falsely so called. Think twice before you help to bring back the reign of Popery.

(2) For another thing, I charge you *to beware of Ritualism*, and to do all you can to resist it. Ritualism is the high road to Rome, and the triumph of Ritualism will be the restoration of Popery.

Resist it in little things. Resist strange dresses, processions, banners, incense, candles on the Communion table, turnings to the East, crosses at the East, and extravagant church decorations. Resist them manfully. They seem trifles; but they frequently lead to a great deal of mischief, and they often end in downright Popery.

Resist it in great things. Oppose with might and main the attempt to re-introduce the Popish mass and auricular confession in our parishes. Send your boy to no school where auricular confession is ever tolerated. Allow no clergyman to draw your wife and daughter to private confession. Oppose

sternly but firmly the attempt to change the Lord's Supper at your parish churches into the Romish sacrifice of the altar. Draw back from the Communion in such churches, and go elsewhere. The laity have a great deal of power in this matter, even without going to law. The clergy cannot do without the laity, any more than officers in a regiment can do without privates. If the English laity, all over England, would rise in their might, and say, "We will not have the mass and auricular confession," Ritualism would wither away in a very short time.

Resist it for Christ's sake. His priestly and mediatorial offices are injured and dishonoured by Ritualism. They are offices He has never deputed to any order of ordained men.

Resist it for the Church of England's sake. If Ritualism triumphs, the days of the Church are numbered. The laity will leave her, and she will die for want of Churchmen.

Resist it for the clergy's sake. The worst and cruellest thing that can be done to us, is to lift us out of our proper places, and make us lords over your consciences, and mediators between yourselves and God.

Resist it for the laity's sake. The most degrading position in which laymen can be put is that of being cringing slaves at the foot of a brother sinner.

Resist it, not least, for your children's sake. Do what in you lies to provide, that, when you are dead and gone, they shall not be left to the tender mercies of Popery. As ever you would meet your boys and girls in heaven, take care that the Church of England in your day is maintained a Protestant Church, and preserves her Articles and the principles of the Reformation wholly uninjured and undefiled.

(3) In the last place, I charge you *not to shrink from supporting the efforts made to resist Ritualism* by such agencies as the Church Association. That society may be weak and young at present; but it is eminently a move in the right direction. It may not be perfect and faultless in all it does; but at any rate it aims at doing the right thing, and it deserves support. Support it by your influence, your money, and your prayers.

Let all who love pure Evangelical religion stand together in these days of division, and not allow crotchets and scruples to keep them asunder. Let the friend of Liturgical Revision drop his favourite panacea for a little space, and put his shoulder to the work of maintaining the Gospel in the Church of England. Let the friend of Revivals not think it misspent time to give his aid in opposing Rome. If Popery once triumph, there will be no more liberty for revivals. We cannot afford to lose friends. Our ranks are already very thin. The Church of England demands of every Protestant and Evangelical Churchman, that he will do his duty.

Things look black in every direction, I freely admit. But there is no cause

to despair. The day is not lost. There is yet time to win a battle. Come what will, let us not desert our position, or forsake the good old ship yet. Let us not please our enemies by spiking our guns, and marching out of our fortress without a battle. Rather let us stand to our guns, like good Bishop Hooper, and in God's strength show a bold front to the foe. The Church of England has done some good in days gone by, and the Church is still worth preserving. If we do go down in the struggle, let us go down with colours flying. But, like the gallant sentinel of Pompeii, let no man leave his post. My own mind is fully made up. I say the Church of England had better perish and go to pieces, than forsake John Hooper's principles and tolerate the sacrifice of the mass, and auricular confession.