

WHY WERE OUR REFORMERS BURNED?

Church Association Lecture VI.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, (Vicar of Stradbroke, Suffolk)

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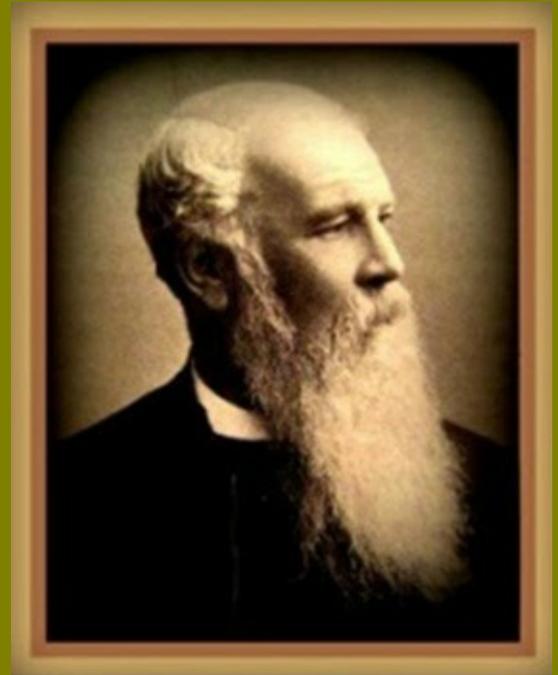
I. The Broad Facts.

II. Who were the Leading Reformers Burned?

III. Why were our Reformers Burned?

IV. The importance of the Subject on our Own Times.

Index



There are certain facts in history which the world tries hard to forget and ignore. These facts get in the way of some of the world's favourite theories, and are highly inconvenient. The consequence is that the world shuts its eyes against them. They are either cut dead as vulgar intruders, or passed by as tiresome bores. Little by little they sink out of sight of the students of history, like ships in a distant horizon, or are left behind, like a luggage-train in a siding. Of such facts the subject of this lecture is a vivid example:—"The Burning of our English Reformers; and the Reason Why they were Burned."

It is fashionable in some quarters to deny that there is any such thing as certainty about religious truth, or any opinions for which it is worth while to be burned. Yet, 300 years ago, there were men who were certain they had found out truth, and content to die for their opinions.—It is fashionable in other quarters to leave out all the unpleasant things in history, and to paint everything of a rose-coloured hue. A very popular history of our English queens hardly mentions the martyrdoms of Queen Mary's days. Yet Mary was not called "Bloody Mary" without reason, and scores of Protestants were burned in her reign.—Last, but not least, it is thought very bad taste in many quarters to say anything which throws discredit on the Church of Rome. Yet it is as certain that the Romish Church burned our English Reformers as it is that we are assembled in St. James's Hall. These difficulties meet me face to face as I walk up to the subject which I am asked to unfold today. I know their magnitude, and I cannot evade them. I only ask you to give me a patient and indulgent hearing.

After all, I have great confidence in the honesty of Englishmen's minds. Truth is truth, however long it may be neglected. Facts are facts, however long they may lie buried. I only want to dig up some old facts which the sands of time have covered over, to bring to the light of day some old English monuments which have been long neglected; to unstop some old wells which the prince of the world has been diligently filling with earth. Give me your attention for a few minutes, and I trust to be able to show you that it is good to examine the question, "Why were our Reformers Burned?"

I. The Broad Facts

The broad facts of the martyrdom of our Reformers are a story well-known and soon told. But it may be useful to give a brief outline of these facts, in order to supply a framework to our subject.

Edward VI., "that incomparable young prince," as Bishop Burnet justly calls him, died on the 6th July, 1553. Never, perhaps, did any royal personage in this land die more truly lamented, or leave behind him a fairer reputation. Never, perhaps, to man's poor fallible judgment, did the cause of God's truth in England receive a

heavier blow. His last prayer before death ought not to be forgotten, "O Lord God, defend this realm from papistry, and maintain thy true religion." It was a prayer, I believe, not offered in vain.

After a foolish and deplorable effort to obtain the crown for Lady Jane Grey, Edward was succeeded by his eldest sister Mary, daughter of Henry VIII. and his first Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and best known in English history by the ill-omened name of "Bloody Mary." Mary had been brought up from her infancy as a rigid adherent of the Romish Church. She was in fact a very Papist of Papists, conscientious, zealous, bigoted, and narrow-minded in the extreme. She began at once to pull down her brother's work in every possible way, and to restore Popery in its worst and most offensive forms. Step by step she and her councillors marched back to Rome, trampling down one by one every obstacle, and as thorough as Lord Strafford in going straight forward to their mark. The Mass was restored; the English service was taken away; the works of Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, Tyndal, Bucer, Latimer, Hooper, and Cranmer were proscribed. Cardinal Pole was invited to England. The foreign Protestants resident in England were banished. The leading divines of the Protestant Church of England were deprived of their offices, and while some escaped to the Continent many were put in prison. The old statutes against heresy were once more brought forward, primed and loaded. And thus, by the beginning of 1555 the stage was cleared, and that bloody tragedy in which Bishop Bonner and Gardiner played so prominent a part, was ready to begin.

For, unhappily for the credit of human nature, Mary's advisers were not content with depriving and imprisoning our English Reformers. It was resolved to make them abjure their principles, or to put them to death. One by one they were called before special commissions, examined about their religious opinions, and called upon to recant, on pain of death if they refused. No third course, no alternative was left to them. They were either to give up Protestantism and receive Popery, or else they were to be burned alive. Refusing to recant they were one by one handed over to the secular power, publicly brought out and chained to stakes, publicly surrounded with faggots, and publicly sent out of the world by that most cruel and painful of deaths, the death by fire. All these are broad facts which all the apologists of Rome can never gainsay or deny.

It is a broad fact that during the four last years of Queen Mary's reign no less than 288 persons were burnt at the stake for their adhesion to the Protestant faith.

In 1555	there were burnt	71.
1556	" "	89.
1557	" "	88.
1558	" "	40.

—288. (1)

Indeed, the faggots never ceased to blaze whilst Mary was on earth, and five martyrs were burnt in Canterbury within a week of her death. Out of these 288 sufferers, be it remembered, one was an archbishop, four were bishops, 21 were clergymen, 55 were women, and four were children.

It is a broad fact that these 288 sufferers were not put to death for any offence against property or person. They were not rebels against the Queen's authority, caught red-handed in arms. They were not thieves, or murderers, or drunkards, or unbelievers, or men and women of immoral lives. On the contrary they were, with barely an exception, some of the holiest, purest, and best Christians in England, and several of them the most learned men of their day.

I might say much about the gross injustice and unfairness with which they were treated at their various examinations. Their trials, if indeed they can be called trials, were a mere mockery of justice.—I might say much about the abominable cruelty with which most of them were treated, both in prison and at the stake. But you must read Foxe on these points.—I make no comment on the stupid impolicy of the whole persecution. Never did Rome do herself such irreparable damage as she did in Mary's reign. Even unlearned people, who could not argue much, saw clear that a Church which committed such horrible bloodshed, could hardly be the one true Church of Christ.(2) But I have no time for all this. I must conclude this general sketch of this part of my subject with two short remarks.

For one thing, I ask you never to forget that for the burning of our Reformers the Church of Rome is wholly and entirely responsible. The attempt to transfer the responsibility from the Church to the secular power is a miserable and dishonest subterfuge. The men of Judah did not slay Samson; but they delivered him bound into the hands of the Philistines. The Church of Rome did not slay the Reformers; but she condemned them, and the secular power executed the condemnation. The precise measure of responsibility which ought to be meted out to each of Rome's agents in the matter is a point that I do not care to settle. Miss Strickland, in her "Lives of the Queens of England," has tried in vain to shift the blame from unhappy Mary. With all the zeal of a woman she has laboured hard to whitewash her character. The reader of her biography will find little about

martyrdoms. But it will not do. Mr. Froude's volume tells a very different tale. The Queen, and her Council, and the Parliament, and the Popish Bishops, and Cardinal Pole, must be content to share the responsibility among them. One thing alone is very certain. They will never succeed in shifting the responsibility off the shoulders of the Church of Rome. Like the Jews and Pontius Pilate, when our Lord was crucified, all parties must bear the blame. THE BLOOD is upon them all.

For another thing, I wish you to remember that the burning of the Marian martyrs is an act that the Church of Rome has never repudiated, apologized for, or repented of, down to the present day. There stands the huge blot in her escutcheon; and there stands the huge fact side by side, that she has never made any attempt to wipe it away. Never has she repented of her treatment of the Vaudois and the Albigenses;—never has she repented of the wholesale murders of the Spanish Inquisition;—never has she repented of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew;—never has she repented of the burning of the English Reformers. Make a note of that fact and let it sink down into your minds. The Church to which some Anglicans want us to be re-united is a Church “drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus,” a Church that repents not of her murders. They would fain persuade us that she is changed! She is harmless forsooth, and liberal now! She may be safely trusted! She has “painted her face and tired her head,” and as she “looks forth from her window” is full of smiles. But Rome never changes. Rome will never admit that she has made mistakes. She burned our English Reformers 300 years ago. She tried hard to stamp out by violence the Protestantism which she could not prevent spreading by arguments. Never forget that! Beware of trusting her fine words and fair speeches. Remember her doings at Tahiti, and her dealings with Matamoros.

If Rome had only the power, I am not sure that she would not play the whole game over again.

II. Who were the Leading English Reformers Burned?

The question may now arise in your minds, who were the leading English Reformers that were burned? What were their names, and what were the circumstances attending their deaths? These are questions which may very properly be asked, and questions to which I proceed at once to give an answer.

In this part of my lecture I am very sensible that I shall seem to many to go over old ground. But I am bold to say that it is ground which ought often to be gone over. I, for one, want the names of our martyred Reformers to be “Household Words” in every Protestant family throughout the land. I shall, therefore, make no apology for giving the names of the nine principal English martyrs in the

chronological order of their deaths, and for supplying you with a few facts about each of them. Never, I believe, since Christ left the world, did Christian men ever meet a cruel death with such glorious faith, and hope, and patience, as these Marian martyrs. Never did dying men leave behind them such a rich store of noble sayings, sayings which deserve to be written in golden letters in our histories, and handed down to our children's children.

(1) The first leading English Reformer who broke the ice and crossed the river, as a martyr in Mary's reign, was John Rogers, a London minister, Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, and Prebendary and Reader of Divinity at St. Paul's. He was burned in Smithfield on Monday, the 4th of February, 1555. Rogers was born at Deritend, in the parish of Aston, near Birmingham. He was a man who, in one respect, had done more for the cause of Protestantism than any of his fellow sufferers. In saying this I refer to the fact that he had assisted Tyndale and Coverdale in bringing out a most important version of the English Bible, a version commonly known as Matthew's Bible. Indeed, he was condemned as "Rogers alias Matthews." This circumstance, in all human probability, made him a marked man, and was one cause why he was the first who was brought to the stake.

Rogers' examination before Gardiner gives us the idea of his being a bold, thorough Protestant, who had fully made up his mind on all points of the Romish controversy, and was able to give a reason for his opinions. At any rate he seems to have silenced and abashed his examiners even more than most of the martyrs did. But arguments of course went for nothing. "Woe to the conquered!" If he had the word his enemies had the sword.(3)

On the morning of his martyrdom he was roused hastily in his cell in Newgate, and hardly allowed time to dress himself. He was then led forth to Smithfield on foot, within sight of the Church of St. Sepulchre, where he had preached, and through the streets of the parish where he had done the work of a pastor. By the wayside stood his wife and ten children, one a baby, whom the diabolical cruelty of Bishop Bonner had flatly refused him leave to see in prison. He just saw them, but was hardly allowed to stop, and then walked on calmly to the stake, repeating the 51st Psalm. An immense crowd lined the street, and filled every available spot in Smithfield. Up to that day men could not tell how English Reformers would behave in the face of death, and could hardly believe that Prebendaries and Dignitaries would actually give their bodies to be burned for their religion. But when they saw John Rogers, the first martyr, walking steadily and unflinchingly into a fiery grave, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. They rent the air with thunders of applause. Even Noailles, the French Ambassador, wrote home a description of the scene, and said that Rogers went to death "as if he was walking to his wedding." By God's great mercy he died with comparative ease. And so the first Marian martyr passed away.

(2) The second leading Reformer who died for Christ's truth in Mary's reign was John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester. He was burned at Gloucester on Friday, the 9th of February, 1555.

Hooper was a Somersetshire man by birth. In many respects he was, perhaps, the noblest martyr of them all. Of all Edward the Sixth's Bishops none has left behind him a higher reputation for personal holiness and diligent preaching and working in his diocese. None, judging from his literary remains, had clearer and more scriptural views on all points in theology. Some might say that Edward the Sixth's Bishop of Gloucester was too Calvinistic; but he was not more so than the Thirty-nine Articles. Hooper was a far-sighted man, and saw the danger of leaving nest-eggs for Romanism in the Church of England. In his famous dispute with Cranmer and the other Bishops about wearing Romish vestments at his consecration, it has been, I know, the fashion to condemn him as too stiff and unbending. I say boldly that events have shown that we should reverse our verdict. The plain truth is, that in principle Hooper was right, and his opponents were wrong.

A man like Hooper, firm, stern, not naturally genial, unbending and unsparing in his denunciation of sin, was sure to have many enemies. He was one of the first marked for destruction as soon as Popery was restored. He was summoned to London at a very early stage of the Marian persecution, and, after lingering eighteen months in prison, and going through the form of examination by Bonner, Gardiner, Tunstall, and Day, was degraded from his office, and sentenced to be burned as a heretic.

At first it was fully expected that he would suffer in Smithfield with Rogers. This plan for some reason was given up, and to his great satisfaction Hooper was sent down to Gloucester, and burned in his own diocese, and in sight of his own cathedral. On his arrival there, he was received with every sign of sorrow and respect by a vast multitude, who went out on the Cirencester road to meet him, and was lodged for the night in the house of a Mr. Ingram, which is said to be still standing. There Sir Anthony Kingston, whom the good Bishop had been the means of converting from a sinful life, entreated him, with many tears, to spare himself, and urged him to remember that life was sweet, and death was bitter. To this the noble martyr returned this memorable reply, that "eternal life was more sweet, and eternal death was more bitter."

On the morning of his martyrdom he was led forth, walking, to the place of execution, where an immense crowd awaited him. It was market-day, and it was reckoned that nearly 7,000 people were present. The stake was planted directly in front of the western gate of the Cathedral-close, and within 100 yards of the deanery and the east front of the cathedral. The exact spot is marked now by a beautiful memorial at the east-end of the churchyard of St. Mary-de-Lode. The

window over the gate, where Popish friars watched his dying agonies, stands unaltered to this day.

Arrived at this spot, Hooper was allowed to pray, though strictly forbidden to speak to the people. And there he knelt down, and prayed a prayer which has been preserved and recorded by Foxe, and is of exquisite and touching character. Even then a box was put before him containing a full pardon, if he would only recant. His only answer was, "Away with it; if you love my soul, away with it!" He was then fastened to the stake by an iron around his waist, and fought his last fight with the king of terrors. Of all the martyrs, none perhaps, except Ridley, suffered more than Hooper did. Three times the faggots had to be lighted, because they would not properly burn. Three quarters of an hour the noble sufferer endured the mortal agony, as Foxe says, "neither moving backward, forward, nor to any side," but only praying, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me; Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and beating his breast with one hand till it was burned to a stump. And so the good Bishop of Gloucester passed away.

(3) The third leading Reformer who suffered in Mary's reign was Rowland Taylor, Rector of Hadleigh, in Suffolk. He was burned on Aldham Common, close to his own parish, the same day that Hooper died at Gloucester, on Friday, the 9th February, 1555.

Rowland Taylor is one of whom we know little, except that he was a great friend of Cranmer, and a doctor of divinity and canon law. But that he was a man of high standing among the Reformers is evident from his being ranked by his enemies with Hooper, Rogers, and Bradford; and that he was an exceedingly able and ready divine is clear from his examination, recorded by Foxe. Indeed, there is hardly any of the sufferers about whom the old martyrologist has gathered together so many touching and striking things.

Striking was the reply which he made to his friends at Hadleigh, who urged him to flee, as he might have done, when he was first summoned to appear in London before Gardiner:—

"What will ye have me to do? I am old, and have already lived too long to see these terrible and most wicked days. Fly you, and do as your conscience leadeth you. I am fully determined, with God's grace, to go to this Bishop, and tell him to his beard that he doth naught. I believe before God that I shall never be able to do for my God such good service as I may do now." (Foxe's "Acts and Mon.," Vol. III., 138.)

Striking were the replies which he made to Gardiner and his other examiners. None spoke more pithily, weightily, and powerfully than did this Suffolk incumbent.

Striking and deeply affecting was his last testament and legacy of advice to his wife, his family, and parishioners, though far too long to be inserted here, excepting the last sentence:—

“For God’s sake beware of Popery; for though it appear to have in it unity, yet the same is vanity and Antichristianity, and not in Christ’s faith and verity.” (Foxe’s “Acts and Monuments,” Vol. III., 144.)

He was sent down from London to Hadleigh, to his great delight, to be burned before the eyes of his parishioners. When he got within two miles of Hadleigh, the Sheriff of Suffolk asked him how he felt. “God be praised, Master Sheriff,” was his reply, “never better. For now I am almost at home. I lack but just two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father’s house.”

As he rode through the streets of the little town of Hadleigh, he found them lined with crowds of his parishioners, who had heard of his approach, and came out of their houses to greet him with many tears and lamentations. To them he only made one constant address,—“I have preached to you God’s Word and truth, and am come this day to seal it with my blood.”

On coming to Aldham Common, where he was to suffer, they told him where he was. Then said he,—“Thank God, I am even at home.”

When he was stripped to his shirt and ready for the stake, he said, with a loud voice,—“Good people, I have taught you nothing but God’s Holy Word, and those lessons that I have taken out of the Bible; and I am come hither to seal it with my blood,”

He would probably have said more, but, like all the other martyrs, he was strictly forbidden to speak, and even now was struck violently on the head for saying these few words. He then knelt down and prayed, a poor woman of the parish insisting, in spite of every effort to prevent her, in kneeling down with him. After this he was chained to the stake, and, repeating the 51st Psalm, and crying to God, “Merciful Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake receive my soul into thy hands,” stood quietly amidst the flames without crying or moving, till one of the guards dashed out his brains with a halberd. And so this good old Suffolk incumbent passed away.

(4) The fourth leading Reformer who suffered in Mary’s reign was Robert Farrar, Bishop of St. David’s, in Wales. He was burned at Carmarthen, on Friday, the 30th March, 1555. Little is known of this good man beyond the fact that he was born at Halifax, and was the last prior of Nostel, in Yorkshire, an office which he surrendered in 1540. He was also chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer and to the Protector Somerset, and to this influence he owed his elevation to the Episcopal

bench. He was first imprisoned for various trivial and ridiculous charges on temporal matters in the latter days of Edward the Sixth, after the fall of the Protector Somerset, and afterwards was brought before Gardiner, with Hooper, Rogers, and Bradford, on the far more serious matter of his doctrine. The articles exhibited against him show clearly that in all questions of faith he was of one mind with his fellow-martyrs. Like Hooper and Taylor, he was condemned to be burned in the place where he was best known, and was sent down from London to Carmarthen. What happened there at his execution is related very briefly by Foxe, partly no doubt because of the great distance of Carmarthen from London in those pre-railway days, partly perhaps because most of those who saw Farrar burned could speak nothing but Welsh. One single fact is recorded which shows the good Bishop's courage and constancy in a striking light. He had told a friend before the day of execution that if he saw him once stir in the fire from the pain of his burning, he need not believe the doctrines he had taught. When the awful time came, he did not forget his promise, and, by God's grace, he kept it well. He stood in the flames holding out his hands till they were burned to stumps, until a bystander in mercy struck him on the head, and put an end to his sufferings. And so he passed away.

(5) The fifth leading Reformer who suffered in Mary's reign was John Bradford, Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Chaplain to Bishop Ridley. He was burned in Smithfield, on Monday, July the 1st, 1555, at the early age of thirty-five. Few of the English martyrs perhaps are better known than Bradford, and none certainly deserve better their reputation. Strype calls Bradford, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the "four prime pillars" of the Reformed Church of England. He was by birth a Manchester man, and to the end of his life retained a strong interest in the district with which he was connected. At an early age his high talents commended him to the notice of Edward the Sixth, and by Ridley's advice he was appointed one of the six Royal chaplains who were sent about England to preach up the doctrines of the Reformation. Bradford's commission was to preach in Lancashire and Cheshire, and he seems to have performed his duty with singular ability and success. He preached constantly in Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton, Bury, Wigan, Ashton, Stockport, Prestwich, Middleton, and Chester, with great benefit to the cause of Protestantism, and with great effect on men's souls. The consequence was what might have been expected. Within a month of Queen Mary's accession Bradford was in prison, and never left it until he was burned. His youth, his holiness, and his extraordinary reputation as a preacher, made him an object of great interest during his imprisonment, and immense efforts were made to pervert him from the Protestant faith. All these efforts, however, were in vain. As he lived, so he died.(4)

On the day of his execution he was led out from Newgate to Smithfield about nine o'clock in the morning, amid such a crowd of people as was never seen

either before or after. A Mrs. Honeywood, who lived to ninety-six, and died about 1620, remembered going to see him burned, and her shoes being trodden off by the crowd. Indeed, when he came to the stake the Sheriffs of London were so alarmed at the press that they would not allow him and his fellow-sufferer, Leaf, to pray as long as they wished. "Arise," they said, "and make an end; for the press of the people is great."

"At that word," says Foxe, "they both stood up upon their feet, and then Master Bradford took a faggot in his hands and kissed it, and so likewise the stake." When he came to the stake he held up his hands, and, looking up to heaven, said,— "O England, England, repent thee of thy sins! Beware of idolatry; beware of false Antichrists! Take heed they do not deceive you!" After that he turned to the young man Leaf, who suffered with him, and said, "Be of good comfort, brother; for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night." After that he spoke no more that man could hear, excepting that he embraced the reeds, and said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it." "He embraced the flames," says Fuller, "as a fresh gale of wind in a hot summer day." And so, in the prime of life, he passed away.

(6, 7) The sixth and seventh leading Reformers who suffered in Mary's reign were two whose names are familiar to every English-man—Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, and Hugh Latimer, once Bishop of Worcester. They were both burned at Oxford, back to back, at one stake, on the 16th of October, 1555. Ridley was born at Willimondswike, in Northumberland, on the borders. Latimer was born at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire. The history of these two great English Protestants is so well known to most people that I need not say much about it. Next to Cranmer, there can be little doubt that no two men did so much to bring about the establishment of the principles of the Reformation in England. Latimer, as an extraordinary popular preacher, and Ridley, as a learned man and admirable manager of the Metropolitan diocese of London, have left behind them reputations which never have been surpassed. As a matter of course, they were among the first that Bonner and Gardiner struck at when Mary came to the throne, and were persecuted with relentless severity until their deaths.

How they were examined again and again by Commissioners about the great points in controversy between Protestants and Rome,—how they were shamefully baited, teased, and tortured by every kind of unfair and unreasonable dealing,—how they gallantly fought a good fight to the end, and never gave way for a moment to their adversaries—all these are matters with which I need not trouble you. Are they not all fully chronicled in the pages of good old Foxe? I will only mention a few circumstances connected with their deaths.

On the day of their martyrdom they were brought separately to the place of execution, which was at the end of Broad-street, Oxford, close to Balliol College.

Ridley arrived on the ground first, and, seeing Latimer come afterwards, ran to him and kissed him, saying, "Be of good heart, brother; for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it." They then prayed earnestly, and talked with one another, though no one could hear what they said. After this they had to listen to a sermon by a wretched renegade divine named Smith, and, being forbidden to make any answer, were commanded to make ready for death.

Ridley's last words before the fire was lighted were these,—“Heavenly Father, I give Thee most hearty thanks that Thou hast called me to a profession of Thee even unto death. I beseech Thee, Lord God, have mercy on this realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies.” Latimer's last words were like the blast of a trumpet, which rings even to this day—“Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”

When the flames began to rise, Ridley cried with a loud voice in Latin, “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit: Lord, receive my spirit,” and afterwards repeated these last words in English. Latimer cried as vehemently on the other side of the stake, “Father of heaven, receive my soul.”

Latimer soon died. An old man, above eighty years of age, it took but little to set his spirit free from his earthly tenement. Ridley suffered long and painfully, from the bad management of the fire by those who attended the execution. At length, however, the flames reached a vital part of him, and he fell at Latimer's feet and was at rest. And so the two great Protestant bishops passed away. “They were lovely and beautiful in their lives, and in death they were not divided.”

(8) The eighth leading English Reformer who suffered in Mary's reign was John Philpot, Archdeacon of Winchester. He was burned in Smithfield, on Wednesday, December the 18th 1555. Philpot is one of the martyrs of whom we know little comparatively, except that he was born at Compton, in Hampshire, was of good family, and well connected, and had a very high reputation for learning. The mere fact that at the beginning of Mary's reign he was one of the leading champions of Protestantism in the mock discussions which were held in Convocation, is sufficient to show that he was no common man. The relentless virulence with which he was persecuted by Gardiner is easily accounted for when we remember that Gardiner, when he was deposed from his see in Edward VI.'s time, was Bishop of Winchester, and would naturally regard his successor, Bishop Ponet, and all his officials, with intense hatred. A Popish bishop was not likely to spare a Protestant archdeacon.

The thirteen examinations of Philpot before the Popish bishops are given by Foxe at great length, and fill no less than one hundred and forty pages of one of

the Parker Society volumes. The length to which they were protracted shows plainly how anxious his judges were to turn him from his principles. The skill with which the Archdeacon maintained his ground, alone and unaided, gives a most favourable impression of his learning no less than of his courage and patience.

The night before his execution he received a message, while at supper in Newgate, to the effect that he was to be burned next day. He answered at once "I am ready: God grant me strength and a joyful resurrection." He then went into his bedroom, and thanked God that he was counted worthy to suffer for His truth.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, the sheriffs called for him, and conducted him to Smithfield. The road was foul and muddy, as it was the depth of winter, and the officers took him up in their arms to carry him to the stake. Then he said merrily, alluding to what he had probably seen at Rome when travelling in his early days, "What, will you make me a Pope? I am content to go to my journey's end on foot."

When he came into Smithfield he kneeled down and said, "I will pay my vows in thee, O Smithfield." He then kissed the stake and said, "Shall I disdain to suffer at this stake, seeing my Redeemer did not refuse to suffer a most vile death on the cross for me?" After that he meekly repeated the 106th, 107th, and 108th Psalms, and being chained to the stake, died very quietly. And so the good Archdeacon passed away.

(9) The ninth and last leading Reformer who suffered in Mary's reign was Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was burned at Oxford, on the 21st of March, 1556. Cranmer was born at Aslacton, in Nottinghamshire. There is no name among the English martyrs so well known in history as his. There is none certainly in the list of our Reformers to whom the Church of England on the whole is so much indebted. He was only a mortal man, and had his weaknesses and infirmities, it must be admitted; but still he was a great man, and a good man.

Cranmer, you must always remember, was brought prominently forward at a comparatively early period in the English Reformation, and was made Archbishop of Canterbury at a time when his views of religion were confessedly half-formed and imperfect. Whenever quotations from Cranmer's writings are brought forward by the advocates of semi-Romanism in the Church of England, you should always ask carefully to what period of his life those quotations belong. In forming your estimate of Cranmer do not forget his antecedents. He was a man who had the honesty to grope his way into fuller light, and to cast aside his early opinions and confess that he had changed his mind on many subjects. How few men have the courage to do this!

Cranmer maintained an unblemished reputation throughout the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., although frequently placed in most delicate and difficult positions. Not a single man can be named in those days who passed through so much dirt, and yet came out of it so thoroughly undefiled.

Cranmer, beyond all doubt, laid the foundation of our present Prayer-book and Articles. Though not perhaps a brilliant man, he was a learned one, and a lover of learned men, and one who was always trying to improve everything around him. When I consider the immense difficulties he had to contend with, I often wonder that he accomplished what he did. Nothing, in fact, but his steady perseverance would have laid the foundation of our Formularies.

I say all these things in order to break the force of the great and undeniable fact that he was the only English Reformer who for a time showed the white feather, and for a time shrank from dying for the truth! I admit that he fell sadly. I do not pretend to extenuate his fall. It stands forth as an everlasting proof that the best of men are only men at the best. I only want you not to forget that if Cranmer failed as no other Reformer in England failed, he also had done what certainly no other Reformer had done.

From the moment that Mary came to the English throne Cranmer was marked for destruction. It is probable that there was no English divine whom the unhappy Queen regarded with such rancour and hatred. She never forgot that her mother's divorce was brought about by Cranmer's advice, and she never rested till he was burned.

Cranmer was imprisoned and examined just like Ridley and Latimer. Like them he stood his ground firmly before the Commissioners. Like them he had clearly the best of the argument in all points that were disputed. But like them, of course, he was pronounced guilty of heresy, condemned, deposed, and sentenced to be burned.

And now comes the painful fact that in the last month of Cranmer's life his courage failed him, and he was persuaded to sign a recantation of his Protestant opinions. Flattered and cajoled by subtle kindness, frightened at the prospect of so dreadful a death as burning, tempted and led away by the devil, Thomas Cranmer fell, and put his hand to paper, repudiating and renouncing the principles of the Reformation, for which he had laboured so long!

Great was the sorrow of all true Protestants on hearing these tidings! Great was the triumphing and exultation of all Papists! Had they stopped here and set their noble victim at liberty, the name of Cranmer would probably have sunk and never risen again. But the Romish party, as God would have it, outwitted themselves. With fiendish cruelty they resolved to burn Cranmer, even after he had recanted.

This, by God's providence, was just the turning-point for Cranmer's reputation. Through the abounding grace of God he repented of his fall, and found mercy. Through the same abounding grace he resolved to die in the faith of the Reformation. And at last, through abounding grace, he witnessed such a bold confession in St. Mary's, Oxford, that he confounded his enemies, filled his friends with thankfulness and praise, and left the world a triumphant martyr for Christ's truth.

I need hardly remind you how, on the 21st March, the unhappy Archbishop was brought out, like Samson in the hands of the Philistines, to make sport for his enemies, and to be a gazingstock to the world in St. Mary's Church. I need hardly remind you how, after Dr. Cole's sermon, he was invited to declare his faith, and was fully expected to publicly acknowledge his alteration of religion, and his adherence to the Church of Rome. I need hardly remind you how, with intense mental suffering, the Archbishop addressed the assembly at length, and at the close suddenly astounded his enemies by renouncing all his recantations, declaring the Pope to be Antichrist, and rejecting the Popish doctrine of the Real Presence. Such a sight was certainly never seen by mortal eyes since the world began!

But then came the time of Cranmer's triumph. Light of heart and clear in conscience, he allowed himself cheerfully to be hurried to the stake amidst the frenzied outcries of his disappointed enemies. Boldly and undauntedly he stood up at the stake while the flames curled around him, steadily holding out his right hand in the fire and saying, with reference to his having signed a recantation, "This unworthy right hand," and steadily holding up his left hand towards heaven.(5) Of all the martyrs, strange to say, none at the last moment showed more physical courage than Cranmer did. Nothing, in short, in all his life became him so well as the manner of his leaving it. Greatly he had sinned, but greatly he had repented. Like Peter he fell, but like Peter he rose again. And so passed away the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury.

I will not trust myself to make any comment on these painful and interesting histories. I have not time. I only wish you to believe that the half of these men's stories have not been told you, and that the stories of scores of men and women less distinguished by position might easily be added to them, quite as painful and quite as interesting.(6) But I will say boldly that the men who were burned in this way were not men whose memories ought to be lightly passed over, or whose opinions ought to be lightly esteemed. Opinions for which "an army of martyrs" died ought not to be dismissed with scorn. To their faithfulness we owe the existence of the Reformed Church of England. Her foundations were cemented with their blood. To their courage we owe, in a great measure, our English liberty. They taught the land that it was worth while to die for free thought. Happy is the land which has had such citizens! Happy is the Church which has had such

Reformers! Honour be to those who at Oxford, Gloucester, Carmarthen, and Hadleigh, have raised stones of remembrance and memorials to the martyrs! Shame be to the great metropolis of London that, in all her expenditure of money she has never raised a memorial to those who were burned in Smithfield. There is to be a dead-meat market and a railway-station there; but as yet there is no martyrs' memorial!

III. Why were our Reformers Burned?

But I pass on to a point which I hold to be one of cardinal importance in the present day. The point I refer to is the special reason why our Reformers were burned. Great indeed would be your mistake if you supposed that they suffered for the vague charge of refusing submission to the Pope, or desiring to maintain the independence of the Church of England. Nothing of the kind! The principal reason why they were burned was because they refused one of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish Church. On that doctrine, in almost every case, hinged their life or death. If they admitted it they might live; if they refused it they must die.

The doctrine in question was the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Did they or did they not believe that the body and blood of Christ were actually present under the forms of bread and wine after the words of consecration were pronounced? Did they or did they not believe that the real body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, was present on the so-called altar so soon as the mystical words had passed the lips of the priest? Did they or did they not? That was the simple question. If they did not believe and admit it they were burned.(7)

There is a wonderful and striking unity in the stories of our martyrs on the subject. Some of them no doubt were attacked about the marriage of priests. Some of them were assaulted about the nature of the Catholic Church. Some of them were assailed on other points. But all, without an exception, were called to special account about the real presence, and in every case their refusal to admit the doctrine formed one principal cause of their condemnation.

(1) Hear what Rogers said:—

“I was asked whether I believed in the sacrament to be the very body and blood of our Saviour Christ that was born of the Virgin Mary, and hanged on the cross, really and substantially? I answered, ‘I think it to be false. I cannot understand really and substantially to signify otherwise than corporally. But corporally Christ is only in heaven, and so Christ cannot be corporally in your sacrament.’”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 101, edit. 1684.

And therefore he was condemned and burned.

(2) Hear what Bishop Hooper said:—

“Tunstall asked him to say, ‘whether he believed the corporal presence in the sacrament, and Master Hooper said plainly that there was none such, neither did he believe any such thing.’ Whereupon they bade the notaries write that he was married and would not go from his wife, and that he believed not the corporal presence in the sacrament: wherefore he was worthy to be deprived of his bishopric.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 123.

And so he was condemned and burned.

(3) Hear what Rowland Taylor said:—

“The second cause why I was condemned as a heretic was that I denied transubstantiation and concomitation, two juggling words whereby the Papists believe that Christ’s natural body is made of bread, and the Godhead by and by to be joined thereto, so that immediately after the words of consecration, there is no more bread and wine in the sacrament, but the substance only of the body and blood of Christ.”

“Because I denied the aforesaid Papistical doctrine (yea, rather plain, wicked idolatry, blasphemy, and heresy) I am judged a heretic.” Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 141.

And therefore he was burned.

(4) Hear what was done with Bishop Ferrar. He was summoned to “grant the natural presence of Christ in the sacrament under the form of bread and wine,” and because he refused to subscribe this article, as well as others, he was condemned. And in the sentence of condemnation it is finally charged against him that he maintained that “the sacrament of the altar ought not to ministered on an altar, or to be elevated, or to be adored in any way.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 178. And so he was burned.

(5) Hear what holy John Bradford wrote to the men of Lancashire and Cheshire when he was in prison:—

“The chief thing which I am condemned for as an heretic is because I deny in the sacrament of the altar (which is not Christ’s Supper, but a plain perversion as the Papists now use it) to be a real, natural, and corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the forms and accidents of bread and wine; that is, because I deny transubstantiation, which is the darling of the devil, and daughter and heir to Antichrist’s religion.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 260.

And so he was burned.

(6) Hear what were the words of the sentence of condemnation against Bishop Ridley:—

“The said Nicholas Ridley affirms, maintains, and stubbornly defends certain opinions, assertions, and heresies, contrary to the Word of God and the received faith of the Church, as in denying the true and natural body and blood of Christ to be in the sacrament of the altar, and secondarily, in affirming the substance of bread and wine to remain after the words of consecration.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 426.

And so he was burned.

(7) Hear the articles exhibited against Bishop Latimer:—

“That thou hast openly affirmed, defended, and maintained that the true and natural body of Christ, after the consecration of the priest, is not really present in the sacrament of the altar, and that in the sacrament of the altar remaineth still the substance of bread and wine.”

And to this article the good old man replied:—

“After a corporal being, which the Romish Church furnisheth, Christ’s body and blood is not in the sacrament under the forms of bread and wine.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 426.

And so he was burned.

(8) Hear the address made by Bishop Bonner to Archdeacon Philpot:—

“You have offended and trespassed against the sacrament of the altar, denying the real presence of Christ’s body and blood to be there, affirming also material bread and material wine to be in the sacrament, and not the substance of the body and blood of Christ.”—Foxe in loco, vol., iii. p. 495.

And because the good man stoutly adhered to this opinion he was condemned and burned.

(9) Hear, lastly, what Cranmer said with almost his last breath, in St. Mary’s Church, Oxford.

“As for the sacrament, I believe, as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester, the which my book teacheth so true a doctrine, that it shall stand at the last day before the judgment of God when the Papist’s doctrine contrary thereto shall be ashamed to show her face.”—Foxe in loco, vol. iii. p. 562.

If any one wants to know what Cranmer had said in this book, let him take the following sentence as a specimen:—

“They (the Papists) say that Christ is corporally under or in the form of bread and

wine. We say that Christ is not there, neither corporally nor spiritually; but in them that worthily eat and drink the bread and wine he is spiritually, and corporally in heaven.”—Cranmer on the Lord’s Supper. Parker Society edit. p. 54.

And so he was burned.

Now, were the English Reformers right in being so stiff and unbending on this question of the real presence? Was it a point of such vital importance that they were justified in dying before they would receive it? These are questions, I suspect, which are very puzzling to many unreflecting minds. Such minds, I fear, can see in the whole controversy about the real presence nothing but a logomachy, or strife of words. But they are questions, I am bold to say, on which no well-instructed Bible-reader can hesitate for a moment in giving his answer. Such a one will say at once that the Romish doctrine of the real presence strikes at the very root of the Gospel, and is the very citadel and keep of Popery. Men may not see this at first, but it is a point that ought to be carefully remembered. It throws a clear and broad light on the line which the Reformers took, and the unflinching firmness with which they died.

Whatever men please to think or say, the Romish doctrine of the real presence, if pursued to its legitimate consequences, obscures every leading doctrine of the Gospel, and damages and interferes with the whole system of Christ’s truth. Grant for a moment that the Lord’s Supper is a sacrifice, and not a sacrament—grant that every time the words of consecration are used the natural body and blood of Christ are present on the Communion-table under the forms of bread and wine—grant that every one who eats that consecrated bread and drinks that consecrated wine, does really eat and drink the body and blood of Christ—grant for a moment these things, and then see what momentous consequences result from these premises. You spoil the blessed doctrine of Christ’s finished work when He died on the cross. A sacrifice that needs to be repeated is not a perfect and complete thing.—You spoil the priestly office of Christ. If there are priests that can offer an acceptable sacrifice to God besides Him, the great High Priest is robbed of His glory.—You spoil the scriptural doctrine of the Christian ministry. You exalt sinful men into the position of mediators between God and man.—You give to the sacramental elements of bread and wine an honour and veneration they were never meant to receive, and produce an idolatry to be abhorred of faithful Christians.—Last, but not least, you overthrow the true doctrine of Christ’s human nature. If the body born of the Virgin Mary can be in more places than one at the same time, it is not a body like our own, and Jesus was not the second Adam in the truth of our nature.—I cannot doubt for a moment that our martyred Reformers saw and felt these things even more clearly than we do, and seeing and feeling them, chose to die rather than admit the doctrine of the real presence. Feeling them, they would not give way by subjection for a moment, and cheerfully laid down their lives. Let this fact be

deeply graven in our minds. Wherever the English language is spoken on the face of the globe this fact ought to be clearly understood by every Englishman who reads history. Rather than admit the doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood under the forms of bread and wine, the reformers of the Church of England were content to be burned.

IV. The Importance of the Subject on our Own Times

And now I must ask your special attention while I try to show the bearing of the whole subject on our own position and on our own times. I must ask you to turn from the dead to the living, to look away from England in 1555 to England in 1867, and to consider seriously the light which the burning of our Reformers throws on the Church of England at the present day.

We live in momentous times. The ecclesiastical horizon on every side is dark and lowering. The steady rise and progress of Ritualism and Ritualists is shaking the Church of England to its very centre. It is of the very first importance to understand clearly what it all means. A right diagnosis of disease is the very first element of successful treatment. The physician who does not see what is the matter is never likely to work any cures.

Now, I say there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that the great controversy of our times is a mere question of vestments and ornaments—of chasubles and amices—of more or less church decorations—of more or less candles and flowers—of more or less bowings and crossings—of more or less gestures and postures—of more or less show and form. The man who fancies that the whole dispute is a mere aesthetic one, a question of taste like one of fashion and millinery, must allow me to tell him that he is under a complete delusion. He may sit on the shore, like the Epicurean philosopher, smiling at theological storms, and flatter himself that we are only squabbling about trifles, but I take leave to tell him that his philosophy is very shallow, and his knowledge of the controversy of the day very superficial indeed.

The things I have spoken of are trifles, I fully concede. But they are pernicious trifles, because they are the outward expression of an inward doctrine. They are the skin disease which is the symptom of an unsound constitution. They are the plague spot which tells of internal poison. They are the curling smoke which arises from a hidden volcano of mischief. I, for one, would never lend a hand to agitate about church millinery or candles if I thought they meant nothing beneath the surface. But I believe they mean a great deal of error and false doctrine, and therefore I publicly protest against them, and say that those who support them are to be blamed.

I give it as my deliberate opinion that the root of the whole Ritualistic system is the dangerous doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine. The real presence, under the forms of bread and wine, is the foundation principle of Ritualism. The real presence is what the Ritualistic party want to bring back into the Church of England. And just as our martyred Reformers went to the stake rather than admit the real presence, so I hold that we should make any sacrifice rather than allow it to come back in any shape into our Communion.

I will not weary you with quotations in proof of what I affirm. You have heard enough, perhaps too much of them. But I must ask permission to give two short extracts.

Observe what Dr. Pusey says, in a sermon lately published, called, "Will ye also go away?" (Parker's, 1867):—

"While repudiating any materialistic conceptions of the mode of the presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, such as I believe is condemned in the term 'corporal presence of our Lord's flesh and blood,' i.e., as though His precious body and blood were present in any gross or carnal way, and not rather sacramentally, really, spiritually—I believe that in the Holy Eucharist the body and blood of Christ are sacramentally, supernaturally, ineffably, but verily and indeed present 'under the forms of bread and wine;' and that 'where His body is, there is Christ.'"

Observe what Dr. Littledale says, in a tract called "The Real Presence":—

"I. The Christian Church teaches, and has always taught, that in the Holy Communion, after consecration, the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ are 'verily and indeed' present on the altar under the forms of bread and wine.

"II. The Church also teaches that this presence depends on God's will, not on man's belief, and therefore that bad and good people receive the very same thing in communicating, the good for their benefit, the bad for their condemnation.

"III. Further, that as Christ is both God and man, and as these two natures are for ever joined in His one person, His Godhead must be wherever His body is, and therefore He is to be worshipped in His sacrament.

"IV. The body and blood present are that same body and blood which were conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, ascended into heaven, but they are not present in the same manner as they were when Christ walked on earth. He, as man, is now naturally in heaven,

there to be till the last day, yet He is supernaturally, and just as truly, present in the Holy Communion, in some way which we cannot explain, but only believe.”

In both cases you see there is an attempt to evade the charge of maintaining a “gross and carnal presence.” Judge for yourselves how far the attempt is successful. It is a very curious fact that the Romish controversialist, Mr. Harding, Bishop Jewel’s opponent, said just as much 300 years ago. He said:—

“Christ’s body is present not after a corporal, or carnal, or natural wise, but invisibly, unspeakably, miraculously, supernaturally, spiritually, Divinely, and in a manner by Him known.”—Harding’s Reply to Jewell, p. 434. Parker Society Edit.

In both cases you will hardly fail to observe that the very expressions which our martyrs steadily refused is employed, “present under the forms of bread and wine.”

It is clear to my mind that if Dr. Pusey and Dr. Littledale had been brought before Gardiner and Bonner three hundred years ago, they would have left the court with flying colours, and at any rate would not have been burned.

I might refer you to other published sermons on the Lord’s Supper by men of high position in our Church. I might refer you to several Ritualistic manuals for the use of communicants. I might refer you to the famous book “Directorium Anglicanum.” I simply give it as my opinion that no plain man in his senses can read Ritualistic writing about the Lord’s Supper and see any real distinction between it and downright Popery. It is a distinction without a difference, and one that any jury of twelve honest men would say at once could not be proved.

I turn from books and sermons to churches, and I ask any reflecting mind to mark, consider, and digest what may be seen in any thorough-going Ritualistic place of worship. I ask him to mark the superstitious veneration and idolatrous honour with which everything within the chancel, and around and upon the Lord’s-table, is regarded. I boldly ask any jury of twelve honest and unprejudiced men to look at that chancel and communion-table, and tell me what they think all this means. I ask them whether the whole thing does not savour of the Romish doctrine of the Real Presence, and the sacrifice of the mass. I never went into St. Alban’s, Holborn, but once. But when I did and saw the chancel and communion-table, it came thick and hot across my mind that if Bonner and Gardiner had seen them, they would have lifted up their hands and rejoiced, but that Ridley, Bishop of London, and Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, would have turned away with righteous indignation and said, “This is not meant for the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s board, but for counterfeiting the idolatrous Popish mass.”

I do not for a moment deny the zeal, earnestness, and sincerity of the Ritualists, though as much might be said for the Pharisees or the Jesuits. I do not deny that we live in a singularly free country, and that Englishmen now-a-days have liberty to commit any folly short of “felo-de-se” [suicide]. But I do deny that any clergyman, however zealous and earnest, has a right to re-introduce Popery into the Church of England, and, above all, I deny that he has any right to maintain the very principle of the Real Presence, for opposing which the Reformers of his Church were burned.

The plain truth is, my fellow-Churchmen, that the doctrine of the Ritualistic school about the Lord’s Supper can never be reconciled with the dying opinions of our martyred Reformers. If words mean anything, Hooper and Rogers and Ridley and Bradford and their companions, held one view of the Real Presence, and the Ritualists hold quite another. If they were right the Ritualists are wrong. There is a gulf that cannot be crossed between the two parties. There is a thorough difference that cannot be reconciled or explained away. If we hold with one side, we cannot possibly hold with the other. For my part I say unhesitatingly that I have more faith in Ridley and Hooper and Bradford, than I have in Mr. Mackonochie, Dr. Littledale, and Dr. Pusey and their followers, and I hold that by every lawful means they ought to be opposed.

But what are we going to do? Lectures and speeches are all very well. But something more is needed, something needs to be done. The danger is very great, far greater, I fear, than most people suppose. A conspiracy has been long at work for un-protestantizing the Church of England, and all the energies of Rome are concentrated on this little island. A sapping and mining process has been long going on under our feet, of which we are beginning at last to see a little. We shall see a good deal more by-and-by. At the rate we are going on it would never surprise me if within fifty years the crown of England were no longer on a Protestant head, and high mass were once more celebrated in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s. The danger, in plain words, is neither more nor less than that of our Church being unprotestantized and going back to Babylon and Egypt. We are in imminent peril of re-union with Rome.

You may call me an alarmist, if you like, for using such language. But I reply there is a cause. The upper classes in this land are widely infected with a taste for a sensuous, histrionic, formal religion.—The lower orders are becoming sadly familiarized with all the ceremonialism which is the stepping-stone to Popery.—The middle classes are becoming disgusted with the Church of England, and asking what is the use of it.—The intellectual classes are finding out that all religions are either equally good or equally bad.—The House of Commons will do nothing unless pressed by public opinion. We have no Pym or Hampdens there now.—The Canterbury Convocation trifles with danger, and puts forth a report in which it declares that Ritualism has nothing to do with Romanism!—The Bishops

are a house divided against itself, and seem at present unable to find their hands. They either rebuke mildly as individuals like Eli, saying, "It is no good report I hear;" or else decree collectively an edict as vague as that of Ahasuerus, that every man should "bear rule in his own house," and every bishop do what he likes in his own diocese.—And all this time Ritualism grows and spreads. The ship is among breakers,—breakers ahead and breakers astern,—breakers on the right hand and breakers on the left. Something needs to be done.

The very life of the Church of England is at stake, and nothing less. Take away the Gospel from a Church and that Church is not worth preserving. A well without water, a scabbard without a sword, a steam-engine without a fire, a ship without compass and rudder, a watch without a mainspring, a stuffed carcass without life,—all these are useless things. But there is nothing so useless as a Church without the Gospel. And this is the very question that stares us in the face. Is the Church of England to retain the Gospel or not? Without it in vain shall we turn to our archbishops and bishops, in vain shall we glory in our cathedrals and parish churches. Ichabod will soon be written on our walls. The ark of God will not be with us. Surely something ought to be done.

One thing is very clear to my mind. We ought not lightly to forsake the Church of England. No! so long as her Articles and Formularies remain unaltered, unrepealed, and unchanged, so long we ought not to forsake her. Cowardly and base is that seaman who launches the boat and forsakes the ship so long as there is a chance of saving her. Cowardly, I say, is that Protestant Churchman who talks of seceding because things on board are at present out of order. What though some of the crew are traitors, and some are asleep! What though the old ship has some leaks and her rigging is out of order! Still I maintain there is much to be done. There is life in the old ship yet. The great Pilot has not yet forsaken her. The compass of the Bible is still on board. There are yet left on board some faithful and able seamen. So long as the Articles and Formularies are not Romanized, let us stick by the ship. So long as she has Christ and the Bible, let us stand by her to the last plank, nail our colours to the mast, and never haul them down. Once more I say, let us not be wheedled, or bullied, or frightened, or cajoled, or provoked, into forsaking the Church of England.

But all this, it may be said, is only negative advice; we want something positive. Tell us what should be done. I will answer that question in a few moments.

Of direct action against Ritualism,—of the comparative advantages of a Royal Commission, prosecutions in courts of law, and Bills in Parliament, I shall say but little.

From a Royal Commission I should expect nothing. He that considers what the component parts of such a Commission would probably be, must have stronger faith than I have, if he thinks it would do good.

From any prosecution at law I should expect little. The delays and uncertainties of legal proceedings are notorious. Still I am not prepared to say that under no circumstances ought they to be tried.

From a Bill in Parliament I should expect more than from anything else. Lord Shaftesbury's Bill is emphatically a move in the right direction, and ought to be actively supported. Yet we must not forget how very unwilling the House of Commons is to look into religious questions, and really, when I consider that Churchmen, Romanists, Dissenters, and Jews sit side by side on the benches of St. Stephen's, I can hardly wonder.

But, after all, no direct action can do more than touch the outward parts of Ritualism. Men are not made sound Protestants and good Churchmen by Acts of Parliament or by decisions of courts of law. The branches may be lopped, but the root remains behind. It is the wide-spread leaven of Ritualistic principles that forms our greatest danger, and against these principles we must be prepared to make, not a few spasmodic efforts, but a long-continued and most energetic struggle.

(1) For one thing, we ought to organise an union of all Protestant Churchmen from one end of the country to the other. We should endeavour to get up a Protestant league—a league of Protestant clergymen and laymen,—from the Isle of Wight to Berwick-on-Tweed, and from the Land's End to the North Foreland,—a league of all who desire to maintain in the Church of England the principles of the Protestant Reformation.

(2) For another thing, we must agitate, agitate, agitate, from one end of the country to the other. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." When the Anti-Corn Law League was working for the introduction of free trade and the repeal of protective laws, they left no stone unturned, in order to keep their principles before men's eyes. Let us not be ashamed to work in the same way. We must spread the knowledge of the question at issue in every possible way, by pulpit and by platform, by pen and by tongue, by newspaper press and by book, pamphlet and by tract. Above all, we must remind the laity that this is pre-eminently their controversy, and that if they maintain an endowed Protestant Church they have a right to know what is said and done in every parish church throughout the land, and to require that nothing shall be done contrary to the principles of its Reformers.

(3) Above all, we must never forget to besiege the Throne of Grace with constant intercession and supplication. Petitions to Parliament are all very well in their way. But petitions to heaven are far more important. "Yet once more," said old martyred Latimer in prison, "yet once more, O Lord, restore the Gospel to England." Oh! that we had more bishops like him.

Who is there here that loves the Gospel of Christ? Who is there here that abhors the idea of England going back to monasteries and nunneries, to confessionals, to Latin prayers, and Virgin Mary worship, and Popish masses? Have we not had enough of all that? Was not Romanism weighed thoroughly in the balances of England three hundred years ago, and found wanting? You are the man that ought to help us. Arise, and do something for Christ's truth. Help us to withstand Ritualism.

Who is there here that loves his country? Who is there here that values English liberty, and loathes the idea of a gagged press, a priest-ridden population, and a prohibition of free thought? You are the man that ought to help us. Arise, and do something for Christ's cause. Help us to withstand Ritualism.

Who is there here that loves the Church of England as it was made by our Reformers, and wishes it to be unchanged? Who is there here that desires his children may worship, after his death, in a church where there is an English Liturgy, and an English Bible, and a scriptural Lord's Supper, and not a Popish mass, and no Confessional in the vestry? You are the man that ought to help us. Arise, and do something for Christ's cause. Help us to withstand Ritualism.

In the name of the Lord let us set up our banners. If ever we would meet Ridley and Latimer and Hooper in another world without shame, let us contend earnestly for the truths which they died to preserve. The Church of England expects every Protestant Churchman to do his duty. Let us not talk only, but act. Let us not act only, but pray.

Men and brethren, there is a voice in the blood of the martyrs. What does that voice say? It cries aloud from Oxford, Smithfield, and Gloucester, "Resist to the death the Popish doctrine of the Real Presence, under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine in the Lord's Supper!"

NOTE.—The following quotations about the doctrine of the "Real Presence" are commended to the special attention of all Churchmen in the present day:—

(1.) "Whereas it is ordained in this Office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling; (which order

is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue;) yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved; it is hereby declared, that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine thereby bodily received, or unto any Corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one." (Rubric at the end of the Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer.)

(2.) "As concerning the form of doctrine used in this Church of England in the Holy Communion, that the Body and Blood of Christ be under the forms of bread and wine, when you shall show the place where this form of words is expressed, then shall you purge yourself from that which in the meantime I take to be a plain untruth." ("Cranmer's Answer to Gardiner," pp. 52, 53, Parker Edit.)

(3.) "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament." ("Hooker's Eccles. Pol.," b. v., p. 67.)

(4.) "The Church of England has wisely forborne to use the term of Real Presence in all the books set forth by her authority. We neither find it recommended in the Liturgy, nor the Articles, nor the Homilies, nor the Church Catechism, nor Nowell's Catechism. For though it be once in the Liturgy, and once more in the Articles of 1552, it is mentioned in both places as a phrase of the Papists, and rejected for their abuse of it. So that if any Church of England man use it, he does more than the Church directs him; if any reject it, he has the Church's example to warrant him." ("Dean Aldrich's reply," p. 13, 1684. See "Goode on Eucharist," p. 38.)

JOHN CHARLES RYLE

Endnotes:

1) These numbers are given by Soames, in his history of the Reformation (Vol. IV. 587), and are taken from Strype. Other historians give higher numbers.

2) A lady in high position told Bonner in a letter, after Philpot's death, that his cruelty had lost the hearts of 20,000 rank Papists in twelve months.

3) Rogers' prophetic words in prison, addressed to Day, printer of Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," are well worth quoting, "Thou shalt live to see the alteration of this religion, and the Gospel freely preached again. Therefore have me commended to my brethren, as well in exile as here, and bid them be circumspect in displacing the Papists and putting good ministers into Churches, or else their end will be worse than ours."—Foxe III., 309.

4) Bradford seems to have had a very strong feeling about the causes for which God permitted the Marian persecution. Writing to his mother from prison, he says:—"Ye all know there never was more knowledge of God, and less godly living and true serving of God.—God, therefore, is now come, and because He will not damn us with the world He punisheth us."—Foxe iii. 255.

5) Soames is my authority for this statement about Cranmer's left hand. I can find it nowhere else. He also mentions, what other historians, record, that when the fire had burned down to ashes, Cranmer's heart was found unconsumed and uninjured.—Soames' History of the Reformation, vol. iv., p. 544.

6) The following martyrdoms are recommended to the special notice of all who possess Foxe's book—Laurence Saunders, burned at Coventry; William Hunter, at Brentwood; Rawlins White, at Cardiff; George Marsh, at Chester; Thomas Hawkes, at Coggeshall; John Bland, at Canterbury; Alice Driver, at Ipswich; Rose Allen, at Colchester; Joan Waste, at Derby; Richard Woodman, at Lewes; Agnes Prest, at Exeter; Julius Palmer, at Newbury; John Noyes, at Laxfield.

7) "The Mass was one of the principal causes why so much turmoil was made in the Church, with the bloodshed of so many godly men."—Foxe's Preface to Vol. III. of Acts and Monuments.

"The sacrament of the altar was the main touchstone to discover the poor Protestants. This point of the real, corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament, the same body that was crucified, was the compendious way to discover those of the opposite opinion."—Fuller, Church History, iii. 399. Tegg's edit.