

1. EXCERPTS FROM JOHN FOXE'S *BOOK OF MARTYRS* (see textbook)

Bishop Ridley and Bishop Latimer.

Mr. Latimer, after remaining a long time in the Tower, was transported to Oxford, with Cranmer and Ridley, the disputations at which place have been already mentioned in a former part of this work. He remained imprisoned till October, and the principal objects of all his prayers were three--that he might stand faithful to the doctrine he had professed, that God would restore his gospel to England once again, and preserve the Lady Elizabeth to be queen; all which happened. When he stood at the stake without the Bocardo-gate, Oxford, with Dr. Ridley, and fire was putting to the pile of fagots, he raised his eyes benignantly towards heaven, and said, "God is faithful, who doth not suffer us to be tempted above our strength." His body was forcibly penetrated by the fire, and the blood flowed abundantly from the heart; as if to verify his constant desire that his heart's blood might be shed in defence of the gospel. His polemical and friendly letters are lasting monuments of his integrity and talents. It has been before said, that public disputation took place in April, 1554, new examinations took place in Oct. 1555, previous to the degradation and condemnation of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer. We now draw to the conclusion of the lives of the two last. Dr. Ridley, the night before execution, was very facetious, had himself shaved, and called his supper a marriage feast; he remarked upon seeing Mrs. Irish (the keeper's wife) weep, "though my breakfast will be somewhat sharp, my supper will be more pleasant and sweet." The place of death was on the north side of the town opposite Baliol College--Dr. Ridley was dressed in a black gown furred, and Mr. Latimer had a long shroud on, hanging down to his feet. Dr. Ridley, as he passed Bocardo, looked up to see Dr. Cranmer, but the latter was then engaged in disputation with a friar.--When they came to the stake, Dr. Ridley embraced Latimer fervently, and bid him be of good heart. He then knelt by the stake, and after earnestly praying together, they had a short private conversation. Dr. Smith then preached a short sermon against the martyrs, who would have answered him, but were prevented by Dr. Marshal, the vice-chancellor. Dr. Ridley then took off his gown and tippet, and gave them to his brother-in-law, Mr. Shipside. He gave away also many trifles to his weeping friends, and the populace were anxious to get even a fragment of his garments. Mr. Latimer gave nothing, and from the poverty of his garb, was soon stripped to his shroud, and stood venerable and erect, fearless of death. Dr. Ridley being unclothed to his shirt, the smith placed an iron chain about their waists, and Dr. Ridley bid him fasten it securely; his brother having tied a bag of gunpowder about his neck, gave some also to Mr. Latimer. Dr. Ridley then requested of Lord Williams, of Fame, to advocate with the queen the cause of some poor men to whom he had, when bishop, granted leases, but which the present bishop refused to confirm. A lighted fagot was now laid at Dr. Ridley's feet, which caused Mr. Latimer to say, "Be of good cheer, Ridley; and play the man. We shall this day, by God's grace, light up such a candle in England, as, I trust, will never be put out." When Dr. Ridley saw the flame approaching him, he exclaimed, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!" and repeated often, "Lord receive my spirit!" Mr. Latimer, too, ceased not to say, "O Father of heaven receive my soul!" Embracing the flame, he bathed his hands in it, and soon died,

apparently with little pain; but Dr. Ridley, by the ill-adjustment of the fagots, which were green, and placed too high above the furze was burnt much downwards. At this time, piteously entreating for more fire to come to him, his brother-in-law imprudently heaped the fagots up over him, which caused the fire more fiercely to burn his limbs, whence he literally leaped up and down under the fagots, exclaiming that he could not burn; indeed, his dreadful extremity was but too plain, for after his legs were quite consumed, he showed his body and shirt unsinged by the flame. Crying upon God for mercy, a man with a bill pulled the fagots down, and when the flames arose, he bent himself towards that side; at length the gunpowder was ignited, and then he ceased to move, burning on the other side, and falling down at Mr. Latimer's feet over the chain that had hitherto supported him. Every eye shed tears at the afflicting sight of these sufferers, who were among the most distinguished persons of their time in dignity, piety, and public estimation. They suffered October 16, 1555. In the following month died Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England. This papistical monster was born at Bury, in Suffolk, and partly educated at Cambridge. Ambitious, cruel, and bigoted, he served any cause; he first espoused the king's part in the affair of Anne Boleyn: upon the establishment of the Reformation, he declared the supremacy of the Pope an execrable tenet, and when queen Mary came to the crown, he entered into all her papistical bigoted views, and became a second time bishop of Winchester. It is conjectured it was his intention to have moved the sacrifice of Lady Elizabeth, but when he arrived at this point, it pleased God to remove him. It was on the afternoon of the day when those faithful soldiers of Christ, Ridley and Latimer, perished, that Gardiner sat down with a joyful heart to dinner. Scarcely had he taken a few mouthfuls, when he was seized with illness, and carried to his bed, where he lingered fifteen days in great torment, unable in any wise to evacuate, and burnt with a devouring fever, that terminated in death. Execrated by all good Christians, we pray the Father of Mercies, that he may receive that mercy above he never imparted below.

Bishop Cranmer

The queen's revenge was only to be satiated in Cranmer's blood, and therefore she wrote an order to Dr. Cole, to prepare a sermon to be preached March 21, directly before his martyrdom, at St. Mary's, Oxford; Dr. Cole visited him the day previous, and was induced to believe that he would publicly deliver his sentiments in confirmation of the articles to which he had subscribed. About nine in the morning of the day of sacrifice, the queen's commissioners, attended by the magistrates, conducted the amiable unfortunate to St. Mary's church. His torn, dirty garb, the same in which they habited him upon his degradation, excited the commiseration of the people. In the church he found a low, mean stage, erected opposite to the pulpit, on which being placed, he turned his face, and fervently prayed to God. The church was crowded with persons of both persuasions, expecting to hear the justification of the late apostacy: the catholics rejoicing, and the protestants deeply wounded in spirit at the deceit of the human heart. Dr. Cole, in his sermon, represented Cranmer as having been guilty of the most atrocious crimes; encouraged the deluded sufferer not to fear death, not to doubt the support of God in his torments, nor that masses would be said in all the churches of Oxford for the repose of his

soul. The Doctor then noticed his conversion, and which he ascribed to the evident working of Almighty Power, and in order that the people might be convinced of its reality, asked the prisoner to give them a sign. This Cranmer did, and begged^[243] the congregation to pray for him, for he had committed many and grievous sins; but, of all, there was one which awfully lay upon his mind, of which he would speak shortly. During the sermon Cranmer wept bitter tears: lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, and letting them fall, as if unworthy to live: his grief now found vent in words: before his confession he fell upon his knees, and, in the following words unveiled the deep contrition and agitation which harrowed up his soul. "O Father of heaven! O Son of God, Redeemer of the world! O Holy Ghost, three persons and one God! have mercy on me, most wretched caitiff and miserable sinner. I have offended both against heaven and earth, more than my tongue can express. Whither then may I go, or whither may I flee? To heaven I may be ashamed to lift up mine eyes, and in earth I find no place of refuge or succour. To thee, therefore, O Lord, do I run; to thee do I humble myself, saying, O Lord, my God, my sins be great, but yet have mercy upon me for thy great mercy. The great mystery that God became man, was not wrought for little or few offences. Thou didst not give thy Son, O Heavenly Father, unto death for small sins only, but for all the greatest sins of the world, so that the sinner return to thee with his whole heart, as I do at present. Wherefore, have mercy on me, O God, whose property is always to have mercy, have mercy upon me, O Lord, for thy great mercy. I crave nothing for my own merits, but for thy name's sake, that it may be hallowed thereby, and for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake. And now therefore, O Father of Heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c. Then rising, he said he was desirous before his death to give them some pious exhortations by which God might be glorified and themselves edified. He then descanted upon the danger of a love for the world, the duty of obedience to their majesties of love to one another and the necessity of the rich administering to the wants of the poor. He quoted the three verses of the fifth chapter of James, and then proceeded, "Let them that be rich ponder well these three sentences: for if they ever had occasion to show their charity, they have it now at this present, the poor people being so many, and victual so dear. "And now forasmuch as I am come to the last end of my life, whereupon hangeth all my life past, and all my life to come, either to live with my master Christ for ever in joy, or else to be in pain for ever with the wicked in hell, and I see before mine eyes presently, either heaven ready to receive me, or else hell ready to swallow me up; I shall therefore declare unto you my very faith how I believe, without any colour of dissimulation: for now is no time to dissemble, whatsoever I have said or written in times past. "First, I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, &c. And I believe every article of the Catholic faith, every word and sentence taught by our Saviour Jesus Christ, his apostles and prophets, in the New and Old Testament. "And now I come to the great thing which so much troubleth my^[244] conscience, more than any thing that ever I did or said in my whole life, and that is the setting abroad of a writing contrary to the truth, which now here I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be; and that is, all such bills or papers which I have written or signed with my hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand hath offended, writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished; for when I come to the fire, it shall first be burned. "And as for the Pope, I refuse him as

Christ's enemy, and antichrist, with all his false doctrine. "And as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught in my book against the bishop of Winchester, which my book teacheth so true a doctrine of the sacrament, that it shall stand in the last day before the judgment of God, where the papistical doctrines contrary thereto shall be ashamed to show their face." Upon the conclusion of this unexpected declaration, amazement and indignation were conspicuous in every part of the church. The catholics were completely foiled, their object being frustrated; Cranmer, like Sampson, having completed a greater ruin upon his enemies in the hour of death, than he did in his life. Cranmer would have proceeded in the exposure of the popish doctrines, but the murmurs of the idolaters drowned his voice, and the preacher gave an order to lead the heretic away! The savage command was directly obeyed, and the lamb about to suffer was torn from his stand to the place of slaughter, insulted all the way by the revilings and taunts of the pestilent monks and friars. With thoughts intent upon a far higher object than the empty threats of man, he reached the spot dyed with the blood of Ridley and Latimer. There he knelt for a short time in earnest devotion, and then arose, that he might undress and prepare for the fire. Two friars who had been parties in prevailing upon him to abjure, now endeavoured to draw him off again from the truth, but he was steadfast and immovable in what he had just professed, and before publicly taught. A chain was provided to bind him to the stake, and after it had tightly encircled him, fire was put to the fuel, and the flames began soon to ascend. Then were the glorious sentiments of the martyr made manifest;—then it was, that stretching out his right hand, he held it unshrinkingly in the fire till it was burnt to a cinder, even before his body was injured, frequently exclaiming, "This unworthy right hand!" Apparently insensible of pain, with a countenance of venerable resignation, and eyes directed to Him for whose cause he suffered, he continued, like St. Stephen, to say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" till the fury of the flames terminated his powers of utterance and existence. He closed a life of high sublunary elevation, of constant uneasiness, and of glorious martyrdom, on March 21, 1556.[245] Thus perished the illustrious Cranmer, the man whom king Henry's capricious soul esteemed for his virtues above all other men. Cranmer's example is an endless testimony that fraud and cruelty are the leading characteristics of the catholic hierarchy. They first seduced him to live by recantation, and then doomed him to perish, using perhaps the sophistical arguments, that, being brought again within the catholic pale, he was then most fit to die. His gradual change from darkness to the light of the truth, proved that he had a mind open to conviction. Though mild and forgiving in temper, he was severe in church discipline, and it is only on this ground that one act of cruelty of his can in any way be excused. A poor woman was in Edward's reign condemned to be burnt for her religious opinions; the pious young monarch reasoned with the archbishop upon the impropriety of protestants resorting to the same cruel means they censured in papists, adding humanely, "What! would you have me send her quick to the devil in her error?" The prelate however was not to be softened, and the king signed the death warrant with eyes steeped in tears. There is however a shade in the greatest characters, and few characters, whether political or religious, were greater than Cranmer's.

WOODCUT IMAGES FROM THE *BOOK OF MARTYRS*

(FOLLOWING PAGE)

The description of Doctour Cranmer, howe he was
plucked downe from the stage, by Friers and Papifts,
for the true Confession of hys Faith.



The

The burnyng of the Archbishop of Caunterbury Doctor Thomas *Cranmer, in the Towneditch at Oxforde, with his hand first thrust into the fire, wherewith he subscribed before.*



2. ACCOUNT OF CRANMER'S DEATH BY A CATHOLIC EYEWITNESS (IN A LETTER)

But that I know for our great friendships, and long continued love, you look even of duty that I should signify to you of the truth of such things as here chanceth among us; I would not at this time have written to you the unfortunate end, and doubtful tragedy, of Thomas Cranmer late bishop of Canterbury: because I little pleasure take in beholding of such heavy sights. And, when they are once overpassed, I like not to rehearse them again; being but a renewing of my woe, and doubling my grief. For although his former, and wretched end, deserves a greater misery, (if any greater might have chanced than chanced unto him), yet, setting aside his offenses to God and his country, and beholding the man without his faults, I think there was none that pitied not his case, and bewailed not his fortune, and feared not his own chance, to see so noble a prelate, so grave a counsellor, of so long continued honor, after so many dignities, in his old years to be deprived of his estate, adjudged to die, and in so painful a death to end his life. I have no delight to increase it. Alas, it is too much of itself, that ever so heavy a case should betide to man, and man to deserve it. But to come to the matter: on Saturday last, being 21 of March, was his day appointed to die. And because the morning was much rainy, the sermon appointed by Mr Dr Cole to be made at the stake, was made in St Mary's church: whither Dr Cranmer was brought by the mayor and aldermen, and my lord Williams: with whom came divers gentlemen of the shire, sir T A Bridges, sir John Browne, and others. Where was prepared, over against the pulpit, a high place for him, that all the people might see him. And, when he had ascended it, he kneeled him down and prayed, weeping tenderly: which moved a great number to tears, that had conceived an assured hope of his conversion and repentance.... When praying was done, he stood up, and, having leave to speak, said, 'Good people, I had intended indeed to desire you to pray for me; which because Mr Doctor hath desired, and you have done already, I thank you most heartily for it. And now will I pray for myself, as I could best devise for mine own comfort, and say the prayer, word for word, as I have here written it.' And he read it standing: and after kneeled down, and said the Lord's Prayer; and all the people on their knees devoutly praying with him.... And then rising, he said, 'Every man desireth, good people, at the time of their deaths, to give some good exhortation, that other may remember after their deaths, and be the better thereby. So I beseech God grant me grace, that I may speak something, at this my departing, whereby God may be glorified, and you edified.... And now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than nay other thing that ever I said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth. Which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand, contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be: and that is, all such bills, which I have written or signed with mine own hand since my degradation: wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished: for if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned. And as for the pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine.' And here, being admonished of his recantation and dissembling, he said, 'Alas, my lord, I have been a man that all my life loved plainness, and never dissembled till now against the truth; which I am most sorry

for it.' He added hereunto, that, for the sacrament, he believed as he had taught in his book against the bishop of Winchester. And here he was suffered to speak no more.... Then was he carried away; and a great number, that did run to see him go so wicjedly to his death, ran after him, exhorting him, while time was, to remember himself. And one Friar John, a godly and well learned man, all the way traveled with him to reduce him. But it would not be. What they said in particular I cannot tell, but the effect appeared in the end: for at the stake he professed, that he died in all such opinions as he had taught, and oft repented him of his recantation. Coming to the stake with a cheerful countenance and willing mind, he put off his garments with haste, and stood upright in his shirt: and bachelor of divinity, named Elye, of Brazen-nose college, labored to convert him to his former recantation, with the two Spanish friars. And when the friars saw his constancy, they said in Latin to one another 'Let us go from him: we ought not to be nigh him: for the devil is with him.' But the bachelor of divinity was more earnest with him: unto whom he answered, that, as concerning his recantation, he repented it right sore, because he knew it was against the truth; with other words more. Whereby the Lord Williams cried, 'Make short, make short.' Then the bishop took certain of his friends by the hand. But the bachelor of divinity refused to take him by the hand, and blamed all the others that so did, and said, he was sorry that ever he came in his company. And yet again he required him to agree to his former recantation. And the bishop answered, (showing his hand), 'This was the hand that wrote it, and therefore shall it suffer first punishment.' Fire being now put to him, he stretched out his right hand, and thrust it into the flame, and held it there a good space, before the fire came to any other part of his body; where his hand was seen of every man sensibly burning, crying with a loud voice, 'This hand hath offended.' As soon as the fire got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying all the while. His patience in the torment, his courage in dying, if it had been taken either for the glory of God, the wealth of his country, or the testimony of truth, as it was for a pernicious error, and subversion of true religion, I could worthily have commended the example, and matched it with the fame of any father of ancient time: but, seeing that not the death, but cause and quarrel thereof, commendeth the sufferer, I cannot but much dispraise his obstinate stubbornness and sturdiness in dying, and specially in so evil a cause. Surely his death much grieved every man; but not after one sort. Some pitied to see his body so tormented with the fire raging upon the silly carcass, that counted not of the folly. Other that passed not much of the body, lamented to see him spill his soul, wretchedly, without redemption, to be plagued for ever. His friends sorrowed for love; his enemies for pity; strangers for a common kind of humanity, whereby we are bound one to another. Thus I have enforced myself, for your sake, to discourse this heavy narration, contrary to my mind: and, being more than half weary, I make a short end, wishing you a quieter life, with less honor; and easier death, with more praise.