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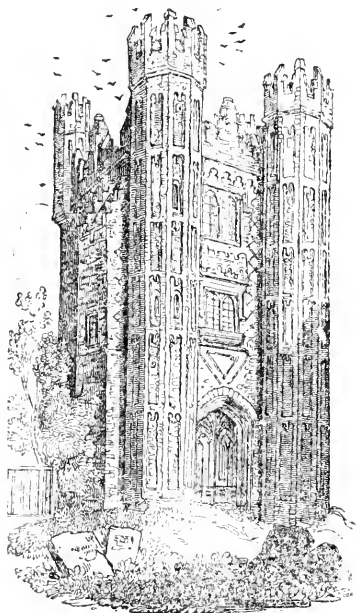
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EXAMINATIONS AND MARTYRDOM
OF
DR. ROWLAND TAYLOR.

A.D. 1555.

Abridged from the "Acts and Monuments of John Foxe."



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EXAMINATIONS AND MARTYRDOM

OF

DR. ROWLAND TAYLOR.

DR. TAYLOR was a native of Rothbury, in Northumberland. He was of the University of Cambridge, where the conversation of Dr. Turner and the preaching of Latimer proved to be the means of his conversion. The following narrative of his suffering for the truth of God's Word, is, with few exceptions, in the very words of Foxe, the martyrologist:—

The town of Hadley [in Suffolk] was one of the first that received the Word of God in all England, at the preaching of master Thomas Bilney; by whose industry the Gospel of Christ had such gracious success, and took such root there, that a great number in that parish became exceeding well learned in the holy Scriptures, as well women as men; so that a man might have found among them many that had often read the whole Bible through, and that could have said a great part of St. Paul's Epistles by heart, and very well and readily have given a godly learned sentence in any matter of controversy. Their children and servants were also brought up and trained so diligently in the right knowledge of God's Word, that the whole town seemed rather a university of the learned, than a town of cloth-making or labouring people. And (what most is to be commended) they were for the more part faithful followers of God's Word in their living.

In this town was Dr. Rowland Taylor, doctor in both the civil and canon laws, and a right perfect divine parson; who at his first entering into his benefice did not, as the common sort of beneficed men do, let out his benefice to a farmer, who should gather up the profits, and set in an ignorant unlearned priest to

serve the cure, and so they have the fleece, little or nothing care for feeding the flock : but, contrarily, he made his personal abode and dwelling in Hadley, among the people committed to his charge ; where he as a good shepherd, abiding and dwelling among his sheep, gave himself wholly to the study of holy Scriptures, most faithfully endeavouring himself to fulfil that charge which the Lord gave unto Peter, saying, “ Peter, lovest thou me ? feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my sheep.” This love of Christ so wrought in him, that no Sunday nor holyday passed, nor other time when he might get the people together, but he preached to them the Word of God, the doctrine of their salvation.

Not only was his word a preaching unto them, but all his life and conversation was an example of unfeigned Christian life and true holiness. He was void of all pride, humble and meek as any child ; so that none were so poor, but they might boldly, as unto their father, resort unto him. Neither was his lowliness childish or fearful ; but as occasion, time, and place required, he would be stout in rebuking the sinful and evil doers, so that none was so rich but he would tell him plainly his fault, with such earnest and grave rebukes as became a good curate and pastor. He was a man very mild, void of all rancour, grudge, or evil will, ready to do good to all men, readily forgiving his enemies, and never sought to do evil to any.

To the poor that were blind, lame, siek, bedrid, or that had many children, he was a very father, a careful patron, and diligent provider ; insomuch that he caused the parishioners to make a general provision for them ; and he himself (beside the continual relief that they always found at his house), gave an honest portion yearly to the common alms-box. His wife also was an honest, discreet, and sobermatron, and his children well nurtured, brought up in the fear of God and good learning.

To conclude, he was a right and lively image or pattern of all those virtuous qualities described by St. Paul in a true bishop ; good salt of the earth, savourily biting the corrupt manners of evil men ; a light in God's house, set upon a candlestick, for all good men to imitate and follow.

Thus continued this good shepherd among his flock, governing and leading them through the wilderness of this wicked world, all the days of the most innoent and holy king of blessed memory, Edward the Sixth. But after it pleased God to take King Edward from this vale of misery unto his most blessed rest, the Papists, who ever ssembled and dissembled, both with King Henry the Eighth, and with King Edward his son, now seeing the time convenient for their purpose, openly refused all good reformation made by the said two kings, and violently overthrew

the true doctrine of the Gospel, and persecuted with sword and fire all those that would not agree to receive again the Roman bishop as supreme head of the Universal Church, and allow all the errors, superstitions, and idolatries, that before (by God's Word) were disproved and justly condemned.

In the beginning of this rage of Antichrist, a certain lawyer, called Foster, a man of no great skill, but a bitter persecutor in those days, conspired with one John Clerk to bring in the Pope and his maumetry [Idolatry] again into Hadley church. For as yet Dr. Taylor, as a good shepherd, had retained and kept in his church the godly Church service and reformation made by King Edward, and most faithfully and earnestly preached against the Popish corruptions, which had infected the whole country round about.

Therefore the aforesaid Foster and Clerk hired one John Averth, parson of Aldham, a blind leader of the blind, to come to Hadley, and there to give the onset to begin again the Popish mass. To this purpose they builded up the altar with all haste possible, intending to bring in their mass again about Palm Monday. But this their device took none effect; for in the night the altar was beaten down. Wherefore they built it up again the second time, and laid diligent watch, lest any should again break it down.

On the day following, came Foster and John Clerk, bringing with them their Popish sacrificer, who brought with him all his implements and garments, to play his Popish pageant, whom they and their men guarded with swords and bucklers, lest any man should disturb him in his missal sacrifice.

When Dr. Taylor, who, according to his custom, sat at his book studying the Word of God, heard the bells ring, he arose and went into the church, supposing that something had been there to be done, according to his pastoral office; and coming to the church, he found the church doors shut and fast barred, saving the chancel door, which was only latched. Where he entering in, and coming into the chancel, saw a Popish sacrificer in his robes, with a broad new shaven crown, ready to begin his Popish sacrifice, beset round about with drawn swords and bucklers, lest any man should approach to disturb him.

Then said Dr. Taylor, "Who made thee so bold to enter into this church of Christ, to profane and defile it with this abominable idolatry?" With that started up Foster, and with an ireful countenance said to Dr. Taylor, "What doest thou here, to let and disturb the Queen's proceedings?" Dr. Taylor answered, "I am the shepherd that God my Lord Christ hath appointed to feed this his flock: wherefore I have good authority to be here: and I command thee, thou Popish wolf, in the name of

God, to avoid hence, and not to presume here, with such Popish idolatry, to poison Christ's flock."

Then said Foster, "Wilt thou traitorously, heretic, make a commotion, and resist violently the Queen's proceedings?"

Dr. Taylor answered, "I make no commotion, but it is you, Papists, that make commotions and tumults. I resist only with God's Word against your Popish idolatries, which are against God's Word, the Queen's honour, and tend to the utter subversion of this realm of England. And further thou dost against the canon law, which commands that no mass be said but at a consecrated altar."

When the parson of Aldham heard that, he began to shrink back, and would have left his saying of mass.

Then Foster, with his armed men, took Dr. Taylor, and led him with strong hand out of the church, and the Popish prelate proceeded in his Romish idolatry. Dr. Taylor's wife, who followed her husband into the church, when she saw her husband thus violently thrust out of his church, kneeled down and held up her hands, and with a loud voice said, "I beseech God, the righteous Judge, to avenge this injury that this Popish idolater this day doth to the blood of Christ." Then they thrust her out of the church also, and shut the doors; for they feared that the people would have rent their sacrificer in pieces.

Within a day or two after, with all haste possible, this Foster and Clerk made a complaint of Dr. Taylor, by a written letter to Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord Chancellor. When the bishop heard this, he sent a letter missive to Dr. Taylor, commanding him within certain days to come and appear before him upon his allegiance, to answer such complaints as were made against him.

When Dr. Taylor's friends heard of this, they were exceeding sorry and grieved in mind; and foreseeing to what end the matter would come; seeing also all truth and justice were trodden under foot, and falsehood with cruel tyranny were set aloft and ruled all the whole rout; they earnestly counselled him to depart and fly, alleging and declaring unto him that he could neither be indifferently heard to speak his conscience and mind, nor yet look for justice or favour at the said Chancellor's hands, who, as it was well known, was most fierce and cruel; but must needs (if he went up to him) wait for imprisonment and cruel death at his hands.

Then said Dr. Taylor to his friends, "Dear friends, I most heartily thank you for that you have so tender a care over me. And although I know that there is neither justice nor truth to be looked for at my adversaries' hands, but rather imprisonment and cruel death yet know I my cause to be so good and

righteous, and the truth so strong upon my side, that I will, by God's grace, go and appear before them, and to their beards resist their false doing."

Then said his friends, "Master Doctor, we think it not best so to do. You have sufficiently done your duty, and testified the truth, both by your godly sermons, and also in resisting the parson of Aldham, with others, that came hither to bring in again the Popish mass. And forasmuch as our Saviour Christ willeth and biddeth us, that when they persecute us in one city, we should fly into another; we think in flying at this time, ye should do best, keeping yourself against another time, when the Church shall have great need of such diligent teachers and godly pastors."

"Oh!" said Dr. Taylor, "What will ye have me to do? I am now old, and have already lived too long, to see these terrible and most wicked days. Fly you, and do as your consciences lead you. I am fully determined, with God's grace, to go to the bishop, and to his beard to tell him that he doth naught. God shall well hereafter raise up teachers of his people, who shall, with much more diligence and fruit teach them, than I have done. For God will not forsake his Church, though now for a time he trieth and correcteth us, and not without a just cause. As for me, I believe before God, I shall never be able to do God so good service, as I may do now; nor shall I ever have so glorious a calling, as I now have, nor so great mercy of God proffered me, as is now at this present. For what Christian man would not gladly die against the Pope and his adherents? I know that the Papacy is the kingdom of Antichrist, altogether full of lies, altogether full of falsehood. Wherefore I beseech you and all other my friends, to pray for me; and I doubt not but God will give me strength and his Holy Spirit, that all mine adversaries shall have shame of their doings."

When his friends saw him so constant, and fully determined to go, they with weeping eyes commended him unto God; and he within a day or two prepared himself for his journey, leaving his cure with a godly old priest, named Sir Richard Yeoman, who afterwards, for God's truth, was burnt at Norwich.

Dr. Taylor, being accompanied with a servant of his own, named John Hull, took his journey towards London. By the way, this John Hull laboured to counsel and persuade him very earnestly to fly, and not come to the bishop, and proffered himself to go with him to serve him; and in all perils to venture his life for him, and with him. But in no wise would Dr. Taylor consent or agree thereunto, but said, "Oh! John, shall I give place to this thy counsel and worldly persuasion, and leave my flock in this danger? Remember the good Shepherd, Christ,

who not alone fed his flock, but also died for his flock. Him must I follow, and, with God's grace, will do. Therefore, good John, pray for me, and if thou seest me weak at any time, comfort me; and discourage me not in this my godly enterprise and purpose."

Thus they came up to London; and shortly after Dr. Taylor presented himself to the Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, then Lord Chancellor of England.

Now when Gardiner saw Dr. Taylor, he, according to his common custom, reviled him, calling him knave, traitor, heretic, with many other villainous reproaches; all which Dr. Taylor heard patiently, and at the last said unto him, "My Lord, I am neither traitor nor heretic, but a true subject, and a faithful Christian man, and am come according to your commandment, to know what is the cause that your Lordship hath sent for me."

Then said the Bishop, "Art thou come, thou villain? How darest thou look me in the face for shame? Knowest thou not who I am?" "Yes," said Dr. Taylor, "I know who you are. Ye are Doctor Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord Chancellor, and yet but a mortal man, I trow. But if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all? How dare you for shame look any Christian man in the face, seeing ye have forsaken the truth, denied our Saviour Christ and his Word, and done contrary to your own oath and writing? With what countenance will ye appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and answer to your oath made first unto King Henry the Eighth, of famous memory, and afterward unto King Edward the Sixth, his son?"

The Bishop answered, "Tush! tush! that was Herod's oath, unlawful, and therefore worthy to be broken. I have done well in breaking it: and, I thank God, I am come home again to our mother, the Catholic Church of Rome, and so I would thou shouldst do."

Dr. Taylor answered, "Should I forsake the Church of Christ, which is founded upon the true foundation of the apostles and prophets, to approve those lies, errors, superstitions, and idolatries, which the Popes and their company at this day so blasphemously do approve? Nay, God forbid. Let the Pope and his return to our Saviour Christ and his Word, and thrust out of the Church such abominable idolatries as he maintaineth, and then will Christian men turn unto him. You wrote truly against him, and were sworn against him."

"I tell thee," said the Bishop of Winchester, "it was Herod's oath, unlawful, and therefore ought to be broken and not kept: and our holy father the Pope hath discharged me of it."

Then said Dr. Taylor, "But you shall not so be discharged

before Christ, who doubtless will require it at your hands, as a lawful oath made to your liege and sovereign lord the King, from whose obedience no man can assoil [absolve] you, neither the Pope, nor any of his."

"I see," said the Bishop, "thou art an arrogant knave, and a very fool."

"My Lord," said Dr. Taylor, "leave your unseemly railing at me, which is not seemly for such a one in authority, as you are. For I am a Christian man, and you know that he that saith to his brother, Raca, is in danger of a council, and he that saith, Thou fool, is in danger of hell fire."

The Bishop answered, "Ye are false, and liars, all the sort of you."

"Nay," said Dr. Taylor, "we are true men, and know that it is written, The mouth that lieth slayeth the soul. And again, Lord God, thou shalt destroy all that speak lies. And therefore we abide by the truth of God's Word, which ye, contrary to your own consciences, deny and forsake."

"Thou art married," said the Bishop.—"Yea," said Dr. Taylor, "that, I thank God, I am, and have had nine children, and all in lawful matrimony. And blessed be God who ordained matrimony, and commanded that every man that hath not the gift of continency should marry a wife of his own, and not live in adultery or whoredom."

Then said the Bishop, "Thou hast resisted the Queen's proceedings, and wouldest not suffer the parson of Aldham, a very virtuous and devout priest, to say mass in Hadley." Dr. Taylor answered, "My Lord, I am parson of Hadley, and it is against all right, conscience, and laws, that any man should come into my charge and presume to infect the flock committed unto me, with venom of the Popish idolatrous mass."

With that the Bishop waxed very angry, and said, "Thou art a blasphemous heretic indeed, that blasphemest the blessed sacrament (and he put off his cap) and speakest against the holy mass, which is made a sacrifice for the quick and the dead." Dr. Taylor answered, "Nay, I blaspheme not the blessed sacrament which Christ instituted, but I reverence it as a true Christian man ought to do; and confess that Christ ordained the holy Communion in remembrance of his death and passion, which when we keep according to his ordinance, we, through faith, eat the body of Christ, and drink his blood, giving thanks for our redemption; and this is our sacrifice for the quick and the dead, to give God thanks for his merciful goodness showed to us, in that he gave his Son Christ unto the death for us."

"Thou sayest well," said the Bishop, "It is all that thou hast said, and more too; for it is a propitiatory sacrifice for the quick

and the dead." Then answered Dr. Taylor, "Christ gave himself to die for our redemption upon the cross, whose body there offered was the propitiatory sacrifice, full, perfect, and sufficient unto salvation, for all them that believe in him. And this sacrifice our Saviour Christ offered in his own person, himself, once for all, neither can any priest any more offer him, nor do we need any more propitiatory sacrifice; and therefore I say with Chrysostom, and all the doctors, Our sacrifice is only memorative, in the remembrance of Christ's death and passion, a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and therefore the fathers call it Eucharistia; and none other sacrifice bath the Church of God."

"It is true," said the Bishop, "the sacrament is called Eucharist, a thanksgiving, because we there give thanks for our redemption; and it is also a sacrifice propitiatory for the quick and the dead, which thou shalt confess ere thou and I have done." Then the Bishop called his men, and said, "Have this fellow hence, and carry him to the King's Bench, and charge the keeper he be straitly kept."

Then kneeled Dr. Taylor down, and held up both his hands, and said, "Good Lord, I thank thee; and from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable errors, idolatries, and abominations, good Lord, deliver us: and God be praised for good King Edward." So they carried him to prison, to the King's Bench, where he lay prisoner almost two years.

In prison Dr. Taylor spent all his time in prayer, reading the holy Scriptures, and writing, and preaching, and exhorting the prisoners and such as resorted to him, to repentance and amendment of life. And finding there the virtuous and vigilant preacher of God's Word, Master Bradford (who for his innocent and godly living, his devout and virtuous preaching, was worthily counted a miracle of our time, as even his adversaries must confess), he began to exhort him to faith, strength, and patience, and to persevere constant unto the end. Master Bradford, hearing this, thanked God that he had provided him such a comfortable prison-fellow; and so they both together lauded God, and continued in prayer, reading, and exhorting one the other; insomuch that Dr. Taylor told his friends that came to visit him, that God had most graciously provided for him, to send him to that prison where he found such an angel of God, to be in his company to comfort him.

After Dr. Taylor had lain in prison awhile, he was cited to appear in the Arches at Bow Church, to answer unto such matters as there should be objected against him. At the day appointed he was led thither, his keeper waiting upon him; where, when he came, he stoutly and strongly defended his marriage, affirming by the Scriptures of God, by the doctors of

the primitive church, by the laws both civil and canon, that it is lawful for priests to marry, and that such as have not the gift of continency, are bound on pain of damnation to marry. This did he so plainly prove, that the judge could give no sentence of divorce against him, but gave sentence he should be deprived of his benefice because he was married.

“You do me wrong then,” said Dr. Taylor; and alleged many laws and constitutions for himself. But all prevailed not; for he was again carried into prison, and his livings taken away, and given to other.

After a year and three quarters, or thereabout, the Papists got certain old tyrannous laws, which were put down by King Henry VIII. and by King Edward, to be again revived by Parliament; so that now they might, *ex officio*, cite whom they would, upon their own suspicion, and charge them with what articles they pleased; and except they in all things agreed to their purpose, burn them. When these laws were once established, Dr. Taylor was summoned before the Chancellor and other commissioners, the 22d of January, 1555. The purport and effect of his examination are described by himself, in his own letter written to a friend of his.

First, the Lord Chancellor [Bishop of Winchester] said, “You, among other, are at this time sent for, to enjoy the King’s and Queen’s Majesties’ favour and mercy, if you will now rise again with us from the fall which we generally have received in this realm; from the which (God be praised) we are now clearly delivered miraculously. If you will not rise with us now, and receive mercy now offered, you shall have judgment according to your demerits.” To this Dr. Taylor answered, “So to rise, should be the greatest fall that ever I could receive: for I should so fall from my dear Saviour Christ to Antichrist. For I do believe that the religion set forth in King Edward’s days was according to the vein of the holy Scripture, which containeth fully all the rules of our Christian religion, from the which I do not intend to decline so long as I live, by God’s grace.”

Then Master Secretary Bourn said, “Which of the religions mean you of, in King Edward’s days? For you know there were divers books of religion set forth in his days. There was a religion set forth in a catechism by my lord of Canterbury [Archbishop Cranmer]. Do you mean that you will stick to that?” Dr. Taylor answered, “My lord of Canterbury made a catechism to be translated in English, which book was not of his own making; yet he set it forth in his own name, and truly that book for the time did much good. But there was, after that, set forth by the most innocent King Edward (for whom

God be praised everlastingly), ‘The Whole Church Service, set forth with great deliberation, and the advice of the best learned men of the realm, and authorized by the whole Parliament, and received and published gladly by the whole realm: which book was never reformed but once; and yet, by that one reformation it was so fully perfected, according to the rules of our religion in every behalf, that no Christian conscience could be offended with anything therein contained—I mean, of that book reformed.’”

Then the Lord Chancellor said, “Didst thou never read the book that I had set forth of the Sacrament?” Dr. Taylor answered, “I have read it.” The Lord Chancellor said, “How likest thou that book?” Dr. Taylor said, “My lord, I think many things be far wide from the truth of God’s Word in that book.” Then the Lord Chancellor said, “Thou art a very varlet.” To that Dr. Taylor answered, “That is as ill as ‘raca,’ or ‘fool.’”^{*} Then the Lord Chancellor said, “Thou art an ignorant beetle-brow.” To that Dr. Taylor answered, “I have read over and over again the holy Scriptures, and St. Augustine’s works through; St. Cyprian, Eusebius, Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, with divers other books throughout: therefore, I thank God, I am not utterly ignorant. Besides these, my lord, I professed the civil laws, as your lordship did; and I have read over the canon law also.” The Lord Chancellor said, “With a corrupt judgment thou readest all things: touching my profession, it is divinity, in which I have written divers books.” Then said Dr. Taylor, “My lord, ye did write one book, ‘De Vera Obedientia:’ I would you had been constant in that; for indeed you never did declare a good conscience that I heard of, but in that one book.” The Lord Chancellor said, “Tut, tut, tut; I wrote against Bucer, in priests’ marriages: but such books please not such wretches as thou art, which hast been married many years.” To that Dr. Taylor answered, “I am married indeed, and I have nine children in holy matrimony, I thank God: and this I am sure of, that your proceedings now at this present in this realm against priests’ marriages, is the maintenance of the doctrine of devils, against natural law, civil law, canon law, general councils, canons of the apostles, ancient doctors, and God’s laws.”

Then the Lord Chancellor said, “Thou sayest that priests may be married by God’s law. How provest thou that?” Dr. Taylor answered, “By the plain words and sentences of St. Paul, both to Timothy and to Titus, where he speaks most evidently of the marriage of priests, deacons, and bishops. And

^{*} Matt. v. 22.

St. Chrysostom, writing upon the Epistle to Timothy, saith, 'It is a heresy to say that a bishop may not be married.' Then said the Lord Chancellor, "Thou liest of Chrysostom. But thou doest, as all thy companions do, belie ever without all shame both the Scriptures and the doctors."

At length the Lord Chancellor said, "To make an end, wilt thou not return again with us to the Catholic Church?" and with that he rose. And Dr. Taylor said, "By God's grace, I will never depart from Christ's Church."

Then Dr. Taylor required that he might have some of his friends to come to him in prison: and the Lord Chancellor said, "Thou shalt have judgment within this week:" and so he was delivered again unto his keeper.

On the last day of January, 1555, Dr. Taylor and Master Bradford, and Master Saunders, were for the last time called to appear before the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishops of Norwich, London, Salisbury, and Durham, and there were charged again with heresy and schism, and a determinate answer was required, whether they would submit themselves to the Roman Bishop and abjure their errors; or else they would, according to their laws, proceed to their condemnation.

When Dr. Taylor and his fellows, Master Bradford and Master Saunders, heard this, they answered stoutly and boldly that they would not depart from the truth which they had preached in King Edward's days, neither would they submit themselves to the Romish Antichrist; but they thanked God for so great mercy, that he would call them to be worthy to suffer for his word and truth.

When the bishops saw them so boldly, constantly, and unmoveably fixed in the truth, they read the sentence of death upon them, which when they had heard, they most joyfully gave God thanks, and stoutly said unto the Bishops, "We doubt not but God the righteous judge will require our blood at your hands, and the proudest of you all shall repent this receiving again of Antichrist, and your tyranny that ye now show against the flock of Christ." So was Dr. Taylor condemned, committed to the Clink, and the keepers charged straitly to keep him.

When the keeper brought him towards the prison, the people flocked about to gaze upon him; unto whom he said, "God be praised, good people, I am come away from them undefiled, and will confirm the truth with my blood." So was he bestowed in the Clink till it was toward night, and then he was removed to the Compter by the Poultry.

In a letter written to a friend of his, after his last examination and condemnation, the other causes, besides his marriage, for which he was condemned, are thus set down:—

“ My second cause why I was condemned a heretic is, that I denied transubstantiation, by the which they do believe, and will compel all others to believe, that immediately after the words called ‘ 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 together with his Godhead: so that the same being now Christ, both God and man, ought to be worshipped with godly honour, and to be offered to God, both for the quick and the dead, as a sacrifice propitiatory and satisfactory for the same. This matter was not long debated in words: but because I denied the foresaid Papistical doctrines, yea, rather plainly, most wicked idolatry, blasphemy, and heresy, I was judged a heretic.

“ I did also affirm the Pope to be Antichrist, and Popery Antichristianity; and I confessed the doctrine of the Bible to be a sufficient doctrine, touching all and singular matters of Christian religion and of salvation.

“ I also alleged, that the oath against the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome was a lawful oath, and so was the oath made by us all touching the king’s or queen’s pre-eminence: for Chrysostom saith, that apostles, evangelists, and all men in every realm, were ever, and ought to be ever, touching both body and goods, in subjection to the kingly authority, who hath the sword in his hand, as God’s principal officer and governor in every realm.”*

When Dr. Taylor had lain in the said Compter in the Poultry a seven-night or thereabouts prisoner, on the 4th of February Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, with others, came to the said Compter to degrade him, bringing with them such ornaments as do appertain to their massing mummery. Now being come, he called for Dr. Taylor to be brought unto him, the Bishop being then in the chamber where the keeper of the Compter and his wife lay. So Dr. Taylor was brought down from the chamber above that, to the said Bonner. At his coming, the Bishop said, “ Master Doctor, I would you would remember yourself, and turn to your mother holy Church; so may you do well enough, and I will sue for your pardon.” Whereunto Master Taylor answered, “ I would you and your fellows would turn to Christ. As for me I will not turn to Antichrist.” “ Well,” said the Bishop, “ I am come to degrade you: wherefore, put on these vestures.” “ No,” said Dr. Taylor, “ I will not.” “ Wilt thou not?” said the Bishop; “ I shall make thee, ere I go.” Quoth Dr. Taylor, “ You shall

* The above extracts from Dr. Taylor’s letters are taken from the “ Letters of the Martyrs,” with a preface by Coverdale, pp. 130—134. Lond. 1837. The letters are found also in Foxe.

not, by the grace of God." Then he charged him upon his obedience to do it; but he would not do it for him; so he willed another to put them on his back. And when Dr. Taylor was thoroughly furnished therewith, he set his hands by his sides, walking up and down, and said, "How say you, my Lord, am I not a goodly fool? How say you, my masters, if I were in Cheap,* should I not have boys enough to laugh at these apish toys, and toying trumpery?"

At the last, when the Bishop should have given Dr. Taylor a stroke on the breast with his crosier staff, as part of the ceremony, his chaplain said, "My Lord, strike him not, for he will sure strike again." "Yea," said Dr. Taylor, laughing at his fear, "the cause is Christ's, and I were no good Christian, if I would not fight in my Master's quarrel." So the Bishop laid his curse upon him, but struck him not. Then Dr. Taylor said, "Though you do curse me, yet God doth bless me. I have the witness of my conscience, that ye have done me wrong and violence; and yet I pray God, if it be his will, forgive you. But from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and his detestable enormities, good Lord, deliver us." And in going up to his chamber, he still said, "God deliver me from you, God deliver me from you."

The night after he was degraded, by the gentleness of the keepers, his wife, his son, and John Hull his servant, were permitted to sup with him; and at their coming-in before supper, they kneeled down and prayed, saying the litany.

After supper, walking up and down, he gave God thanks for his grace, who had so called him and given him strength to abide by his holy word; and turning to his son Thomas, he said, "My dear son, Almighty God bless thee, and give thee his Holy Spirit, to be a true servant of Christ, to learn his word, and constantly to stand by his truth all thy life long. And my son, see that thou fear God always. Flee from all sin, and wicked living; be virtuous, serve God with daily prayer, and apply to thy book. In any wise see thou be obedient to thy mother, love her, and serve her; be ruled by her now in thy youth, and follow her good counsel in all things. Beware of wicked company, of young men that fear not God, but follow their wicked lusts and vain appetites. Flee from whoredom, and hate all filthy living, remembering that I thy father do die in the defence of holy marriage. Another day, when God shall bless thee, love and cherish the poor people, and count that thy chief riches is to be rich in alms; and when thy mother is waxed old, forsake her not, but provide for her to thy power, and see that she lack nothing. For so will God bless thee, and give thee

* Cheapside.

long life upon earth and prosperity : which I pray God to grant thee."

Then turning to his wife, he said thus : " My dear wife, continue steadfast in the fear and love of God ; keep yourself undefiled from their Popish idolatries and superstitions. I have been unto you a faithful yoke-fellow, and so have you been unto me, for the which I pray God to reward you, and doubt you not, dear wife, but God will reward it."

Then giving her some advice as to her marrying again after his death, he added, " I pray you, bring up my children in the fear of God, and in learning, to the uttermost of your power, and keep them from this Romish idolatry." When he had thus said, they with weeping tears prayed together, and kissed one the other ; and he gave to his wife a book of the Church-service, set out by King Edward, which he, in the time of his imprisonment, daily used. And unto his son Thomas he gave a Latin book, containing the notable sayings of the old martyrs, gathered out of the Ecclesiastical History [by Eusebius].

On the next morrow, being the 6th day of February, the Sheriff of London, with his officers, came to the Compter by two o'clock in the morning, and brought forth Dr. Taylor, and without any light led him to the Woolsack, an inn without Aldgate. Dr. Taylor's wife, suspecting that her husband should that night be carried away, watched all night in St. Botolph's Church-porch beside Aldgate, having with her two children, the one named Elizabeth, thirteen years of age (whom being left without father or mother, Dr. Taylor had brought up of alms from three years old) ; the other named Mary, Dr. Taylor's own daughter.

Now, when the Sheriff and his company came against St. Botolph's Church, Elizabeth cried, saying, " O my dear father ! Mother, mother, here is my father led away !" Then cried his wife, " Rowland ! Rowland ! where art thou ?"—for it was a very dark morning, that the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor answered, " Dear wife, I am here ;" and stayed. The Sheriff's men would have led him forth, but the Sheriff* said, " Stay a little, masters, I pray you ; and let him speak to his wife ;" and so they stayed. Then came she to him, and he took his daughter Mary in his arms ; and he, his wife, and Elizabeth kneeled down, and said the Lord's Prayer. At which sight the Sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company. After they had prayed, he rose up and kissed his wife, and shook her by the hand, and said, " Farewell, my dear wife ; be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience. God shall stir

* This Sheriff was Master Chester.

up a father for my children." And then he kissed his daughter Mary and said, "God bless thee, and make thee his servant : " and kissing Elizabeth, he said, "God bless thee. I pray you all stand strong and steadfast unto Christ and his word, and keep you from idolatry." Then said his wife, "God be with thee, dear Rowland. I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadley."

And so was he led forth to the Woolsack, and his wife followed him. As soon as they came to the Woolsack, he was put into a chamber, wherein he was kept with four yeomen of the guard and the Sheriff's men. Dr. Taylor, as soon as he was come into the chamber, fell down on his knees, and gave himself wholly to prayer. The Sheriff then seeing Dr. Taylor's wife there, would in no case grant her to speak any more with her husband; but gently desired her to go to his house and take it as her own, and promised her she should lack nothing, and sent two officers to conduct her thither. Notwithstanding, she desired to go to her mother's, whither the officers led her, and charged her mother to keep her there till they came again.

Thus remained Dr. Taylor in the Woolsack, kept by the Sheriff and his company, till eleven o'clock. At which time the Sheriff of Essex was ready to receive him; and so they set him on horseback within the inn, the gates being shut. At the coming out of the gates, John Hull, before spoken of, stood at the rails with Thomas, Dr. Taylor's son. When Dr. Taylor saw them, he called them, saying, "Come hither, my son Thomas." And John Hull lifted the child up, and set him on the horse before his father; and Dr. Taylor put off his hat, and said to the people that stood there looking on him; "Good people, this is mine own son, begotten in lawful matrimony; and God be blessed for lawful matrimony." Then lifted he up his eyes towards heaven, and prayed for his son, laid his hat upon the child's head, and blessed him, and so delivered the child to John Hull, whom he took by the hand, and said, "Farewell, John Hull, the faithfullest servant that ever man had." And so they rode forth, the Sheriff of Essex, with four yeomen of the guard, and the Sheriff's men leading him.

When they were come almost to Brentwood, they caused to be made for Dr. Taylor a close hood, with two holes for his eyes to look out at, and a slit for his mouth to breathe at. This they did, that no man should know him, nor he speak to any man. Which practice they used also with others. Their own consciences told them that they led innocent lambs to the slaughter. Wherefore they feared, lest if the people should have heard them speak, or have seen them, they might have been much more strengthened by their godly exhortations, to

stand steadfast in God's word, and to fly the superstitions and idolatries of the Papacy.

All the way Dr. Taylor was joyful and merry, as one that accounted himself going to a most pleasant banquet or bridal. He spake many notable things to the Sheriff and yeomen of the guard that conducted him, and often moved them to weep, through his much earnest calling upon them to repent, and to amend their evil and wicked living. Oftentimes also he caused them to wonder and rejoice, to see him so constant and steadfast, void of all fear, joyful in heart, and glad to die. Of these yeomen, three used Dr. Taylor friendly, but the fourth, whose name was Homes, used him very unkindly and churlishly.

At Chelmsford the Sheriff of Suffolk met them to receive him, and carry him forth into Suffolk. And being at supper, the Sheriff of Essex very earnestly laboured him to return to the Popish religion, thinking with fair words to persuade him, and said, "Good master Doctor, we are right sorry for you, considering what the loss is of such a one as ye might be, if ye would. God hath given you great learning and wisdom; wherefore ye have been in great favour and reputation in times past with the council and highest of this realm. Besides this, ye are a man of goodly personage, in your best strength, and by nature like to live many years; and without doubt, ye should in time to come, be in as good reputation as ever ye were, or rather better. For ye are well beloved of all men, as well for your virtues as for your learning; and methinketh it were great pity you should cast away yourself willingly, and so come to such a painful and shameful death. Ye should do much better to revoke your opinions, and return to the Catholic Church of Rome; acknowledge the Pope's holiness to be the supreme head of the Universal Church, and reconcile yourself to him. Ye may do well yet, if ye will; doubt ye not but ye shall find favour at the Queen's hands. I and all these your friends will be suitors for your pardon, which, no doubt, ye shall obtain. This counsel I give ye, good master Doctor, of a good heart, and good-will toward ye; and thereupon I drink to ye." In like manner said all the yeomen of the guard, "Upon that condition, master Doctor, we will all drink to you."

When they had all drunk to him, and the cup was come to him, he stayed a little, as one studying what answer he might give. At the last, thus he answered and said, "Master Sheriff, and my masters all, I heartily thank you for your good will. I have hearkened to your words and marked well your counsels. And to be plain with you, I do perceive that I have been deceived myself, and am like to deceive a great many of Hadley of their expectation." With that word they all rejoiced. "Yea,

good master Doctor," said the Sheriff, "God's blessing on your heart: hold you there still. It is the comfortablest word that we have heard you speak yet. What! should ye cast away yourself in vain? Play a wise man's part, and I dare warrant it, ye shall find favour." Thus they rejoiced very much at the word, and were very merry. At the last, "Good Master Doctor," said the Sheriff, "What meant ye by this, that ye say ye think ye have been deceived yourself, and think ye shall deceive many a one in Hadley?" "Would ye know my meaning plainly," said he? "Yea," said the Sheriff, "good Master Doctor, tell it us plainly."

Then said Doctor Taylor, "I will tell you how I have been deceived; and, as I think, I shall deceive a great many. I am, as you see, a man that hath a very great carcass, which I thought should have been buried in Hadley church-yard, if I had died in my bed, as I well hoped I should have done. But herein I see I was deceived; and there are a great number of worms in Hadley church-yard, which should have had jolly feeding upon this carrion, which they have looked for many a day. But now I know we be deceived, both I and they; for this carcass must be burnt to ashes: and so shall they lose their bait and feeding, that they looked to have had of it!"

When the Sheriff and his company heard him say so, they were amazed, and looked one on another, marvelling at the man's constant mind, who thus, without all fear, made but a jest at the cruel torment and death now at hand prepared for him. Thus was their expectation wholly disappointed. And in this appeareth what was his meditation in his chiefest wealth and prosperity; namely, that he should shortly die and feed worms in his grave.

When they were come to Lavenham, the Sheriff of Suffolk, to whom Dr. Taylor had been delivered at Chelmsford, stayed there two days; and thither came to him a great number of gentlemen and justices upon great horses, who all were appointed to aid the Sheriff. These gentlemen laboured Dr. Taylor very sore, to reduce him to the Romish religion, promising him his pardon, "which," said they, "we have here for you." They promised him great promotions, yea, a bishoprick if he would take it; but all their labour and flattering words were in vain. For he had not built his house upon the sand, in peril of falling at every puff of wind; but upon the sure and unmoveable rock, Christ. Wherefore he abode constant and unmoveable unto the end.

After two days [on the 9th of February], the Sheriff and his company led Dr. Taylor towards Hadley, and coming within two miles of Hadley he desired to light off his horse: which done, he leaped, and skipped once or twice, as men commonly

do in dancing. "Why, Master Doctor," said the Sheriff, "how do you now?" He answered, "Well, God be praised, good Master Sheriff, never better: for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house. But, Master Sheriff," said he, "shall not we go through Hadley?" "Yes," said the Sheriff, "you shall go through Hadley." Then said he, "O good Lord, I thank thee: I shall yet once ere I die see my flock, whom thou, Lord, knowest I have most heartily loved and truly taught. Good Lord, bless them, and keep them steadfast in thy Word and truth."

When they were now come to Hadley, and came riding over the bridge, at the bridge-foot waited a poor man, with five small children; who, when he saw Dr. Taylor, he and his children fell down upon their knees, and held up their hands, and cried with a loud voice, and said, "O dear father and good shepherd, Dr. Taylor: God help and succour thee, as thou hast many a time succoured me and my poor children." Such witness had the servant of God of his virtuous and charitable alms given in his lifetime. For God would now the poor should testify of his good deeds, to his singular comfort, to the example of others, and confusion of his persecutors and tyrannous adversaries. For the Sheriff and others that led him to death, were wonderfully astonished at this; and the Sheriff sore rebuked the poor man for so crying. The streets of Hadley were beset on both sides the way, with men and women of the town and country, who waited to see him. When they beheld him so led to death, with weeping eyes and lamentable voices, they cried, saying one to another, "Ah! good Lord, there goeth our good shepherd from us, who so faithfully hath taught us, so fatherly hath cared for us, and so godly hath governed us. O merciful God! what shall we poor scattered lambs do? What shall come of this most wicked world? Good Lord, strengthen him and comfort him:" with such other most lamentable and piteous voices. Wherefore the people were sore rebuked by the Sheriff and the catchpoles his men, that led him. And Dr. Taylor evermore said to the people, "I have preached to you God's Word and truth, and am come this day to seal it with my blood."

Coming against the alms-houses, which he well knew, he cast to the poor people money, which remained of what good people had given him in the time of his imprisonment; and which he had put in a glove ready for that purpose. And coming to the last of the alms-houses, and not seeing the poor that there dwelt ready at their doors, as the others were, he asked, "Is the blind man and blind woman that dwelt here alive?" It was answered, "Yea; they are there within." Then he threw glove and all in at the window, and so rode forth,

Thus this good father and provider for the poor, now took his leave of those, for whom all his life he had a singular care and study. For it was his custom, once in a fortnight at the least, to call upon Sir Henry Doyle, and others the rich cloth-makers, to go with him to the almshouses, and there to see how the poor lived; what they lacked in meat, drink, clothing, bedding, or any other necessaries. The like did he also to other poor men that had many children, or were sick. Then would he exhort and comfort them; and, where he found cause, rebuke the unruly, and what they lacked, that gave he after his power; and what he was not able, he caused the rich and wealthy men to minister unto them. Thus showed he himself in all things an example to his flock, worthy to be followed.

At the last, coming to Aldham Common, the place where he should suffer, and seeing a great multitude of people gathered together, he asked, "What place is this, and what means it that so much people are gathered hither?" It was answered, "It is Aldham Common, the place where you must suffer; and the people are come to look upon you." Then said he, "Thanked be God, I am even at home;" and so he alighted from his horse, and with both his hands rent the hood from his head. Now his hair was knotted evil-favouredly, and clipped much like as a man would clip a fool's head; which cost Bishop Bonner had bestowed upon him, when he degraded him. But when the people saw his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping tears, and cried, saying, "God save thee, good Dr. Taylor; Jesus Christ strengthen thee, and help thee; the Holy Ghost comfort thee;" with such other like godly wishes. Then would he have spoken to the people; but the yeomen of the guard were so busy about him, that as soon as he opened his mouth, one or other thrust a tip-staff into his mouth, and would in no wise permit him to speak. Then desired he licence of the Sheriff to speak; but the Sheriff denied it to him, and bade him remember his promise to the Council. "Well," said Dr. Taylor, "promise must be kept."

What this promise was, it is unknown; but the common fame was, that after he and others were condemned, the Council sent for them, and threatened them they would cut their tongues out of their heads, except they would promise that at their deaths they would keep silence and not speak to the people. Wherefore they, desirous to have the use of their tongues, to call upon God as long as they might live, promised silence.

Dr. Taylor, perceiving that he could not be suffered to speak, sat down, and seeing one named Soyce, he called him, and said, "Soyce, I pray thee come and pull off my boots, and take them

for thy labour. Thou hast long looked for them, now take them." Then rose he up, and put off his clothes unto his shirt, and gave them away. Which done, 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 God's blessed book, the holy Bible; and I am come hither this day to seal it with my blood." With that word, Holmes, yeoman of the guard aforesaid, who had used Dr. Taylor very cruelly all the way, gave him a great stroke upon the head with a cudgel, and said, "Is that the keeping of thy promise, thou heretic?" Then he, seeing they would not permit him to speak, kneeled down and prayed, and a poor woman, who was among the people, stepped in and prayed with him; but her they thrust away, and threatened to tread her down with horses; notwithstanding, she would not remove, but abode and prayed with him. When he had prayed, he went to the stake and kissed it, and set himself in a pitch barrel, which they had set for him to stand in, and so he stood with his back upright against the stake, with his hands folded together, and his eyes toward heaven, and so he continually prayed.

Then they bound him with chains, and the Sheriff called one Richard Doningham, a butcher, and commanded him to set up fagots; but he refused to do it, and said, "I am lame, Sir, and not able to lift a fagot." The Sheriff threatened to send him to prison; notwithstanding he would not do it.

Then appointed he one Mulleine, of Kersey, a man fit to be a hangman; and Soyce, a very drunkard, and Warwick, who, in the commotion time in King Edward's days, lost one of his ears for his seditious talk; also one Robert King, a deviser of interludes. These four were appointed to set up the fagots and to make the fire, which they most diligently did. And this Warwick cruelly cast a fagot at him, which lighted upon his head, and brake his face, that the blood ran down his visage. Then said Dr. Taylor, "O friend, I have harm enough; what needed that?" Furthermore, Sir John Shelton there standing by, as Dr. Taylor was speaking and saying the Psalm *Miserere* [being the 51st Psalm], in English, struck him on the lips; "Ye knave," said he, "speak Latin: I will make thee." At the last they set to fire: and Dr. Taylor, holding up both his hands, called upon God, and said, "Merciful Father of heaven, for Jesus Christ my Saviour's sake, receive my soul into thy hands." So stood he still, without either crying or moving, with his hands folded together, till Soyce, with a halbert, struck him on the head, that the brains fell out, and the dead corpse fell down into the fire.

Thus rendered the man of God his blessed soul into the

hands of his merciful Father, and to his most dear and certain Saviour, Jesus Christ, whom he most entirely loved, faithfully and earnestly preached, obediently followed in living, and constantly glorified in death.

On Aldham Common, a stone yet marks the place where the martyr suffered; on it is rudely engraved, "1555. D. Taylor in defending that was good. At this plas left his blude." A more finished monument was erected by its side in 1818.



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