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FORE FATHERS**

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OUR
PROTESTANT FOREFATHERS.

BY
WILLIAM STEPHEN GILLY, D.D.

PREBENDARY OF DURHAM,
AUTHOR OF "WALDENSIAN RESEARCHES," ETC., ETC.

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OUR PROTESTANT FOREFATHERS.

SECTION 1.—*The difference between Romanism and Protestantism.*

CHRISTIANS in this quarter of the world are divided into two parties—the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The Roman Catholics consent to

The Authority of the Church of Rome,
The Supremacy of the Pope,
The Intercession of the Virgin and the Saints,
The Worship of the Virgin Mary,
The Worship of Saints,
The Use of Images,
The Veneration of Relics,
The Power of granting Indulgences,
The Doctrine of Purgatory, and
The Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

They believe also that the authority of unwritten traditions and of Holy Writ are equal, and that there are seven sacraments which confer grace. The Protestants refuse their assent to these things, believing them to be unscriptural; and they renounce all submission to the assumed power of the Church of Rome.

That I may represent the faith of Romanism fairly, I give the following extracts from the Creed of Pope Pius IV., in the very words in which they were published ten years ago in defence of the Roman Catholics by Mr. Butler, in his "Book of the Roman Catholic Church;" wherein he affirms, "that this Creed is considered, in every part of the world, as an accurate and explicit summary of the Roman Catholic Faith."

"I most firmly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other constitutions and observances of the Church.

"I also admit the Sacred Scriptures according to the sense which the Holy Mother Church has held, and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy

Scriptures ; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

“I profess also, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessary for every one ; viz. baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order, matrimony ; and they confer grace ; and of these, baptism, confirmation, and order, cannot be reiterated without sacrilege.

“I profess, likewise, that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead ; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which conversion the whole Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation.

“I confess, also, that under either kind alone, the whole and entire Christ, and a true Sacrament, is received.

“I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invoked ; that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated.

“I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the Mother of God ever Virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained ; and that due honour and veneration are to be given to them.

“I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

“I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all Churches ; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Christ.

“I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the Sacred Canons and General Councils, and

particularly by the Holy Council of Trent : and likewise I also condemn, reject, and anathematise all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever condemned and anathematised by the Church.

“ This true Catholic Faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now freely profess and truly hold, I promise, vow, and swear, most constantly to hold and profess the same whole and entire, with God’s assistance, to the end of my life.”

Such is the Roman Catholic’s creed, in which he professes to maintain the power and authority and supremacy of the Pope ; the worship of the Virgin Mary and saints ; the use of images, relics, indulgences, and penances ; and the doctrine of purgatory, of transubstantiation, and of seven sacraments.

In opposition to these tenets, we assert that the doctrine of the Pope’s supremacy and authority has led to the most unreasonable assumption, and to the most unrighteous exercise of spiritual power, and to the most terrible sufferings that man can inflict on man ;—that the in-

vocation of the Virgin Mary and of the saints, and the use of images, have introduced practices of idolatry which pious Roman Catholics themselves deprecate; that the doctrines of indulgences, penances, and transubstantiation, have been productive of superstitions, blasphemies, and immoralities, which those who first invented them could not have foreseen.

SECTION 2.—*The solemn national protests of the sixteenth century were the Crisis, not the beginning of the struggle.*

Solemn national protests against the Roman Catholic Faith, and extensive separations from the Church of Rome, took place in the sixteenth century. The two principal movements, the one in Germany, the other in England, occurred about the same time. That in Germany is dated from the year 1530, when the confederated advocates of Martin Luther's opinions signed their confession of Faith at Augsburgh, and entered into the alliance called the Union of Smalkald: that in England is usually computed from the year 1534, in which Henry VIII., was de-

clared supreme Head of the English Church ; but it might be as properly assigned to the year 1535, when the first complete English translation of the Bible, the Magna Charta of our Protestantism, the great book of appeal, was published by Authority.

Now because Luther took a prominent part in the religious discussion which preceded the stir in Germany, and because Henry VIII. was the first British king who renounced all obedience to the Roman Bishop, Protestants have been insultingly told, that their religion is new and upstart ; that there was no Protestant faith before Martin Luther ; and that the Reformation in England owes its birth to an act of kingly caprice, and not to the religious feelings of the people. We deny that Popery was always the religion of England before Henry VIII.'s time, and the only faith known to our forefathers before the sixteenth century. Thus far only is the assertion correct, that it was the only faith which the State permitted our forefathers to avow during several centuries.

Protestantism, or the principle of Resistance, opposed to the corruptions and usurpations of the

Roman Church, is to be found so soon as that Church began to depart from the simplicity of the Gospel: it may be traced through different periods of ecclesiastical history, until it broke out in those two memorable political convulsions, which ought to be called the grand crisis, and not the first struggle of the Protestant cause.

The Romanists say that the Church has always taught the doctrines which we disclaim; and we retort, that they are innovations, and that there have always been Protestants to lift up their voices against them. Humble servants of Christ, one by one, declared against the errors and domination of the Romish Pontificate, long before nations agreed to disown them. Small communities asserted their independence before large ones threw off the Papal yoke; and we are to look for the *origin* of our religious system, not in the decrees of princes or in acts of parliament, not in political revolutions and public manifestoes—but in the apostolical writings and institutions, and in the studies, and contemplations, and firmness of individuals.

The object of this statement is to draw attention to the important fact, that there was a great

religious process going on in the minds of men in the private stations of life, many ages before dominions and principalities entered on the question of the Pope's supremacy, at that epoch which is called the Reformation. We will grant that the liberation of great part of Europe from Papal usurpations and exaction, after bearing the yoke for many centuries, cannot be dated earlier than three hundred years back. But we strenuously maintain, that a commotion had been observed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Switzerland, and even in parts of Italy and Spain,—and that demands for improvement, and a system of opposition to the abuses and corruption of the dominant Church, had long previously indicated the existence of that spirit which we now call Protestantism. The good and the wise, however, being generally the fewest in number, the early Protestants were silenced by imprisonment and death, or the fear of them; or were driven into mountains and retired places, where, in deprivation and in steadfastness, they made the deep valley and the forest resound with the praises of God.

SECTION 3.—*The abuses which hastened the Crisis.*

At length the “rapacity of the Papal see, the mendacious impudence and the barefaced impostures of the friars, the growing immorality of the whole clerical body, and, above all, the monstrous abuse of *indulgences*,”* became so intolerable, that men who had any sense of religion could bear with them no longer, and the religious revolution rolled on like a mighty flood through all the countries of the north of Europe.

The power of granting *indulgences* being still one of the favourite and soul-ensnaring doctrines of the Romish Church, I will digress for a moment to show what it had to do, as an immediate cause, with the great Protestant movement at the time when the British and German nations threw off the Papal chains. Pope Leo X. wanted money, and he “lost no time in replenishing his empty coffers by the public sale of in-

* Duham, ‘Germanic Empire,’ vol. ii. p. 319. “Any change,” says this erudite author, “would have been better than the existing state of things. God’s providence was concerned; either a reformation must be effected, or adieu to religion.”

dulgences ;”* that is to say, he made use of the power which his predecessors had usurped over Christian churches, and he sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, promising pardon of sins to such as would purchase the pardon with money. One of the Pope’s agents in this nefarious traffic was a Dominican friar of the name of Tetzel. The Dominican friars were the founders and great supporters of that terrible tribunal the Inquisition, which put to death hundreds of thousands of victims. Tetzel went forth preaching the efficacy of the *indulgences* which he had to sell, and boasting of the number of souls which had been released from purgatory, and saved from hell by the purchasers of them. The forms of the indulgences or pardons ran thus :—“By Christ’s authority, and that of his apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me, I do absolve thee first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever way they have been incurred—and also from all the sins, transgressions, and excesses, however enormous they may be, &c. &c.”) So successful was Tetzel in this unholy mer-

* Dunham, ‘Germanic Empire,’ vol. iii. p. 4.

chandise, and so blinded had the people been by being kept in the darkness of Popery, that his receipts were enormous; but on one occasion his wickedness produced its own punishment. "Can you grant absolution for a crime which a man has not yet committed, but intends to commit?" asked one of his hearers. "Yes," replied Tetzal, "if the proper sum of money be paid down." The man paid the amount required, and received the form of pardon duly signed and sealed. Soon afterwards Tetzal was robbed, and the robber produced the indulgence:—"This," said he, "is the crime I intended to commit, and here is my pardon."

Other profanations, under the name of religion, went on: the wickedness which could break out into such an atrocious sin as the sale of indulgences stopped at nothing, until even the timid and the indifferent were roused to action by the increasing abominations of the Romish Church; and the Reformation, which had been demanded for ages, proceeded on an enlarged scale and with increased acceleration.

Luther, who then went forth in the strength of God to fight the battle of the Lord of Hosts,

was one of the most zealous declaimers against Popery, and he has for this reason been erroneously called the Father of Protestantism. But had Luther never lived, the Protestant cause would have prospered under God's providence, and other men, great as he was, would have been raised up to vindicate the truth. "Where was Protestantism, that new religion, before Luther?" we have been insultingly asked. The reader who attentively peruses the following pages will be able to give an answer.

SECTION 4.—*The Holy Catholic Church, before the corruptions of the Romish Church produced divisions.*

For many ages after the religion of Jesus Christ was first established, the Great body of Christians scattered over the whole world were called the *Holy Catholic Church*; the word Catholic signifying general or universal. The Christians having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, were agreed also in all the great articles of Faith; and the congregations of different countries and kingdoms worshipped their common

Saviour according to forms which were so much alike, that though there might be some differences in point of discipline, yet, as branches of the same stem make one tree, so they made one Church of Christ. They corresponded with each other; they consulted each other; they helped each other when they were in poverty or affliction; and thus they proved to the rest of the world that they were brethren, being of one mind, living in peace together whenever they met, and never striving together except for the faith of the Gospel. Such was their affectionate bond of union, to whatever nation they belonged; and well might the heathen say of them, "See how they love one another!" One great reason why the primitive Christians continued fast bound together in this communion of saints and fellowship of the Holy Catholic Church, was, that nobody of any character for piety or scriptural knowledge ever attempted to introduce objects, doctrines, or services, which were opposed to the written Word of God, or to the simplicity of the Gospel: another reason was, that no particular congregation or branch of Christ's Universal Church endeavoured to

lord it over another, or to assume the pre-eminence. For very many years there was no such thing known in the Church as image-worship or saint-worship, or *compulsory* confession to a priest, or prohibitions against marriage, or any such introductions of human invention. There was nothing forced upon the will—there was nothing to sear the conscience, or to make a devout man feel, that, by his conformity to the Church, he was acting against the revealed Word of God. The Christians of those days might have had their friendly discussions on religious points; but there was not any intolerant, unscriptural, or irrational doctrine propounded in such a manner as was likely to divide the Christian world.

This unanimity continued as long as those wise precepts of the apostles were observed:—“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body.” Col. ii. 18. 23. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for

filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

SECTION. 5.—*The first Protestants—Irenæus—
The Waldenses—The Albigenses.*

But when the time came, as St. Paul prophesied it should come, "that the man of sin should be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" (2 Thess. ii. 3. 4. 9. 10.)—when the unhappy time came "that some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth;" (1 Tim. iv. 1—3.) then the seamless robe of Christ was torn, and the Church of Rome apostatized from the religion taught by

Christ and his apostles. Image-worship, and worshipping of angels and saints, and forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats, and lording it over God's heritage, and the exalting of a person called the Pope, sitting in the temple as God himself, and lying wonders and other corruptions, from thenceforth distinguished the Roman or most powerful branch of the Church; and then humbler and less numerous, but more pious congregations, were obliged to PROTEST against such errors, and afterwards to separate from those who held them; and this was the origin of Protestantism.

The first act in ecclesiastical history which comes under this name, was that of Irenæus,* and of the Christians of Gaul, who lived between the Rhone and the Alps, about the year of our Lord 200, when they protested against the tyranny and intolerance of Victor, bishop of Rome, who endeavoured to force on them his own opinions and practices. But though this outbreaking of intolerance began at Rome, so early as about

* Irenæi Opera. p. 340. Edit. Paris: 1710. "Victorem, fortiter et graviter increpavit." See Dissertatio in libros Irenæi. ibid. p. 86. See also Euseb. Hist. Eccl. 5. 24.

the year 200, and was followed by many doings among the clergy of that city, of which other Christians could not approve, yet it was a great length of time before the usurpations and corruptions of the Romish Church became so gross, as to compel the faithful servants of Christ to have no more communion with her. All her unscriptural services and practices were introduced by degrees, one after another; first a small error, and then a greater: as, for example, images were first used as memorials, and not as objects of worship; relics of dead saints were collected and preserved with more superstition than was right, but it was long before they were adored. The Virgin Mary, the apostles, and saints, after their death, were named with veneration, and their memory was dearly and respectfully cherished, as it ought to be now; but it was many ages before they were prayed to, or before they were invoked for help and protection. In like manner, the clergy were at first *recommended* not to marry; next, they were *forbidden* to marry. It was also after the lapse of centuries that the doctrine of transubstantiation produced the sin of worshipping a consecrated

wafer, and calling it Christ and God ; and that the doctrine of purgatory led to the profanation of receiving money for saying masses for the dead, or the shameful traffic of selling indulgences. So likewise the exactions, and the usurpations, and the pretended power of the Romish Church, over all other churches, were gradually put forth. Rome, being the capital of the world and the seat of empire, her bishops were visited very often, and had great respect paid them by Christians of other countries. Having better opportunities of communicating with the pious and the learned of all nations, it was naturally supposed that their information and counsel would be more valuable than that of other bishops and clergy ; consequently they were more frequently consulted, and great deference was paid to their decisions. They took advantage of this, and they pushed their claims and their impositions farther and farther, till their tyranny could be endured by the intelligent, the bold, and the pious, no longer, and Protestantism spread from one place to another. “Successors to the Prince of the Apostles,” “Vicars of Christ,” “Universal Bishops,” “Gods on Earth,” and such like

titles, which the Popes or Bishops of Rome have arrogated, were not known during the primitive ages of Christianity, nor was Rome then called “the Mother and Mistress of Churches,” or pronounced to be “infallible:” therefore, when she insisted upon the power which such titles infer, those “who hold the Head,” who know that only “one is their master, even Christ,” determined “to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled in the yoke of bondage;” and they *protested* against the despot Church, and afterwards separated from her. The Romish church continued, however, still to style herself the “*Catholic Church*,” when she was no longer catholic or universal. Those Protestant Churches only can be *Catholic*, which maintain scriptural doctrines and articles of faith in which all true Christians can unite.

Although there never was a period in which God did not raise up witnesses unto himself, who declared their adherence to the uncorrupted Gospel of Christ, and contended for the faith delivered to the saints, yet at times they were so few and obscure, compared with the multi-

tudes who were deceived, as the word of prophecy foretold, by the power, and signs, and lying wonders, and delusions of the "man of sin," that history makes little mention of them: and no wonder, because the historians of the day, for several centuries, were themselves among the number of those who were ignorant of the true faith, and who sided with its enemies. But the truth cannot always be concealed; and we learn from the pages of an advocate of some of the errors of Rome, who lived at the time,* that there was a small body of *Protestant* Christians, in our sense of the term, dwelling in the Cottian Alps, about the year 397. These secluded Christians had their own bishops and their own clergy in their mountain retreats; they had also their own church services, free from the corruptions which had then crept into the Romish Church. They had no images, no saint-worship, no relic-worship, no masses for the souls of dead men; but they permitted their clergy to marry, and they worshipped God ac-

* See the works of Jerome, 'Adv. Vigil.' Epist. 53. My learned and indefatigable friend Mr. Faber first pointed out this passage to me.

ording to scriptural ordinances. For this they were proscribed and calumniated by the Romanists, and they in their turn protested against them. It is very astonishing, and a certain proof of God's protection, that the descendants of these people live in the fastnesses of the same mountains, and have continued to worship the God of their fathers after the way which Papists call heresy, and to protest against Rome from that time to this. They are now called Waldenses, or Vaudois, from the mountain valleys in which they have dwelt so long, and by that name they have been known ever since the year 1100. But by what name they were called between 397 and 1100, we cannot say, because they were not distinctly noticed by chroniclers during that long interval. Perhaps they are to be recognised as the Subalpina, Subalpines, or Pasasgii of ancient geography, living as they did at the foot of the Alps, in the passes between France and Italy. My assertions on this part of our subject are supported by the researches and opinions of that accurate historian, Sir James Mackintosh, and of Mr. Le Bas, the biographer of Wiclif. "With the dawn of his-

tory," says the former, "we discovered some simple Christians in the valleys of the Alps, where they still exist under the ancient name of Vaudois, who, by the light of the New Testament, saw the extraordinary contrast between the purity of primitive times, and the vices of the gorgeous and imperious hierarchy which surrounded them."*

Mr. Le Bas has gone more at length into the argument. "There seems," he says, "to be a strong presumption in favour of the belief that the people of the valleys of Piedmont, known by the name of the Vaudois or Waldenses, had preserved from a very early period a far purer faith than that which was possessed by the great body of Christendom. The history of this *Subalpine Protestantism* is indeed enveloped in such deep obscurity, that any attempt to investigate it would far exceed the limits or the design of the present work. We cannot however reflect without wonder and delight upon one precious document of unquestionable authenticity, which may be regarded as a confession of the faith of these people in the twelfth century. The relic in

* 'England,' by Sir James Mackintosh, vol. i. p. 321.

question is an ancient poem called ‘The Noble Lesson,’ containing a metrical abridgement of the history and doctrine of the Old and New Testament, in the original language of the country, and evidently compiled for the purpose of perpetuating among the people the principles of sound belief. It is beyond all doubt that the essential doctrines and principles of our Reformation will be found in this religious formulary, which concludes with an exposure of the gross errors of the Papacy, the simony of the priesthood, masses, and prayers for the dead, the impostures of absolution, and the abuses of the power of the keys. From that time to the present, the same opinions have been inflexibly maintained by these simple mountaineers, who have borne a perpetual and heroic testimony to the faith of their fathers, in the midst of the most merciless and appalling persecutions. The extent and *antiquity* of the Waldensian perversion is a subject of perpetual complaint with the Papal authorities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and if to this consideration we add the traditions uniformly prevalent among the uncorrupted shepherds, their own confident

claims of immemorial purity in faith and doctrine, their obscure and solitary abodes, and their remoteness from the scene of pontifical splendours and despotism, we shall find but little difficulty in the surmise that the valleys of Piedmont may from primitive, perhaps from apostolic times, have witnessed a more undefiled profession and practice of the Gospel, than can easily be found among the more degenerate communities of Christian Europe. To myself, I confess, the probability appears to be, not that the Vaudois shook off the superstitions of the Romish Church, but rather that they had never put them on; and that when the hand of power was stretched forth to force the spotted garment upon them, they revolted at the oppression, and at length recorded their *protest* against it, in the form of that immortal Lesson, which to this day may be regarded as their spiritual petition of right.”* Mr. Le Bas adds in a note, “I cannot but agree with Mr. Gilly, that ‘it is much more likely that a race of mountaineers, secluded from the world, should have preserved the purity and simplicity of the primitive Church, than that

* ‘Life of Wiclif,’ p. 28—31.

they should *suddenly* become Scripture readers and reformers in the twelfth century, after having been overwhelmed in the darkness that prevailed in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.”*

There was another community which attracted notice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by confessions of faith greatly at variance with those of the Romanists. These were the Albigenses, that unhappy people of the south of France, whose history is written in letters of blood, whose preachers were in England as early as 1166, and who were entirely swept away from the face of the earth, in a crusade against them excited by Pope Innocent III.

At a conference at Montreuil in the year 1206, the Albigenses maintained, as Allix has shown,—

“I. That the Church of Rome was not the holy Church, nor the Spouse of Christ, but that it was a Church which had drunk in the doctrine of devils.

“II. That the mass was neither instituted by Christ nor his Apostles, but a human invention.

* See ‘Waldensian Researches,’ p. 113.

“ III. That the prayers of the living are unprofitable for the dead.

“ IV. That the purgatory maintained in the Church of Rome is no better than a human invention, to satisfy the avarice of the priests.

“ V. That the saints ought not to be prayed unto.

“ VI. That transubstantiation is a human invention and erroneous doctrine ; and that the worshipping of the bread is manifest idolatry.

“ That therefore it was necessary to separate from the Church of Rome, in which the contrary was said and taught, because one cannot assist at the mass without partaking of the idolatry there practised, nor expect salvation by any other means than by Jesus Christ, nor transfer to creatures the honour which is due to the Creator, nor say, concerning the bread, that it is God, and worship it as such, without incurring the pain of eternal damnation, because idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. For all these things, which they asserted, they were hated and persecuted to death.”

SECTION 6.—*The spirit of Protestantism in Britain coeval with the Pope's pretended jurisdiction here.*

But many of those, who allow that in some countries there existed inconsiderable communities, which from early times declared against all connexion with the Romish Church, do still assert that Papal Christianity was the most ancient form of the Christian religion in England, and that there was no Protestantism among our ancestors before the sixteenth century.

We will go back nearly a thousand years,* from the Romanists' date of the origin of English Protestantism to the time when Augustin arrived in England; and the following dramatic description, given by a Roman Catholic historian, of the attempt of that missionary from Rome to subjugate the British clergy to the control of the

* "If we consult an earlier period, we shall find king Arthur promoting his chaplain to the Archbishopric of York. Galf. Monu. 9. 8, and British Synods nominating Prelates for British Sees, without the slightest reference to Rome. Spelman. Concil. 1. 60, 61."

Pope, shall show whether there were then Christian communities, independent of the Church of Rome, in this island, or not.

“Gregory (the Pope) had written to Augustin, that he had subjected all the bishops of Britain to his authority. The missionary, with the aid of Ethelbert, prevailed on the British prelates to meet him at a place which has since been called Augustin’s Oak, in Worcestershire. After a long and unavailing debate, the conference was adjourned to another day. In the interval the Britons consulted a neighbouring hermit, who advised them to watch the behaviour of Augustin; if he rose to meet them, they were to consider him a man of unassuming disposition, and to listen to his demands; but if he kept his seat, they should condemn him of pride, and reject his authority. With this sapient admonition, which left to accident the decision of the controversy, seven bishops, with Dinoth, abbot of Bangor, repaired to the place of conference.* Augustin happened to be seated, and did not rise at their arrival: both his reasons

* For one of the best accounts of this transaction, see Spelman. Concil. 1. 104—110.

and his authority were consequently despised. In points of doctrine there had been no difference between them; and to facilitate their compliance in other matters, the archbishop had reduced his demands to three heads;—that they should observe the Catholic computation of Easter; should adopt the Roman rite, in the administration of baptism; and should join with the missionaries in preaching to the Saxons. Each of these requests, in obedience to the advice of the hermit, was pertinaciously refused.”*

In an ancient manuscript, preserved among the Parker MSS. of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, there is a passage to this effect:—“After the Saxons had become Christians by means of Austin, in such sort as Austin had taught them, the Britons would not eat or drink with them, because they corrupted with superstition, images, and idolatry, the true religion of Christ.” The evidence of the old chronicler, who wrote thus, may be thought to require some confirmation, and we can furnish it, upon the undoubted testimony of the venerable Bede, who also shows that there was an intimate con-

* Lingard's ‘History of England,’ vol. i. p. 112.

nexion between the ancient British, Irish, and Scottish Churches, and a common adherence to observances differing from those of the Church of Rome :—“ We learnt through Bishop Daganus, when he came to this island, and through the abbot Columbanus, when he came to Gaul, that the Scots* (of Ireland)⁷ do not differ from the Britons in their observances. For Bishop Daganus, when he came to us, refused not only to eat with us at the same table, but in the same house.” Bede, Eccl. Hist. lib. 2. c. 4. Again :—“ Even to this day, the Britons are in the habit of expressing their contempt both for the faith and the religion of the Anglo-Saxons, and to hold no more intercourse with them than with the Pagans,” lib. 2. c. 20. Bede made the first of these two statements on the authority of Laurentius, who succeeded Augustin in the see of Canterbury, and who played off the cheat of lacerating his own shoulders, and pretending

* Bede farther shows, Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. c. 3. 4 and 25, that the Scottish clergy of Iona, or Icolmkill, and its numerous dependencies in Scotland, were still independent of Rome 100 years after Laurentius complained of the Non-Conformity of the British, Irish, and Scottish Churches.

that he had been flogged by St. Peter, for showing too little zeal. Pretty good proof this, that although Pope Gregory took upon himself to invest Augustin and his successors with authority over all the clergy and bishops of Britain, yet the British Churchmen would neither submit to the Romish discipline, nor adopt the corruptions of image-worship, saint, and relic-worship, &c., which the Italian pontiff attempted to impose upon them. The religion of Rome, therefore, was not at that period the universal religion of our Christian ancestors.

We will take another period of history. Wilfred, a Northumbrian bishop, was deposed by the authorities of his native country in the year 680. He went to Rome, and implored the Pope to reinstate him. This appeal to the Papal see, and the Pope's mandate for his restoration to the bishopric, were treated with equal contempt by the king and clergy of Northumberland, who declared that they would not permit the Roman prelate to exercise jurisdiction over them.*

These protests were against the *authority* of

* It was many years before Wilfrid was restored. See Bede, Eccl. Hist. 5. 20. and Spel. Conc. 1. 162. 203. 206.

the Roman Church ; now for an instance of English rejection of the *doctrines* of Romanism at a very early period :—

In the year 787, the Council of Nice declared most solemnly that image-worship was to be observed by Christians. The Church of Rome approved of the canon. The matter was submitted to a synod of the clergy of England five years afterwards, and it was pronounced by English theologians, that the Council had “determined many things inconsistent with, and contrary to, the true faith ; especially the worship of images, a usage altogether execrated by the Church of God.”*

Alcuin also, an Englishman, who flourished at that time, wrote an epistle to prove that image-worship, and the canon of the Council of Nice, which sanctioned it, were contrary to Scripture.

We will conclude this part of our subject by a quotation from Blackstone. “The ancient British Church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the Bishop of Rome, and his pretend-

* See Soames’s ‘Bampton Lectures.’ Not. Binii ad 2 Nic. Syn. et Fran. Conc. ; Magd. Cent. 8. c. 9, and Spel. Conc. 1. 306—8.

ed authority : but the Pagan Saxon invaders having driven the professors of Christianity to the remotest corners of our island, their own conversion was afterwards effected by Augustin the monk, and other missionaries from the court of Rome. This necessarily introduced some few of the Papal corruptions, in point of faith and doctrine, but we read of no civil authority claimed by the Pope in these kingdoms, till the end of the Norman conquest.”*

SECTION 7.—*Britain under Romish thralldom, and Wiclif the Protestant liberator.*

Thus England had witnesses, at an early period of her history, to testify against the innovations of Rome ; but though she produced a noble array of divines, who, from time to time, did all they could to resist the invaders of her spiritual rights, at length she became enslaved by Papal tyranny. Under the Anglo-Saxon dynasties the island was comparatively independent, and was more in *communion*† with, than

* Blackstone's 'Commentaries,' b. 4: c. 8.

† See many proofs of this in Spel. Conc. vol. i. pp. 153. 182. 194. 203. 237. 293. 317. 320.

in *subjection* to, the Italian Pontiff; but the Norman line of monarchs, after William the Conqueror, submitted to the dictation of the Popes, and conceded one point after another, until the nation found itself completely under the foot of a foreign bishop.

The Pope arrogated the right not only of crowning but of uncrowning her princes; and even now an Englishman's cheek burns with shame at the recollection of Henry II. consenting to be scourged at the command of that alien; and of his pusillanimous son, John, laying the crown of England at the legate's footstool, and taking it back from his hands, as the acknowledged vassel and tributary of Rome.

The benighted people of that day, having once surrendered their spiritual liberties, were forced to bend their necks to the vilest and most offensive species of thralldom which their bondmasters of the Popedom could inflict.

By a sentence called an *interdict*, the whole kingdom, on an offence given to the Pope, in John's reign, was deprived of the public exercise of religion: the churches were ordered to be shut, and the clergy to withhold their ministrations;

and thus did the Holy Father consign her children to the direst condition that man can imagine, —to a famine of the Word of God. Inconsistency worthy of Romanism !

The Christian, according to the Romish Church, cannot be saved without the priest and the forms of religion ; and he who called himself Christ's Vicar upon earth interdicted all priestly functions and every religious rite. The doors of the sanctuary were closed ; the sacraments were forbidden ; children were unbaptized, and the dead were deprived of their funeral obsequies. A nation which can tamely bear such an exercise of spiritual prerogative as this will sink very deep into the slough of debasement before she makes any struggle to extricate herself. It was 150 years after this interdict, ere an avenger of the religious sufferings of England laid the first axe to the root of the noisome tree, which, overshadowed and poisoned the land. Wiclif, who was born in 1324, and died 1384, was the man to whom we owe this debt of gratitude : and the following brief sketch of the ignorance which he strove to dispel, and of abuses to which he opposed himself, will show that if he, or one like

him, had not lifted up his voice of denunciation, the very stones would have cried out.

The Bible was literally a sealed book; for there was no such thing as a complete version of Scriptures in the English tongue until Wiclif achieved a translation.* Even after Wiclif's own copy was finished, the value of a New Testament was £2 16s. 6d., equal to £30 now. There were indeed some few translations and paraphrases of portions of Scripture, but these were doled out sparingly and unwillingly; for the very idea of opening the sacred page to the people, and of making it common to the laity, was thought to be sacrilegious. "It is casting the Gospel-pearl abroad to be trodden under foot of swine," said Knyghton, a Romish historian of that period. If the book of our holy faith, by which only they could be judged, was so neglected, no wonder that the doctrines, conversation, and conduct of the clergy were unworthy of their profession, and that priests "dealt falsely," and "ate up the people as it were bread." Many of the parochial

* The price of a Bible in Latin, an unknown tongue to all but the learned, was as much as a labouring man's price of work for fifteen years, and equal to 300l. of our money.

benefices were held by foreigners;* French, Italians, and Spaniards, nominated by the Pope, who lived out of the country, without performing any sacred functions, and consumed the produce of their livings at a distance from their flock. This non-residence of the clergy invited multitudes of the order of Mendicants, or begging friars, who proved as great a plague, and as devouring as the locusts of Egypt. In the first instance, a few Dominicans were permitted to establish themselves in the country: they professed to be humble and poor, and grateful for protection; but their numbers and their pretensions increased, till the kingdom swarmed with them, and groaned under their extortions and their licentiousness. They beset the chambers of the weak and the superstitious, and the beds of the dying; and, persuading them that there was no salvation without their passports to Heaven, much of the property of the land fell into the

* In 1367, some foreign pluralists were holding as many as twenty places of preferment. Great complaints had previously been made of these harpies. One Pope sent his precepts to three English bishops to provide for thirty Italian clergy out of the first vacancies. See "Turner's England," viii. 69.

hands of these bare-footed pretenders to poverty, by the bequests of their dupes, who impoverished their families under the hope of saving their own souls. It is said that fraternities of the same order are now finding their way again into England : if so, let **Wiclif's** words be remembered—
“ God says, that evil teachers are the cause of the destruction of the people : and friars are the principal evil teachers : they are the principal cause of destroying the world.”

In this state of things, when the whole land was everrun with the agents of Rome, preaching up the **Pope's** supremacy, and bribing to submission, by pardons and indulgences, how great must have been the vigour of **Wiclif's** mind, the independence of his soul, to take his stand in the citadel of truth, to be fearless of the frowns and the contempt that awaited him, and regardless of the clamour that would be excited against him ! The **Romanists** at this very time felt themselves to be so strong in England, that the **Pope** revived his claim of sovereignty over the realm, and had the impudence and the folly to demand a yearly tribute of ten thousand marks, as the acknowledgment of our vassalage. **And**

on what ground did the Pope make this demand?—In virtue of an impost granted by King John, and to be paid for ever, for the removal of the interdict laid on his subjects! So then the nation could only be absolved for money!

Englishmen! was not Wiclif justified in protesting against Popery, and in calling upon his countrymen to break the fetters of Rome, when an Italian priest, whose seat of power was far distant, sued your king for homage and tribute? Half the landed property was already in the hands of the Romish priesthood: rapacious aliens, strangers to our manners and customs, who were totally unable to speak the language of England, and who never landed on her coasts, enjoyed many of her dignities and benefices, and drained her of her wealth. The Popes levied a tax on Church income, which amounted to five times as much as the king's revenues; they exacted the first-fruits of all benefices; they claimed the goods of all who died without wills; and when they had thus made the nation to crouch between two burthens—impoverishment and disgrace, they thought to rivet the chains more durably, and to imprint the mark of the beast more

indelibly, by the burning brands of homage and tribute.

What has been, may be; and the battle which Wiclif fought for his native land will have to be fought again, unless men's eyes and ears are open in time to the stealthy march of their Romish assailants. Wiclif did not preach against Rome till her enormities cried aloud; until her clergy were so corrupt and profligate, that, as Chaucer, the poet of that age, too truly expressed it,—

To put pennies in their purse,
They will sell both Heaven and Hell.

Was it not time to cry—"Come out of her, my people," when the ministers of the Roman Church ceased to preach the words of eternal life—but made lying miracles, and legendary histories, and puerile and monstrous fables of deliverances from purgatory, the subjects of their pulpit discourses; when these were the themes in which they beguiled and led captive the souls of men, and banished the sound of the Gospel from the earth?

There are men professing this same Popish faith that impoverished England afore-time, and

committed her best sons to the flames, who are now clamouring for, and prophesying, the downfall of the Church of England; and they have had the cunning to win over to their side the infidel and half-believer, and they are trying to induce the orthodox dissenters of England to make common cause with them: and an outcry, loud and discordant, is raised against the Church, and there is a clamour for her destruction; and if she falls, she will fall not in her worst, but in her best days, when she is trying to put her house in order,—when her ministers, high and low, are more distinguished for good conduct and learning and zeal, than at any former period of her history.

But even if her revenues be taken away, and the polished corners of her temple be demolished, yet will she not fall! Her episcopacy will remain; her orders of priesthood and her decent administrations will remain. Her liturgy will outlive the mandate for her destruction; her consolations and her sacraments will survive, and her voice will yet be heard high above the storm:—“The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death.”

What a stir it must have made, as his biographer says, when Wiclif published his work “On the Truth and Meaning of Scripture,” and when, instead of preaching about the good offices of the saints, and the influence and intercession of the Virgin, he spoke of the one only Name by which men can receive health and salvation !

How the astonished congregations must have listened with admiring earnestness, when, instead of magnifying saints and anchorites and monks, and boasting of the signs and wonders wrought by their hands, “he solemnly dwelt on the supreme majesty of Jehovah,”—on the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace,—on the terms of forgiveness and salvation,—and on the wonders of atonement ! These were his topics, —the same, Mr. Le Bas most truly observes, as become a *Protestant* pulpit at the present day.

SECTION 8.—*Wiclif’s translation of the Scriptures, and his other writings, and the effects produced by them.*

But not to preaching only did Wiclif trust for the instruction of the people ; and therefore it

was that he translated the Bible into his native language, and multiplied copies as far as he could, and placed them in the hands of Scripture-readers, whom he sent forth to read out of the Book of Life, that the men of England might hear them speak in their own tongues, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. It was this English version of the Scripture, which made the Sacred Volume more known to the laity at large, than it was before known to the clergy themselves; and thus, as Dr. Lingard, the Roman Catholic historian, confesses, "a spirit of inquiry was generated, and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution, which in a little more than a century astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe."

Here then, in our own land, according to the acknowledgment of one hostile to Protestants, there was Protestantism before Luther, there was a vindication of the religious privileges of the native against the intrusive exactions of the alien. The prodigious importance of encouraging the people to read the Word of God in their own tongue, was soon felt, and it brought down a storm of persecution upon the reformer's

head. Nothing has ever exasperated or alarmed the Romish priesthood so much as the circulation of Scripture in the vernacular language without notes or comment.

As soon as Wiclif's Bible began to do its work, a bill was brought into parliament to forbid the perusal of the English Bible by the laity. But for that time it was thrown out ; and the translator's defence of his version, and vindication of the people's right to have the free use of Scripture, is an effort of powerful reasoning, which is well worthy of being recited in our own days, when Popish influence is again threatening Protestant principles and Bible-reading. "To condemn it," said Wicliff, "is to condemn the Holy Ghost, who gave the Word of God in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, that they might speak it in all languages that were ordained of God under Heaven. Scripture is the Faith of the Church : therefore, as secular men ought to know the Faith, so it is to be taught to them in whatever language is best known to them. The truth of the Faith is clearer and more exact in Scripture than the priests know how to express it : it is expedient, therefore, that the faithful should themselves

search out and discover the sense of the Faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they know and understand. He who hinders this, does his endeavour that the people should continue in a damnable and unbelieving state. Prelates, and the Pope, and friars, and others, may prove defective: accordingly Christ and his Apostles converted the world by making known to them the truths of scripture in a language familiar to the people; and for this purpose the Holy Spirit gave them the knowledge of all tongues. Why then should not Christ's disciples of the present day take freely from the same loaf, and distribute to the people? All Christians must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be answerable to him for all the goods, wherewith he has entrusted them. It is therefore necessary that all the faithful should know these goods, and the use of them; for an answer by prelate or attorney will not then avail, but every one must answer in his own person."

"*The Scripture alone is truth.*" "*The Scripture alone is the faith of the Church.*" This was Wiclif's argument—"The grand and solid maxim," says his eloquent biographer, "upon which, as

upon the **Eternal Rock**, he built up the defence of his great undertaking, and indeed the whole fabric of his scheme of Reformation. We have here the vigorous germ of *Protestantism*, cast by him with a bold and vigorous hand into the generous soil of his country, there to lie for a long and tempestuous period, to all appearance dormant and powerless till the season should arrive for its starting into life."

After the death of this undaunted reformer, his enemies, and the haters of light, succeeded in obtaining a decree of convocation to this effect : —that "no one shall translate any text of Sacred Scripture, by his own authority, into the English or any other tongue, in the way of book, treatise, or tract ; and no publication of this sort composed in the time of John Wiclif, or since, shall be read either in part or in whole, either in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication, until such translation shall be approved by the diocesan of the place ; every one who shall act in contradiction to this order to be punished as an abettor of heresy and error."

The works which Wiclif left behind him bear

witness to his most astonishing diligence ; among others, it is said that as many as three hundred of his familiar sermons still remain. In these and other treatises, we find that his active and enlightened mind was constantly engaged in exposing errors, against which we now protest, especially the doctrine of transubstantiation, auricular confession, Papal indulgences, Papal excommunication and interdicts, and Papal supremacy. Wiclif died in peace at his rectory, not because his enemies were moderate and forbearing, but because they dared not pursue him into the district which his presence and his virtues had rendered a very sanctuary and city of refuge. He was so venerated by his parishioners and neighbours, that when his spirit took its flight to the realms of everlasting rest, every memorial of him was preserved with the most devoted affection ; and the stranger who visits Lutterworth may see the chair on which he was wont to sit, and on which he died ; the oak of the pulpit from which he preached ; the table on which he wrote ; and a relic of the cloak which covered his venerable person.

SECTION 9.—*The Lollards—Lord Cobham, and the sufferers under the statute of burning heretics.*

The death of Wiclif, which took place in 1384, checked, but did not crush, the springing plant of the Reformation. His codes, his opinions, and his principles, were circulated by his followers, who were called Lollards ; but why so called, we cannot satisfactorily explain. In spite of every attempt to keep them down, the Lollard Protestants increased in numbers, and spread from one county to another. Most of their tenets were directed against the doctrines and possessions of the Romish Church. They had ample cause to declaim against doctrines which dishonoured God and enslaved men ; and against possessions held in England, in great part by foreigners, and all under the tenure of a foreigner's permission, at the will of the Pope. The Romanists knew the weakness of their cause too well to trust its defence to argument and preaching ; therefore they obtained an act of parliament, in 1399, under which they were empowered to *burn the heretics*. This act is called the statute

de Heretico Comburendo, i. e. for the burning of heretics. What a parliament! What a state of things! What a picture of Popery! Here is no concealment! The object of the bill was openly professed—to *burn heretics!* The preamble of the act runs in this style:—“Whereas divers unauthorized preachers go about teaching new doctrines and heretical opinions, making conventicles and confederacies, holding schools, writing books, misinforming the people, and daily committing enormities too horrible to be heard,” &c. : it then enacts,—“Therefore, if any person so convicted shall refuse to abjure such preachings, doctrines, opinions, schools, and informations, he shall be burnt on a high place before the people, that such punishment may strike terror into the minds of others.” This account of the proceeding is copied from a Roman Catholic’s history of it (Dr. Lingard’s.) Observe, therefore, under the Roman Catholic establishment in this country, when the Papists were in power, (that establishment and that power against which Protestants are so called for protesting,) men were to be *burnt for teaching new doctrines and heretical opinions, making conventicles and confederacies,*

holding schools, writing books, and misinforming the people! The Act of Parliament specifies no other crime; for the charge “*of daily committing enormities too horrible to be heard,*” means nothing: if any enormity had really been committed by the Lollard Protestants, their adversaries would have been too glad to state it fully and by name, to justify the severity of this *Burning Act*. But this statute was not rigid enough; therefore the House of Commons, which was full of Roman Catholics in that day, petitioned the King, that “when any man or woman was taken and imprisoned for Lollardism, he might be *instantly* put on his answer, and have such judgment as he deserved, for an example to others of such wicked sect, that they might soon cease from their wicked preachings, and keep themselves to the Christian faith.

Popery and Protestantism now began fairly to display their opposite characters in England at the religious trials and executions which took place. In 1400, William Sautre, rector of Lynn, in Norfolk, after begging that he might be permitted to dispute before the Lords and Commons on the subject of religion, was brought to trial,

and burnt on charges of which the following were the principal :--“ He saith that he will not worship the cross on which Christ suffered, but only Christ that suffered upon the cross :” also, “ that he would sooner worship a temporal king than the aforesaid wooden cross :” also, “ that every priest and deacon is more bound to preach the Word of God, than to say the canonical hours :” also, “ that after pronouncing of the sacramental words of the body of Christ, the bread remaineth of the same nature that it was before, neither doth it cease to be bread.”

Soon afterwards, John Badby was committed to the flames for no greater crime than this avowal :—“ After the consecration the bread remaineth the same material bread which it was before ; nevertheless, it is a sign or sacrament of the Living God. I believe the Omnipotent God in Trinity to be ONE. But if every consecrated host be the Lord’s body, than there are twenty thousand Gods in England.”

In 1417, during Henry V.’s reign, the celebrated Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, was roasted alive at a slow fire, after having been condemned as a heretic ; or to use the words of

his sentence, which sets forth Popery and Protestantism in contradistinction, because “we have found him not only an evident heretic in his own person, but also a mighty maintainer of other heretics, against the faith and religion of the holy and universal Church of Rome; namely, about the two sacraments of the altar and of penance, besides the Pope’s power and pilgrimages.”*

The offences of which Lord Cobham was guilty, were his maintenance of a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country; his care in collecting, transcribing, and circulating the works of Wiclif among the common people, and more especially his zeal in having copies of Wiclif’s Bible multiplied at a very great expense to himself. In vindication of this martyr from the calumnies of his adversaries, I will add his own account of his religious opinions:—

“1. I believe that the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is Christ’s body in the form of bread.

“2. That every man who would be saved must forsake sin, and do penance for sins already committed, with true and very sincere contrition.

* ‘State Trials,’ vol. i. p. 46.

“3. That images might be allowable to represent and give men lively ideas of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the martyrdom and good lives of the saints ; but if any man give that worship to dead images which is due only to God, or put such hope and trust in the help of them as he should do in God, he becomes a grievous idolater.

“4. That the matter of pilgrimages may be settled in a few words : a man may spend all his days in pilgrimages, and lose his soul at last ; but he that knows the holy commandments of God, and keepeth them, shall be saved, though he never visit the shrines of the saints, as men now do in their pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, and other places.”

During Lord Cobham's trial, a scene and a dialogue took place, strongly characteristic of the principles of the two parties.

Archbishop Arundel recommended Cobham to ask for absolution. “I never yet trespassed against you,” he replied, “and therefore I do not feel the want of your absolution.” Then kneeling down, he exclaimed, “I confess myself here unto thee, my Eternal Living God, that I

have been a grievous sinner. Good Lord, I humbly ask thee mercy : of thee have I need of absolution.”

He was asked, “Do you believe that after the words of consecration there remains any material bread !”

“The Scriptures, he answered, make no mention of material bread. I believe that Christ’s body remains in the form of bread. In the Sacrament there is both Christ’s body and bread : the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes, but the body of Christ is hid, being seen only by faith.”

One of the bishops exclaimed vehemently, “It is foul heresy to call it bread !” Cobham replied, “St. Paul the Apostle was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a Christian, and yet he calls it bread.”

Dr. Walden, the prior to the Carmalites, now lost all patience, and exclaimed, “What rash and desperate people are these followers of Wicklif !”

The witness which Lord Cobham then bare to Wicklif’s virtues, is a most valuable testimony

to that great man's worth, and to the effects of his doctrines :

“ Before God and man, said Cobham, “ I solemnly here profess, that, till I knew Wiclif, whose judgment ye so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin ; but after I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it hath been otherwise with me : so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions.”

In the beginning of Henry VI.'s reign, William Taylor, of Bristol, gave evidence by his sufferings at the stake, that the Protestant leaven was still working, and that the Romish hatred of free inquiry on religious matters was growing fiercer and more intolerant. The crimes laid to the charge of this witness of the truth were, that he had asserted “ that prayer is to be directed to God alone ;—that the saints are not to be worshipped or invoked ;—and that to pray to any created being is to commit idolatry.”*

Besides these, there were simple-minded men of lower degree—peasants and mechanics, who, when they were plying the loom or the plough,

* Fox, i. p. 605.

meditated deeply on the things of God, and who had their eyes providentially opened to see the absurdity of the legends that were told them; of the penances that were imposed on them; of the false miracles that were played off upon them; of the terrors of purgatory with which they were to be scared; of the indulgences which were offered to them for money; and who had their nerves braced to raise their voices against such monstrous fables out of the consuming flames. We owe much to these, as well as to the lordly Cobham, and to the learned theologians and students who interpreted God's Word faithfully, and died in attestation of it; and we gratefully acknowledge that stones were brought to the Protestant fabric, and that the foundations of the noble temple, which has since reared its head to Heaven, were laid in part by the hands of workmen, whom the pharisaic Papists would call "contemptible rustics and unlearned laymen."

The civil wars between the adherents to the houses of York and Lancaster put some sort of stop to religious inquiry and religious persecution.

SECTION 10.*--*Protestantism gains strength before Luther, and advances in spite of Henry VIII.*

When the nation began to breathe after her political bloodshed, fire and torture again pursued those who dared to think and act more freely than the Romish priesthood gave them permission. At Coventry, in the year 1519, six men and one woman were burnt for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongues. These examples are enough to prove to conviction, that long before the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Luther, and he arose like another Sampson to break the bands of Dalilah and the Philistines; there were intrepid and faithful witnesses in other parts of the world, and especially in England, who were depositaries of the Truth till God was pleased to make it triumphant. Mr. Sharon Turner has well expressed this sen-

* I trust that this Section, together with Section 13, will expose the falsehood of Cobbett's statement in his "Legacy to Parsons," that the Church of England is a creature of the State forced upon the people.

timent in his ‘History of England.’ Speaking of Dean Colet, he says:—“We see a full reformation of religious and moral truth accomplished in his mind before the name of Luther had passed beyond his own threshold.” Nay, Protestantism, so far from being a novelty before Luther, was transmitted to that chief among ten thousand, through one of the channels of which I have been speaking. It happened that, while Wiclif was in the full force of his career, a party of Bohemian barons arrived in England, and one of them carried home with him some of the writings of Wiclif. These fell into the hands of John Huss, who at once adopted and promulgated the opinions of the English Reformer.* Huss afterwards obtained more of the books of Wiclif, and industriously circulated them, so that when a search was made in Bohemia to destroy them, no less than two hundred were discovered. Luther, in his turn, admired and gave notoriety to the works of Huss. When he was studying at Erfurth, he found, in the library of the convent, a book entitled ‘The Sermons of John Huss;’ and, according to his

* Æneas Silvius, p. 66.

own account, his astonishment at reading them was incredible:—"I could not comprehend," said he, "for what cause they burnt so great a man, who explained the Scripture with so much gravity and dexterity."*

There is more reason to suppose that Luther trimmed his lamp with oil drawn from English vessels, than that English Protestants lighted their candle in Germany. One of our most renowned Reformers, Latimer, declared, on an occasion when his preaching excited much attention, that he had not then read any of the works of Luther. He was asked by a bishop of Ely to deliver a sermon against Luther: "My Lord," replied Latimer, "I am not acquainted with the doctrine of Luther, nor are we permitted here to read his works; and therefore it were a vain thing for me to refute his doctrine, not understanding what he hath written, nor what opinion he holdeth. Sure I am that I have preached before you this day no man's doctrine, but only the doctrine of God out of the Scriptures: and

* Luther's Preface to the Works of Huss, cited by Sharon Turner, 'History of England,' vol. v. p. 200.

if Luther be none otherwise than I have done, there needeth no confutation of his doctrine.”*

I will now, having disposed of the question “Where was Protestantism before Luther?” add a few words more on the oft-repeated calumny, that the English Reformation was engendered in the mind of King Henry VIII., and that this island never would have protested against Rome had it not been for that licentious and sanguinary tyrant, who, say the Romanists, renounced for himself and his kingdom all connexion with Rome, and invented a new religion, because the old one was too holy for him, and because the Pope refused to sanction his divorce of Catherine, and his marriage with Ann Boleyn.

Henry VIII. certainly legalised that which was before unlawful, according to the laws of the kingdom,—namely, resistance of Papal supremacy; but he never embraced the Scriptural doctrines of our pure religion, and he persecuted those who did. Protestantism—I mean the religious movement—owes much to Luther, for hastening the crisis in Germany, but little to

* Strype's ‘Ecclesiastical Memorials,’ vol. iii. p. 370.

Henry, who retarded it in England. He may have given some impulse to the political engine that forced Popery from its commanding position in this country, but he did nothing to give food to the soul hungering after the bread of life; he did nothing to promote a more spiritual system; he struck down the Papal arm because it was raised against himself; but his own tyranny would have proved quite as destructive to the seeds of religious improvement, had he lived long enough to prosecute all his despotic objects. Men had begun to think seriously on matters of faith before his reign commenced: and the progress of free inquiry and of Scriptural knowledge advanced in spite of him. We have too long suffered the name of this bad man to press like an incubus upon the bosom of our religion; let us throw off the weight, and cast it back to the Romanists, whose child he was. Bred up in their system, it was their cardinal, Wolsey, as his adviser, and with their Pope's license, as his warrant, that he first harboured the notion of seizing part of that Church property which they now bewail, and converting it to his own purposes. Encouraged also by former practices of

the Romish Church, and knowing that the Popes had been in the habit of sanctioning divorces, and granting dispensations for the most revolting marriages, he hugged the burning coal of his lust to his heart, believing that a Papal bull would enable him to keep it there. It is notorious in history that it was not a religious motive but a political one, which induced the Pope to refuse the boon which Henry solicited. Let the Romanists then take back their Henry VIII., whose act of the Six Articles stamps his Anti-Protestant character, and thank him for the attempts he made to stifle our religion, when it grew up faster than he liked. Praise be to Him that dwelleth in Heaven, and who laughs to scorn the kings of the earth and the rulers that take counsel against his Word, the force of truth was too strong even for the most powerful and arbitrary of our monarchs, and all his might could not suppress it. Protestantism was by his time firmly taking root downward, and bearing fruit upward. Its influence was felt in the Church, Romish as it then was; in the universities; in the castellated mansions of the great; in the houses of the citizens; and in the cottages of

the peasantry, long before Henry cast his adulterous eye on Ann Boleyn, or thought of quarrelling with the Bishop of Rome. It was Wiclif, the rector of Lutterworth, the university professor, the country clergyman, and other humble teachers like himself, who, by their writings, and their preaching, and their example, and not the despotic King, with his fierce decrees, who dispelled the clouds of ignorance, and opened the way to the fountains of eternal life. Henry's hostility was only directed against a power which thwarted his own: theirs, arising out of a principle of faith, and founded on Scripture, was against the images, and the masses, and the indulgences, and the false miracles, and the many intercessors, robbing Christ of his glory of being the only One, and the blandishment of Popery, which were all injurious to the soul's hope of immortality.

Theirs was the merit of having conduced to a sense of personal responsibility in matters of religion, to the rejection of all imaginary help from the meritorious offerings of saints, and to a dependence on the atonement and intercession and justification of Jesus Christ alone, which consti-

tutes the main difference between the devout Romanist and the devout Protestant. And the spirit of Protestantism, when once evoked, was a determined and a moving spirit: it was not to be put down or to be confined. If it was not received in one place, it would go to another; and wherever it was received, there it abided. Thus it abided in the valleys of Piedmont; in the Alpine fastnesses of France, Switzerland, and Italy; in the forests of Bohemia; and in the vales and homes of Britain. Henry VIII. had nothing to do with the origin, and little with the advance of spiritual Protestantism.

SECTION 11.—*The Bible, in the vernacular tongue, becomes an engine of wonderful power in the hands of the Protestants.*

In this section I must endeavour to show that it was the study of the Scriptures, and the opportunities offered to the people of becoming acquainted with the Word of God in their own tongue, which brought Protestantism to its maturity and full strength in this country as well as in others.

“The new translation,” as Dr. Lingard testifies of Wiclif’s Bible, “became an engine of wonderful power ;” and that is why the Romish clergy hate every translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, because it is an “engine of wonderful power.” It is one before which the Church of Rome never can stand : she has therefore always been averse from the free use of it ; and her abhorrence of it is the reason why we ought the more closely to imitate the wisdom of our Protestant forefathers, and to ply it in every corner of the land. But we, of the present day, are not as earnest as they were in employing the only weapon against which the armour of Rome is not proof. Whether it is that the very facilities which we enjoy of working this engine have rendered some of us careless and lukewarm, or that the wiles of our adversaries have persuaded us that it is illiberal and unfair to carry this warfare into their camp, certain I am that we are ceasing to fight them, as we should, with our strongest arm. If, before the art of printing was invented, manuscript copies of Scripture, difficult to read, and expensive to purchase, were found to be the surest

liberators from religious tyranny and corruption, what an extraordinary accession of power might now be put forth, when the press can multiply numbers of the Bible without end, and render the perusal of them perfectly easy ! The increase of Protestants was slow before printed books were in circulation, but it was rapid beyond all calculation as soon as this new accelerating force was applied ; and this accounts for the sudden appearance of hosts of declared seceders from the Romish Church in all parts of Europe, before the middle of the sixteenth century.

We trace the simultaneous movement to the same cause—to the circulation of printed copies of Scripture in the vernacular languages of Germany, France, and England. It is a most extraordinary fact, and points to the directing hand of Providence, that just about the same time three new translations of Scripture appeared among the principal nations of Europe ; viz. Martin Luther's New Testament in German, 1522 ; the Waldensian Olivetan's Bible in French, 1535 ; and Miles Coverdale's Bible in English, in 1535. The effect was almost miraculous : people's eyes were opened to the

truth ; and the Romish clergy, knowing that the utmost subtleties of human reasoning cannot be successful against Holy Writ, have ever since done all they could to restrict the use of it. They cannot in these days openly denounce the reading of Scripture ; therefore they pretend to call our translations erroneous, and on that ground to dissuade from the use of them. But why does not the *Infallible Church* give vernacular translations of her own, and pronounce them to be correct interpretations of God's revealed will ? She affirms that she holds the keys of knowledge and revelation : then why does she not unlock the clasps which she has put on the treasures of Scriptural knowledge, and relieve herself of the responsibility of being the depository of the Oracles of God, and of refusing to speak from the tripod ?

In the creed of Pope Pius, which I have before cited, she makes her children swear that they will receive no interpretation but hers ; and yet she withholds an interpretation which may be equally accessible to all, and suffers her priests to deal out by piecemeal whatever ex-

planation they may choose to put on the written Word.

The following anecdote will illustrate her inconsistency and weakness on this point. In 1825, a Roman Catholic Bishop (Dr. Doyle) was examined before a committee of the House of Lords. He was asked, "Have you in any instance allowed the circulation of the Bible among the laity without notes?" Dr. Doyle answered, "I do not know that we have." In reply to a previous question, Dr. Doyle had said, "The notes carry in our edition of the Bible no weight, for we do not know the writers of many of them."

SECTION 12.--*Cranmer--The first authorised English Version of the Bible, and the People's reception of it.*

When Cranmer and the fathers of the Reformed Church in England saw that the time was come to make new efforts, and to engage the body of the people on their side, they resolved to make that a *national* concern which had hitherto been the work of *individuals*,—

namely, the diffusion of Gospel truths; and they agreed that an authorised English version of the Scriptures should be their first object. But see what difficulties they had to encounter.

So late as the year 1519, as I have mentioned before, six men and a woman had been burnt, for only teaching so small a portion of Scripture as the Lord's prayer and ten commandments in the vulgar tongue. The King, Henry VIII, was so little inclined to favour their views, that he had written a book against Luther, the Protestant champion in Germany, and had issued proclamations against Tyndal's English translation of the New Testament, published in 1526, declaring that the possession of the book after thirty days would expose the person convicted of having it to the penalty of heresy—the flames.*

All the copies that could be found of Tyndal's Testament had been burnt in Cheapside, as if

* An old man named Thomas Harding, of Buckinghamshire, was observed to go into the woods, and was seen there reading. This gave rise to suspicion: his house was searched, and a New Testament was found: the man was burnt alive, and all who carried a fagot to his stake had an indulgence of forty days granted to them.

the Romanists were determined to avow that there was a vast contrariety between their doctrines and those of Scripture. But their animosity did not stop here: in 1530 a public notice announced that the King and his bishops did not think any English version of Scripture was wanted. Patiently, therefore, were the friends of Scripture-reading obliged to watch their opportunities before they could openly put their intention in execution. While Wolsey lived, there was no hope of any public recognition of the duty of putting English translations of the Bible into the hands of the people. That Cardinal Archbishop, who held by Papal dispensation the revenues of four bishoprics* at one time, hated even the art of printing, because, said he, "it will bring down the honour of the priesthood, by making the people as wise as they." But the work of preparation was going on in the hearts and in the secret chambers of the more faithful soldiers of the Cross. Cranmer was studiously qualifying himself to fight the battle of truth: he kept large folio volumes

* Some short time ago it was stated in Parliament that pluralities were first held by the Protestant clergy!

for notes, in which he marked down the best of the various interpretations and comments on Scripture, which he had read in the Fathers and eminent theologians of the Church; and when the season appointed for the great crisis arrived, he was ready with his arguments for the publication of a revised translation. These he pleaded with so much force before the Convocation of his province, in December, 1534, that it was agreed to petition the King to grant a commission to provide an amended translation of the Bible in the English tongue. Henry complied, and on the 4th of October, 1535, Coverdale's version (which when revised was afterwards called Cranmer's Bible) was published in folio, to the great joy of the people, and to the confusion of the Romanists; one of whom, Bishop Stokesly, was heard to declare, "I wonder that Cranmer should thus abuse the people, in giving them liberty to read the Scriptures, which does nothing else but infect them with heresy."

There are a few anecdotes relating to the publication of this first authorised translation of the Bible, which are well worth recording, as demonstrative of the temper in which our an-

cestors received the blessing, and the use they made of it: A command was issued that every Church should be provided with one of these folio Bibles. It was done; but the anxiety of the people, of such as could, to read the precious volume, and of such as could not, to handle and turn over the pages of that book, which they had been in the habit of regarding as a thing of mystery and prohibition, was so great, that it was found necessary to chain them for security to the desks. In a country church I have seen the very Bible and the very chain preserved as relics, which three hundred years ago attested the popular feeling on this subject. But so deeply rooted were the old prejudices of the governing authorities, that it was four years after the Bible was placed in the churches, before the King could be persuaded to revoke the decrees which forbade his subjects to have it in their private possession. At last they were *graciously permitted by royal license* to purchase Bibles for their own reading at home. Then it was that every body who could afford it bought a copy of the Scriptures: such as could not buy the whole, purchased detached passages. A

cart-load of hay was known to be given for a few chapters of St. Paul's Epistles. And many there were, who, having learned to read in their old age, that they might have the pleasure of poring over the written Word, and reading with their own eyes the wonderful things of God, exclaimed with the prophet, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart." The crosses and public places often presented the moving sight of men, women, and children, crowding round a reader who was rehearsing the songs of Zion, and the prophecies of the seers of Israel, or the tender discourses of the Redeemer of mankind.

One poor man, named John Marbeck, was so desirous of making himself the master of a Bible, that he determined to write one out, because he had not money enough to buy one; and when he had accomplished that laborious task, he set about the still more trying toil of making a Concordance.

"They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floors of their houses," says Mr. Blunt, in his admirable 'Sketch of the Reformation,'

which every body should read, “and put their lives in peril, rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up all night, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the Word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy.”

Such being the avidity with which the Scriptures were cherished, let the reader imagine the consternation which overwhelmed the pious of this country, when the capricious Henry reversed his former decrees in favour of biblical learning, and threatened his people with imprisonment, confiscation, and fire, if any, below the privileged classes, should presume to search the Scriptures. This terrible stretch of royal prerogative was confirmed by Act of Parliament, in 1543; and it seemed like a seal of human folly and infatuation, forced upon a tyrant king and a subservient senate, to refute future calumnies against Protestantism, and to be handed down to posterity as proof most positive that the Reformation was carried on, not by the cold me-

chanism of State politics, but by the fervent zeal and undaunted devotion of holy men, in spite of kings and parliaments. Our Protestant forefathers would have been crushed, and their names and their labours clean-forgotten, if the will of some of their temporal and spiritual rulers could have been accomplished. The proclamation of 1543 set forth that "No books were to be printed about religion without the King's consent ; none might read the Scripture in any open assembly, or expound it, but he who was licensed by the King or his ordinary. Every *nobleman* or *gentleman* might cause the Bible to be read to him in or about his house. Every merchant who was a housekeeper, might also read it ; but no woman, no artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving-men under the degree of yeoman, and no husbandman, nor labourer, might read it."

Such were the struggles of Protestantism ! Nearly two hundred years after Wiclif's translation first appeared, even after the authorized version was published and freely circulated, the King, who is falsely described by our opponents as the nursing father of our faith, strove, by every means with which absolute power invest-

ed him, to stifle the infant religion, which he is said to have engendered.

There is a curious document still in existence, which shows what was felt by the humble and lowly Christians of that day, who were thought too degraded in intellect to be permitted to read the Bible. It is in the form of a note made by a shepherd in the spare leaf of a book, which he bought after the passing of the Act above referred to:—At Oxford, in the year 1546, brought down to Scynbury by John Darly, price 14*d*. When I kept Mr. Letymer's sheep, I bought this book, when the Testament was abrogated, that shepherds might not read it. I pray God amend that blindness. Writ by Robert Williams, keeping sheep upon Scynbury Hill, 1546."

In the midst of the storms which were raised against Protestants, at different periods of Henry's reign, it is a marvel how Cranmer, even after he was made archbishop, escaped Henry's wrath.

He was in a high place, and could not be unobserved. He certainly owed his safety to that extraordinary inconsistency and fitfulness of the King, who persecuted Protestants and Roman-

ists as the humour seized him—who liked to day what he hated yesterday, and whom a witicism or a ready saying would frequently divert from his most violent purposes. A remarkable instance of this caprice, and a proof that the highest station was no protection against King Henry's hatred of heresy, and jealousy of those who were Protestants beyond his Protestantism, is to be found in the well-known anecdote of Queen Catharine Parr, Henry's last wife. He had determined to bring her to trial for her opinions—for having discussed religious questions too freely with himself. Articles of accusation were drawn up, and the Chancellor was at the door with the guard who were to arrest the Queen—when happily she told her husband that she had carried her disputations to an extreme point, to draw him into discourse and to excite his interest. "Is it so?" said the king, "then we are friends again;" and the Chancellor was indignantly driven from the presence, with cuffs and kicks from the royal hand and foot, for his officious meddling.

SECTION 13.—*The Protestant Cause triumphs, by virtue of its own principles, rather than by the aid of the ruling powers.*

These statements will satisfy you that Protestantism, in the right sense of the word, had but little help from the government of the country, until the reign of Edward VI.; and that the contest between it and Romanism in every other respect, except the Pope's supremacy, was carried on in the face of adverse rulers, by the pious few. The dissolute manners of the Romish clergy had excited the disgust of the people: the fires which were kindled in every quarter, to consume those who ventured to differ from the religion of the State, made that religion more and more odious to them: the attempts to deprive them of the Scriptures assured them that Romanism and the Word of God were at variance—else why such pains to keep them in ignorance of it?—and the reading and hearing Scripture, as occasion offered, confirmed them in their suspicions that the practices and the pretensions of the Church of Rome could not bear

the test of the Gospel. Having learnt what was right, the people determined to practise it, and without waiting for any order from an Ecclesiastical Court or a Minister of State, the parochial authorities began to pull down the images of saints which were erected in the churches, and to efface the pictures painted on the walls, substituting texts of Scripture in the place of the latter. Henry VIII.'s mandate for the removal of *superstitious* objects amounted to nothing—for who dared to determine what were superstitious? The minister and churchwardens of a parish in London led the way, by clearing their church of every thing that was in violation of the Second Commandment; and Ridley, afterwards Bishop of London, had the honour of preaching a sermon which “raised a great heat over England.” Hitherto the government of Edward VI. was silent and passive on this subject; and even then, the first injunctions which were published only cautiously directed that “such images as the curates knew were abused by pilgrimages or offerings to them, should be taken down.” The Protector’s letter for the entire removal of images did not come until it was demanded by public opinion.

Men's minds, enlightened by degrees, could no longer tolerate the impiety of such images—for instance, as that which was meant to represent the Holy Trinity. It depicted the Father Eternal as an old man, with a triple crown, and rays about his head,—the Son as a young man with a crown and rays,—and the Holy Ghost as a dove sitting over their heads: to complete the profanation, the Virgin was placed between the Father and the Son, in conformity with the doctrine of the Assumption.

Thus slowly did the State permit the withdrawing of offensive objects from the eyes of the religious. In like manner the Acts of Parliament, relating to the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the abolition of private masses, were not passed until the pulpits had long resounded with exposures of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The Communion Bill was not agreed to until 20th December, 1547. It was twelve months more before the ritual and public services were weeded of their most unscriptural and fabulous deformities; and the entire reformation of the Church ceremonies cannot be said to have been

effected till many years after the complaints of the devout and the reflecting had been loudly uttered in the ears of their rulers. The authorities seemed still inclined to check rather than hasten the march of improvement. A proclamation against those who "*innovated and persuaded from the old accustomed rites*" was issued even in King Edward's reign: in fact, every removal of yokes too heavy to bear proceeded with equal slowness and deliberation. The clergy themselves took the liberty to marry before the Acts of Parliament, in 1548 and 1552, were passed for their relief, and legalized their marriages. These things show that the separation of the people of England from the Church of Rome, and the renouncement of her religious practices and impositions, did not emanate with the government either of Henry VIII., or of his successors Edward and Elizabeth, but that they originated in the Protestant principles which kept gaining strength from year to year, as they were more universally promulgated and better expounded. It was a little spark and a gradual ignition, and not a sudden conflagration raised by another Nero, which lighted up among the

people of this realm, and consumed the fabrics of Rome. The old constructions, which it had taken a thousand years to build up, could not be demolished at once, and we behold the hand of God in the retardation of this religious movement; for if our cause is now weakened in the eyes of the inconsiderate, and we are now taunted with the reproach that it was kingly tyranny which made Protestants of our forefathers, what would have been the effect of the argument had there really been the slightest truth in the assertion? Thanks be to the Most High, the conviction came first, and the law afterwards. The rejection of Romanism was not legalized till thousands of books had been written, printed, and circulated against its delusions; till thousands of sermons had been heard and preached against its errors, and till the suffrages of men were collected in favour of a restitution of the primitive doctrines of the Gospel. "If," said a sober-minded reasoner on this subject, "amidst so much that is admirable in the character and conduct of the first Reformers, we might be permitted to allot the meed of praise to any particular part, I should have no hesitation in as-

signing it to that singular moderation and discernment which distinguished the Reformation from all other revolutions, which overcoming the common infirmities of our nature, by which men are apt to run from one extreme into its opposite, controlled the spirit of innovation in the moment of reform; rejected nothing without examination; retained nothing without authority; and when it abjured the usurpations of the Church of Rome, discarded only its corruptions, and left all that had the stamp of Christianity behind,—like the fire which separates and consumes the dross, but preserves and refines all that is pure in the ore.”*

The active struggle in this country may be said to have commenced about the year 1360, when Wiclif first began to lecture and to preach against the clergy of Rome, and to have achieved its object the year after Elizabeth’s accession—say 1560. For two hundred years, therefore, our Protestant forefathers were publicly contending and suffering, before the kingdom experienced the full benefit of their devoted efforts. During the

* Taylor’s “Answer to the Question, Why are you a Churchman?”

last fifty years of the contest, from the beginning of Henry's reign in 1509, to the termination of Mary's in 1559, the perseverance, the learning, the diligence, the piety, and the intrepidity of those faithful servants of God, were fully manifested in patience and tribulation. At one time they had to bear the reproaches of those among whom they lived, and the spoiling of their goods, and bonds and imprisonments, and cruel mockings. At another time they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; and oftentimes, when they thought that their work was done, and that they had triumphed over prejudices and false reasoning, and malignant opposition, and tyrannical power, they had to fight the battle over again, and to submit to new trials, disappointments, and sufferings. Ah! little do we think at what a sacrifice of all which is dear to man, our fathers and forerunners in the faith bought for us the privileges which we now enjoy, and enabled us freely to discuss the sacred subjects, which they could not whisper to themselves but at the jeopardy of their lives. Take the example of Cranmer only, whom, much as we admire, we do not profess to

call perfect in his generation. Every bitter drug which man can take, he had to swallow : he was perpetually in peril of his life : when he stood before Henry VIII., the sword hung by a thread over his head, even in his moments of greatest favour. He had first to reason himself out of long-cherished opinions ; he had then to contest the point with his own order. He had patiently to watch his seasons and opportunities : he had to see himself dashed from the pinnacle of his hopes, at the moment when he thought he had reached it. He had to bear the blame of severities inflicted on those whom he knew to be undeserving of them, but which he could not avert. He had to do things from which his heart revolted ; and he expired in tortures at the stake—a penitent and a martyr, with his mind agonized by a sense of his own defects, and his body slowly burning in the flames,—so slowly, that he watched over, and even exulted in the consumption of that right hand of his, which had offended him by signing an act of recantation in an hour of weakness. Oh, call to remembrance the former days, in which, after your Protestant fathers were illuminated, they

endured a great fight of afflictions, and pray that you may have strength and grace to persevere in the Holy Faith which they bequeathed to you.

SECTION 14. *Anecdotes illustrative of the character, doctrines, and conduct of our Protestant luminaries—Wiclif, Cranmer, Latimer, Jewel, Rowland Taylor, Bernard Gilpin.*

When Wiclif was attacked by an alarming sickness, brought on by his incessant labour and anxiety in defence of the truth, his adversaries thought it a favourable opportunity to endeavour to wring from his supposed weakness that which they knew it to be impossible to extort from him in his more calm and collected hour. An embassy of the mendicant order, begging friars, was deputed to intrude themselves into his chamber, and some of the authorities of the day lent their countenance and their presence to the same ungenerous attempt to bully and intimidate the man whose last moments they hoped were approaching. They found him stretched upon his bed, faint and in anguish. They surrounded

his pallet; some preached, some threatened, and all invoked him by the powers of earth and hell to recant all that he had said or written against them, inasmuch as he had but a short time to live. The recumbent saint heard them in silence, until they had uttered all that they had to say: he then requested to be raised up on his pillows, and, gathering up his strength, he exclaimed, with a firm voice, "I shall not die but live, and again declare the works of the Lord, and protest against your evil deeds."

His words were Heaven-inspired, and prophetically true: his health was restored, and Wiclif was spared many years to uphold the sacred cause of which he was the champion, and to tear the mask from hypocrisy and infidelity.

While CRANMER was in prosperity, he had so much of the milk of human kindness, and of Christian forgiveness in his disposition, that it was said of him,—“The surest way to secure the good offices of the archbishop is to do him some notable displeasure.” His house was the asylum, not of the learned and distinguished stranger only, but of many of the poor and the

distressed. On one occasion it was converted into an hospital for sick and wounded soldiers, who were returning home from France through Kent. He kept a surgeon and physician to attend them; and when they were well enough to depart, he furnished them with money for their journey. At the very summit of his grandeur, his habits of study were the same as those which distinguished him in humble life. He usually rose at five, and devoted the first four hours of the day to his books, his compositions, or his devotions; the three next were set apart for public business. He dined at twelve, returned to his literary labours at five, and, with a short interval of recreation, continued at them till his hour of rest for the night. By these regular habits, his accumulations of knowledge were so great, that it was difficult to propose any question to him out of Scripture, general theology, or canon law, which he could not answer; and he was always able to support his opinions by reference to the best authorities.

The great extent of his learning, and the acuteness of his reasoning, were made so manifest at his trial, when he was arraigned before

the tribunal which condemned him, that his judges were constrained to silence him. "If you will adduce a proof of the corporeal presence in the Eucharist, out of any one divine who lived within a thousand years of our Saviour's resurrection," said Cranmer, "I will consent to the Romish doctrine."—"We come to examine you, and not to permit you to examine us," was the answer; which evaded, but could not refute his argument.

When sentence of degradation and excommunication was passed upon him, he was delivered over to the secular arm, with this cruel mockery of mercy and justice:—"And we beseech Her Majesty, with all the affection possible, by the love of God, and by our regard for piety and mercy, and by the intervention of our prayers, not to bring upon this wretched man any peril of dismemberment or death."

Extracts from a Letter, written by a Roman Catholic, who was a witness of Cranmer's Martyrdom.

"On Saturday last, being the 21st of March, was his day appointed to die: and, because the

morning was much rainy, the sermon appointed by Dr. Cole, to be made at the stake, was made in St. Mary's Church; where was prepared, over against the pulpit, an high place for him, that all the people might see him. And, when he had ascended it, he kneeled down and prayed, weeping tenderly, which moved a great number to tears that had conceived an assured hope of his conversion and repentance. * * * * *

“When Dr. Cole had ended his sermon, he desired all the people to pray for him—Mr. Cranmer kneeling down with them, and praying for himself. I think there was never such a number so earnestly praying together; for they that hated him before, now loved him for his conversion, and hope of continuance. They that loved him before could not so suddenly hate him, having hope of his confession again of his fall. * * * * *

“So love and hope increased devotion on every side. I shall not need, for the time of sermon, to describe his behaviour, his sorrowful countenance, his heavy cheer, his face bedewed with tears; sometimes casting them down to the earth for shame—to be brief, an image of

sorrow ; the dolour of his heart bursting out at his eyes in plenty of tears ; retaining ever a quiet, grave behaviour, which increased the pity in men's hearts, that they unfeignedly loved him, hoping it had been his repentance for his transgression and error. I shall not need, I say, to point it out unto you ; you can much better imagine it yourself.

“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. * 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 down,’— And he read it standing ; and then kneeled down, and said the Lord's Prayer ; and all the people on their knees devoutly praying with him.

“His prayer was thus: ‘O Father of Heaven ; O Son of God, Redeemer of the World ; O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them both, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon me, most wretched caitiff and miserable sinner. I who have offended both Heaven and earth, and more grievously than any tongue can express, whither

then may I go, or whither should I fly for succour? To Heaven I may be ashamed to lift up mine eyes; and in earth I find no refuge. What shall I then do? Shall I despair? God forbid! O good God, thou art merciful, and refusest none that come unto Thee for succour.

“ ‘To thee therefore do I run. To thee do I humble myself, saying, O Lord God, my sins be great, but yet have mercy upon me for thy mercy. O God the Son, thou wast not made man: this great mystery was not wrought for few or small offences, nor thou didst not give thy Son unto death, O God the Father, for our little and small sins only, but for all the greatest sins of the world, so that the sinner return unto thee with a penitent heart, as I do here at this present. Wherefore have mercy upon me, O Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: for although my sins be great, yet thy mercy is greater. I crave nothing, O Lord, for mine own merits, but for thy name’s sake, that it may be glorified thereby, and for thy dear Son Jesus Christ’s sake. And now therefore, Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c. &c.’ * * * * *

“Then rising, he said, ‘Every man desireth,

good people, at the time of their deaths, to give some good exhortation, that others 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 any other thing that ever I said or did in my life—and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth [alluding to his recantation.] * * * * *

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.' * * * * *

“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 a bachelor of divinity, named Elye, of Brazen-nose College, laboured to convert him to his former recantation, with the two Spanish friars.

“And the bishop answered, (showing his hand,) ‘This is 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 the 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 : others, 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 honour, and easier death, with your praise, the 23d of March. Yours, J. A.”*

LATIMER was one of the earliest and most determined opponents of Romanism during the most perilous times of the reign of Henry VIII. In his Sermons of the Card, as they were called, which he preached at Cambridge, in 1529, he began to declare his opinions. The preachers of that day used to select some pastime or topic of the season, on which they would construct their discourses. At Christmas, Latimer fixed on cards as his subject ; he would take the heart, he said, for his trump, and teach his hearers to serve God with their heart, and not to rely on external and unfruitful ceremonies. After some explanatory observations, he proceeded:—“Now I trust you know what your card means : let us

* Memorial of Cranmer, Strype, vol. i. b. iii. p. 552.

see how we can play with the same. Whensoever you go and make your oblation to God, ask of yourselves this question, Who art thou? The answer, as you know, is, I am a Christian man! Then you must again ask of yourselves, what Christ requires of a Christian man? Christ will not accept our oblation if it be of another man's substance; [in allusion to the Popish doctrine of the meritorious works, offerings, and intercession of the saints,] it must be our own." In his sermon on the *Plough*, which was delivered in London some years afterwards, he expressed himself much more boldly and plainly. "There is one," he exclaimed, "who is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England: it is the devil. He is never out of his diocese, and never from his cure: he is ever in his parish; he keeps residence at all times; he is ever at his plough; and his office is to hinder religion, to set up idolatry, to teach all manner of Popery. He is ready enough to put forth his plough, to devise as many means as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where his plough is going, away with books, and up with candles; away with Bibles, and up with beads;

away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles—yea, at noon-day. Where he, the devil, is resident, up with superstition and idolatry, censuring, painting of images, ashes, holy water, and new services of man's inventing; as though man could invent a better way to honour God than God himself hath appointed. Away with clothing the naked, the poor, and the impotent; up with decking of images, and gay garnishing of stocks and stones. Up with man's traditions; down with God's traditions and his most holy Word. And all things must be done in Latin; there must be nothing but Latin: God's Word may in nowise be translated into English."

When King Henry issued a proclamation forbidding the use of the Scriptures, Latimer shrunk not from the path of his duty, dangerous as it was, but addressed a letter of remonstrance to the angry monarch, in which he reminded him that those who had recommended him "to make it treason for any to have the Scripture in English, were they who blinded his people with their customs, and their ceremonies, and their glosses, and punished them with cursings, excommuni-

cations, and other corruptions. Therefore, may it please your Grace, to return to the golden rule of our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which is this, 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' They that persecute are void, and wholly without truth; not caring for the clear light, which is come into the world, and which shall show forth every man's works: and they whose works are naught dare not come to this light, but go about to stop it and hinder it, hindering as much as they may the Holy Scripture from being read in our mother tongue: saying it would cause heresy and insurrection; and so they persuade, at least they would fain persuade, your Grace to keep it back. And as concerning your last proclamation, prohibiting such books, the very chief counsellors of it were those whose evil living and choked hypocrisy those books disclosed. And as touching the men who were lately punished for these books, there is no man that can lay any word or deed against them, that should sound to the breaking any of your Grace's laws; this only excepted, if it be yours, and not rather theirs. Wherefore, gracious King, remember yourself; have pity upon your soul,

and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give account of your office, and of the blood which hath been shed with your sword.” This letter was written in December, 1530.

Latimer's Account of his former Opinions and Conversion.

“I thought, in times past, that the Pope could have delivered from purgatory, at his pleasure, with a word of his mouth : now I abhor my superstitious foolishness. I thought in times past that divers images of saints could have holpen me : now I know that one can help as well as another. It were too long to tell you what blindness I have been in, and how long it were ere I could forsake such folly, it was so incorporated in me : but by continual prayer, continual study of Scripture, and oft communing with men of more right judgment, God hath delivered me.”

The man who was so honest in the avowal of his sentiments, was ready to suffer for them. He resigned his bishopric of Worcester, after the Act of the Six Bloody Articles were passed, in 1539, rather than hold preferment under a sys-

tem of State religion, wherein such unscriptural and violent measures were adopted. When Mary came to the throne, he was a very old man, and living in retirement, but he was soon singled out for persecution, and committed to prison. In his place of confinement, he put the following declarations to paper: "In my prison I have read the Testament over seven times, but I could never find in the institution of the sacrament either flesh or bones, or the word transubstantiation. You have changed the most holy communion into a wicked and horrible sacrifice of idolatry, and you deny to the lay people the cup, which is directly against God's institution, which saith, 'Drink ye all of this;' and where you should preach the benefit of Christ's death to the people, you speak to the wall in a foreign tongue."

Latimer perished in the flames in the year 1555, with Ridley, Bishop of London. At the last, his body seemed to acquire new strength with his indomitable spirit, and, to the astonishment of the spectators, he was seen to lift himself up, and to stand erect at the stake. When the fagots were blazing, he stretched forth his

arms to the fire, and exclaimed, in a loud and cheerful voice, "Brother Ridley, be of good comfort; we shall this day light such a candle in England; as, by God's grace, shall never be put out."

The immortal fame of JEWEL, Bishop of Salisbury, does not rest, like that of the martyrs, whose names I have just recited, on his dying testimony at the stake, but on evidence by which he yet speaketh--his 'Apology for the Church of England,' one of the noblest specimens of theological reasoning which Protestant ever put forth. His renown is perpetuated also in the record of his controversy with Harding. "I defy you," said he, in that dispute, "to find Romanism in the Bible; I defy you to find it in the six first centuries; I defy you to uphold it by the authority of the earliest interpreters of the Bible; I defy you to establish it by the consent of those who, in primitive times, bore witness to the truth."

Jewel was born in the year 1522; and while he was yet a stripling he gave such an earnest of his future character, that it was predicted of him by his tutor, "Surely St. Paul's Cross will

one day ring of this boy." His early habits of study were so severe, that he imposed the duty upon himself of rising at four in the morning, and of poring over his books for the greatest part of eighteen hours every day. Abstemiousness and self-denial, and the most exemplary moral conduct, distinguished his university career at Oxford as much as his profound learning, and wrung from the Popish dean of his college an expression of approbation, highly complimentary,—“I should love thee, Jewel, if thou wert not a Zuinglian. Thou art an heretic in thy faith, but certainly an angel in thy life.” This proves that while he was yet a very young man, he made a public profession of opinions hostile to the tenets of Romanism. But, “angel as he was in his life,” he fell in a moment of weakness, and subscribed to a paper containing the leading articles of the Church whose doctrines he abominated. He soon shook off the trammels imposed on him by the terrors of a cruel death, and fled from his country to escape both the allurements and the threats of the dominant Church in England, when Queen Mary governed the realm. At Frankfort he publicly ac-

knowledged the guilt of his apostacy, and declared from the Church Pulpit, "that it was his abject and cowardly mind, and faint heart, that made his weak hand commit that wickedness." From this time to his death, Jewel continued one of the most stedfast advocates and brightest ornaments of the Protestant faith. "It is an easy thing," said one of his biographers, "for those who were never tried, to censure the frailty of those that have truckled for some time under the shock of a mighty temptation. But let such remember St. Paul's advice: 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.' This great man's fall shall ever be my lesson; and if his glittering Jewel were thus clouded and foiled, God be merciful to me a sinner."

When a change of things enabled Jewel to return home, he took a lead in the discussions and proceedings which finally placed the Reformed Church of England on the high place, among Christian churches, which she now occupies; and it was at St. Paul's Cross, as the instructor of his youth foresaw, that he put forth one of those challenges to the Romanists, which established his reputation, and extended it at

once far beyond his own country. “If any man,” said he “can prove either of the following articles, by any one clear and plain sentence, either out of the Scriptures or out of the works of the old Fathers—or by a Canon of any old General Assembly—or by any example of the Primitive Church, then I promise and bind myself to go over to his party.

“I. That there was any private mass in the world at that time, for the space of six hundred years after Christ ;

“II. Or, that there was any Communion ministered unto the people under one kind ;

“III. Or, that the people had their Common Prayers then in a strange tongue, that they understood not ;

“IV. Or, that the Bishop of Rome was then called an Universal Bishop, or the Head of the Universal Church ;

“V. Or, that the people were then taught to believe that Christ’s body is really, substantially, carnally, or naturally, in the Sacrament ;

“VI. Or, that his Body is, or, may be, in a thousand places, or more, at one time ;

“VII. Or, that the priest did then hold up the Sacrament over his head ;

“VIII. Or, that the people did then fall down and worship it with godly honour ;

“IX. Or, that images were then set up in the churches, to the intent that the people might worship them ;

“X. Or, that the lay people were then forbidden to read the Word of God in their own tongue.”

A compilation of this brief character cannot do justice to a work like “Jewel’s Apology for the Church of England.” It must therefore suffice to give an imperfect outline of its contents. The first section treats of the persecutions of the Primitive Christians. The second recounts the false charges brought against the early Reformers. In the third there is an exposition of the doctrines of the Reformed Church. The fourth section contains a refutation of the accusations against the Reformers. The fifth exposes the conduct of the enemies of the Reformation. The sixth is a most luminous development of the causes of the Reformation. The seventh proves that the Church of Rome is

not founded on antiquity. The eighth sets forth the grounds of our separation from the Church of Rome. The ninth and tenth discuss the supremacy of kings and sovereigns. The eleventh compares the Pope and St. Peter; and the last section gives a summary view of the preceding arguments.

When Jewel became a bishop, his life was spent in almost incessant toil for the good of his diocese and of the Church at large. He was pronounced to be one of the "most notable and painful prelates of his time." His doors were constantly open to the destitute, and he was lavish in his attentions to the deserving. "The judicious Hooker" was rescued from obscurity by the discernment and bounty of bishop Jewel, and repaid his benefactor's kindness in the days of his own eminence, by pronouncing him to be "the worthiest divine that Christendom had bred for some hundreds of years." Jewel died in 1571, worn out by visitations, preachings, and episcopal superintendence, wasted to a skeleton, and grown prematurely old at forty-nine, by a consuming course of study and anxiety, which began with his dawn of reason, and ended only

with his life. Some of his last words were to this effect:—"My prayer to the Almighty is, that he will vouchsafe either to convert or confound the Roman Pontiff--the author, sower, and standard bearer of all the rebellious dissensions and schisms in the Christian world, who, wherever he has planted his foot, has scattered abroad the seeds of contention. A crown of righteousness is now laid up for me! Christ is my righteousness. Father, thy will be done--thy will, I say--not mine, for mine is imperfect and depraved!"

ROWLAND TAYLOR, Rector of Hadleigh, in Suffolk: when this stout-hearted martyr was led through his parish on his way to Aldham Common, where he suffered, the expressions of public esteem and commiseration attested the holiness of his life, and the faithfulness of his ministry. At the foot of the bridge there was a poor man with five small children; when he saw Dr. Taylor, he and his children fell down on their knees, and he held up his hands, and cried out with a loud voice—"O, dear father, and good shepherd, God help and succour thee, as thou has many a time succoured me and my

poor children!" The streets of Hadleigh were beset on both sides of the way with men and women, who waited to see him, and take their last farewell. When they saw him going to his painful death, many of them exclaimed, with weeping eyes—"There goes our good pastor, who hath so affectionately instructed us, and cared for us. O merciful God, what will his scattered flock do without him!" Such witness had this servant of Christ of his piety and devotedness, while he exercised his office of parochial minister.

BERNARD GILPIN, born 1517. Of the numberless ornaments of the Protestant faith, while it was yet struggling for ascendancy in England, there is not one of whom we have more reason to be proud than of Bernard Gilpin. He combined in his venerated person every Christian character, which we are in the habit of loving and respecting. He was the diligent student, the steady inquirer after truth, the ardent preacher of the Gospel, the faithful parish priest, the unwearied missionary, (carrying the Word of Life to the remotest parts of the county in which he lived,) and the munificent patron of humble

merit. Before he declared himself an advocate of the sound principles of Protestantism, he not only read diligently and weighed well the arguments for and against Romanism, but he sought out the company of the best reasoners on each side of the question, and even travelled into foreign countries that he might consult the ablest divines on the Continent. It was not till after much prayer, much deliberation, and the deepest conviction, that he took upon himself the office of a Protestant minister; and from that time till the hour of his death, his whole life was one continued offering of body, mind, heart, soul, and strength, to God his Maker, and to Christ his Redeemer. He might have held the highest dignities of the Church, but he refused them; and thus he testified against worldly ambition. He expended all the produce of his living, the Rectory of Houghton-le-Spring, on works of charity and hospitality; and thus he acquired a name for disinterested goodness, which his most bitter religious adversaries could not refuse him. He was so scrupulously conscientious, that nothing could induce him to act against his own views of right and wrong. Up-

on an occasion in early life, when he thought he could not properly perform the duties of a vicarage conferred on him, he resigned it. He was told he might absent himself, and hold it by the bishop's dispensation. "Dispensation!" said he; "will any dispensation restrain the tempter from endeavouring in my absence to corrupt the people committed to my care? I fear it would be but an ill excuse for the harm done to my flock, if I should say, when God shall call me to account for my stewardship, that I was absent by dispensation."

Gilpin's own history of his conversion will prove the best account that can be given of his devout frame of mind and ardent love of truth.— "You require me to write in a long discourse the manner of my conversion from superstition to the light of the Gospel, which I think you know was not in a few years. As time and health will permit, I shall hide nothing from you, confessing my own shame, and yet hoping with the Apostle—'I have obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly.' Many things gave me occasion to search both the Scriptures and ancient Fathers; whereby I began to see many great

abuses, and some enormities used and maintained in Popery ; and to like well of sundry reformations on the other side.

“Afterwards, in three years’ space, I saw so much gross idolatry at Paris, Antwerp, and other places, that made me to mislike more and more the Popish doctrines, especially because the learned men disallowed image-worship in *their schools*, and suffered it so grossly in *their churches*.

“I reasoned with certain that were learned of my acquaintance, why there was no reformation of these gross enormities, about images, relics, pilgrimages, buying mass and trentals, with many other things, which, in King Edward’s time, the Catholics (so called) did not only grant to be far amiss, but, also promised that the Church should be reformed, if ever the authority came into their hands again. When I asked when this reformation was to begin, in hope whereof I was the more willing to return from Paris, I was answered,—‘We may not grant to the ignorant people that any of these things hath been amiss: if we do, they will straight infer other things may be amiss as well as these, and still go further and further.’ This grieved

me, and made me seek for quietness in God's Word: nowhere else I could find any stay.

“Thus in process of time I grew to be stronger and stronger; yet many grievous temptations and doubts have I had, which many nights have bereaved me of sleep.

“My nature hath evermore fled controversy so much as I could. My delight and desire hath been to preach Christ, and our salvation by him, in simplicity and truth; and to comfort myself with the sweet promises of the Gospel, and in prayer.

“I have been always scrupulous and troubled, either in subscribing or swearing to any thing besides the Scriptures and articles of our belief, because the Scriptures ought ever to have a pre-eminence above man's writings.

“And certainly, since I took this order to open my faults in writing, not pausing who knew them, so it might edify myself or others, I have found great ease and quietness of conscience: and am daily more edified, comforted and confirmed, in reading the Scriptures. And this I praise God for, that when I was most troubled, and weakest of all, my faith in God's mercy was

so strong, that if I should then have departed this life, I had, and have, a sure trust, that none of these doubts would have hindered my salvation. I hold fast one sentence of St. Paul,—‘I have obtained mercy, in that I did it in ignorance;’ and another of Job,—‘If the Lord put me to death, yet will I trust in him.’ Yet have I prayed God’s mercy many times for all these offences, infirmities, and ignorances; and so I will do so still, so long as I have to live in the world.”

These anecdotes will show that our Protestant forefathers were supported in their own minds and conduct, and that they promoted the cause of the Reformation, by their faithful adherence to the peculiar and distinguishing truths of the Gospel. They confessed and preached Christ in the divinity of his person, in the efficacy of his atonement, in the fulness and freeness of his grace, and in the supreme virtue of his intercession. By the force of these doctrines, and by the example of their holy lives, they cast down the strong holds of superstition, and they re-erected in their place that temple for the performance of


“a reasonable service,” which never can again be destroyed, as long as the Bible continues to be read in the vernacular language of England.







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