ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

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At the pivot point of every great movement, we usually find one man who stands out head and shoulders above the rest. So it was in the English Reformation. On its political side was King Henry VIII. At the very centre of that movement, on its religious side, we find Archbishop Cranmer. "The cause of the English Reformation was twofold, political and doctrinal." May we briefly survey that twofold reason for the breach with the past? In reality, it was a return to a truer conception of the Apostolic Faith as set forth in the New Testament. At points, the political and doctrinal merge into each other. They were never far separated, for Church and State were almost equivalent terms.

"The torch of the Church's spiritual life, at the close of the Middle Ages, was burning very low." A glimmer showed here and there. Some glorious buildings grew up in that age, and other forms of art left to us from that period show that they sprang from a body of men not devoid of spiritual ideas. But the other side is patent. The higher clergy were marked by their secular character. They often were more of statesmen than ecclesiastics. They held practically all the important offices of the realm, and, merely, for business capacity. That age produced neither an Anselm nor a Hugh of Lincoln. Simony was rife everywhere. Indulgences produced laxity of character. Plurality in the holding of offices was usual. Cardinal Wolsey held the sees of York and Winchester. He farmed out those of Bath, Worcester and Hereford, to foreign prelates, was Abbot of St. Albans, and at the same time, he held the office of Lord Chancellor. The ecclesiastical courts were open to innumerable abuses. Anyone holding even a minor ecclesiastical office could claim Benefit of Clergy, and so avoid trial in the secular courts, no matter what the offence might be. This, as well as the privilege of "Sanctuary," almost invalidated the civil law. There were far too many clergy—monks, friars, chantry priests (whose main duty was the saying of solitary Masses), and parochial clergy. Their main concern was liturgical and ceremonial, not pastoral. Preaching was almost non-existent. "The monks had lost their opportunity and were of very little use in the educational cause. English folk liked neither the idleness of the monks nor the covetousness of the higher clergy and the deep abuses which pervaded religion." Above all, the constant appeals to Rome, and the interference of the Pope in domestic matters, made stable government impossible. In addition, the presence of many monks in the monasteries, who acknowledged no power other than that of the Pope, meant a divided authority in the land. The King was king over a part of his people only. These forces, in addition to the fact that a large part of the national revenues went into the Papal coffers, emphasised the necessity of a stable supreme authority in the land.

The inevitable result of these evils, and of this negligence in spiritual matters, was ignorance and superstition on the part of the people, which were exploited to the full. Meanwhile, events on the Continent, and domestic problems at home, hastened a breach with the past. The world was opening up in voyages of discovery. Luther was challenging Papal authority in Germany. The spirit of Italian Humanism—the Renaissance—issued in a revolt against Medievalism. In England, the revival of Greek learning issued in " the search for the plain meaning of the New Testament instead of the fanciful interpretations of the Schoolmen," whilst study in Latin " had substituted the study of Cicero for that of Duns Scotus." This is clear from the writings of Colet, More, and Erasmus, the Oxford Humanists. Their influence in returning to the Christianity of the Apostles, and the banishing of superstition, the worship of relics and such like, cannot be overemphasised. The forces which led to the Reformation, both in its political and religious aspects, converged into three streams which eventually united.

They were, first, an Anti-Clerical movement, expressed by Chaucer's satire, and by legal efforts to exclude clerics from secular offices. Second, an Anti-Papal movement, brought about by the degeneracy of the Papacy, unjust extortion, greed, and unfounded Papal claims bolstered up by forged documents. Third, a doctrinal revolt begun by Wycliffe, continued by Huss and Luther, and strengthened by the publication of the Greek New Testament. Although Lollardry had been driven underground in England, it had not been extinguished in spite of the terrible measures used against it. The fullness of the time had come. As Canon Carnegie says, " Communities which had grown up under Papal Guardianship began to organise their own spiritual and material resources, on independent lines, and chafe against outer tutelage." The failure of the medieval Papacy, with its grand ideal, is perhaps the greatest failure of the Christian era. We may summarise the position in the words of David Ogg. " At the beginning of the sixteenth century there existed in England a church which, while still an integral part of European Catholicism, had acquired a certain amount of independence from Rome."

It was into this atmosphere, political and spiritual, that Thomas Cranmer was born on the 2nd of July, 1489. His family was of some standing, though not of either wealthy or noble descent, taking its name from Cranmer, a Lincolnshire manor. Its arms, a chevron between three cranes, seems to be an Heraldic pun on the name, signifying a lake which abounded in cranes. The family eventually migrated into Nottinghamshire and had lands at Aslacton, where Thomas, the future Archbishop, was born. He was the fifth child of a family of seven. His early education was harsh and severe and may have been obtained at the grammar schools of either Grantham, Nottingham, Newark or Southwell, probably the last. He was also allowed to follow field sports, developing some skill in shooting and hawking. At the same time he learnt to ride.

This ability was maintained so that even as Archbishop he could mount the roughest horse that came into his stable. His father died when Thomas was but ten years old, and at the early age of fourteen years he was sent to Jesus College, Cambridge. Here he followed the usual course of academic study which was largely confined to logic and the teaching of the Schoolmen. At that time, Greek learning was discouraged by the Roman Hierarchy as the language of the schismatic East. In 1510 or 1511, he took his B.A. Then, forsaking the past, he launched out into the study of Erasmus and the best Latin authors. Later, he studied the writings of Luther. On being elected to a Fellowship of his college, he studied theology until he took his doctor's degree in 1523 at the age of thirty-four. During this period his biographer tells us that "considering what great controversy was in matters of religion—and forasmuch as he perceived that he could not judge indifferently in so weighty matters without the knowledge of Holy Scriptures—he applied his whole study, three years, to the said Scriptures." In later years, this store of learning stood him in great stead, for when King Henry consulted him on any matter, information was at hand. By his marriage to his first wife he lost his Fellowship, but on her early death he was re-elected. After his ordination in 1520 promotion came to him early. As an examiner we learn that he was most conscientious. He sought to raise the standard of biblical knowledge by questioning the candidates from the Scriptures. If they were not sufficiently versed in the subject, he would not let them pass. The Friars disliked this, for their study lay principally in the Schoolmen. Cranmer's learning must have been great, for Wolsey sought to remove him to his own new foundation at Oxford. These sidelights show us a careful, discriminating, devout student, trained in God's Sacred Word, having a keen insight in discerning the false from the true, and the base from the good.

We must now turn to the period when Cranmer was called upon to fulfil more public duties; in particular, to his relations to King Henry VIII, who had ascended the throne in 1509 at the age of eighteen years. When the two first met, Henry was involved in the maze of negotiations with the Pope for the annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. That marriage and its ramifications were like threads woven into Cranmer's life. Important as was this matter as the occasion of the English Reformation, it is false to speak of it as the only cause. There is evidence extant which proves that the possibility of a breach with the Papacy and the turning of the English Church into a separate Patriarchate was known at Rome in 1527. Further, it was not merely Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn which urged him, nor yet as Hilaire Belloc would have us believe, Anne Boleyn's determination to be queen, that lay behind it. Henry knew that a male heir to the throne was a necessity for the continuation of peaceful rule, or at least an atmosphere in which England could flourish. Unfortunately, Catherine could not give the King that male heir. So, whilst we hold no brief for Henry's actions, we must be fair. It seems that

his scruples about the validity of his marriage to Catherine were not feigned. It was an age of superstition, too. Further, he had been intended for the ministry and knew that the marriage was within the degrees prohibited not only by the Church but by Scripture, in spite of the Pope's dispensation to allow it. When on his death-bed, his father, Henry VII, had actually urged him not to complete the union with Catherine, although he had planned the marriage when Henry was but twelve years old, on the death of his eldest son Prince Arthur, who had previously married Catherine. Archbishop Warham had protested against it in spite of the Papal dispensation.

Further, doubts as to Princess Mary's legitimacy had been expressed by both countries when Henry sought to marry her first into the Royal House of Spain and then that of France. Such unions within the prohibited degree were condemned by the Schoolmen. Thomas Aquinas, Henry's favourite author, was definite on the point, even to denying the Pope's power to overrule Scripture. Henry also knew Leviticus xx. These doubts seemed to have taken shape as early as 1524, and from records it seems that Anne Boleyn did not appear at court until 1527. The coveted decree would have been given by an accommodating Pope. Such a decree as Henry desired had been given to his own sister as well as to Louis XII of France. The Pope, however, was at the moment under the power of Charles V, who was Catherine's nephew. He (the Pope) feared deposition, for he was aware of the knowledge which Charles possessed. He himself was guilty of simony and, further, had used forged documents to cover up a defect in his birth. Henry was determined. He tired of the Pope's evasions and procrastinations and rejected, along with other expedients, the Papal suggestion of taking a second wife whilst retaining the first. A man of Henry's sagacity was not likely to be silenced by the repetition of a very doubtful measure. He wished there to be no doubt as to the lawfulness of his heir.

In the midst of all this uncertainty a chance meeting of Cranmer with Doctor Edward Fox, the King's almoner, and Stephen Gardiner, his secretary, brought him to the King's notice. In conversation with these Cranmer expressed his opinion that the matter should be taken from the lawyers and submitted to the divines of the Universities. He took his stand on Scripture, concluding that the Bishop of Rome had no authority to dispense with God's Word. Aquinas had stated this principle before. It was Cranmer's definite opinion also. Nor need we think it strange, for on his own confession he had begun to pray in private for the abolition of the Papal power in England as early as 1525. The opinions of the Universities were collected. It has been suggested that wrong methods were used both by Charles on the one hand and Henry on the other. Yet, when one sees that, on the whole, the Protestant Universities were less inclined to favour Henry than were the Romanist, it seems that the verdict for Henry was largely an honest one. The outcome of the difference was the overthrow of

the Papal supremacy by Parliament and Convocation alike. Let it here be said that the Convocation recognised the King as Supreme Head of the Church of England (*quantum per Christi legem licet*) and that the Clergy made their Act of Submission in 1532 during Warham's Archi-episcopate, not in Cranmer's time. Gardiner, too, who later was Cranmer's great enemy, had no small share in these decisions. Warham died on August 22 of the same year—1532.

At that time Cranmer was acting as Henry's agent to the Emperor Charles V. Whilst in Germany he had married the niece of Osiander, the German divine, as his second wife. This was not the action of a strict medievalist. It was charged against him later as adultery. Yet his action was honourable in an age when many ecclesiastics were not careful of their honour in such matters. The King passed over Gardiner and chose Cranmer as Archbishop. Never did a man accept so high an office more unwillingly. His consecration by Papal Bull was on March 30, 1533. Prior to his consecration he made a public protestation on the subject of the oath of fealty to the Pope. He maintained that he did not intend to bind himself to do anything contrary to the King and the commonwealth of England. His enemies have made much of this action. At his trial, it was brought in as proving his guilt of perjury. The guilt evidently lay in honestly declaring his intentions instead of keeping them secret. It has been said that an examination of the oath which he took will prove that the decided declarations of fealty to the Pope usually inserted in the Episcopal Oaths were not contained therein.

Cranmer's first duty was to examine the marriage tangle, and on the 23rd of May, 1533, he declared Henry's marriage with Catherine to be null and void. Convocation had previously assented to two propositions. First, that the Pope had no authority to have sanctioned such a marriage between a man and his deceased brother's wife, when the previous marriage had been consummated. Second, that the marriage of Arthur and Catherine had been so consummated. In the decision, Convocation must share either praise or blame with Cranmer. Next, he declared the marriage with Anne Boleyn as valid. This marriage had taken place privately without Cranmer's knowledge, at about the end of January, 1533. It is believed that Doctor Lee, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, officiated at the ceremony. The Pope did not take this at all kindly. An attempt was made to heal the breach, but it failed owing to the hasty action of the Cardinals in Rome. The final break with the Papacy was the passing of the Act of Supremacy in 1535. Thus was the Nation delivered from the Roman bondage by a Prince who, right up to his death, belonged to a Church which, in all external essentials but obedience to the Pope, was Roman Catholic.

We cannot follow in detail the problems of Henry's reign, his matrimonial difficulties and his disputes with those who refused to acknowledge the Act of Supremacy. One point must be mentioned, for Cranmer had to take a part in it. Henry's alliance with Anne

was not destined to last. All went well for a time. But her very light-heartedness aided the Queen's downfall, laying her open to suspicion; and she, too, failed to bear Henry the coveted son. Further, the Continental powers never recognised her as queen. She was charged with treason, given a mockery of a trial and sent to the block. The marriage was then declared to be no marriage, and once again the King was free. The proceedings of the examination are a tangle. But, as Pollard says, "monstrous as it seems from the point of view of justice and equity, the divorce of Anne Boleyn was probably legal." Cranmer's task was unenviable. On the evidence produced, in which the Queen confessed lawful impediments to her marriage, though firmly denying certain charges against her character, the Archbishop had no other course than to declare the marriage null and void, as indeed it was on the basis of Roman Canon Law. The Queen had favoured the Reformers. Her fall spurred the Romanists to renewed efforts in stemming the tide of reform.

The Act of Supremacy put a two-edged sword into Henry's hand. It gave him temporal and spiritual authority alike. Cranmer hoped for its use in one direction—Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, in the very opposite direction. Both were equally emphatic on the subject of the Supremacy. Authority there must be, but it was more and more realised that as the authority of Scripture had been acknowledged in the matter of Catherine's marriage and other matters, the Supremacy had to be shared with the Scriptures. Consequently, reform in doctrine was ultimately inevitable, even though that logical outcome was delayed until the next reign.

Cranmer's heart was set on reform, particularly the publication of an English Bible. The reforming movement was more in the succession of Wycliffe's teaching than Luther's. Cranmer, and those with him, even as Wycliffe had done, looked to the State to reform a corrupt Church. It was the only political theory of the time. They gradually receded from the doctrine of the Mass, as Wycliffe had done, but the King kept a balance, first leaning to one side, then to the other. We see this in the various translations of the Bible, first sanctioned and then condemned. One translation remains, that usually known as Cranmer's Bible, because he wrote the preface. By royal command it was ordered to be placed in every parish church. This is the "Great" or "Chained" Bible which we read of and sometimes see in churches. It was Tyndale's uncompleted translation, the rest being Coverdale's work. Tyndale had translated from the Greek and Hebrew, not from the faultily translated Vulgate. One wishes that both our Authorised and Revised versions were as near to the original in certain parts, as was Tyndale's. It was the very accuracy of the translation of certain words which aroused opposition. "Presbuteros" was translated "Elder" instead of "Priest," "Ekklesia" as "congregation" instead of "church," "Metanoia" as "repent" instead of "do penance." The tide of reform ebbed and flowed. Advance was

made in the publication of the famous "Ten Articles," whilst the later "Six Articles" were reactionary. These latter had penalties attached to the breach of them, but they were not uniformly enforced or Cranmer would have suffered. The same tendency is seen in "The Bishop's Book" which leaned to reform, and in "The King's Book," which was conservative in outlook. In this latter exposition of the faith the King took a lead, writing part of it himself. He also presided at the meeting which authorised its use. As a next step the superstitious use of images and relics was forbidden. Purgatory was discountenanced. One liturgical gem comes from that period—our matchless English Litany. Its publication in 1544 showed that change would come in the substitution of the mother tongue for Latin. This admirable expression of religious devotion has become part of our very composition. We turn to it again and again to express our inmost desires and aspirations. That it now stands almost as Cranmer penned it is an imperishable monument to his saintliness and devotional spirit. Thus, we see the movement going slowly ahead. Cranmer had little or no part in the abolition of the monasteries or in the abolition of the chantries. He did, however, protest to the King against the misuse of the confiscated revenues, pleading the educational cause.

During the latter part of Henry's reign, Cranmer was the victim of many envious and subtle plots. The wily Gardiner was concerned in them all with Bonner of London as his henchman. Henry protected Cranmer throughout with a whole-hearted loyalty. As Pollard says, "Faithless to many, to Cranmer the King was true unto death." On one occasion he thus spoke of Cranmer in terms of highest praise to those who plotted against him, "I would you would well understand that I accounted my Lord of Canterbury as faithful a man towards me as ever was prelate in this realm, and one to whom I am many ways beholding by the faith I owe to God; and therefore whoso loveth me will regard him hereafter." The King was a keen judge of character and he knew that his Archbishop was his truest friend. A man of singleness of purpose, devout, without ambition in politics, and pursuing an even course in his life. When dying, Henry turned to his Archbishop. On his arrival the King could no longer speak. When questioned in the matter he gave Cranmer assurance by an affirmative grasp of the hand, that he trusted in the Lord and Christ's mercy. Thus, he died.

The doctrinal position was but little changed at Henry's death. Protestant theology had not entered the King's heart. He merely "substituted a royal for a Roman Catholicism." "To the end of his reign Henry VIII was burning people for denying transubstantiation, while he executed others for denying the Royal Supremacy." As for Cranmer, he had not yet reached the doctrinal position which he later held. He denied transubstantiation, but held to a Real Presence. We know that for years he had been quietly working in various ways upon drafts of liturgical and doctrinal reforms, all

to be used later. With Henry's death, we pass the first phase of the Archbishop's work.

With the accession of King Edward VI we find the stage all set for doctrinal reform. By the late King's will the government was placed in the hands of a Council of Regency. Cranmer's name headed the list, but we know that he had no taste for politics. The Earl of Hertford, the King's uncle, better known as "Protector Somerset," was appointed Protector by the Council in the King's minority. It was a popular election. His rule was mild and tolerant, for he was a man of large and noble ideas. After Somerset's fall, the rule passed into the hands of Northumberland, whose policy was pursued with intolerance and tyranny. He used the reforming tendency for his own ends.

Three features of the reign must be noticed. First, the authority of the secular power. In this reign the power of the Royal Supremacy reached its highest mark. The bishops had to take out new commissions from the King, authorising them to hold their respective offices. The government then took reform in hand on the lines Wycliffe had urged. This may seem a strange procedure to us, but, let us remember that the same pressure of the secular powers was felt in Roman Catholic countries, also that Convocation voiced the opinions of the clergy only, while the laity —the main body of Church people—were not represented. Further, the outlook of that day on administration in general being what it was, the Reformation was only possible through the Royal Supremacy. The second feature was the substitution of the use of English for Latin in the Church services. The third feature was the growth of Protestant influences, which fostered and led to further reform.

The steps towards doctrinal reform now command our attention. But it will be necessary for us to realise that Cranmer and most of the Reformers had not yet made up their minds on all matters. They were in a state of flux. Of his mental and spiritual progress Cranmer was not afraid to write "I was many years in divers . . . errors as of transubstantiation, of the sacrifice propitiatory of the priests in the Mass, of pilgrimages, Purgatory, pardons and many other superstitions and errors that came from Rome. . . . But after it had pleased God to show unto me, by his Holy Word, a more perfect knowledge of Him, by little and little I put away my former ignorance." In 1547 the First Book of Homilies was issued by Royal authority as a guide in preaching. This was a work on which Cranmer had been engaged for a few years. It expressed no views on the Holy Communion. By the same authority, a copy of Erasmus's Paraphrase of parts of the New Testament was ordered to be placed in every church. Princess Mary took part in the translation. The Epistle and Gospel in the Mass were to be read in the vernacular. The superstitious use of images and pictures was denounced.

The following year saw further advance in the Order of Communion. This was the outcome of Convocation's decision that the

Communion should be administered in both kinds. It was a Communion service in English added as an appendix to the Latin Mass, and contained a number of new features drawn from the "Consultation" of Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne. The next step was the authorisation of the First Prayer Book in 1549, which was made the only legal Service Book in England. There were many changes in it. It was in English. The Communion Office showed a marked departure from transubstantiation by its omission of vital points of the Sarum Mass. Sacrificial Vestments were made optional, as was Private Confession. Still, far as the New Prayer Book went, the clergy of the old order, Gardiner in particular, read the old teaching into it. The trend of doctrinal reform was clear to those who would see, and the opponents of the Book saw it clearly enough. English was substituted for Latin. All readings in church were from the Scriptures, and to the Scriptures the framers of the Book appealed for confirmation of the changes that were made. One "Use" was prescribed in the place of the many and varied "Uses," prevailing throughout the country. The primitive idea of Communion was restored to its proper place, and the sacrificial aspect of the Mass found little or no place in the service. The consecration prayer clearly emphasised the completeness of the sacrifice on Calvary, "Who made there (by His one oblation once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Further, all the services were made congregational.

The logical outcome of the changes was a new Ordinal. No longer were the ministers regarded as Sacrificing Priests. They were still regarded as ministers of the Sacraments having powers of Absolution, but stress was laid on the prophetic office of preaching, and on pastoral care. Later, again a logical outcome of the changes, the "Altar" was omitted and the "Table" or "God's Board" substituted. It was very soon obvious that the New Book was not sufficiently explicit. This is quite clear from the wordy conflict that took place between the imprisoned Gardiner and Cranmer on the subject. We know that quite early Cranmer began to make notes with a view to revision. At the same time, he sought criticisms of the Book from the Reformers, both English and foreign.

The Second Prayer Book of 1552 made a distinct departure from the past. The Communion Service was as unlike the Mass as possible. In fact, the name Mass was omitted. The old Canon or Consecration Prayer was divided into four separate parts. The Benedictus and Agnus Dei were omitted for obvious reasons, as also were prayers for the dead—the "Bidding" was, and still is, for prayer for the "Church Militant here on earth." Cranmer's own words are worthy of quotation on the doctrine involved in the new Communion Service. "They (the Papists) say that Christ is corporally present under or in the form of bread and wine. We say that Christ is not there, neither corporally nor spiritually, but in them that worthily eat and drink the bread and wine. He is spiritually and corporally present in Heaven." It has often been

said that Cranmer was over-influenced by the foreign Reformers. It is more than probable that Cranmer had a direct influence on them. There is evidence which points to this influence in the case of Peter Martyr's views on the Real Presence.

Bishop Gibson writes of the "too-pliant Archbishop." But whilst admitting the influence of the foreigners as we must do, the influence was much less than some would have us believe. Cranmer never went far enough for the Zwinglians. At the same time he dissatisfied the Lutherans with his views on the Holy Communion. He was thoroughly English, and in his extensive travels in Europe had had opportunity to investigate, weigh and balance the movements towards reform, and measure the strength of Rome. Above all, we owe a debt of gratitude to Cranmer as leader of the Reformers, that the Church of England retained the threefold order of the Ministry. Bishop Short's words do not appear to be too strong. "The admirer of our episcopal church must, under God, thank Cranmer that his parliamentary interference saved our apostolic establishment. . . . So far then, from blaming the Archbishop for his manner of reforming by legislative enactments, we must consider that the existence of our establishment in its apostolical form is owing to this very circumstance." Doctrinal reform had reached its limit, so may we now survey the progress of the Reformation in King Edward's short reign ?

God's honour was no longer usurped by the worship of images. The Mass had become the Communion, and in this, God's love and honour again were vindicated, as not requiring a repetition of Calvary in constant sacrifices, for He had accepted the "one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction" of Christ's atoning death. Thus, the doctrine of salvation in Christ alone was set forth. The services were in the mother tongue. Superstitious worship and belief in Purgatory being exposed as false, the people were freed from ignorance and doubt concerning the future life. In the permission of the clergy to marry, England obtained what has been a blessing in many ways, the wholesome atmosphere of the English rectory and vicarage.

The sands in the hour-glass of Edward's life were running low. History tells of Northumberland's plots to secure power for himself by passing over Mary, and securing the succession for Lady Jane Grey, who was married to his son, Guilford Dudley. This scheme meant the setting aside of Henry's will, the violation of an Act of Parliament, as well as passing over the Duchess of Suffolk, Lady Jane's mother. Edward was eventually won over to this succession by the Duke, who afterwards subdued the Council by threats of treason. The document which had been drawn up in favour of Lady Jane, was then signed by the judges and lawyers who composed it, and by the greater part of the Council. Cranmer's name headed the list as the King's first subject. In reality, he was the last to sign it. Those who charged him with a betrayal of his oath to King Henry because of this, either forgot or ignored the facts. At first he refused to sign, because of his pledged word

to Henry, and demanded an audience with the King. This was refused for a time. The Archbishop, who never was a politician, was kept in ignorance of the Duke's threat and plots. He still refused to sign, and at last, when he eventually saw the King, he remonstrated with him on the subject, and held out until the King seemed to cast a reflection on his loyalty, appealing to him that he be not "more repugnant to his will than the rest of his Council were." He then signed the document. But all the plans failed, and Mary succeeded.

With Mary's accession we enter upon the last phase of Cranmer's career. The flood-gates of persecution were soon to be opened wide. The Archbishop could expect no mercy from Mary, even though he had once saved her from danger. She immediately set out to restore the Papal régime. At this, many of the foreign reformers fled, but Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer stuck to their posts. Early in the reign rumour was rife that Cranmer had restored the Latin Mass in Canterbury Cathedral and that he had offered to say Mass before the Queen. With almost reckless daring he indignantly repudiated the slander in a declaration which ended with an offer to prove that the Prayer Book was purer in doctrine as based on Scripture than any service book used in England for a thousand years.

Charged with treason, he could have been put to death for his part in the transfer of the crown to Lady Jane Grey. Although he pleaded guilty and was condemned, his life was not taken, but he was imprisoned for six months. Spared from the block, his death was planned as a penalty for heresy.

He was soon in prison again. We know the story of his sufferings from imprisonment, cruel persecution and his mockery of a trial in which he persistently refused to acknowledge the Papal authority. His judges cited him to appear in Rome within eighty days. In a letter to the Queen he consented to this, but afterwards appealed to a General Council as an authority above that of the Pope. Yet his confinement in prison continued, and we see the mockery of it all when he was condemned for wilful absence from Rome. He was then deprived of his office, degraded, excommunicated, and delivered to the secular power with no permission to appeal against the sentence. His actual degradation, in which Bonner delighted like a fiend, makes abominable reading. When in prison Cranmer was continually refused the assistance of his friends who would have aided him. Confinement took its toll from him, for he was not in good health at the time.

The Archbishop stood in the very centre of the Doctrinal Reformation in England, and to strike a vital blow at the movement, nothing was more desirable than his recantation. By subtle plots, by suggested promises of life and greater honours, by flattery and entreaty, at last Cranmer fell. It was a terrible fall. But in the signing of those recantations which were dictated to him, the discredit falls more on the dictator than the subscriber. Life was never intended to be given to him. We know his remorse when

he realised his betrayal of his faith. With all care, preparation was made for the final scene. From his place of confinement he was taken to St. Mary's, Oxford, and met at the door with the chanting of the Nunc Dimittis. He was then set before the people. Dr. Cole delivered a not unmerciful sermon, and ended by asking the congregation to pray for a contrite sinner. Rising from his knees, Cranmer made his last defence. How very different from what was expected! After thanking his hearers for their prayers he, too, prayed what has been described as "the last and sublimest of his prayers." He then offered Godly exhortations to all, recited the Lord's Prayer in English and made a confession of his faith, repudiating transubstantiation and denouncing the Pope as Antichrist.

His humiliation was now turned into a triumph. Out of his misery he rose like the true man he was. He was rushed to the stake, nay he rushed his murderers to it, for "so quick was the martyr's step," writes Mason, "that the others could scarcely keep pace with him." Bound to the stake after he himself had stripped off his upper garments, he saw the flames lighted, and thrusting his right hand into the fire, the hand which had signed his recantations, he said with a loud voice, "This hand hath offended." The burning of his hand first was his own voluntary recantation of those recantations which had been drawn from him by falsehood and trickery when his body was weakened by confinement in prison, and by persistent persecution. Thus, he died, a martyr for truth, suffering for his opinions. His death was no defeat. It was a victory.

Having briefly pursued Cranmer's history, we now may seek to form some estimation of his character. He has been both reviled and lauded. On his appointment to Canterbury, Erasmus spoke of him as "a professed theologian, and a most upright man of spotless life." Of his saintliness, his simplicity, his peerless honesty and kindness, there is evident proof. None but a man of transparent honesty could have written to a woman of Queen Mary's character as did Cranmer when asking her clemency in what he described as "mere heinous folly and offence in consenting and following the testament and last will of our late Sovereign; which will God knoweth, I never liked." Of his scholarship there is proof in his writings and in the Articles of Religion which he framed. Of his saintly spirit, the Book of Common Prayer is sufficient proof. Of its style Dr. P. Dearmer has written, "Fortunately, the main part of the English Prayer Book was written by Archbishop Cranmer, the greatest master of English prose before Hooker, Donne and Milton." Of his power as a preacher his contemporaries bore testimony, and they tell us of the wonderful effect his sermons produced upon his hearers. He was no weakling in the hands of a powerful king. Of that there is abundant proof. Think of his outspoken criticism of the Six Articles, in spite of the King's determination to have them authorised. Again, there is extant a copy of the "Bishop's Book" with emendations in Henry's hand and

Cranmer's plain answers to them. These alone show quite clearly that the Archbishop was no flattering courtier but one accustomed to speaking his mind, even to a Tudor. Almost unaided he stubbornly resisted the Act of the Six Articles. He alone pleaded to Henry for Anne Boleyn, speaking of her in high terms, at a time when his course of action put but a step between him and death. He went so far as to remind the King that he, too, had offended God. He alone pleaded for Thomas Cromwell, whom he once told that the Court was setting an evil example. He intervened likewise for Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More who denied the Royal Supremacy. He successfully intervened on Princess Mary's behalf when the King ordered her to the Tower for refusing to acknowledge the Royal Supremacy. On that occasion the King warned the Archbishop that he would repent of his interference. On another occasion he intervened for Somerset during his trial, so much so, that the judges hesitated in their course. He effectively opposed the powerful Northumberland when Bishop Tunstall was charged with High Treason. The charge was laid aside, and the Prince Bishop was only deprived of his See. These and other like actions, were not the deeds of a weak man, the tool of a powerful king. We see how he forgave those who betrayed him to the unscrupulous Gardiner, who repeatedly plotted his fall. His spirit of forgiveness became almost a byword. Men said, " Do my Lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and you make him your friend for ever." His hospitality was almost boundless. In an age when religious toleration was almost unknown by Catholic and Protestant alike, Cranmer displayed clemency. This is shown in his efforts to win over the condemned. In this way he spent twelve months in trying to win Joan Bocher, but failed. Of this humility there is abundant proof, as in his letter to Gardiner saying, " I would that I, and all my brethren, the bishops, would leave all our styles, and write the style of our offices, calling ourselves the Apostles of Jesus Christ ; so that we took not upon us the name vainly, but were so in deed." If we are inclined to judge him harshly for apparent contradictions in his writings, let us remember that he was made Archbishop before his ideas were fully developed, and that he was cradled in the church from which he had the courage to come out. " He was a man who had the honesty to grope his way into fuller light, and to cast aside his earlier opinions and confess that he had changed his mind on many subjects. How few men have the courage to do this ! "

Regarding his submission to the will of the two kings in certain matters, which seem to us unaccountable, we must remember his difficulty, in which, as Pollard tells us, " Like all Anglicans of the sixteenth century, he recognised no right of private judgment, but believed that the State, as represented by monarchy, Parliament and Convocation, had an absolute right to determine the national faith, and to impose it on every Englishman." It was an Erastian outlook, but " His Erastianism rose to the height of a great spiritual principle."

"All . . . authorities had now legally established Roman Catholicism as the national faith, and Cranmer had no logical ground on which to resist." "His earlier 'Recantations' are merely recognitions of his lifelong convictions of this right of the State. But his dilemma on this point led him into further doubts, and he was eventually induced to revile his whole career and the Reformation." But at last, his loyalty to God and the truth prevailed, and for that he suffered.

What is our debt to Cranmer, either directly or in part? An open Bible. The clasps that fastened the Bible were not unloosed by weak hands. Freedom from superstition and the fears of Purgatory were the gift of the Reformation. He set us a great example which we ought to follow in seeking the reunion of Protestantism. He made a noble attempt to attain this end, although, through no fault of his own, the plan failed. A noble life is also set before us. To him we largely owe our Liturgy and exposition of the faith in the Articles of Religion. Above all, we are indebted to him for that boon which is ours, and which was the very pivot of the doctrinal Reformation in England, the substitution of the Communion—the Koinonia—for the Mass.

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F. B.

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H. D.