

there was a conflict of tribunal against tribunal and authority against authority, until the whole of that period, like the time which preceded it, was summed up in one man, whose name and character might be said to be a complete epitome of the rebellion of the royal will against the royalties of Jesus Christ. It was almost useless for him to say it was Henry VIII, who bore the name of the king under whom St. Thomas of Canterbury won his crown of martyrdom. One Act of Parliament, passed in subservience to the royal will and unsupported by the will of the English people, transferred the supreme jurisdiction of the Vicar of Christ to the crown of England. He would now briefly touch upon the history of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More. Two more beautiful characters had never passed over the history of England. John Fisher, born under the shadows of the minster of St. John of Beverly, bore that saint's name. He was a man of mature culture and intellect, of high and aspiring theological knowledge—a light of the University of Cambridge—a man who promoted true research and literary science, and therefore, one whom the world was compelled to admire. John Fisher was made Bishop of Rochester in the full vigor of life, and for thirty years he ruled over his flock with the humility and the charity of the Good Shepherd. He was the first victim, and for what reason? Because he would not consent to the divorce of a lawful queen from her lawful husband, and because he refused to take an oath rejecting the supreme jurisdiction of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. When all his colleagues banded themselves together to support the royal will, John Fisher alone, with his apostolic authority, spoke on behalf of the queen against the supreme tyranny of her husband. After this he was summoned before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the oath was tendered to him, but he absolutely refused to take it. Again and again he was tempted. Privy councillors came around about him, and strove to argue him out of his conviction, and he said, "Answer me one question, and I will accept what you state. 'What shall it gain a man if he get the whole world and lose his own soul?'" With the bishops who ought to have stood by him he did not argue, but he rebuked them, appealing to their consciences. He said to them: "It is you whom I am defending, and yet you come to try to make me swerve." After that he was told, for the purpose of undermining his constancy, that Sir Thomas More, his fellow prisoner in the Tower, had taken the oath, and had submitted. Fisher did not believe the state-