

Poetry.

THE FRIEND OF OUR DARKER DAYS.

'Twas said when the world was fresh and young,
That the friends of earth were few;
And shrines have blazed and harps have rung...

BISHOP RIDLEY.

(From Palmer's History of the Church.)

Amongst that noble army of martyrs, who in the
sixteenth century contended even to death for Christian
truth against Roman errors and superstitions, none merits
a more conspicuous place than NICHOLAS RIDLEY, Bishop of
London. He was born in Northumberland, in the beginning
of the sixteenth century, and studied at the University of
Cambridge, where he was distinguished for learning and piety.

St. Bartholomew's for wounded soldiers and sick persons;
and Bridewell for the correction of idle and disorderly persons.
These, with the hospital of St. Thomas, he richly endowed;
and when he had signed the instrument to that effect, he, with
reverent gesture and speech, thanked God for prolonging his
life to finish that business.

sumed, while he cried to his tormentors to "let the
fire come at him." But in all his agony, he still called on
God, "Lord, have mercy upon me." At length the faggots
were removed by one of the by-standers; and when the
tortured martyr saw the fire flaming up, and when the
flame reached a bag of gunpowder which hung round his
neck, he was seen to stir no more, but burned on the
other side; and either from the chain loosening, or by the
overpower of his body after his legs were consumed, he
fell over the chain down at Latimer's feet.

4. I likewise undoubtedly receive and profess all
other things delivered, defined, and declared by the
sacred canons, and general councils, and particularly
by the Holy Council of Trent. And I condemn, reject,
and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all
heresies which the Church has condemned, rejected,
and anathematized.

Now, were this all, we might afford to sit still, and
let it run itself out in the common course like any
other quack medicine; but, meanwhile, it is doing incalculable
harm by leading people away from the Church, which is
the sole "pillar and ground of the truth"; and while it
is obtaining for itself a precarious temporary importance,
it is secretly undermining the first principles of religion,
so that when it falls, as fall it assuredly will, it will
leave to the Church the almost hopeless task of reclaiming
a populace who have learned to deny the existence of any
such thing as positive duty.

lively voice, and applied to the people's use as the
speaker in his wisdom thinketh meet. For this alone is
it which they use to call preaching. The public reading
of the Apocrypha they condemn altogether as a thing
effectual unto evil; the bare reading in like sort of
whatsoever, yea even of Scriptures themselves, they
milk as a thing unprofitable to do that good which we
are persuaded may grow by it. Our desire is in this
present controversy, as in the rest, not to be carried
up and down with the waves of uncertain arguments,
but rather positively to lead on the minds of the
simpler sort by plain and easy degrees, till the
very nature of the thing itself do make manifest what
is truth. First therefore, because whatsoever is spoken
concerning the efficacy or necessity of God's Word,
the same they tie and restrain only unto sermons, howbeit
not sermons read neither, (for such they also abhor
in the Church,) but sermons without book, sermons
which spend their life in their birth, and may have
public audience but once; for this cause to avoid
ambiguities wherewith they often entangle themselves,
not marking what doth agree to the Word of God itself,
and what in regard of outward accidents which may
befall it, we are to know that the Word of God is
his heavenly truth touching matters of eternal life
revealed and uttered unto men, unto prophets and
apostles by immediate divine inspiration, from them
to us by their books and writings. We therefore have
no Word of God but the Scripture. Apostolic sermons
were unto such as heard them his Word, even as
properly as to us their writings are. Howbeit not so
our own sermons, the exposition which our discourse
of wit doth gather and minister out of the Word of
God. For which cause, in this present question we
are, when we name the Word of God, always to mean
the Scripture only. The end of the Word of God is
to save, and therefore we term it the Word of Life.
The way for all men to be saved, is by the knowledge
of that truth which the Word hath taught; and with
eternal life is a thing of itself communicable unto
all, it behoveth that the Word of God, the necessary
mean thereto, be so likewise. Wherefore the Word
of Life hath been always a treasure, though precious,
yet easy, as well to attain, as to find; lest any man
desirous of life should perish through the difficulty
of the way. To this end the Word of God no otherwise
serveth, than only in the nature of a doctrinal instrument.
It saveth, because it maketh wise unto salvation.
Wherefore the ignorant it saveth not; which they live
by the Word, must know it. And being itself the
instrument which God hath purposely framed, thereby
to work the knowledge of salvation in the hearts of
men, what cause is there wherefore it should not of
itself be acknowledged a most apt and a likely mean
to leave an apprehension of things divine in our
understanding, and in the mind an assent thereto?
For touching the one, the Word, who knoweth and
discovers best the rich treasures of his own wisdom,
hath by delivering his word made choice of the Scriptures
as the most effectual means whereby those treasures
might be imparted unto the world, it followeth, that
to man's understanding the Scripture must needs be
even of itself intended as a full and perfect discovery,
sufficient to imprint in us the lively character of
all things necessarily required for the attainment of
eternal life. And concerning our assent to the mysteries
of heavenly truth, seeing that the Word of God, for the
Author's sake, hath credit with all that confess it
(as we all do) to be his word, every proposition of
holy Scripture, every sentence being to us a principle;
if the principles of all kinds of knowledge else have
that virtue in themselves, whereby they are able to
procure our assent unto such conclusions as the industry
of right discourse doth gather from them, we have
no reason to think the principles of that truth which
teacheth unto men's everlasting happiness less forcible
than any other, when we know that of all other they
are for their certainty the most infallible. But as every
thing of price, so this doth require travail. We bring
not the knowledge of God with us into the world; and
the less our own opportunity or ability is that way,
the more we need the help of other men's judgments
to be our direction herein. Nor doth any man ever
believe, into whom the doctrine of belief is not instilled
by instruction, some way received at the first from
others. Wherein whatsoever it means there are to
notify the mysteries of the Word of God, whether
publicly (which we call preaching) or in private
howsoever, the Word by every such mean even
ordinarily doth save, and not only by being delivered
unto men in sermons. Sermons are not the only
preaching which doth save souls. For, concerning
the use and sense of this word preaching, which they
shut up in so close a prison, although more than
enough have already been spoken to redeem the
liberty thereof; yet because they insist so much,
and so proudly insult thereon, we must a little
inquire their ears with hearing how others, whom they
more regard, are in this case accustomed to use
the self-same language with us, whose manner of
speech they desire. Justin Martyr doubteth not to
tell the Grecians, that even in certain of his writings
the very judgment to come is preached; nor the
Council of Vaux to insinuate, that Presbyters,
absent though from the Churches, might be said
to preach by those deputies who in their stead did
but read homilies; nor the Council of Toledo to
call the usual public reading of the Gospels in the
Church, preaching; nor others, long before these
our days, to write, that by him who had reared
a lesson in the solemn assembly as part of divine
service, the very office of preaching is so far
forth executed. Such kind of speeches were then
familiar, those phrases seemed to hear the
outrages which we do, because we think that the
Apostles in writing, and others in reading to the
Church those books which the Apostles wrote,
are neither untruly nor unfaithfully said to
preach. For although men's tongues and their
pens differ, yet to one and the self-same general,
if not particular effect, they may both serve. It is
no good argument, St. Paul could not write with
his tongue, therefore neither could he preach with
his pen. For preaching is a general end whereto
writing and speaking do both serve. Men speak
not with the instruments of writing, neither write
with the instruments of speech; and yet things
recorded with the one, and uttered with the
other, may be preached well enough with both.
By their patience therefore be it spoken, the
Apostles preached as well when they wrote as
when they spake the Gospel of Christ; and our
usual public reading of the Word of God for the
people's instruction is preaching. Nor about words
would we ever contend, were not their purpose,
in so restraining the same, injurious to God's
Word and Spirit. It is on both sides confessed,
that the Word of God outwardly administered (his
Spirit inwardly concurring therewith) converteth,
edifyeth, and saveth souls. Now whereas the
external administration of his Word is, as well by
reading barely the Scripture, as by explaining
the same when sermons thereon be made; in the
one, they deny that the finger of God hath
ordinarily certain principal operations, which
we most stedfastly hold and believe that it
hath in both.



Under and light with which he, for the first time, beheld...

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