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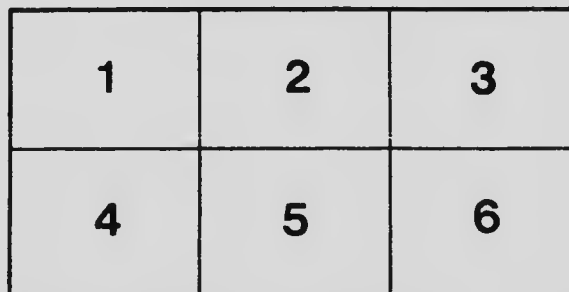
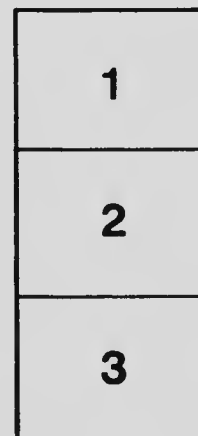
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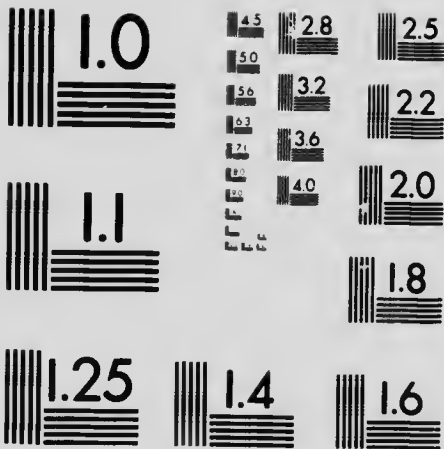
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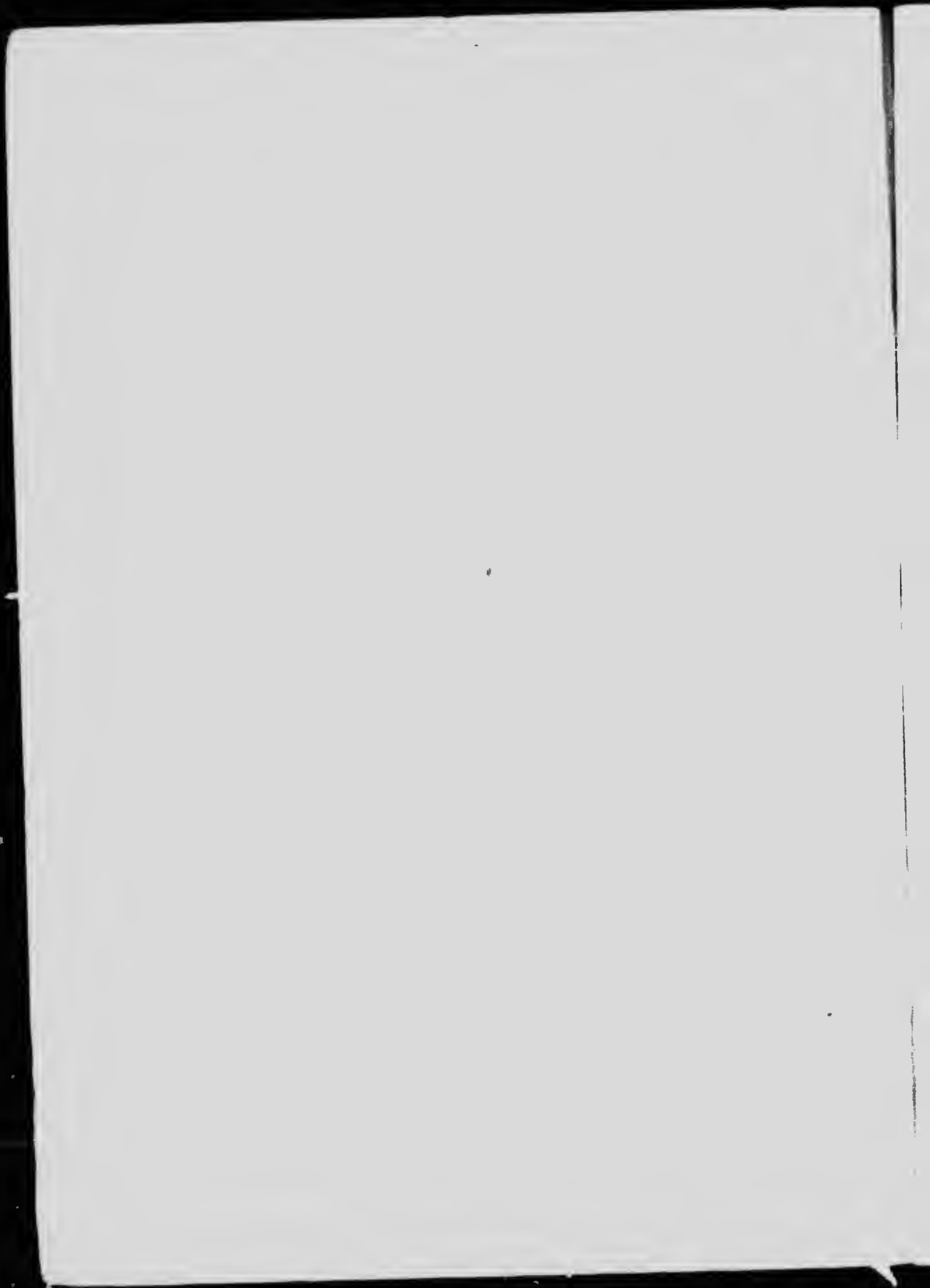
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# CRANMER

by **Canon Hague**

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# CRANMER

An Historical Study

by the

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The Church Record S. S. Publications, Confederation Life Building,  
TORONTO.

**T**HIS is not a biography. It is an historical study. It is not, by any means, intended as a complete biographical statement. It is intended to be suggestive. It is an attempt to throw a fair light upon a much-slandered historical character, and to explain a much-misunderstood career. It is, in a measure, a vindication. In its preparation, I have used the standard English Histories, such as Macaulay, Froude, Green, and Aubrey ; the Roman Catholic historian, Lingard ; the Church historians, Collier, Burnet, Milman, Perry, Massingberd, Martineau, Cutts, Jennings, Hore, Wakeman, Geikie, Blunt, Innes, Southey, Fisher, Dixon, Overton, and Clark ; Dean Hook's Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury ; and above all, Foxe, Strype, and the invaluable editions of Cranmer's works, and the Original Letters, by the Parker Society.

D. H.



# Cranmer.

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Few historical characters have been more misrepresented than Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, from 1533 to 1556. Roman Catholic historians, from Lingard downwards, have almost uniformly traduced him. Anglican Catholics, from Wakeman upwards, have almost uniformly misjudged him. And a Protestant historian, who ought to have known better, has done more to prejudice English opinion against him than all the Roman and Neo-Catholic writers combined. It is Lord Macaulay who is chiefly responsible for the popular view of Cranmer. In his History of England, he has painted Archbishop Cranmer as a man unscrupulous in his dealings, zealous for nothing, a coward and a time-server in action, a placable enemy, and a lukewarm friend; and his characterization in the Essay on Hallam's Constitutional History of Cranmer as a merely supple, timid, interested courtier, has passed into almost universal opinion.

It can be certainly said that the idea in the average mind about Cranmer is, that while possessing many amiable and excellent qualities, he was in the main, if not a traitor and a hypocrite, at least a time-server without character, a Churchman without principle, a cowardly leader, timid, pliant, and vacillating, an arch-episcopal Mr. Anything, and a political Mr. Facing-both-ways. Froude, the English historian, has left it on record that Macaulay's unfairness

to Cranmer first suggested to him the project of writing history.

It is time that a reaction should set in, and that a juster opinion of this great English Churchman should prevail. As a matter of fact, Cranmer was a man born, as it were, out of due time. He had to fill a very trying, and oftentimes a very thankless, position, and even his detractors have reluctantly admitted that he played his part to the best of his ability under circumstances of almost incredible difficulty. A man of studious, retiring, and academic habits, he was suddenly thrust out into the hurly-burly of the most strenuous, ecclesiastical-national life. He was forced to play a part that was entirely distasteful to his temperament. Cranmer never was, never could have been, a great, big, bold, world-defying man like Luther. He was not a daring and outspoken truth-champion like Knox. He was not of adamant native strength, uncompromising in his dogmatic position, like Calvin. He was of less masterful and imperious mould. But manfully and earnestly, here a little and there a little, not without occasional trips and falls, he did what he could in the times in which God placed him, with the material God had built him of.

It is easy for us to sit on our velvet cushions of twentieth-century ease and criticise the courage of those who were sailing the ship in the storm-centre of these Reformation days. Perhaps if we lived a little nearer the times, we would echo the words

of a great historian of the Church: The name of Thomas Cranmer deserves to stand upon eternal record, having been the first Protestant Archbishop of this country, and the greatest instrument under God in the happy reformation of the Church of England, in whose piety, learning, wisdom, and conflict, and blood, the foundation of it was laid. He was a man of more excellent spirit than the ordinary run of men.

Archbishop Cranmer was born in 1487. His father was an English country gentleman. He was sent to college at an early age, and developed a remarkable talent for study. At Cambridge he was well known as a scholar of Jesus College, became a master of sophistry and the logic of the schools, and was distinguished by a habit for accurate and scientific observation which afterwards became his most salient characteristic as a scholar. *Vehemens observator erat.*

At that time the new wave of thought that was breaking over the religious world touched England. The publication of the Greek Testament by Erasmus gave an impetus to University life that was epoch-marking. The old Roman foundations in worship and doctrine were being shaken, and the world was waking out of the deep sleep of the Middle Ages. The thing that struck Erasmus on his visit to England was the number of young men who were taking up the study of the Bible. Cranmer became a diligent student of the Scriptures. The whole of

his influential life may be traced to this foundation and root; the earnest, personal, first-hand study of the Bible. It might be said of him, as Carlisle said long afterwards of Luther: "He gradually got himself founded as on the rock. No wonder he should venerate the Bible, which had brought this blessed help to him. He prized it as the Word of the Highest must be prized by such a man. He determined to hold by it, as through life and to death he firmly did."

In 1529 a chance observation caused him to leap into fame. The matter of the King's divorce from Queen Catharine was in discussion at a country house where he happened to be staying, and Cranmer remarked that the question ought to be decided and discussed by the authority of the Word of God, and might be done just as well in England, in the universities, as in Rome. The remark was carried to the king. It speedily brought Cranmer into favor with Henry VIII., and started him on a path of extraordinary Church influence. It did more than that. It fortified Cranmer in his position as an advocate of the right of private judgment with regard to Scripture and truth, as opposed to the claim of the Pope of Rome. It gave him a starting point of independence as a thinker and a theologian. And further; it signalized him as the man for the hour. The King and the nobility alike recognized him as a man who was prepared to stand as an Englishman, and as an English Churchman, against the overshadowing

prerogatives of the Papacy. The King was looking for just such a man. He found in Cranmer what he wanted.

In 1529 Cranmer was despatched as an ambassador to Rome, and bore himself well. It was a daring thing in those days to contend with the Pope. But, following the example of the great Apostle, he gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with us. He contended firmly these points:

1st. That no one *jure divino* could or ought to marry his brother's wife.

2nd. That the Bishop of Rome by no means ought to dispose to the contrary.

In 1533, Cranmer, who had been Archdeacon of Taunton, King's Chaplain, Pope's Plenipotentiary General in England, was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury.

This was a great epoch in the history of the Church of England. Cranmer accepted the appointment with unfeigned reluctance. Not only did he feel, as he expressed it, very sorry to leave his study; he felt his great inability to such a promotion. And further: "He expressly told the King that he could accept it only on one condition; that it should come from him, and not from the Pope, inasmuch as the King, as the Supreme governor of the Church of England in causes ecclesiastical and temporal, had the full right and donation of all manner of bishoprics and benefices, and no foreign authority." The

King, after a good many talks on the subject, agreed that Cranmer might accept the Archbishopric, making his protestation to protect his conscience. This Cranmer did. "I indeed, bona fide, made my protestation that I did not acknowledge his authority any further than as it agreed with the express Word of God. And this my protestation I did cause to be enrolled." Cranmer Letters, Park. Soc. 223-224.

After receiving the eleven Bulls from the Pope, which he gave to the King, Cranmer was consecrated with the usual form and ceremony of the Roman Church. Later on when he received the pallium, he again asseverated that he took the oath under the same protestation. Cranmer has been doubly assailed for doing these things. The Romanists have taunted him for his want of principle as a Churchman. The Anglo-Catholics have taunted him for his time-serving subservience to Henry. It must be asserted, moreover, in all fairness, that throughout this period of his career, Cranmer honestly seems to have held as a conviction the right of the King's supremacy as opposed to the Pope's supremacy. To some Church minds it seems to be impossible that a Churchman could take such a position. But Cranmer certainly appears to have accepted it, and to have accepted it with conscientiousness. That is, he regarded the Pope's headship of a national Church as a usurpation, and seemed to honestly believe that the King, as head of the Nation, was, under Christ of course the Heavenly Head, the head of the national

Church. "Why," said Doctor Martin, in the famous trial at Oxford, September, 1555, before Brokes, "why, you made Henry the Eighth Supreme Head of the Church!" "Yes," said the Archbishop, "of all the people of England, as well ecclesiastical as temporal." "And not of the Church," said Martin. "No," said Cranmer, "for Christ is only Head of His Church, and of the faith and religion of the same. The King is head and governor of his people, which are the visible Church." With this postulate, it can be seen that Cranmer's character, essentially cautious and tardy in development, was evidencing a certain force of independence. From this time on, Cranmer's chief care was to advance God's cause in his high position. The thing that he lived for, his primary concern, was the reformation of the Church, in morals, and doctrine, and finally in worship. The stages through which he passed in his archepiscopate were, broadly speaking, three:

First.—The Political-antipapal.

Second.—The Protestant-doctrinal.

Third.—The Evangelical-liturgical.

*The first stage through which Cranmer passed was the Antipapal.* In the Parliament of 1533 he moved that the usurped power of the Pope was a mere tyranny; that it was against the law of God, according to the Divine Word. This was the national legislative complement of the renunciation of the supremacy of the Pope by the Convocations of York

and Canterbury in 1531. The abolishment of the foreign Papal power by Act of Parliament, and the voluntary separation of the Church of England as a particular or national Church, from the corporate unity of Rome, was largely the result of his singularly forceful advocacy. Convocation in 1532, petitioned the King in these memorable words:— Forasmuch as St. Paul willeth us *to withdraw* ourselves from such as walk disorderly, it may please the King's most noble Majesty to ordain that the obedience of him and his people *be withdrawn from the See of Rome*. And when Cranmer, later, was accused of schism, as not only himself *receding from the Catholic Church and See of Rome*, but also of moving the King and subjects of this realm to the same, he answered: "As touching *the receding*, that he well granted; but that receding or departing was only from the See of Rome, and had in it no matter of any schism." We have separated from that Church (the Church of Rome), said Bishop Jewel, in his *Apologia*, and have returned to the Primitive Church.

Reading through the lines of his after-convictions, we must surely give credit to Cranmer for honesty of purpose in this matter. It was not abject subservience to the imperious will of Henry. It was conviction born of Scripture, and fortified by reason. His article on the Catholic Church in the Ten Articles, of 1536, demonstrates this, evidently. Throughout all this initial stage of his reforming career, the character of a liberty-loving and Italian-



scorning Englishman comes strongly out. But there was something higher and deeper than that. There was in Cranmer, also, that love of freedom with which Christ makes us free, of which the Lord Jesus spoke when he said : If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. And as the years passed on, this conviction not merely of the tyranny of the Papal authority, but of the evil and unscripturalness of the Papacy as an apostate ecclesiastical system, deepened and strengthened.

#### 2ND. CRANMER AS A PROTESTANT REFORMER.

*The second stage through which Cranmer passed was the Protestant-doctrinal.* His progress in the first part of this stage of his career was gradual, and his action correspondingly cautious. But every step shows progress. Cranmer's first action in his career as a Protestant reformer was the most important of all. In 1534 he pressed in Convocation for a translation of the Bible, that the Scripture should be translated into the vulgar tongue by some honest and learned men. It was a significant motion. It showed his master-bias. He regarded the Bible even then with a peculiar affection, and throughout his career he was the unswerving champion of an open Bible. He worked, and worked long and patiently, for his final object ; the English Bible to be read in all the English Churches, and all the Bible to be put in the hands of all the English people. It took years, but at last it came. In 1538-39 the great English Bible, now popularly known as Cran-

mer's Bible, was set up by Royal Command in every church. It was a great act, and it created no small sensation. For it was done, as one historian of the Church put it, to the confusion of the Romanists, the exultation of the Reformers and the rejoicing of Archbishop Cranmer. Not only so. In spite of the antipathy of the Romanists, who called it the mother of all heresy and the father of schism, and did all in their power to prevent its being read, Cranmer worked for a further concession, and not only secured the Bible for the Church, but procured leave for the people to buy Bibles and keep them in their own houses.

Cranmer then proceeded to a very great work indeed as far as its effect on the future of England's Church history is concerned; the systematized recasting of the Church's doctrine. In 1536 the Ten Articles came out. They were largely due to Cranmer. His speech in Convocation on that occasion showed that he had already grasped in embryo the very kernel and essence of the principles of evangelical religion. While the Ten Articles are, of course, not so clear in their doctrinal purity as the present Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, they exhibit a remarkable advance towards the reformed doctrine, and may be said to be the high-water mark of the principles of the Reformation before the days of Edward VI. In another way, too, they were epoch-marking. They were the first declaration of the doctrinal independence of the Church of England. They

flung out the banner of England's national Church in the assertion of its right to act independently of Rome. The very opposition they evoked shows the independence of Cranmer, and his determination to set forth what he believed to be truth. Cranmer's hand is also plainly evident in the book that was set forth a little later; the Bishop's Book, or Institution, of 1537, a kind of composite Protestant—Popish, Catholic—Evangelical manual. It was simply an evidence of the tangled theological sentiment of the day. The Article on the Catholic Church, which seems to have been Cranmer's, was a remarkable piece of work, for it proves that as far back as 1537 Cranmer had practically arrived at the teaching of our Article 19. It sets forth in unmistakable language the initial concept of the impossibility of the Church of Rome being the Catholic Church, and of the unity of the Catholic Church being a spiritual unity. It distinguishes between the Catholic Church visible and the Catholic Church invisible, and largely teaches the present doctrine of the Church of England upon the subject of the Church.

In fact, we may trace in these early doctrinal formularies of 1536 the rudimentary workings of the master mind which in later years was the inspiring influence of the Articles which have become the formulated teaching of the Church of England: the 39 Articles.

During this period a double process of development was in evolution in Cranmer.

On the one hand there was discernible an increasing antipathy towards the Roman Catholic system. This was more especially against the superstitions and falsities of its worship, though it was conjoined with an antipathy to the Papacy as the representative of spiritual tyranny and ecclesiastic corruption. On the other hand there was a growing sympathy with the continental reformers. Cranmer was gradually, perhaps even timidly, stretching out the hand of fellowship towards the Reformers on the Continent. His interest in them had been first awakened through his visit as chaplain of the English Embassy to Nuremburg, in 1532. The fact of his having married his second wife, as a result of this, a niece of the Nuremburg liturgiologist, Osiander, would doubtless tend to cement the ties already formed. It was largely owing to his influence that a deputation of Lutheran divines came over to England, in 1538. The English reforming Churchmen, and even Henry himself, were feeling that they were really engaged in the same great work, notwithstanding differences of detail, and that a friendly conference would tend to draw them closer. The 13 Articles which were published were an expression of the harmony of faith and doctrine between the Reformers in the Church of England and their Lutheran brethren.

This visit, however, unfortunately seems to have failed in its purpose. Instead of establishing the concord, it broke the concord, and the Romish party

took advantage of some premature and perhaps impolitic expressions on the part of the Lutheran embassy to twist the mind of the king.

From that time to the end of the reign of Henry VIII. there was a decided anti-Protestant reaction, and Cranmer's position became one of extremest difficulty. Cromwell fell. Gardiner became the man of the hour. Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, was a clever man. Wily, crafty, insinuating, of loose morals, a trained diplomatist, a master of intrigue; he was the unwearying foe of the principles of the Reformation. As the result of his influence on the King, The Six Articles, a set of Roman dogmas of the most definite type, including transubstantiation, private masses, clerical celibacy and auricular confession, were introduced in 1539, as the formulated doctrine of the Church of England, and the laws of heresy were put in operation. Cranmer showed his independence and courage, however, even at this juncture by doing all in his power to prevent the adoption of those execrable penal clauses with regard to the execution of heretics. "The Archbishop did adventurously oppose, standing himself, as it were, post alone against the whole Parliament." Later on he stood out against the Romish manual known as The King's Book, or the Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man. And to the end of the career of the dogmatic and increasingly imperious King, Cranmer kept quietly but consistently working for the principles of the Reformation. At times it

looked as if he did very little. His inaction on occasions appears open to unquestionable criticism. But on the whole he seems to have done what he could. He certainly kept the Bible for the people. It was owing to Cranmer that the Bible was maintained in the Church to the end of Henry VIII.'s reign, untouched by any dishonoring hand. No one can ever estimate the effect upon the nation of that silent but potent force, the seed of the Word planted in every church in England, and in the homes of many of England's people.

It was largely owing to Cranmer also that the Apostolic lever of power was once more revived in England's Church, the practise of preaching. Gifted men were permitted to freely preach the Gospel. And to encourage the clergy in this novel work, a book of Homilies was drawn up, mainly by Cranmer in obedience to a resolution of Convocation in 1542. Gardiner imprisoned them pretty well, as Mr. Tomlinson has shown in his valuable work on the Prayer Book, Articles, and Homilies, but still the principle was established which later on in Edward's days became a feature of the reformed Church of England. But above all, as we shall presently show, Cranmer was working silently and energetically as an ecclesiastical popularist for the re-establishment of the rights of the people of the land to participate personally and intelligently in the worship of the Church. In 1544, three years almost before the great Tudor's death, he was the means of giving to

England's people the Litany in English. It was a great act. It marked an epoch in England's church history. It was the inauguration of a great church principle, *church* prayer, not private prayer, but *church* prayer, public prayer, in the people's mother tongue. It did not supersede, of course, the ecclesiastical use of Latin as the language of English church worship. That did not come till five years later. But it undermined one of the first ecclesiastical principles of Rome, and prepared the way for the extinction of the ecclesiastical use of Latin.

#### THE EVANGELICAL LITURGICAL.

*The third stage through which Cranmer passed might be summarized in the words the Evangelico-liturgical.* It was the period in which he attained to the fullest clearness in Scriptural and doctrinal enlightenment, and his final position in church teaching and worship. During this part of his career, Cranmer's development as an advocate of the reformed doctrine and as a liturgical compiler is of special interest. At times his progress slow, and his caution marked. But however gradual his advance along the path of the new learning, it was deliberately and uniformly in the one direction. The moulding factors during the latter years of his Archbishopric were :

First. The influence of an illumined study of the Holy Scriptures. His growing clearness of insight into doctrinal truth was primarily due to his careful and continuous study of God's Holy Word by the light

of God's Holy Spirit. While it is not exactly clear that Cranmer came within the stream of influence of the so-called Cambridge band, the centre of which was that influential, though comparatively unknown reformer, Thomas Bilney, it is certain that the same influences that operated upon Bilney and Latimer and Barnes and Coverdale, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures, were operating upon his mind, and that he was throughout these years, in consequence, reaching after deeper things than mere ethical and ecclesiastical reform. Cranmer, as Strype put it, was a great Scripturist.

The second and by no means an indifferent influence, was the companionship and sympathy of Bishop Ridley. Strong, scholarly, scriptural, Nicholas Ridley exercised no small influence upon Archbishop Cranmer, whose chaplain he was, and whose theological researches in the Scriptures and the Fathers, incited by a treatise of Bertram or John Scotus Erigena, strongly impressed Cranmer's receptive mind. "I grant," he said in that famous scene in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, on 12th September, 1555, when he was cited to appear before the Bishop of Gloucester as subdelegate of the Pope, "I grant that then I believed otherwise than I do now, and so I did until my Lord of London, Dr. Ridley, did confer with me, and by sundry persuasion and authorities of Doctors drew me quite from my opinion." Ridley became Cranmer's right-hand man. In fact, we might alter the proverbial saying and say: Latimer leaned



to Cranmer, Cranmer leaned to Ridley, and Ridley and Cranmer and Latimer all leaned to the Word of God.

The third influence, and in the latter days more particularly, was that of certain scholarly men who came from the Continent as representatives of the most modern reformed opinion, to reside by Cranmer's invitation in England. Of these the leading men were Peter Martyr, an Italian, a man of singular erudition, and of strongly Protestant Evangelical sentiments, who was established in 1548 as Regius Divinity Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Another man was Martin Bucer, a strong Protestant Reformer, who was appointed as the Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge. "Bucer is with the Archbishop of Canterbury like another Scipio, and an inseparable companion," wrote Hooper to Bullinger, June, 1549. John A. Lasco, a Polish Reformer of noble lineage, also helped Cranmer into paths of truth, and exercised no small influence upon him. While it can not be fairly said that Cranmer agreed in every detail with the opinions of these foreign reformers, it must be admitted by the impartial that there was a general similarity in thinking, and an entire sympathy in action. Their eyes were all tending in the same direction, and they were all being led by the same guiding spirit, away from the falsities of mediævalism to the verities of the Scripture and the teaching of the Apostles.

Looking over his life as a theologian and

a Churchman, it may be said that Cranmer's career as a whole was one of steady spiritual evolution, divisible into three sections. Or, to put it into other words, his convictions passed through three fairly well defined stages.

During the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., he was a Roman Catholic in doctrine, as he was an Anglo-Roman Catholic in Communion, having been nurtured in the Roman doctrine, familiarized from childhood with the Roman ritual, and an expert in Roman law and procedure. He was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by the head of the Roman Church, and consecrated according to the Pontifical of the Church of Rome. During the latter part of that time he could be described as a Roman with a decided leaning to Lutheranism. Cranmer then became a Lutheran, having abandoned completely the Roman doctrine of the priesthood and the sacrifice of the mass, and during the last five or six years of Henry's reign he may be described as a Lutheran with decided leanings towards the reformed position. During the first two or three years of Edward's reign his position was advancing more or less slowly and cautiously towards the reformed position, and by 1548-49 he had come over to what might be called the Bullinger view of the Sacraments, and what we would call the Reformed or Evangelical position. In a letter of Hooper to Bullinger, he says: "Now I hope Master Bullinger and Canterbury entertain the same opinions." On the last day

of December, 1548, a letter was written to Bullinger, describing the great debate on the Sacrament in Parliament, December 14th, 1548, in which it was said: "Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, contrary to general expectation, most openly, firmly and learnedly maintained your opinion concerning the Eucharist. The Truth never obtained a more brilliant victory among us. I perceive that it is all over with Lutheranism, now that those who were considered its principal and almost only supporters have altogether come over to our side." From that time on Cranmer's convictions were stereotyped. He held to his convictions to the last, holding the golden mean between an unscriptural Sacramentarianism on the one hand and an unscriptural Anti-sacramentarianism on the other, and defending his position with dignity, clearness, and determination. In all his appearances before his accusers at Oxford, he spoke bravely and boldly, as Dean Hook says, in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, without shrinking from the assertion of any truth he had already advanced.

It is impossible to give exact dates, but the following may be taken as an approximate summary of his successive positions:

Cir. 1525-38—Cranmer, a Roman, tending towards Lutheranism.

Cir. 1538-46—Cranmer, a Lutheran, tending towards the reformed doctrine.

Cir. 1547-53—Cranmer, an evangelical of the reformed school.

That this is proven by Cranmer's own words is evident from his statement in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, in 1555, during his cross-examination by Dr. Martin :

Martin :—When you condemned Lambert, the Sacramentary, what doctrine was taught by you ?

Cranmer :— I maintained *then* the Papists' doctrine.

Martin :—And how when King Henry died? Did you not translate Justus Jonas' book ?

Cranmer :—I did.

Martin :—Then you there defended another doctrine touching the Sacrament? . . . Then from a Lutheran you became a Zwinglian, which is the vilest heresy of all, in the high mystery of the Sacrament; and for the same heresy you did help to burn Lambert, the Sacramentary, which you *now* call the Catholic faith, and God's Word.

Cranmer :—I grant that *then* I believed otherwise than I do now. Cran. Lett. Park. Soc., 218.

It was during the latter stage of his career, in the years 1549-1552 (Edward VI. reign), that the *Magnum Opus* of Cranmer's career was produced; the Prayer Book of the Church of England. No one disputes that in this work his was the guiding mind. He was not only the Chairman of the Compilation Committee, but the formative genius in its compilation. Cranmer was par excellence the compiler of the Prayer Book. Even in the compilation of the Prayer Book, the progressive character of his mind was

evident. The book was not formed suddenly, nor was the whole plan of it definitely evolved at one time. As far as its contents were concerned, it was a composite of the most ancient and the most recent material. It represented the materials of many ages, and the thoughts of many men. But as far as its form, and spirit, and object, and principle, was concerned it was practically new, and without a counterpart in the western Catholic world. It was the product of the Reformation. Yet, while this is the case, two things may be asserted.

In the first place the shape the Prayer Book finally assumed seems to have been the climax of a series of progressive ideas, or working plans, that passed through Cranmer's brain. His first idea probably was to have an expurgated Breviary to take the place of the old Roman Offices. That is, his first project was purification; to purify the old offices, and, by means of translation and purgation, rid them of some of their most objectionable mediæval features. This seems to have been followed by the idea of an abbreviated and adapted Breviary, and the reduction of the eight or nine offices, used mainly, if not wholly, by ecclesiastics, to two services for the use of the people. In a word, the rudimentary idea of popularization. For, when Cranmer started out on the path of liturgical reform, it may be safely asserted that his primary object was merely purgation and reform, and that even when he reached the second stage of adaptation and

translation, he did not contemplate a Church of England Prayer Book for the use of England's people in English. His idea was simply an adapted or Anglicanized form of the Roman or Breviary service. But gradually, in ways that men would call accidental, but which we must think Providential, there rose before the mind of Cranmer what surely must have been the dream of his life, the vision of a people's Prayer Book. Henceforth, his idea was to have one Prayer Book for the people of England; a single volume, not eight separate books; a single volume, not in Latin, but all in English; one book, all on scriptural lines, in an easily-handled volume, and all for the people.

The result of these visions, and dreams, and ambitions, and efforts, was that masterpiece of Cranmer's life, the Book of Common Prayer. In its first stage of publication, in 1549, even though it contained many elements of superstition, it was, with its democratic idea and popularized worship, distinctly a new thing in the then Catholic world. Yet, even at the date of its compilation, Cranmer had undoubtedly arrived, in a measure, at the views contained in the second. The first Prayer Book marks a mere transitional stage in the Reformation of the Church of England. For a very short time afterwards, in 1552, the second Prayer Book was introduced, containing the more matured and final views of Cranmer and Ridley upon the Sacrament, of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, and purposely omitting the words

mass, altar, auricular confession, sundry genuflections and crossings, and prayers for the dead.

There is a second thing to be remembered in regard to Cranmer's views and their relation to the Prayer Book, and that is this: the final stage of Cranmer's views represent, in the main, the doctrines and ritual finally impressed upon the liturgy of the Church of England. In other words, the views, doctrines and opinions *which Cranmer held in 1552*, were in 1552 formally set forth in the second Prayer Book, and in the Articles, as the teaching of England's Church; and *in that form to this day* the true and real views and principles of the Church of England are stereotyped in the service and the teaching of the Articles of the Book of Common Prayer. An Oxford scholar has recently said: The whole outcome was, and is to this day, the expression of Cranmer's mind. The ultimate construction of the Church of England was shaped in accordance with Cranmer's ideas. That is true. And though this writer probably did not refer to this phase of it, it is mainly true with regard to doctrine. His mind, his ideas, became the master-force, the moulding-force, of the form of the worship and formulated teaching of the national Church. For what Cranmer did in 1552 was done permanently. With a few slight changes, changes largely of addition, enlargement, and enrichment, the whole of their revising work has been introduced permanently in the Prayer Book of the Church of England. Or, as it may be stated in other words: the

position which Cranmer and his associate compilers deliberately assumed in 1552, with regard to the salient teachings of the Church, has never been abandoned by the Church of England.

As far as the liturgical work of Cranmer goes, it must be a source of gratification to all Englishmen that one so steeped in Scriptural knowledge, and so gifted with the power of producing a stately and sonorous English, should have been selected as God's instrument for the compilation of a book which was to exercise so widely-spread influence as the Book of Common Prayer. If men speak of the beauties of the Prayer Book, and of its language as a well of English undefiled; if men speak of its power to mould a nation's spiritual character; of its power to steady and uplift the devotions of a world-wide Church; of its power to hold and attract and inspire Christians of every realm; it is largely owing to the patient toil and the Scriptural devotion of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Before we pass to the latter part of his career there are two matters that should have a passing reference. The first is the position of Cranmer with regard to the confiscation of the endowments of the suppressed monasteries. The idea has obtained a wide circulation that Cranmer, if not the instigator of this movement, was at least in some measure responsible for the wholesale spoliation of these properties. The following facts, however, should be held in remembrance:—(1) That the suppression or



spoliation of the monasteries in the reign of King Henry VIII. was by no means the first suppression. (2) That they were most of them, if not all of them, suppressed by the Bulls of the Pope. (3) That that great Roman Catholic, Cardinal Wolsey, was the author of the suppression of a very large number, and derived enormous personal gains from their dissolution, living in quasi-royal splendor on the spoils of thirty or so monastic manors. (4) That the most ruthless destroyer of them all was an uncompromising papist, Henry VIII. (5) That Cranmer and Latimer pleaded most vigorously, as Strype has pointed out in his Memorials of Cranmer, i.-ix., for the retention of various monasteries as centres of Christian learning, for the employment of their revenues for the establishment of colleges and theological halls, and for the extension of the episcopate by the founding of new bishoprics. It was largely the Romish influence that prevented their utilization for collegiate and church extension purposes. The reformers even lost favor, as a modern historian has put it, by standing out against the sacrilege of their unconditional transfer to the King and his favourites. Another great historic writer has said: "No plunder of Church or Crown had touched the hands of Cranmer. No fibre of political intrigue, or crime or conspiracy, could be traced to the palace at Lambeth."

Cranmer's position with regard to the transfer of the crown to Lady Jane Grey has also been wantonly

assailed. It will be remembered that Edward VI., as his end drew near, was determined that his sister Mary, the daughter of Queen Catharine, should not be his successor, and as the marriages of the mothers of both Mary and Elizabeth had been illegalized, it seemed only natural that the young King should throw the force of his influence in the direction of a Protestant successor. The Council was pliant, with two exceptions. Hales refused to the last to give in, and Cranmer for a long while held out most firmly. When we consider the personal weight of the Royal will, it is remarkable that Cranmer took so strong a stand. However, he finally yielded. Probably he was wrong. But that he was inexcusable, is a very strong statement for any man to make. There was no doubt that the Sovereign, with the consent of Parliament, had power, according to current-day usage, to transfer the succession. Mary, Queen of Scots, was already excluded by the will of Henry VIII. If the Chief Justice, the leading legalist of the day, after deliberately examining and re-examining the arguments for and against the King's contention, had altered his opinion, it seems hard for any one to accuse the Archbishop of taking an inexcusably weak position, as some modern writers have done. "The judges," said Edward VI. to Cranmer, as he stood at the death-bed of the dying boy, "the judges have informed me that I may lawfully bequeath my Crown to the Lady Jane. I hope you will not stand out." Whether or not the others were involved by their

pledge in eternal disgrace, and perjured themselves, is a fair matter of debate. But it is certain the charges do not apply to Cranmer.

All the conspirators, save only he,  
Did what they did through policy ;  
He only, in a general, honest thought  
Of common good for all, made one of them.

It probably would have been nobler for him to have stood out. But, after all, who, in these days, can judge ?

*The Closing Days.*

Edward VI. died July 6th, 1553.

After the death of Edward VI., Cranmer's lot was not a very happy one. The tragedy of Mary's reign is one of the mysteries of Providence. Yet out of the awful blight of that unhappy segment of England's history, have come some of the best things in our national life. The reign of Mary meant ecclesiastically and theologically the re-establishing for a few years of the Roman Catholic religion in England. In 1554, England was received back into union with Rome. The nation, through its representatives, declared itself regretful and repentant for *its schism*, humbly besought absolution, and asked to be received *once more into unity* with the See of Rome. They were absolved then by the Papal Legate for all heresy and schism and received again into unity with the Holy Roman Church. Before long the fires were blazing and some of England's best and holiest were dying at the stake, not for treason, not for sedition, but because they endured to the end in

holding that doctrine of the Communion which is now taught in the 28th and 30th Articles of the Church of England.

The conduct of Cranmer throughout Mary's reign, with one brief and sad exception, is of the highest. While his friends on every side were flying from the country Cranmer refused to flee. His resolution was noble. "The post which I hold and the parts I have taken require me to make a stand for the truths of Holy Scripture." With this and like sayings, he refused to desert his post. Later on when a scurrilous slander was circulated to the effect that he had celebrated or authorized the celebration of the Mass in Canterbury, he wrote a most dignified and courageous rejoinder. Latimer himself could not have written in more dauntless strain. "I have been well exercised these twenty years to bear evil reports and lies," he said, "and have borne all things quietly, but untrue reports to the hindrance of God's truths are in no wise to be tolerated." He then went on to say that the Communion Service of the Church of England was conformable to the order of Christ and His Apostles, whereas the Mass in many things is not founded on Christ's Apostles or the Primitive Church, but is manifestly contrary to the same.

Cranmer was, not long after, despatched as a prisoner to the Tower, where he held pleasant and heart-inspiring conferences with his episcopal brothers in bonds, Bishop Ridley and Bishop Latimer. They read the New Testament over together, for they

were all confined in one chamber in the Tower, "with great delectation and peaceful study." From there, in April, 1554, they were taken to Oxford, when the last disputations on the subject of the Sacraments were held, and Cranmer bore himself throughout with marked dignity and calmness, as a scholar and a champion of the Truth.

The scene of his first examination was a notable one. The leading churchmen of the day had flocked to Oxford, and delegates from every part of the kingdom thronged in St. Mary's Church, where the thirty-three Commissioners in their scarlet robes and academics were awaiting the arbitrament. Three Articles were submitted to him, and most firmly, and with a dignity that won the admiration of many, they were repudiated by the Archbishop. At this, his first defence, Cranmer stood alone, "calm, collected, unmoved," as he did also at his second. A short while after, he underwent another examination, and a few days later Cranmer, with Latimer and Ridley, again stood before the Commissioners for their final pronouncement. The three Articles that were to determine their standing or falling were submitted to them. They were asked whether they would maintain, or whether they would deny, the three following propositions:—

1st. In the Sacrament of the altar, by virtue of the divine word uttered by the priest, the natural body of Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary, is

really present under the species of bread and wine, and also His natural blood.

2nd. After consecration the substance of bread and wine no longer remaineth, neither any other substance, save only the substance of Christ, God and Man.

3rd. In the Mass there is a life-giving propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living as well as of the dead.

The Bishops were asked whether they said Yes or No. One by one each of them repudiated and denied for the last time the Roman dogma. The prolocutor with dramatic tensity urged them with

ding appeal to reconsider this final decision. tely, solemnly, and decisively, the three Bishops answered: "We are not minded to turn." Then and there the sentence of heresy was pronounced upon them. And though many months elapsed, it was for heresy, the heresy of denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and maintaining the present-day doctrine of the Church of England, as set forth in the services and in the Articles, that Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley were burnt at the stake near Baliol College, Oxford. "We are not minded to turn!" These are splendid words. They deserve to be held in the memory of all English Churchmen.

The saddest passage of Cranmer's life came shortly before his end. In what seems to have been a time of moral and spiritual enfeeblement, one of those crises to which we are all liable, of intense depression

of spirit, he was entrapped by the wily envoys of Rome, and induced by two of their most able strategists, Garcina and Sydall, to sign a series of recantations. It matters little how many he signed, or how far their genuineness can be established. The undeniable fact is that he recanted, and that plainly against his conscience. But his fall, though profound, was transient, and as men rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things, Cranmer rose from that dismal depth to a height of esteem from which he never can be removed. His agony of remorse, his deep and real repentance, his longing to atone in some measure for the sin that stained his soul; these things can never be forgotten. Of all the dramatic passages of England's history, none approaches or surpasses the scene of Cranmer's recantation of his recantation in the University church, and the nobility of his death amid the flames on that foul and rainy day in Oxford, March 21st, 1556. Historian after historian has depicted it. Our great modern poet Tennyson has immortalized it in his drama of Queen Mary.

Howard.—Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave all else untold.

Feters.—My Lord, he died most bravely!

Seldom, as we have said before, has a man been so pitilessly treated for one act of weakness. No character in the pages of history, perhaps, has been so ruthlessly denounced for a single error. One modern historian tells us that for that one recanting act, the

brand of the craven is upon him, and the flames of Oxford have not erased it. He says that because of his failure of an hour, forgiveness is denied him for the ages.

But is this fair? Really, is it fair and just?

A man should be judged by his life, and not by his failure under one singular and peculiar circumstance. Why should we judge Cranmer's life any more than we judge another man only by his faults, still less by only one fault. "We make too much of faults. The details of the business hide the real centre of it. Faults? The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none. Poor human nature! Is not a man's walking, in truth, always that: 'a succession of falls.' In this wild element of a Life he has to struggle onwards; now fallen, deep abased; and ever, with tears, repentance, with bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again still onwards. That his struggle be a faithful, unconquerable one; that is the question of questions."

Well said, Thomas Carlyle. We must judge a man's whole life, not a single hour of weakness. We must judge Cranmer's life as we judge Peter's. Like Peter, he denied; like Peter, he wept, and that bitterly; like Peter, he confessed, and that bravely; like Peter, he braved the world with such power that multitudes were convinced. If he was timid constitutionally; if he was inclined to hesitate and falter; then all the more honor to him that he did what he did.



Of all the martyrs at the stake, no martyr ever displayed such physical courage as Thomas Cranmer, Metropolitan and Primate of all England. And if he recanted once, he only did after all what two of the other English martyrs did, men of the highest courage. With that one brief exception, it can be truly said of Cranmer; he never went back; he never receded; he never played the traitor. He was one of those—

Who rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream.

To conclude and epitomize:—

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Metropolitan and Primate, was unquestionably the master spirit of the Reformation of the Church of England. He was not as strong a man as Crumwell, as clever a man as Erasmus, as eloquent a man as Latimer, or as bold a man as Luther. But in many ways he was a great man, and he was the man of the day. If unendowed with more brilliant faculties, he had at least the divine gift of common-sense, and the divine grace of patience. He knew when to be silent, and he knew when to speak. He has been freely called a coward. Historian after historian has accused him of absence of principle. They assert that his character was abject and yielding. They taunt him with his silence when as a brave man he should have spoken, and with submission when as a true man he should have opposed.

There may be another explanation.

There were times when boldness would have been madness, and opposition folly. A general may retreat, and still be brave. And no man seems to have mastered better than Cranmer the great secret of statesmanship, the power to wait patiently on time; to be quiet when it would be madness to speak; to wait when it would be folly to push forward. He has been unfairly accused of not opposing the Six Articles Bill because he was an inconsistent coward. But he was no coward then, if Burnet can be trusted, who says he opposed the King with much resolution and boldness. And afterwards he was no coward, for when all brave men in England were afraid to open their lips, he alone dared to plead for Anne, venturing as far as was possible with such a king as Henry VIII. Nor was he a coward when, not long after, he stood up, almost alone, against the angry Lords and pleaded like a man for Crumwell. Nor did he look like a craven when, a few years later, he stood Athanasius contra mundum in the Legislature against the Bloody Statute. (See Geikie, 349.)

Dean Hook, who has not presented Cranmer, by any means, in the fairest light, says that his conduct in November, 1553, "as compared with that of Crumwell, and even that of Wolsey, is worthy of all admiration. He bravely refused to fly when flight was possible; and that though life was dear to him, there was not in him that abject cowardice which we lament in a man so really great as

“Wolsey, or as one who acted so important a part of  
“life as Crumwell.”

It has been thought that he was a time-serving knave because he did not stand by Lambert, or because he more than once gave way to the King. But at the time of Lambert's death he was at least a Consubstantiationist; and, as to giving in to the King, there were times, as we all know, when it would have been infatuation not to have done so. The times were hard, as Bishop Burnet quaintly said, very ticklish. The King was hard. The questions of action were almost maddening at times. It is easy for men in these days to criticise; but a poor and shallow thing it is to condemn a man in a situation like his. For long weeks and months together, Cranmer could simply do nothing. And, like a wise man, he did not try. He saw that it would be of no use. And then, at other times, he saw an opening. At once he seized it, worked like a man, and made the most of it.

“To grasp the skirts of happy chance,  
And breast the blows of circumstance.”

And so through all the dreary years till Edward's day, Cranmer fought and wrought almost alone. He could not do much. But he did what he could. It was a sore struggle. He stood practically alone. He had no friend for support, and the malice of the Popish party was incredible.

Throughout the reign of Edward, Cranmer's character was consistent, and he was most courageous. And if in that reign cosmos emerged from chaos, and

the vague and flitting dreams of the Reformers were formally materialized on the reconstruction of the Church's doctrine and worship, it was owing to the gentle but firm influence of the man, who however accused of pliability and inconsistency, still steadily held on. In Mary's reign, as we have seen, the Simon became a Peter, and the man who by nature was endowed with a gentle, tolerant, conciliatory disposition, to say nothing of the disadvantages and disabilities of a storm-tossed age, emerged triumphantly in the final act of his life.

“Life may be given in many ways,  
 And loyalty to truth be sealed  
 As bravely in the closet as the field.  
 But then to stand beside her,  
 When craven churls deride her  
 To front a lie in arms and not to yield.  
 This shows methinks, God's plan,  
 And measure of a stalwart man;  
 Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
 Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth.

Such was he our Martyr-Chief.

I praise him not; it were too late;  
 And some innate weakness there must be  
 In him who condescends to victory  
 Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait:  
 He knew to bide his time;  
 And can his fame abide,  
 Still patient in his simple faith sublime.  
 Till the wise years decide.”

What after all may be taken as the heart and secret of this influential life. What was the cause

final of his work and efforts as a Churchman and as a man?

What was it that led the Archbishop of Canterbury from the time of his consecration to prosecute with almost an undeviable consistency the cause of ecclesiastical reform, and to pursue it with whatever transient phases of halting and hesitation, to its final goal, the reformation of the Church of England as a particular or national church? What was it that inspired him with what became the supreme aim and purpose of his life, to restore once more to the people of God's Church in its simplicity and scripturalness, the worship that through the de-formation of the ages had become traditional, superstitious, and unintelligible; to wrest the monopoly of Church worship from monastics and priests and choir and give it back once more to the priesthood of the laity; an object surely worthy of a life, and of a death? What was it that led Cranmer with such undeviating firmness to labour for the transformation of the Mass into the simple Communion Service of the Church of England; to overturn that which for a thousand years had woven itself into the nation's ecclesiastical life as the supreme and highest act of worship, and to substitute for it the Supper of the Lord on the Lord's Table, as a memorial of the Lord's death? What was it that led him with such singular determination and perseverance to labor for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures as the inspired source of doctrine, and the inspired guide of life? What was it that

led him, a devout and simple-hearted child of the Romish faith, a sincere and true-hearted believer in the teachings of Rome, to repudiate with insistent energy not only the supremacy of the Pope, but the whole body of Roman teaching, as a system which falsified the truth of God and overwhelmed men with Christless ignorance? That conviction, that change, that patient resolve, all sprang from one source, and are explained by one thing. Thomas Cranmer was a man whose heart-life was changed by the power of God's spirit operating through God's Word. That, as he once simply and solemnly stated it in his own language, was the secret of all.

Writing in answer to one of his critics on one occasion, to explain the change that had come over him, he uttered words that I have sometimes thought deserve to be written in letters of gold. They are these :

*“ I confess of myself that I was in that error of the Real Presence as I was many years past, in divers other 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 ; being brought up from youth in them and noursled (nursed) therein, for lack of good instruction from my youth, the outrageous floods of Papistical errors at that time overflowing the world. For the which, and other mine offences in youth, I do daily pray unto God for mercy and pardon, saying, ‘ Good Lord, remember not mine*

*ignorances and offences of my youth.' But after it had pleased God to show unto me, by his Holy Word, a more perfect knowledge of His Son Jesus Christ, from time to time, as I grew in knowledge of Him, by little and little I put away my former ignorance. And as God of His mercy gave me light, so through His grace I opened my eyes to receive it, and did not wilfully repugn unto God and remain in darkness."*—Cranmer. On the Lord's Supper. Pa k. Soc. 374.

That, in a nutshell, is the secret of the Reformation of the Church of England.

The re-formation of the Church of England was not due to convocations, or Kings, or Parliaments. It was due to the spiritual enlightenment of certain great English Churchmen. The Church was reformed because the reformers were converted, and the conversion of the reformers was effected by the same forces that inaugurated the primitive Church; the Spirit of God through the Word of God. This, then, was the secret of Cranmer's life-work. God had showed him Jesus Christ. God had been pleased to reveal His own Son to Cranmer by means of His Holy Word. It was because Cranmer grew in knowledge of Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour, and Teacher, and Lord, that he shed little by little the remnants of his early ignorances, doctrinal and ritual. That was the reason that he, like Paul, preached the faith that once he destroyed. That was the reason that, though by nature timid, he became so brave and took a daring

stand. "I will never consent to the Bishop of Rome," he said, "for then should I give myself to the Devil." "I cannot, with conscience," he again asserted, "obey the Pope." "Although the Bishop of Rome, whom they call Pope, beareth the room of Christ on earth, and hath power of God, yet by that power and authority he has not become unsinnable." It was this that made him stand alone facing the angry crowd at Oxford, undaunted and unmoved as they shouted *Vicit Veritas*, and refuse his obeisance with quiet dignity to the representative of the Pope, while he bowed to the representatives of England's Court. It was this that led him at last to the stake at Oxford. For it must never be forgotten that the man who died at Oxford, as Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England's Church, died there because he refused to believe in the real the corporal presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord. Did he, or did he not, believe in the corporal presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper; that was the question. Repudiating that, he died. The Archbishop of England's Church was burned at the stake because he refused to accept the Communion teaching of the Church of Rome. It was that too that was the secret explanation of much of the misjudgment and nearly all of the abuse that has fallen to the lot of Thomas Cranmer.

What, then, are the verdicts of individual judges



with regard to a career like this? "Truth is the daughter of time," said old Bishop Fox in 1537, "and time is the mother of truth, and whatsoever is besieged of Truth cannot long continue; and upon whose side Truth doth stand, that ought not to be thought transitory, or that it will ever fall."

"My Lords," said the Duke of Argyle in a memorable speech in 1885, upon the political situation, "the social reforms of this last century have not been mainly due to the Liberal party. They have been mainly due to the influence, character, and perseverance of one man, Lord Shaftesbury." "That," said Lord Salisbury, in endorsing this eloquent tribute, "that is, I believe, a very true representation of the facts."

So, slightly altering this, we may say: The ecclesiastical reforms of the Church of England in the sixteenth century were not mainly due to a political party, or even to the King; they were due mainly to the influence, character, and perseverance of one man, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. If the Church of England to-day is peculiarly democratic in its character and in its worship; if the language of its liturgy is the mother tongue of England's people, and the salient feature of its worship the right of participation of the people in all its services; if its offices from beginning to end are saturated with Scripture and expressed in Scripture; if its calm, and dignified, and beautiful devotion is at once spiritual in expression and edifying in effect; if its doctrines

are based upon the purest teachings of the Holy Bible, and in conformity with the purest ideals of the Apostles of Jesus Christ; if not only England's Church but English Christians have had secured to them an open Bible in the Church; it is, in the main, because of the earnest purpose and rare devotion of this scholar and statesman, that accomplished liturgist and dying martyr, Thomas Cranmer.

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