

HUGH LATIMER

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Hugh Latimer by R. M. Carlyle & A. J. Carlyle

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After the Picture in the National Portrait Gallery, from a photograph by Messrs. Walker & Boucalt

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BY
R. M. CARLYLE
AND

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CHAPLAIN AND LECTURER (LATE FELLOW) OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OXFORD,
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PREFACE

It is difficult to write a life of any of the more important personages of the English Reformation; it is difficult to write without prejudice, and the documents of the last part of the reign of Henry VIII. and of the reign of Edward VI. have not yet been calendared. We have endeavoured to give a brief account of Latimer's life and doings, without attempting to deal in detail with the great critical and controversial questions of the time; some will, no doubt, think this improper, but we should like to point out that Latimer's position in English History is not of the kind to make a life of him a convenient starting-point for a discussion of the complicated circumstances of those times.

We have to express our obligations to Canon Dixon's *History of the Church of England in the Time of the Reformation*, especially for the reign of Edward VI. and Queen Mary. The references to the *State Papers* are to the "Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic," of the reign of Henry VIII. References to Latimer's *Sermons* and *Remains* are to the two volumes in the Parker Society's publications. References to Strype's *Memorials* are to the edition of the Clarendon Press, 1822, and to Strype's *Cranmer*, Clarendon Press, 1812. Morice, to whom

occasional reference is made (taken from Strype), was at one time secretary to Cranmer, and probably reasonably well acquainted with the circumstances of Latimer's life. Augustine Bernher was a personal servant of Latimer. The references to Foxe are to the edition of the *Acts and Monuments* published by R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, London, 1838.

LIFE OF LATIMER

CHAPTER I

THE history of the Reformation, especially in England, is the history of one of the most complex movements in the history of Europe. The great changes of the sixteenth century were the results of many forces, closely, no doubt, interrelated, but yet diverse in their character. And yet it is but a superficial judgment which fails to perceive that below all the complex forces of the Reformation there lay one great force,—the force of the revival of religion, a passion which possessed men for the recovery of a more spiritual, and therefore a more free and spontaneous, religious life.

The characters of the men who played the greater parts in this movement are often as perplexing as the movement itself. In England especially they are often interesting, but almost always perplexing, full of ideas and gifted with great qualities; but they lack the direct, straightforward, robust character of the great reformers of Germany and Switzerland. And yet again, it is a hasty and superficial judgment which fails to recognise that these men were profoundly stirred, were full of a genuine zeal for the

truth. It is no doubt, however, this very lack of simplicity which throws into greater relief the characters of those few great Englishmen, like Sir Thomas More on the one side and Latimer on the other, whose characters exhibit just those qualities of directness, of straightforward simplicity which we usually miss. It was to these qualities, combined with a rare gift of terse and homely eloquence, that Latimer owed his great influence in the movement of the Reformation in England. He would have been the first to acknowledge that he could lay no claim to the title of an original theological thinker, but he did more than any other to translate the conceptions of the theologians of the Reformation in England into language which could be understood of all men; and the simplicity and dignity of his life and death did more than was done by any other to compel the reverence of Englishmen for the Reformation.

In studying the life of Latimer, we must from the outset bear steadily in mind how very different was the Reformation in England before the great reaction under Mary, from the Reformation settlement under Elizabeth. In the movement before Mary we are compelled to recognise that the aims of the religious and of the political leaders of the country moved upon different lines, on lines which only occasionally were even parallel, and that, properly speaking, no reconciliation between their different aims had been reached, until in the reign of Edward VI. the religious leaders persuaded the political, for the time being, to adopt their views. We must remember, too, that the religious leaders had not precisely the same aims before, as after, the Marian persecution. During the