

THE STRUGGLE WITH PURITANISM

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The struggle with Puritanism by Bruce Blaxland

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BRUCE BLAXLAND

**THE STRUGGLE
WITH PURITANISM**

HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

General Editor :

JOHN HENRY BURN, B.D., F.R.S.E.

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN

THE STRUGGLE WITH PURITANISM

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BY
BRUCE BLAXLAND, M.A.

VICAR OF THE ABBEY CHURCH, SHREWSBURY

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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THE initial impulse to undertake the task of editing this series was given me, so far back as 1897, by the late Dr Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London. He was good enough to suggest the names of some of the writers whom I should invite to collaborate; and he drew up what he called "a rough scheme," of which the following is a modification.

- I. The Foundations of the English Church (to A.D. 800).
- II. The Anglo-Saxon Church and the Norman Conquest (A.D. 800-1135).
- III. The Mediæval Church and the Papacy (A.D. 1135-1485).
- IV. The Reformation Period (A.D. 1485-1603).
- V. The Struggle with Puritanism (A.D. 1603-1702).
- VI. The English Church in the Eighteenth Century.

The names of the six scholars, who have accepted the invitation to contribute to this series, are a sufficient guarantee that the work is conceived in no narrow spirit of partisanship, but with the earnest desire to do justice to all parties, whether religious or political. The Editor has thought it right to allow to each writer the utmost freedom of treatment consistent with

the general plan of the series. If here and there this has resulted in some slight divergence of view between one volume and another, he believes that it will prove rather advantageous than detrimental to the utility of the work; for much would be lost, and very little gained, by preventing a writer from giving free expression to his own view of the facts, and of the inferences to be drawn from them.

J. H. BURN

THE PARSONAGE
BALLATER

INTRODUCTION

THE title of this volume—'The Struggle with Puritanism'—may at first sight appear to express only half the truth. For, as the following pages will prove, the struggle with the adherents of the Pope was at times equally severe, and during the reign of James II. was the absorbing topic in most men's minds and conversation. Yet the words describe the period sufficiently well when the two great principles which had been struggling for the mastery since the early days of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, were now the principles upon which two great parties within the Church and State were to fight not merely for toleration but for existence. One party appealed to the Catholic Fathers, wished to retain the Catholic Hierarchy and the Liturgy of the Church. They were sons of the Reformers; but they stood for a Reformed Catholicism. The other party would in time bring the English Church into conformity with the Reformed religion of Geneva. Their great authority and master was John Calvin.

1. Two permanent results of the discussions, conferences, controversies, and indeed civil war which arose out of these fundamental differences, are the English Bible and the English Prayer Book. The history of the times which produced them, and the way in which they were accepted, are of the greatest value and importance to us who have in our own lives seen the

publication of a Revised Bible, and when we are considering proposals for, or reading of discussions about a Revised Prayer Book.

2. The great men of the period are possibly not such attractive characters as the saints of the early days—Aidan or Wilfrid, Oswald or Alfred; but we are reading of men who lived in days which are nearer our own, and in difficulties which we can more easily appreciate. They were not men who were likely to be popular, but they did solid work both for their own day and for future times. 'Anglicanus clerus stupor mundi.'

Of the great ecclesiastics, no man did so much or so enduring a work as Laud, and no man has been judged more differently. How the estimation of his life and character has changed can best be understood by comparing the Laud of Macaulay with the Laud of Professor S. R. Gardiner. The latter writer, who could have no sympathy with the Archbishop's objects, gives his judgment that Laud and not his enemies was on the side of liberty. Nor is it less interesting to notice how Bishop Creighton's views upon Laud underwent a considerable change. He wrote in 1880, "Laud is an interesting character, excellent but *narrow*, with every private virtue and deep religious feeling, but unsympathetic towards others and believing too much in outward organization, a sort of ecclesiastical policeman at best."¹ In 1898 he says, "Laud was a man of great ideas, and a man who was unflinching and unwavering in his pursuit of truth . . . his ideal of the Church of England was probably higher and truer than that of any other man, certainly of his time. . . . Personally he was *large-minded* and *tolerant*, but he was prepared

¹ 'Life of Creighton,' vol. i. p. 216.