1. Nicholas Ridley (1500?–1555), Bishop of London; Hugh Latimer (1492?–1555), former Bishop of Worcester, preacher to Edward VI.

2. Fur trimmings.

3. The prison in Oxford.

4. With great effect.

JOHN FOXE

From Acts and Monuments

OF THESE LATTER AND PERILOUS DAYS, TOUCHING MATTERS OF THE CHURCH, WHEREIN ARE COMPREHENDED AND DESCRIBED THE GREAT PERSECUTION AND HORRIBLE TROUBLES THAT HAVE BEEN WROUGHT AND PRACTICES BY THE ROMISH PRELATES FROM THE YEAR OF OUR LORD A THOUSAND TO THE TIME NOW PRESENT

The Behavior of Dr. Ridley and Master Latimer,¹ at the Time of Their Death, which was the Sixteenth of October, an. 1555

Upon the north side of the town, in the ditch over against Balliol College, the place of execution was appointed; and for fear of any tumult that might arise, to let the burning of them, the Lord Williams was commanded by the queen's letters (and the householders of the city) to be there assistant, sufficiently appointed. And when everything was in a readiness, the prisoners were brought forth by the mayor and the bailiffs.

Master Ridley had a fair black gown furred, and faced with foins,² such as he was wont to wear being bishop, and a tippet of velvet furred likewise about his neck, a velvet nightcap upon his head, and a corner cap upon the same, going in a pair of slippers to the stake, and going between the mayor and an alderman, etc. After him came Master Latimer in a poor Bristol frieze frock all worn, with his buttoned cap, and a kerchief on his head all ready to the fire, a new long shroud hanging over his hose down to the feet; which at the first sight stirred men’s hearts to rue upon them, beholding on the one side the honor they sometime had, and on the other, the calamity whereunto they were fallen.

Master Doctor Ridley, as he passed towards Bocardo,³ looking up where Master Cranmer did lie, hoping belike to have seen him at the glass window and to have spoken unto him. But then Master Cranmer was busy with Friar Soto and his fellows, disputing together, so that he could not see him through that occasion. Then Master Ridley, looking back, espied Master Latimer coming after, unto whom he said, “Oh, be ye there?” “Yea,” said Master Latimer, “have after as fast as I can follow.” So he following a pretty way off, at length they came both to the stake, one after the other, where first Dr. Ridley entering the place, marvelous earnestly holding up both his hands, looked towards heaven. Then shortly after espying Master Latimer, with a wondrous cheerful look, ran to him, embraced, and kissed him; and, as they that stood near reported, comforted him saying, “Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it.” With that went he to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and most effectuously prayed, and behind him Master Latimer kneeled, as earnestly calling upon God as he. After they arose, the one talked with the other a little while, till

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they which were appointed to see the execution removed themselves out of the sun. What they said I can learn of no man.

Then Dr. Smith, of whose recantation in King Edward’s time ye heard before, began his sermon to them upon this text of St. Paul in the 13 chap. of the first epistle to the Corinthians: “Si corpus meum tradam igni, charitatem autem non habeam, nihil inde utilitatis capio,” that is, “If I yield my body to the fire to be burned and have not charity, I shall gain nothing thereby.” Wherein he alleged that the goodness of the cause, and not the order of death, maketh the holiness of the person; which he confirmed by the examples of Judas, and of a woman in Oxford that of late hanged herself, for that they, and such like as he recited, might then be adjudged righteous, which desperately sundered their lives from their bodies, as he feared that those men that stood before him would do. But he cried still to the people to beware of them, for they were heretics, and died out of the church. And on the other side, he declared their diversities in opinions, as Lutherans, Oecolampadians, Zwinglians, of which sect they were, he said, and that was the worst; but the old church of Christ and the Catholic faith believed far otherwise. At which place they lifted up both their hands and eyes to heaven, as it were calling God to witness of the truth; the which countenance they made in many other places of his sermon, whereas they thought he spake amiss. He ended with a very short exhortation to them to recant, and come home again to the church, and save their lives and souls, which else were condemned. His sermon was scant in all a quarter of an hour.

Dr. Ridley said to Master Latimer, “Will you begin to answer the sermon, or shall I?” Master Latimer said: “Begin you first, I pray you.” “I will,” said Master Ridley.

Then the wicked sermon being ended, Dr. Ridley and Master Latimer kneeled down upon their knees towards my Lord Williams of Tame, the vice-chancellor of Oxford, and divers other commissioners appointed for that purpose, which sat upon a form thereby. Unto whom Master Ridley said: “I beseech you, my lord, even for Christ’s sake, that I may speak but two or three words.” And whilst my lord bent his head to the mayor and vice-chancellor, to know (as it appeared) whether he might give him leave to speak, the bailiffs and Dr. Marshall, vice-chancellor, ran hastily unto him, and with their hands stopped his mouth, and said: “Master Ridley, if you will revoke your erroneous opinions, and recant the same, you shall not only have liberty so to do, but also the benefit of a subject; that is, have your life.” “Not otherwise?” said Master Ridley. “No,” quoth Dr. Marshall. “Therefore if you will not so do, then there is no remedy but you must suffer for your deserts.” “Well,” quoth Master Ridley, “so long as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ, and his known truth; God’s will be done in me!” And with that he rose up and said with a loud voice: “Well then, I commit our cause to almighty God, which shall indifferently judge all.” To whose saying, Master Latimer added his old posy, “Well! There is nothing hid but it shall be opened.” And he said he could answer Smith well enough, if he might be suffered.

5. Richard Smith, D.D. (1500–63); he had recanted in 1547 but later repudiated his recantation.
6. Followers, respectively, of Martin Luther (1483–1546), founder of the Reformation in Germany; Johann Oecolampadius (1482–1531), organizer of Protestantism at Basle; Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), organizer of Protestantism in Zürich.
7. Motto.
Incontinently they were commanded to make them ready, which they with all meekness obeyed. Master Ridley took his gown and his tippet, and gave it to his brother-in-law Master Shipside, who all his time of imprisonment, although he might not be suffered to come to him, lay there at his own charges to provide him necessaries, which from time to time he sent him by the sergeant that kept him. Some other of his apparel that was little worth, he gave away; other the bailiffs took. He gave away besides divers other small things to gentlemen standing by, and divers of them pitifully weeping, as to Sir Henry Lea he gave a new groat; and to divers of my Lord Williams’ gentlemen some napkins, some nutmegs, and races of ginger; his dial, and such other things as he had about him, to everyone that stood next him. Some plucked the points of his hose. Happy was he that might get any rag of him. Master Latimer gave nothing, but very quickly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose and his other array, which to look unto was very simple; and being stripped into his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that were present as one should lightly see; and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked silly old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold.

Then Master Ridley, standing as yet in his truss, said to his brother: “It were best for me to go in my truss still.” “No,” quoth his brother, “it will put you to more pain; and the truss will do a poor man good.” Whereunto Master Ridley said: “Be it, in the name of God”; and so unlaced himself. Then being in his shirt, he stood upon the foresaid stone, and held up his hand and said: “Oh heavenly Father, I give unto thee most hearty thanks, for that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I beseech thee, Lord God, take mercy upon this realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies.”

Then the smith took a chain of iron, and brought the same about both Dr. Ridley’s and Master Latimer’s middles; and as he was knocking in a staple, Dr. Ridley took the chain in his hand, and shaked the same, for it did gird in his belly, and looking aside to the smith, said: “Good fellow, knock it in hard, for the flesh will have his course.” Then his brother did bring him gunpowder in a bag, and would have tied the same about his neck. Master Ridley asked what it was. His brother said, “Gunpowder.” “Then,” said he, “I take it to be sent of God; therefore I will receive it as sent of him. And have you any,” said he, “for my brother? meaning Master Latimer. “Yea, sir, that I have,” quoth his brother. “Then give it unto him,” said he, “better time; lest ye come too late.” So his brother went, and carried of the same gunpowder unto Master Latimer.

In the meantime Dr. Ridley spake unto my Lord Williams, and said: “My lord, I must be a suitor unto your lordship in the behalf of divers poor men, and specially in the cause of my poor sister; I have made a supplication to the Queen’s Majesty in their behalves. I beseech your lordship for Christ’s sake, to be a mean to her Grace for them. My brother here hath the supplication, and will resort to your lordship to certify you hereof. There is nothing in all the world that troubleth my conscience, I praise God, this only excepted. Whiles I was in the see of London divers poor men took leases of me, and agreed with

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8. Immediately.
9. “This was no Popish tippet, but made only to keep his neck warm” [Foxe’s note].
1. Roots.
2. Watch.
3. Innocent, harmless.
4. A close-fitting body garment or jacket.
5. Believer in, advocate of.
me for the same. Now I hear say the bishop⁶ that now occupieth the same room will not allow my grants unto them made, but contrary unto all law and conscience hath taken from them their livings, and will not suffer them to enjoy the same. I beseech you, my lord, be a mean for them; you shall do a good deed, and God will reward you."

Then they brought a faggot, kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Dr. Ridley’s feet. To whom Master Latimer spake in this manner: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

And so the fire being given unto them, when Dr. Ridley saw the fire flaming up toward him, he cried with a wonderful loud voice: “In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum; Domine, recipe, spiritum meum.” And after, repeated this latter part often in English, “Lord, Lord, receive my spirit”; Master Latimer crying as vehemently on the other side, “Oh Father of heaven, receive my soul!” who received the flame as it were embracing of it. After, as he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died (as it appeared) with very little pain or none. And thus much concerning the end of this old and blessed servant of God, Master Latimer, for whose laborious travails, fruitful life, and constant death the whole realm hath cause to give great thanks to almighty God.

But Master Ridley, by reason of the evil making of the fire unto him, because the wooden faggots were laid about the gosse⁷ and over-high built, the fire burned first beneath, being kept down by the wood; which when he felt, he desired them for Christ’s sake to let the fire come unto him. Which when his brother-in-law heard, but not well understood, intending to rid him out of his pain (for the which cause he gave attendance), as one in such sorrow not well advised what he did, heaped faggots upon him, so that he clean covered him, which made the fire more vehement beneath, that it burned clean all his nether parts, before it once touched the upper; that that made him leap up and down under the faggots, and often desire them to let the fire come unto him, saying, “I cannot burn.” Which indeed appeared well; for, after his legs were consumed by reason of his struggling through the pain (whereof he had no release, but only his contentation⁸ in God), he showed that side toward us clean, shirt and all untouched with flame. Yet in all this torment he forgot not to call upon God still, having in his mouth, “Lord have mercy upon me,” intermingling this cry, “Let the fire come unto me, I cannot burn.” In which pains he labored till one of the standers-by with his bill⁹ pulled off the faggots above, and where he saw the fire flame up, he wrested himself unto that side. And when the flame touched the gunpowder, he was seen stir no more, but burned on the other side, falling down at Master Latimer’s feet. Which some said happened by reason that the chain loosed; other said that he fell over the chain by reason of the poise¹ of his body and the weakness of the nether limbs.

Some said that before he was like to fall from the stake, he desired them to hold him to it with their bills. Howsoever it was, surely it moved hundreds to tears, in beholding the horrible sight; for I think there was none that had not clean exiled all humanity and mercy which would not have lamented to behold the fury of the fire so to rage upon their bodies. Signs there were of sorrow

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6. Edmund Bonner (ca. 1500–69); he had preceded Ridley as Bishop of London during the reign of Edward VI, and became Bishop again on Mary’s accession.
7. Gorse, used as kindling.
8. Satisfaction.
1. Weight.
on every side. Some took it grievously to see their deaths, whose lives they held full dear; some pitied their persons, that thought their souls had no need thereof. His brother moved many men, seeing his miserable case, seeing (I say) him compelled to such infelicity, that he thought then to do him best service when he hastened his end. Some cried out of the luck, to see his endeavor (who most dearly loved him, and sought his release) turn to his greater vexation and increase of pain. But whoso considered their preferments in time past, the places of honor that they sometime occupied in this commonwealth, the favor they were in with their princes, and the opinion of learning they had, could not choose but sorrow with tears to see so great dignity, honor, and estimation, so necessary members sometime accounted, so many godly virtues, the study of so many years, such excellent learning, to be put into the fire and consumed in one moment. Well! dead they are, and the reward of this world they have already. What reward remaineth for them in heaven, the day of the Lord's glory, when he cometh with his saints, shall shortly, I trust, declare.