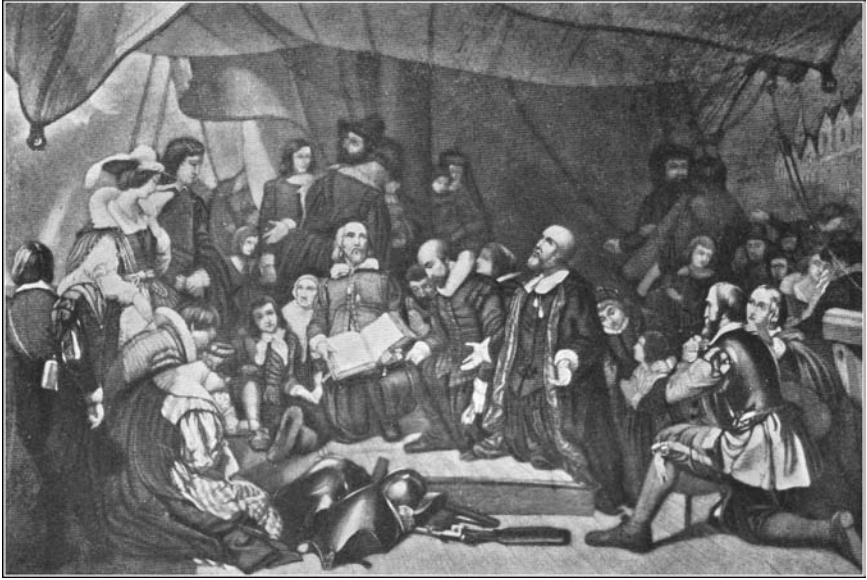


# **SAINTS AND HEROES**

**SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES**



## THE EMBARKATION OF THE PILGRIMS

From the Painting by Robert Walter Wier,  
in the Capitol, Washington.

The Central Figure with the  
Open Book is William Brewster

**SAINTS AND  
HEROES**  
**SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES**

**BY**  
**GEORGE HODGES**

*with illustrations*



**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS**  
**CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

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# Luther

**1483-1546**

ON the last day of October, in the year 1517, a German monk posted a paper on a church door in Wittenberg. It was written in Latin, and was addressed to theologians. It contained a series of statements concerning the doctrine and practice of indulgences. The writer desired to have the matter discussed. It seemed to him that there was something wrong about it, and he would be glad to hear what wiser men might say. Here, he said, are indulgences preached and sold throughout the Church; is it right? is it in accordance with the gospel and the truth? The paper was a question.

Now the meaning of an indulgence was this. Every sin deserves the punishment of God. The sure consequence of sin is eternal suffering in hell. But by the grace of God, and the cross of Christ, and the ministry of the Church, there is a way of escape. Every sin may be forgiven, if the sinner is truly sorry and repents. In order, however, to obtain this forgiveness, the repentant sinner, they said, must

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confess his sin to a priest, and be, by him, assured of the pardon of God, and in addition must do what the priest tells him as a penance. The priest, in the old time, told him to fast, or to give money to the poor, or to go on a pilgrimage. In the days of the crusades, sinners were told that, in the place of the former penances, they might enlist as soldiers in the armies which were going to the Holy Land to take Jerusalem from the Turks. By-and-by, they were told that they might be assured of forgiveness if they paid the expenses of somebody else who was willing to go in their place. Then they were told they might gain the same blessing by giving money for some other good purpose; for example, for the building of a church. These substitutes for the old penances were called indulgences.

Gradually and naturally, this doctrine gave rise to grave errors and evils. One of the errors was that simple and ignorant people easily believed that the forgiveness of God was gained, not by repentance, but by indulgence. If they sinned, they could make it right, they thought, and escape punishment, by the payment of money. And this payment, they imagined, would affect them, not only in this world, but in the world to come; and would obtain pardon not only for themselves, but for others who had gone already into that other world. One of the evils was that this error was made a means of raising money for the Church. People gladly paid for the building of cathedrals and monasteries in the belief that they were thereby gaining forgiveness for their



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sins, and salvation for their souls and for the souls of their friends.

So when Pope Leo X wished to raise a great sum of money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Church at Rome, he undertook to do it by the sale of indulgences. It seemed as right in those days to build a church by means of indulgences as it seemed right in this country a hundred years ago to build a church by means of lotteries. The raising of this money in Germany was put into the hands of a man named Tetzl. He was a frank, straightforward person, with a better head for business than for religion, but with a great ability to appeal to the people. He knew how to speak to crowds. Tetzl took the doctrine of indulgences as he found it, and used it, as the phrase is, for all it was worth. He went about as a revival preacher goes to-day, having preparations made for his coming, enlisting all the ministers of the place, and holding great meetings. But his purpose was simply to get money. He began by preaching about sin and about hell. Now, he said, what have you done? All sins may be forgiven. Here is the promise of the pope, here are letters of indulgence, here is the opportunity for a little money to save your souls. And your friends,—perhaps you have a father or a mother, perhaps you have children, gone into the other world, in purgatory,—you may save them also. “Do you not hear your dead parents crying out, ‘Have mercy upon us? We are in sore pain and you can set us free for a mere pittance?’ ”

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This was what Martin Luther had in mind when he posted his paper concerning indulgences on the church door in Wittenberg.

Luther was already one of the foremost men in the Church in Germany. Born the son of a miner, among hills filled with copper, he had made his way by his own efforts through school and college, and had begun to study law. Suddenly, amidst the terrors of a thunderstorm, he had changed his mind and had given himself to the ministry. He had entered a monastery in Erfurt. There he had gone through long seasons of deep depression, trying to save his soul by fasting and pain and prayer. For days he went without food, for nights he went without sleep, hoping thus to gain the good-will of God. He was terribly afraid of God, and feared that he would be lost at last in the torments of hell. But in the monastery he found wise advisers. One good brother said, "Martin, you are a fool. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God." Another good brother, Staupitz, the head of the monastery, to whom Luther cried, "Oh, my sin, my sin, my sin!" replied, "You have no real sin. You make a sin out of every trifle." Staupitz urged him to trust in the mercy and love of God who freely forgives those who put their faith in Christ. He saw also that what Luther needed was an active life, and to be occupied, not in thinking about himself, but in ministering to others.

Then Staupitz became dean of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg, and he called Luther out of the monastery to be professor of logic

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and ethics. Presently he sent him on an errand to Rome, to see a bit of the great world. On his return Luther took his degree of doctor of divinity, and began to preach in the city church. He was appointed to teach theology to the young monks in the Wittenberg monastery, and men came to be instructed by him till the place was overcrowded. When he was but thirty-one he was made district-vicar, and put in charge of eleven monasteries. His hands were full of business. Then Staupitz made him his successor, in the chair of biblical theology.

There was already a new interest in the study of the Bible, and Luther entered into his new duties with enthusiasm, learning Greek and Hebrew, and reading all the latest books. He was at the same time the most popular preacher in the town, and the most popular professor in the university; and his fame began to go abroad. He had a practical mind, and was interested, not only in doctrine, but in conduct. And he had a remarkably strong and free and original way of expressing himself. Thus he criticized the common way of thinking about the saints. Instead of trying to be like them, people were praying to the saints to help them. "We honor them," said Luther, "and call upon them only when we have a pain in our legs or our head, or when our pockets are empty."

This was the man who posted on his church door a proposition that the theologians should look seriously into the matter of indulgences.

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MARTIN LUTHER

From a Print in the Possession of the  
New York Public Library.

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Luther's thesis, as his paper was called, set all Europe talking. People were ready for great changes. It was as when the spring comes after a long winter, and the brooks begin to flow again, and the grass grows green, and buds appear upon the trees. The invention of the mariner's compass had enabled Columbus to steer due west across the Atlantic, and the new land which he had discovered showed that the world was much bigger than men had thought. The invention of powder and of printing had given men a gun in one hand and a book in the other, which were changing the conditions of society. The plain man with the gun was able to face the knight on horseback, and the plain man with the book was able to test the teachings of the scholar. It was the day of a new independence.

Thus, although Luther's questions as to the doctrine of indulgences were received by the theologians with suspicion and by the authorities with alarm, in both Church and state, the common people heard them gladly. They were translated out of Latin into German. "In fourteen days," says Luther, "the theses ran through all Germany; for the whole world was complaining of indulgences." And of other matters also; of other evils in religion, against which there seemed to have at last appeared a leader.

For the indulgences had been sold in the name of the pope, and by his authority; and Tetzal, in defending them, had declared that the pope could do no wrong. "The pope," said Tetzal, "cannot err in those things which are of faith and necessary to

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salvation.” And to this he added, “They who speak slightly of the pope are guilty of blasphemy.”

And the pope was against Luther. At first, he had considered the theses as of no importance. “A drunken German wrote them,” he is reported to have said. “When he is sober, he will think differently.” But the more he heard about the matter, the less he liked it. Then he summoned Luther to Rome to be put on trial. And Luther, being protected by his prince, the Elector Frederick, refused to go.

Mititz, on behalf of the pope, met him with persuasions to hold his peace. He told him that if he would change his mind the pope would make him a bishop, or an archbishop, or a cardinal. Eck, on behalf of the pope, met him with arguments. He told him that his opinions were like those for which John Hus had been burned at the stake.

Luther, on his side, appealed, at first, from the pope ill-informed to the pope better-informed, and then from the pope to a general council of the Church. The question of indulgences fell into the background. The debate now turned upon the power of the pope. Was he indeed the representative of Christ on earth, in such a sense that his word was truth, and his will was law? Luther declared his determination to think for himself, and to make up his own mind, and to say that which he believed to be right and true. He would be bound, he said, neither by the pope nor by the Church. He would be guided by the Bible and his own conscience.

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There are two ancient and universal parties in religion. On one side are those who are interested in the institution, in services and sacraments, in customs and traditions. They were represented in the Old Testament by the priests, in the New Testament by the Scribes and Pharisees. On the other side are those who are interested in the individual, in the relation of religion to actual, present conditions. They were represented in the Old Testament by the prophets, in the New Testament by the apostles. The motto of one party is "It is written"; they refer to the law and authority, and desire to keep in the old ways. The motto of the other party is "It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us"; they refer to the voice of God speaking in their own souls, and are ready to change as their knowledge of the truth changes, or their understanding of the needs of men. One party is conservative, the other is progressive. They are both right, but they are never both right at the same time. Now the conservatives are right, and contend on the side of God against the progressives who are attacking that which is both old and true, and are throwing the Church into disorder. Now the progressives are right, and contend on the side of God against the conservatives who are maintaining that which is not only old but mistaken, and are trying to keep out the light, and are resisting reformation.

In Luther's time it was the progressives who were right, and he was the leader of them.

Matters came rapidly to a crisis. In 1520, the pope issued a bull of excommunication against

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Luther. The word bull is from the Latin *bulia*, meaning the leaden seal which was attached to important documents. It came to be applied to the documents themselves. The effect of an excommunication was to expel the offender, not only from the Holy Communion, but from intercourse with his neighbors; nobody was allowed to trade with him or speak to him. This, however, depended on public opinion. In order to make an excommunication effective, people must believe that the pope had the power to issue it, and that in issuing it he was expressing the will of God. Wherever this was not believed, the bull was worth no more than the paper on which it was written. Already there were so many persons in Germany who were disposed to disregard the pope, that Luther, when he received the bull, called together the professors and students of the university and burned the thing.

And so strongly was Luther supported by the nobles, the lawyers, the priests, and the people of Germany, that in spite of the excommunication he was permitted to plead his cause before the emperor, and the representatives of the states and cities of the land. The council met at Worms, and to that city Luther went in spite of dangers. He knew that he might be set upon by the way and killed: he knew that he might be condemned and burned alive, as Hus had been. He said afterwards, "Had I known as many devils would set upon me as there were tiles on the roofs, I should have sprung into the midst of them with joy."



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Thus he stood before the representatives and rulers of Church and state. A pile of books which he had published was upon the table. They asked him if he wrote them, and he said that they were his. They asked him if he was prepared to stand by all that he had written, and he answered that some of the books were composed of sermons, concerning which nobody had raised a question: some were controversies with various persons, whom he had, perhaps, called harder names than was necessary, for he did not claim to be a saint; some were against the pope; he was prepared to stand by these, and to withdraw from them not a word. Nevertheless, he was willing to change his mind, if he could be proved wrong out of the Bible. "You demand a simple reply," he said, "and I will give it. Unless convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason, I cannot and will not revoke anything, for it is neither safe nor right to act against one's conscience. God help me. Amen."

The result was a formal condemnation. Luther's books were to be burned, nobody was to be allowed to read them, he himself was to be seized and sent to the emperor to be put in prison. Thus he was under the ban of the state as well as of the Church, and was declared an outlaw. This decision continued without repeal all the rest of Luther's life. But it had no more effect than the pope's bull. For even the laws of the civil courts depend on the will of the people. Luther lived all his days thereafter under the protection of the people.

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For the moment, however, it seemed prudent to remove him from the hands of his enemies. One night, as he was taking his journey, returning from Worms to Wittenberg, he was met in a lonely road by a company of armed horsemen, his companions were put to flight, and he was taken by secret paths through the woods to the castle of the Wartburg. There he found himself among friends, who had taken this way to bring him into a safe hiding-place. He lived in this friendly imprisonment for nearly a year, while all the world wondered what had become of him. That he was still alive was made plain by the fact that he continued to write and publish letters, tracts, and pamphlets. One time the Archbishop of Mayence ventured to begin again the sale of indulgences, but on the receipt of a single letter from the hidden Luther he changed his plans in a fright.

It was during his year in the Wartburg that Luther made his translation of the New Testament out of Greek into German. Afterwards, with the help of others, he translated the Old Testament, completing the whole work in 1534. This became the Bible of the German people, and had the effect of determining the German language. It had been spoken in a great number of different dialects; thenceforth it was spoken and written in the manner of Luther. And thus appearing in a form which became the German of old Germany, the Bible was brought into the possession of all the people. The prophets and apostles spoke to them in their own speech.

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Meanwhile, outside the Wartburg, and apart from the direction of Luther, events of importance were taking place. The Reformation was becoming a general movement. When Luther returned, he found much of which he disapproved. Rising up, as he did, in the face of authority, and declaring his individual and independent conviction, other men were moved to follow his example. And they were as ready to disagree with Luther as Luther had been ready to disagree with Rome. The Protestants were divided amongst themselves.

It was the desire of Luther to make few changes in religion. He felt that he and his followers were still in the ancient church, out of which, indeed, they had put the pope and the bishops and the superstition, but whose life and worship and ministry proceeded as before. But others, in the process of making changes, went on and on, till the difference between the old and the new became very great. They destroyed images and closed monasteries; they abandoned ancient customs, introduced strange services, and taught doctrines which had never been heard before.

Luther opposed, not only these radicals, but the great company of learned men called Humanists, who were led by Erasmus. They were quietly trying to establish truth on a basis of reason, and to encourage men to think freely, relying on the good sense and the good will of men. Luther, however, denied the freedom of the will, and put in the place of the authority of the Church the authority of the Bible. His idea was that men were not to reason

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about religion, but to take it just as they found it in the Scriptures. Thus he lost the support of the scholars.

At the same time the rebellion of Luther against the pope and the bishops was followed by men who rebelled against their employers and their masters. The Peasants' War was an uprising of the poor against the rich. They went about with clubs and torches, destroying property and lives. Luther's enemies declared that this was the natural consequence of Luther's teaching. He had cut the dikes of order and authority and obedience, they said, and, of course, the land was overflowed. Luther was as stout against the men who were claiming their right to live, as he was against those who were claiming their right to think. He denounced the peasants, and urged the princes to shoot them like mad dogs.

Thus he had his limitations, like most people, and having led the people a little way could conduct them no further. He did his great part, and others took up the work and continued it; as Columbus discovered America, but others settled it. Two things, however, Luther admirably taught. He taught the doctrine of salvation by faith, and the doctrine of the goodness of the common life.

When Luther came, men were being taught the doctrine of salvation by grace. Grace was a blessing given by God through the Church. It was bestowed by the priests in the sacraments. And that meant that the Church, the priests, and the sacraments were absolutely necessary to men in

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order to be saved. It made the Church a supreme power. Luther taught that salvation is by grace, but that grace is given to those who have faith. Faith is the act by which we perceive the love and forgiveness of God. It joins us to God; it gives the believer peace and joy and assurance of salvation. And it is independent of all means. It is between the individual and God, without the need of any priest. The love of God is revealed in the Bible, and it is set forth in the sacraments, but it is perceived by each person for himself. The effect of the doctrine was to set men free from the Church; they could get along without it, Luther said.

And this idea which made every man a priest to himself, and thus put away the distinction between the clergy and other people, made men see the goodness of all life. God is our father, and He made the world for us to enjoy. The Christian is not to turn his back upon it, and go out of it, but to enter into it freely and gladly, carrying on his business, having his family and friends, and behaving himself naturally. In a world where the ideal of a good life was a separation from all the common concerns and recreations of society, this was a new doctrine. "It looks like a great thing," said Luther, "when a monk renounces everything and goes into a cloister, carries on a life of asceticism, fasts, watches, prays, etc. On the other hand, it looks like a small thing when a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework. But because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God, far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of

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all monks and nuns. For here there is no command of God, but there God's command is fulfilled, that one should honor father and mother and help in the care of the home."

So Luther was married, and his wife, Katherine von Bora, made him a comfortable and happy home. Now he ate three good meals a day, and slept in a bed which was made up every morning, instead of once a year as when he lived alone. There he gathered his friends about him, and wrote his sermons and his books, and prepared the lectures which he gave in the University of Wittenberg. There he planted a garden, and dug a well; though Katherine could not persuade him to keep his study in order; books and papers were always in a pile upon his desk. He was busy unceasingly, directing a hundred enterprises, answering a hundred thousand questions, the counsellor of Protestants. He was often depressed to see how, after all, the Reformation had not very much reformed the world, and he had his share of pain and sickness.

Luther died in Eisleben, where he was born, and was buried in Wittenberg, where he lived most of his life. A great-hearted man, frank, sincere, full of courage and strength, often angry, often merry, loving God and his friends, and hating evil, he had the qualities of a soldier and of a pioneer. He will always be remembered as the man who broke the power of the Mediæval Church.

# More

**1478-1535**

A BOOK which Luther wrote on the “Babylonian Captivity of the Church” was answered in England by King Henry the Eighth. So stout was the orthodoxy of the king against the heresy of the reformer, that the pope conferred upon him the title, still borne by sovereigns of England, of Defender of the Faith. In this answer the king maintained that the pope was the greatest man in the world, and was to be obeyed, not only by all priests, but by all princes. He showed what he had written to Sir Thomas More, and More advised him not to publish it.

“You and the pope,” he said, “may some time fall out, and disagree. Then you may find that you have put a sword in the pope’s hand against yourself.” To this excellent advice the king paid no attention.

Sir Thomas More was the most eminent man of his time in England. He was known all over Europe for his scholarship and his statesmanship. But the most interesting thing about him for us is the fact that he represented, better than anybody

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else, the mind of many wise and good men who were in sympathy with the new ideas which were at that time beginning to change the world, and yet in sympathy also with the old ways. He was the intimate friend of Erasmus, who was the leader of such men in Europe.

More and Erasmus saw clearly that the Church of their day ought to be reformed. They felt, for example, very much as Luther felt about indulgences. They knew that religion, among many people, had come to be a matter of magic, a belief that saints and relics could save them from the punishment of their sins, and from the diseases of their bodies, and could bring them good luck both in this world and in the next. And they knew that religion, among many priests, had come to be a matter of money; all that they cared for was to be rich. They desired to have these evils stopped. Thus they were in sympathy with the reforms which had been started by Luther. But, at the same time, they cared greatly for the Church. They saw that along with all that was wrong, there was much more that was right. And this they wished to keep. They feared that the Reformation would go too far. When they found that Luther, having attacked the indulgences, had proceeded to attack the pope who permitted them, and having defied the pope, had denied the necessity of the sacraments from which the pope had excommunicated him, they felt that he was like a man, who, finding a wasps' nest under the eaves of his house, burns out the nest with so great a fire that he burns the whole house with it.



*MORE*



SIR THOMAS MORE

From the Painting after Holbein in the  
National Portrait Gallery

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Thus in a time when all the world was taking sides, some Protestant and others Catholic, some for the new and others for the old, More and Erasmus and such moderate men found themselves in a difficult position. They were on both sides, and on neither.

One time, while Henry the Seventh was the king, More, though he was but twenty-four years of age, was a member of Parliament; and the king demanded of the House of Commons a great sum of money, much more than he had any right to ask; and when the House was silent, being unwilling to vote the money, and yet unwilling to offend the king, More made a speech the effect of which was to give the king very much less than he had required. Some of the king's people told him that he had been defeated by a beardless boy. Coming thus under the ill-will of the king, he retired into private life. And there the debate between what was called the old learning and the new occupied his thoughts. At first, he studied Greek and science, like a man of the new time. Then he gave himself to devotion and prayer in a monastery, and planned to be a priest, like a man of the old time. The matter was happily decided for the moment by a visit which he made to Mr. Colt's house, in Essex, where he met his daughter Jane and married her. But it illustrates the contention in his mind between the new and the old.

Then the seventh Henry died, and the eighth Henry came to the throne, and More came out of his retirement into great favor. He was made a member of the Privy Council, and Treasurer of the Excheq-

## MORE

uer, and was chosen Speaker of Parliament. The new king so delighted in his conversation that More could hardly get leave to go home from the court to his own family as much as once a month. The king would send for him to come to his private room, and there would talk with him sometimes about this world, sometimes about the next, and then would take him to the palace roof on clear nights, "there to consider with him the diversities, courses, motions, and operations of the stars and planets." And when More, tiring of this and desiring to go home, would stay away from court, the king would visit him in his own house, coming to dinner without being invited, and afterwards walking with More in the garden by the hour together with his arm about his neck.

William Roper, More's son-in-law, who wrote his life, congratulated him on this royal friendship. But More said, "Son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go."

By-and-by, he was made Lord Chancellor; his father, in the meantime, being only a judge of the Court of the King's Bench. It is remembered that as Sir Thomas passed through Westminster Hall, he would often go into his father's court, and reverently kneel down and ask his father's blessing; and that when he and his father met in any place, "notwithstanding his high office, he would offer the pre-eminence to his father."

More became Lord Chancellor by reason of the fall of Cardinal Wolsey; and the fall of Cardinal

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Wolsey was occasioned by the difficulties connected with the king's divorce.

Henry the Eighth had married Catherine, his brother's widow, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. They had lived happily together, but their marriage had been saddened by the death of their children. Child after child died in infancy; only a daughter, Mary, lived. There was no son to follow Henry on the throne. Moreover, as one child after another died, Henry began to fear that he was being punished for a marriage which many good men believed to be against the will of God. These people thought it was wrong for a man to marry his deceased brother's wife. Then Henry fell in love with a young lady of the court, named Anne Boleyn.

Thus the rights and wrongs of the matter were very complicated. It was clearly right for Henry to regret leaving the succession to the throne in such doubt that there would probably be a war between different claimants. It was clearly wrong for Henry to fall in love with Anne Boleyn. As for the divorce which he desired from Catherine, some said one thing, and some another. Anyhow, it became Wolsey's business to secure the divorce by getting the permission of the pope. And in this he failed. In the changes of power in Europe, Italy and the pope came under the rule of Spain, and the pope would not venture to do a thing so offensive to Spain as to allow the divorce of the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Thus Wolsey fell into disgrace, and his chancellorship was given to Sir Thomas More.

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Then Henry decided to proceed with the divorce in spite of the pope. He followed Luther's example. The pope said to Luther, "You are excommunicated; you are from henceforth forbidden to partake of the sacraments of the Church." Luther answered, "That will make no difference to me. I shall suffer no loss by your refusal of the sacraments: they do not depend on Church approval." The pope said to Henry, "You may not be divorced. I refuse to give you my permission." Henry answered, "That will make no difference to me. You claim to be a ruler in my kingdom, and to enforce your laws, not only in the Church but in the state. I deny the claim. You are dismissed. From this day forward you are no ruler here. I do not care for your permission. I shall do precisely as I please."

Meanwhile, the Lord Chancellor had been attending, with all diligence, to the duties of his office. Every morning he sat from eight until eleven to hear cases, and every afternoon he was to be found in his house to hear petitions. Whoever had a grievance might bring it to his notice, and the poorer the suppliant the better. In a day when the taking of bribes was a common sin of judges, More declined all gifts. One time, his enemies,—for a great man in that age always had enemies,—declared that he had received a "fair great gilt cup" from a man in whose favor he had decided a case. And More confessed that the man's wife brought him the golden cup as a New Year's gift, and that he took it.

"There, gentlemen," cried the chief accuser, "did I not tell you that you should find this matter

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true?" Thereupon More answered that having received the cup at the lady's hands, he caused his butler to fill it with wine, and drank to her good health, and gave it back. "Thus was this great mountain turned scarce unto a mole-hill."

One time, the Duke of Norfolk, coming to dine with the Lord Chancellor, found him at the parish church in the midst of the service, with a surplice on his back, singing in the choir. After the service, as they went home arm in arm, the Duke said, "Well, well! my Lord, a parish clerk! a parish clerk! You dishonor the king and his office."

To which the Chancellor replied, smiling, "Your Grace may not think that the king, your master and mine, will be offended with me for serving God, his Master."

At a little distance from his mansion house, More built a place which contained a chapel and a library; and to this building he was accustomed to go that he might be alone to read and pray; and especially on Fridays, he spent the whole day there, in his devotions, saying the seven penitential psalms and the litany and other prayers. This he found time to do, even in the midst of the great business of his high office, feeling that the essential thing, above all else, is that a man be the master of himself. And to this end, he wore under his fine clothing a shirt of hair, and sometimes flogged himself with a knotted cord, that he might exercise himself in the endurance of discomfort and pain. The devil, he said, is like an ape, who will do mischief when no one is looking,

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but if he is observed will leap back. Thus he kept on the watch against temptations.

In the midst, however, of all this strictness of living and this devotion to the old ways of the Church, he wrote a book called "Utopia," which was filled with the spirit of the new age. This book is in the form of an account of a strange and distant land, given to More by one who had traveled with Americus Vesputius, and in his travels had visited a people whose customs were very different from the customs of England. In this way, More was able to set forth his ideas of the right manner of living. Among other things, he said that, in Utopia, religion was free. No man there was punished for his belief, but every man might be of what religion he pleased, and might endeavor to draw others to it by the force of argument, and by amicable and honest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions. This seemed to be in accord with the new liberty which Luther was bringing into the Church.

Meanwhile, the matter of the king's divorce was coming forward. More was against it. He believed that the pope was right in refusing to allow it. When he perceived that the matter was decided, he resigned his office. Out he went from his high place, a poor man as he had entered it. He called his children and his grandchildren together, who were all living with him in his great house, and said that he must now reduce his expenses.

"I have been brought up," he said, "at Oxford, at an Inn of Chancery, at Lincoln's Inn, and

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in the King's Court. Thus I have gone from the lowest degree to the highest. Now we must go back. We will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, and live like the prosperous lawyers; and the next year, if we are not able to maintain this, we will go one step down to the Town Inn fare, and live like the less prosperous lawyers. If that exceed our ability too, then will we the next year after descend to Oxford fare, and live like scholars. Which, if our ability stretch not to maintain neither, then may we yet, with bags and wallets, go a-begging together, and so still keep company merrily." Thus did he take his change of fortune with all cheerfulness.

While he was Lord Chancellor, one of his gentlemen, when the church service was over, was accustomed to go to his wife's pew, and say, "Madam, my Lord is gone," and thus escort her from the church. The day after he resigned his office, Sir Thomas himself came down after the service and standing by the pew made a low bow, saying, "Madam, my Lord is gone."

The king, however, was not contented with More's resignation. Chancellor or not, More was the greatest man in England, and his silence meant that he did not approve of the king's conduct. He refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn. It was plain that he was opposed to the king's marriage. Thus he made an enemy of Anne and of the king. One time, he asked his daughter how Queen Anne did, and how things went at court. She answered, "Never better; there is nothing else but dancing and sporting." "Alas, Meg," said More, "it pitieth me to



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remember to what misery, poor soul, she will shortly come." Some say that he added, "These dances of hers will prove such dances that she will spurn off our heads like footballs."

Then the Act of Supremacy was passed, declaring the king head of the Church in England, in the pope's place. And first the clergy, and then the great men of the realm, were called upon to accept it.

"Mr. More," said the Duke of Norfolk, his good friend, "it is perilous striving with princes, and therefore I would wish you to incline somewhat to the king's pleasure."

"Is that all, my Lord?" said More. "Is there, in good faith, no more difference between your Grace and me, but that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow?"

Thus he went to appear before the Lords at Lambeth. That morning, as his custom was when he entered into any matter of importance, he went first to church and said his prayers. It was also his custom, whenever he went away from home, to have his wife and children come with him to his boat, and there to kiss them all and bid them farewell; but that morning he would not let them come, but shut the gate behind him.

Presently, in the boat, he said to William Roper, "Son Roper, I thank the Lord, the field is won."

Roper answered, "Sir, I am thereof very glad."

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But as he considered what More meant, it became plain that he had thanked the Lord that He had enabled him to go forward in obedience to what his conscience called him to do, in spite of his great love of his family. When he shut the gate, he knew that for conscience' sake he was shutting himself out from his pleasant home, from all the joys of his delightful life, and from the sight of the loved faces of his wife and children.

Thus More refused to take the oath of supremacy as against his conscience, and they put him in prison in the Tower. There he remained for more than a year, in the hardship of close confinement, deprived of even books and paper.

One time, when his wife came to see him, being a simple person, and not understanding these great matters, she remonstrated with him. "What the good year, Mr. More," said she, "I marvel that you, that have been always hereunto taken for so wise a man, will now so play the fool to lie here in this close, filthy prison, and be content to be shut up among mice and rats, when you might be abroad at your liberty, and with the favor and good-will both of the king and his Council, if you would but do as all the bishops and best learned of this Realm have done. And seeing you have at Chelsea a right, fair house, your library, your books, your gallery, your orchards, where you might, in the company of me your wife, your children, and household, be merry, I muse what in God's name you mean here still fondly to tarry."

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To whom Sir Thomas, having listened quietly with a cheerful countenance said, "I pray thee, tell me, tell me one thing."

"What is that?" said she.

"Is not this house as nigh heaven as mine own?"

To whom she, after her accustomed fashion, not liking much talk, answered, "Tilly vally, tilly vally!"

But his daughter Margaret understood him better. With her he said the psalms and the litany, as he had been wont to do at family prayers at home. "I find no cause, I thank God, Meg," he said, "to reckon myself in worse case here, than in mine own house." And Margaret's husband, William Roper, writing the story of his life, adds this comment, "Thus by his gracious demeanor in tribulations appeared it, that all the troubles that ever chanced unto him, by his patient sufferance thereof were to him no painful punishments, but of his patience profitable exercises."

At last, being brought to trial, the solicitor-general, Rich, recounted a conversation which he claimed to have had with More.

"Admit that there were, sir, an Act of Parliament, that all the Realm should take me for the king, would not you, Mr. More, take me for the king?"

"Yes, sir," said More, "that would I."

"I put the case further, that there were an Act of Parliament that all the Realm should take me for

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the pope, would then not you, Mr. More, take me for the pope?"

"For answer," said Sir Thomas, "to your first case, the Parliament may well, Mr. Rich, meddle with the state of temporal princes; but to make answer to your second case, I will put you this case: Suppose the Parliament would make a law, that God should not be God, would you then, Mr. Rich, say God were not God?"

"No, sir," said he, "that would I not, since no parliament may make any such law."

"No more," said Sir Thomas, according to Rich's report, "could the Parliament make the king the supreme head of the Church."

This was the sole evidence against him, and this More denied. But his death had been determined. The king was not willing that there should live, even in silence, a man whose disapproval was a constant criticism upon him.

Thus he was condemned to die. And as he came, after his condemnation, from Westminster to the Tower, his daughter Margaret was waiting by the way to see him. And she, "pressing in amongst the midst of the throng and the company of the guard, that with halberds and bills were round about him, hastily ran to him, and there, openly in the sight of them all, embraced and took him about the neck and kissed him, who, well liking her most daughterly love and affection towards him, gave her his fatherly blessing, and many godly words of comfort besides; from whom after she was departed, she not satisfied

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with the former sight of her dear father, having respect neither to herself, nor to the press of the people and multitudes that were about him, suddenly turned back again, and ran to him as before, took him about the neck, and divers times together most lovingly kissed him, and at last with a full heavy heart was fain to depart from him; the beholding whereof was, to many of them that were present thereat, so lamentable, that it made them for very sorrow to mourn and weep.”

Sir Thomas More was beheaded on the seventh day of July, 1535. The scaffold was poorly built, and as he and the lieutenant of the Tower climbed the steps together, he said, “I pray you, I pray you, Mr. Lieutenant, see me safe up, and for my coming down, let me shift for myself.” Thus he died, composed and with a cheerful face, kneeling down and commending his soul to God in whom he put his trust, and whose obedience he valued above all the pleasures of his life.

When the Emperor Charles heard of this tragedy, he called the English ambassador, and said, “My Lord Ambassador, we understand that the king, your master, hath put his faithful servant and grave wise councilor, Sir Thomas More, to death.” The ambassador answered that the circumstances were unknown to him. “Well,” said the emperor, “it is very true, and this we will say, that if we had been master of such a servant, we would rather have lost the best city of our dominions, than such a worthy councilor.”