

A Short Biography of John Bradford

J.C. Ryle



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"John Bradford, the famous English Reformer, who was burned at Smithfield for Christ's truth, in Queen Mary's days, is far better known as a martyr than as a writer. The splendour of his death has eclipsed the work of his pen. Few perhaps have the least idea what a rich treasure of English theology is laid up in his literary remains.

This ought not so to be. Among the many goodly volumes published by the Parker Society, not a few, I suspect, sleep quietly on library shelves, unopened and uncut. Like ancient weapons of war, they are too ponderous for the taste of our day. Like guns and shells in Woolwich Arsenal, they are regarded as stores to be only used in special times of need. Yet some of these volumes will richly repay an attentive perusal, even in the nineteenth century. Latimer, Hooper, and Jewell should never be neglected. Side-by-side with these three men I am disposed to rank the two volumes of Bradford's Works and Remains, from which I propose to make some selections at the conclusion of this paper.

Some account of Bradford's life and death will prove a suitable preface to the extracts I shall give from his writings. It is to many an old story, and well known; yet in days like these it is well to stir up men's minds by putting them in remembrance of the champions of the English Reformation."

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