

Thomas Drowry - The Martyred Blind Boy

Burnt to death on 15th May 1556

"Faithful unto death" - Revelation 2:10

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.(Rev 2:10 KJV)

In the reign of "Bloody Mary" of England, when the good Bishop Hooper was about to be burned to death, a blind boy, by much importunity, prevailed on the guard to bring him to the bishop. This boy had lately suffered imprisonment in Gloucester for confessing the truth. After the bishop had examined him concerning his faith and the cause of his imprisonment, he looked on him steadfastly, tears standing in his eyes, and said, "Ah! poor boy, God hath taken from thee thy outward sight, for what reason He best knoweth; but He hath endued thy soul with the eye of knowledge and faith. God give thee grace continually to pray unto Him, that thou lose not that sight, for thou wouldst then be blind both in body and soul."

The boy's name was Thomas Drowry. How often or how long he had endured imprisonment for the truth's sake is not known; but on his final examination he was brought before Dr. Williams, Chancellor of Gloucester, sitting judicially with the registrar of the diocese in the consistory, near the south door of the cathedral church, who administered the usual articles, chiefly urging that on transubstantiation, and saying -

"Dost thou not believe that after the words of consecration, spoken by the priest, there remaineth the very real body of Christ in the sacrament of that altar?"

"No," answered the blind boy, "that I do not."

"Then," said the Chancellor, "Thou art a heretic, and shalt be burned. But who taught you this heresy?"

"You, Master Chancellor."

"Where, I pray thee?"

"Even in yonder place," replied the boy, turning and pointing with his hands towards where the pulpit stood.

The Chancellor again inquired, "When did I teach thee so?"

Drowry answered, 'When you preached there" (naming a day) "a sermon to all men, as well as me, upon the sacrament. You said the sacrament was to be received spiritually, by faith, and not carnally and really, as the Papists have heretofore taught."

The shameless apostate answered, "Then do as I have done, and thou shalt live, as I do, and escape burning."

The blind boy said, Though you can easily dispense with yourself, and mock God, the world, and your conscience, yet will I not do so."

"Then God have mercy upon thee," rejoined the Chancellor, "for I will read the condemnation sentence against thee."

"God's will be fulfilled!" answered the young martyr.

Hereupon the registrar, being moved with the scene, stood up and said to the Chancellor, "Fie, for shame, man! Will you read the sentence against him, and condemn yourself? Away, away, and substitute some other to give sentence and judgment."

"No, registrar," said the fearfully hardened man; "I will obey the law, and give sentence myself according to mine office."

He did so; delivered him to the secular power, who on the very same day led the blind boy to the place of execution at Gloucester, together with one Thomas Croker, a poor bricklayer, condemned also for the like testimony of the truth; when both, in one fire, most constantly and joyfully yielded their souls into the hands of the Lord Jesus.
