

*The storie of Queene Katherine Parre late Queene, and wife to King Henry 8. Wherein appeareth in what daunger she was for the Gospell, by the means of Steuen Gardiner and other of his conspiracy: and how graciously she was preferred by her kind and louing husband the king.

{ Anno }
{ 1546. }

Queene Katherine Parre,

The religious zeale of Queene Katherine toward Gods word.

The exhortation of Queene Katherine to the king.

The king toward his latter end waxed more impatient.

The vertuous inclination of Queene Katherine toward the king.

Enemies & conspirers agaynst the Gospell.

Queene Katherine a patronesse of Gods truth.

After these stormy stories aboue recited, the course and order, as well of the time, as the matter of storie doeth require nowe somewhat to intreate likewise touching the troubles and afflictions of the vertuous and excellent lady Queene Katherine Parre, the laste wife to king Henry 8. The storie wherof is this.

About the same time aboue noted, which was about the yeare after the king returned from Bullein, he was informed that Queene Katherine Parre, at that time his wife, was very much geuen to the reading and study of the holy scriptures: & that she for that purpose had retained diuers well learned and godly persons, to instruct her thoroughly in the same, in whom as at all times convenient she vied to haue priuate conference touching spiritual matters: so also of ordinarie, but especially in Lent euery day in the after noone for the space of an houre, one of her layd Chaplains in her priuie Chamber made some collation to her and to her Ladies and Gentlewomen of her priuie Chamber, or other that were disposed to heare: in which sermons, they oft times touched such abuses as in the church then were rife. Which things as they were not secretly done, so neyther were their preachings vnknewen vnto the Kinge. Wherof at the first, and for a great time, he seemed very well to like, which made her yet more bold (being in deed become very zealous toward the Gospell, and the professors thereof) frankly to debate with the king, touching Religion, and therein flatly to discouer her selfe: oftentimes wishing, exhorting and perswading the king, that as hee had to the glorie of God and hys eternall fame, become a good and a goodly worke in banishing that monstrous Idolle of Rome, so he would thoroughly perseute and finally the same, cleansing and purging hys Church of Englande, cleane from the dregges thereof, wherin as yet remained great superstition.

And all be it the king grew towards hys latter ende, very sterne and opinionate, so that of fewe he could be content to be taught, but worst of all to be contended wyth all by argument: notwithstanding towardes her he retained hys accustomed manner (vnto others in like case vied) as appeared by great respectes, either for the reuerence of the cause, wherunto of hym selfe he seemed well inclined, if some others coulde haue ceased from seeking to peruert hym, or els for the singular affection which vntill a verie small time before hys death, he alwayes bare vnto her. For neuer handmaide longre wyth more carefull diligence to please her mistresse, then shee did with all painfull endeuor apply her selfe by all vertuous meanes, in all thynges to please hys humour.

Moreover, besides the vertues of the minde, shee was endued wyth very rare giftes of nature, as singular beautie, fauour, and comely personage, being thynges wherewith the King was greatly delighted: and so enjoyed shee the kings fauour, to the great likelihood of the setting at large of the Gospell within this Realme at that time, hadde not the malicious practise of certain enemies professed agaynst the truth (which at that time also were very great) preuented y same, to the vtter alienating of the kings mind from Religion, and, almost to the extreme ruine of the Queene and certaine others with her, if God had not miraculously succoured her in that distresse. The conspirers and practisers of her death, were Gardiner B. of Winchester, Wilsley then Lord Chauncelloz, and others more aowell of the kings priuie chamber, as of his priuie councill. These seeking (for the furtheraunce of theyr vngodly purpose) to reuine, stirre vp and kindle euil and pernicious humours in their Prince and soueraigne Lord, to the intent to depyue her of hys great fauour, which then shee stode in wyth the king, (which they not a litle feared would turne to the vtter ruine, of their Antichristian secte, if it shoulde continue) and thereby to stoppe the passage of the Gospell: and consequently, hauing taken away her, who was the only Patronesse of the professors of the truth, openely wythout feare of checke or controuent, wyth fire and sword, after theyr accustomed manner, to invade the small remainder (as they hoped) of that poore flocke, made theyr wicked entrie vnto this theyr malicious enterprise, after thys maner following.

The kinges Maiestie (as you haue hearde) mistiked to be contended with all in any kinde of argument. This humour of hys, although not in smaller matters, yet in cau-

ses of Religion as occasion serued, the Queene would not sticke in reuerent termes and humble talke, entering wyth him into discourse with sound reasons of Scripture, now and then to contrary. The whych the King was so well accustomed vnto in those matters, that at her handes he tooke all in good part, or at the least did neuer shee to countenance of offence thereat: which did not a litle appall her aduersaries, to heare and see. During which tyme, perceyuing her so thoroughly grounded in the kings fauour, they durst not for theyr liues once opene their lips vnto the king in any respect to touch her, either in her presence, or behind her backe: And so long shee continued this her accustomed usage, not onely of hearing priuate sermons (as is sayde) but also of her free conference with the king in matters of Religion, without all perill, vntill at the last by reason of hys loze leg (the anguish wherof began moze and moze to encrease) he waxed sickly, and therewithall, froward, and difficult to be pleased.

The king some tyme contrary to the king in argument.

The king waxeth sickly and difficult to please.

In the tyme of this his sickness, he had left his accustomed manner of conning and visiting the Queene, & therefore shee, according as she vnderstode him by such assured intelligence as shee had about him, to be disposed to haue her company, sometimes being sent for, other sometymes of her selfe would come to visite him, either at after dinner or after supper, as was most fit for her purpose. At which tymes shee would not fayle to vse all occasions to moue him, according to her manner, zelously to proccede in the reformation of the Church. The sharpnes of the disease had sharpened the kinges accustomed patience, so that he began to shew some tokens of mistiking: and contrary vnto his manner, vpon a day, breaking of that matter, hee tooke occasion to enter into other talke, which somewhat amazed the Queene. To whome notwithstanding in her presence, he gaue neither euill word nor countenance, but knit vp all arguments in gentle wordes and louinge countenance: and after other pleasant talke, shee for that time tooke her leaue of his maiesty, who after his manner, bidding her fare well sweete hearte (for that was his vsuall terme to the Queene) licenced her to depart.

The king becometh to mistike of the Queene.

At this visitation chaunced the Bishop of Winchester aforesayd to be present, as also at the Queenes takinge her leaue (who verie well had printed in his memorie the kings sodaine interrupting of the Queene in her tale, and falling into other matter) and thoughte if the prou were beaten whilst it was hotte, and that the kinges humour were holpen, suche mistiking might followe towardes the Queene, as might both ouerthrow her & all her endeuors: and only awaited some occasion to reuene into the kings memory, the former mistiked argument. Hys expectation in that behalfe did nothing faile him. For the king at y time shewed himselfe no lesse prompt and ready to receiue any information, then the bishop was maliciously bent to stirre vp the kings indignation agaynst her. The king immediately vpon her departure from him, vied these or like wordes: A good hearing (quoth he) it is when women become such Clerkes, and a thing much to my comfort, to come in mine olde dayes to be taught by my wife.

The Bishop of Winchester taketh his occasiō to worke his mischiefes.

The Bishop hearing this, seemed to mistike that the Queene shoulde so much forget her selfe, as to take vpon her to stand in any argument wyth his maiesty, whom he to his face extold for his rare vertues, and especially for his learned iudgement in matters of religion, aboue, not only Princes of that and other ages, but also aboue Doctours professed in Diuinitie, and sayde that it was an vnkinde thing for any of his maiesties subiects to reason and argue wyth him so malaparty, and greuous to him for hys parte and other of his Maiesties Councillours and seruantes, to heare y same: and that they all by proffe knew his wisdom to be such, that it was not needful for any to put him in mind of any such matters: instering mozeouer how dangerous and perillous a matter it is, and euer hath bene for a Prince to suffer suche insolent wordes at hys subiectes hands: who as they take boldnesse to contrary their soueraigne in wordes, so want they no will, but onely power and strenght to ouerthwart them in deedes.

The Bishop of Winchesters wordes to the king.

Besides thys, that the Religion by the Queene so stably maintained, did not onely disallow and dissolve the policie and politicke gouernment of Princes, but also taught the people that all thynges oughte to be in comon, so that what colour so euer they pretended, theyr opinions were in deede so odious, and for the Princes estate so perillous, that (laving the reuerence they bare vnto her for hys Maiesties sake) they durst be bold to affirme that the greatest subiect in this lande, speaking those wordes that shee dyd speake, and defending those argumentes that shee dyd defend, had with indifferent iustice, by law deserued death.

Winchesters accusation agaynst the Queene.

Howbeit for his part he would not nor durst not, without good warrant from his Maiesty, speake hys knowledg