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### Lollardy and the Reformation in England

James Gairdner (1828–1912) was one of the foremost authorities of his day on the Tudor period. This four-volume historical survey (originally published 1908–1913) argues that the impetus for the English Reformation came from the Lollard movement of the late fourteenth century. A prolific researcher and editor, Gairdner devoted his career to English history, and his study is both meticulous and factually sound. His critics, however, were quick to observe that the Lollard hypothesis was tenuous, and this mature work is most valuable today to those interested in the history of Reformation scholarship. Volume 1 begins with an account of Lollard history from the fourteenth century to the eve of the Reformation. The second part of the volume focuses on the question of royal supremacy from an Elizabethan perspective looking back, and also includes a chapter on Sir Thomas More.

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*An Historical Survey*

VOLUME 1

JAMES GAIRDNER



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# Lollardy and the Reformation in England

An Historical Survey

BY

JAMES GAIRDNER, C.B.

HON. LL.D. EDIN.

VOL. I

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## P R E F A C E

It is now some years since I was asked by my friend Dr. Hunt, now President of the Royal Historical Society, on behalf of himself and the late Dean Stephens of Winchester, to contribute a volume to the English Church History planned by them, dealing with the first half of the sixteenth century down to the death of Mary. Interesting as the task assigned to me was, I confess I shrank from it at first, feeling that anything like adequate treatment of it, in the light of new materials and evidences better arranged than they had been, made demands upon my leisure which it was doubtful whether I had a right to concede while still engaged in other work, which I could not delay or set aside. Moreover, I knew too well not only that it was no holiday task, though it could perhaps be pursued at intervals, but that the result would certainly be to present many things in a very different light from that in which they had been hitherto regarded. Nor was it, perhaps, altogether encouraging that the plan of publication hardly admitted of elaborate justification of these views, or even of specific citation of authorities for separate statements. Yet I was anxious to say, within the



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limits allotted to me, and without taxing too greatly the patience of my editors and publishers, what I believed to be the truth about this very important period of Church History; and how far my judgment was to be trusted must, of course, be a question for readers and critics who were to follow me.

On the whole, the reception my volume met with was exceedingly favourable—far more so, I must confess, than I had expected; and such criticism as I have seen was not ungenerous. But I could not help feeling, after a time, that a more complete elucidation of various subjects was desirable; and that, though a full history of the English Reformation may not be a work which such a one as I can hope to achieve—even if advancing years did not remind me of the necessary limitation of my powers,—it was desirable to illustrate from sources more familiar, I think, to me than to most people, a number of influences, not confined, by any means, to a period of fifty years, but culminating, from various causes, in a great political and religious crisis in the sixteenth century, which has determined the relations of Church and State and placed the religious thought of the world under new conditions from that time even to the present day.

My present work, therefore, although partly going over the same ground as its predecessor, has a wider scope and a materially different aim. The volume which I contributed to Dean Stephen's Church History aimed only at setting forth the true story of

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the Church of England from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the death of Queen Mary. The previous and the subsequent history were handed over to others, who treated their periods, as I did mine, without more than necessary reference to earlier causation or subsequent development. But the Reformation, as a study by itself, forbids us to confine our view even to one single century. We must look back for the predisposing causes; we must look forward to the subsequent developments; and we must endeavour to realise from both causes and developments the unity of the whole subject, and the position at which we have arrived in our own day as a true and natural consequence of all that has gone before.

It is not a mere study of events that will suffice for this. In the religious history of a nation one might almost treat events, even of a religious character, as matters of subordinate interest. Great events, indeed, must be noted, not only as special crises due to the development of new forces, but as conditions laid down for future progress; and it has been my main purpose to inquire how far they either controlled or were controlled by the religious feeling of the nation. In this attempt I think I may be pardoned for passing over much that is of considerable interest, not only in political but even in ecclesiastical history. The ancestry and growth of ideas that have revolutionised the world are far more important matters than the reception of a legate or the proclamation of a latter-day crusade.

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Moreover, I have not bound myself to the form of a progressive historical narrative. I have called the work an historical survey, not a history; for I have felt it necessary at times to glance backwards and forwards, and even to repeat myself to some extent. Whether I could have got all I had to say otherwise into a more artistic form, I am not altogether sure. The significance of great movements seems to require a good deal of restatement to do it justice; and a condensed general survey ought, I think, to assist the understanding of a detailed account. Yet perhaps the conditions under which I have been compelled to work are answerable to some extent for repetitions which might have been avoided.

I have, however, followed historical order in the main. The connection of Lollardy and the Reformation in England is the subject of these two volumes, and it is a subject by no means exhausted when we come to the death of Henry VIII., at which the second volume ends. If strength be still vouchsafed to me for so great an undertaking I have a great desire to carry the work on to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the political basis of a national religion was most firmly established. The work was done, indeed, in a manner by no means lovely; but there is no excuse for not looking facts in the face and considering whither they carry us. The philosophy of the present age is largely against the recognition of any national religion whatever; but Christianity is still with us, to be acknowledged or

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disowned in some form or other, at their peril, by individuals, parties, and nations. So I sincerely trust that a national Christianity will not only survive among us, but be more generally regarded than it has been.

I have but one word to add, and that is a word of gratitude to my friend Dr. Hunt, who has perused most of these sheets in passing through the press, and has given me the benefit of many criticisms and suggestions. Of course he is not responsible for anything that I have said, but in various ways his observations have been very helpful.

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## ERRATA

### VOL. I

- Page 24, in last footnote insert "iii." after "Wilkins."  
 ,, 39, line 9, insert "the" before "extracts."  
 ,, 48, line 21, delete "to constitute."  
 ,, 63, footnote 2, for "knyztziis" read "knyztzis."  
 ,, 108, line 5 from bottom of text, for "passage" read "manuscript."  
 ,, 121, line 20, for "thousands of" read "many of the."  
 ,, 123, line 21, for "ancient" read "general."  
 ,, 152, line 7 from bottom, after "declined" insert "thus." *Note.*—The technical sense in which the word "suspectus" was used in these examinations is not familiar to us. Mungyn apparently means to say that no grounds of suspicion had been alleged against him sufficient to justify a prosecution. Bearing this in mind, the first four lines at the beginning of next page must be altered as follows:—  
 ,, 153, lines 1 to 4 should be—"was brought in once more. Being asked if even yet he would abjure, he answered point-blank that he was not suspected of any error or heresy, and therefore, as a man so suspected, he said expressly that he would never abjure while he lived." The next sentence should be cancelled.  
 ,, 176, line 6, for "capricious" read "testy," and insert a comma after "capitosus." [The writer apparently intended to explain *capitosus* by adding "scilicet testie," the last word being misread by the Bohemian scribe as *testis*.]  
 ,, 178, line 3, "declare" should be printed with inverted commas to show that it represents the technical Latin *declarare*, meaning "to explain."  
 ,, 270, lines 7, 6 from the bottom, for "even before receiving" read "shortly before, on receiving."  
 ,, 271-2. Leaf to be cancelled.  
 ,, 273, line 14, for "was able" read "did his best."  
 ,, 349, line 4, after "Mr. Foxe" insert a comma before the line.  
 ,, 357, line 15, after "Satan" delete the comma.  
 ,, 365, line 9, after "bias" insert a comma.  
 ,, 370, line 32, for "positive mistranslation" read "somewhat doubtful translation."  
 ,, 371, line 3, for "plainly" read "probably."  
 ,, 371, footnote 1, strike out the last clause, "but there cannot," etc..  
 ,, 425, line 16, delete "to."  
 ,, 463, note 1, for "*Ecclesiastica*" read "*Ecclesiasticae*."  
 .. 571-2. Leaf to be cancelled.