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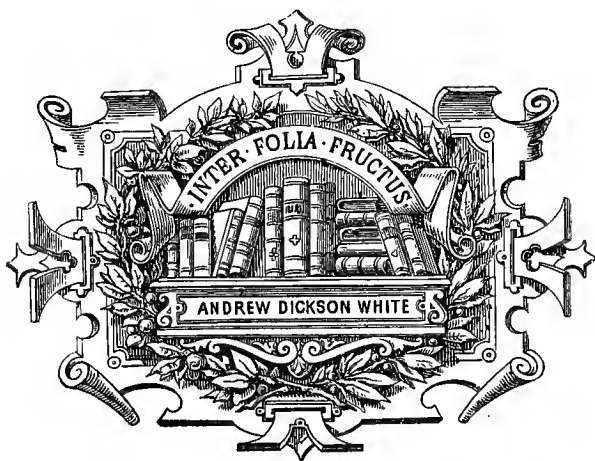
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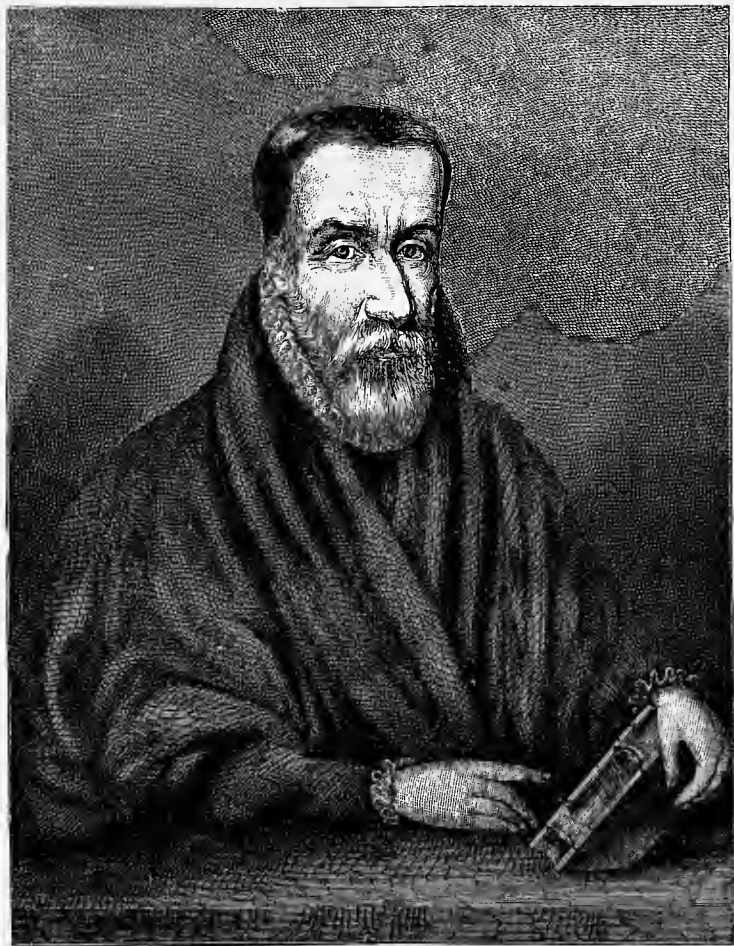
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OUR ENGLISH BIBLE:

ITS

TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLATORS.

BY

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"HOMES AND HAUNTS OF MARTIN LUTHER," "LIGHTS OF THE WORLD,"
"THE PROGRESS OF DIVINE REVELATION," ETC.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

IT is nearly forty years since the Author began to study the history of "Our English Bible." At that period he spent several weeks in the British Museum, examining early versions and editions. He also visited Oxford, Cambridge, and Lambeth, to inspect some of their MS. treasures. The results of these investigations have already appeared in anonymous publications; and now, having revised and abridged his original materials, he finally commits them to the press, in the present concise and more popular form.

Within the last half-century many corrections have been made in the details of Bible history, and many important particulars have been added to our previous knowledge. The recent works of Dr. Westcott and Dr. Eadie have

placed some facts in a new light ; Dr. Moulton's papers in the " Bible Educator " are also useful contributions ; and in the " Catalogue of the Caxton Exhibition " are found records of important discoveries by Mr. Stevens. In the fields thus recently opened the Author has largely reaped : a further examination of Caxton's " Golden Legend " has confirmed what Mr. Stevens has said with regard to the long-neglected bearing of that curious work on Biblical history ; and his original suggestion as to Coverdale and Van Meteren has, with some modification, been adopted to the improvement of the present work.

The origin and labours of the Biblical Revision Companies, both in England and America, are also noticed, so far as they are publicly known.





CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. EARLY HISTORY AND ASSOCIATIONS	1
II. WYCLIFFE AND HIS VERSION	25
III. TRANSLATORS AFTER WYCLIFFE, AND EARLY PRINTED VERSIONS	43
IV. WILLIAM TYNDALE	71
V. MILES COVERDALE	117
VI. MATTHEW'S BIBLE	138
VII. THE GREAT BIBLE	149
VIII. EDWARD THE SIXTH'S REIGN	170
IX. THE GENEVA VERSION	186
X. THE BISHOPS' BIBLE	202
XI. THE RHEMISH VERSION	221
XII. THE "AUTHORIZED VERSION," 1611	229
XIII. THE BIBLE IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES	260
XIV. REVISION OF THE ENGLISH VERSION	279

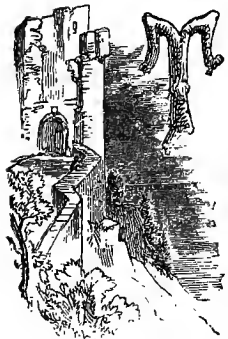


OUR ENGLISH BIBLE.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY AND ASSOCIATIONS.



THE fact of so many different tongues being spoken by the human family is sometimes regarded as one of the infelicities of our present condition; but it brings counterbalancing advantages, in the bond of sympathy and brotherhood which it supplies to each nationality. And radical differences of speech form an institution of Providence, which, if it had not appeared at the building of Babel, would certainly have arisen sooner or later through the scattering of mankind. It necessitates some kind of method by which a Revelation made from heaven in one language may be made intelligible in another. Revelation is hidden—wherever there is ignorance of the original—like the sun behind dark clouds, or beneath

hills before the hour of dawn; we must either acquire a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek for ourselves, or the book must be translated into words with which we are familiar. The first process is no doubt the most effectual, but it must be confined in the nature of things to a few; the second is indispensable for the vast majority. What cannot be done *by* the multitude must be done *for* them; the result of the Pentecost miracle must be accomplished in the best way it can by learning and labour on the part of scholars, that every man may learn in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. The reading of what is divinely written is subject to the same conditions as the hearing of what was divinely spoken. "Things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."*

The traditions of the Jews discourage the translation of their Scriptures; to this hour the Hebrew original alone is read in the synagogues: and the religion of the Mahometans forbids a change of the Arabic Koran into any equivalent rendering; because, say they, not only the substance of it is uncreated and eternal, subsisting in the essence of Deity, but the words are "inscribed with a pen of light on the table of His everlasting decrees."

It is otherwise in this country, thank God! and a

* 1 Cor. xiv. 7-9, 11.

succession of men have, with zeal and patience, devoted themselves to the translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Our English Bible differs from all other vernacular translations at least in two respects. First, it is the most widely circulated volume in the world. Copies of it have been multiplied to an unparalleled extent. They are read not only by a greater comparative number of persons at home than any book in any other land, but throughout our colonial dependencies, and in the vast territory of the United States, there is no volume which can vie with it in the multitude of its copies, any more than in the interest which it has inspired and the effects which it has produced. And next, whilst most other versions, ancient and modern, have been produced by individuals who undertook the task single-handed, and all the versions have remained much as they were at first, our Bible is the work of successive scholars, covering a wide space of time, and only by slow degrees arriving at completion. Syriac, Latin, Gothic, Armenian, and Slavonic translations were accomplished with considerable speed, and the same may be said of those which have been produced in foreign languages by modern missionaries : but the English Bible may be called a growth of centuries ; preparations were made for it before the sixteenth century, and not until the seventeenth did it take the form in which it now appears. We may almost say the English Bible is like the English constitution, not indeed as to its first origin and elements, but as to the successive steps by which it reached its present state. On these accounts the history of English translations and translators has an interest altogether its own.

A thick haze rests over the early history of Christianity in Britain ; how, when, or where it was first proclaimed

within our shores is a secret which no research has been sufficient to discover. Traditions that Paul, or Joseph of Arimathæa, preached the gospel here are utterly worthless, and have long been rejected; all that can be said upon the subject of the first planting of the Church among our fathers is, that probably during the first century some Romans who visited Britain, or some natives who had returned from the great city, brought tidings of the new faith which God had revealed to man. The landing of Cæsar upon our coast, with its attendant events, leading to the establishment of a new earthly dominion, is a scene preserved on the page of history with vividness; but the landing of the first Christians, as instruments in the hand of God for establishing His reign among our pagan ancestry, and what they said and did, how they were opposed, where they succeeded, and what was the measure of their success—all this, so interesting to curiosity, and affording such play for imagination, is lost, for ever lost, amidst the shadows of the past.

Tertullian expressly alludes to places in Britain inaccessible to the Romans, which had been subdued by Christ;* so that, in his time, Christianity would seem to have penetrated further than the imperial arms, and to have reached, perhaps, as far as Scotland. The inspired records, at first in detached portions, and afterwards in their collective form, were prized, and circulated among early Christians as containing the authoritative rule of religious belief and conduct. Wherever the gospel was carried and embraced, the Book from which its facts and precepts were drawn would speedily follow; and we cannot question that the sacred writings were, at an early period, brought over to

* *Adversus Judæos*, vii.

enlighten and comfort the British Church. Where Rome extended her dominion, she endeavoured to establish her language as an auxiliary to her power; and, as it is likely the Britons were taught Latin, the version of the sacred book in that tongue would be intelligible to educated converts in this country.

When pagan Saxons took possession of our island they introduced their own superstitions and idolatries, and, with the exception of western parts, where some few vestiges of Christianity were retained, the whole country relapsed into a state of heathenism.

The monk Augustine visited Britain at the close of the sixth century, and tradition relates that he left the impress of his foot on the rock he touched as he stepped on shore. Putting aside this legend, it may be truly said that, by his labours in this country, he impressed an effect upon its character which has never been effaced. He and his companions were benefactors to England, far greater than any who had visited it since the time of the first Christians; and however we may deplore their errors, we must applaud their zeal, and rejoice in their success. Kent was the chief scene of the Roman apostle's labours and triumphs; the other parts of Saxon England were gradually reclaimed by different missionaries. Mixed up with absurd traditions relating to the events of that period, there are some of a far different character, full of truth and beauty, upon which the historian delights to linger. How touching is the story of the courtier of the Northumbrian king, who, in council with his master and fellow-nobles respecting the missionary Paulinus, observed, "Man's life is like a little sparrow, which, whilst your Majesty is feasting by the fire in your apartment with your royal retinue, flies in at one window and out at another.

Indeed, we see it that short time it remaineth in the house, and then it is well sheltered from wind and weather; but presently it passeth from cold to cold, and whence it comes and whither it goes we are altogether ignorant. Thus we can give some account of our soul during its abode in the body, while housed and harboured therein; but where it was before, and how it fareth after, is to us altogether unknown. If, therefore, Paulinus's preaching will certainly inform us herein, he deserveth, in my opinion, to be entertained."* It was no small advantage to have some one in the regions of Northumbria to tell the inhabitants whence came the soul, and whither it fled. And a blessing above all price was that Book which preserved the Divine revelation respecting the destiny of man, and the realm into which he enters when the hand of death dismisses the soul from the body. Though little known among the common people, the Scriptures were preserved and transcribed with care by Saxon monks; and in Ireland and in Scotland, as early as the sixth century, there were monasteries in which the copying of the Word of God was a common employment. The famous Columba of Iona is especially renowned for his diligence and care in this respect.

The language in which these MSS. were written was not the language of the inspired writers, but that of the Latin Church, into which its sacred books had been translated, and in which its sacred offices were commonly performed. There was an ancient version called the *Vetus Italica*, and another founded upon that, by the celebrated Jerome, who partly revised and partly translated it anew. This latter was distinguished as the *Vulgate*, and became common in the west of Europe, but not to the exclusion of

* Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 13.

the earlier one; both being transcribed by ecclesiastical copyists, and read, in part at least, by the priest in public service.

By the Anglo-Saxon tongue is meant that which came to be commonly spoken by our forefathers, from the shores of the Eider, the Elbe, the Weser, and the Baltic—tribes of Jutes and Angles as well as Saxons—who settled down together within our island borders, and managed to communicate with each other after some indescribable fashion. Saxon was the main element of their common speech, and constituted the backbone of conversation and literature in the early days of our national history. So vigorous was its life, and so predominant its influence, that we are told, if our word-books at the present day contain 38,000 English terms, properly so called, five-eighths of them are of Saxon origin.*

Such persons as were ignorant of Latin would, when interested in the truths of Christianity, naturally wish to see them written in their native language, provided they were able to read it; and priests anxious to promote the spiritual welfare of their flocks would be glad to meet such a laudable desire. Hence a number of Christian books in the vernacular made their appearance at an early period; and it has been common with historians, in treating of the earliest written attempts at Scripture instruction, to class them together, and to arrange them chronologically, as coming under the common denomination of Biblical Versions. But they differ so much from each other, that when presented in this way they are likely to make an incorrect impression upon the reader's mind. Some of the so-called Anglo-Saxon versions are, properly speaking, no versions at all.

* Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 7.

To prevent misapprehension, it will be best to notice the sacred Anglo-Saxon books under certain divisions.

I. Those which took the form of paraphrases, summaries, and Scripture lessons in rhyme.

The earliest production of this kind is ascribed to Cædmon, a brother of the famous monastery which overlooked the sea on Whitby Cliff, where linger still venerable ruins, attractive to numerous visitors, who in summer months ramble in that interesting locality. Cædmon lived in the seventh century, and being fond of versification, he produced a metrical work, thus described by a modern author :

“The inequality of the different parts of the poem attributed to Cædmon was first noticed by Conybeare. A fine poem on the Fall of the Angels, the Creation, and the Fall of Man, is awkwardly prefaced by a narration of the same story much more briefly told. Then we have a barren version of the chapters of Genesis to the close of the life of Abraham, except the accounts of the flood, and of the war of the kings against Sodom, which are told in a superior style. Suddenly, without any connexion with that of Abraham, we are introduced to the history of Moses, which again is told in a very different manner, and has all the marks of being a separate poem. After the history of Moses follows that of Nebuchadnezzar, equally distinct and complete in itself, which occupies all the remainder of the first part. The second part comprises chiefly a poem on the descent of Christ into Hades, a favourite story, known in somewhat later times as the Harrowing of Hell.”*

Judging from Thorpe's prose translation of Cædmon,

* Wright's *Literature and Superstitions of England in Middle Ages*, i. 27.

the reader will probably admit that his work was not destitute of a certain kind of force.

Take the following specimen from the history of Abraham :

“ Then the chief began the powerful King to tempt, earnestly proved what the man’s fortitude were : with words austere, he with his voice addressed him—‘ Go thou, with utmost haste, Abraham, journeying set thy steps, and with thee lead thine own child. Thou shalt Isaac to me sacrifice, thy son, thyself as an offering, after thou mountest the steep downs (the ring of the high land which I from hence will show thee) up with thine own feet : there thou shalt prepare a pile, a bale-fire for thy child, and thyself sacrifice thy son, with the sword’s edge, and then with swart flame burn the beloved’s body, and offer it to me as a gift.’ He delayed not the journey, but soon began to hasten for the way. To him was the Lord of angels’ words terrific, and his Sovereign dear. Then the blessed Abraham his night’s rest gave up, the Preserver’s behest despised not, but him the holy man, girded with a gray sword, showed, that of the Guardian of Spirits, dread in his breast dwelt.

“ Began then his asses to saddle, the sage dispenser of gold, bade him two young men accompany, his own son was the third, and he the fourth himself. Then he hastily departed, from his own house, leading Isaac, a child unwaxen, as him the Lord had bidden, hastened then much and speeded forth on the earth’s way, as him the Lord had taught, the ways over the desert, till that, in glory bright, of the third day, upover the deep water the morn arose. . . .

“ Departed then the man and his own son, to the limit which him the Lord had shown, passing over the wealds : the son bare wood, the father fire and sword. . . .

“Began then the pile to load, fire awaken, and fettered the feet and hands of his child, and then on the pile hove young Isaac, and then hastily griped the sword by the hilt; would kill his son with his hands, the fire quench with the youth’s gore. . . .

“To him then quickly, from the firmament above the glory spirit of God spake in words—‘Beloved Abraham, slay not thine own child, but take thou alive the boy from the pile, thy son; him the God of glory favoureth. Parent of the Hebrews, thou shalt meeds, through the hand of the holy King of heaven, true rewards of triumph, thyself receive;—ample lasting gifts: thee will the Guardian of spirits requite with favours, for that to thee was dearer his peace and grace than thine own child.’”*

Under the same division may be ranked what goes by the name of *Alfred’s Dooms*, consisting of the substance of the Ten Commandments, thus translated from the original Anglo-Saxon by Mr. Thorpe:

“The Lord spake these words to Moses, and thus said— I am the Lord thy God. I led thee out of the land of the Egyptians, and of their bondage.

“1. Love thou not other strange gods above Me.

“2. Utter thou not My name idly, for thou shalt not be guiltless towards Me if thou utter My name idly.

“3. Remember that thou hallow the rest-day. Work for yourselves six days, and on the seventh rest. For in six days Christ wrought the heavens and the earth, the seas, and all creatures that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: and therefore the Lord hallowed it.

“4. Honour thy father and thy mother, whom the Lord

* Thorpe’s *Cædmon*, pp. 172-176.

hath given thee, that thou mayest be the longer living on earth.

“5. Slay thou not.

“6. Commit thou not adultery.

“7. Steal thou not.

“8. Say thou not false witness.

“9. Covet thou not thy neighbour’s goods unjustly.

“10. Make thou not to thyself golden or silver gods.”*

Such a method of presenting the contents of the Bible, however interesting and valuable, cannot be justly described as translating the Holy Scriptures.

Neither can the work of Ælfric, written in the tenth century.† It contains an epitome of the Old and New Testaments. He gives often in an abridged form, and with omissions, the historical contents of the Pentateuch, the books of Joshua, Judges, the Kings, Esther, and Job; also parts of the Apocrypha. Sometimes Ælfric gives accurate renderings, at other times they are incorrect; and he commonly substitutes for the texts paraphrases and statements of his own.

When William the Norman, England’s second great conqueror, stepped on the shore near Hastings, he came to effect changes in the language as well as the social habits and the general civilisation of the Anglian race. A new dialect made its appearance. The old English tongue entered a transition state. It became mixed with words and inflexions of Norman origin. Rask, in his Anglo-Saxon grammar, fixes the boundary-line between the former and this new era in the history of our language about the year 1100. Some marks of the change may be traced in the *Saxon Chronicle*, written between the years 1079 and 1140;

* Thorpe’s *Ancient Laws and Institutions of England*, vol. i. p. 45.

† Edited by Thwaites, 1623.

but the progress of a language is very gradual, and the change during a transition state is so fluctuating and confused, that it is difficult to determine to which dialect in particular any composition in question may belong.

As this change was going on, some one named Orm, or Ormin, a canon of the Augustine order, wrote a feeble versified paraphrase of the Gospels and Acts, running out to the extent of 20,000 lines.* In this work the older case-endings of words disappear, though few foreign words are introduced; it exhibits our language under Henry II. Respecting orthography the author was very particular, and forewarned transcribers against inaccuracy, conscious of changes going on at the time in that direction.†

Another specimen of this class is the famous *Salus Animi* or *Soulehele*, in the Vernon MS. of the Bodleian, which, according to the best critics, belongs to the thirteenth century. The following lines relate to the crucifixion:

“Our ladi and hire sustur stoden under the roode,
 And seint John, and Marie Magdaleyn with wel sori moode
 Ur Ladi biheold hire sweete eon ibrouht in gret pyne,
 For monnes gultes nouthen her and nothing for myne.
 Marie weop wel sore, and bitter teres leet,
 The teres fullen upon the ston down at hire feet.”

One may hope that such productions were of some practical use, that there were earnest minds who studied these fragments, and caught the influence of the facts which they record; but compositions of another class were sought for with greater avidity, and were commonly read with deeper interest. The lives of the saints were held in the highest esteem; and some of them are found incorporated

* Edited, with a glossary, by Dr. Meadows, 1852. 2 vols.

† Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 30.

in the large thick volume of the Vernon MS., to which reference has been made as containing the work entitled *Soulehele*. "This sumptuous volume was undoubtedly chained in the cloister or church of some capital monastery. It is not improbable that the novices were exercised in reciting portions from these pieces. In the British Museum there is a set of legendary tales in rhyme, which appear to have been solemnly pronounced by the priest to the people on Sundays and holidays. This sort of poetry was also sung to the harp by the minstrels on Sundays, instead of the romantic subjects usual at public entertainments."*

It should be also stated that there is preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, a MS. Story of *Genesis and Exodus*, published in 1865, under the editorship of Richard Morris. The author probably lived about the middle of the thirteenth century.

II. A second class of productions includes Latin MSS., with interlineary glosses.

The first of these is the celebrated *Durham Book of the Four Gospels*, preserved in the British Museum. The Latin text was copied by Eadfrith, a monk, in the bleak Isle of Lindisfarne, where a famous convent existed, under St. Cuthbert.† Eadfrith died in 687, and his copy must have been made in the same century which witnessed the

* Warton's *History of English Poetry*, i. 18.

† "Cuthbert's spiritual influence extended far beyond Lindisfarne Priory. He preached zealously among the Northumbrians; and when plague swept the country, and the people, frightened back into paganism, sought a fancied safety in heathen spells and amulets, he went to and fro among them to warn, to strengthen, and to bless the sufferers. He was accustomed to betake himself on horseback or on foot to mountain regions, where, gathering about him a population as wild as their country, he spent the day in teaching and baptizing, and the chief part of the night in chanting psalms in the open air with a voice so remarkable for compass

activity of Cædmon in the composition of his poem. Whitby and Lindisfarne thus became contemporaneously united in the work of Scripture instruction; and about two hundred years later, in the time of Alfred, an interlineary Anglo-Saxon interpretation of the Latin words was added, by a priest named Aldred. The gloss is given word for word, and no attempt is made to transfer the meaning from one idiom to another.

It may interest the reader to peruse the rendering of the Lord's Prayer into the tongue spoken by our ancestors, and to trace in the rather uncouth-looking words some resemblance in sound to the language of the present day :

“Fader uren thu arth in heofnum, sie gehalgud noma thin : to cymeth ric thin ; sie willo thin suæls in heofne & in eortho ; hlaf userne ofer wistlic sel us todæg : & forgef us scylda usna suæ uæ forgefon scyldgum usum : & ne inlæd usih in costunge uh gefrig usich from yfle.”*

The old quarto volume in which this glossary is preserved is a most beautiful specimen of ancient penmanship. One might almost fancy the letters were engraved. There are in the book many ornaments and pictures by St. Ethelwald, who succeeded Eadfrith in the see of Durham. It contains four curious portraits of the Evangelists, and the initial letter of each Gospel is finely illuminated. Among the stories told respecting the volume, the following is not the least remarkable and amusing. When the monks of Lindisfarne were removing from their favourite monastery to avoid the depredations of the Danes, the vessel in which

and power that the people were ready to believe themselves visited by some heavenly messenger, and eagerly flocked to his feet.” (*Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels*, part iv. pref. p. xvii. Surtees Society, 1865.)

* Cottonian mss., Nero, D. iv. fol. 36.

the holy brethren were embarked was upset, and the *Durham Book*, which they were anxious to convey to some place of safety, fell into the sea; but through the merits of St. Cuthbert the volume was preserved, for, the tide ebbing at the time much farther than usual, it was found lying high and dry on the sands, at the distance of full three miles from the shore. The Latin Gospels in the book had been used by St. Cuthbert himself, and therefore the volume had acquired the most precious associations in the thoughts of the brotherhood; and it is asserted that it was found after the accident, "much more beautiful than before, both within and without, being no way injured by the salt water, but rather polished by some heavenly hand:" but its present appearance, whilst confirming the fact of its temporary submersion, disproves the assertion that it was uninjured by the waves. For greater safety it was afterwards placed upon the lid of the inner coffin of St. Cuthbert, where it was found in 1104, when the monks ended their wanderings at Durham, and there built a magnificent cathedral.* Afterwards taken back to Lindisfarne, where a colony of the Durham monastics built what was called the Priory of Holy Island, it remained amongst the costly treasures of the fraternity until the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. In some unknown way it fell into Sir Robert Cotton's hands, and is now preserved in the splendid collection of MSS. bearing his name in the British Museum. The rich binding is lost, but the caligraphy and the illuminations exist in unfaded lustre.

After the *Durham Book* comes the *Rushworth Gloss*, a manuscript existing in the Bodleian Library. It is an inter-

* Raine's *St. Cuthbert*, pp. 34, 47.

lineary Saxon translation of the Gospels, written about the same time as the former work. It has coloured initials and ornamental delineations of the Evangelists. The parties who executed the task have preserved their names—"Owen, that this book glossed, and Farmen, the priest at Harewood." The copyist has also taken care to perpetuate his memory in connexion with his labours,—one MacReogol, who prays that the reader may not forget to intercede for the writer. The *Anglo-Saxon Gloss*, as in the case of the *Durham Book*, follows the Latin word for word, and resembles it in form, as probably it corresponds with it in age.*

III. The third class of Anglo-Saxon Scriptures embrace what may be more properly called *versions* than any of those already mentioned.

The earliest production of this kind of which we have

* "The Rushworth Book, though a noble ms., yields in antiquity, as well as in beauty of execution, to the Lindisfarne Codex. It is written in lines extending through the page, and is abundantly ornamented with illuminated letters. Both mss. abound with clerical errors; the older one is, however, the more correctly written of the two." (The *Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels*, part iii. pref. p. x. Surtees Society publication for 1863.)

"In the Lambeth Library (1033, 4to., vellum) are two vols., written probably about 1430; mutilated at the beginning and end and in several other places, in parts much soiled.

"This ms. contains the books of the Old Testament, from 2 Paral. (Chron.) ii. 7 to Baruch inclusive, in the later version, with the prologues to Isaiah and Baruch. The textual glosses are numerous, and sometimes peculiar. It has also occasional glosses in the margin. On Psa. ciii. (civ.) 17, is a Latin note on the word *gerfaucun*, which supposes Wycliffe the author of the version, and terms him 'Latinitatis ignarus.' The note is in a hand of about 1500." (Forshall and Madden, p. xlvi.)

It would be useless to give specimens of these Saxon mss., as they would need to be translated into modern English to be intelligible to general readers. Of course the Saxon renderings are intended to correspond with the Vulgate text.

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any account, is a version of the Gospel of St. John, executed by Bede, the monk of Jarrow. As we read the account of his death in the year 735, preserved by an eye-witness, we are transported, in imagination, to the monastery on the banks of the Tyne, where still, amidst clouds of smoke and noxious vapours, an old Saxon chancel may be seen in good preservation, connected with a now ruined monastery, and containing, near the communion table, a shattered high-backed seat, world-known as Bede's chair. There, in the monastery, we see the venerable ecclesiastic in his last hour, intently engaged in dictating to his amanuensis. "There remains now only one chapter; but it seems difficult for you to speak," exclaims the scribe, as his pen traces on the parchment the last verse of the 20th chapter of John. "It is easy," replied Bede: "take your pen, dip it in ink, and write as fast as you can." "Now, master," says the Jarrow scribe, after hastily penning down the sentences from his trembling lips, "now only one sentence is wanting." Bede repeated it. "It is finished," said the scribe. "It is finished," replied the dying saint. "Lift up my head; let me sit in my cell, in the place where I have been accustomed to pray; and now glory be to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And with the utterance of these words his spirit fled. It was a noble distinction to die in the act of translating the Word of God.

Bede is said to have acquired some acquaintance with Hebrew, and more with Greek, and to have had in his possession a codex of the Acts of the Apostles in the original, to the readings of which he refers in a commentary on that book.* He is thought by some to have translated the whole

* Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 11.

Bible. We should be glad to see an accredited ms. of such a version, but nobody knows where it can be found. John Foxe, in 1571, printed the Gospels of the four evangelists, translated in the old Saxon time out of Latin into the vulgar tongue of the Saxons; but the worthy martyrologist was scarcely to be trusted as editor of such a work; and on examining it we discover that two-thirds only are composed of the version; the other third is made up by verses from the Bishops' Bible, which are sometimes made to harmonize with an earlier translation. It was conjectured by Marshall, who published another edition, on the basis of that by John Foxe, that the collection contained the supposed version by Bede; but this is mere conjecture, and the text of that version, if there ever was one, continues to be a desideratum.

Foxe rejoiced much that he could appeal to antiquity in favour of vernacular versions, then viewed with so much jealousy by the Church of Rome; and the Reformers generally were fond of this argument, considerably overstating the facts of the case, as might be expected in an uncritical age, and amidst the heats of controversy. Archbishop Parker observes, in his preface to the Bishops' Bible: "Their old forefathers, that have ruled in this realme, who in their times and in diuers ages did their diligence to translate the whole bookes of the Scriptures to the erudition of the laytie, as yet at this day, to be seene diuers bookes translated into the vulgar tongue, some by kynges of the realme, some by bishoppes, some by abbottes, some by other deuout godly fathers; so desirous they were of old tyme to haue the lay sort edified in godlynes by reading in their vulgar tongue, that very many bookes be yet extant, though for the age of the speache, and straungeness of the charect of many of them

almost worne out of knowledge. In whiche bookes may be seene evidently howe it was vsed among the Saxons, to haue in their Churches read the foure gospels so distributed and piked out in the body of the euangelistes' bookes, that to euery Sunday and festiuall day in the yere they were sorted out to the common ministers of the Church in their common prayers to be read to their people."

In fact, our knowledge of early Anglo-Saxon Gospels is altogether unsatisfactory; for we are told by Sir Frederick Madden, a great authority on this subject, that of several mss. in existence, "none appear to give the version in its original purity."*

IV. The last division to be noticed consists of Anglo-Saxon and Early English Psalters. The Psalms formed so important a part of the church service, and so powerfully touched the hearts of men, that we do not wonder more attention was paid to them by our forefathers than to any other portion of Holy Writ. It is very remarkable that the Psalms have in all ages drawn towards them the affections of devout minds, and have been a true *cardiphonia* to mankind in general; so that in this fact we have a satisfactory answer to objections brought against them in modern times.

An Anglo-Saxon Psalter, of the ninth century, has been edited by Stevenson for the Surtees Society; and an Anglo-Norman version of the Psalms and canticles of the church exists, regarded as earlier than 1200.† The earliest prose translation of an entire book of Scripture is a Psalter by William de Schorham, vicar of Chart Sutton, near Leeds, in the county of Kent. It belongs to the fourteenth century

* Preface to edition of Wycliffe's *Bible*, by Forshall and Madden, p. ii.

† *Ibid.*, p. iii.

—the beginning of Edward the Third's reign; and in a version of the Psalms attributed to John Hyde, and preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, we have, probably, a revision of Schorham's work. Belonging to about the same period is a ms. by Richard Rolle, a chantry priest, who died 1349. Having written a Latin commentary on the Psalms, he afterwards published an English version of the text, with an English commentary appended to it.

He lived in solitude, close by the convent of Hampole, a village about four miles from Doncaster; and there he carried on his studies and wrote his works, after invoking the muse with more of perseverance than genius or taste. He is known in the annals of our literature as the author of several theological pieces in Latin, and especially of the *Prick of Conscience*; a curious old English poem, of which the reader may find ample specimens in Warton's *History of English Poetry*.* His prose translation of the Book of Psalms is found in several manuscripts—the one in Sidney College claiming to be the original. The beginning of the first Psalm is translated thus:

“Blisful man, ye whilke way yede nocht i ye counseyl of wicked, and in ye wey of sinfulle stode nocht, and in ye chayr of pestilence he nocht sate.”

Rolle, in his work of translation, was evidently bent upon doing good, and in a prologue he informs us that he sought no strange English, but what was easiest and most common, that he followed the letter of the Latin text as far as possible, and that, in expounding, “he followed the holy doctors, and aimed at reproving sin.” This, as he further observes, was stated in order to meet the objections of

* Vol. ii. p. 43 *et seq.*

envious men, who might say that he did not understand what he was doing, and was thereby injuring himself and others. A short comment or gloss is inserted after each sentence, which, in the simplest manner, explains the meaning of the passage; as, for example, after the third verse of the first Psalm it is said, "He shall not only be good in himself, but he shall be as a tree that is profitable to many, and *noyand* to none." Hampole's gloss, though substantially the same in all the manuscripts examined, is more concise in some than others.

A curious ms. of this version, copied in the time of Henry VI., states that the work was undertaken at the request of Dame Margaret Kirkby, a lady recluse, living probably at Hampole; that the autograph ms. by the author was attached to a tomb by chains, and that many copies, corrupted by the Lollards, were at the time in circulation. It is amusing to find this note respecting one of the mss.: "Being disturbed, I forgot to add that this book evidently appears to have lain long in water. Thus the famous Durham Gospels in the Cottonian Library, Nero, D, iv., were recovered from the sea. So also the comment of Johannes de Lathbury was taken from the bottom of the sea, and the works of Mr. Frith found in the belly of a great fish."*

It may be mentioned here that the Hampole hermit, who, without any poetical genius, was fond of versifying, composed metrical paraphrases of the Lord's Prayer, and of selections from the Book of Job; but another and far more effective labourer in the vineyard was in Rolle's day preparing for his work. God was raising up Wycliffe to prepare an

* Harl. mss., described in Cat. ii. p. 244.

English version of the whole Bible, to feed the minds of those who pined with spiritual hunger. It cannot be said, indeed, that no man gave unto them, for we have seen that some diligent and faithful servants did convey refreshment, at least a few "crumbs from the Master's table;" but, at the best, it was a stinted supply. Gratefully do we trace remains of the least contributions of Scriptural knowledge among the relics of our old English literature; but it is painful to think that, after all, so little was done for the instruction of the people in the oracles of God. Happily, far different times have come over our country, and now by every cottager the Bible may be easily obtained. The night of those ages, as far as Scriptural knowledge was concerned,—to say nothing of other kinds of knowledge,—was illumined only by a pale moon, whose rays, darting from amidst thick clouds, and lighting up here and there the wide waste, we love to watch, and think how some travellers to eternity might catch these beams, and, guided by them, pursue the path of safety; but a bright morning long since dawned on our fathers, and we, thank God! are living in the brightness of the full noon-day.





CHAPTER II.

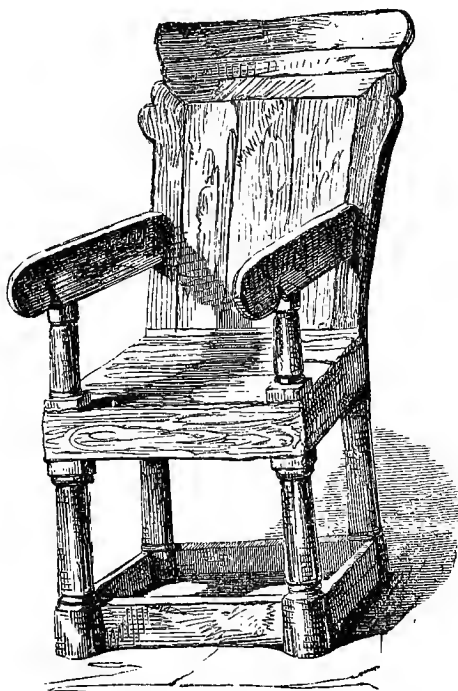
WYCLIFFE AND HIS VERSION.



OWERING above the pleasant town of Lutterworth, on the banks of the Swift, there stands the old Church of St. Mary, an interesting specimen of the pointed architecture of this country in the thirteenth century. What with the decay produced by time, and the mutilation occasioned by accident, it has lost much of its original beauty; but there are associations which invest it with a charm which the skill of the architect could never impart.

We look with feelings of peculiar veneration on that time-worn edifice, as we remember that there John Wycliffe preached and laboured, and that probably under the shadow of those walls he prosecuted his task of translating the Scriptures into the English tongue. The carved oak pulpit in which he taught, the table on which he wrote, the chair in which he died, and the robe, now torn and tattered, which he used to wear, are preserved as relics which cannot fail to operate as quickeners of the imagination. With

the aid of the portrait of his venerable form and face now hanging on the vestry wall, we can picture that true-hearted man, occupying the sacred desk, and proclaiming to his parishioners the gospel of Christ, and then retiring to



JOHN WYCLIFFE'S CHAIR.

resume the study of the Word of God, and to write upon that oak table page after page of his memorable version! In 1372, Wycliffe became a theological lecturer at Oxford. In April, 1374, he was presented by the Crown to the

Lutterworth Rectory, and at the same time, it is presumed, he relinquished the living of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire.

The same year he was sent to Bruges as a Commissioner with the Bishop of Bangor, to negotiate with a papal embassy in that city respecting the reservation of benefices. That visit made him better acquainted than before with the chicanery and corruption of the Roman court, and roused his indignation against the papal system. At Oxford, where he was Warden of Balliol * as early as 1361, he had distinguished himself as the inveterate opponent of the Mendicant Friars, who, whilst overrunning the university and the country, exerted all their influence to prop up the despotism of the Roman see. In the controversy between Edward III. and the Pope, respecting the papal claim of tribute from England, Wycliffe had fearlessly contended against the claim as unjust and arrogant. But, on his return from Bruges, reviewing what he had there seen and heard, he came out as a more decided champion than ever for a reformation of the church. Indeed, so bold was the course he pursued, that he was cited to appear at St. Paul's to answer certain charges against him, when a scene of tumult occurred, quaintly described by Foxe, which ended in the deliverance of Wycliffe from his enemies, through the interposition of his illustrious friend, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. His enemies, however, would allow the reformer no peace, but continued their opposition; happily

* The preface to Forshall and Madden's edition of *Wycliffe's Bible*, p. vii., note 5, says, "Irresistible evidence of the identity of the Warden of Canterbury Hall with the reformer is to be found in a passage from Will. Wydforde's *Septuaginta duo questiones de Sacramento Eucharistiæ*." But Professor Shirley, in an introduction to his edition of Wycliffe's *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, questions the force of this evidence.

without effect, the refractory ecclesiastic enjoying for a time the special favour and patronage of the Duke.

All this excitement, whilst it increased his distaste for the papal system of government and doctrine, sharpened his love for the Holy Scriptures as the standard of religious principles and ecclesiastical discipline. He wrote a book upon the *Truth and Meaning of Scripture*, in which he maintains that Christ's law is sufficient; that a Christian man, well understanding it, may gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage upon earth; that all truth is contained in Scripture; that we should admit of no conclusion not approved there; that there is no court beside the court of heaven; that though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the gospel than we should from all that multitude; and that true sons will in no wise go about to infringe the will and testament of their heavenly Father. His writings subsequent to the year 1378 exhibit abundant arguments in support of the sufficiency of Scripture, and in defence of vernacular translations. "As the faith of the church," he says, "is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in an orthodox sense, the better. And since secular men should assuredly understand the faith, it should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them. Inasmuch also as the doctrines of our faith are more clearly and precisely expressed in the Scriptures than they may possibly be by priests, seeing, if one may venture so to speak, that many prelates are but too ignorant of Scripture, and as the verbal instructions of priests have many other defects, the conclusion is abundantly plain, that believers should ascertain for themselves the matters of their faith by having the Scriptures in a language which they

fully understand. According to the constant doctrine of Augustine, the Scriptures contain the whole of truth, and this translation of them should therefore do at least this good, namely, placing bishops and priests above suspicion as to the parts of it which they profess to explain. Other means also, as prelates, the pope, and friars, may prove defective; and to provide against this, Christ and His apostles evangelized the greater portion of the world, by making known the Scriptures in a language which was familiar to the people. To this end, indeed, did the Holy Spirit endow them with the knowledge of all tongues. Why, therefore, should not the living disciples of Christ do as they did—opening the Scriptures to the people so clearly and plainly, that they may verily understand them, since, except to the unbeliever, disposed to resist the Holy Spirit, the things contained in Scripture are no fiction? ”*

Wycliffe appeared before a synod at Lambeth in 1378, when conclusions deduced from his writings were exhibited against him, and he returned answers, which he subsequently published in an enlarged form. He referred to a papal prohibition of Scripture reading; to doctrines which he deduced from the written Word as accounted tares, in allusion to an expression in one of the bulls, “Tares amidst pure grain;” and to applications for a papal censure of vulgate versions as heretical. Besides this, in a tract he afterwards composed in reply to an anonymous author, whom he styles *Mixtus Theologus*, he adverts to the condition in which the doctrine of papal infallibility places Divine revelation, since, he says, the Pope might on that ground claim to exclude books from the canon of Scripture, and make Holy Writ itself heretical.

* Vaughan's *Life of Wycliffe*.

“It seems probable that Wycliffe’s first attempt at the interpretation of Scripture was his commentary on the Apocalypse. The fearful pestilence which, between 1345 and 1349, swept away a large portion of the human race, and other calamities, arising as well from the strife of nations and parties as from the discord of the natural elements, cast a general gloom over society. But perhaps nowhere within the realm of England was there a more melancholy spectacle than that which, for some years subsequent to the pestilence, was presented by the University of Oxford. Dwelling in such a spot, a man of sanguine temperament would almost of necessity become imbued with the notion, then generally prevalent, that things were preparing themselves for their great consummation, and that Antichrist’s personal appearance was shortly to be expected. This feeling prompted that which is believed to be the earliest production of Wycliffe’s pen, *The Last Age of the Church*. It was written in 1356.”

“It is a remarkable circumstance that about the time when Wycliffe must have been employed upon the commentaries just mentioned, another, upon the Gospels, should have appeared, compiled upon a like principle. The name of the author has not been discovered, but the preface implies that he knew of no previous exposition of the Gospels in English; and the language accords with the northern dialect in the middle of the fourteenth century.”

The commentary extends to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The following is a characteristic extract: “Prechours thei calle hom self, and sey that thei be sent, bot contrary tho thinges to tho Apostels thei telle: thei magnyfie martirs, and bene pursuars of martirs. The apostels and martirs of Crist made no pursuynge, bot sufferd; thei kursed none, bot

sufferd cursynges and wariynges. Bot fals prophetes pursue men, and vndo cristen men, and blasfemen God, thof not in word, thei do in hor manere" (Matt. ix. 38.)*

In the Harleian mss. in the British Museum (5085) is one entitled *Mirror of Sermons for the Year*. It would appear to be the same work as that described by Forshall and Madden. The Homilies abound in legendary tales, which are notified in the margin. The following is a rendering of the first few verses of the second chapter of Matthew: "Yan whan He was borne in bethleem of Jude, in ye dais of Herod kinge: Se ye maistres come from ye est to jersalem, and saiden, Where is he yat is born ye kinge of Jues, For whi we sen his sterre in ye est and we com to anoure him: And Herod ye kinge whan he herd yis is greteliche troubled, and al ierl̄m wiy hi. And he gadred alle princes of prestes and maisters of ye folk, and asked of hem where yt crist was borne: And hy saide to him In bethleem of Jude: For so is it writen yom ye prophete. And you bethleem lond of jude you nart nougt lest in ye princes of Jude: For of ye schal com out aduk yat gouerney mi puple of isrl."

The dates of commencing and of concluding the work which has made John Wycliffe so famous in history cannot be determined with any precision. He accomplished his task by degrees. He began with a translation of the Apocalypse; next appeared the Gospels in English, with a commentary; then followed the other books of the New Testament, which was believed to have been finished about 1380.† A version of the Old Testament, as well as the New,

* Forshall and Madden, preface to *Wycliffe's Bible*, p. x. Three mss. are mentioned:—Matthew, in Univ. Libr., Camb., II. 2. 12; and Brit. Mus. Egerton, 842; Mark and Luke in Corp. Christi Camb., Nasmith xxxii. This last ms. I shall notice on p. 47.

† Westcott's *History of the English Bible*. Eadie considers it may have been

appeared entire not long afterwards, on which he appears to have employed himself, and which is supposed to have been completed by him before 1384, when he peaceably died of paralysis at the Lutterworth Rectory, exempt from "the horrible judgment" which his enemies predicted would befall him. "Admirable," says Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted with so many packs of dogs should die at last quietly sitting on his form." In the next century, however, he was not allowed to continue in his grave, for the Council of Constance ordered him to be disinterred and burnt, and his ashes to be thrown into the river Swift. "Thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblems of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."*

One loves to picture this remarkable man pursuing his Biblical toils, now at his Lutterworth Rectory, then in his college at Oxford, working in the winter nights by his lamp, and early in the summer's morn as the sun beamed through his window. We see him with his long grey beard, sometimes alone, bending over the parchment manuscript, carefully writing down some well-laboured rendering; and sometimes in company with others who sympathized in his sentiments, and loved to aid him in his hallowed enterprise. There was one who took a part with him at first, who afterwards forsook the cause to which Wycliffe devoted his life. The name of Nicolas de Hereford appears as his

finished by 1381. (Vol. i. p. 6.) Dr. Vaughan wrote to me in a letter, many years ago, saying, "My impression was, and still is, that Wycliffe meditated his translation in 1378, and that he probably commenced it at that time."

* Fuller's *Church History of Great Britain*, ii. 457, 493. Ed. 1837.

coadjutor in a ms. of the Old Testament translation preserved in the Bodleian Library. This man for a while took part with the English reformers before the Reformation; and on account of these circumstances he was suspected of heresy and thrown into prison. The displeasure of his ecclesiastical superiors induced Nicholas to recant; and the abrupt close of the translation of the Old Testament in the middle of the Book of Baruch, as appears from his ms. in the Bodleian, is thought to have been occasioned by his departure from England for a time, just after he had been excommunicated for heresy. The work, however, was carried on by some one else,—Wycliffe himself is believed to have been the person, thus completing what had been his own project, in the execution of which he had been assisted by another. Unfortunately for the fame of Nicholas de Hereford, he subsequently comes before us in history as persecutor of the very persons who held opinions similar to his own at an earlier period. He sat in commission in the Cathedral of Hereford, accompanied “with many other prelates, and worshipful men, and wise graduates in sundry faculties,”* to try and condemn some who had departed from Roman Catholic doctrines and practices.

In spite of efforts made to deprive Wycliffe of the honour of being the first English translator of the Bible, his claims are now in that respect generally acknowledged. Antiquarian investigation has fully refuted all rival claims. Sir Thomas More, when opposing Tyndale, to serve a purpose, maintained that the “*hole* Bible was long before [Wycliffe’s] days, by virtuous and well-learned men translated into the English tongue;” but, strangely enough, Sir Thomas at the same time admitted that it would be a dangerous

* Foxe, iii. 187.

thing for a printer to publish a Bible, "and then hang upon a doubtful trial whether the first copy of his translation was made before Wycliffe's days or since."* Others have spoken of Bibles antecedent to Wycliffe's, but it has been satisfactorily shown that the versions to which they refer were made after Wycliffe's death. All the attempts to wrest from the rector of Lutterworth the honourable distinction of being the earliest translator or editor of a complete English collection of sacred writings have proved futile; and to him, therefore, are due the admiration and gratitude of his country for the achievement of an enterprise as unprecedented as it was important and beneficial. He opened the gates of revelation to all his countrymen. He wrote for the people. He intended his work not for the library of the church and convent, not for a shelf in the priest's study, but for the table of every man who had ability to read. He published his translation, sent it abroad throughout the land, encouraged persons to transcribe it, and urged men to read in their own tongue the wonderful message from God. Nor would he guard by gloss or comment the pure truth of heaven, as almost all his predecessors had done, but he left the oracle to speak for itself, thus virtually asserting the right of private judgment. This is a peculiarity of the utmost importance. The Church authorities of the age were exceedingly jealous of any appeal to the right of private judgment. All religious instruction was to be conveyed by the priesthood, or to be under their control; and Holy Scripture was to be accompanied by ecclesiastical interpretations. Wycliffe was perhaps the first to break through these trammels, and to trust the Word of God

* More's *Dialogue*, iii. c. 16.

to its own intrinsic power and efficacy, and to the operation of the Holy Spirit in connection with it. That this act was a novelty, that it gave a shock to ecclesiastical prejudices, is apparent from the pages of the historian Knighton, Wycliffe's contemporary, who mournfully deploras that the gospel pearl was thus scattered abroad and cast before swine. It may seem, in the present day, no mighty thing to make such a translation, and attempt its general circulation; but those who are disposed on that ground to lessen the fair fame of our first great translator, should remember how well the detractors of Columbus, the first to sail on an untried ocean, were rebuked in the familiar story of the broken egg. In such an age as that in which Wycliffe lived, to translate the whole Bible for popular use, to conceive the plan, and to execute the project, implied the possession of qualities of mind and heart such as belong only to the truly noble of our race. Wycliffe was the contemporary of some whose brilliant genius streaked the early morn of our revived literature, and whose rich poetic splendour far eclipses any literary honours which adorn his name; but we must be allowed to pronounce Wycliffe, on the whole, a greater character than our British Chaucer or the Italian Petrarch. The moral courage of the reformer was beyond all praise. There were others in his day, and before his time, who saw the corruptions of the Church, and assailed them, in a timid spirit and a covert form: they wrote in a double sense, concealing their more important meanings under the veil of allegory, "the trembling muse, for its own safety, induced by fear to disguise itself in sacred vestments;" but Wycliffe—bold, sincere, and earnest—brooked no trammels and feared no opposition, while with one hand he opened the Book of revelation before all the people, and with the other

hand laid bare, in the face of the world, and to the apprehension of the humblest, the corruptions of the Church of Rome.

It is a remarkable fact that though Wycliffe's version has



PORTION OF WYCLIFFE'S BIBLE.

been talked of and written about for centuries, it was never satisfactorily identified until lately, and consequently could not be judged of according to its intrinsic merits. It is now established as a fact that the version of the New Testament

printed as Wycliffe's in the edition by Baber, and again printed in a revised form by Bagster in the *English Hexapla*, is not the version executed by the reformer, but one prepared on his model by some who became his followers. The true text of Wycliffe never appeared in print until Forshall and Madden, after the toil of twenty-two years, brought it out in 1850—although the errors of earlier editors had been detected by Lea Wilson, who in 1848 published the New Testament from a genuine Wycliffe ms. In Forshall and Madden's edition every one may see what the reformer effected, and form an estimate of it for himself. The following are extracts :

“Therefore when Jhesus was born in Bethlem of Juda, in the days of kyng Herode, loo ! kyngis, *or wijs men*, camen fro the eest to Jerusalem, sayinge, Wher is he, that is borun kyng of Jewis? forsothe we han seyn his sterre in the este, and we comen for to wirshipe hym. Sothely kyng Herode hereynge is trublid, and al Jerusalem with him. And he, gedrynge to gidre alle the princis of prestis and scribis of the peple, enquiride of hem wher Crist shulde be borun” (Matt. ii. 1-4).

“Poul, seruauant of Jhesu Crist, clepid apostle, departed into the euangelie of God; the which he behiȝt bifore by his prophetis in hooly scripturis of his sone, the which is maad to him of the seed of Dauith after the fleisch, the which is predestynat, *or bifore ordeyned bi grace*, the sone of God in vertu after the spirit of halewyng of the aȝeyn rysynge of deed men, of Jhesus Crist oure Lord, by whom we han resseyued grace and apostilled, *or stat of apostle*, to obeische to the feith in alle folkis for his name, in which, and ȝe ben clepid of Jhesu Crist, to alle that ben at Rome, the louede of God, clepid hooly, grace to ȝou, and pees of God our fadir, and of the Lord Jhesu Crist” (Rom. i. 1-7).

Probably Wycliffe knew nothing or next to nothing of Greek: a few words in that language sprinkled over his writings afford no proof of much acquaintance with it. Certainly he did not make his translation of the New Testament from the original, but from the Latin Vulgate, as he did his version of the Old Testament. In his literal renderings he was anxious, no doubt, to avoid giving a handle to his adversaries for charging him with perverting the Scriptures; and in the use of plain and racy Anglo-Saxon he sought to instruct and interest the common people—thus, in both respects, proceeding on Hampole's principle of seeking "no strange English, but easiest and commonest, and such as is most like the Latin." Whether he derived any assistance from previous translations we are unable to say; yet it appears very probable that he would seek out such fragmentary versions in existence as he could: certainly it was, at the best, only in certain portions of the Word of God that he could get help from his predecessors; for, as already shown, till he undertook the task no one appears to have executed anything like a complete version.

"One is surprised to see how, when Wycliffe's work is modernized in spelling, it so closely resembles subsequent translations in the general aspect of the version, in the flow and position of the words, in the distinctive terms and connecting particles, in the rhythm of its clauses, and the mould of its sentences. Several of its phrases must have passed early into the language, especially those which from their currency had acquired a kind of proverbial power, such as 'strait gate' and 'narrow way,' 'beam' and 'mote,' and being adopted by Tyndale, they have kept their place unto this present.' . . . Wycliffe is easily read, though not a few of his words are obsolete. His theological nomen-

clature, part of which he had learned from Bradwardine, has not been changed to any great extent, and many of the terms explained in the margin of the MSS., as if needing explanation, are now part of the language, while the explanatory terms have themselves disappeared.”*

The effect of Wycliffe's labours was immense. His translation was studied; poor priests—as the preachers of his doctrines came to be called—went through the land diffusing the knowledge they had acquired by the study of that translation. They became popular, and in some quarters rivalled in influence the Mendicant order. “Men came to mock them, but went away struck to the heart, overawed, humbled, and converted. At the same time that they arrested the attention and commanded the passions of the vulgar, they challenged the most refined to the contest; and it seems to be generally admitted that no one was found able to cope with them in the field of argumentation. Though the multitude are not qualified to be direct judges of the higher powers of intellect, and though they are often made the dupes of loquacious effrontery, yet there is something in true genius and sterling merit which, when skilfully employed for that purpose, will produce a more powerful and extraordinary effect than ignorant assurance can ever reach.”† The character of the times was also in favour of the success of Wycliffe's labours, for the fourteenth century was an age of revival in freedom, commerce, literature, and civilization. Men were waking up after the slumber of centuries, they were stimulated to thought and inquiry, and thus were prepared to listen to instruction on the most interesting of

* Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 72, 73.

† Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, ii. 378.

all subjects—religion. The corruptions of the Church, too which were exposed in so many quarters by poetry and satire, had produced a revulsion of feeling in the breasts of multitudes, and, sickened at heart with a system palpably false, they turned to look for what was really true. Above all, there was doubtless the concurrent power of God—the disposal of His Providence, and the effusion of His grace—to aid the labours of Wycliffe and his followers.

That we have not overstated the effect of the toils of our reformer and translator may be proved by an appeal to the pages of his bitter enemy, Knighton. He compares the progress of Lollardism to the shooting forth of saplings from the root of a tree, and informs us that it filled the land with its fruit, and he goes so far as to aver that, if you met two men on the road, one was sure to be a Wycliffite.* If it be conceded, as probably it ought, that many who bore Wycliffe's name only partially adopted his doctrines, yet it must be admitted, on Knighton's testimony, that a very large multitude of persons were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the reformer's teaching. The number of manuscripts still extant containing a vernacular version, which must have been written by his followers, substantiate the same fact. These manuscripts may justly be regarded at once as the proof and the means of Wycliffe's success. A cause which depended mainly on the circulation of the Holy Scriptures for its extension can leave little doubt on one's mind as to whence it came, and with whose honour it ought to be identified. Wycliffe's character and distinctive work was evidently of God, and it was not in the power of man to overthrow it. No one ever was more maligned; but, as in many other cases, time has reversed the judgment of the past,

* Knighton *de Eventibus*, 2663.

and vindicated from aspersion the character of one among the greatest of the world's benefactors. The favourite title of "the morning star of the Reformation" points to the preparatory influences exerted by him in relation to the great change of the sixteenth century; and that influence no doubt includes the whole effect of his career as a politician, a theologian, and a translator. The most distinguished Churchmen of the Middle Ages took a leading part in State affairs; and it must not be forgotten that Wycliffe went to Bruges in the capacity of a Royal Commissioner, to negotiate business connected with the reservation of benefices. Opposed to the policy of the papal court, he promoted the policy of liberal English statesmen of the fourteenth century, who aimed at maintaining, as far as possible, the independence of their country. He held decided opinions on many social questions, which he boldly expressed. His religious convictions were very profound, and differed from those of many around him. What exactly were his views on several important questions, in which he felt a deep interest, has not been ascertained. Though many new lights are kindled round his biography, we should be glad to discover additional documents, such as might clear up remaining difficulties. Only by a careful study of his works can we acquire such knowledge as is within our reach; but to see what he was *all round*, we need to recover some of his works, which, for the present, continue in oblivion. That he was perfectly wise and consistent in his teaching is more than can be imagined. Rash propositions, no doubt, he maintained; but perhaps, if we knew all he wrote, some perplexities relating to him might be cleared up. At all events, his moral character cannot be impugned; nor can the evangelical cast of his sentiments be denied; neither are his spirituality of mind and devoutness

of life open to question. What he was in these respects is found worthy of one who undertook to open the Word of God before the eyes of all the people. And by his work of translation, beyond all other kinds of influence exerted by him, was the cause of reformed Christianity advanced in his native land. In that point of view there is nothing to mar the beauty of his career and the efficiency of his labours. Whatever he might be as a politician, a divine, and a social instructor, his labours on an English version of the Scriptures entitle him to the eulogium pronounced on Simon, the son of Onias: "Even as the morning star being in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon being full in her course, and as the bright beams of the sun, so doth he shine and glisten in the temple and church of God."



LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.



CHAPTER III.

TRANSLATORS AFTER WYCLIFFE, AND EARLY PRINTED VERSIONS.



THAT there were two English versions of Scripture towards the end of the fourteenth century was long ago surmised, but only of late has the fact been clearly established and satisfactorily explained. Much confusion remained, even after the point of a double translation had been set at rest, since, for want of a careful collation of mss., and the employment of sufficient critical skill upon the whole inquiry, it continued doubtful which of the two ascertained versions belonged to Wycliffe. As previously stated, editors made serious though excusable mistakes, printing, as did Baber and Offor, the second version instead of the first, under the reformer's name. The labours of Forshall and Madden have done much to disentangle the confused skein. They examined about one hundred and seventy mss. and classified them, so as to obtain a distinctive text, which is entitled to the claim of priority. That is of right assigned

to Wycliffe, on grounds which appear in the preface to the valuable edition of 1850. Out of one hundred and seventy mss., fifteen of the Old Testament and eighteen of the New belong to that version—the rest exhibit another of later date. Not one-fifth of these are earlier than the year 1408; the greater part seem to belong to about the second quarter of the century.

The second version appears to have been the work of John Purvey or Purnay, a zealous disciple of Wycliffe, who lived with his master and continued in his house to the day of his death. He was born near Olney, in Buckinghamshire, and after Wycliffe's decease he removed to Bristol, where through his zealous preaching he fell into trouble. Being apprehended, and also alarmed by the fate of the martyr Sautre, burnt for heresy, he retracted his opinions at St. Paul's Cross in the year 1400. After this Archbishop Chichele received the recanter, and gave him the vicarage of Hythe. Again he was accused of heresy, and again cast into prison, where, it is supposed, he ended his days. In a prologue to this version reference is made to "the English Bible late translated," by which Wycliffe's version is no doubt intended; and the author says that, in executing his labours, he had much travail with "divers fellows and helpers." As Purvey had been, for some time before Wycliffe's death, his companion and fellow-labourer, I think it probable that he had taken some part in the first version; but this second work, or rather revision, for it does not amount to more, was most likely executed mainly by himself. He says, "At the beginning I purposed, with God's help, to make the sentences as true and open in English as it is in Latin, either more true and more open than it is in Latin; and I pray for charity and for common profit of Christian souls,

that if any wise man find any default of the truth of translation, let him set in the true sentence and open of holy writ . . . for . . . the common Latin Bibles have some need to be corrected, as many as I have seen in my life, than hath the English Bible late translated." * And, to show that Purvey did not lack an appreciation of moral as well as critical qualifications for such a task, another passage may be quoted from the same prologue: "He hath need to live a clean life, and be full devout in prayers, and have not his wit occupied about worldly things, that the Holy Spirit, author of wisdom and knowledge and truth, dress him in his work, and suffer him not to err." "By this manner, with good living and great travail, men may come to true and clear translating and true understanding of Holy Writ, seem it never so hard at the beginning. God grant to us grace to ken well and keep well Holy Writ, and suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last."

The word "*Bible*" is used by Purvey to denote the Holy Scriptures. He speaks of "a simple creature who hath translated the *Bible* out of Latin in English." Again, as we have seen, he refers to "the *Bible* late translated." The Saxons had employed the word "*ge-writ*," but not the word *Bible*, as a designation of inspired writings. "*Bible*" is derived from the Greek *Biblion*; and Greek Fathers have recourse to the plural *Biblia* as a designation of Holy Writ. *Biblia* was employed by the Latins; and at length the neuter plural glided into a feminine singular; the French spoke of *La Bible*, and the Italians of *La Bibbia*. Through French, the appellation found its way into England. Chaucer has it in his *House of Fame*, to describe any

* The prologue was printed in 1536, under the title of *The Door of Holy Scripture*, and in 1550 as *The Pathway to Perfect Knowledge*.

book. "Men might make of them a bible twenty foot thick." And he tells us, in the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, that the study of this doctor of physic "was but little on the bible."* As title-pages were unknown in those days, neither the title of "Bible" nor any other title was prefixed to the new translation.

The following extracts from Purvey's version, as printed by Forshall and Madden, are given, that the reader may compare them with the corresponding passages taken from Wycliffe: †

" Therfor whanne Jhesus was borun in Bethleem of Juda, in the daies of King Eroude, lo! astromyenes camen fro the eest to Jerusalem, and seiden, Where is he, that is borun King of Jewis? for we han seyn his sterre in the eest, and we comen to worschipe him. But king Eroude herde, and was trublid, and al Jerusalem with hym. And he gaderide to gidre alle the prynces of prestis, and scribis of the puple, and enqueride of hem, where Crist shulde be borun" (Matt. ii. 1-4).

" Poul, the seruaunt of Jhesu Crist, clepid an apostle, departid in to the Gospel of God; which he hadde bihote tofore bi his profetis in holi scripturis of his sone, which is maad to hym of the seed of Dauid bi the flesch, and he was bifor ordeyned the sone of God in vertu, bi the spirit of halewyng of the a3en-risung of deed men, of Jhesu Cristoure Lord, bi whom we han resseyued grace and the office of apostle, to obeie to the feith in alle folkis for his name, among whiche 3e ben also clepid of Jhesu Crist, to alle that ben at Rome, derlyngis of God, and clepid hooli, grace to 3ou, and pees of Godoure fadir, and of the Lord Jhesu Crist" (Rom. i. 1-7.)

* Chaucer's *Works*, 477, 5.

† See page 37

There is a ms. version marked "Nasmith xxxii." containing a version of Mark and Luke, with comments, also the epistles of Paul, preserved in Corpus Christi (or Bennet) College Library. It is described in the catalogue as written in the fifteenth century; but Lewis thought it belonged to an earlier period. Influenced by him, I once thought so too, and that after a personal inspection of the ms.; but now I am inclined to regard it as of later date. It has been remarked that the comments contain no reflections on the Friars, a circumstance which contributed to raise a suspicion that the comments were written before Wycliffe's time; but I think it is more probable that this work belongs to the fifteenth century, and represents a version used by a circle distinct from that of Wycliffe and his followers. Lewis remarks, the work seems "not to have been published, but made only for the translator's own use"*—a supposition which, if correct, would strengthen my inference.

The following is copied from the first of Mark:—

"The bigynnyng of the gospel of ihum crist god son, as it was wryten in ysaye the sphete, lo y sende myn aungel byfore thi face, the whylke shal redye thi way byfore the. The voyce of the kryande in the deserte, redis the way of god; ryȝte make ȝee the stretys of hym. Ihon was in the deserte baptysande & prechande the baptyme of penaunce in remysoun of synnes. Ande alle the men of ierusalem wente forth to hym & alle the koñtre of the iewry & were baptysede of hym in thee flode of Iordane schryifande theire synnes. Ande Ihone was kladde with heris of

* Lewis, *History of Translations*, 16. Forshall and Madden (see p. 31 of this work) refer to the ms. so marked, as containing St. Matthew. This is a mistake; the ms. seems to present a version different from the one which they describe.

cameyls & a gerdil of a skyne aboute his lendis ; & he ete honysokyls, & honye of the wood : & he prechyde seyande a stalworthar thanne I shal come eftir me, of whom I am not worthi downfallande, or knelande to louse the thonge of his chawceres."

The gloss on the two Gospels is copious, and sometimes is marked by a strong spiritualizing strain. "The thong of Christ's shoe" resembles the Incarnation ; "how that goddis sone was maad flessche, the whylke Ihon seith he is not worthi to louse, that is, to make inuestygacoun of." As to John's eating honey, it is remarked, "that his prechyng was so swete that menn supposyde that he was crist ; bot sone this opynyoun fel away, for he tolde opynly that he was not cryst, but the byfore goar of crist."

From what has been said about the number of mss. collected for the edition of Wycliffe by Forshall and Madden, it follows that the second version must have had a large circulation ; most likely a much larger one than the first, though it is difficult to come to a conclusion in this respect, as we cannot tell how many copies of both kinds have been destroyed. It is interesting to learn something of the possessors of these mss. ; and we are informed that one belonged to Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester ; another to Henry VI., who gave it to the Charterhouse ; another, apparently, to Richard III. ; another to Henry VII., and another, perhaps, to Edward VI. ; another was given to Queen Elizabeth as a birthday present.* This statement only shows what value must have been attached to *copies* of the version, as literary curiosities. They came to be royal treasures—princely gifts. The first three sovereigns enumerated had no sympathy with the men who pre-

* Westcott's *English Bible*, 24.

pared and circulated such publications, no sympathy with them in the cause they espoused and promoted; and therefore the possession of these books affords no proof of the owners' Wycliffite tendencies. However, the number altogether which has survived the storms of persecution, the law enacted against Bible circulation, presently to be noticed, and the testimony borne by Knighton to the spread of Wycliffite opinions, are sufficient to prove the religious value set upon these treasures in many quarters, and how widely the Word of God must have been disseminated from love to its sacred contents. With the effects of Bible circulation at that time the history of Lollardism is closely connected, and some notice of that vigorous movement is requisite in the present stage of our narrative.

The name of Lollard is probably derived from the German *lollen*, or *lullen*, whence our English word *lull*, in allusion to the low murmuring of the human voice; and it seems to have been applied originally to those religious people who were addicted to singing psalms. But, whatever its origin, it received an application much wider than the etymology would imply. "I smell a Lollard," says mine host, in the *Canterbury Tales*, simply because, when he had uttered an oath, one of the merry party gravely said, "*Benedicite!* what ails the man, so sinfully to swear?" whence we may infer that anybody who seemed more than ordinarily religious incurred the reproach, or rather the honour, of Lollardism, however it might be esteemed. Certainly those who were tinctured with Wycliffe's principles came to be chief bearers of the title, and they consisted of persons entertaining different shades of opinion. In looking over documents relating to these men, we find that disbelief in the papal doctrine of transubstantiation, in the efficacy of sacraments

when administered by immoral priests, in the virtue of pilgrimages and prayers to saints, was a common charge against people of this class. Some of them declared that the Pope was Antichrist, and, in connection with this view, speculated upon unfulfilled prophecy. The matter of tithes was a question with many, and it was contended that such contributions were to be freely offered, and not forcibly exacted—that wicked priests had no right to them. Language, also, was sometimes used with regard to property, which, though it might be guarded by after explanations, had a wild, Fifth Monarchy look. There is, no doubt, a spiritual sense in which, as Dr. Arnold says, “the good things of the world are stolen by many; but they belong, by God’s gift, to those only who are Christ’s;” and Wycliffe himself, in what he said on that subject, might mean no more; but language used in one sense is sometimes caught up and employed in another, so as to [cover designs not originally dreamt of. It is always the fate of popular movements that the foolish and the bad get hold of the skirts of the wise and the good; that, like the camp followers of an army, all manner of vagrants attach themselves to soldiers of truth and godliness.

Lollardism is represented by some writers as if it were exclusively a religious movement, and by others as mainly a political one, in which religion was employed for other ends. Neither of these extreme opinions can be supported by facts. That politics were mixed up with some phases and circumstances of Lollardism there can be no doubt. What is related in history respecting John of Northampton, a Lord Mayor of London, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, is sufficient to show that these political reformers sought to avail themselves of contem-

porary religious excitements for the promotion of their objects. Theories of political economy, which became mixed up with theological opinions, point in the same direction; and what is thus established by particular facts is in accordance with the natural tendency of the circumstances in which the Lollards and their opponents were placed. So bound together were the affairs of Church and State, so complicated were the political entanglements with religious questions, that no attempt could be made at reforming the Church without its assuming a political character. Heresy and schism had become so identified with treason and rebellion in the minds of Churchmen, that they treated dissentients from the established faith and order as troublers of the public peace and disaffected subjects of government. Some reformers were forced, by their circumstances, into a political position which they did not desire; and people into whose heads no political thoughts entered appeared to be undermining the constitution. On the other hand, it does not appear, from the facts of the case, that Lollardism was mainly a political outbreak, that it aimed at a civil and social revolution under religious pretensions. The genuine religious element seems to have been primary and chief, the political secondary and subordinate.

Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, has often been cited as an example of the political character of Lollardism. His conduct wore a political aspect; to effect such changes as he contemplated would require a political revolution; but of his piety, and of what we may call his Protestantism, there can be no doubt; and to represent him as a traitor, a rebel, and the leader of an insurrection, is most unjust, because unsupported by ascertained facts. A story no doubt was told to Henry iv. about a Lollard plot; that heretics were assembling in

St. Gile's to act under Oldcastle; that they meant to burn Westminster Abbey and other ecclesiastical buildings; and that her Majesty went to the spot at night, and found these people, who said they were looking for the Lollard noble. But whether the story told the king was true becomes another question. Any connection between Cobham and the plot, if there was one at all, is by no means plain.

The political element, so far as it did exist, and the religious principles which certainly influenced numbers of the Lollards, must be distinguished from each other. The former would arise from several causes, one of which has been just assigned; but the latter must be ascribed to something of a different order. Here the distinctive spiritual teaching of Wycliffe and his associates must be recognised, and with it—to a still larger extent of operation—the translating of Holy Writ and the reading of it by men and women of every class. The population was divided, in the language of the day, into *priesthood*, *knighthood*, and *labourers*; and we have evidence that all ranks were imbued with sentiments of religious Lollardism. In convents, monasteries, cathedrals, and churches, there was abundance of Lollard talk. Sisters of the veil, brothers of the cowl, showed sympathy with Wycliffe and his poor priests, and were suspected, if not denounced. In castles and baronial halls, on the battlements of towers and within oriel windows, and across pleasant gardens, there were whisperings of the Lollard faith, rebukes for Lollard piety, and readings of Lollard books dearer than gold and silver. In city houses, in the merchant's stone mansion, in the tradesman's huckster-like shed or humble back-rooms, in the yeoman's cottage and the peasant's hut, Lollard truths were discussed,

Lollard teachers harboured, and Lollard hymns lowly sung in the ear of God.

But though Lollardism was popular, it was perilous. "Brother," said one who had been touched by the new spirit of the age—"brother, I know well that I am holden by Christ's law to perform thy asking, but nevertheless we are now so fallen away from Christ's law, that if I would answer to thy askings, I must in case undergo the death; and thou wottest well that a man is beholden to keep his life as long as he may."*

It is reported that as early as the year 1390 an attempt was made to suppress Wycliffe's translations by Act of Parliament, but that John of Gaunt, Wycliffe's old friend, resisted the bill, declaring, "We will not be the dregs of all, seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their own language."† Be this, however, as it may, a convocation at Oxford, in the year 1408, enacted a law, commonly called Arundel's Constitution—from the part taken in the measure by the archbishop of that name—by which all unauthorized persons were forbidden to translate any part of the Scripture into English, and every one was warned, under pain of excommunication, against reading any version or treatise, made either in Wycliffe's time or since, except it should be approved by the diocesan or a provincial council.

Before this no law existed prohibiting the use of vernacular versions; in fact, they had been countenanced and encouraged by Church authorities; but now the Lollard movement had awakened suspicion and excited fear—indeed, had aroused the utmost terror. The political complications

* Forshall and Madden's *Wycliffe Bible*, p. xv., note.

† Lewis's *History of Translations*, 28.

of Lollardism went a long way towards producing this result. Doctrines about voluntary tithes and property founded in grace, and the invalid offices of immoral priests, alarmed the priesthood and the landowners. Movements in the direction of constitutional and social reforms added to the excitement, and all of this kind which went on came to be attributed by indiscriminating people to the circulation of vernacular Bibles and Testaments. Moreover, it should be remembered that such circulation was a direct appeal to individual consciences, involving a concession of the right of private judgment; people were to read and judge for themselves; an idea in our day extolled on all sides, and exalted to the skies, but then looked on as the mother of all heresy, the fountain of rebellion, anarchy, and mischief. The Constitution of Arundel is a thing unrighteous enough, but, regarded in the light of that age, it is no marvel.

At any rate, here was a weapon put into the hands of the enemies of Lollardism, which they might wield at pleasure against any one found possessing one of the Wycliffe Bibles. The ecclesiastical courts were soon occupied with cases of this description; and from the register of Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich, we learn that in 1429, Richard Fletcher, of Beccles, had to appear before his lordship, on the charge of having a book of the new law in English. Nicholas Belward, too, was arraigned for purchasing a New Testament for four marks and forty pence, and teaching William Wright and Margery his wife the study of the same. Others were accused of belonging to the sect of the Lollards, on the ground that they could read English well, and did read in the presence of others the Word of God. As one muses over old entries in the records of persecution, they bring up illustrations of the state of the times. How revolting to

modern feeling, that the study of Scripture should be alleged as a crime against a man in the *spiritual* court! How wide-spread must have been ignorance, when ability to read English attached to any one a suspicion of heresy! How precious must books have been in days when a Testament was worth £2 16s. 8d., equal to £45 6s. 8d. now, taking sixteen as the multiple for bringing down money to our standard.*

Among the relics of that olden time, there are preserved Biblical curiosities, which deserve a passing notice. We remember examining, many years ago, in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a fine specimen of the *Biblia Pauperum*, of which a few copies only are to be found in the present day, in very rare collections. It consists of rude plates, representing Scripture figures and incidents, with a few Latin sentences explanatory of the subject. The work is printed from wooden blocks, in the way in which playing-cards were manufactured—a curious art, which was applied to the production of books of a religious character, such as the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*. These block-books, Mr. Hallam considers, were executed in the Low Countries;† but probably some of them found their way into England at an early period. They belong to the first half of the fifteenth century, and were precursors of nobler productions, whose appearance in the latter half of the same century mark a memorable era in the history of mankind. Mr. Horne, in his *Introduction* describes the *Biblia Pauperum* as

* In one of the *Computi* of Robert Trethewy, 1354-55, mention is made of the redemption of a Bible which had lain as security for repayment of 60s. to "Langgeton's chest" (a loan fund which had been given some years before to the University by John Langton, Bishop of Chichester and Lord Chancellor). See Aueley's *Munimenta Acad.*, p. 133 (Hist. mss. Com. II. 128).

† *Introduction to Literature of Europe*, vol. 1., p. 207.

deriving its name from its being a Catechism of the Bible for the common people, who were enabled to obtain it at a low price ; but it could be of little use to such persons, who cannot be supposed to have been able to read Latin, when so few could read their own language. It seems much more likely that the volume took its name from the Franciscan Friars, the chief preachers of the day, who styled themselves *Pauperes* ; the volume, probably, being a sort of text-book to aid them in their ministrations.

These imperfect specimens of printing were soon succeeded by productions which filled the world with wonder. Let the reader imagine himself in the city of Mentz in the middle of the fifteenth century. That thoughtful man now pacing the banks of the Rhine, and then entering his own habitation in some obscure street, toils in a secret apartment where no one, save an assistant at his unknown craft, is allowed to enter. He perseveres until volumes appear, all marvellously alike, displaying gracefully formed letters, such as rival the fairest specimens of penmanship. The magic manuscripts increase in number. No scriptorium could multiply them so fast. Men marvel, and think there must be witchcraft in this business. The workman is Gutenberg, and his house is the first printing-office.

The whole or a portion of the Scriptures was certainly the first book of a considerable size which issued from the press. The earliest bearing a date is the beautiful Psalter by Fust and Schöffer, in 1457, of which a sumptuous copy printed on vellum adorns the Royal Library at Windsor. But a Latin Bible, with the prologue of St. Jerome, printed probably by Gutenberg at Mentz, between 1450 and 1455, and commonly called the Mazarin Bible, on the very slight ground of a copy having been found in Cardinal Mazarin's

Library, is considered the earliest offspring of the noble invention; and we may see, exclaims Mr. Hallam, "this venerable and splendid volume leading up the crowded myriads of its followers, and imploring, as it were, a blessing on the new art, by dedicating its first fruits to the service of Heaven."*

As was natural, early types for printing were formed on the model of written characters, and hence the earliest Bibles and Psalters in German presented letters such as had been used by scribes in missals and other religious books; but when German printers went to reside at the famous monastery of Subiaco, near Rome, they cut punches in imitation of the letters used in Italy. Thus printed books so much resembled manuscripts that they were sometimes mistaken for them; and even until very lately a copy of the Mazarin or Gutenberg Bible, preserved at Lambeth Palace, passed as the work of a scribe, instead of the work of a printer.†

Recent researches have shown that many more Bibles in modern tongues than was once believed were printed before the end of the fifteenth century. "Prior to the discovery of America, no less than twelve grand patriarchal editions of the entire Bible, being of several different translations, appeared from time to time in the German language; to which add the two editions by the Otmars of Augsburg of 1507 and 1518, and we have the total number of no less than fourteen distinct large folio pre-Reformation or Ante-Lutheran Bibles." Two translations in Italian appeared at Venice in 1471: a French Testament in 1477, and in the same year a Dutch Old Testament: a Bohemian version was

* *Introduction to Literature*, i. 211.

† *Blades' Biography and Typography of W. Caxton*, 43-45.

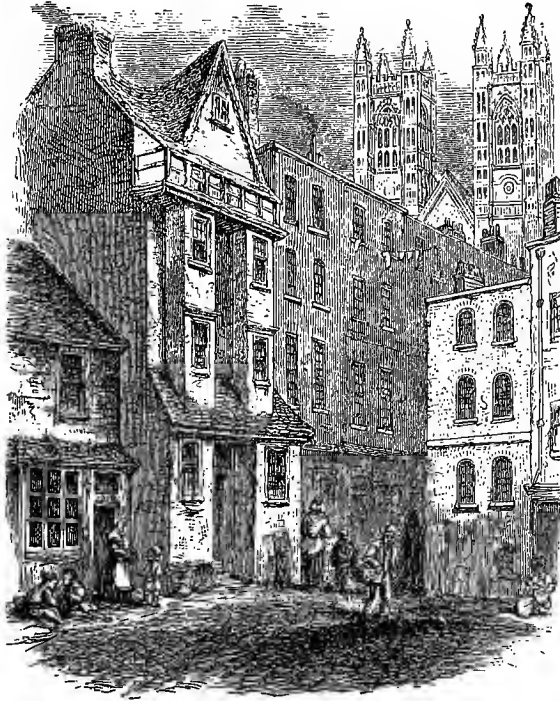
printed at Prague in 1488. "The first Bible in small octavo, or 'the poor man's Bible,' was the earliest, or among the earliest books from the press of Johann Froben of Basle, in 1491."* Until of late, it was generally believed in this country that the fathers of our Reformation took the lead in Biblical labours, and were amongst the first to print and publish the Sacred Scriptures in the vernacular; but this is a great mistake; and I have reason to believe that other versions were printed abroad in the common languages of Europe, besides those just now enumerated. Numbers of foreign Bibles were printed before one in our native tongue issued from the press.

Printing was introduced into England by William Caxton, who, in 1477, published his first book at Westminster, entitled *The Dictes and Notable Wise Sayings of the Philosophers*. Another publication, without place or date, but presenting the words *Caxton me fieri fecit*, and entitled, *The Doctrinal of Sapience*, was finished May 7th, 1489, and contains what the priests ought to learn and teach to their parishes. "Every crysten man and woman," it is said, "ought to bileve fermely the xii artycles of the Cristen feith." It ends with a prayer that God would grant His grace to us, so to live in this short life, that we may come to His bliss, for to live and reign there without end for ever and ever.† The *Speculum Vitæ Christi* emprynted by Wylllyam Caxton (without place or date) sets before the reader "a devout meditation of the Great Council in Heaven for the restoring of man and his salvation," respecting which it is said, "all the Court of Heaven, wondering and commending the sovereign wisdom, assented

* Stevens *The Bibles in the Caxton Exhibition*, pp. 28, 60. (No. 696.)

† Blades' *William Caxton*, 321.

well hereto." Thus step by step the printer at the Almonry under the shadow of our great National Abbey approached nearer and nearer to the instruction of his fellow-countrymen, by means of printing, knowledge of revealed truth,



CAXTON'S HOUSE IN WESTMINSTER.

ed, as it might be expected, with what he had learned from the Roman Catholic Church of England, in which he had been brought up, and of which he remained a member.

But he goes much further in his *Golden Legend*, dated 1483, a work which has never received the attention which

it deserves from those who undertake to study the history of English translations of Scripture.

It begins with the Advent of our Lord.

After a reference to the moral weakness of man, thus quaintly expressed, "There lacketh non to comande, but there is none that accomplisheth the commandment," the book refers to the necessity of the Advent "by reson of the tyme, of whiche the appostle Paul speketh, *ad galatas* the iiii chapitre, *At ubi venit plenitudo temporis*, when the plenitude, or ful tyme of the grace of god was ordeyned, thene he sente his soneyt was god & son of the virgyne, and wyf, whiche was made subget to the lawe. To that, they be subget to ye lawe he bought hem agayn & were receyued sones of god by grace of adopcion." Passing on to the Nativity of our Lord, we read, "Joseph whiche thene was of the lignage of dauid, and dwellyd in Nazareth, wente into the cyte of Bethlem and ladde with him the virgyne marie his wyf. And whan they were comen theder bycause hostryes were alle taken up, they were constrayned to be withoute in a comyn place where alle peple wente. And ther was a stable for an asse that he brought with hym and for an oxe. In that nyght our blessed lady and moder of god was delyverd of our blessyd sauour upon the heye that laye in the racke." Then follow, not only an account of the visit of the "thre Kynges" and of the angelic appearance to the Shepherds, but certain mediæval legends of other wonders supposed to have occurred at the same time.

The work further contains much of the history giver Genesis. The following extracts will afford a better idea of the contents than can be conveyed by any general description:

"In the begynnyng god made and created heuen and erthe. The erthe was ydle & voyde and couerd with

derknes. And the spyrite of god was born on the watres. And god said, Be made lyght, and anon lyght was made. And god sawe that lyght was good, and dyuyded the lyght fro derknes, & called the lyght day, and derknes nyght. And thus was made lyght with heuen and erthe fyrst, and even and mornyng was made one daye. The seconde day he made the firmamente, and dyuyded the watres that were under the firmament fro them that were aboue, and called the firmament heuen. The thyrde day were made on the erthe herbes and fruytes in their kynde. The fourthe day god made the sonne and mone, and sterres, &c. The fyfthe day he made the fisses in the water, and byrdes in the ayer. The sixthe day god made the beestis on the erthe eueryche in his kynd and gendre. And god sawe that all thyse werkes were good, and said *Faciamus hominem, &c.*, Make we man unto our similitude and ymage—here spack the fader to the sone and holy ghoste, or ellis as it were the comune voys of thre persones, whan it was sayd make we, & to cure, in plurel nombre. Man was made to the ymage of god in his sowle: here is to be noted, that he made not only the sowle without the body, but he made both body and sowle, as to the body he made male and female. God gaf to man the lordship and power upon alle lyuyng beestis. What God had made man it is not wretun *Et vidit quod esset bonum, quia in proximo sciebat eum lapsurum*. For yet he was not parfyght til the woman was made. And therefore it is red, it is not good the man to be allone. Thus in sixe dayes was heuen and erthe made, and alle the ornacion of them: and thenne he made the vii day in whiche he rested, not for that he was wery, but cessyd of hys operacion, and shewd the vii day whiche he blessyd." *

* Folios xxxvi. xxxvii.

In the same style of abridgment and paraphrase is couched the story of the fall: "The woman sawe that the tree was fayr to loke on, and clene and swete of sauour, toke and ete therof, and gaf unto Adam of the same, happily desiryng hym by fayr wordes: but Adam anon agreed, for whan he sawe the woman not deed, he supposed that god hath said, that they shold dye to fere hem with. And thenne ete of the fruyt forboden. And anon theyr sight was opened that they sawe theyr nakydnes. And thene anon they understode that they had trespaced." [What follows must be omitted.] "And thus they knewe then that they were naked. And they toke figge leuis, and sowed them to gyder, for to couere theyr membres in maner of brechis."

Then follow the history of Noah, the life of Abraham, the life of Isaac and his two sons, the story of Joseph, and the life of Moses, all written in a similar way, the use of Scripture phraseology being frequently blended with explanatory comments. Next come the histories of Saul, of David, of Solomon. of Tobit, Judith, St. Andrew and St. Nicholas. These occupy eighty-nine double-paged leaves out of more than four hundred.

Any one who compares the Golden Legend of Caxton with the *Légende dorée* in French must be struck with the immense difference between the two, for, whilst in the latter we meet at the commencement with a few pages respecting the Advent, and afterwards with a few lives of Scripture characters, the bulk of the volume relates to the Fathers of the Church and succeeding legendary saints. There is nothing in the French volume which corresponds with the large amount of matter which in Caxton we find to have been extracted from the Five Books of Moses and

other parts of Scripture. A similar difference exists between Caxton's volume and the *Legenda Sanctorum* of Jacobus de Voragine, printed at Ulm (1480?). The latter contains eight and a half pages on *The Time of Renovation* and *The Advent of our Lord*. The remainder consists of the legends of saints, beginning with St. Andrew the Apostle. They are one hundred and ninety-two in number, and cover more than four hundred unpagged leaves printed on both sides.

A very considerable portion of the lives of Adam and others described in Scripture, as given in Caxton's Golden Legend, is drawn immediately from that source; fragments of a verbal though free translation of the Book of Genesis occur again and again on page after page, and I should think, if these were extracted and carefully put together, they would form, not, indeed, a full and accurate, but a decidedly approximate version of the first book of Holy Writ. Upon comparing the renderings in Caxton with the Wycliffe versions, it becomes plain that they are not derived from the works of early reformers. They seem to have come from the Vulgate, through the study either of the London printer, or some one who assisted him in his toils, unless indeed he borrowed from some ms. version not at present identified. Looking at the magnitude of the volume, and at the numerous other works on which Caxton was engaged, it would seem next to impossible that he could alone have executed the herculean task of writing such an immense quantity of matter. It seems to have been no unusual thing in early days for great workers to avail themselves, without acknowledgment, of the industry of others. As artists were indebted to the pencils of their pupils, so authors and translators might be indebted to the

pens of coadjutors—we cannot wonder if, in this respect, Caxton anticipated Tintoretto.

About a fourth part of Caxton's *Golden Legend* being devoted to matter derived largely from the Bible, the remainder, amounting to about three hundred leaves, printed on both sides in double columns, is occupied with the legendary lore so popular in the mediæval church. There seem to have been in his time three works which went by the name of the *Golden Legend*—the Latin *Legenda aurea*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, in 1298; the French *La Légende dorée*, translated first by Jean Belet, then by Jehan de Vignay, both in the fourteenth century, and an English version well known in Caxton's time. Some of the stories in these legendary works, which were transplanted into the Westminster typographer's large folio, are of a kind to shock the modesty of most people in the present day; and these are the portions fixed upon by certain bibliographers, to the neglect of the better elements which the book includes.

It is of the legendary part that Caxton speaks when he says: "I have subsidised myself to translate into English the *Legend of Saints*. Against me here might some persons say, that this legend hath been translated tofore, and truth it is; but forasmuch as I had by me a legend in French, another in Latin, and the third in English, which varied in many and divers places; and also many histories were comprised in the two other books which were not in the English book, therefore I have written one of the three books, which I have ordered otherwise than the said English legend is, which was tofore made."

This is the account which Caxton gives of the origin of his text, so far as it relates to the traditionary tales of the

church; but he makes no remark respecting the Scripture portion of his volume, though that is by far the most



PRINTING PRESS OF 1520.

important and valuable. It places our English printer under a new aspect—even as one anxious, so far as the authority of the church, and his own judgment, as one of her sincere

sons would allow, to communicate to the English people in their own tongue Biblical instruction on historical, doctrinal, and practical points. He did not venture, like John Wycliffe, to set forth a complete vernacular version, without note or comment, but he walked in the footsteps of Cædmon, Ælfric, Ormin, the author of the *Soulehele* ms., and Richard Rolle; and therefore he claims a place such as he has never received in the history of English translators.*

Caxton, as an author, then, was, though imperfectly, doing a work as pioneer of the Bible, which the Lollards, with the prejudices roused against them, could not have accomplished; and his services in this form ask for grateful acknowledgment; above all, we should honour Caxton, *the printer*, who, by his novel art, was paving the way for what was afterwards accomplished by Nicholson, Grafton, and others, who consecrated the discovery to the printing of pure Scripture translations. Nothing could be more fitting than to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the momentous era in the life of our first typographer by a solemn musical service, and the delivery of pertinent religious lessons within the walls of our National Abbey, close to which he pursued his toils.

“What,” asked the preacher on that occasion, “was the

* Mr. Blades has classified the books printed at the Caxton press according to the different types, which he numbers from 1 to 6. It is remarkable that under No. 1 there is but one religious book, *Méditations sur les sept psaumes pénitenciaux*. Under No. 2, containing thirty-four books, we find *Infancia Salvatoris*. Under No. 3 there are *Directorium seu pica Sarum*; *Horæ ad usum Sarum*; and a Latin psalter—the only other publication in this class is an advertisement. Under No. 4 there are thirty books, of which eight relate to religion, including two editions of the *Golden Legend*. Under No. 5, the ten books included all treat of morality or religion. Under No. 6 are nineteen works, six of which are of a devotional nature, particularly *Ars moriendi* and the *Chastising of God's Children*. I have reason to believe that in the books thus indicated there are many English quotations from Scripture.

year 1477 in England? It was, as has been duly described, one of those tranquil periods which immediately succeeds and immediately precedes events of extraordinary moment. The knell of the Middle Ages had already been sounded. It was hardly more than twenty years since the last relic of the old Græco-Roman world—Byzantium—had passed away before the conquering Ottomans. It was only five years before that the last echo of the Crusades had passed away. It was but six years since the last of the barons had fallen on the field of Barnet. Old estates, old dominions, and old superstitions were then fast departing.

“And not only so, for with the exiles from Constantinople came into Europe a flood of Greek learning, and, at the same time that the Catholic warriors of Spain were driving the Ottomans from their country, Columbus discovered a new world. Just ten years before came into existence the greatest of scholars, Erasmus, and just four years after was to be born Luther, the greatest of reformers. The day of the Reformation and the reorganization of Western Christendom had come. The sun that came out of the mists on the morning of the battle of Barnet was but the type of the new dawn that burst upon England when the feudal system passed away. ‘The night was far spent, and the day was at hand.’ And yet they that lived in that age knew not what was in store for them; they knew not that under the shelter of Westminster Abbey had struck root in England an instrument without which, humanly speaking, even the learning of Erasmus and the genius of Luther would have failed to produce their world-wide effect. Mechanical and moral powers, by a marvellous Providence, leagued together to preserve all that was good in the past and to promote all that was good in the future, at the greatest crisis

that had arisen in the world since the fall of the Roman Empire."*

The earliest printed volume containing an express English Biblical translation is one by Wynkyn de Worde, at London, "in the Fletestrete, at the sygne of ye sonne." "This treatise," says the title-page, "concernynge the fruytfull sayinges of Dauyd the kynged and prophete in the seven penytencyall psalmes, deuyded in seuen sermons, was made and compyled by the ryght reuerente fader in god, Johan fysshher, doctour of dyuynite and bysshop of Rochester. 1508." The book contains one hundred and forty-six leaves; the Latin text of the penitential psalms is printed in fragments and an English rendering accompanies it of a most imperfect, confused, and unsatisfactory description.

The following are specimens taken from the discourse on the sixth psalm, the first of the seven penitential ones :

"Good Lorde, correcte me not in the euerlastinge payne of hell, neyther punyssh me in the paynes of purgatory. Have mercy on me, good lord, for I am feble and weyke." "Go ye cursed people into the eternall fyre." "That fyre is prepared for the deuyll and his aungelles." "*Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me*" (left untranslated). "Correcte me not good lorde in the paynes of purgatory." "Blessyd Lord, haue mercy on me, for of myselfe I haue no strengthe." "Good lorde, make me hole." "The herte of a synfull persone is lyke unto the troublouse see whiche neuer hathe reste." "All ye partes of my body be without reste, and my soule is sore troubled." "Whan thou, good lorde, tournest away thy face all thynges shall be troubled." "Be ye turned to me, and I shall be tourned to you."

* Extract from Dean Stanley's sermon, 1877.

“ Good lorde, why taryest thou soo longe ? ” “ Therefore, good lorde, be thou tourned unto me, and delyuer my soule from this trybulacyon. ” “ Our lorde is bothe mercyfull inwarde, and also the doer of mercy outwarde, pacyent, and alwaye mercyfull. ” “ They that be hole nedeth no physycyen, but a physycyen is nedefull unto them that be seke. ”

These extracts, exhibiting now and then piecemeal versions of texts, and so far resembling those in Caxton’s *Golden Legend*, follow, often inaccurately, corresponding passages in the Vulgate. They run into a form of paraphrase, according to the prevalent opinions of the day, and are embedded in the midst of tedious meditations. It will be observed that other texts are introduced besides those taken from the psalter.

Before closing this chapter I would direct attention to one who deserves a passing notice ; not as a Bible translator, for this honour, though ascribed to him, was not his ; but as one who walked so far in the footsteps of Wycliffe and his followers, as to maintain the sufficiency and to promote the reading of Holy Writ. I refer to Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, in the middle of the fifteenth century. He seems to have been no one-sided man ; but whilst supporting the church of his day, exalting the Pope’s supremacy, and defending his episcopal brethren, he ventured on the new path of appeal to Scripture as conclusive in controversy, and as intelligible to the apprehension of devout readers. In a work written by him, entitled *A Treatise on Faith*, he says, “ Holy Writ is such a ground and foundation of our Christian general faith, that there is no greater or better, or more surer ground and foundation to us of our Christian general faith, than is written in Holy Writ. Very often Scripture expoundeth itself, inasmuch as by the reading of

Scripture in one part, a man shall learn which is the true understanding of Scripture in all other parts, wherein he doubted or was ignorant before. Certain it may be, that one simple person, in fame or in state, is wiser for to know, judge, and declare what is the true sense of a certain portion of Scripture, and what is the truth of some article, and that for his long studying, labouring, and advising thereupon, than is a great general council. The writing made and found by God, and by the apostles, may ground sufficiently the same faith in every clerk or layman, notably reasoned for to understand what he readeth in the New Testament, though he learn not the same faith by any general council or any multitude of clerks to be gathered together."* The life and proceedings of the author of this passage have given rise to historical controversies not belonging to our subject, and into which therefore I shall not enter; but whatever might be his ecclesiastical opinions, whatever the ground of the accusations brought against him, and whatever the meaning of his recantation in the presence of Archbishop Bouchier, he did, by writing such a passage as that just quoted, place himself, as it relates to the study of the Bible, in a line with the rector of Lutterworth; and it is remarkable that the two names are connected in one of the statutes of King's College, Cambridge, showing that not only in vulgar estimation, but in the judgment of university authorities, Wycliffe and Pecock had sentiments in common, dividing them from the chief church rulers of their day.†

* *British Reformers*, ii. 204.

† "Item statuimus—quod qualibet scholaris in admisione sua—juret quod non favebit opinionibus damnatis, erroribus aut heresibus Johannie Wiclif, Reginaldi Pecock," etc.—Le Bas, *Life of Wiclif*, 429.



CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM TYNDALE.



AT the commencement of the sixteenth century there lived in the manor-house of Little Sodbury, in Gloucestershire, a worthy knight of the name of Sir John Walsh. His dwelling belonged to that class of which a few relics may still be seen in quiet country nooks, displaying fantastic gables and twisted chimneys embosomed among shrubs and trees.

On visiting a few years ago the pleasant village where this modest mansion stands on the slope of the Cotswold Hills, I was delighted with the prospect it commands of the Severn valley, dotted over with rich green woods, and found a portion of the residence of the Walshes in existence, consisting of a good large dining-hall of the Tudor style, somewhat neglected, but not much out of repair. The old parish church is swept away, but two noble yews guard the entrance of the new edifice, showing signs of an age reaching back beyond the sixteenth century. There was abiding in

this mansion at the time of which we speak a humble priest, named William Tyndale, who filled the office of tutor in the family.

He was a person of quiet and retired habits, devoted to study, and exemplary in his moral and religious character. But no one could look on him without perceiving at once



HOUSE OF SIR JOHN WALSH.

that he was a man of no common stamp, for his expansive forehead indicated a comprehensive mind, his eyes betokened quick and penetrating thought, his whole countenance was expressive of extraordinary firmness, while round his lips there lurked something of quiet humour. He often mingled with the guests who gathered round the social board in the dining-hall referred to, including the neighbouring ecclesiastics; and it happened sometimes that conversation turned

upon theological topics, when this tutor was wont to express his opinions with considerable freedom.

“As he was learned and well practised in God’s matters, so he spared not to show unto them simply and plainly his judgment; and when they at any time did vary from his opinions, he would show them in the book, and lay before them, the manifest places of Scripture, to confute their errors, and to confirm his sayings.”* When he accompanied Sir John and his lady to the tables of these dignitaries, he scrupled not to talk with the same boldness, till deep suspicion of his heterodoxy began to be felt by his ecclesiastical brethren.

Even the knight himself and his fair spouse entertained some fears on the subject, and thought it right to expostulate with the tutor respecting his sentiments. But he was not the man to yield any point which his judgment approved, and he firmly maintained his opinion. “Well,” said Lady Walsh, “there was such a doctor there as may dispend a hundred pounds, and another two hundred, and another three hundred pounds; and what were it reason, think you, that we should believe you before them?” Her ladyship’s logic was of a kind to which the tutor knew not how to reply, and he, therefore, politely held his tongue. But there were deep thoughts at work under that capacious brow, and mighty purposes springing up within that dauntless breast. On another occasion a priest observed to him, “We are better without God’s laws than the Pope’s.” “I defy the Pope and all his laws,” he replied, and added, “If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy who driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do.”

This was the echo of a sentiment expressed by Erasmus

* Foxe, v. 115. Religious Tract Society’s Edition.

in his *Encomium Moriaë*. "I wish," alluding to the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, "that the husbandman may sing parts of them at his plough, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way."

William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire in 1477, and studied at Oxford, where "he grew up, and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted."*

From Oxford he proceeded to Cambridge, and, in remembrance of his early studies he remarked long afterwards, "In the universities they have ordained that no man shall look at the Scriptures until he be noselled [or nursed] in heathen learning eight or nine years,"—an allusion indicating the revival of classical studies at that period, the advantages of which William Tyndale shared—"and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of Scripture;" "and when he taketh his first degree he is sworn that he shall hold none opinions condemned by the church."† In another work Tyndale refers to a large party remaining in the university and in the church violently prejudiced against the revival of ancient learning; "Remember ye not how within these thirty years and far less, and yet dureth to this day, the old barking curs, Dun's disciples and like daft called Scottish, the children of darkness, raged in every pulpit against Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and what sorrow the schoolmasters that taught the true Latin had with them; some beating the pulpit with their fists for madness, and roaring out, with open and foaming mouth, that if there were but one Jerome or Virgil in the

* Foxe, v. 115.

† *Practice of Prelates, Works,* "

world, and that same in their sleeves and a fire before them, they would burn them therein, though it should cost them their lives; affirming that all good learning decayed and was utterly lost since men gave themselves unto the Latin tongue."*

By the zealous study of classical tongues, Tyndale acquired that knowledge of Greek which qualified him for the task he was destined to execute; and from the study of the Scriptures in the original language he imbibed that spiritual taste which inspired the subsequent toils of his industrious life.

In the mansion at Sodbury he continued his sacred studies, and enlarged his acquaintance with Divine Revelation, till the purpose just noticed then ripened into deliberate action. But he could not find, while he remained among the Gloucestershire priests, the quietude and liberty necessary for the prosecution of his design; and therefore, being "so turmoiled," as he says, he was glad to make his escape, and seek elsewhere a place in which to carry out his fixed resolution. "As I this thought," he tells us, "the Bishop of London came to my remembrance, whom Erasmus (whose tongue maketh of little gnats great elephants, and lifteth up above the stars whosoever giveth him a little exhibition) praiseth exceedingly, among other in his *Annotations on the New Testament*, for his great learning. Then, thought I, if I might come to this man's service, I were happy. And so I gat me to London, and, through the acquaintance of my master, came to Sir Harry Gilford, the king's grace's comptroller, and brought him an *oration of Isocrates*, which I had translated out of Greek into English, and desired him to speak unto my lord of London for me; which he also did as

* *Answer to Sir Thomas More*, Works, iii. 75.

he showed me, and willed me to write an epistle to my lord, and go to him myself, which I also did, and delivered my epistle to a servant of his own, one William Hebilthwayte, a man of mine old acquaintance. But God (which knoweth what is within hypocrites) saw that I was beguiled, and that that council was not the next way unto my purpose. And therefore He got me no favour in my lord's sight. Whereupon my lord answered me his house was full, he had more than he could well find, and advised me to seek in London, where he said I could not lack a service. And so in London I abode almost a year, and marked the course of the world, and heard our praters—I would say our preachers—how they boasted themselves and their high authority, and beheld the pomp of our prelates, and how busy they were, as they yet are, to set peace and unity in the world (though it be not possible for them that walk in darkness to continue long in peace, for they cannot but either stumble, or dash themselves at one thing or another that shall clean unquiet all altogether,) and saw things whereof I defer to speak at this time, and understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace, to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare." *

This was written in 1530, and relates to what took place in 1524. In vain Tyndale sought the patronage of the metropolitan bishop—no encouragement from that quarter could he find for his momentous undertaking. Indeed, he had hard work to live in London, and would have been in positive destitution but for the friendship of a wealthy citizen and alderman named Humphry Monmouth. Hearing Tyndale preach at St. Dunstan's in the West, he inquired

* Tyndale's *Preface to the First Book of Moses called Genesis.*

into his circumstances, and finding he had no means of support, and being afterwards requested by Tyndale to render him some assistance, he kindly took him into his house for half a year; "and there," says Monmouth, "he lived like a good priest, as me thought. He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book, and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will, nor drink but small single beer. I never saw him wear linen about him in the space he was with me. I did promise him ten pounds sterling to pray for my father and mother, their souls, and all Christian souls; I did pay it to him when he made his exchange at Hamboro'."*

This Humphry Monmouth was one of the earliest professors of the reformed doctrines in London, and was an eminently amiable and pious man. Latimer relates a beautiful anecdote of him in his Seventh Sermon on the Lord's Prayer. A poor man, a Papist, who was under great obligations to Monmouth, incensed at his opposition to the errors and corruptions of Rome, went and accused him before the bishops. The alderman sought to subdue the man's enmity, but for some time it was in vain. One day he met his poor but malignant neighbour in a narrow street, and walking up to him, seized him by the hand and inquired, "Neighbour, what is come into your heart to take such displeasure with me? What have I done against you? Tell me, and I will be ready at all times to make you amends." Finally, he spake so gently, so charitably, so lovingly, and friendly, that it wrought so in the poor man's heart, that by-and-by he fell down upon his knees and asked him forgiveness. The rich man forgave him, and so took him again to his favour, and they loved as well as ever they did afore.

* *Strype's Memorials*, I. part ii. 363-7.

Beautiful illustration of the passage, in reference to which Latimer quoted the circumstance, "We shall overcome our enemy with well-doing, and so heap up hot coals upon his head." *

Both Tyndale and Monmouth were now but in a transition state from darkness to light. They saw clearly some of the errors of Rome, and some of the truths of the gospel, but old associations and habits still hung about them, as is evident from the monkish austerity of the one, the payment for prayers on behalf of the dead by the other, and the belief in purgatory still cleaving to both. But Providence was preparing the way for Tyndale to execute the task upon which he had set his mind, and which was at once to purify his own religious sentiments, and to prove powerfully instrumental in dispersing much of this darkness from the face of his beloved country. Yet, as it often happens in this world, the reformer had to perform his high behest amidst persecution and suffering, and to receive from his fellow-men no other reward than the crown of martyrdom. Tyndale whilst tutor in Walsh's family had preached in the adjacent villages and to crowds collected in Bristol on College Green. But "blind and rude priests," says Foxe, "flocking together to the alehouse, for that was their preaching-place, raged and railed against him, affirming that his sayings were heresy, adding moreover unto his sayings of their own heads more than ever he spake." Consequently he had been accused to the Chancellor of the Diocese, who "rated me," he declares, "as though I had been a dog, and laid to my charge things whereof there could be none accuser brought forth." † He had so defended himself, however, as to escape that time the

* Latimer's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 440. Parker Society.

† Demaus' *Life of Tyndale*, 56, 57.

clutch of persecution ; but a different destiny awaited him abroad, whither he departed, after his residence in London, not so much through apprehension of danger, as because on the Continent he could more successfully accomplish the completion and printing of his Scripture translations. Bidding adieu to his native shores—an everlasting adieu, as it proved in the sequel—Tyndale sailed over to Hamburg in the year 1524.

Much mystery enshrouds his proceedings after his arrival at Hamburg ; and his biographers, in the absence of clear and sufficient information, have indulged in various conjectures, to which I do not intend to make any addition. It has been asserted that in the commercial city to which he directed his way he at once proceeded to print the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, which he had translated into English ; but Mr. Maitland has laboured to prove that for six-and-thirty years no printing-press had existed in the place ;* and other modern authorities, either following him, or proceeding on grounds of their own, have concluded that Hamburg as yet did not possess a single printer.† Why he went there in particular, except that he knew of English merchants in that German city, who sympathized in his undertaking, or because he chose it as a convenient landing-place to some other spot, is by no means apparent. That he afterwards found friends there who assisted him with money, is a fact ; but whether he went anywhere else soon after his arrival, is a critical point with his biographers. Tyndale's contemporaries, Sir Thomas More, Cochläus, John Foxe, and others, say that he went to Wittenberg ; but to that statement a determined contradiction has been set up by Mr. Anderson, in his *Annals of the Bible*,‡ and others who have

* *Reformation in England*, 371. † *Life of Tyndale*, 92. ‡ *Annals*, i. 45-47.

accepted his arguments. Nothing seems more intrinsically probable than that Tyndale should wish to see the great leader of the German Reformation, whose writings he so much admired, and whose example, as a Scripture translator, he determined to follow. Moreover, abundance of evidence is at hand to show that he made much use of Luther's work in his own labours, as will presently appear. But chiefly, it would seem, from jealousy of their countryman's fame, and a fear lest he should be set down now, after the manner of his own day, as a copyist of the Wittenberg reformer, several modern writers have, with excessive zeal, contended that the Wittenberg expedition was a sheer impossibility. It is contended that Tyndale himself denied it, because he wrote in his answer to Sir Thomas More, "When he saith, 'Tyndale was confederate with Luther,' that is not truth;" but to deny that he was *confederate* with Luther is by no means tantamount to a denial of having *visited* Luther. Further, it is alleged that Luther at that period was so engrossed with his own business as to have no time to spend with an English visitor, and so absorbed in his own sacramental views, as to feel no disposition to notice any one who differed from him in that respect. But these allegations are unreasonable, in face of the fact that Luther was visited by all sorts of people—that Wittenberg "was the common asylum of all apostates"—and that there is nothing known of Tyndale's sacramental opinions which would make him objectionable to the great Teutonic divine. On the contrary, Sir Thomas More asserts that Tyndale actually adopted the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper.* In short, those who, for the sake of vindicating Tyndale's independence, deny that he ever went to Wittenberg, resemble those who, for

* *Life of Tyndale*, 93, 96.

the purpose of disproving St. Peter's Roman episcopate, maintain that he never entered the Eternal City.

At all events, in 1525 we find Tyndale at Cologne; and decisive evidence is afforded that he had then far advanced in the prosecution of his purpose. The press had been at work upon his New Testament. I wish we could minutely trace all the circumstances connected with his labours in preparing this version, but, as stated before, considerable obscurity rests upon his proceedings. In those times it was necessary, in order to succeed, that such a man should act with silence and secrecy; and the remembrance of his adventures in the execution of his work has utterly perished. Probably, at Hamburg, so long as he remained there, he was employed on the translation, deriving support from Monmouth and other religious merchants who embraced the new learning; and if he did go to Wittenberg, he might there avail himself of Luther's *Table Talk* touching Translations, and of valuable assistance obtained from Melancthon, and other learned professors in the university.

At Cologne, however, we clearly see him so far in advance with his Testament, as to be superintending the printers in bringing it through the press. An assistant was with him, one Roye, a crafty and selfish person, who helped Tyndale for what he could get. The latter tells us that they wrote and compared the texts together; and imagination can picture the two men, influenced by far different motives, at work in the far-famed city on the banks of the Rhine, in some poor-looking house in an obscure street,—while a priest or a pilgrim passed under the window, on their way to the Shrine of the Three Kings, little dreaming of the kind of employment going on there, and of the consequences to which it would lead.

But there was an Argus-eyed heresy-hunter, named Cochläus, a deacon of the Church of the Blessed Virgin, at Frankfort, who got a glimpse of what Tyndale was doing. Having become intimate and familiar with the Cologne printers, he sometimes heard them confidently boast, when in their cups, that whether the king and cardinal of England would or not, all England must in a short time be Lutheran. He heard also that there were two Englishmen lurking about, skilful in languages and fluent in speech, whom, however, he could nowhere find. Calling, therefore, certain printers to his lodgings, after they were heated with wine, one of them, in private conversation, discovered to him the secret by which England was to be drawn over to the side of Luther,—namely, that three thousand copies of the Lutheran New Testament, translated into the English language were in the press, and already were advanced as far as the letter κ, *in ordine quaternionum*; and that the expenses were wholly supplied by English merchants, who were secretly to convey the work, when printed, and to disperse it widely through all England, before the king or the cardinal could discover or prohibit their doing so.

“Cochläus, being inwardly affected by fear and wonder, disguised his grief under the appearance of admiration. But another day, considering with himself the magnitude of the grievous danger, he cast in mind by what method he might expeditiously obstruct these very wicked attempts. He went, therefore, secretly to Herman Rinck, a patrician of Cologne, and military knight, familiar both with the Emperor and the King of England, and a councillor, and disclosed to him the whole affair, as, by means of the wine, he had received it. He, that he might ascertain all things more certainly, sent another person into the house where

The xiiij. Chapter.

The same daye wentt Iesus

Tout of the housse/and satt by the see syde/and moche people resorted vnto him/so grethly that he wēt and sat in a shypp /and all the people stode on the shore. And he spake many thyngs to them in similitudis / sayyng: beholde / the sower went forth to seme / and as he sowēd / some fell by the wayes syde / i the sowlls cā / and deuoured it uppe. Some fell apon stony grounde where it had nōt moche erth / and anon it spronge uppe / because it had no depth of erth: and when the son was vppe / hit canth heet / and for late of rotyng wyddred awaye. Some fell amonge thornes / and the thornes arose / and choofed it. Parte fell in goodde grounde / and brought forth good frute: some an hundred fold / some fysty fold / some thyrty fold. Whosoer hath eares to heare / let him heare.

And hys Disciples cam / and sayde to him: Why speakest thou to them in parables: he answered and saide vnto them: Hit is geuen vnto you to knowe the secretts of the kyngdome of heven / but to them it is nōt geuen. For whosomere hath / to him shall hit be geuen: and he shall have aboundance: But whosoer hath nōt: from him shalbe takyn a waye eue that same that he hath. Therefore speake I to them in similitudis: For though they se / they se nōt: and hearynge they heare nōt: nether vnderstonde. And in them ys fulfylled the prophesy of esay / which prophesi sayth: with youre eares yeshall heare / and shall not vnderstode / and with youre eyes yeshall se / and shall not perceave. For this peoples hert ys

He that hath. wherethe worde of god is vnderstode / there hit multiplieth & makith the poeple better. where hit is not vnderstode / there hit decreaseth & makith the poeple worse.

the work was printing, according to the discovery of Cochläus; and when he had understood from him that the matter was even so, and that there was great abundance of paper there, he went to the senate, and so brought it about that the printer was interdicted from proceeding farther in that work. The two English apostates, snatching away with them the quarto sheets printed, fled by ship going up the Rhine to Worms, where the people were under the full rage of Lutheranism, that there, by another printer, they might complete the work begun." *

Often have vessels laden with stores of merchandise, or with spoils seized by robber lords, dwelling in castles on the banks of the Rhine, been seen gliding up that river; but never before had a boat freighted with such a treasure as Tyndale's half-printed Testaments floated upon those swift-running waters. He hastened to Worms, the city which had been entered in triumph by Luther not long before,—when the herald of the emperor preceded him on horseback, and two thousand persons, including Saxon noblemen, accompanied him to his inn. No such welcome awaited our English exile. In which of the old streets of that picturesque city Tyndale resided during his stay, and where the printing press was worked, out of which came the sheets which created so much excitement, no one can tell; but we know that the famous typographer, Peter Schoeffer, son of Faust's associate at Mentz, had an establishment at Worms, where he successfully plied the new-found art.

The Testament, interrupted in its progress at Cologne, was in quarto, and it had a prologue, and certain notes. It could easily be identified as Tyndale's, by those who had

* *Com. de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri*, translated in Anderson's *Annals of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 58.

discovered what he was doing. At Worms, he changed his plan, and commenced an octavo edition of the book, without prologue or notes. This he speedily finished, and at once issued it from the press. It was the first New Testament printed in English that ever saw the light. "That the rudeness of the work now at the first time offered, offend them not," are words of the translator in the postscript to his book. But, though the quarto edition was for a little while left incomplete, Tyndale resumed his labours, and completed them. First in design and partial execution, it was the last in publication; and this I take to be the true explanation of a bibliographical puzzle, upon which a good deal of antiquarian speculation has at different times been expended. The whole matter may be seen in Anderson's *Annals*, examined at length, and placed in as clear a light as scanty and conflicting information renders possible.

In the month of December, 1525, whilst Tyndale was occupied, perhaps in Schoeffer's office, Lee, almoner of Henry VIII., and afterwards Archbishop of York, was staying in the city of Bordeaux; and it is remarkable that thus early rumours reached him of what Tyndale had been doing. "Please your highness to understand," he writes to his royal master, "that I am certainly informed, as I passed in this country, that an Englishman, your subject, at *the solicitation and instance of Luther, with whom he is*, hath translated the New Testament into English, and within a few days intendeth to return with the same imprinted into England. I need not to advertise your grace what infection and danger may ensue hereby, if it be not withstood. This is the next way to fulfil your realm with Lutherans." "All our forefathers, governors of the Church of England, have with all diligence forbid and eschewed publication of English

Bibles, as appeareth in constitutions provincial of the Church of England."* The letter illustrates the belief at the time that Tyndale visited Luther, and it shows the wide-spread interest felt in the discovery then recently made by the busy Cochläus. The news is further reported by Spalatin, while attending the Imperial Diet in the city of Spires. In his diary for Saturday, the morrow of St. Lawrence, being the 11th of August, 1526, he says, "Our prince, the Elector of Saxony [then at the Diet], having heard a sermon at the residence of the Landgrave of Hesse [who favoured the Reformation], returned to his house." Further, "At Worms, 6,000 copies of the New Testament were printed in English. This work was translated by an Englishman, who was staying there with two of his countrymen, and who was so learned in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and French, that whichever he spoke you would think his native tongue. The English, indeed, have such a desire for the gospel, although the king opposes and dislikes it, that they say they would buy a New Testament even if each copy cost 100,000 of money." In addition to this the New Testament was printed in French at Worms.† The learning of Tyndale must have been magnified by repeated conversations on the subject; and it is a little curious that, while the most intimate acquaintance with Italian and Spanish are attributed to him, nothing is said of German, a language which we well know he had acquired.

A precious relic of the old quarto Testament was some years since discovered by Mr. Rodd, containing the prologue, and the Gospel of Matthew, as far as the twenty-second

* Ellis's *Third Series*, vol. ii. p. 71.

† *Amœnitates Litterariæ*, by Schelhorn, vol. iv. p. 431. Arber's *Tyndale's Test.* p. 26.

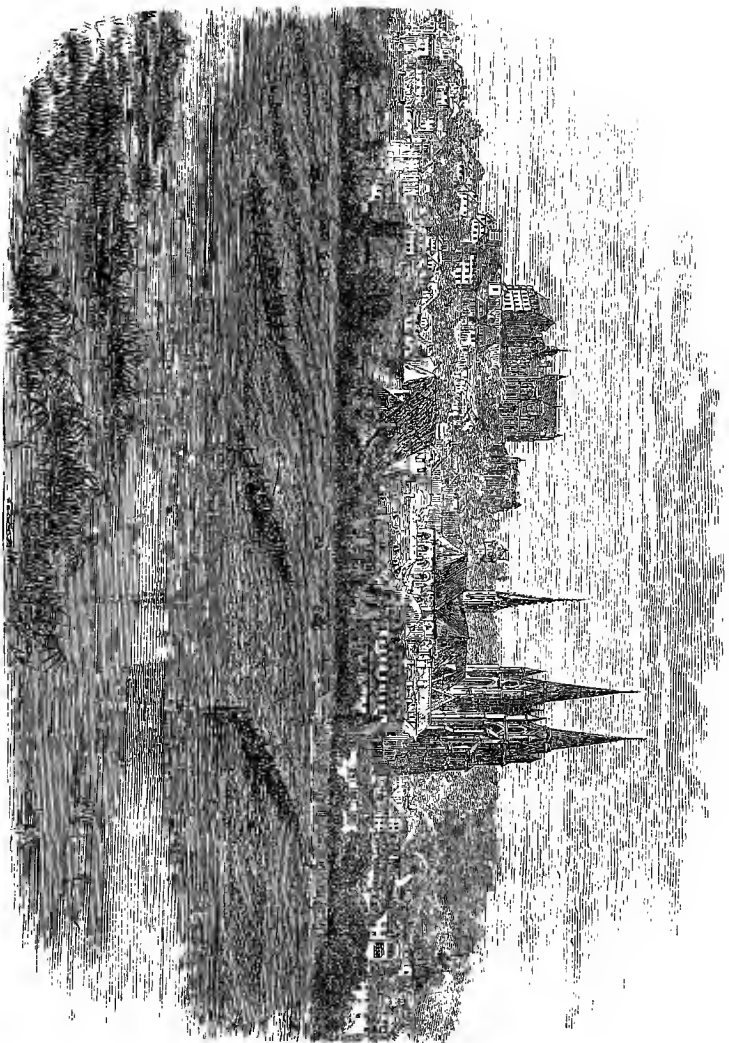
chapter. The only complete copy of the octavo edition known to exist is preserved in the Baptist College Library, Bristol, but this copy lacks the original title-page. The only other copy known—a very imperfect one—is in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's. In the preface to the *Wicked Mammon*, published in May, 1528, Tyndale says that his New Testament was finished two years previously; and this statement is in harmony with the report of Cochlæus, whose story relates to the year 1525. I have no doubt that it was in the next year that Tyndale *published* his Testament—not in 1525, as Mr. Anderson has endeavoured to prove. After attentively considering all he has written, I do not see how the thing was possible as he represents it; and, in the absence of direct and positive evidence to the contrary, I adhere to my opinion, that the Testament was issued in the former part of the year 1526.

Stealthily brought over to England, the books were soon circulated. Richard Horman, a merchant of the English factory at Antwerp, and Simon Fyshe, the author of a notable production of that day entitled, *The Supplication for the Beggars*, appear to have been industrious agents in conducting this rather difficult enterprise. The results appear in the confession of a man named Robert Necton, who had engaged himself in selling the obnoxious volumes. He bought ten, twenty, and thirty copies at a time, of Fyshe, described as “dwelling by the White Friars in London.” He sold five to “Sir William Furboshe, singing man in Stowmarket,” in Suffolk, for seven or eight groats apiece, equal to £1 15s. or £2 now. He carried several to Lynn, and would have sold them to a young merchant man, which young man would not meddle with them because they were prohibited. About Christmas he acknowledges that he went

about to buy a great number of New Testaments, when there came a Dutchman, who offered to sell two or three hundred copies. As to himself, he frankly stated that he had read the book through many times, to others as well as himself.* This confession seems to have been made about the year 1528; but it refers to incidents which occurred soon after the importation of Tyndale's version. As the stock of copies diminished, either in consequence of sales, or through forfeiture, fresh importations supplied the demand. This perplexed the ecclesiastical authorities, who unwisely determined to buy up the edition as fast as possible; and Archbishop Warham wrote on the subject to Nix, Bishop of Norwich, who pronounced the undertaking "a gracious and blessed deed." Tonstall entered into the scheme, and endeavoured to promote it by purchasing the books abroad, before they could be brought over. He happened to be at Antwerp in 1529, and there he employed a person named Augustine Packington, an Antwerp mercer, to carry out his scheme.

Tyndale had now reached that city. Leaving Worms, he had visited the pleasant town of Marburg, in the Valley of Lahn, where the castle of the Landgrave of Hesse, still retaining much feudal magnificence, overlooked the habitations of the industrious burghers. There, from the press of Hans Luft, he had published the *Wicked Mammon*, and other well-known works; and he had also prepared for publication a version of the Pentateuch, which bears this colophon, "Emprented at Marlborow, in the land of Hesse, by me Hans Luft, the yere of oure Lorde M.CCCCC.XXX., the XVII. dayes of Januarie." The five books of Moses thus published seem to have been intended for separate sale, as well as for sale in one volume. Before the work appeared,

* Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. part ii. p. 63. Oxford edition.



MARBURG.

Tyndale left Marburg, perhaps to return again by the time it was issued; in any case, however, we find him in the great seaport of the Netherlands in the course of 1529, when, if Foxe be correct in his date, he paid a visit to Hamburg.*

As the old story goes, Augustine Packington came to Tyndale, while in the city, and said, "William, I know thou art a poor man, and hast a heap of New Testaments and books by thee, for which thou hast both endangered thy friends and beggared thyself, and I have now gotten thee a merchant, which, with ready money, shall dispatch thee of all that thou hast, if you think it profitable for yourself." "Who is the merchant?" said Tyndale. "The Bishop of London," replied Packington. "Oh! that is because he will burn them," rejoined Tyndale. "Yes," quoth Packington. "I am the gladder," rejoined Tyndale; "for these two benefits will come thereof—I shall get money to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world will cry out against the burning of God's Word, and the overplus of the money that shall remain to me shall make me more studious to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again; and I trust the second will much better like [please] you than ever did the first." "So," remarks the chronicler, Hall, who preserves this narrative, "forward went the bargain; the bishop had the books—Packington had the thanks—and Tyndale had the money."† Doubts about some particulars of the story may fairly be entertained. That Tyndale should be the man of whom the books were purchased seems unlikely, for the editions purchased must have been those produced by the Antwerp printers, to

* *Acts and Mon.* vol. v. p. 120.

† Hall's *Chronicle*, quoted in Demaus's *Life of Tyndale*, pp. 221, 222.

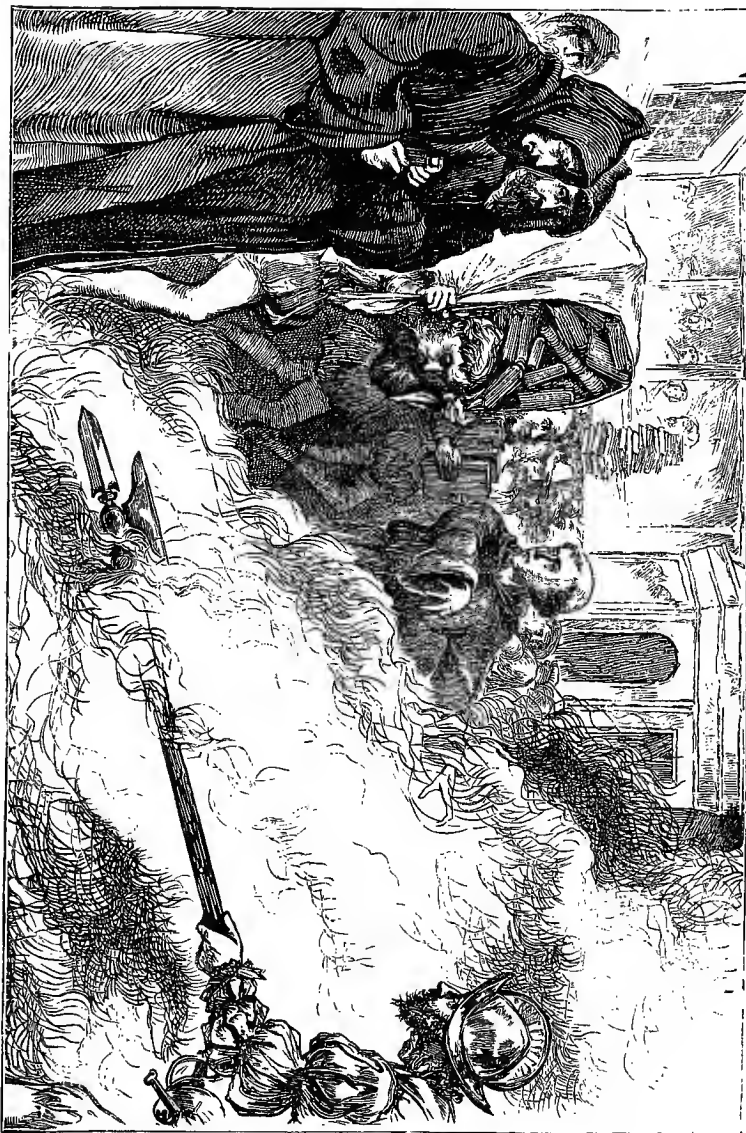
whom, in all probability, they belonged. However, they were obtained in some way, and in the following year were publicly consumed.

There was a great gathering in the churchyard of old St. Paul's, on the 4th of May, 1530. The spectacle-loving folks of those days might be seen wending up Ludgate Hill, and along the side of Chepe, to assemble round St. Paul's Cross. The promenade in the middle aisle of the old Gothic cathedral—where London citizens were wont to saunter and chat, transact business, and while away an idle hour—was almost emptied by the attractive influence of the scene to be enacted without the walls.

This, and previous acts of the same order, were performed by virtue of ecclesiastical authority, which, in those days, by royal permission, in some respects reigned supreme.

On this occasion Tonstall caused the books obtained at Antwerp to be committed to the flames. Testament after Testament was flung on the blazing pyre—the people were solemnly warned against the sin of reading vernacular versions. The church was the only teacher. The Bible was not for the people to read, but for the priest to explain. The version made in the English tongue was only fit for the flames! The crowds about the old churchyard looked on the spectacle that day with varied feelings. Some thought all was right; others, that all was wrong. “This burning,” says Burnet, “had such a hateful appearance in it, being generally called a burning of the Word of God, that people from thence concluded there must be a visible contrariety between that book and the doctrines of those who handled it; by which both their prejudice against the clergy, and their desire of reading the New Testament, was increased.”*

* *History of the Reformation.*



On the 24th of May, 1530, less than three weeks after the book-burning in St. Paul's Churchyard, a meeting was held at Westminster, composed of the King, Archbishop Warham, and several of the bishops, together with delegates from the universities. In a document they issued, reference is made to the translations of Scripture corrupted by Wyllyam Tyndall, as well in the Old Testament as in the New, among pernicious books, of which said the assembled ecclesiastics, through his majesty, "Detest them, abhor them; keep them not in your hands, deliver them to the superiors such as call for them." Then he adds, "Thus I move and exhort you in God to do, this is your duty to do—this ye ought to do, and being obstinate, or denying and refusing this to do, the prelates of the church, having the care and charge of your souls, ought to compel you, and your prince to punish and correct you, not doing the same, unto whom St. Paul saith the sword is given by God's ordinance for that purpose." It is afterwards stated that "it has sometimes seemed proper for the Word of God to be circulated, while at other times it has been deemed needful for it to be restrained, and that the king, taking into consideration all circumstances, thinketh in his conscience, that the divulging of the Scripture at this time in the English tongue to be committed to the people, should rather be to their further confusion and destruction than the edification of their souls. We cannot require or demand Scripture to be divulged in the English tongue otherwise than upon the discretion of the superiors, so as whensoever they think in their consciences that it may do you good, they may and do well to give it unto you."*

* The original ms. is in Lambeth Library. It is printed in Wilkins' *Councils*, vol. iii. p. 727.

Among the names appended is that of Hugh Latimer, well known as an advocate for Bible circulation. Whatever might be the principle on which he was induced to sign the document, the views expressed in it were opposed to his own; and this he avowed in a letter written to the king shortly afterwards, where he speaks of three or four dissentients to the proclamation, whose opinion was overborne by a majority.*

The crusade was kept up throughout such parts of the country as had received the proscribed volumes; and many a strict search was made for them, while ingenious contrivances were adopted for their concealment.

But, in spite of searchings and burnings, proclamations, and buying up of editions, the Testaments still found their way from the Continent: sometimes enclosed in packages artfully covered with flax, sometimes conveyed among the wares of Jewish merchants. "Sir," said the Bishop of London to his agent, Packington, "how cometh this, that there are so many New Testaments abroad? you promised me that you would buy them all?" "I bought all that were to be had," rejoined Packington; "but I perceive they have printed more since; I see it will never be better so long as they have letters and stamps; wherefore you were best to buy the stamps too, and so you will be sure." The bishop smiled, and so ended the matter.†

It is an important fact, much overlooked, that at this time, when English Protestant books were burnt, and people were persecuted for reading them, no Act of Parliament stood in the way of importing such books into England after they had been printed abroad. Indeed, there was an Act which encouraged the importation. For a prohibitory

* Foxe, vol. vii. p. 509.

† Foxe, vol. iv. p. 670.

statute of Richard III., i., c. 9, in reference to Italians and other foreigners, expressly provided that it should not extend to any stranger for bringing into this realm, or selling by retail, or otherwise, any books written or printed: or to any printer of such books dwelling in this country for such purpose. The prohibition of importing English Bibles printed abroad was for some time a purely ecclesiastical proceeding, the act of certain bishops. But in 1533 an Act was passed to repeal the proviso in the statute of Richard III., and to forbid the importation of foreign printed books; a new proviso now being introduced of quite another kind, namely, one to prevent English printers from raising their prices in consequence of this barrier against continental competition. In this way, Parliament united with the Church in shutting the door through which the Scriptures had been conveyed to the people of England.

While Tyndale's enemies on this side of the Channel were burning his books, he was pursuing his labours on the other, revising his translation, preparing a version of the Old Testament, and writing works in defence of principles drawn from the sacred oracles. As he had proceeded with his studies, and had marked what was going on in this country and abroad, his eyes had been opened to the true character of the Romish court and of papal claims. He laid bare the history of the papal see, and the evils which sprang from it.

In the course of the year 1530, whilst at Marburg, he published his *Practice of Prelates*, one of the bitterest of his controversial writings: provoked to do so by a misapprehension of what was at the time going on in his own country.* From this work I quote the following passage:

“And to see how our holy father came up, mark the

* Demaus's *Life of Tyndale*, p. 248.

ensample of an ivy-tree : first it springeth out of the earth, and then awhile creepeth along by the ground till it find a great tree. Then it joineth itself beneath alow unto the body of the tree, and creepeth up a little and a little, fair and softly. And at the beginning, while it is yet thin and small, that the burden is not perceived, it seemeth glorious to garnish the tree in the winter, and to bear off the tempests of the weather. But in the mean season it thrusteth roots into the bark of the tree, to hold fast withal ; and ceaseth not to climb up, till it be at the top and above all. And then it sendeth his branches along by the branches of the tree, and overgroweth all, and waxeth great, heavy, and thick ; and sucketh the moisture so sore out of the tree and his branches, that it choaketh and stifeth them. And then the foul stinking ivy waxeth mighty in the stump of the tree, and becometh a seat and a nest for all unclean birds, and for blind owls, which hawk in the dark, and dare not come at the light.

“ Even so the bishop of Rome, now called pope, at the beginning crope along upon the earth ; and every man trod upon him in this world. But as soon as there came a Christian emperor, he joined himself unto his feet and kissed them, and crope up a little with begging now this privilege, now that ; now this city, now that ; to find poor people withal, and the necessary ministers of God’s Word. And he entituled the emperor with choosing the pope and other bishops ; and promoted in the spiritualty, not whom virtue and learning, but whom the favour of great men commended ; to flatter, to get friends, and defenders withal. And the alms of the congregation which was the food and patrimony of the poor and necessary preachers, that he called St. Peter’s patrimony, St. Peter’s rent, St. Peter’s

lands, St. Peter's right; to cast a vain fear and a heathenish superstitiousness into the hearts of men, that no man should dare meddle with whatsoever came once into their hands for fear of St. Peter, though they ministered it never so evil; and that they which should think it none alms to give them any more (because they had too much already) should yet give St. Peter somewhat (as Nabuchodnesser gave his god Beel) to purchase an advocate and an intercessor of St. Peter, and that St. Peter should at the first knock let them in. And thus, with flattering and feigning, and vain superstition, under the name of St. Peter, he crept up and fastened his roots in the heart of the emperor, and with his sword clamb up above all his fellow-bishops, and brought them under his feet. And as he subdued them with the emperor's sword, even so by subtilty and help of them (after that they were sworn faithful) he clamb above the emperor, and subdued him also, and made him stoop unto his feet and kiss them another while. Yea, Pope Cœlestinus crowned the Emperor Henry the Fifth [Sixth], holding the crown between his feet: and when he had put the crown on, he smote it off with his feet again, saying, that he had might to make emperors and put them down again.

“And he made a constitution, that no layman should meddle with their matters, nor be in their councils, or wit what they did; and that the pope only should call the council, and the emperor should but defend the pope; provided alway that the council should be in one of the pope's towns, and where the pope's power was greater than the emperor's. Then, under a pretence of condemning some heresy, he called a general council, where he made one a patriarch, another cardinal, another legate, another primate,

another archbishop, another bishop, another dean, another archdeacon, and so forth, as we now see.

“And as the pope played with the emperor, so did his branches and his members, the bishops, play in every kingdom, dukedom, and lordship; insomuch that the very heirs of them by whom they came up, hold now their lands of them, and take them for their chief lords. And as the emperor is sworn to the pope, even so every king is sworn to the bishops and prelates of his realm: and they are the chiefest in all parliaments; yea, they and their money, and they that be sworn to them, and come up by them, rule altogether.

“And thus the pope, the father of all hypocrites, hath with falsehood and guile perverted the order of the world, and turned the roots of the trees upward, and hath put down the kingdom of Christ, and set up the kingdom of the devil, whose vicar he is; and hath put down the ministers of Christ, and hath set up the ministers of Satan, disguised yet in names and garments like unto the angels of light and ministers of righteousness. For Christ’s kingdom is not of the world; and the pope’s kingdom is all the world.” *

In 1531 Tyndale printed a version of Jonah; and in 1534 he reissued the Pentateuch, with slight changes in the text of Genesis, in the prefaces to the several parts of the volume, and in the explanatory tables appended to the work. But his most important task this year was a revised translation of the New Testament. In it he sought to render the English more idiomatic, and was not above availing himself of hints derived from hostile criticisms on the edition of 1526. In his preface, there is a reference to George Joye, a person who had been employed by the Dutch printers in speedily bringing out the reprints of Tyndale’s Testaments.

* Tyndale’s Works, *Practice of Prelates*, pp. 270-273. Parker Soc. Edit.

From it we learn that Tyndale was much dissatisfied with the alterations Joye had ventured to make. And the criticisms led to an answer on the part of Joye, in which he endeavoured to vindicate himself against the charges alleged by Tyndale. But what chiefly claims notice is what Tyndale states respecting his own translation :

“ Here thou hast, most dear reader, the New Testament or covenant made with us of God in Christ’s blood, which I have looked over again (now at the last) with all diligence, and compared it unto the Greek, and have weeded out of it many faults which lack of help at the beginning and oversight did sow therein. If ought seem changed, or not altogether agreeing with the Greek, let the finder of the fault consider the Hebrew phrase or manner of speech left in the Greek words, whose preterperfect tense and present tense is often both one, and the future tense is the optative mood also, and the future tense is often the imperative mood in the active voice, and in the passive ever. Likewise person for person, number for number, and an interrogation for a conditional, and such like, is with the Hebrews a common usage. I have also in many places set light in the margin to understand the text by. If any man find fault either with the translation or ought beside, which is easier for many to do than so well to have translated it themselves of their own pregnant wits at the beginning, without forensample, to the same it shall be lawful to translate it themselves, and to put what they lust thereto. If I shall perceive either by myself or by the information of other, that ought be escaped me, or might be more plainly translated, I will shortly after cause it to be mended. Howbeit in many places methinketh it better to put a declaration in the margin than to run too far from the text. And in many

places when the text seemeth at the first chop hard to be understood, yet the circumstances before and after, and often reading together, maketh it plain enough."* Another and further revised edition was added by Tyndale in 1535.

For some time after the invention of typography, printers imitated copyists by not prefixing a title-page to their volumes. The first Bible with a separate title-page is a Latin one from the Venetian press, in 1487. We do not know what title-page was prefixed to Tyndale's translation of 1526; that of 1534 exhibits this description on the first leaf: "The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke by Willyam Tyndale," etc. I have indicated the origin of the word "Bible;" the origin of the word "Testament" also requires notice. Testament is a Latin word, used in the Western Church as equivalent to the Greek *Diathekè*, which, with the prefix *Kainè* (new), about the fourth century became a common appellation for the Gospels, and other inspired Christian books, as distinguished from the old *Diatheke* or sacred Jewish books. The first and more proper meaning, *covenant*, passed out of sight for the secondary meaning, Testament, as denoting a will. Wycliffe has spoken of Divine Scripture as a Testament, and *New Testament*, we see, is put on the title-page of Tyndale's translation of 1534.

It is time to notice the merits of Tyndale's work, as a Scripture translator. Of his scholarly qualifications there remains no doubt on the part of any one who has studied his history. Rash assertions used to be made that he translated from the Vulgate; and I am sorry to say that they have of late been repeated by men from whom better things might be expected, but who, unfortunately,

* *Address to the Christian Reader*, prefixed to edition of 1534.

have not taken the trouble to investigate irresistible evidence on the other side. Tyndale's Oxford and Cambridge training, and his translation of the Greek oration of Isocrates, would, one would think, be sufficient to prove that he must have made considerable attainments in the language of the New Testament; and the critical examination of his version, recently published by a distinguished Biblical scholar, established, beyond all dispute, that he made it, not from any other translation, but from the original itself.* He wisely availed himself of existing helps—the Vulgate, Erasmus's New Testament, and Luther's German renderings—but these did not diminish the independence of his judgment; they only helped him to form his own conclusions.

His knowledge of Hebrew, as well as Greek, has also been satisfactorily ascertained, and his care in the preparation of his Old Testament translations is equally conspicuous with that in the New.

“In his version of the New Testament,” says Canon Westcott, “we have seen that Tyndale willingly faced the labours of minute correction. The texts of 1525, 1534, and 1535 are specifically distinct, and each later edition offers a careful revision of that which preceded it. Though the evidence is less extensive in the case of the Old Testament, it is evident he expended no less pains upon this. The texts of ‘the epistles from the Old Testament,’ appended to the New Testament of 1534 and 1535, differ in small details from the published Pentateuch of 1531, and, what is still more interesting, from one another. Thus in these, as in the New Testaments themselves, there is a double revision; and there is nothing to show that Tyndale bestowed less care upon the lessons from the Apocrypha than on those from the canonical books.

* See Westcott's *History of the English Bible*, pp. 173, 179.

“This patience of laborious emendation completes the picture of the great translator. In the conception and style of his renderings he had nothing to modify or amend. Throughout all his revisions he preserved intact the characteristics of his first work. Before he began he had prepared himself for the task, of which he could apprehend the full difficulty. He had rightly measured the momentous issues of a vernacular version of the Holy Scriptures, and determined once for all the principles on which it must be made. His later efforts were directed simply to the nearer attainment of his ideal. To gain this end he availed himself of the best help which lay within his reach ; but he used it as a master, not as a disciple. In this work alone he felt that substantial independence was essential to success. In exposition or exhortation he might borrow freely the language or the thought which seemed suited to his purpose, but in rendering the sacred text he remained throughout faithful to the instincts of a scholar. From first to last his style and his interpretation are his own ; and in the originality of Tyndale is included, in a large measure, the originality of our English version. For not only did Tyndale contribute to it, directly, the substantial basis of half of the Old Testament (in all probability), and of the whole of the New, but he established a standard of Biblical translation which others followed. It is even of less moment that by far the greater part of his translation remains intact in our present Bibles than that his spirit animates the whole. He toiled faithfully himself, and where he failed he left, to those who should come after, the secret of success. The achievement was not for one, but for many ; but he fixes the type according to which the later labourers worked. His influence decided that our Bible should be popular and not literary,

speaking in a simple dialect, and that so, by its simplicity, it should be endowed with permanence. He felt, by a happy instinct, the potential affinity between Hebrew and English idioms, and enriched our language and thought, for ever, with the characteristics of the Semitic sound.”*

How far Tyndale availed himself of the labours of Wycliffe and Purvey is a critical question. One so interested in the work of Bible translation could scarcely fail to be somewhat acquainted with its history. He must have known something about the Lollard version, though I am not aware of any allusion to it in his writings. Mr. Marsh is so confident, that he says, “Tyndale is merely a full-grown Wycliffe. The recension of the New Testament is just what his great predecessor would have made it, had he awaked again to see the dawn of the glorious day, of which his own life and labours kindled the morning twilight. Not only does Tyndale retain the general grammatical structure of the older version, but most of its felicitous verbal combinations, and, what is more remarkable, he preserves even the rhythmic flow of its periods, which is again repeated in the recension of 1611.”† In all criticism of this kind there is room for the play of a specious imagination,—fancy takes the place of fact. We must turn to see what Tyndale himself says on this subject. These are his own words: “Them that are learned Christianly, I beseech that they consider how that I had no man to counterfeit [or imitate], neither was holpen with English of any that had interpreted the same or such like thing in the Scripture beforetime.” This looks like a disclaimer of having used any previous vernacular version in the execution of his own; yet the words translated,

* Westcott's *History*, pp. 208, 211.

† *Lectures on the English Language*, p. 447.

act. 14. 5
 on. 1. 5
 18m. 4. 2

“pinnacle of the Temple,” “comprehended,” “tribulation and anguish,” and “mote” and “beam,” point in an opposite direction; and, what is very remarkable, in Matt. vii. 6, both Wycliffe and Tyndale adopt a rendering—not suggested either by the Greek or by the Latin—which refers the “trampling” to the “swine,” and the “rending” to the “dogs;” also in the 14th verse of the same chapter, both speak of the gate as strait, and the way as narrow.* Ingenious surmises may be adopted to reconcile the fact of certain resemblances between the two translations and the high probability of Tyndale’s having read the work of his predecessor, with the statement he has so distinctly expressed; yet, after all, we meet here with another of the difficult, if not insoluble, problems of Tyndale’s life and labours.

Tyndale’s renderings are remarkable in two respects: they are unconventional and popular; they are also quaint and racy. Of the former class we have examples in the words “congregation,” not church; “favour,” not grace; “overseer,” not bishop; “elder,” not priest; “love,” not charity. Such renderings show that Tyndale wished to employ words in popular use, words that would explain themselves, rather than technical terms, however venerable from their ecclesiastical usage. Of the latter class—the quaint and racy—the following are instances: In Matt. iv. 24, we find “divers diseases and gripinges;” vi. 7, “babele not moche;” x. 9, “nor brasse yn youre gerdels;” xiii. 33, “hyd in thre peckes off meeles;” xiv. 14, “his herte dyde melt uppon them;” 20, “gaddered up of the gobbetes;” xv. 27, “the whelppes eate of the crommes;” xvii. 27, “thou shalt fynd a piece of twelve pens;” xxvi. 17, “to eate the ester lambe;”

* Dr. Moulton, *Bible Educator*, vol. ii. p. 309.

Mark vi. 40, "sat doune, here arowe, and there arowe;" viii. 19, "how many baskettes of the levinges of broken meate toke ye up?" xiv. 66, "won off the wenches off the hiest preste;" Luke ii. 3, "his awne shyre tounne;" x. 34, "brought hym to a common hostry;" xi. 46, "yourselves touche not the packes;" xv. 16, "filled his bely with the coddess that the swyne ate."*

These details might be multiplied by numerous references to Tyndale's Old Testament. In comparing the quarto of Tyndale's Testament, 1525, with Luther's, 1522, the resemblance, in respect of printing, is remarkable. The appearance of the page is the same, the arrangement of the text is the same, and the references in the margin are also the same, and, what is more important to be noticed, the marginal notes introduced into the quarto edition are to a large extent translations from those of Luther.†

No doubt Tyndale made use of Luther in the translation of the text, as well as in the compilation of notes, but far less in the former than the latter. His revisions show his careful adherence to the original. About a third of the alterations in the edition of 1534, as compared with that of 1525, show nearer approximations to the Greek,—some in the most delicate minutiae of the work. In one passage a rendering from Luther takes the place of a paraphrase in the earlier edition; "yet it must be remarked that, even in this revision, the changes are far more frequently at variance with Luther's renderings than in accordance with them."‡

A man like Tyndale, so incessantly and quietly plying his pen in translating Scripture truths, was not likely to

* See Eadie's *English Bible*, vol. i. pp. 156, 157.

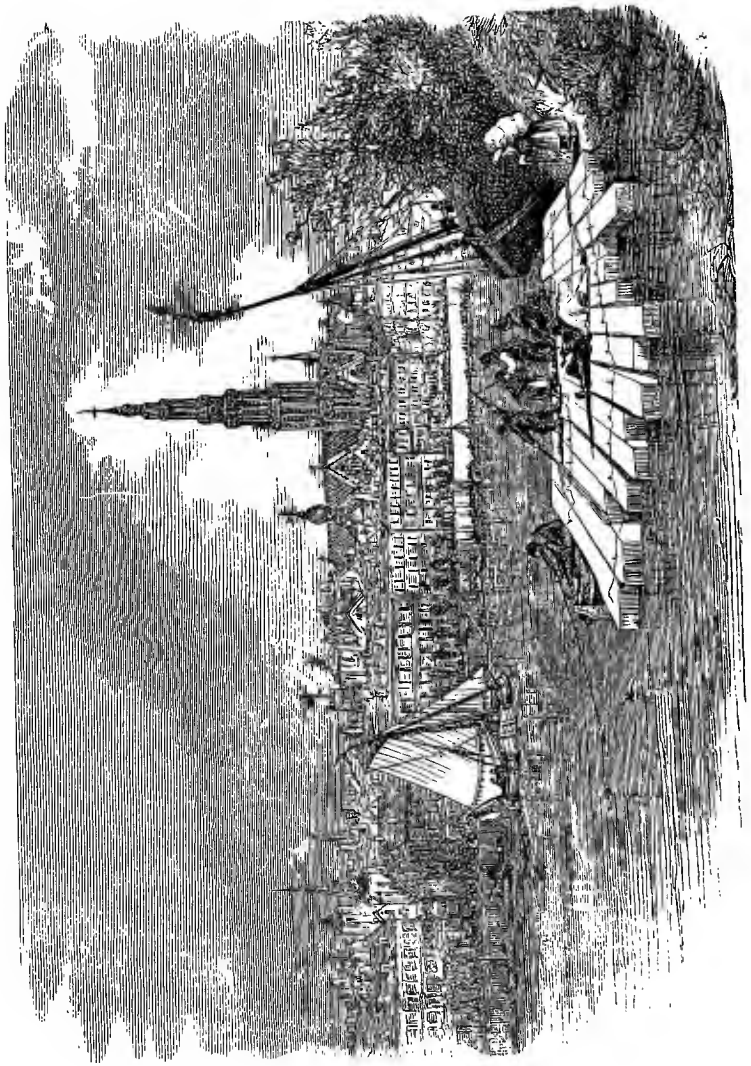
† Demaus's *Life of Tyndale*, p. 122. Arber, 67.

‡ Westcott's *Hist.* p. 185. He gives the variations in App. iii.

be unmolested by enemies to a free circulation of the Bible. Henry VIII., though he had broken with Rome, and had commenced a course which proved subservient to the cause of the Reformation, was an inveterate enemy to the use of Tyndale's version, and published a proclamation against it, for which no doubt he was the more ready because Tyndale had condemned the divorce of Catherine. At one period—it was soon after the monarch's marriage with Anne Boleyn—a rumour obtained currency that he had become favourably disposed towards the circulation of a vernacular version. Tyndale, in his last letter to Frith, 1533, remarks, "George Joye, at Candlemas, being at Barrow, printed two leaves of Genesis, in a great form, and sent one copy to the king, and another to the new queen, with a letter to N. for to deliver them, and to purchase licence that he might so go all through the Bible. Out of this is sprung the noise of the new Bible, and out of that is the great seeking for English books at all printers and bookbinders in Antwerp, and for an English priest that should print."* Hence it is clear that a notion prevailed of the king being favourable to an English translation of the Bible. Cranmer, too, who was just raised to the primacy, of whom much will be said hereafter, exerted all his influence to effect this object.

But, whatever were the real thoughts and purposes of the capricious sovereign at that moment, no hope remained for William Tyndale. His work could never be royally welcomed in England, because the offence committed by his opposing the divorce could not be forgiven. However, for some reason which it is difficult to ascertain, measures were employed to decoy him over to England. Sir Stephen Vaughan, Henry's agent in the Netherlands, did his utmost to persuade

* Demaus's *Life of Tyndale*, p. 377.



ANTWERP.

him to return ; but Tyndale, though ready to die in defence of truth, did not deem it a duty to put his head into the lion's mouth, and therefore preferred to remain on the Continent.

Yet he sought to vindicate himself to the king's minister. One day a stranger informed Sir Stephen that a person desired to speak with him. Conducted to a field by the walls of Antwerp, close to a running stream, he found the person in waiting to be Tyndale himself. " Sir," said he, " I have been exceeding desirous to speak with you.* I am informed that the king's grace taketh great displeasure with me for putting forth of certain books which I lately made in these parts, but especially for the book named the *Practice of Prelates*, whereof I have no little marvel, considering that in it I did but warn his grace of the subtle demeanour of the clergy of his realm towards his person, and of the shameful abuses by them practised, not a little threatening the displeasure of his grace and weal of his realm ; in which doing I showed and declared the heart of a true subject, which sought the safeguard of his royal person, and weal of his commons, to the intent that his grace thereof warned, might, in due time, prepare his remedies against the subtle dreams. If for my pains therein taken—if for my poverty—if for my exile out of my natural country, and being absent from my friends—if for my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherewith I am everywhere compassed, and finally, if for innumerable other hard and sharp sicknesses which I endure, not yet feeling their asperity, by reason I hoped with my labours to do honour to God, true service to my prince, and pleasure to his commons—how is it that his grace, this considering, may either by himself think, or by

* Cott. mss., Titus, b. i., 67.

the persuasions of others be brought to think, that in this doing I should not show a pure mind, a true and incorrupt zeal, and affection to his grace? ”

The interview between Tyndale and Vaughan by the gates of Antwerp, in the meadow near the stream, while the former eloquently defended his character, is one of those interesting incidents in the bypaths of history which are more worthy of attention than many world-known facts standing out conspicuously, but insignificantly, on the high road.

Vaughan had another interview with Tyndale, and seemed deeply touched by the earnestness and pathos with which he pleaded for liberty to perform the task on which his heart was set.

“ If it would stand with the king’s most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture to be put forth among his people, like it is put forth among the subjects of the emperor in these parts, and of other Christian princes, be it of the translation of what person soever shall please his majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same ; but immediately to repair unto his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his royal majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain or tortures, yea, what death his grace will, so that this be obtained.”*

There was another exile on the Continent at the time, one like-minded with Tyndale, his affectionate and constant friend, and probably a convert to Protestant truth through his instrumentality. I refer to the meek, amiable, and pious John Frith. Vaughan was exhorted by the king to use his influence with him, and get him also back to England.

* Letter printed in *English Translations and Translators*, prefixed to Bagstorf's *Hexapla*.

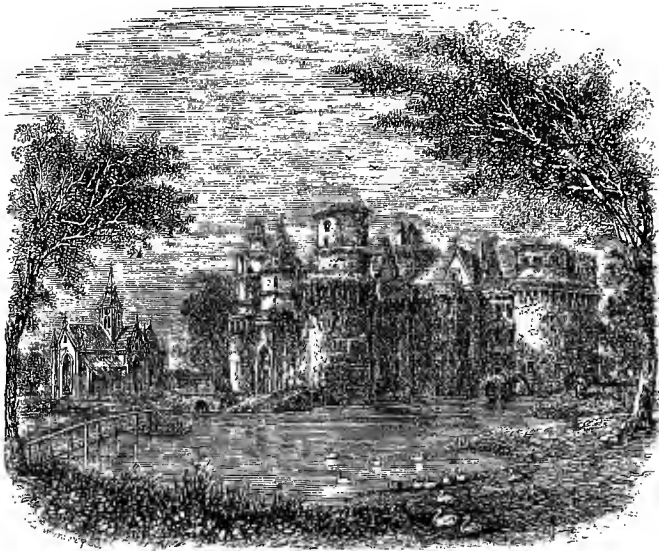
Whether through such influence or not, Frith certainly did soon after return, to experience the tender mercies of Henry and his myrmidons, manifested in his committal to the Tower and in his speedy martyrdom. Tyndale wrote a letter to Frith in prison, in which he said, "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be honour, pleasure, or riches, shall be given me."

Addressing his friend in the prospect of martyrdom, Tyndale speaks in a tone of deep piety:* "Dearly beloved, be of good courage, and comfort your soul with the hope of this high reward, and bear the image of Christ in your mortal body, that it may, at His coming, be made like to His immortal; and follow the example of all your other dear brethren which chose to suffer in hope of a better resurrection. Keep your conscience pure and undefiled, and say against that nothing. Stick at necessary things, and remember the blasphemies of the enemies of Christ, 'They find none but will abjure rather than suffer the extremity.' Moreover, the death of them that come again after they have once denied, though it be accepted with God and all that believe, yet it is not glorious; for the hypocrites say, 'He must needs die; denying helpeth not; but might it have holpen, they would have denied five hundred times; but seeing it would not help them, therefore of pure pride and mere malice together they speak with their mouths that their conscience knoweth false.' If you *give* yourself, *cast* yourself, *yield* yourself, *commit* yourself wholly and only to your loving Father; then shall His power be in you and make you strong; and that so

* Demaus, *Life of Tyndale*, pp. 362, 375. The letter is dated the 9th of May [1533]

strong that you shall feel no pain, which shall be to another present death, and His Spirit shall speak in you, and teach you what to answer, according to His promise."

These words of comfort were calculated to strengthen the sufferer, as in the July of 1533 he was led to Smithfield, where he perished at the stake.



VILVORDE CASTLE.

Tyndale was betrayed into the hands of his enemies by an unprincipled Englishman, named Philips. This man had professed friendship for the noble-hearted reformer, and had, on the very morning of the betrayal, borrowed of him forty shillings. Under the guidance of this second Iscariot the officers proceeded to Tyndale's place of abode, when Philips

entered, and bringing out his unsuspecting victim, "gave the men a sign," who immediately seized on their prey, and conveyed him to the castle of Vilvorde, near Brussels. The unresisting meekness, the transparent simplicity of the good man affected the officers; and during captivity his pious conversation was made useful to the gaoler and his family.

In September, 1536, he was led forth to execution, and having been first strangled, his body was thrown into the flames. His last breath went up to heaven in the well-known prayer, "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England!" "If they burn me," he had said eight years before, "they shall do no other thing than that I looked for. There is none other way into the kingdom of life, than through persecution and suffering of pain, and of very death, after the example of Christ."*

At whose instigation was Tyndale barbarously sacrificed? Much of obscurity rests on the transaction, but there can be little doubt that enemies of the reformer in this country, if not prompters of the act, yet winked at its perpetration.

His only friend in his last, as in his early days, was an English merchant. All honour to the name of Thomas Poyntz, Tyndale's host, in whose house he was captured, who pleaded hard to save him, and who even risked his life in the adventure! "Brother," he says, writing to John Poyntz, a gentleman at the English court, "the knowledge that I have of this man causes me to write as my conscience bids me; for the king's grace should have of him, at this day, as high a treasure as of honour: one man living there is not that has been of greater reputation." Poyntz was imprisoned at Brussels, on account of his intimacy with Tyndale, and saved himself—probably, from a death of violence—

* Demaus, *Life of Tyndale*, p. 482.

by escaping from prison, and making his way to England. This friend of the translator now lies buried in the little church of South Oxenden, Essex. Many graves of far less interest than his are pointed out and visited with the highest honour.

Tyndale was eminently a great man—great in mind, and heart, and enterprise. His intellectual endowments were of an order to render him a match in controversy with no less a personage than the illustrious Sir Thomas More. Logic, erudition, wit, and eloquence, may all be found in the pages of his answer to Sir Thomas; and that his opponent felt sensible of his intellectual and literary qualifications, there are obvious indications in the portly quartos which he wrote against him. The qualities of his heart were as remarkable as those of his head. He combined a calm and steady heroism with a child-like simplicity. No man was ever more free from duplicity, more full of meekness, and at the same time more elevated in soul by a manly courage. Ever, “as in his great Taskmaster’s eye,” he pursued his labours in obscurity and exile, reaping no earthly benefit whatever—looking for no reward but the smile of his heavenly Father.

He dealt a blow at Romanism more effectual than any other aimed at it by his Protestant contemporaries. Other reformers have filled the field of vision and engrossed the attention of historians; but to Tyndale, of right, belongs a chief place in the first rank of the noble band.





CHAPTER V.

MILES COVERDALE.



IN the district of Coverdale, in the county of York, there stood, at the close of the fifteenth century, in all its magnificence, the well-known abbey of Coverham. Amidst the pleasant scenery which bordered upon that ecclesiastical edifice, amidst hills, meadows, and trout-streams, in all probability, the man first saw the light who was to be a coadjutor of Tyn-dale, and to go beyond him by being the first to publish the whole of the Bible, translated from the original. Miles Coverdale, no doubt, derived his name from the district in which he was born, and perhaps in the monastic school at Coverham received the first elements of instruction. One pictures the sturdy little fellow running about the hills, sporting in the meadows, and fishing in the trout-streams, and then mingling with other boys, under the tutorship of the cowled monks, who little thought, as they looked on his countenance, the kind of man he was to make.

In his youth he went to the Augustine monastery in

Cambridge, and there shared, no doubt, in the advantages derived from the revival of learning in the university, about the time of Erasmus's second visit to it in 1511. Dr. Barnes was among the chief instruments of that revival, and it was he who presided as prior over the brethren of



MILES COVERDALE.

the house of the Augustines at Cambridge. The accommodation and habits of Cambridge men were then rather different from what they are now; and if the reader would like to take a peep at them in the days of Coverdale, he may form a judgment of what they must have been

then from what they were in the reign of Edward VI., as thus described in a sermon by Thomas Lever,* 1550: "There be divers there which rise daily between four and five of the clock in the morning, and from five† until six of the clock use common prayer, with an exhortation of God's Word, in a common chapel, and from six until ten of the clock use ever either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereat they be content with a penny piece of beef amongst four, having a few pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender dinner, they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock in the evening, when they have a supper, not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems, or unto some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock, and there being without fire are fain to walk or run up and down, half an hour, to get a heat in their feet when they go to bed."

Perhaps there was better cheer in the monastery of the Augustines before the Reformation than it would seem, from Lever's sermon, many of the Cambridge men enjoyed afterwards; however that might be, there Coverdale studied and worked, and laid in such an amount of learning as qualified him for the great work which Providence intended him to perform. Dr. Barnes was brought to the knowledge of Evangelical truth, and was led to adopt the principles of the reformers, by Thomas Bilney. Probably, Coverdale soon imbibed the spirit of his worthy prior, and thus began the noble career which secured such benefits for his country. In a letter written from the Augustine monastery, to Thomas

* *Antiquarian Repertory* (ed. 1809), vol. iv. p. 18.

† Before the Reformation it would be the hour of prime. The Common Prayer was introduced by the reformers.

Cromwell, on May day, 1527, Coverdale remarks :—“ Now I begin to taste of Holy Scriptures ; now, honour be to God, I am set to the most sweet smell of holy letters, with the godly savour of holy and ancient doctors, unto whose knowledge I cannot attain without diversity of books, as is not unknown to your most excellent wisdom. Nothing in the world I desire but books, as concerning my learning : they once had, I do not doubt but Almighty God shall perform that in me which He of His most plentiful favour and grace hath begun.”*

Thomas Cromwell, afterwards Earl of Essex, the favourite of Henry—one who played so conspicuous a part in the secular movements connected with the Reformation—was Coverdale’s early friend and patron ; and the connection of this great man, and the assistance which he rendered Coverdale in his undertaking, are obvious in the reformer’s history up to the time of the minister’s death. Perhaps it was the friendship of Cromwell which saved Coverdale from being involved in trouble when he came out as an antagonist to papal errors. Barnes was accused of heresy, and committed to the Fleet. Coverdale attended him as a friend, amidst his trials ; and afterwards, in Essex, distinguished himself as a zealous preacher against transubstantiation, the worshipping of images, and the practice of confession. Yet we find him untouched by persecution. But in 1529 he appears to have left his native country for the Continent, no doubt induced so to do as the best plan for securing personal safety. There we lose sight of him for a while, unless we believe Foxe’s unsupported statement, that he became connected with Tyndale at Hamburg in translating the Pentateuch.

Besides Cromwell, who took a private interest in Coverdale,

* Quoted in *Memorials of Miles Coverdale*, p. 7.

there were two other distinguished personages friendly like himself to the circulation of English Scriptures. Anne Boleyn had appointed Latimer as one of her chaplains ; in other ways also she had favoured the Reformation ; and it



THOMAS CROMWELL.

can easily be conceived how considerable, for a time, would be the influence exerted by one "who reigned in the king's heart as absolutely as he did over his subjects."* Cranmer, whose opinions are well known—and his exertions on behalf

* Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, vol. i. p. 269.

of Bible translations will be presently reviewed—was, just at this juncture, raised to the primacy on the death of Archbishop Warham. All these circumstances were propitious in relation to further attempts at translating the Bible by some one not personally obnoxious to the sovereign.

In the Chapter House of old St. Paul's, in the winter of 1534, four days before Christmas, Cranmer stood up before Convocation to recommend that something should be done in reference to Biblical translation. The members, though inclined to fall in with his views to some extent, clogged their concession by an order to the effect, that all persons having books of suspected doctrine in the vulgar tongue, imprinted beyond or on this side the sea, should, within three months, bring them in to officers appointed by his majesty, under penalties at the royal pleasure. The concession itself ran in the following form: that the bishops, abbots, and priors of the upper house, "unanimously did consent, that the most reverend father the archbishop should make instance in their names to the king that . . . his majesty would vouchsafe to decree that the Scriptures should be translated into the vulgar tongue, by some honest and learned men, to be nominated by the king, and to be delivered unto the people according to their learning."* The reference to a royal decree, as an authority for what was to be done, shows the effect of the recent Act of Supremacy, which had transferred so large a share of spiritual power into his majesty's hands. Previously, according to the Arundel Constitution of 1408, Convocation, independently of any other sanction, might have made such a decree, indeed, a single bishop might have done so in his own diocese.†

* Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer* (Oxford edit.), vol. i. p. 34.

† See Collier's *Eccl. Hist.*, vol. iii. p. 280.

What followed will be noticed hereafter : in the meanwhile, we must follow Coverdale, who had for years been "set to the sweet smell of holy letters." Possibly he felt encouraged by tidings of what went on in England, to hasten his preparations for a version of the whole Bible. Foxe says that Coverdale met Tyndale at Hamburg in 1529, and he helped him in translating the Pentateuch—a statement which, though sometimes questioned, contains in it nothing improbable; but where Coverdale was, and what exactly he did until 1534, is not apparent. At that time, however, it is certain that he was fully absorbed in the accomplishment of his great design; and in the preface to his Bible he says, "Considering how excellent knowledge and learning an interpreter of Scripture ought to have in the tongues, and pondering also mine own insufficiency therein, and how weak I am to perform the office of a translator, I was the more loath to meddle with this work. Notwithstanding, when I considered what great pity it was that we should want it so long, and called to my remembrance the adversity of them who were not only of ripe knowledge, but would also, with all their hearts, have performed that they begun, if they had not had impediment;" (here, probably, he alludes to Tyndale, then in prison;) "considering, I say, that by reason of their adversity it could not so soon have been brought to an end as our most prosperous nation would fain have had it; these and other reasonable causes considered, I was the more bold to take it in hand."

In the edition of his Bible published in 1550, he further states, "For which cause, according as I was desired anno 1534, I took the same upon me to set forth the special translation, not as a checker, not as a reprover or despiser of other men's translations." And in the dedica-

tion of his work he also remarks, "The Holy Ghost moved other men to do the cost thereof." From these hints, it may be gathered that Coverdale was stimulated to his work by other persons; that other persons bore the cost of the publication; and that he was careful not to cast any reflection on the eminent man who had preceded him in his toils.

Additional light has lately been thrown upon the history of Coverdale's Bible by the discovery of a passage in a brief biographical notice of Emanuel van Meteren, author of the *History of Belgium*, published in Flemish, 1614, and in French in 1618. Both editions issued from the Hague; and the notice, long overlooked, is appended to the history. It appears from this sketch, that one Cornelius van Meteren, towards the close of the fifteenth century, removed from Breda to Antwerp, and afterwards became connected, by the marriage of his son, with a family named Ortelius. Another marriage linked the two families to John Rogers, a famous biblical translator, to be noticed hereafter. Cornelius van Meteren married Ottilia Ortelius, and they had a son named Jacob. Jacob is represented in the biography as zealously engaged in producing a translation of the Bible "for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in England;" "and for this purpose he employed a certain learned scholar named Miles Coverdale."*

I subjoin the whole passage as it appears in the French work. The last sentence is all that I can find relating to Miles Coverdale. Speaking of Jacob van Meteren, the writer says: "Luy avoit faict apprendre sa jeunesse l'art d'imprimerie, & estoit doué de la cognoissance de plusieurs langues, & autres bones scieces tellement que dès lors il

* *The Bibles in the Canton Exhibition*, p. 88.

sceust si bien distinguer la lumiere des tenebres, qu'il employa sa peine, & monstra son zele en Anvers à la traduction de la Bible Angloise, & employa à cela vn certain docte Escolier nommé Miles Coverdal ce qu'il fit à l'avancement du Royaume de Iesus Christ en Angleterre."*

This very important passage has been brought into notice through the indefatigable researches of Mr. Stevens; and it establishes beyond question a fact previously unknown—that Coverdale and Jacob van Meteren were connected with each other in bringing out an English Bible. Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the Bible referred to is that which is so well known as Coverdale's. Such being the case, it seems to follow that Coverdale's Bible was printed at Antwerp; and this serves to set at rest a long agitated question amongst bibliographers. Wanley and Fry have supposed the work was executed at Zurich; and play has been given to the fancy, that Coverdale, when bringing the book through the press, was sojourning in the well-known cheerful city, embosomed among vine-clad knolls, meadows, and orchards, and surmounted by forests, above and beyond which appear the loftier summits of the Alps. The poetical dream is dispelled by a sentence in the old Dutch book just cited; and we are summoned to the busy commercial city of Antwerp, to watch the advancement of the work so interesting to every Englishman. But there is nothing whatever in this valuable discovery to lead us to suppose that Jacob van Meteren did anything more than in some way "employ" Coverdale in this work—whether by money or by mechanical toil as printer, does not appear—though,

* *La Vie et la Mort de l'honorable et Renommé Historien Emanuel de Meteren*, printed at the end of *L'Histoire des Pays-bas d'Emanuel de Meteren*, La Haye, 1618.

indeed, as Meteren was a scholar, learned in languages, it is possible he may have assisted Coverdale by some suggestions.

The word "employa," used by the biographer of Van Meteren, who naturally looked at the transaction from the Antwerp point of view, would seem to refer to some arrangement arising out of pecuniary responsibility, and falls in with Coverdale's statement, just now quoted, "The Holy Ghost moved other men to do the cost thereof." But, in connection with the acknowledgment of Meteren's part, it must not be forgotten that Coverdale was an agent of Cromwell, and enjoyed his patronage; perhaps, also, he had some pecuniary assistance from him in the matter. Coverdale's words suggest that more than one provided the cost.

A curious incident is related in reference to the Meteren family, in 1535. Jacob was for a while absent in England. The London booksellers and stationers, finding the market filled with foreign books, especially Testaments, made complaint in 1533, and petitioned for relief; in consequence of which the proviso in the Act of Richard III., already referred to, was repealed, and foreigners were compelled to sell their editions entire to some London stationer *in sheets*, so that the binders might not suffer. Business arising out of this circumstance probably took the printer from his home; and during his absence his house was searched, "ostensibly for the person of Leonard Ortelius, the father of Abraham, and the uncle of Ottilia, to arrest him as a Lutheran, but really to search for forbidden books." Ottilia was at the time expecting the birth of a child; and, praying to the Almighty for the safety of her family as well as herself, she resolved that she would give the new-comer a name

commemorative of the Divine mercy. On the 9th of July, 1535, a boy was born, whom she named Emanuel, "God with us;" and this boy is, by the bibliographer who makes known to us the fact, further named, "twin brother of the Coverdale Bible."

It is truly affecting to learn that towards the end of the reign of Edward VI., finding Antwerp unsafe for them, on account of their religion, they resolved to remove, with all their effects and families, to London, and live under the young king, who had offered them an asylum. On their passage from Antwerp, the ship which carried them was attacked by a French cruiser, burnt and sunk: and so perished Jacob and Otilia van Meteren.*

Much difficulty has been felt in determining the time occupied by the execution of Coverdale's work. His reference to Tyndale seems to fix the commencement of the undertaking to about the year 1534; and in the preface to a subsequent edition, just noticed, the author gives that year as the date of taking upon him "to set forth this special translation." I cannot agree with those who suppose that "to set forth" means superintendence of the printing and correction of the sheets. Giving copy to the workmen, and receiving and examining proofs, surely could not be the business he was induced to undertake through the adversity of others—could not be the act he was specially desired by friends to perform!

In all probability, when he commenced, he had materials by him, besides earlier translations, which would help him in the performance of his task. He is likely to have made versions of certain parts for his own use: but, allowing for

* Stevens, *Catalogue of the Cotton Exhibition* pp. 87-91.

such helps, what he accomplished must have been done in a short time, and was certainly a herculean achievement.

Mr. Stevens, to whom we are indebted for information respecting Van Meteren, has also done much to unravel a mystery connected with the title-page to Coverdale's Bible. Different titles, and different preliminary leaves, are found in different copies, and they have occasioned much perplexity. There is a Coverdale of 1535, in Sion College Library, with a title-page probably taken from some other copy, as well as a fac-simile of the same page, made up by some ingenious imitator so skilfully that—as the librarian who showed it to me many years ago remarked—"it would deceive the very elect." A genuine title-page is prefixed to the copy belonging to the Earl of Leicester, which I had the privilege of examining at Holkham Hall, soon after it was brought to light, having been long concealed, so I was informed, within the bottom of an old chair.

The title-page is bordered by woodcuts representing events in sacred history, King Henry VIII. being depicted at the foot as receiving the Bible from the bishops and nobles kneeling before him. The letterpress of the page is as follows: "BIBLIA. The Bible, that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe. MDXXXV. S. Paul, ii Tessa iii. Praie for us, that the worde of God maie have fre passage, and be glorified, &c. S. Paul Col. iii. Let the worde of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wysdome, &c. Josue i., Let not the boke of this lawe departe out of thy mouth, but exercyse thyselve therin daye and nighte, &c." Mr. Fry, in his small volume, *The Bible by Coverdale*, remarks, "In the Bible of 1535, belonging to the Earl of Leicester, at Holkham

Hall, having the title before described, is one leaf printed in the same type as the title, and as the volume itself. It is the only one known to exist printed in this type, and is most interesting, as proving that some introductory matter was printed in the same type as the work. It also affords strong evidence that the title, with the list of books on the reverse of it, was not intended to accompany the dedication, etc., which was printed in the English black-letter."

The Holkham Bible is considered by Mr. Stevens to be a perfect copy of *the original book, as it came from an Antwerp press, in 1535* (the press which he claims to have been Van Meteren's), and he, as well as Mr. Fry, makes it appear probable that this Bible contained no royal dedication. Besides the perfect Holkham Coverdale, there is another Coverdale at Castle Ashby, the property of the Marquis of Northampton, printed in black-letter, and dated 1536. The title-page runs as follows: "Biblia, the Byble, that is the Holy Scrypture of the Olde and New Testament, faythfully translated into Englysche, MDXXXVI. S. Paul, ii Tessel iii. praye for us that the Worde of God may have free passage and be glorified. S. Paul, Colloss. iii., Let the Worde of Christ dwell in you plenteously, in all wysdome, &c. Josue i. Let not the boke of this lawe depart out of thy mouth, but exercyse thyselve therin daye and nighte, that thou mayest kepe and do everye thyng accordynge to it that is wrytten therein."

The difference between this title-page and the other is obvious at a glance. The words "out of Douche and Latyn" are dropped in the Northampton Bible, and the last text quoted as a motto, instead of being mutilated, as in the Holkham copy, is given complete. There is another and important difference between the two Bibles; whereas the

Leicester Bible lacks a royal dedication, the Northampton copy contains one addressed to the most victorious prince King Henry the Eighth. Allusion is made in the first sentence to his "dearest first wife and most virtuous princess Queen Anne."

Mr. Fry says, in his volume on Coverdale, just referred to, that if his "views are correct, the copy of the Sacred Scriptures in the library at Castle Ashby is of the highest interest, since it must be regarded as the only example that is known to us of the first Bible in the English language surviving (except the map), exactly in the state in which it was *issued in this country*, and in the same year in which the printing of the text was finished."

Another Coverdale is in the possession of the Earl of Jersey, and was included in the Caxton Exhibition. We find on the title-page, "Biblia. The Byble, that is the Holy Scripture of the olde and newe Testament faythfully translated into Englyshe, MDXXXVI." Then follow the Scripture mottoes as they appear in the Northampton copy; and the colophon is the same as in the Leicester Bible, "Prynted in the yeare of our Lord MDXXXV., and fynished the fourth day of October." The dedication has the name of Queen Jane, who was married to Henry VIII., May 20, 1536. "It is, we believe," says Mr. Stevens, "the only copy known perfect as it came from the hands of the publisher, Nicolson, that is, with the title, reverse, blank, and the seven other preliminary leaves, together with the map, as added by Nicolson, while the rest of the volume is as it came from Van Meteren"—whom this authority, as we have seen, supposes, but without sufficient reason, to have had a main hand in the translation as well as the printing. At all events, the book as a whole issued

in this form from the warehouse of the well-known London printer who figured so early in the sale of English Bibles.

It is worth noticing that as Coverdale's work is the first instance of the entire collection of sacred writings, printed in English, being published as a single volume, the title prefixed is that of *Biblia*. It is a relic of Latin usage, not after the manner of Tyndale, who eschewed such words, and preferred the vernacular speech of his countrymen. "Bible" was a word used so early as the time of Purvey.* Taken from Norman French, it had become thoroughly Anglicised; and it is curious to find it in Coverdale's title-page, in a secondary position, as an explanation of *Biblia*, the more ecclesiastical term, because a Latin one. It may be mentioned here that in Coverdale's Bible Hebrew letters are introduced, forming the name Jehovah; and that Hebrew characters also are prefixed to divisions in the Book of Lamentations.

Coverdale embraces the Apocrypha in his translation, and places the Epistle to the Hebrews between the Third Epistle of John and the Epistle of James, James being followed by Jude and the Apocalypse. Though we find summaries at the beginning of books, there are no headings to each chapter, nor are chapters separated into verses; explanatory notes are also absent.

The blocks used in the title and in the body of the book at Antwerp, it is believed by Mr. Stevens, all passed into the possession of Nicolson, and can be traced in many books for many years in England. "Nicolson not only sold off this original edition in 1535 and 1536, but he immediately printed two other editions in English type,

* See page 45.

the one in folio and the other in quarto, both bearing the date of 1537, though probably printed mostly in 1536.”*

The advertisement in the title-page of the first edition, “translated out of Douche and Latyn,” expressed a fact. His Bible is a secondary translation, based on the Swiss Zurich version of Zwingli and Leo Juda, 1524, 1529. He also made use of the Vulgate and of Luther. “The Pentateuch,” says Professor Westcott, “unless a partial examination has misled me, may be fairly described as the Zurich translation rendered into English by the help of Tyndale, with constant reference to Luther, Paginus, and the Vulgate.”

Some of the renderings in this Bible are curious; for example, Gen. viii. 11, “She bare it [an olive leaf] in hir nebb,” a Scotch expression. Judg. ix. 53, “Cast a pece of a mylstone upon Abimelechs heade and brake his brane panne;” xv. 19, “Then God opened a gome tothe in the cheke-bone, so that water wente out;” xvii. 5, “An overbody cote” for ephod. 1 Sam. xxi. 13, “His slauerynges ranne downe his beerd.” 1 Kings xxii. 34, “And shott the kyng of Israel betwene the mawe and the longes.” Psa. xci. 5, “Thou shalt not nede to be afrayed for eny bugges by night.” Jer. viii. 22, “There is no triacle in Galaad.” It is also a noteworthy fact that, although Coverdale follows Tyndale, he does not adhere to Tyndale’s method of excluding old scholastic ecclesiastical terms. He has not only the word “repentance,” but the word “penance” also; not only “elder,” but “priest;” not only “love,” but “charity.”† Amidst this inconsistency, however, he cleaves to the word “congregation,” instead of “church.”

* *Catalogue of Canton Exhibition*, p. 118.

† In Coverdale’s version, Rom. xiv. 15, we find “oharity.” In other places “love” except Jude 12, when he has “your kindness.”

What was the fate awaiting the volume?

The flattering dedication to the king, introduced into the book after its arrival in England, did not secure the royal favour. No licence was given for its circulation. Nor was it sanctioned by the spiritual, any more than the political authority of the realm. It lay open, notwithstanding the new title-page, to the censure expressed by Convocation in 1534 of all books of suspected doctrine, in the vulgar tongue, imprinted beyond the water. It came as much within the scope of ecclesiastical prohibition as did the translations of Tyndale. Moreover, about 1535, Cranmer was doing what he could to prepare for a new and authorized version, implying that such a one, at that time, did not exist. Instead of adopting Coverdale's, he arranged for executing one in England; and connected with this intention is the following amusing story.*

“ He began with the translation of the New Testament, taking an old English translation thereof [whose was this? Tyndale's or Wycliffe's?], which he divided into nine or ten parts, causing each part to be written at large in a paper book, and then to be sent to the best learned bishops and others, to the intent that they should make a perfect correction thereof. And when they had done, he required them to send back their parts, so corrected, unto him at Lambeth, by a day limited for that purpose: and the same course, no question, he took with the Old Testament. It chanced that the Acts of the Apostles were sent to Bishop Stokesley to oversee and correct. When the day came, every man had sent to Lambeth their parts corrected; only Stokesley's portion was wanting. My lord of Canterbury wrote to the bishop a letter for his part, requiring him to

* *Strype's Life of Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 48, Oxford edit.

deliver them unto the bringer his secretary. He received the archbishop's letter at Fulham, unto which he made this answer: 'I marvel what my lord of Canterbury meaneth, that thus abuseth the people in giving them liberty to read the Scriptures, which doth nothing else but infect them with heresy. I have bestowed never an hour on my portion, nor never will. And therefore my lord shall have this book again; for I will never be guilty of leading the simple people into error.' My lord of Canterbury's servant took the book, and brought the same to Lambeth unto my lord, declaring my lord of London's answer. When the archbishop had perceived that the bishop had done nothing therein, 'I marvel,' said he, 'that my lord of London is so froward that he will not do as other men do.' One Mr. Thomas Lawney stood by, and hearing my lord speak so much of the bishop's untowardness, said, 'I can tell your grace why my lord of London will not bestow any labour or pains this way. Your grace knoweth well that his portion is a piece of the New Testament. But he being persuaded that Christ had bequeathed him nothing in His Testament, thought it mere madness to bestow any labour or pain, where no gain was to be gotten. And besides this, it is the Acts of the Apostles, which were simple poor fellows, and therefore my lord of London disdained to have to do with any of them.' Whereat my lord of Canterbury, and others who stood by, could not forbear from laughter."

A different treatment from that of the first edition of Coverdale was vouchsafed to one afterwards. In 1536 Cromwell held a council; "the bishops and prelates attending—as he was come in, rose up and did obeisance unto him as their Vicar-General, and he again saluted every one in their degree, and sat down in the highest place at

the table." After a discussion on the subject of Christian peace, by the great minister of State in the king's name, they took up the question of sacraments, when Fox, Bishop of Hereford, remarked that they were commanded by his majesty "that these controversies should be determined only by the rule and judgment of the Scripture." "The lay people," he went on to observe, "the lay people do now know the Holy Scripture better than many of us; and the Germans have made the text of the Bible so plain and easy, by the Hebrew and Greek tongues, that now many things may be better understood without any glosses at all, than by all the commentaries of the Doctors. And, moreover, they have so opened these controversies by their writings, that women and children may wonder at the blindness and falsehood that have been hitherto." Then rising into a strain of real eloquence, the bishop added, "Truth is the daughter of time, and time is the mother of truth; and whatsoever is besieged of truth cannot long continue; and upon whose side truth doth stand, that ought not to be thought transitory, or that it will ever fall. All things consist not in painted eloquence, and strength, or authority: for the truth is of so great power, strength, and efficacy, that it can neither be defended with words, nor be overcome with any strength; but after she hath hidden herself long, at length she putteth up her head and appeareth, as it is written in Esdras, 'A king is strong; man is stronger; yet women be more strong: but truth excelleth all.'"^{*} This was an unanswerable argument for the circulation of the Scriptures; but, like other wise and weighty words uttered at the time, it would seem to have made very little impression; but Cromwell and Cramner, and others present, felt its force, and used such influence in the

^{*} Foxe, vol. v. p. 332.

highest quarters that an edition of Coverdale's Bible, printed by Nicolson of Southwark in 1537, "overseen and corrected," not, however, to an important extent, came out with these words,—“Set forth with the king's most gracious licence.” A wonderful step was this in the way of promoting the study of the Scriptures amongst all ranks, and involved, for the instant at least, a change in the royal ecclesiastical policy more momentous than historians generally seem to apprehend.

It must have been to the sanction of this later publication, not the edition of 1535, that Coverdale referred, when he said in a sermon at Paul's Cross, according to the testimony of Fulke, “After it was finished, and presented to King Henry VIII. of famous memory, and by him committed to divers bishops of that time to peruse, of which I remember Stephen Gardiner was one, after they had kept it long in their hands, and the king was divers times sued unto for the publication thereof, at the last, being called for by the king himself, they re-delivered the book, and being demanded by the king what they thought of the translation, they answered that there were many faults therein. ‘Well,’ said the king, ‘but are there any heresies maintained thereby?’ They answered that ‘there were no heresies that they could find.’ ‘If there be no heresies,’ said the king, ‘then, in God's name, let it go abroad among our people.’”*

If we are to trust this statement, it seems as if the first edition was submitted to the bishops, and that after their perusal of it the royal sanction was given to the second.

Though from an English press there issued this new edition of Coverdale—followed by another in 1538, and in the same year by the English New Testament, and editions of a

* Fulke's *Defence of Bible Translations*, p. 4.

Diglott Testament, exhibiting the Vulgate and English in parallel columns*—the main work of preparing and printing vernacular Scriptures for this country went on abroad; and what was done there at this time will appear in the next chapter.

* In an edition of Coverdale's Bible, by Grafton and Whitchurch, 1538, is a dedication to Cromwell, in which he laments the numerous errors which had crept into Nicolson's editions, printed in London during Coverdale's absence. A New Testament, both in Latin and English, "after the Vulgate texte, commonly called St. Jerome's, faythfully translated by Johau Hollybushe," printed in Southwark by Nicolson, appeared the same year. The English is really Coverdale's, and it answers to the first edition of Coverdale's, page for page. Like the first edition, it contains many blunders. What is meant by the name of Johan Hollybushe no one knows, that I am aware. I suspect that Coverdale had fallen out with Nicolson, and that the printer issued this book on his own account.





CHAPTER VI.

MATTHEW'S BIBLE.



“**T**HE Bible, which is all the Holy Scriptures, in which are contayned the olde and newe Testaments truely and purely translated into Englysh by Thomas Matthew. Essaye 1. Hearken to ye Heavens, and thou earth geave eare: for the Lorde speaketh, MDXXXVII.” This was the title-page of a folio volume which appeared at the date specified; and at the bottom we read in large red letters, “Set forth with the Kinges most gracyous lycence.” At the end are these words—“To the honoure and prayse of God was this Byble prynted and fynessed, in the year of our Lorde God MDXXXVII.” The book had been printed abroad, where and by whom we do not know; but

it was a publication of great consequence; its results were important, and connected with its history are some difficulties, which after much exaggeration are partially cleared up: certain particulars, however, continue unexplained. The volume demands attentive consideration.

1. On opening it, one of the first things which strikes an observer, is the collection of notes appended to the text. Wycliffe has sent forth his translation without notes. Tyndale had done the same, as respects his 8vo Testament, though he had given some in the 4to edition, and had written expositions of the Pentateuch and Jonah. Coverdale's Bible contained no comment, no gloss whatever. This new Bible, bearing the name of Matthew, in this respect exhibits a new feature. The Psalms are more fully explained than other books: and in the Apocrypha, this passage arrests attention: 2 Macc. xii., "Judge upon this place whether the opinion hath been to pray for the dead, as to be baptized for them" (1 Cor. xv.), which thing was only done to confirm the hope of the resurrection of the dead, not to deliver them from any pain. St. Paul did not allow the ceremony of christening for the dead; no more doth any place of the canonical scripture allow the ceremony of offering for the dead. Furthermore, this whole book of the Maccabees, and specially this second, is not of sufficient authority to make an article of our faith, as it is before sufficiently proved by the authority of St. Jerome in the prologue of the books called Apocrypha.

The controversial bearing of this note is sufficiently obvious; and it appears surprising when we refer to the announcement of "the Kinges most gracyous lycence."

2. For a long time, no accurate knowledge was possessed by historians as to the nature of the text. It was not care-

fully examined ; all sorts of surmises were thrown out and repeated, some originating in vague and contradictory statements, made by early writers, now utterly unworthy of criticism, because set aside by collations and comparisons of the text,—especially those of which we possess results in the scholarly works of Canon Westcott and Dr. Eadie.

It appears that the translation of the Pentateuch corresponds with that published by Tyndale. The translation from the book of Joshua to the Second Book of Chronicles inclusive, differs from any found in previously published versions. From Ezra to Malachi we have Coverdale's text, with slight alterations : this is also the case with the Apocrypha. The New Testament is taken from Tyndale's edition of 1535.* The Bible appearing under the name of Matthew may then be roughly described as consisting of two-thirds belonging to Tyndale, and one-third belonging to Coverdale. It is by no means original, and is well denominated a " composite " production.

3. Looking into the folio again, we notice the name *Thomas Matthew*, standing at full length, at the close of the dedication to Henry VIII. An exhortation to the study of the Scriptures, following this, is signed " J. R." in large capitals adorned with flourishes. At the end of the Old Testament appear, in similiarly decorated capitals, W. T. These initials occasion much perplexity. No doubt J. R. means John Rogers, and W. T., William Tyndale. But what is William Tyndale's connection with that part of the volume to which his initials are attached, seeing that very part is the work of Miles Coverdale? One might have expected to find M. C. in that place, and W. T. at the end of the Pentateuch. And how are we to dispose of the

* Westcott's *Hist.* p. 221, *et seq.* ; Eadie's *English Bible*, vol. i. p. 322.

remaining difficulty as to who is "Thomas Matthew," and in what relation does his name stand to the initials, T. R., at the end of the exhortation? We know who John Rogers was; but the question as to what person is intended by *Thomas Matthew* has created much perplexity in the minds of bibliographers. The appearance of the name of Matthew at the end of the dedication, and of the initials J. R. at the end of the exhortation, naturally conveys the idea that they point to two persons. If one individual be the author of both compositions, it seems odd that he should sign the first in one way, and the second in another. So far, then, the conclusion seems inevitable, two persons, and not one, had to do with this Bible. Thomas Matthew is in some way responsible for the dedication; and John Rogers is the writer of the exhortation. But, at this point, it must be remembered, that in the sentence pronounced on the latter before his death, he is four times called "Johannes Rogers *alias* Matthew;" and in the Council Register of Mary's reign, it is written, "John Rogers *alias* Matthew, is ordered to keep his house at Paul's." * From this circumstance it would seem as if Rogers went by the name of Matthew; † and

* Eadie's *English Bible*, vol. i. p. 313.

† There is in the British Museum a small volume entitled *The Newe Testament*, anno MDXXXIII.; underneath appears this monogram, G⁴/_{xx}H. It is well known that William Tyndale was sometimes called William Hytchins; and this circumstance, combined with the discovery of Van Meteren's connection with Bible printing, has led Mr. Stevens to adopt the following conjecture: "Mr. Francis Fry," he says, "under his No. 4, calls this edition G. H., but has hitherto been unable to explain the monogram. Our suggestion is, that the G. H. means the translator, Guillaume Hytchins, the assumed name of William Tyndale; the other letters being the initials of the printer (?) and proprietor I. v M., that is, Jacob van Meteren." The latter part of the conjecture is not so plausible as the beginning. Mr. Stevens notices that this New Testament "has recently been proved by Mr. Francis Fry, of Bristol, to be a reprint of Tyndale's last revision, the edition of 1535."

it might be inferred, looking at this alone, that Rogers and Matthew must be the same person. Moreover, the Bible that bears Matthew's name, and came to be so called, was also known as Rogers'. Looking at the contents of the volume alone, one would say Matthew and Rogers are different men; looking at the proceedings in Queen Mary's reign against the martyr, we should say the names Matthew and Rogers meant one and the same person. So the matter stands; and sweeping statements on the one side or the other, with these conflicting facts in sight, are unwarrantable. The most that I feel warranted to say is, that the *alias* can be better reconciled with the idea of Matthew being one person, and J. R. another, than the fact of the two signatures in the Bible can be reconciled with the idea of Matthew and Rogers being one and the same person. It is possible that Rogers, having had to do with a Bible bearing Matthew's name, came to be known by that appellation; not that he adopted it for any purpose of concealment or evasion; but it seems impossible that one and the same person should, in the same volume, assume two entirely different designations. As to who Thomas Matthew was, on the hypothesis of his being another man than Rogers, nobody knows. That a name should appear on the title-page of a Bible, that a Bible should pass current under that name, and that no vestige should be found of his life and history, is certainly a very strange fact; but many strange things meet us in the history of our English Bible.

4. Another peculiarity of the book is that a blank page, and the commencement of a new numbering, are found before the Book of Isaiah, and on the opposite side of the page are the initials R. G. and E. W.: about what they mean, however, there can be no dispute. They evidently

refer to Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, already printers of Coverdale's Diglotts, the first of them, as we shall presently see, employed in Bible printing afterwards. Here it is easy to say that Grafton and Whitchurch interposed, when the printing of the Bible abroad, no one knows where, had advanced as far as Solomon's Song; that they purchased what had been struck off, and made arrangements for the completion of the work, whether abroad or at home; * but such a statement rests entirely on the occurrence of certain initials in the middle of the Bible. That these printers, in *some way or other*, at that point became connected with the undertaking is, however, a reasonable conclusion.

5. We turn now to the contents of the volume. The part between the end of the Pentateuch and the beginning of Ezra is found in no previous translation, and is by both Canon Westcott and Dr. Eadie identified in substance as the work of William Tyndale. † Foxe relates that a packet of papers was sent by the martyr on the morning of his execution to his faithful friend Poyntz; and it is *supposed* they included mss. of a translation of the Old Testament, carried on beyond the Pentateuch. These, it is further *supposed*, came into the hands of Rogers, and that he employed them in that part of the version which has not been taken from the printed works of either Tyndale or Coverdale. With fragmentary translations of Jonah, and other parts of the Old Testament, which appear in Tyndale's works, Matthew's version does not correspond; but such a knowledge of Hebrew as was possessed by Tyndale is apparent in the production, and Dr. Eadie thinks no one else *could have accomplished it*. ‡ This is not a satisfactory

* Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 315. † Westcott's *Hist.*, 223; Eadie, i. 321. ‡ Eadie, i. 322.

argument; for Rogers himself was a learned man, and, if he had the mss. of Tyndale, might have added something of his own to that which had been prepared by his illustrious predecessor. At all events, it is not unlikely that Tyndale's work in this particular part was in some way incorporated by Rogers in his edition of the Bible. The New Testament in Matthew's Bible is taken from Tyndale's revised edition of 1535, not from the edition of 1534.*

One word with respect to Rogers himself. He was chaplain to an English congregation at Antwerp, and became acquainted with Tyndale during his residence in that city. His mind had been dissatisfied with the principles of Roman Catholicism, in which he had been brought up, and to which he had once been devotedly attached; but his friendship with the exile, though it must have been brief, ripened his incipient Protestantism, and made him a zealous reformer. Having been educated at Cambridge, and possessing the reputation of being a "very able linguist and general scholar," he was fitted to follow his friend in his own special path of usefulness. We shall meet with him hereafter in most distressing circumstances.

As soon as the Bible bearing the name of Matthew† was complete, Grafton and Whitchurch forwarded it to Cranmer, who expressed his delightful surprise at the sight of the

* Westcott, *Hist.* p. 233.

† Let me introduce here the words of Mr. Stevens, "The enterprising foreign citizen of Antwerp, Jacob van Meteren, who printed Coverdale's Bible, and sold the edition to Nicolson, with cuts, map, and probably the type (lost), got up and printed this Bible also, and sold the whole edition to Grafton and Whitchurch, together with the special plant thereto belonging. Rogers and Van Meteren were relatives by marriage." (*Catalogue of the Cotton Exhibition*, p. 123.) I give this simply on the authority of Mr. Stevens; I should not say more myself than that it is a plausible conjecture.

volume, and forwarded it to Cromwell. "I understand," says the archbishop afterwards, in a letter addressed to the powerful minister of state, "that your lordship, at my request, hath not only exhibited the Bible which I sent unto you to the king's majesty, but also hath obtained of his grace that the same shall be allowed, by his authority, to be bought and read within this realm."* Probably Cromwell's influence with Henry at that time had much to do with the obtaining of a royal sanction for the work, in the much-coveted words, "Set forth with the Kinges most gracyous lycence."

As so large a part of the new Bible consisted of Tyndale's translation, and as Henry could scarcely fail to be ignorant of that fact, it is the more surprising that, after condemning Tyndale's version, the king should now be found openly giving to it the sanction of his gracious licence. The *Prologue to the Romans* had been condemned separately, and was not to be easily overlooked; and the most superficial inspection would have shown the boldness of the notes with which the text was copiously furnished. He may have been glad to act independently of the bishops. But however this might be, by Cranmer's petition, by Cromwell's influence, and by Henry's authority, without any formal ecclesiastical decision, the book was given to the English people which is the foundation of the text of the present Bible. From Matthew's Bible—itself a combination of the labours of Tyndale and Coverdale—all later revisions have been successively formed.†

Just about the time when Matthew's Bible appeared, in the year 1537, there occurred, according to documents in the

* Cranmer's *Works*, Parker Society, Letter 197.

† Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 94.

State Paper Office, some curious incidents in connection with our history. "A circle of Protestants at Wincanton, in Somersetshire, wrote to Cromwell, complaining of the curate, who would not teach them, or preach to them, but 'gave his time and attention to dicing, carding, bowling, and cross waster.' In their desire for spiritual food they applied to the rector of the next parish, who had come occasionally and given them a sermon, and had taught them to read the New Testament; when suddenly, on Good Friday, the unthrifty curate entered the pulpit, where he had set no foot for years, and admonished his parishioners to give no credence to the new-fangled fellows which read the new books. 'They be like knaves and Pharisees,' he said; 'they be like a dog that gnaweth a marry-bone, and never cometh to the pith; therefore avoid their company; and if any man will preach the New Testament, if I may hear him, I am ready to fight with him incontinent;' and, 'indeed,' the petitioners said, 'he applyeth in such wise his school of fence so sore continually, that he feareth all his parishioners.' So the parish clerk at Hastings made a speech to the congregation on the faults of the translation. 'It taught heresy,' he said; 'it taught that a priest might have a wife according to God's law. He trusted to see the day that the book called the Bible, and all its maintainers and upholders, should be brent.'"*

These circumstances indicate the welcome given to the Scriptures on the one hand, and the opposition made to them on the other; whilst all this was going on, demands for copies of the English version increased.

In the year 1538 a New Testament in Latin and English appeared under the name of John Hollybush,

* Froude's *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 237.

though the English version is Coverdale's, printed page for page from Nicolson's second edition; and in the same year an edition in Latin and English was published by Grafton and Whitchurch, containing corrections by Coverdale, of an edition published by Nicolson during Coverdale's absence from London. It contains a dedication to Cromwell, in which Coverdale deploras that so many errors existed in that edition.

In the year 1539 another edition of Matthew's Bible came forth, from the press of Byddell and Bartlett, at the sign of the "Sun," in Fleet Street, edited by Richard Taverner, who dedicated the volume to the king, remarking that his grace never did anything more acceptable to God than the act of licensing the most sacred Bible, containing the "unspotted and holy word of God." He informs us, in his preface, that as the printers were desirous to have the Bible come forth as faultless as the shortness of the time for the recognising of the same would permit, they desired him to overlook and peruse the whole copy, and amend the same according to the true examplers, which, according to his talent, he had gladly done. He introduces a running commentary in the text, thus departing from a course previously pursued: this is the . . . more remarkable as he was a layman; and it affords an instance of an unordained member of the Church of England undertaking not only to translate the Scriptures, but to give an interpretation of their meaning. Taverner was a strange genius. He was of the Inner Temple, where he loved to display his pedantry by citing the law in Greek. In the reign of Edward he became a preacher by royal licence, and sometimes appeared in the pulpit dressed in a damask gown, velvet bonnet, and gold chain, in which uncanonical attire he delivered a discourse before the youthful sovereign! In

the reign of Elizabeth he resumed his pulpit exercises, and when High Sheriff of Oxfordshire he preached before the university, wearing, in addition to his other unclerical dress, a sword by his side. "Surely," says Fuller, "preaching now ran very low, if it be true what I read, that Mr. Tavernour, of Water Eaton, in Oxfordshire, High Sheriff of the county, gave the scholars a sermon in St. Mary's, with his gold chain about his neck, and his sword by his side, beginning with these words, 'Arriving at the Mount of St. Mary's, in the stony stage where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits, baked in the oven of charity, and carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation.'"*

The vanity and eccentricity of the editor might have been thought to disqualify him for the office he undertook, but the dedication is worthy of a wise and prudent and honest man, and favourably contrasts with that which proceeded from the pen of Coverdale. He truly said, "This one thing I dare full well affirm, that amongst all your majesty's discoverings, your highness never did anything more acceptable unto God, more profitable to the advancement of true Christianity, more unpleasant to the enemies of the same and also your grace's enemies, than when your majesty licensed and willed the most sacred Bible, containing the unspotted and lovely word of God, to be in the English tongue set forth to your highness's subjects."

* Fuller's *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 459.



CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT BIBLE.



CROMWELL, Earl of Essex, for some time the chief minister and favourite of Henry,—with all his ambition and pride, his unprincipled conduct, and his reckless obstinacy,—was a man who professed, and perhaps felt, veneration for the Scriptures. It is said that in his youth, as he was travelling from Rome to England, he made Erasmus's Testament his constant companion, relieving the tediousness of his journey by committing to memory the whole of the translation. It might be that impressions of the beauty and worth of the Scriptures, derived from his studies on that journey, led to the favour which this distinguished statesman manifested towards their translation in the days of his palmy power. Certainly, to Cromwell is to be attributed the patronage, the pecuniary assistance, and the obtaining of a royal sanction, which enabled Coverdale to execute the task of bringing through the press the Great Bible in the years 1538 and 1539. Coverdale

seems to have been an agent of Cromwell in many ways—to have transacted a good deal of business for him abroad, and in the Biblical undertaking now to be described, acted under his control and direction.

Paris was the place chosen for printing the work, because the best paper and presswork might be secured there. Grafton went over to Paris to superintend the mechanical part of the business, while Coverdale acted as editor and corrector. On the 23rd June, 1538, they wrote to Cromwell, in terms indicating that the enterprise in which they were embarked was really that of Henry's influential minister. "We be entered into *your* work of the Bible, whereof (according to our most bounden duty) we have here sent unto your lordship two ensamples, one in parchment, wherein we intend to print one for the king's grace, and another for your lordship, and the second in paper, whereof all the rest shall be made."* Hence we see that the workmen were, in the midsummer of 1538, engaged on the printing of the Bible in the city of Paris, under the superintendence of Coverdale, with Cromwell as responsible author of the undertaking. Coverdale and Grafton in the same communication sought "favourable letters" from Henry's prime minister to the English ambassador in Paris, securing his protection—a request which was speedily granted. The Bishop of Winchester was then the representative of the English court in France, but he was shortly after succeeded by Bonner, Archdeacon of Leicester, who figures in the sanguinary annals of Mary's reign. Cromwell wrote to Bonner, and directed him to aid Coverdale in his work; and it is but little in keeping with the subsequent history of the unhappy man to find him most attentive to Cromwell's sug-

* This letter is printed in the appendix to *Memorials of Coverdale*, p. 195 also in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 575.

gestions, and most assiduous in his friendship towards the printers, even going so far as to invite them to his table, and condescending to visit them in return. With the countenance of the English ambassador, and the express licence of the King of France, obtained by a letter from Henry, no doubt, at the solicitation of Cromwell, the translator and his printers proceeded rapidly with their work, and were anticipating the successful completion of their toils, when indications of peril made their appearance ; and in the month of December the Inquisition issued an order, prohibiting them, under canonical pains, to print the said Bible.

At first it might seem as if the hand of ecclesiastical despotism snatched away the permission ceded by the civil power ; inasmuch as the history of Roman Catholic countries testifies to its having often been the case, that the royal prerogative grew pale before the assumptions of the Church of Rome ; but the fact is that in the present instance, a proviso was added to the licence, forbidding the publication of any private and unauthorized opinions, and such a clause would invite, rather than otherwise, the interference of the Inquisition.* The parties engaged upon the Great Bible were summoned to appear before the inquisitors, but very naturally they sought to escape from the power of that court. Having before the outburst of the storm perceived the gathering clouds, they had forwarded to England all the sheets of the book as far as they had gone, and now they would gladly have saved the remainder worked off since ; but this they found impossible ; therefore, seeking their own safety, they hastily decamped from Paris, leaving the residue of the printed sheets to be seized by the harpies of the Inquisition. Some of these were burned, but “ four great dry fats full ” of

* The licence is in Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 756, Oxford edit.

the obnoxious bales were sold to a haberdasher "to lap his caps in." The Englishmen afterwards, by the encouragement of Cromwell, returned to Paris, and happily succeeded in recovering the presses, types, and workmen they had employed there. Grafton, thus well furnished, set up business in London.

In the next year, 1539, he proceeded to complete some copies which had been sent over to Cromwell; and at length the Bible appeared with the colophon, "Fynisshed Apryle, anno m.cccc.xxxix." Grafton also tried to recover the four fats full which had been sold to the haberdasher. He earnestly solicited Bonner to use his influence in the matter; but with no success. Bonner was on the point of leaving France. From the archdeaconry of Leicester he had been promoted to the see of Hereford, and now he was translated to London. "Master Grafton," said he to the English printer when they parted at Paris, "so it is that the king's most excellent majesty hath by his gracious gift presented me to the bishopric of London; for the which I am sorry, for if it would have pleased his grace, I could have been well content to have kept mine old bishopric of Hereford." Grafton replied, "I am right glad to hear of it, and so I am sure will be a great number of the city of London, for though they yet know you not, yet they have heard so much goodness of you from hence, as no doubt they will heartily rejoice of your placing." "I pray God," rejoined the bishop elect, "I may do that may content them. And to tell you, Master Grafton, before God, the greatest fault that ever I found in Stokesley was for vexing and troubling of poor men, as Lobley the bookbinder and other, for having the Scripture in English; and, God willing, he did not so much hinder it, but I will as much further it; and I will have of your Bibles

set up in the church of Paul's, at the least, in sundry places six of them, and I will pay you honestly for them, and give hearty thanks."* One would hope that Bonner was sincere in what he said;† and if so, how would it have startled him to have been told that the time was coming when he would far surpass Stokesley in the persecution of Bible readers! After Bonner had left Paris, Grafton obtained the remaining sheets in the haberdasher's possession, returned to London with them, and forthwith completed more copies.

This Bible consists of a revision of Matthew's version. Several variations from it occur. Cranmer certainly had nothing to do with the book. His name is not mentioned in the correspondence between Cromwell and Coverdale on the subject. The latter must have been the person who revised the translation.

The editor speaks of following "the standing text of the Hebrew, with the interpretation of the Chaldaic and Greek"—an expression which points to the Chaldaic paraphrase and the Septuagint as having been consulted in the work. But, whatever use might be made of the original in this new revision, it is stated by one who has carefully examined the subject,† that Münster's Latin version of the Old Testament with the Hebrew text was largely employed in the course of the work.

The New Testament was also revised, Erasmus being employed here as Münster was for the Old Testament; and an apparatus was constructed for indicating diversity of readings, "with such annotations in another table, as shall doubtless elucidate and clear the same, as well without any singularity of opinions as all checkings and reproofs." The

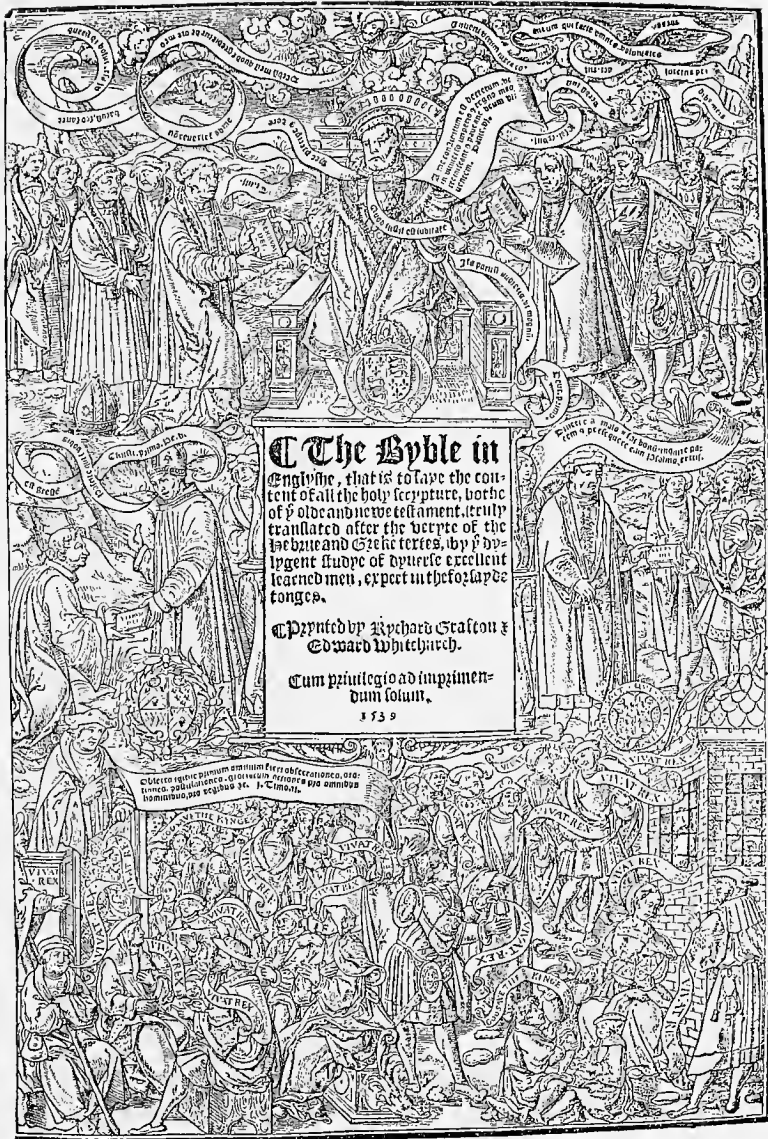
* Foxe, vol. v. p. 412.

† Westcott, *History*, p. 236.

distinctive marks were introduced into the Bible as it came from the press; but the annotations themselves were deferred, and never made their appearance.

The book is a goodly folio, with this title, "The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the Holy Scrypture, bothe of ye olde and newe testament, truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dilygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges. Prynted by Rychard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum. 1539."

The designs surrounding this title form a choice specimen of the wood engravings of the day. Above sits Henry, enthroned in state, with bishops on the right hand and temporal peers on the left, to both of whom he gives a volume labelled "Verbum Dei." Over him, in the midst of clouds, appears the Lord Jesus, with the monarch kneeling, his crown laid in the dust. On one side, below the title, appears the Primate Cranmer, and on the other the Lord Secretary Cromwell, employed in distributing the Scriptures. In one corner, at the foot of the page, is a sketch of a preacher, who is supposed to be delivering a discourse from 1 Tim. ii., on the duty of praying for kings, while the congregation shout "Vivat Rex," or "God save the king," indicated by labels flowing from their lips; in the other corner is a prison, with culprits peeping through the barred windows, and a concourse of people outside saluting them with the same cries as those of the neighbouring congregation. The motto of the order of the Garter is inscribed above. It is a fact too important to be overlooked, that in the Great Bible we find there are not any notes, although some were intended to appear. Coverdale, in fact, as general editor, now, as he



COPY OF THE HOLBEIN BORDER IN THE GREAT BIBLE OF 1539.

had done before, presented to his countrymen the volume of inspired truth to speak for itself.

The master of the undertaking took measures for securing the extensive sale and use of the volume as soon as it was published. Certain injunctions to the clergy are preserved, requiring them before the next Christmas to provide "one boke of the whole Bible of the *largest* volume in English to be set up in the churches." *

From its size it came to be called the *Great Bible*, the name by which it is generally known, and to which it is seen to have an indisputable title, when the large goodly folio is compared with copies of earlier editions.

The date of the injunctions is 1538; but as the year did not end till March (1539, New Style), the next Christmas might be in this last year, leaving ample time, after the completion of the book in April, for the clergy to procure copies of it before the ensuing Christmas. A royal declaration was also issued about the same date, stating his majesty's zeal for the setting forth of God's Word, and his pleasure that the translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue should be taught and declared by the clergy.† But, strangely enough, the people were warned against forming a judgment for themselves of the meaning of the Divine oracles—they were to have recourse to learned men, authorized to preach and declare the same. A singular inconsistency,—to give the Bible to a man, and yet forbid his using his own faculties for ascertaining what were the truths it contained—to tantalize inquisitive mortals by placing before them the means of gratifying their curiosity, and then to forbid their employing such means! The inconsistency in the royal declaration,

* The injunctions are given in Burnet's *Hist. of the Ref.* vol. ii. p. 260.

† Strype's *Life of Cranmer*, p. 65.

however, may be accounted for by supposing that it was by Cromwell's solicitation that Henry granted the use of the Bible, while the monarch was still himself disposed to keep the people under the yoke of human authority in matters of religion. He would not comply with his favourite's request without putting into the declaration the caveat just noticed. Still it was a great thing to permit the use of the Scriptures at all. It was the first time that such a measure of liberty had been granted since the love of Scripture study had been awakened in the souls of the English people. This sheathing of the sword of persecution would have delighted Tyndale, and did delight Coverdale. Grateful must the latter have been to his old patron, Cromwell, for his efforts in this matter; and surely he must have lamented that a man who showed such sincere zeal for the circulation of the Bible should be so practically unmindful of its righteous and merciful precepts!

What Strype says of the Bible in 1538 may be applied here. With what joy it was received, not only among the learned, and those noted for loving the Reformation, "but generally all England over, by the vulgar and common people, and with what greediness God's Word was read, and what resort to places where the reading of it was. Everybody that could, bought the book or busily read it, or got others to read it to them, if they could not themselves; and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose, and even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the Holy Scriptures read," when Scripture reading was allowed in 1538.

Several poor men in the town of Chelmsford bought the New Testament, and read it on Sundays to their neighbours gathered round them "at the lower end of the church." A



lad named William Maldon joined the listeners, much to his father's displeasure; whereupon he obtained a copy for himself, and to "conceal it, laid it under the bed straw, to read it at convenient times." One night he and his mother had a conversation on the subject of kneeling before a crucifix. He pronounced it to be a breach of the commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, nor bow down to it, nor worship it;" and when his father heard of this, he went into his chamber, and took him out of bed by his hair, and whipped him unmercifully. "And when the young man bore this beating, as he related, with a kind of joy, considering it was for Christ's sake, and shed not a tear, his father, seeing that, was more enraged, and ran down and fetched a halter, and put it about his neck, saying he would hang him."*

In the month of April, 1540, another edition of the Bible was issued from the press of Edward Whitchurch, with a colophon, "Fynished in Apryl." This Bible had a preface by Cranmer; and an examination of the volume shows that the version had been revised, though it is substantially the same as in the Great Bible. I have noticed several variations in the Book of Isaiah, and am surprised that it should have been so commonly confounded with the Great Bible of 1539. Canon Westcott has pointed out this strange confusion, and the distinction between the two editions is now an established fact. Another edition came out in July, 1540; and yet another in the November of the same year. Three more were issued in 1541. "These six editions all have Cranmer's prologue, but the third and fifth bear the names of Tunstall and Heath upon the title-page, who are said to have 'overseen and perused' the translation at the commandment of the King's Highness." "The edition of November, 1540, goes back from

* Strype's *Life of Cranmer*, p. 91, Oxford edit.

the text of April, 1540, to that of 1539, so that the edition of April, 1540, exhibits the greatest approximation to Münster." * The revision in the new edition of Cranmer's Bible indicates a fresh use of Erasmus and the Vulgate ; and, grouping these Bibles together, a distinction is to be carefully made between them and the Great Bible of 1539. Those of 1540 and the following year are the true Cranmer Bibles.

With reference to Cuthbert, Bishop of Durham, whose name appears, with that of Nicholas, Bishop of Rochester, on the title-pages of 1541, it should be remembered that he was no other than Tunstall, once Bishop of London, who had shown himself such a stern enemy to Tyndale and his Testament. It is remarkable what an effect the royal will had on some of the bishops, who would one day very obsequiously persecute people for reading the Bible, and another, when a gust of royal favour blew in the opposite direction, would encourage them to peruse the previously proscribed volume. The Bishop of Durham could not be ignorant whose version substantially he was sanctioning with his own name. Moreover, it is affirmed in *The Supplication of Poor Commons*, that he and his colleague Nicholas, of Rochester, "when they saw the world somewhat like to swing on the other side," denied that they had ever meddled with the book, and called upon the printers to leave out their names on the title-page !

That title-page, by the way, bears a significant token of the changed fate and fortune of the man who had employed his great power in promoting the translation and spread of the Scriptures. Cromwell's arms were emblazoned on a shield in the title-page of the Great Bible, but in the edition of 1541 that shield is blank. The star of the favourite of

* Westcott, *Hist. Eng. Bible*, pp. 101, 251.

Henry, so long in the political ascendant, had fallen. His own nefarious deeds, and his master's caprice, had brought him down from his proud elevation to the dust and the block. On the 28th July he was beheaded on Tower Hill.

Among the many glaring inconsistencies and strange mutations of those exciting times is the example of Bonner, who now performed his old promise to Grafton, and set up the Bibles in St. Paul's, though he was then beginning his career as a persecutor. But still the Bible reading in St. Paul's—not the cathedral of Sir Christopher Wren, but a mediæval Gothic edifice, with pointed arches and mullioned windows—not a building preserved from profane intrusion, but one used as a public walk, where people passed to and fro all the day long—the group gathering round the book chained to a desk by one of the pillars, while some professor of the new learning read its contents to a large listening throng—is a beautiful fact in the story of the day; and, whatever might be Bonner's motive, let thanks be given him for fulfilling his promise. Grafton, if he walked through the aisles, would stop, with no little interest, to look at his own printed book, fastened in a corner, and to listen to, not only the reader, but also to the comments made by the auditors.

Augustine, in his comment on the passage, "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's," fancies that the eagle, when grown old, has an incrustation on its beak, which prevents it from taking aliment till it chafes itself against a rock, and rubs off the excrescence, when returning to its food and eating with avidity, it restores its vigour and renews its plumage; then spreading out its wings, it soars upwards in its congenial element as one risen from the dead. This strange notion supplies no unapt illustration of the state of the Church of Christ in the sixteenth century, as indicated by the

Bible reading in St. Paul's. Long debarred of its spiritual food, because its mouth had been sealed up by spiritual despotism, the true Church now liberated itself from bondage—once more tasted the good Word of God, and renewing its strength like an eagle, rose toward heaven with shining plumage and a steady wing.

What is very remarkable, the proclamation of May, 1541, in reference to Bible reading, actually complained that many English towns had neglected their duty, and had not provided copies, in consequence of which the command to furnish them is repeated, and the curate and inhabitants remaining disobedient were threatened with a penalty of forty shillings for every month during which the book should be wanting. The proclamation fixed the price of the Great Bible at a sum not exceeding ten shillings unbound, and twelve shillings "well and sufficiently bound, trimmed, and clasped."*

If in some places the Scriptures were neglected, in others, people having tasted of them, and their relish for the contents being thereby increased, they craved more and more the perusal of existing translations; and therefore some of the old Church party, with a view to neutralize the effect of a royal permission, as far as it went, condemned existing translations, and sought to supply one of their own, better suited to their purpose.

A meeting of Convocation was held in February, 1542, when we find Archbishop Crammer landing in his barge at St. Paul's Wharf, and thence proceeding on foot, with the cross carried before him, into the choir of St. Paul's. To the assembled clergy Gardiner, the same man who was ambassador at Paris before Bonner, and at Cromwell's request

* Burnet's *Reformation Records*, c. iii., No. 24.

favoured Coverdale—a remarkable instance of these men changing sides in the course of their history—proposed that the New Testament should be revised, and that certain *majestic* words in the Latin Vulgate should be transferred to the new version. Fuller gives a list of high-sounding terms, and adds, “Gardiner’s design plainly appeared in stickling for the preserving of so many Latin words to obscure the Scripture; who, though wanting power to keep the light of the Word from shining, sought out of policy to put it into a dark lantern; contrary to the constant practice of God in Scripture, leveling high, hard expressions to the capacity of the meanest.”* Cranmer, however, defeated the project, and no further revision was made in Henry’s reign.

But the tide was turning. Cromwell was gone, Cranmer had not the firmness of character and the power over Henry which the former possessed, and the monarch soon relapsed into his enmity against the general use of the Bible. His submissive Parliament, in the year 1543, passed an Act prohibiting the use of Tyndale’s translation, and commanding that the annotations and preambles in all other Bibles should be destroyed; nor was any one belonging to the class of apprentices, artificers, journeymen, servants, husbandmen, and labourers, to be permitted to read the Old or New Testament at all, either in public or private.

Bibles not of Tyndale’s translation, provided all annotations and preambles were cancelled, would seem, according to the letter of the Act, to have been allowed; but as the case stood with regard to printed versions, they all, more or less, contained the work of the deceased exile, so that it is difficult to say what construction was to be put upon the new statute.

Perhaps the Act did not interfere with the order made

* *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 108.

by Convocation in 1542, that, "every Sunday and holyday throughout the year, the curate of every parish church, after the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat*, should openly read to the people one chapter of the New Testament in English, without exposition," and when the course was ended, that he was to commence another course of reading in the Old Testament.*

No doubt the privilege of reading the Bible was often abused. Ignorant people misunderstood it, conceited people misinterpreted it, controversial people made it a subject of contention, and profane people turned it into ridicule. Henry complained that the book was "disputed, rhymed, sung, and jangled in every alehouse and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same." All this, of course, would be turned to account by those who had from the beginning opposed the circulation of English versions; and Henry, after having given his gracious licence to Coverdale's as well as Matthew's and the Great Bible, in his last days put a fresh restriction on the religious liberty of his subjects. In 1546 he issued a new proclamation, prohibiting expressly the version of Coverdale as well as that of Tyndale, and also "*any other*" than was "*permitted*" by the Act of 1543; but, with the obscurity of meaning which marked that strange page of our statute book, whatever favourable construction might be put upon it by a reader of any version not expressly that of Tyndale or Coverdale, it is obvious that such a reader exposed himself to the peril of a far different interpretation of the ambiguous law. Nobody could safely read any English Bible whatever, with that proclamation hanging over his head.

The Act and the proclamation together were engines of

* Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. p. 581, Oxford edit.

persecution capable of being extensively applied by inimical lawyers ; but the monarch was not long spared to witness the effect of his proceedings, for on the 25th of January, 1547, the Great Disposer of life and death summoned him to another world.

An episode in Henry's reign connected, not with the translation, but with the use of the Scriptures, is too interesting to be passed over.

John Marbeck was organist of the royal chapel, Windsor, then in all the freshness of its beautiful Tudor architecture. The groined roof and the perpendicular arches often rung with the music of his chants and responses—their echoes still linger in our cathedral services. The Book of Common Prayer noted by him was printed in 1550 by Richard Grafton ; but his most noticeable employment here consisted in leading the way towards an humble but useful walk of Biblical literature, the compilation of an English concordance. His story, as related by Foxe, also throws light on two points—first, the jealousy felt with respect to Bible reading, and secondly, the habit of concluding that any Bible reader was a heretic.

Commissioners appointed to look after forbidden books came to Windsor the Thursday before Palm Sunday, 1543, and began their work just before midnight. Marbeck was a suspected person, and he was one of those who were apprehended. Arraigned before Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, he was asked, "Dost thou know wherefore thou art sent for?" "No," said the accused. His attention was directed to some quires of paper lying on the table, containing part of a concordance translated out of Latin into English ; and the bishop proceeded to say that a concordance was for the help of a preacher, and that "if such a book should go forth in

English it would destroy the Latin tongue." Marbeck, according to Foxe, was sent to the Marshalsea, as it would appear from the story, not because he was an accused heretic, but in order that the Church authorities might gather from him evidence relative to certain Windsor people who were strongly suspected of heresy. But the organist declined to say anything, and his silence was construed into a proof of sympathy with heretical neighbours. Gardiner is represented as using violent language, and urging the improbability of Marbeck's preparing a concordance without the help of others. "Truly, my lord," said Marbeck, "I cannot tell in what part your lordship doth take it, but howsoever it be, I will not deny but I did it without the help of any man, save God alone." "Say what thou wilt," rejoined the prelate; "except God Himself would come down from heaven and tell me so, I would not believe it!" And so, going forth to a window where two great Bibles lay upon a cushion, the one in Latin, the other in English, he called Marbeck to him, and pointing his finger to a place in the Latin Bible, said, "Canst thou English this sentence?" "Nay, my lord, thow I be not so cunning to give it a perfect English, but I can fetch out the English thereof in the English Bible." The story is oddly told, and much of it is unintelligible.

Renewed endeavours to obtain from Marbeck evidence against his friends were in vain, and his refusal greatly exasperated his persecutors. The Bishop of Winchester now plainly accused him as a great heretic, because he had read more Scripture than any man in the realm. Five examinations of the Windsor organist are recorded, and in one of them, before the Bishop of Salisbury, he thus describes how he worked at his concordance. "When Thomas Matthew's Bible came first in print, I was much desirous

to have one of them ; and being a poor man, not able to buy one of them, I determined with myself to borrow one amongst my friends, and to write it forth. And when I had written out the five books of Moses in fair great paper, and was entered into the Book of Joshua, my friend Master Turner (of Magdalen College, Oxford, and afterwards of Windsor) chanced to steal upon me unawares, and seeing me writing out the Bible, asked me what I meant thereby ; and when I had told him the cause, ' Tush ! ' quoth he, ' thou goest about a vain and tedious labour. But this were a profitable work for thee, to set out a concordance in English.' ' A concordance,' said I, ' what is that ? ' Then he told me it was a book to find out any word in the whole Bible by the letter, and that there was such an one in Latin already. Then I told him I had no learning to go about such a thing. ' Enough,' said he, ' for that matter, for it requireth not so much learning as diligence ; and seeing thou art so painful a man, and one that cannot be unoccupied, it were a good exercise for thee.' And this, my lord, is all the instruction that ever I had, before or after, of any man." At last Marbeck came to be indicted as a heretic, on the ground that he had spoken against the mass, and being found guilty was condemned to be burnt ; but he escaped the flames through the intercession of a friend.* Three Windsor men, however, Pearson, Testwood, and Felmer, accused with him, were consumed to ashes in that part of the park which lies under the North Terrace of the Castle, near the spot where stands the South-Western Railway Station.

* Foxe, v. pp. 474-494.



CHAPTER VIII.

EDWARD THE SIXTH'S REIGN.



ENRY VIII. was buried on 16th February, 1547, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, with all the pomp characteristic of that pageant-loving age, and with many of the rites and ceremonies of Popery; on the Sunday after, young Edward was crowned in the Abbey of Westminster. It has often been said that when the royal insignia were presented to the boyish monarch, and he saw the three swords borne in state on such occasions, he asked for a *fourth*. Some one, not catching the idea, inquired what his majesty meant; when he replied, "The Bible; that book is the sword of the Spirit, and to be preferred before these swords. That ought, in all right, to govern us, who use them for the people's safety by God's appointment. Without that sword we are nothing, we can do nothing, we have no power; from that we are what we are this day; from that we receive whatsoever it is that we

at this present do assume. He that rules without it is not to be called God's minister or a king. Under that we ought to live, to fight, to govern the people, and to perform all our affairs. From that alone we obtain all power and virtue, grace and salvation, and whatsoever we have of Divine strength."* During the short reign of this young prince—embracing only six years and a half—men could read their Bibles without molestation; and no less than about fifty editions of the Scriptures issued from the press during that brief space.

Thirty-one out of fifty-seven English printers who plied their trade in the cities of London, Canterbury, and Worcester, and in the town of Ipswich—so greatly had the use of typography become extended—employed their presses in executing copies of the Scriptures, each selecting whatever version he chose; and it is curious to find that of Coverdale's Bible, in Edward's reign, three editions were published; of Cranmer's, seven of the whole Bible and eight of the New Testament; of Matthew's, five; of Taverner's, two; of the New Testament of Tyndale, or Matthew, there were twenty-four, fifteen of them bearing Tyndale's name. In each year there were eight issues of the Bible. That came to pass which is written, "The plowman shall

* I give these words as found in Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 22. The author connects these words with the coronation, on the authority of one "who wrote about those times," and who relates "that he heard it from credible hands." Strype gives a minute account of the coronation of Edward in his *Life of Cranmer*, book ii. c. 1, but says nothing there of the presentation of a Bible. Camden's *Remains* have been cited as an authority for the anecdote. It is related there as follows: King Edward the Sixth, when three swords were delivered at his coronation unto him as King of England, France, and Ireland, said there was yet another sword to be delivered unto him. Whereat, when the Lords marvelled, he said, I mean the sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, without which we are nothing, neither can do anything." Neither Strype nor Camden says that a Bible was presented to him.

overtake the reapers, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.”* Of all versions, Tyndale’s was the most popular.

Yet there were no editions of the Scriptures published at the royal charge or by the royal command ; people were left to themselves, to moral influence, and the guidance of God’s providence and Spirit ; and such was the result. Upon Tuesday, the 15th of November, in the House of Lords, a bill was introduced, by whom is not stated, though Cranmer was present, *for the reading of the Scriptures* ; but it never reached a second reading, nor was any such measure even hinted at throughout the reign.†

No new translation was published in the reign of Edward, except a translation of the paraphrase by Erasmus. The preparation of this book had been commenced in Henry’s reign, at the request of Queen Catherine Parr. Nicholas Udal, a distinguished scholar, and Master of Eton College, translated the Gospel of Luke. Mark was translated by Thomas Key, Registrar of Oxford. The translators of the Gospel of Matthew and the Book of Acts are unknown ; but the most remarkable circumstance connected with the volume was, that the Lady Mary—the future persecuting Queen of England—was employed on the translation of John ; “ but when she had with overpainful study and labour of writing cast her weak body into a grievous and long sickness, . . . she committed the same work to Mr. Francis Mallet.”‡ The courtly Master of Eton, Dr. Udal, takes care in the preface, which is the production of his pen, to compliment Queen Catherine and the Princess Mary on their connection with the work, by remarking, “ It was now no

* Eadie, *Hist. Eng. Bible*, vol. i. p. 423.

† *Lords’ Journals*, Anderson, vol. ii. p. 247.

‡ Lewis, p. 165.

news at all to see queens and ladies, of most high estate and progeny, instead of courtly dalliance, to embrace virtuous exercises of reading and writing, and with most earnest study, both early and late, to apply themselves to the acquiring of knowledge as well in other liberal arts and discipline, as also most especially of God and His most holy Word."* The first volume was published in 1548; the second, containing the Epistles and the Revelation, in the following year. Dr. Old, Leonard Cox, and Edmund Allen were engaged in the production of the work; Coverdale also took a part in it, for he wrote the dedication to Edward VI.; and perhaps he also translated the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles to the end of Galatians.

Coverdale's connection with the book no doubt arose from his position in Queen Catherine's household as almoner, which would bring him into frequent contact with that illustrious lady, and would be the means of commending him to her as peculiarly fitted to take part in such a work.

It appears that the archbishop contemplated a new translation of the Scriptures. Two very learned foreigners, Bucer and Fagius, were staying, in the year 1549, at Lambeth, and were informed, "as it had been a great while his pious and most earnest desire, that the Holy Bible should come abroad in the greatest exactness and true agreement with the original text, so he laid this work upon these two learned men. First, that they should give a clear, plain, and succinct interpretation of the Scripture, according to the propriety of the language. And secondly, illustrate difficult and obscure places, and reconcile those that seemed repugnant to one another. And it was his will and advice that to this end and purpose their public readings should tend. This

* Lewis, p. 164.

pious and good work by the archbishop assigned to them, they most gladly and readily undertook. For their more regularly carrying on this business they allotted to each other, by consent, their distinct tasks; Fagius, because his talent lay in the Hebrew learning, was to undertake the Old Testament, and Bucer the New.* But the scheme was frustrated, for Fagius died in the November of the year 1549; and the spirit of his friend, the amiable Bucer, followed him, in little more than a year, to the regions of perfect intelligence and undying friendship.

Coverdale's relation to Catherine Parr, as almoner in her royal household, brought him to court, and thus made the indefatigable Bible worker known to the youthful king, and placed his feet in paths of earthly honour. In 1551 he was appointed to preach in Westminster Abbey a funeral sermon for the Lord Chamberlain; and soon afterwards he rose to the bishopric of Exeter, a circumstance noticed by Peter Martyr, then at Cambridge, who wrote to Bullinger, saying that he thought nothing could tend more to promote true religion than to trust such men with the administration of Church affairs.† Coverdale was nominated by Edward on the 14th of August, 1551, and on the next day royal letters authorizing his consecration were sent to Cranmer. The poverty, however, of the bishop designate occasioned delay, as he had no means of paying the firstfruits; and it is further stated that difficulties were thrown in the way of his doing homage. Yet after all there could not have been much time lost, for on the 30th of August Coverdale was consecrated, with Scory, the elect for Rochester, and John, suffragan of Bedford, "all with their surplices and

* Strype's *Life of Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 281.

† *Memorials of Coverdale*, p. 146.

copies, and Coverdale so habited also.”* A window is opened into the domestic scenes of the good man’s life, through which it is pleasant to catch the following glimpses :

“He most worthily did perform the office committed unto him, he preached continually upon every holy day, and did read most commonly twice in the week in some one church or other within this city. He was, after the rate of his living, a great keeper of hospitality, very sober in diet, godly in life, friendly to the godly, liberal to the poor, and courteous to all men, void of pride, full of hospitality, abhorring covetousness, and an enemy to all wickedness and wicked men, whose company he shunned, and whom he would in no wise shroud or have in his house or company. His wife, a most sober, chaste, and godly matron, his house and household another church, in which was exercised all godliness and virtue, no one person being in his house which did not from time to time give an account of his faith and religion, and also did live accordingly ; and as he had a care for the good success in religion, so had he also for the direction of the government in ecclesiastical causes ; and because he was most skilful therein, neither would he be hindered from his godly studies, and be encumbered with such worldly matters, which nevertheless he would have done in all uprightness, justice, and equity, he sent to Oxford for a learned man to be his chancellor.” †

As in the days of Henry VIII., so in the days of Edward VI. complaints were made of the diversity of opinion connected with a free circulation of the vernacular Scriptures ; and once for all it may be observed that this is a fact to be expected, without implying any censure on the principle of

* Strype’s *Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 389.

† Hoker’s *Catalogue of Bishops of Exeter*.

private judgment; nor is it at all surprising, neither does it vitiate the value of freedom, that some, in the frantic joy of a new-found liberty, adopted opinions extravagant and absurd. The agitation of the human intellect by breezes of liberty could not but throw up foam on the surface of the waters; yet who but must regard this as preferable to the dead calm which existed before? The wildness of some of the sectaries alarmed the sober-minded; and Protestant rulers, because of these abuses, adopted measures in imitation of Roman Catholics. The effect of the recent change, however deplorable, was only a natural reaction against the long-established tyranny over the realms of thought. In England as well as Germany, people propounded Antinomian tenets, and affirmed that the elect have a right to the things of this world, according to their necessities. The King's council considered that such an opinion came within their jurisdiction; but, going beyond the suppression of anti-social principles, they also directed Cranmer and others to search after and examine Anabaptists, heretics, and contemners of the Common Prayer. A commission to that effect appeared in April, 1549, and again in January, 1551, when Coverdale was included amongst the commissioners.* Whether he was implicated in proceedings against certain Arians who were put to death as heretics, it is difficult to determine; but there is no reason to believe that he was more enlightened than many others of his day on the subject of toleration. The prevalent sentiment was that to burn men for false opinions was to do God service.

In Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, there is a manuscript, written by Sir John Cheke, in the reign of Edward VI., containing a new translation of the Gospel of Matthew,

which shows that there was more than one attempt made at the time to produce a new version; but it remained incomplete and unpublished. Sir John Cheke was a distinguished Greek scholar, and was preceptor to the king. I have seen the manuscript and examined part of it. It appears to be an original version; and the following is a specimen of the style, and of the spelling, when there was no fixed standard for the latter, and writers in that respect adopted all kinds of variation:

“When Jesus was boorn in beethleem, a citi of Juri in king herod’s dais, lo then y^e wisards came from th’ est parties to Jerusalem, and asked wheer the King of Jewes was y^t was new boorn. For we saw his sterr in the ’eest, and we cam to worschip him. When K. Herod herd this, he was trobled, and al Jerusale with him and he gatherd together al y^e hed priests, and scribes of y^e people and asked of them wheer Christ schold be born. And thei answerd in Bethleem of Juda, for so it is writen bi y^e propheet: And thow Bethleem of Juda, thow art no wais y^e lest among the Princes of Juda, for out of y^e schal come a ruler y^t shall feed Jsrl mi people.”*

On the death of Edward VI., in 1553, a great change came over England in reference to the Bible. A proclamation in August, 1553, prohibited the open reading of the Scriptures. When Philip and Mary, in 1554, passed in procession through the metropolis, and the citizens, in their wonted manner, adorned the streets with emblematic representations, they exhibited a picture of Henry VIII., with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other, giving the volume to his young son Edward. Brought before the Chancellor, who was Bishop

* This version has been printed under the editorehip of James Goodwin, B.D. London, 1843.

Gardiner, the unlucky artist received a violent reprimand, was called "villain and traitor," and had to daub over the book and paint a glove in its room—in doing which, as the story goes, he spoiled the king's hand, for he "wiped away a portion of the fingers withal."* Scripture texts had been painted on the walls of churches, but in October, 1554, a mandate came from Bonner, now Bishop of London, forbidding the practice, and commanding churchwardens and parishioners to "abolish and extinguish such manner of Scriptures, so that by no means they be either read or seen. If after monition this was neglected to be done, parish priests were to cause the aforesaid Scriptures to be razed, abolished, and extinguished forthwith."

In 1555 a London apprentice, found reading his Bible in Brentwood Church, was told by a priest that "it was never merry world, since the Bible came forth in English." After this he was accused of heretical opinions relative to the Lord's Supper; and on that account, not as the penalty of his Bible reading, he was condemned to the stake, and suffered death accordingly, in the village of Brentwood. "In my little pain which I shall suffer," said the youth, "which is but a short braid, Christ hath promised me, mother, a crown of joy; may you not be glad of that, mother?" She knelt down and cried, "I pray God strengthen thee, my son, to the end. Yea, I think thee as well bestowed as any child that I ever bare." †

The press now ceased to be employed in Bible printing. No new editions appeared whilst Mary occupied the throne; and in June, 1555, a proclamation appeared, forbidding the importation of works by Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Fryth, Latimer, Hooper, and others.

* Eadie, vol. i. p. 427.

† Foxe, vol. vi. pp. 723, 727.

Amongst the martyrs of Queen Mary's reign were two men who have come before us in these pages, both zealous in promoting the printing and circulation of the English Bible. The first is John Rogers, who took the lead in suffering, and "bravely brake the ice." After editing Matthew's Bible, he had charge of a congregation at Wittenberg, being sufficiently acquainted with the German language for that purpose.* It is interesting to think of this Englishman residing at the head-quarters of the Saxon Reformation, walking up and down these quaint streets, and dropping in at Luther's lodgings in the Augustinian convent, or at Melancthon's house in the Main Strasse. He returned to England under Edward VI., and became Canon of St. Paul's and a lecturer on divinity, holding at the same time the vicarage of St. Sepulchre. Tried and condemned as an obstinate heretic in January, 1553, he suffered from the revival of Henry IV.'s Act, "*de heretico comburendo*;" and in connexion with his martyrdom one of those touching scenes occurred, which at the time, as witnessed by immense crowds, and afterwards as related in the chimney-nooks of England, did more than anything else, save the circulation of the Bible, to strengthen the Protestantism of our fathers. Rogers asked Gardiner that his wife, being a foreigner, might be allowed to visit him, "for," said he, "she hath ten children, which are hers and mine, and somewhat I would counsel her what were best for her to do." "No," replied the chancellor; "she is not thy wife. She shall not come to thee." "Then I have tired out all your charity," was the good man's meek reply. On February 4th he was led forth to execution from the walls of Newgate; on the way, probably by the corner of St. Sepulchre's Church, where the martyr had been vicar,

* Foxe, vol. vi. p. 591.

and which is just opposite the prison, stood the poor German stranger, with her children, one a babe at the mother's breast. The sheriffs led the victim to Smithfield, priests and others chanting the *Miserere*, and "all the people," no doubt including many of his old parishioners, "wonderfully rejoicing at his constancy, with great praises and thanks to God for the same." "The fire was put under him, and when it had taken hold both upon his legs and shoulders, he, as one feeling no smart, waved his hand in the flame, as though it had been cold water. And after lifting up his hands unto heaven, not removing the same until such time as the devouring fire had consumed them, most mildly this happy martyr yielded up his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father." *

The death of Cranmer at Oxford need not be described. Community in suffering, as well as in labour, links his name to those of Tyndale and Rogers, who had preceded him, as in Bible work, so also in pains and penalties along the fiery way. And if the infirmity of the man triumphed over the heroism of the Christian, there was not wanting in the case of the faltering archbishop, at last, a strength of faith which made him more than conqueror, and illumined his exit from the world with radiance, like a broad flash bursting from the smoke which enveloped and darkened the pyre.

Coverdale narrowly escaped. Through solicitation on his behalf addressed by his brother-in-law to the King of Denmark, that monarch wrote to Queen Mary for his liberation and pardon, supposing he was in prison. She wrote back that he was not under restraint for his religion, but because of debts he owed the Crown. She again wrote

* Foxe, vol. vi. p. 611.



THE MARTYRS' MEMORIAL, OXFORD.

to her royal brother of Denmark, informing him that although Coverdale was bound to pay certain sums of money, she much more valued the gratification of his majesty's desire, and would therefore cancel the obligation. Coverdale received a passport in February, and soon reached the shores of Denmark.*

To use the words of Canon Westcott, "Tyndale, who gave us our first New Testament from the Greek, was strangled for his work at Vilvorde: Coverdale, who gave us our first printed Bible, narrowly escaped the stake by exile: Rogers, to whom we owe the newly formed basis of our present version, was the first victim of the Marian persecution: Cranmer, who has left us our Psalter, was at last blessed with a death of triumphant agony. The work was crowned by martyrdom, and the workmen laboured at it in the faith and with the love of martyrs." †

The Princess Elizabeth, in those dark days, lived at Woodstock, where she was kept in restraint, and whilst there, surrounded by sylvan scenes, she wrote in her New Testament the following quaint passage: "I walk many times into the pleasant fields of Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up goodly sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, chew them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory; that, having tasted their sweetness, I may the less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life." ‡ And in ranks of society far below that of this royal lady, many there were who loved their Bibles, and, in spite of persecution, studied the sacred volume. Individuals in secret would pore over Tyndale's Testament, and imbibe the martyr's spirit from the same source whence that

* Foxe, vol. vi. p. 706. † *History of English Bible*, p. 371.

‡ Weston's *Life of Sir T. Pope*, p. 71.

heroic man drank in his. The book was prized, concealed, and preserved for posterity.

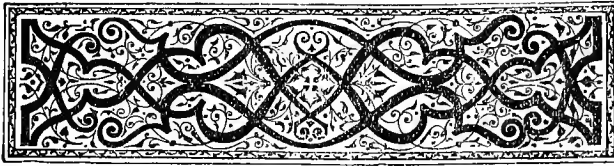
“Fierce whiskered guards that volume sought in vain,
 Enjoyed by stealth, and hid with anxious pain ;
 While all around was misery and gloom,
 This showed the boundless bliss beyond the tomb.
 Freed from the venal priest—the feudal rod,
 It led the weary sufferer’s steps to God ;
 And when his painful course on earth was run,
 This, his chief wealth, descended to his son.”

Nor were little congregations wanting, who here and there, in houses and fields, secretly gathered together to hear the reading of the Word. One, at Islington, is specially noticed by Foxe ; and on the graphic pages of the Protestant chronicle we have a vivid picture of a pious band on the borders of St. John’s Wood, on the morning of May-day, when, as their neighbours were busy with rural games, and were dancing round the pole on the village green, they were employed in listening to the Scriptures read by one of their number, and worshipping with primitive simplicity the Father of spirits ; till the constables, with their bills, approached the circle sitting under the trees, and commanded them to follow, upon which they were led to the magistrate’s house, and most of them committed to prison. Soon after, thirteen of the number were consigned to the flames on charges of heresy.* On reading the examinations of these confessors and martyrs, one is forcibly struck with their intelligent views of religion, their extensive acquaintance with theology derived from the study of the Bible, their remembrance of Scripture texts, and their sagacity in meeting the objections of persecutors. Often were the learned doctors of Rome overcome in controversy with

* Foxe, vol. viii. p. 468.

these simple-hearted persons, who had no learning but what they had derived from the oracles of inspired wisdom. It was shown that a sound and thorough knowledge of the Bible is more than a match for sophistries on the side of error. And the patience, constancy, and joy of these Bible-taught martyrs demonstrated the soul-sustaining power of Bible truths, and read a lesson for all generations, directing us to the study of Scripture as the secret of spiritual strength, hope, and consolation.





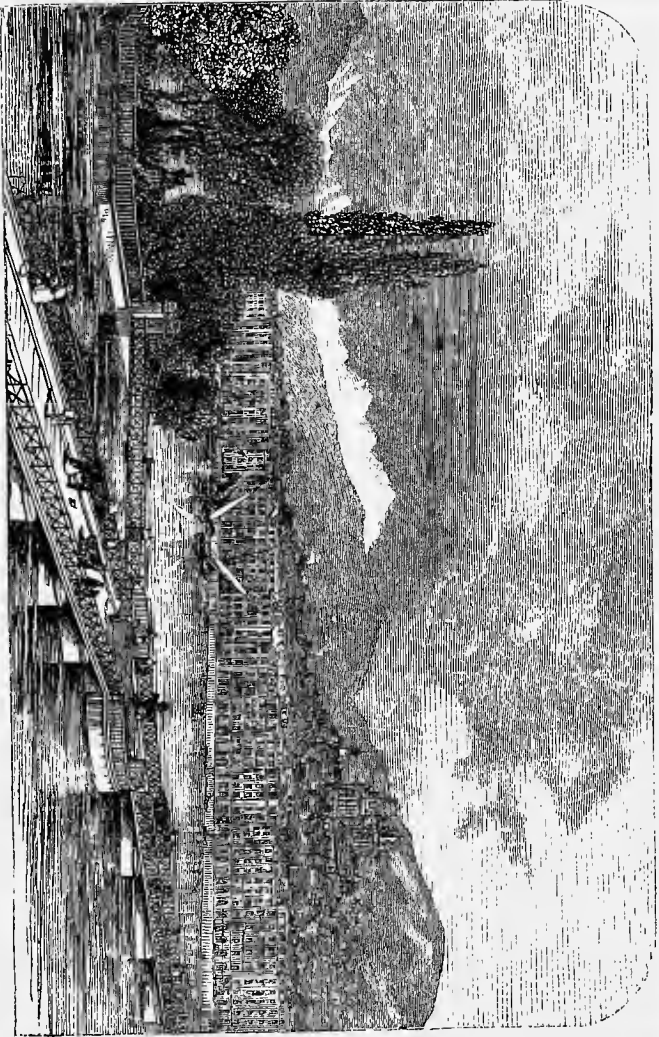
CHAPTER IX.

THE GENEVA VERSION.



ENEVA is a name symbolical of the Reformation. It stands opposed to Rome, which embodies the idea of papal despotism. The far-famed city on the shores of Lake Lemman was the home of Calvin and Beza. There they studied, preached, and sent forth their writings, rendering the city a source of light, whose rays, scattered far and wide, pierced the darkness of Europe. Many eyes were turned to that spot in the middle of the sixteenth century; many sought instruction from the master spirits there.

Intimately is Geneva connected with the history of our English Bible. To exiles there located was England indebted for the most popular translation in the sixteenth century, next to the work of Tyndale. A band of men, first driven from their own country by persecution, which led them to Frankfort, and then, differing from brethren there, settled in Geneva, to worship God with Puritan simplicity, according to the dictates of their conscience.



The Bible was their beloved book, and in its pages they sought a rule of faith, and a spring of consolation amidst years of exile. The more imaginative among them, as they paced the shore of the beautiful waters, which, as the sun poured down his beams, resembled a sea of glass mingled with fire, might count it no unapt emblem of Divine Revelation. As the charming scenery soothed their spirits, they might well regard it as the image of that book which, contrasted—

“ With the world we dwell in, is a thing
That warns us with its stillness to forsake
Earth’s troubled waters for a purer spring.”

Amongst the exiles were Miles Coverdale, William Whittingham, Thomas Sampson, Anthony Gilby, Thomas Bodley, and Thomas Bentham. They were hospitably treated by the Genevese, and were admitted to the privileges of citizenship. On the 10th of June, 1555, the city council were occupied on the subject of receiving the strangers, for in the register of that body it is reported that “the Rev. Jean Calvin has represented that certain Englishmen are desirous to repair hither for the sake of the Word of God, and asked that it may please the magistrates to open for them a church, to enable them to preach and administer the sacraments. Therefore decreed that we advise the selecting of a proper place of worship for said English, and that the parties confer thereupon with Monsieur Calvin.” The Church of Marie la Neuve was finally granted for the purpose.*

William Whittingham was chosen minister of the congregation. He had been educated at Brazenose, Oxford, had been a student at Christ Church, had travelled in France,

* *Registres du Conseil*, vol. i. de 1555, fol. 102; vol. ii. fol. 17, 3c.

and had spent some years at Orleans. There he married Catherine, daughter of Lewis Jaquemayne, and sister to the wife of John Calvin.* Afterwards he is found at Frankfort, taking part in the unhappy controversies there; and as he adhered to the Puritan side of the question, he accompanied those with whom he agreed to the city of Geneva.

In the year 1557 there was published "The Newe Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, conferred diligently with the Greke and best approved translations—with the arguments as wel before the chapters, as for every boke and epistle, also diuersities of readings, and moste proffitable annotations of all harde places: wherunto is added a copious table. At Geneva, printed by Conrad Badius MDLVII." Whittingham was the man who prepared this work. It is plain from the address to the reader that it is the work of one man, though it has been strangely confounded with the whole Bible which followed, and which was the united production of several persons. Whittingham has been generally mentioned as one of the authors of the work; and as there certainly was not more than one, and he was an excellent scholar, fitted for the undertaking, and certainly a leading man in preparing the Genevan Bible, I think it most likely that he was the person who rendered this valuable service to the Church of God. His pastoral character would well account for his undertaking the labour, and would agree with what is said in the preface, of the translation being "designed for the simple lambs in the fold of Christ at Geneva, the place where God had appointed them to dwell."

* Brown Willis quotes from Whittingham's tomb the inscription: "Mariti Catherinæ Sororis Johannis Calvin theologi." "This monument," says a correspondent, Mr. Edwards, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, "however, no longer exists, having been destroyed by the Scots in one of their incursions,

The Genevan Testament was published in the year 1557. An eloquent preface to it was written by John Calvin. The following is a specimen of the style in which the Genevese Reformer introduced the volume to English readers: "For this is life everlasting, to know our only true God, and Him whom He hath sent, Jesus Christ, in whom He hath appointed the beginning, midst, and end of our salvation. This is Isaac, the well-beloved Son of the Father, which was offered in sacrifice, and yet gave not place to death. This is the vigilant Shepherd, Jacob, which had so great care over the sheep which he had in keeping. This is the good and merciful Brother, Joseph, who, in his glory, was not ashamed to acknowledge His brethren, were they never so base and abject. This is the great High Priest and Bishop, Melchisedec, who made an everlasting sacrifice once for all. This is the excellent Law-maker, Moses, who writeth His law in the tables of our hearts by His Spirit. This is the faithful Captain and Guide, Joshua, to conduct us into the land of promise. This is the noble and victorious King David, smiting down with His hand all rebellious power. This is the magnificent and triumphing King Solomon, governing His kingdom in peace and prosperity. This is the strong and valiant Samson, who by His death overthrew all His enemies. And last of all, every good thing which heart can think or desire is

when the cathedral at Durham suffered. But when I was in Geneva, at the end of 1866, I spoke to Dr. D'Aubigné on the subject, and with his aid I was enabled to inspect the archives of the English exiles, which are preserved in the public library there, and I found this entry, 'William Whittingham of Chester in England, and Catherine Jaquemayne of Orleans in France, were married Nov. 15, 1556; presented a son for baptism 17th August, 1557.' His having married the sister of Calvin's wife accounts for the report commonly repeated and countenanced by the inscription on the old monument."

found in this only Jesus Christ. For He humbled Himself to exalt us ; He became servant to make us free ; He was impoverished to enrich us ; He was sold to ransom us ; He became prisoner to bail us ; He was condemned to deliver us ; He was made the curse for our blessing, an offering for sin for our righteousness ; He was disfigured to fashion us ; He died for our life. Insomuch that by Him roughness is smoothed, anger appeased, darkness lightened, unrighteousness justified, weakness strengthened, discomfort comforted, sin bridled, despite contemned, fear boldened, debt paid, labour eased, sadness made glad, mishap good-hap, hardness easiness, disorder ordered, division united, ignominy made noble, rebellion subdued, menacing menaced, ambush discovered, assaults assailed, violence oppressed, battle beaten, war foughten, vengeance punished, torment tormented, damnation damned, depth drowned, hell chained, death dead, mortality immortal, and, to be short, mercy hath swallowed all misery, and bounty hath overcome all evil." Thus did the writer, in the style of his age, exhaust the power of language in expressing his love for the Saviour, and his conceptions of Divine redemption. This many-coloured imagery was fitted to delight the Genevan exiles, and many more like-minded in our own country. It was a quaintly adorned gate, displaying the characteristic workmanship of the day, and opening its leaves to admit the student into the temple of revelation.

Tyndale's Testament is the basis of the Genevan, but Beza's translation is much used in the revision, and there are signs of the exercise of an independent judgment formed from a study of the original. Explanatory notes are introduced in the margin ; and, as might be inferred from the quarter whence they emanated, the doctrinal sentiments

expressed in them are of the Calvinistic school. The Apocrypha is omitted, and certain features in the typographical arrangement of an English version appear for the first time—the use of Roman type, the insertion italics of words to develop the meaning of the original, which italics have there no corresponding terms, and the division of chapters into verses. In this respect the Genevan follows Stephens' Greek Testament; but it exhibits them in distinct paragraphs, which is quite a new feature. The book is a very beautiful specimen of typography upon good paper.

It issued from the press while the fires were blazing in Smithfield, and found its way to England not long afterwards. A case connected with the volume, after it reached this country, is thus reported on the authority of Foxe :

“ There was a priest of some learning at Auburn, near Lincoln, who had been appointed to the place by old Longland, the bishop, Henry's confessor, in the days of Wolsey. This man, named William Living, had married, and with his wife had taken up his abode in London, where he seems to have tried to support himself, in the time of Mary, by the sale of buttons. One Cox, a spy—or, as they phrased it, a promoter—having lodged information against him, the constable and his assistants soon came, and upon examining his books, they made sure that he could not be a safe man. This happened to be in August or September, 1558, when the queen was far from being well. Among the books, Dean, the constable, had fastened his eye on one that was bound and gilt, which happened to be a work on astronomy, the *De Sphæra* of Manilius. On observing the figures, round, triangular, and quadrilateral—this was enough. Carrying this book open with him in the street,

along with its owner and his wife—'I have found him at length,' said the constable; 'and it is no marvel the queen be sick, seeing there be such conjurers in privy corners; but now, I trust, he shall conjure no more!' Delivering up both parties to Tho. Darbyshire, Bonner's relative, and the chancellor of London diocese, after ascertaining who Living was, and charging him with being a schismatic, he immediately ordered the husband to the bishop's coalhouse, and the wife afterwards to the Lollards' Tower. In conveying the former to his prison, however, the gaoler carried him first to his own house in Paternoster Row, and 'there,' says Living himself, 'he robbed me of my purse, my girdle, my Psalter, and a New Testament of Geneva.'

"Bringing his victim to the nauseous coalhouse and to the stocks, 'Put in both your legs and your hands also,' said the cruel and avaricious man, 'and except you fine with me, I will put a collar about your neck.' 'What is the fine?' it was asked. 'Forty shillings,' said the gaoler; a sum equal in value to at least twenty pounds of the present day. 'I am never able to pay it,' said Living. 'You have friends that be able,' was the reply; for well they knew how to take advantage of the generosity and sympathy of the lovers of truth. He then ordered both limbs into the stocks till supper-time, or six o'clock, when a cousin of the prisoner's wife actually paid forty pence (equal to about two pounds) to this monster in waiting for one hour's ease to partake of food! Then from seven that evening to two the next day he lay thus confined without any intermission; the man waiting, no doubt, for another fee. After this he also was carried to the Lollards' Tower, 'having the favour,' says the prisoner himself, 'to put my leg in that hole which Master John Philpot's leg was in;

and so lay all that night, nobody coming to me with either meat or drink.' Next day, however, Living was delivered on the payment of fifteen shillings for his fees. Thus, on the most moderate calculation, the imprisonment had cost a sum equal to about eleven pounds of our present money; but had this happened one year earlier, or had the queen, even now, been as lively as the man himself, he certainly would not have escaped with his life! The 'Testament,' of course, which he most of all valued, was gone.

"His partner in life had been separately handled; and one of her replies was sufficiently expressive. 'You be not ashamed,' said Dale, a promoter, 'to tell wherefore you come hither.' 'No,' replied the good woman; 'that I am not, for it is for Christ's Testament.'"*

The Genevan New Testament was in 1560 followed by a Genevan Bible. Lelong states that the chief persons employed on this work were Coverdale, Whittingham, and Gilby. He mentions also Goodman, Sampson, Cole, "and certain others," as sharing in it; and some have supposed that John Knox, who was then in Geneva, took part in the task. But a smaller number must have been employed, at least during the latter part of the work, if we are to believe what Wood says: "Whittingham with one or two more did tarry at Geneva a year and a half after Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, being resolved to go through with the work." According to their own statement, the translators were occupied "two years and more, day and night." It was completed April, 1560, so that we may conclude, however many there might be employed at first, the number was reduced to two or three at last. They appear very clearly to have been Whittingham, Gilby, and Sampson.

* Foxe, vol. viii. p. 528, abridged by Anderson, *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 306.

Thomas Sampson was educated at Oxford, and had studied in one of the inns of court. He went to Strasburg on Mary's accession; but strongly sympathizing with the Puritan party, he removed to Geneva, and united himself to the congregation there. Anthony Gilby was a Cambridge man, and fled to the Continent at the commencement of Mary's reign. He was prominent in the Frankfort disputes, which led to his removal to Geneva; and both these divines were distinguished by their learning, and their ardent zeal for the reformed faith. Coverdale, as already noticed, is sometimes mentioned as connected with them in their undertaking; but it does not appear that he was at Geneva till the end of the year 1558, which was after the translation began; and he left it again in 1559, before it was finished. Hence it is unlikely that he was one of the translators; still I cannot think it improbable that, while he tarried in the city, he would be consulted about the work, being so distinguished a veteran in this field of enterprise.

There was another person connected with the Genevan Bible, bearing a name that has long been honoured, because of the deeds of the son, though individually the father has been but little noticed. This was John Bodley, the father of the celebrated Sir Thomas, who founded at Oxford the noble library which bears his name. "In the time of Queen Mary," observes the latter, "after being cruelly threatened, and narrowly observed by those that maliced his religion, for the safety of himself and my mother (formerly Miss Joan Hone, an heiress in the hundred of Ottery St. Mary), who was wholly affected as my father, knew no way so secure, as to fly into Germany; where, after a little while, he found means to call over my mother, with all his children and family, whom he settled for a while at Wesel, in Cleveland; and

from thence we removed to the town of Frankfort. Howbeit we made no long tarriance in either of these towns, for that my father had resolved to fix his abode in the city of Geneva, where, as far as I remember, the English church consisted of some hundred members.* Thus among that band of exiles, and under Whittingham's ministry, young Bodley, the future benefactor of Oxford, and one of the noblest patrons of literature, had his early training; there too, probably, he imbibed that taste for books by which he was eminently distinguished. The expense of preparing the Genevan Bible was borne by "such as were of most ability" in Whittingham's congregation, and Bodley was one of the principal, probably by far the chief contributor; for he evidently possessed an interest in the publication of the Genevan Bible under Elizabeth, who granted a patent to him, for the term of seven years, to print it solely, or cause it to be imprinted.

Castalio, Beza, Calvin, and L. Bude, had all been working at the same mine shortly before; and the Genevan translators would be likely to avail themselves of what their brethren had accomplished. "They started indeed with a far better foundation than the French revisers, and their labours show no impatient desire for change. In the historical books they preserved in the main the old rendering, altering here and there an antiquated word or a long periphrasis. In the Hagiographa, the Prophets, and the poetic books of the Apocrypha, the changes were necessarily far more numerous. The spelling and *accentuation* of the Hebrew names in the edition of 1560, as Jaak'ob, Izhak, Rebek'ah, Josh'ua, Zebulun, Abim'elech, are slight but significant indications of a scholarly instinct."†

* Wood's *Athen. Ox.*

† Westcott, p. 275.

The version of the New Testament in the Bible of 1560 does not exactly agree with the separate Testament of 1557 : plainly it was to some degree revised ; and the Old Testament has a much better claim to be regarded as a thoroughly new revision than any other since Coverdale's. The men who prepared it were scholars, acquainted with the original ; and though they derived assistance from other versions, did not follow any of them with servility. " In all parts," says Canon Westcott, " they took the Great Bible as their basis, and corrected its text without ever substituting for it a new translation. Even where the changes are greatest the original foundation can still be traced, and the new work fairly harmonizes with the old. One chief aim of the revisers seems to have been to make the translation as nearly verbal as possible, and consequently in a great number of passages they replace the renderings of the Zurich scholars (Coverdale or Münster) by those of Pagninus. At the same time there is abundant evidence to shew that they were perfectly competent to deal independently with points of Hebrew scholarship ; and minute expressions shew that they were not indifferent to style." The Genevan Bible has been nicknamed " the *Breeches* Bible," from the occurrence of that word in Gen. iii. 7 ; but it is curious to recollect that the word *breeches* in the same verse had been used by Caxton, in the fragmentary versions he introduced into his " Golden Legend." With the knowledge of that fact, only just brought to light, the Genevan Bible loses its old appellation.

The work is dedicated to Elizabeth, who had ascended the English throne before the publication of the version ; and one regrets to find in it traces of that intolerant spirit which was so characteristic of the age. These worthy but mis-

taken men, exiles themselves through religious intolerance, called upon her majesty to take out of the way such impediments as might hurt or deform the work of reformation, animating her by an appeal to the example of Josias, "who burned in sign of detestation the idolatrous priests' bones upon their altars, and put to death the false prophets and sorcerers, to perform the words of the law of God." Strange that those who had suffered so severely from the inflictions of intolerance, and who were still in the land of exile, to which that intolerance had driven them, should have learned so little wisdom in this matter from that which they had endured! But the duty of one man conceding to another the liberty in religious profession and worship which he claims for himself is a lesson which few indeed, if any, in those days, fully understood. They confounded the Jewish theocracy with mere human governments. They thought it a duty to support what they conceived to be truth by the employment of temporal punishments; and here was their grand error, not understanding the import of our Lord's words and those of His apostles, "My kingdom is not of this world;" "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." But the Epistle to the Reader in the Genevan Bible is written in a different spirit, and breathes sentiments of universal good-will.

Amongst the comments is one on the observance of the Sabbath—all the more remarkable from being written in a city where, under the sway of Calvin, no strict Sabbath observance was maintained. *Exod. xxxi. 14*: "God repeateth this point, because the whole keeping of the law standeth in the true use of the Sabbath, which is to cease from our works, and to obey the will of God." It would seem from this statement that the Genevan Puritans were

imbued with the spirit which was so strongly manifested in England during the next century. The Calvinism of the translators comes out strongly in their comment on Rom. ix. 15: "As the only will and purpose of God is the chief cause of election and reprobation, so His free mercy in Christ is an inferior cause of salvation, and the hardening of the heart an inferior cause of condemnation." Nor can one help noticing the burst of feeling against popery and prelacy in a note on Rev. ix. 3: "Locusts are false teachers, heretics, and worldly subtle prelates, with monks, friars, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, doctors, bachelors, and masters, which forsake Christ to maintain false doctrine."

The Church Book of the Puritans of Geneva, preserved in the Genevan archives, sheds interesting light upon their proceedings while these translations were being prepared.* By the aid of this record we are enabled to trace the arrivals and departures of the strangers, the marriages that took place and the children who were born amongst them. The registers of the city council add to the information; and there is something very touching in the notices taken of the removal of the hospitably entertained refugees, after the accession of Queen Elizabeth.

On the 24th of January, 1559, several of the exiles, with their ministers, presented a formal request to the city authorities for a dismissal, on the ground of their being now able to return in peace to the home of their fathers. At the same time they thanked their hosts for the cordial entertainment they had vouchsafed to them. On the 24th of August

* This book is in English, but it bears a French title, *Livre des Anglais*. An account of its contents may be found in the *Memoirs and Documents of the Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève*, 1853. There is a good article on the subject in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1862

the same year a person described as a bishop from England—no doubt Coverdale—made a similar application.*

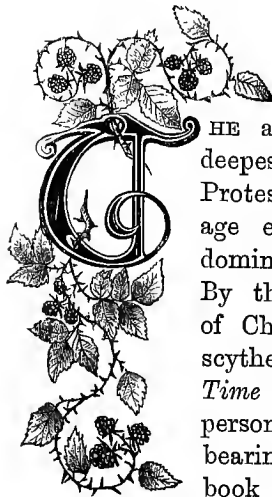
The last departure was at the end of May, 1560, and is thus noticed in the city archives: "*English citizens and residents*,—Wm. Whittingham, citizen, in his own name and that of his companions, came to thank messieurs for the good treatment which they have had in this city, and signified that to serve the Church in their own country it is necessary that they should remove thither, praying us to retain them as humble servants of the State, and declaring that at all times, and in every way in which they may be able to render service to the State and to individuals of the city, they will exert themselves to do so to the utmost of their power; and requesting us to give them an attestation of their life and conversation while they have been in this city." Then follows a reference to the Church records which the English exiles left behind them, and which are still preserved in the Town Hall. "They have presented the book of those of their nation who came to sojourn in the city, as a perpetual memorial. Decreed that an honourable dismissal be granted to them, and an attestation of the contentment we have had with them; and that they be exhorted to pray for us, and to do to strangers among themselves as others have done to them: and let them always be ready to bear good affection to this city. And it is agreed that we retain those that are citizens and subjects as such in future." †

* *Registre du Conseil*, ii. vol. de 1559, fol. 81.
Ib. de 1560, fol. 44.



CHAPTER X.

THE BISHOPS' BIBLE.



HE accession of Elizabeth created the deepest joy in the hearts of English Protestants, and in that pageant-loving age expression was given to the predominant feeling in a congenial fashion. By the Little Conduit at the upper end of Cheapside, an old man appeared with scythe and wings, representing Father *Time* coming out of a cave, leading a second person clad in white silk, his own daughter, bearing the name of *Truth*. She had a book in her hand on which was written *Verbum Veritatis*. It was the Bible in English, and this, after a short speech, Truth handed to her Majesty. "As soon as she received it she kissed it, and with both her hands held it up, and then laid it upon her breast, greatly thanking the city for that present, and said she would often



read over that book. Which passage shows as well how the citizens stood affected to religion (notwithstanding the persecution that had raged among them for some years before) as what hopes the kingdom might entertain of the queen's favour towards it."* This pageant met with a different fate from that in Queen Mary's time, when Gardiner made the painter daub out from his picture the Bible in Henry's hand.

Queen Elizabeth, just before her coronation, it being the custom to release prisoners at the inauguration of a prince, went to the chapel, and in the great chamber one of her courtiers, who was well known to her, either out of his own notion, or by the instigation of a wiser man, presented her with a petition, and before a number of courtiers besought her with a loud voice, "That there were four or five prisoners unjustly detained in prison." It was inquired who they were, when he replied, "Those were the four evangelists and the apostle St. Paul, who had been long shut up, in an unknown tongue, as it were in prison; so as that they could not converse with the common people." The queen answered very gravely, 'That it was first best to inquire of them whether they would be set at liberty or no.'† Her majesty, probably, had little doubt as to the answer which would be obtained from an examination of these extraordinary captives; but by this clever evasion she sought to get rid of difficulties which might attend her avowing thus early the Protestant principle of the free circulation of the Bible. There were Papists in the council of the queen, men who were influential in the former reign; and, with her wonted prudence and policy, she endeavoured

* Nicholls' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i. p. 35.

† *Felicities of Queen Elizabeth*, Lord Bacon's Works, vol. iii. p. 476.

to avoid exciting any opposition on their part. But it may be added that Elizabeth's zeal for the diffusion of the Scriptures was not so great as to render it necessary for her to put any powerful restraint upon her feelings when she uttered her cool reply to the Protestant courtier.

At all events, the Word of God was not bound after Elizabeth's accession. There was certainly no revival or enforcement whatever of the old prohibitory laws against English translations from that time; and in 1559 injunctions, substantially the same as those by Edward VI., were issued by the new queen's authority, directing that every parish church should be provided with a copy of the whole Bible of the largest volume, and of the paraphrases of Erasmus in English; and that all parsons under the degree of A.M. should buy for their own use the New Testament, in Latin and English, with paraphrases.*

The Bible "of the largest volume," or the Great Bible, was the book specified in the injunctions; but very soon after the publication of the Genevan Bible, we find her majesty granting a patent to John Bodley for seven years to print the same, which was virtually giving her sanction to this new version, which soon became a great favourite with the English people. The Great Bible was placed on the church desk; but the Genevan translation was the book preferred by the private reader in the family and the closet. Yet Bodley's patent seems to have been of little avail, for no edition of the Genevan Testament or Bible was published in England till the year 1575. This, perhaps, was owing to Archbishop Parker. He and Grindal, bishop of London, in a letter to Secretary Cecil, in 1565, spoke favourably of the version by the exiles, and recommended that the patent

* Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, vol. i. pp. 214, 218.

to Bodley might be extended for twelve years longer; but they told the secretary that "they would take such order with the party in writing, under his hand, that no impression should pass but by their direction, consent, and



MATTHEW PARKER.

advice."* It is probable that Bodley would not consent to the exercise of a control of this sort, and that the archbishop objected to some things in the annotations, which Bodley was not willing to alter or suppress. The archbishop's interference, however, seems to have stood

* *Strype's Life of Parker*, p. 207.

in the way of the reprint of the book in England. What confirms this notion is that on the archbishop's death, in 1576, the version was immediately published in this country for the first time. Afterwards the Genevan version became an increasing favourite with the English people, and was frequently reprinted.

From papers preserved in the House of Lords, it appears that at an early period of Elizabeth's reign a bill was drafted, "for reducing of diversities of Bibles now extant in the English tongue to one settled vulgar, translated from the original." Errors arose, and papistry and atheism increased, it was thought, from varieties of translations, while many desired "*an authorized translation*," which the lords spiritual could complete, had they power to compel assistance from students of the universities. The lords spiritual, or any six of them, the Archbishop of Canterbury being one, were, according to this bill, to assemble, treat, and deal touching the accomplishment of the work; also to call for the assistance of students of either university, and to pay them out of moneys levied on such cathedral churches and colleges as should be thought requisite. "Any temporal person," it is added, "may give gift or legacy for furtherance of the work."* It has been sometimes asked, when did the expression "authorized" version originate? Here we find the word "authorized" used long before the date of King James's Bible, and it would seem to have been a current phrase for such a Bible as would secure general adoption, through being sanctioned by the chief authorities of the realm. Again,

* Hiet. mss. Com. Report, iii. 4. The bill is not dated, and in the report it is assigned to "1558 or after." Elizabeth succeeded her eister November 17, 1558 (Nicholae's *Chron. of Hist.* p. 319).

as to men who should execute so desirable a work, we see that at this early period they were naturally looked for in Oxford and Cambridge.

Parker certainly was bent on the production of a new version, or at least on a complete revision of the old one, and for that purpose obtained the assistance of his episcopal brethren. "The archbishop took upon him the labour to contrive and set the whole work agoing in a proper method, by sorting out the whole Bible into parcels, and distributing those parcels to able bishops and other learned men, to peruse and collate each of the book or books allotted them; sending withal his instructions for the order they should observe; and they to add some short marginal notes for the illustration or correction of the text. And all these portions being finished and sent back to the archbishop, he was to add the last hand to them, and so to take care for printing and publishing the whole."* When the bishops had completed their task, they sent back their portions of the version to the archbishop as arranged, upon which his grace, and certain learned divines in his household, reperused and examined the whole work. The final accomplishment of his undertaking filled the archbishop's heart with so much joy that it is said he broke forth into Simeon's rapturous exclamation, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'† The Bible was published in 1568.

The parties who assisted Archbishop Parker in the

* *Strype's Parker*, fol. 208.

† *Ibid.*, fol. 272.

preparation of this volume are indicated by their initials subscribed to the portions executed by them respectively.

W. E., at the end of the Pentateuch, point to William Exoniensis, or William Alley, Bishop of Exeter, who succeeded Coverdale. He was an Oxford man of great learning, and in consequence of his Protestantism had been obliged to conceal himself during the reign of Mary. Practising medicine and teaching the young in the north of England—where he led a wandering kind of life till Elizabeth's accession—were his employments and means of support till the establishment of the Protestant Church in England released him from his fears, and opened a pathway to promotion.

R. M., at the close of the Second Book of Samuel, indicate Ricardus Menevensis, or Richard Davies, Bishop of St. David's, an exile in the reign of Mary, and afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, whence he was translated to St. David's. He laboured zealously for the spiritual good of Wales, of which country he was a native.

E. W., at the end of the Second of Chronicles, are the initials of Edwin Wigornensis, the famous Edwin Sandys, Bishop of Worcester. He was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge at the time of Edward the Sixth's death, and supported the title of poor Lady Jane Grey to the crown. For this he was stripped of all but his Bible, and was confined in prison in company with the noble-hearted John Bradford. Like Paul and Silas at Philippi, these honoured captives for the sake of Christ were instrumental in the conversion of their gaoler, and in their dreary cell they were wont to commemorate with him the feast of redeeming mercy. Preserved from martyrdom, Sandys escaped to the Continent, but as he

was going on board the ship that was to convey him to a land of exile, he is said to have gathered round him a number of sailors on the beach, and to have preached to them the word of life. On Elizabeth's accession he was raised to the see of Worcester, afterwards to London, and finally to York.

By A. P. C., at the conclusion of Job, probably we are to understand Andrew Pearson, Canon of Canterbury, an esteemed friend of Parker, to whom he was chaplain and almoner.

T. B., at the end of the Psalms, have been by Burnet and others supposed to refer to Thomas Bentham; but he was Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and would have taken the name of his see. It is much more likely that Thomas Becon, the well-known author of many valued publications, is intended. This portion of the work was originally allotted to Guest, who returned it to the archbishop after making some slight alterations in the version taken from the Great Bible. Probably Becon was the final reviser.*

A. P. C., at the end of Proverbs, most likely represent Andrew Pearson, Canon of Canterbury, as at the conclusion of Job, and A. P. E., at the close of the Canticles, Andrew Perne, Canon of Ely.

R. W., at the conclusion of the Lamentations, are the initials of Robert Horne, Bishop of Winchester, an exile in Mary's reign, and a zealous Protestant, one more lenient than some others to his brethren who differed from him as to the use of certain canonical habits.

* In a letter by Becon to Parker he mentions a present "worthy to be preserved and embraced for the antiquity's sake, namely, an Exposition upon the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, and all the Epistles of St. Paul, both in Latin and English."

T. C. L., at the end of Daniel, evidently denote Thomas Bentham, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. He was a man of distinguished learning, but still more eminent for his deep piety. He was pastor of that remarkable congregation which met in secret places about London during Queen Mary's reign, and it was he who accompanied to the stake the Islington martyrs, who died in Smithfield in June, 1558. The queen had forbidden that any one should speak to them at the stake. Profound silence was enjoined, but the heroic Bentham turned to the people, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "We know that they are the people of God, and therefore we cannot choose but wish well to them, and say, God strengthen them." The queen's proclamation availed not—the murmur, like the sound of many waters, rolled from lip to lip, "Amen! amen!" Bentham was a refugee in the reign of Mary, going first to Zurich, then to Basle, lastly to Geneva, where he was received as resident citizen on the 29th of November, 1537. After the accession of Elizabeth he was appointed Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

E. L. are the initials of Edmund Grindal, then Bishop of London, an exile under Mary, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury. He was very lenient to the Puritan party in the Church; and because he would not comply with the mandate of the queen, to put down certain meetings for exposition and prayer, conducted by clergymen, and commonly called prophesying, he was suspended from his archiepiscopal office. He undertook the Minor Prophets.

The letters J. N. appear at the end of the Apocrypha, meaning John Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, a pious and learned divine, and very moderate in his views of the ecclesiastical questions of the day.

R. E., at the end of Acts, denote Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely. He had been early persecuted for circulating Tyndale's Testament, and in Mary's reign rendered himself notorious by the part he took in the troubles of Frankfort. He was very zealous in enforcing the use of the English Prayer Book, and on his return to his native country was appointed by Elizabeth Bishop of Ely. The same initials appear at the end of Romans, and probably mean the same person. It is altogether improbable, as supposed by Strype, that they denote Edmund Guest, Bishop of Rochester, whose signature would be E. R., not R. E. Cox wrote to Parker in May, 1566, saying, "I trust your grace is well forward with the Bible by this time. I perceive the greatest burden will lie upon your neck touching care and travail. I would wish that such usual words as the English people be acquainted with might still remain in their form and sound so far forth as the Hebrew will bear: inhorn terms to be avoided."*

G. G. are written at the end of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; they designate Gabriel Goodman, once an exile at Geneva, now Dean of Westminster. No other initials are given, and it cannot be determined who prepared the remainder.

The name of Coverdale does not appear. He returned to England after Elizabeth's accession, but never resumed his bishopric, though he officiated episcopally at Parker's consecration. The reason of his not being restored to the bench probably was that he had Puritan scruples about vestments and other things in the Church of England. However, he was appointed rector of St. Magnus, after having suffered much from neglect and poverty—the too

* Strype's *Parker*, fol. 209.

common fate of the world's benefactors. He loved to preach the gospel, though loaded with a burden of years and infirmities; but he was not long permitted to do it without molestation; for when the Act of Uniformity was passed, at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, Coverdale, who could not fully conform, was deprived of his benefice. Still he continued occasionally to preach. "Many of the people," says Strype, "ran after Father Coverdale, who took that occasion to preach the more constantly, but yet with much fear, so that he would not be known where he preached, though many came to his house to ask where he would preach the next Lord's day."* He died in the year 1569, at the age of eighty-one. As the Bishops' Bible was published in 1568, Coverdale was then eighty, and this circumstance of itself would be sufficient to account for his not taking part in the work. His name lives with honour in the memories of posterity; and well deserved was the tribute of gratitude paid to his memory on the occasion of the tercentenary of the English Bible, in the year 1835. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee."

In 1568 this magnificent volume made its public appearance, printed by R. Jugge, "cum privilegio regie Majestatis." It has no dedication, which is a great wonder. But the queen's portrait is introduced on the engraved title-page, and portraits of Leicester and Burleigh are found in the Book of Joshua and the Book of Psalms. There is the device of a pelican feeding her young, and under it the

* *Life of Parker*, 242. When the church of St. Bartholomew was pulled down, the remains of Coverdale were removed to the church of St. Magnus.

words, "Matris ut hæc proprio stirps est satiata cruore, Pascis item proprio, Christe, cruore tuos." There are two prefaces in the volume—one for the Old and the other for the New Testament, both from the pen of Parker, and each contains admirable sentiments. "While this eternal Word of God be our rock and anchor to stick unto, we will have patience with all the vain inventions of men, who labour so highly to magnify their tongues, to exalt themselves above all that is God. We will take comfort by the Holy Scriptures against the maledictions of the adversaries, and doubt not to nourish our hope continually therewith, so to live and die in this comfortable hope, and doubt not to pertain to the elect number of Christ's Church, how far soever we be excommunicated out of the synagogue of such who suppose themselves to be the universal lords of all the world—lords of our faith and conscience at pleasure."

Again, in his preface to the New Testament, Parker remarks, "Here we may behold the eternal legacies of the New Testament bequeathed from God the Father in Christ His Son to all His elect, I say, the legacies lively renewed unto us, not of deliverance from Pharaoh his servitude, but from the bondage and thralldom of that perpetual adversary of ours, the devil. Here we may behold our inheritance—not of the temporal land of Canaan or of the translation of us to the place of worldly paradise,—but here may we see the full restitution of us both in body and soul to the celestial paradise, the heavenly city of Jerusalem above, there to reign with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost for ever. Which legacies of His Testament promised and bequeathed were notwithstanding recorded in the books of the Old Testament to our ancient fathers, which in hope believed in

Christ to come, who was painted before them in figures and shadows, and signified in their old sacraments ordained for that time, but now more evidently renewed and exhibited unto us—not in figure, but in deed; not in promise, but in open sight; in feeling, and handling, and touching of this eternal life, most manifestly confirmed unto us in Christ His blood, in this His New Testament continued and revived, yet in new sacraments, the better to bear in our remembrance this His eternal testament of all joyful felicities.”

Parker endeavoured by the help of Cecil to obtain some special sanction of this volume from her majesty, the result of which does not appear.* He wished to secure uniformity in Bible reading, as in other things, for in some churches the Genevan revision was used, whilst the Great Bible could not be honestly maintained. Convocation, on the 3rd of April, 1571, took up the matter, and ordered that every archbishop and bishop should have at his house a copy of the Holy Bible of the largest volume, as lately printed at London; and that it should be placed in the hall or large dining-room, that it might be useful to servants and strangers.† Each cathedral, too, it was enjoined, should have a copy; and, as far as could be conveniently done, such a provision was to be extended to parish churches.

This is one of those old ordinances which have a pictorial effect on the mind of a modern reader; and I never think of it without picturing to myself the entrance and dining halls

* The letter from Parker to Cecil on this subject is printed in *Biblioth. Sussex*, vol. i. p. 311.

† Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* also was to be provided. “Locentur autem isti libri vel in aula vel in grandi cœnaculo ut et ipsorum famulis et advenis usui esse possint.”—*Synodalia*, vol. i. p. 115.

of the old episcopal palaces of Lambeth, Norwich, Peterborough, and other dioceses, with arched roofs or panelled walls, and all the rude array of episcopal splendour,—so different from the more modest domestic life of bishops now-a-days,—and placing before such a background, figures of men-servants and women-servants, of guests and visitors, looking at the ample page with curiosity, devotion, or irreverence. The injunctions were so neglected, that sixteen years afterwards Archbishop Whitgift had to take the matter anew into his hands. In truth, this Bible was never popular. It was chiefly used in churches, but the Genevan version was the public favourite, and retained its place in the family and the closet. From the year 1560 to 1603 there were one hundred and thirty distinct issues of Bibles and Testaments of different revisions, ninety of which were of the Genevan text.

As might be expected from the separate allocation of the work to different hands, the execution of the Bishops' Bible is diversified. On the whole, the Greek scholarship of the New Testament revisers appears superior to the Hebrew scholarship of those employed on the Old Testament.

“The historical books of the Old Testament,” says Canon Westcott, “follow the text of the Great Bible very closely. The Hagiographa, as far as I have examined them, are corrected with considerable freedom. The prophets are altered very frequently, but in those the new renderings can generally be traced to some other source. The influence of the Genevan revision is perceptible throughout, but it is more obvious in the prophets than elsewhere. Castalio was certainly consulted, and had some influence with the revisers; but, with the exception of the Genevan version itself, no fresh sources were open to them in addition to

those which the Genevan exiles had used.”* The revision of the New Testament is more important than that of the Old. As a general rule, the original renderings in the latter appear to be arbitrary, and at variance with the exact sense of the Hebrew text.† This Bible has obtained the nickname of the “*Treacle Bible*,” from Jeremiah viii. 22, where we read, “Is there no *tryacle* in Gilead?” But here again, as in the case of the Genevan Bible, the odd rendering is not without parallel. The word *triacle* occurs at the same place in Coverdale’s Bible of 1535.

A new edition, published in 1572, presents little or no alteration in the Old Testament; but numerous differences, more or less important, are discovered on comparing the volume of 1572 with that of 1568.

It is interesting to read the notes in the Bishops’ Bible in connection with those in the Genevan version, and to recognise the character of Church theology at that period as reflected from the doctrinal remarks. It was really very much the same as that of the Genevan school. The following are extracts :

“The mystery of man’s redemption and salvation is perfected by the only sacrifice of Christ, the promises to the fathers fulfilled, the ceremonies of the law altered.”—John xix. 30.

“The will and purpose of God is the cause of the election and reprobation : for His mercy and calling through Christ are the means of salvation, and the withdrawing of His mercy is the cause of damnation.”—Rom. ix. 11.

“Our health hangeth not on our works ; and yet are they said to work out their health who do run in the race of justice ; for although we be saved freely in Christ by faith,

* Westcott, p. 301.

† *Ibid.*, p. 310.

yet must we walk by the way of justice unto our health."—Phil. ii. 12.

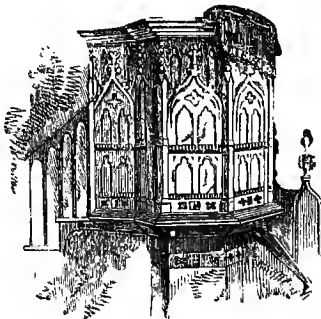
"They that stick to the ceremonies of the law cannot eat, that is, cannot be partakers of our altar, which is thanksgiving and liberality, which two sacrifices or offerings are now only left to the Christians."—Heb. xiii. 10.

There were other scholars in Elizabeth's reign who devoted themselves to Biblical translations. Lawrence Tomson, an under-secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham, prepared a new edition of the Genevan Testament. He entitled it, "The New Testament, translated from the Greek by Theodore Beza;" but though he might avail himself of Beza's Latin version, it is quite certain he did not follow it entirely, but took the Genevan as his standard, altering it here and there. The book contains short expositions selected from distinguished authors. Hugh Broughton, a very learned man and eminent Hebraist, also devoted his time to a revision of translations. He was much dissatisfied with the Bishops' Bible, and was anxious for a new version by "some six of the longest students in the tongues." But though a learned man, he seems to have been one of those impracticable spirits with whom it is impossible to co-operate, and therefore his proposal fell to the ground. He then undertook to publish himself a new translation of the books of "Daniel, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Job."

The publisher of the first edition of the Bishops' Bible in 1568 was Richard Jugge, who printed on the title-page, "Cum privilegio Regiæ Majestatis." A patent was necessary for the purpose, and this had to be obtained from a person named Wilkes, who enjoyed a monopoly of printing in the English language, and who granted royal licences upon receiving a pecuniary consideration. John Jugge, the son

of Richard Jugge, secured a portion of his father's patent ; but in 1579, Wilkes, for "a great sum," sold a more extensive patent to Christopher Barker. In 1579 Christopher included his son Robert in a new patent, embracing "all Bibles and Testaments whatever in the English tongue, with notes or without notes, printed before then or afterwards." This Robert obtained, in 1612, a patent for his son Christopher, upon whose death it was transferred to a brother. The Barkers assigned their rights for a while to other parties ; but in 1635 they were re-secured by the family, who remained royal printers of the English Bible down to the year 1709.*

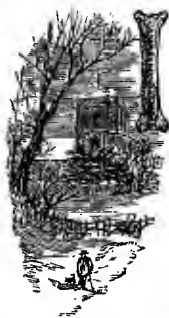
* Eadie, vol. ii. p. 288.





CHAPTER XI.

THE RHEMISH VERSION.



IN the year 1582 a volume printed at a foreign press reached England with the following title-page: "The NEW TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST, translated faithfully into English out of the Authentical Latin, according to the best corrected copies of the same, diligently conferred with the Greek, and other editions in diuers languages, with ARGVMENTS of bookes and chapters, ANNOTATIONS, and other necessarie helps, for the better vnderstanding of the text, and specially for the discouerie of the CORRUPTIONS of diuers late translations, and for clearing the controuersies in religion of these daies; IN THE ENGLISH COLLEGE OF RHEMES. Ps. cxviii.: '*Da mihi intellectum et scrutabor legem tuam, et custodiam illam in toto corde meo*;' that is, 'Giue me vnderstanding, and I wil searche Thy law, and wil keepe it with my whole hart.' S. Aug., tract ii. in Epist. Joan: '*Omnia quæ in Scrip-*

turis sanctis ad instructionem et salutem nostram, intentè oportet audire : maxime memoriæ commendanda sunt, quæ aduersus Hæreticos valent plurimum ; quorum insidiæ, infirmiores quosque et negligentiores circumuenire non cessant ; that is, all things that are readde in Holy Scriptures we must hear with great attention to our instruction and saluation ; but those things specially must be commended to memorie which make most against heretickes, whose deceites cease not to circumuent and beguile all the weaker sort and the more negligent persons. PRINTED AT RHEMES, by John Fogny. 1582. CUM PRIVILEGIO."

This title-page speaks for itself, and with the title-page the preface is in perfect harmony. The translators begin by guarding against the idea that the Scriptures should always be printed in the mother tongue, and be freely read by all sorts of persons. Not on that principle did they publish this book, but for special reasons connected with passing times and the condition of England. They eulogize the wisdom and moderation of the Roman Catholic Church, in neither forbidding nor commanding vernacular versions ; and after reciting the names of illustrious translators, alluding to the Constitution of Arundel, and noticing what had been done since Luther's time by learned Romanists, they insist upon the decree of the Tridentine Council that the Scriptures " may not be indifferently read of all men, nor of any other than of such as have express licence thereunto of their lawful ordinaries." They lament that, owing to the state of the times, this rule cannot in England be precisely observed, yet they trust wise and godly persons will use the matter in the meanwhile with moderation, meekness, and subjection of heart. They deny that their forefathers suffered every sciolist to translate, or every husbandman,

artificer, prentice, maid, and man to read the Bible, making it the subject of table-talk for "ale-benches, boats, and barges." The Scriptures had been kept in monasteries, but "the poor ploughmen could then in labouring the ground sing the hymns and psalms in known or unknown languages as they heard them in the holy church, though they could neither read, nor know the sense, meaning, and mysteries of the same." They repudiate the idea that it is from envy that the priests keep the holy book from the people. The Church would have "the unworthy repelled, the curious repressed, the simple measured, the learned humbled, and all sorts so to use them, or to abstain from them, as is most convenient for every one's salvation." They explain away St. Chrysostom's sanction of popular Bible reading, alleging that people are fonder of mysteries than morals, and that every heretic quotes Scripture. They charge Protestants with false renderings, and state that in this new volume large annotations are set forth, to correct false deductions, and to enforce patristic expositions. They prefer the Vulgate because corrected by Jerome, commended by Augustine, used by the Fathers, and defined as exclusively authentic by the Council of Trent; and, on principles of criticism convenient to themselves, prove to their own satisfaction that the Vulgate is as good, if not better, than the Greek original. Numbers of words are left untranslated in the text, rendering the book "a translation," as Thomas Fuller says, "needing to be translated." *Pasche, azymes, neophyte*, are amongst the mysterious terms—*majestic* words, as Bishop Gardiner would have called them. *Odible, coinquination, acception, correption, exprobate, obsecration, scenopegia*, are further examples of words sprinkled over this strange book. "The spirituals of wickedness among the celestials" (Eph.

vi. 12); "What to me and thee, woman?" (John ii. 4), are specimens of the application of a rule they laid down, "not to mollify the speech, but to keep to it word for word." The idiom of our native language and the dictates of common sense are set at nought by such a version as this. "Do I mind according to the flesh, that there be with me *It is* and *It is not*? But God is faithful, because our preaching which was to you, there is not in it *It is* and *It is not*; for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who by us was preached among you, by me and Sylvanus and Timothy was not *It is* and *It is not*, but *It is*, was in Him; for all the promises of God that are in Him *It is*, therefore also by Him amen to God, unto our glory" (2 Cor. i. 17-20). The similarly ludicrous exactness of John Wycliffe in the same passage would, one might think, redeem his character in the estimation of these Rhemish translators. Of course, Roman theology frequently appears. "Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace toward God by our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). "By faith Jacob dying blessed every one of the sons of Joseph, and adored the top of his rod" (Heb. xi. 21). "If you have not penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 5). "Not willing that any perish, but that all return to penance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). "Remember your prelates which have spoken the word of God to you" (Heb. xiii. 7). "By Him therefore let us offer the host of praise" (*ibid.*, 15). "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which is given thee by prophecy with imposition of the hands of priesthood" (1 Tim. iv. 14).

But in justice it must be said there are many correct and judicious renderings: "Holiness of the truth" (Eph. iv. 24); "our lamps are going out" (Matt. xxv. 8); "you are not come to a palpable mountain" (Heb. xii. 18), are good

examples. And it has been well noticed that our version in common use has obtained from the Rhemish, "*adjure*" (Matt. xxvi. 63); "*upbraideth not*" (Jas. i. 5); "*nothing wavering*" (6); "*the engrafted word*" (21); "*bridleth not*" (26). "Every other English version," it is remarked, "is to be preferred to this, if it must be taken as a whole; no other English version will prove more instructive to the student, who will take the pains to separate what is good and useful from what is ill-advised and wrong." *

One point of interest and importance connected with this translation arises from the esteem in which it is held by our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen; and it may be remarked that, disguised as are many of its renderings, and notwithstanding the array of annotations, which, sentinel-like, are stationed at the door of the temple, there remain what is sufficient to prove the inconsistency of the papal system with the teachings of the New Testament, and to furnish a thoughtful reader with weapons to fight his way out of the strongholds of error.

The notes in the margin are chiefly controversial, and are intended to guard the reader against the adoption of any view inconsistent with the authoritative teaching of the Church. In fact, the translators set forth Scripture as explained by tradition, treating it as an oracle of dubious meaning, of which the utterances must pass through an interpreting priesthood. Unfortunately for the boasted, and almost immaculate purity of the Vulgate, so strenuously maintained by the Rhemish translators, within eight years after they had finished the New Testament a fresh edition appeared, under the sanction of Sixtus v., who, on account of the errors in existing copies, found such an undertaking to

* Prof. Moulton, *Bible Educator*, vol. iv. p. 363.

be necessary. But this corrected edition was pronounced by the next Pope to be incorrect ; and another edition, differing more than any other from the Sistine, was published in 1592, under the auspices of Clement VIII. Two Latin texts varying in numerous particulars were thus placed before the Church by two pontiffs ; an awkward circumstance for advocates of the Rhemish version, and of papal infallibility, which has not escaped the attention of controversial Protestants.*

Three scholars are mentioned as employed upon the Rhemish Testament, William Allen, Gregory Martin, and Richard Bristow. The first was a distinguished Roman Catholic priest, Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, and Canon of York, in Queen Mary's reign. On the accession of Elizabeth he fled to Douay, where he was made Doctor of Divinity, after which he was promoted to a canonry at Cambray, and then to a canonry at Rheims. There he established a seminary, and exerted himself in opposing Protestantism, for which he was rewarded with a cardinal's hat, and the archiepiscopal see of Mechlin. He is said to have been the designated Primate of England and the Legate of Rome, had the Spanish Armada succeeded. Certainly he did what he could to foment troubles in this country during the reign of Elizabeth, whom he branded as a caitiff under God's and holy Church's curse, given up to a reprobate mind ; therefore her open enormities and her secret sins must be great and not numerable.

Gregory Martin had been a scholar of St. John's, Oxford. In 1570 he went over to Douay, and then became divinity reader at Rheims. Wood speaks of him as " an excellent linguist, exactly read and versed in the Sacred Scriptures,

* See Dr. James's *Treatise of the Corruptions of Scripture Councils and Fathers*,

and went beyond all of his time in humane literature.”* Respecting Richard Bristow, or Briston, or Bristol, I can glean no particulars.

A sort of appendix to the version was written by Gregory Martin, entitled “A Discovery of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretics of our Days;” he attempted to overturn all Protestant versions, and thus to clear the ground for a wide circulation of the Rhemish volume. An answer to such an attack was felt to be needful, and it is reported that Queen Elizabeth sent for Beza to undertake the task, which he modestly declined, recommending Thomas Cartwright, as far abler than himself. Cartwright was disliked by Archbishop Whitgift; and when the former began to work upon the subject, whether in consequence of anything said by Beza to Elizabeth I cannot decide, he was forbidden by the primate to proceed any further.† Dr. William Fulke, Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, published, in 1583, a “defence of the sincere and true translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue, against the manifold cavils, frivolous quarrels, and impudent slanders of Gregory Martin.” Martin republished the Rhemish version in 1589, with “a confutation” of what Fulke had written; and this brought Cartwright again into the field, who left behind him a “counter confutation,” published after his death in 1618. “No English champion in that age did with more valour or success charge and rout the Rhemish enemy in matters of doctrine.”‡

A remarkable anecdote is related by Dr. Eadie. “The Rheims Testament was once appealed to and rejected in

* Wood, *Athen. Ox.* vol. i. p. 487 (ed. Bliss).

† See preface to the *Confutation of the Rhemish Translation.*

‡ See *Life of Cartwright*, prefixed to Hambry's edit. of Hooker's *Eccl. Polity.*

tragic circumstances. On the evening before her execution, in Fotheringay Castle, the unfortunate Queen of Scots, laying her hand solemnly on a copy that happened to be on her work-table, took a solemn oath of innocence, when the Earl of Kent at once interposed that the book on which she had sworn was false, and that her oath, therefore, was of no value. Her answer was prompt and decided: ‘Does your lordship suppose that my oath would be better if I swore on your translation, in which I do not believe?’* * *

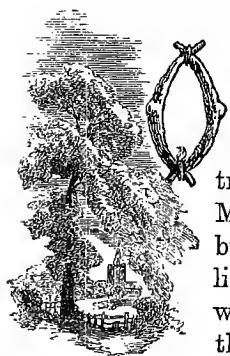
The Rhemish translators made a version of the Old Testament as well as the New. It issued from the press at Douay in 1609, forming two volumes. The editors, who were not the translators, state that this work, executed thirty years before, had remained unpublished so long, “owing to their poor estate in banishment.” After rehearsing the reasons given in the preface to the New Testament for adopting the Vulgate, they remark, in reference to the Clementine revision, to which they had confined their version: “By the way, we must give the vulgar reader to understand that very few or none of the former varieties touched controversies of this time, so that this recognition is no way suspicious of partiality, but is merely done for the more secure conservation of the pure text, and more ease and satisfaction of such as otherwise should have remained doubtful.” In conclusion, the writers express their sympathy with their suffering brother Catholics in England; and they remind them that the honours of martyrdom surpass description, that patience is necessary, and persecution profitable, and they exhort those who are in Christ’s fold to remain there, and persevere to the end.

* *La Mort de la Reyne d’Ecosse Douairière de France*, reprinted in Jebb’s collection, vol. ii. p. 616. *Eadie*, vol. ii. p. 136.



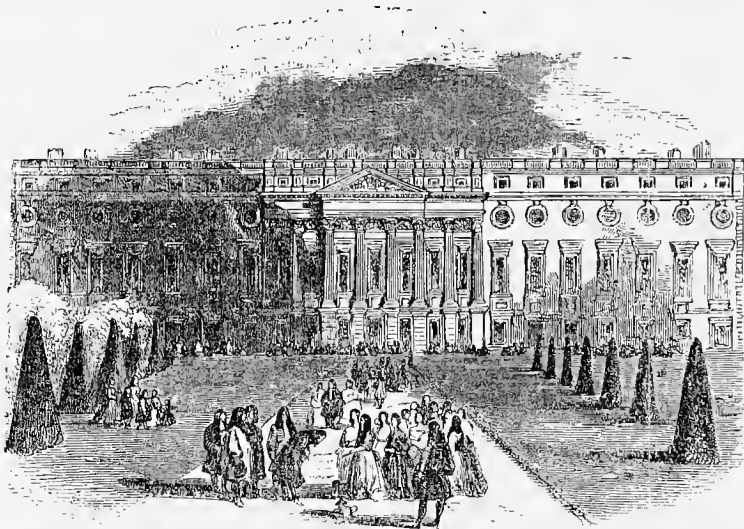
CHAPTER XII.

THE "AUTHORIZED VERSION," 1611.



ON the death of Elizabeth, James I. ascended the throne of England. His progress from Scotland to the capital of his new dominions was one scene of extravagant display and royal amusement. Making knights was his majesty's chief business; hunting in the parks of the nobility and gentry, and in the wild forests which still spread over so many acres of the Old England of that day, was his chief recreation. The same employments were continued after he arrived at his metropolis and his coronation had taken place; and it was during a sojourn at Wilton, while enjoying his favourite field sports, that he issued a proclamation which introduces us to a new chapter in the history of our English Bible. On the 24th of October, 1604, James appointed a meeting to be held for the hearing and the determining "things pretended to be amiss in the Church." The meeting arose out of the complaints of the Puritans, who early saluted their new

sovereign with a list of ecclesiastical grievances, which they besought him to remove. The time fixed for this important conference was the 14th, 16th, and 18th of January, and the place appointed for holding it was Hampton Court.



HAMPTON COURT PALACE.

That noble building had then stood nearly a hundred years, one of the monuments of Wolsey's wealth, pride, and greatness. The fine quadrangle of Tudor architecture, and the magnificent hall, with some other apartments, still remain indicative of the state of the edifice as reared by the cardinal. The comparatively modern erections by William III. have quite altered the character of a considerable portion of Hampton Court Palace; but if the reader's imagination picture to him the whole of the building in

the style of the Tudor portion of it just referred to, he will have an idea of the appearance of the place when the famous conference was held out of which arose the translation of the Bible, now commonly used in this country. Of the multitudes who visit that specimen of our architectural antiquities, many more, it is probable, think of Wolsey's revels, or of Charles's misfortunes, in connexion with the building, than of the circumstance of its having been the birthplace of a design for furnishing the country with a new version of the Bible; yet certainly no other event, however romantic and affecting, associated with the place, can be compared with this in point of real interest and importance.

On Monday, the 16th of January—the only day of the conference which concerns us in the present work—there might be seen assembling in the withdrawing-room of the palace, in the presence of his majesty, who had no small taste for theological debate, certain prelates of the English Church, and a few of the Puritan party, with the well-known Dr. Rainolds at their head. The learning and moral excellence of this remarkable man were so great as to inspire the admiration of his contemporaries generally, and Anthony Wood, in recording his merits, waxes into rapture which he finds it difficult to express. "The truth is," observes that historian, "he was most prodigiously seen in all kind of learning, and had turned over all writers, profane, ecclesiastical, and divine, all the councils, fathers, and histories of the Church. He was also most excellent in all tongues, of a sharp and nimble wit, of mature judgment, indefatigable industry, exceeding therein Origen, surnamed Adamantius, and so well seen in all arts and sciences as if he had spent his whole time in each of them. The

learned Cracanthorp tells us also that for virtue, probity, integrity, and, which is above all, piety and sanctity of life, he was so eminent and conspicuous, that, as Nazianzen speaketh of Athanasius, it might be said of him, to name Rainolds is to commend virtue itself. In a word, nothing can be spoken against him, only that he, with Thomas Sparke, were the pillars of Puritanism, and grand favourers of Nonconformity, as the general part of writers say; yet one of late date reports that Rainolds professed himself a Conformist, and died so.* Whatever the latter part of the statement may be, of the truth of which there is no good evidence, the former, by general consent, is indisputable; and hence, in point of condition and piety, this illustrious Puritan was well qualified to express an opinion on the merits of Biblical translations.† Rainolds objected to certain renderings in the extant versions, and he proposed to his majesty that there should be a new translation. Bancroft, the Bishop of London, no friend to the Puritans, and therefore no favourer of Rainolds, abruptly observed that “if every man’s humour should be followed, there would be no end of translating.” But James, in this one instance, sided with the Puritans, and professed himself friendly to a new translation. He objected, however, to any notes being appended, and railed against those in the Genevan version as untrue and seditious, though the cases he cited gave small countenance to the charge.‡ And

* Wood’s *Athen.* vol. ii. p. 14 (ed. Bliss.)

† Dr. Rainolds’ brother William was at first a Protestant, and afterwards a Papist. The doctor himself was first a Papist, and afterwards a Protestant. It is said a conference between the brothers led to this remarkable change of sentiment (Neal, vol. ii. 37).

‡ The Genevan translation said of the Hebrew midwives, “Their disobedience herein was lawful, but their dissembling evil” (Exod. i. 19.) The trans-

Rainolds concurred with him in this view, for his proposition was to the following effect: "That a translation be made of the whole Bible as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek, and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of Divine service."*

The Hampton Court Conference, so far as an adjustment between the two parties in the Church was concerned, came to nothing; but the suggestion of Dr. Rainolds led to a most important result, in the benefits of which England has long participated. To him we are indebted for the origin of our "Authorized Version," as it is commonly termed. Measures seem to have been taken soon after the conference for securing suitable persons for the important task of preparing the new translation; for in the month of June, in the same year, Bancroft wrote to Cambridge, stating that "his majesty being made acquainted with the choice of all them to be employed in the translating of the Bible in such sort as Mr. Lively can inform you, doth greatly approve of the said choice. And forasmuch as his highness is very desirous that the same so religious a work should admit no delay, he has commanded me to signify unto you in his name that his pleasure is you should, with all possible speed, meet together in your university and begin the same." "I am persuaded his royal mind rejoiceth more in the good hope which he hath for the happy success of that work than of his peace concluded with Spain."

lators remark respecting Asa and Maachah (2 Chron. xv. 16), "Herein he showed that he lacked zeal, for she ought to have died, both by the covenant (as verse 13) and by the law of God; but he gave place to foolish pity, and would also seem after a sort to satisfy the law." This latter perhaps displeased James, because it justified the severe punishment of a royal personage.

* Anderson's *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 371.

Very different were these subjects of joy which the prelate thus couples together; and certainly the manner in which King James celebrated the ratification of the peace with Spain was little in accordance with his professed regard for the Bible. Sunday, of all days, was chosen for the ratification, and the nature of the rejoicings was such as to exhibit a profanation of that day, illustrative of the habits of the times, and forming a fit prelude to the introduction of the Book of Sports. "A most imposing pageant was exhibited by the procession in coaches and on horseback, all the parties clothed in the most gorgeous attire. In the royal chapel various pieces of church music were performed, after which the peace was ratified by the king's oath, on a copy of Jerome's Latin Bible, before the Duke de Frias, Constable of Spain, the ambassador: the air was rent by the general acclamation. Then came the grand banquet and drinking, which lasted about three hours. Meanwhile dancing had commenced in the drawing-room, to which all repaired. The Prince of Wales opened the ball with a Spanish gallarda, and after various other dances it closed with a correnta danced by the Queen and Lord Southampton. Upon this, from a window they had a view of an amphitheatre filled with people, where bears, the property of the king, were baited by greyhounds; a bull running about, tossing and goring mastiffs let loose upon him, followed next; the whole scene concluding with rope-dancing and feats of horsemanship."*

On the 22nd of July, 1604, the king wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He stated that he had appointed fifty-four learned men for the translating of the Bible, divers of whom had no ecclesiastical preferment; and the main

* *Ellis's Letters*, vol. iii. p. 207; *Anderson's Annals*, vol. ii. p. 372.

object of the letter was to enjoin upon his grace and the bishops that whenever a living of twenty pounds per annum was vacant they should inform his majesty of it, that he might commend to the patron one of the said translators as a fitting person to hold it, as his reward for his service in the translation. He further required that the bishops should inform themselves of such learned men in their dioceses, and charged them to assist in the work by sending their observations to Mr. Lively, Dr. Harding, or Dr. Andrewes.* Here ended all the trouble—so far as history records—that James i. ever took respecting the translation which bears his name. The letter just noticed shows that his majesty was intending to reward the translators by means of the liberality of others, not his own; and it further appears, as will be presently noticed, that the expenses of preparing the work were borne by certain parties quite independently of any help from the sovereign.

The Earl of Salisbury, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, wrote the same day (July 22) to the Vice-Chancellor and heads of houses, conveying to them the expression of his majesty's pleasure that they should join in the undertaking by recommending fit persons to assist, and by entertaining the translators at the colleges without any charge,—only the poor colleges were to look to the Bishop of London to defray any expenses in which they might be involved.† It is most amusing to see how careful the king was to shift all the expense on others; and it is mortifying to think that the credit and honour of the undertaking have too commonly been transferred from those to whom they are due to the mean-spirited monarch, whose chief care in the matter was to rid his own shoulders of the pecuniary

* Lewis's *History of Translations*, p. 312.

† *Ibid.* p. 313.

responsibility. Nor were the letters just noticed the only ones written for the purpose of inducing other persons to bear the burden of the expense; for we find Archbishop Bancroft writing to the Bishop of Norwich, on the 31st of July, telling him to acquaint the dean and chapter with the subject, and ascertain what they would contribute. "I do not think," he says, "that a thousand marks will finish the work."* Other bishops were appealed to in the same way. How much was contributed does not appear; and it is now made pretty certain that the money expended in the translation was largely supplied by Mr. Barker, the printer and patentee. "I conceive," says a writer in the year 1657, "that the sole printing of the Bible and Testament, with power of restraint in others, to be of right the property of one Matthew Barker, citizen and stationer of London, in regard that his father paid for the amended or corrected translation of the Bible £3,500, by reason whereof the translated copy did of right belong to him and his assignees."† Out of this sum, paid by the patentee, some at least of the expenses most likely were defrayed. On the 31st of July, Bancroft sent a copy of the king's letter to Cambridge, for the persons who had been selected by the university as translators, expressing his majesty's approbation of the choice, and his desire that they should meet as early as possible. He adds an expression of his own wish, that as soon as they were prepared for the business they would communicate with him.‡

The following instructions accompanied the letters :

* Lewis, p. 321.

† "*A Brief Treatise concerning the Regulating of Printing.* Humbly submitted to the Parliament of England by William Ball, Esq., London. Printed in the year 1651." Anderson's *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 384.

‡ Lewis, p. 315.

“1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the ‘Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

“2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained, as near as may be, accordingly as they are vulgarly used.

“3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word ‘church,’ not to be translated congregation.

“4. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith.

“5. The division of the chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be if necessity so require.

“6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

“7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another.

“8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters ; and, having translated or amended them severally, by himself, where he thinks good, all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

“9. As any one company hath despatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously ; for his majesty is very careful in this point.

“10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them

word thereof, to note the places, and therewithal to send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

“11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed, by authority, to send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place.

“12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind to send their particular observations to the company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the king's letter to the archbishop.

“13. The directors in each company to be the deans of Westminster and Chester for Westminster, and the king's professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two universities.

“14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible—Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.”

Doubts having arisen in the minds of some of the Cambridge men as to the manner of observing the third and fourth rules, Bancroft wrote to them again, stating that it was the royal wish there should be three or four divines of the university appointed as overseers of the translation, especially with a view to carry out the third and fourth rules; probably a similar plan, from the beginning, was contemplated with regard to Oxford; certainly an instruction to that effect was sent to Dr. Ravis, one of the company who assembled at that university.*

* Lewis, p. 319. Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, pt. ii. b. iii. No. 10.

The list of the individuals to whom the preparation of the new version was entrusted has been carefully preserved and often published. It includes the names of some of the most distinguished divines of the day; and as to others among them, of whom history has preserved scarcely any memorial, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of their competency to discharge their momentous trust.

There is in the library at Lambeth a curious ms. (No. 933, art. 41), which seems to be part of a letter written by some one who had been requested to supply information respecting the translators. Neither the writer nor the person addressed can be ascertained, but he was evidently a contemporary student with some of those employed in the version. He speaks of Dr. Stoughton as his tutor—probably Dr. John Stoughton, Fellow of Emmanuel, and author of numerous quaint sermons. The letter must have been written long after the publication of King James's Bible, as the writer refers to a conversation which passed in 1622.*

They were forty-seven in number, and were divided into six parties, two of which met at Westminster, two at Cambridge, and two at Oxford.

The first company met at Westminster, and to them was committed the Pentateuch, with the other historical books, as far as the Second Book of Kings. Dr. Launcelot Andrewes, whose erudition called forth the praise of Europe, presided over this division. He was Dean of Westminster, and then promoted to the sees of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester. Casaubon, Grotius, and Vossius have eulogized his attainments; and Buckeridge, Bishop of Rochester, who preached

* I cannot but mention the learning and courtesy manifested by the late Mr. Maitland, the archbishop's librarian, when, nearly forty years ago, I inspected this ms.

his funeral sermon, in 1626, stated that he understood fifteen languages. Milton, in one of his early elegies, embalmed his name, and bewailed his loss in terms expressive of the prelate's wide and brilliant fame.

As a hard student he has been rarely equalled, and his learning is said to have overflowed in his conversation, as it certainly does in his writings. His skill in repartee, and his prudent evasion of difficulties, are also recorded, of which the following anecdote presents an example: "Waller having one day gone to see James I. at dinner, saw the Bishop of Winchester and Dr. Neale, Bishop of Durham, standing behind the king's chair, and overheard the following conversation. His majesty asked the bishops, 'My lords, cannot I take my subjects' money when I want it, without all this formality in Parliament?' The Bishop of Durham readily answered, 'God forbid, sir, but you should; you are the breath of our nostrils.' Whereupon the king turned and said to the Bishop of Winchester, 'Well, my lord, what say you?' 'Sir,' replied the bishop, 'I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases!' The king answered, 'No put-offs, my lord; answer me presently.' 'Then, sir,' said he, 'I think it lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money, for he offers it.' No doubt, in connection with the Westminster meetings, for, as Andrewes conversed with his coadjutors, many a stream of learning would flow sparkling with the light of innocent pleasantry."*

Amongst Andrewes' coadjutors was Dr. John Overall, Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, and in 1596 raised to the Regius professorship of Divinity in that university. In 1604 he became Dean of St. Paul's, and was afterwards made Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, whence he was trans-

* *Life of Waller* prefixed to his *Works*.

lated to Norwich. To the same company belonged Dr. Adrian de Saravia, the only foreigner engaged in the work. A Frenchman, and invited to Leyden as Professor of Divinity, he came over to England, became acquainted with Richard Hooker, and was installed first Prebendary of Canterbury, and next Canon of Westminster, in 1601. He entered into controversy respecting episcopacy and sacrilege with the celebrated Beza, and in this way pleased Archbishop Whitgift, and displeased his early friends. He died at Canterbury, in 1612, at the advanced age of eighty-two, and was buried in the cathedral. Wood speaks of him as "educated in all kinds of literature in his younger days, especially in several languages."

Dr. Richard Clarke, one of the six preachers at Canterbury, and vicar of Mynstre and Monkton, in the Isle of Thanet, author of a volume of sermons full of erudition; Dr. John Layfield, "skilled in architecture," whose judgment was much relied on for the fabric of the tabernacle and temple; Dr. Teigh, Archdeacon of Middlesex, and vicar of Allhallows, Barking, an excellent textuary and a profound linguist, were among Andrewes' coadjutors.* The rest, of whom fame reports nothing save their learned education and connection with the universities, were Mr. Burgley, or Burleigh, Mr. Geoffry King, Mr. Richard Thomson, and Mr. William Bedwell. Of the last, however, it is said that he was tutor to the great Orientalist, Dr. Pocock, and greatly excelled in the knowledge of Eastern languages and lore. He spent many years in compiling an Arabic lexicon and a Persian dictionary. An Arabic translation of St. John's epistles by this same scholar is preserved in the Bodleian Library.

* The author of the Lambeth ms. supposes that Dr. Teigh might be the same person as William Tye, who wrote a catechism, which he dedicated to Prince Henry, 1612.

The second company, consisting of eight persons, met at Cambridge; and they prepared the translation from the beginning of Chronicles to the end of Canticles. Edward Lively, Regius Professor at Cambridge, and a man of great attainments, presided over the department; with whom were associated John Richardson, Fellow of Emanuel, and Dr. Laurence Chaderton, a man well skilled in Rabbinical literature. He was Master of Emanuel, Cambridge; and as indication of his theological bias it may be stated that for fear of an Arminian being appointed as his successor, he resigned his mastership in favour of a Calvinist. This person he survived, and then lived long enough to witness two other successors. Thomas Harrison, a Hebraist, Vice-master of Trinity; Roger Andrewes, brother to the bishop; Robert Spalding, Fellow of St. John's, and Lively's successor in the Hebrew chair; and Dr. Andrew Byng, who subsequently occupied the same professorship, completed the number.

The third company assembled at Oxford, and consisted of seven members, who undertook the rest of the Old Testament from Isaiah to Malachi. Dr. John Harding, Regius Professor of Hebrew, was chosen to preside over this party, which consisted besides of Dr. John Rainolds, the Puritan, who suggested the new version; Dr. Thomas Holland, a very Apollos, "mighty in the Scriptures;"* Dr. Richard Kilbie, a great Hebraist; Dr. Miles Smith, "who had Hebrew at his fingers' ends," says Anthony Wood; Dr. Brett, a good Grecian and Orientalist; and Mr. Fairclough.† Izaak Walton tells a story of Dr. Kilbie, in connection with the

* He was no man for episcopacy, says the Lambeth ms.

† Dr. Daniel Featley was called Fairclough; but the writer of the Lambeth ms. thinks he was too young to be the person included in the list. He also mentions a Mr. Fairclough, minister of Ketton (Kedington), near Haverill, Suffolk.

new Bible, worth repeating. "The doctor was to ride a journey into Derbyshire, and took Mr. Sanderson (afterwards Bishop of Lincoln) to bear him company; and they going together on a Sunday with the doctor's friend to that parish church where they then were, found a young preacher to have no more discretion than to waste a great part of the hour allotted for his sermon in exceptions against the late translation of several words, not expecting such a hearer as Dr. Kilbie, and showed three reasons why a particular word should have been otherwise translated. When evening prayer was ended, the preacher was invited to the doctor's friend's house, where, after some other conference, the doctor told him he might have preached more useful doctrine, and not have filled his auditors' ears with needless exceptions against the late translation: and for that word, for which he offered to that poor congregation three reasons why it ought to have been translated as he said, he and others had considered all them, and found thirteen more considerable reasons why it was translated as now printed, and told him, 'If his friend then attending him should prove guilty of such indiscretion he should forfeit his favour;' to which Mr. Sanderson said, he hoped he should not: and the preacher was so ingenuous as to say he would not justify himself."*

The fourth company was convened at Oxford, consisting of eight members, who received for their portion of labour the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation of John. Dr. Ravis, Dean of Christ Church, and afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, subsequently of London,† was

* Walton's *Lives*, p. 360.

† "He took all academical degrees, and enjoyed all collegiate dignity. He was a great man against the ministers who followed King James."—Lambeth ms.

president; the famous George Abbott, Dean of Winchester, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Dr. Eedes, Dean of Worcester; Dr. Giles Tomson, Dean of Windsor, who lies buried in the royal chapel; Sir Henry Saville, Provost of Eton; Dr. Perrin, Greek professor; Dr. Ravens; and Mr. John Harman, were the members of this division.

The fifth company met at Westminster, and translated the Epistles. It consisted of Dr. Barlowe, Dean of Chester, afterwards successively Bishop of Rochester and Lincoln; Dr. Hutchinson, Dr. Spëncer,* Mr. Fenton, Mr. Rabbett, Mr. Sanderson, and Mr. Dakins.

The sixth company held their sittings at Cambridge, and undertook the translation of the Apocrypha. They were as follows: Dr. John Duport, Prebendary of Ely, and afterwards Master of Jesus College, Cambridge;† Dr. Branthwaite, Fellow of Emanuel; Dr. Jeremiah Radcliffe, Fellow of Trinity; Dr. Samuel Ward, of Emanuel, afterwards Master of Sidney, and Margaret Professor;‡ Andrew Downes, Greek Professor; the celebrated Mr. Bois; and Mr. Ward, Fellow of King's. Mr. Bois was most indefatigable in executing his trust, for his biographer informs us that "all the time he was about his own part his diet was given him at St. John's, where he abode all the week till Saturday night, and then went home to discharge his cure, and returned thence on Monday morning; and that when he had finished his own part, at the earnest request of him to whom it was

* "There was a Dr. Spencer who succeeded Dr. Reynolds in his presidentship of Corpus Christi College, who had some public place in the university—Lady Margaret Professor, I suppose."—Lambeth ms.

† "He died a little before I came to Cambridge."—Lambeth ms.

‡ Dr. Ward seems to have been well known to the person addressed in the Lambeth ms. "To speak of him to you is needless; yet one thing I will add—that is, that he made the dial over the great gate in Emanuel College."

assigned, he undertook a second, and then was at commons at another college." "Four years he spent in this service, at the end whereof (the whole work being finished, and three copies of the whole Bible being sent to London, one from Cambridge, a second from Oxford, and a third from Westminster) a new choice was to be made of six in all, two out of each company, to review the whole work, and extract one out of all three to be committed to the press. For the despatch of this business, Mr. Downes and he (Mr. Bois) out of the Cambridge company were sent for up to London, where, meeting their four fellow-labourers, they went daily to Stationers' Hall, and in three quarters of a year fulfilled their task. All which time they received duly thirty shillings each of them by the week from the Company of Stationers, though before they had nothing." *

Though but forty-seven are mentioned in the list, fifty-four are spoken of in the king's letter—a discrepancy which some have explained by supposing that the original number was, from circumstances, reduced to forty-seven.†

* Lewis, p. 322. Memoir of Bois, or Boys, ms. Harl. 7,053, printed in Peck's *Des Curiosa*, extracts are given by Anderson, *Annals*, ii. 381. Mr. Anderson discredits part of the narrative. That only six revisers were appointed is obviously a mistake, as there were six companies, and two from each would make twelve, the number stated by Dr. Samuel Ward (*Anderson*, ii. 382). But Mr. A.'s argument against the idea of the Stationers' Company paying anything is, like many of his arguments, unsatisfactory.

† Wood, in his *Annals*, mentions two persons as engaged on the revision not included in the foregoing list, John Aglionby, of Queen's Coll., Oxford, and Leonard Hutton, of Christ Church. Todd, in his *Vindication of the English Translations*, observes that "as Wood omits the name of Eedes (whom he has elsewhere mentioned as one of the translators), and of Ravens, occurring in the original list, we may conclude that their places, vacated soon after the translation was resolved upon, by the death, as we know, of the former, and by some other circumstances now forgotten regarding the latter, were supplied by these learned persons" —App. to *Vindication*, No. vi.

The mode in which the translators were to proceed in their undertaking is described in the regulations ; to which they, no doubt, carefully attended. Every member of a company was to take the same portion, and having translated or amended it by himself, all were to meet together to compare what they had done, and to form one revised copy of the whole, in which they could agree. The oft-quoted anecdote relative to the translators, given in the learned Selden's *Table Talk*, most likely refers to this stage of the proceedings : " They met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, etc. If they found any fault, they spoke ; if not, he read on." When a portion had thus been finished by any company, it was to be sent to the rest for their examination ; and they were required, if they felt a doubt about any of the renderings, or could suggest an improvement, to state such doubt or improvement, and the reasons on which it was founded, to the company who had executed the portion. If the alteration were approved, it was to be adopted at once ; if not approved, it was to be referred to a committee of final revisers. While the labour was great, correctness was likely to be secured by this plan ; for every portion would first be translated by each member of the party to whom it was assigned ; then considered by them all ; then examined by the other companies ; and then finally revised by the select committee appointed to complete the work : thus, after its first translation, passing through a number of ordeals varying from thirteen to sixteen, according to the number of persons in the company to which it belonged.

The final revision of the whole work, as we have seen, was conducted in London. Delegates from Cambridge,

from Oxford, and from Westminster devoted themselves to this important business. They met in the old hall of the Stationers' Company, and there spent three quarters of a year in completing their task.

Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, is particularly mentioned in the manuscript of Bois as engaged upon this final revision, though he was not one of the originally appointed translators.

From the preface written by Dr. Miles Smith, who, for his services, was rewarded with the bishopric of Gloucester, we learn that the translators were occupied for about three years in preparing the version. "The work," he says, "has not been huddled up in seventy-two days" (referring to the haste with which the Septuagint was supposed to have been executed), "but hath cost the workmen, as light as it seemeth, the pains of twice seven times seventy-two days, and more." It has been supposed that the work was not begun till the year 1607; and that the delay was occasioned by the death of Mr. Lively, president of one of the Cambridge companies, who died in the year 1605. But no positive evidence has been afforded in proof of the late commencement of the translation; and it must be apparent to all that Mr. Lively's death would be no hindrance to the commencement or progress of the other companies, though it might be to the commencement and progress of his own. It would appear that Fuller considered the work was begun before Lively's death, for he says, "The untimely death of Mr. Lively, much weight in the work lying in his skill in the Oriental tongues, happening about this time—(happy is that servant whom his Master when he cometh findeth so doing)—not a little retarded their proceedings. However, the rest vigorously, though slowly,

proceeded in this hard, heavy, and holy task; nothing offended with the censures of impatient people condemning their delays, though indeed but due deliberation, for laziness." * Moreover from Wood's *Annals of the Oxford University* it appears that the party who met there had closed their work by the year 1607; for he informs us that the party met at Dr. Rainolds's lodgings, and there "perfected the work, notwithstanding the said doctor, who had the chief hand in it, was all the while sorely afflicted with the gout." Now as Dr. Rainolds died in 1607, the portion undertaken by his company must have been finished in that year, and was most likely begun soon after the preliminary arrangements, in 1604, were complete. Probably there was some delay with the other companies; and this, in connexion with the repeated revisions, and the care that would be taken in printing the book, would account for the whole work being spread over so long a space as from 1604 to 1611, when King James's Bible issued as a portly folio from the press.

The title-page of the volume exhibits certain features in comparison with those of other versions. First, it is stated that this Bible was newly translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translation diligently compared and revised *by his Majesty's special commandment*, in this respect agreeing with the Great Bible of 1541. The Bishops' Bible of 1568 has *cum privilegio Regiæ Majestatis*. Secondly, we find the words *appointed to be read in churches*, resembling on this point the Bible of 1540 and 1541, where it is printed, *this is the Bible appointed to the use of churches*, a note which does not appear in the Bishops'

* Fuller's *Church Hist.* vol. iii. p. 230.

Bible of 1568. But in the Bishops' Bible of 1602 the word "authorized" is used as well as the word "appointed." The object of such words was, if possible, to secure uniformity in the use of versions at public worship; the Genevan Bible having divided popular attention, and rivalled the editions published by royal sanction. But whether the editors were in any way authorized to insert these words, or whether the printers followed the title-page of 1540 and 1541, I do not know. Certainly the version was not issued or sanctioned by royal proclamation, or by order of council, or by Act of Parliament, or by vote of Convocation. An episcopal mandate indeed appears enforcing its use, for copies of the whole Bible of the largest volume and latest edition are required to be in churches by the visitation articles of Laud, 1622, St. David's, 1628, London. In the Scotch Canons of 1636 it is said distinctly, "The Bible shall be of the translation of King James." Thirdly—and the fact is important—there are no annotations announced on the title-page. In this respect, the Bible resembles several succeeding ones; but it exhibits a marked contrast to the two conflicting translations which represented the Puritans on the one hand and the Roman Catholics on the other. The first wished to point out in Scripture the great doctrines which they fervently believed; and the second would not trust a vernacular version to go out alone. The Bible of 1611 left the Divine contents to speak for themselves. Whether this was a Puritan suggestion at the Hampton Conference, or one made by the king himself, is a disputed question.*

The translation is considered to follow mainly the Bishops' Bible; and here it is interesting to refer to what

has been said already respecting the sources from which that revision was derived. The Great Bible was a standard text, from which, however, the prelates frequently deviated, making large use of the Genevan version. The editor of the Great Bible, whilst employing Munster and Beza, worked mainly upon what he found in the Bible which went by the name of Matthew's. To that Tyndale and Coverdale are discovered to be principal contributors; and when we reach the first of these names we come to the fountain-head of Protestant English versions, as the Wycliffe Bibles seem to have had little or no influence. The Vulgate, however, which Wycliffe and his followers rendered into the vernacular, had a decidedly appreciable effect in these successive volumes. The Bishops' Bible, the Genevan Bible, the Great Bible, and Matthew's Bible, with Tyndale's Testaments, then, were, together with the original learning of successive editors, the chief elements which entered into the composition of the version of 1611. But there must be added other influences. First, it appears that, besides the stream of Genevan influence flowing through the Bishops' Bible, it came also over the minds of the new translators with a direct and immediate force. They must have had the Bible and Testament of the exiles before them, and they must have largely consulted it. But, what is more remarkable, the effect of the Rhemish version is manifest. The companies must have had the Roman Catholic Testament, as well as the whole volume of Puritan Scripture, by their side as they slowly accomplished their task.

There were probably other learned works lying on the table, around which gathered the different groups of scholars. New Latin versions of the Old Testament had been published by Arias Montanus and by Tremellius.

New vernacular editions in French, Italian, and Spanish had also appeared ; but little or nothing had been accomplished in the way of collating Greek and Hebrew mss., and correcting the text generally adopted.

Canon Westcott has instituted a careful comparison of the last version with former ones. In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah he finds that, "as far as the variations admit of being reduced to a numerical form, about seven-eighths are due to the Genevan version, either alone, or in agreement with one or both of the Latin versions 'of Tremellius and Pagninus.'" Professor Moulton says of another passage, in the fifty-fourth chapter, from the eleventh to the seventeenth verse, that in more than sixty out of ninety-six words varying in different versions, our version agrees with the Genevan, whereas its agreement with the Bishops' Bible does not extend to more than twelve out of that number. "Hence, though the Bishops' Bible furnished the basis for the new translation, it is clear that the Genevan exercised a much more powerful influence. Indeed, a glance will show that the five translations divide themselves into two classes, the Bibles of Coverdale, Cranmer, and the bishops, standing on the one side ; the Genevan and Authorized Version on the other." Tyndale and Whittingham, then, must be regarded as most important factors in the work wrought out by the six companies, showing that an honest endeavour to adopt the best translation of words must have guided them, apart from ecclesiastical prejudices, which might have been supposed to have turned them away from the Puritan exiles in Germany and Geneva. A further proof of their impartiality is seen in the use they made of the Rhemish Testament.

The repeated eulogiums pronounced by the first scholars

of this country upon the general accuracy of our Authorized Version render it unnecessary, and even presumptuous, for me to add anything to what they have said. Upon all the more important points of religious faith and practice, it is undoubtedly a safe and sufficient guide to those who are unable to examine the original Scriptures for themselves. While in this well-merited commendation there are few who will not agree, there are perhaps equally few who will not admit that there are minor inaccuracies which need correction. The obscurity of some passages, especially in the Old Testament; the infelicity and almost ludicrous effect of certain modes of expression employed, and the striking indelicacy of others; the arbitrary rendering of certain terms; and the unnecessary introduction in some instances of words distinguished by italics, are blemishes so frequently pointed out as to require no further notice. It should, however, be observed that the objections to some passages have undoubtedly arisen from a scrupulous adherence to the original, and from an attempt to transfer some of its idioms into our own language. It had been strange indeed if, in an age when Biblical criticism was in its infancy, a work had been produced in which the keen eye of modern scholarship could detect no imperfections or mistakes, and which could receive no improvement from rich treasures of learning amassed during the last two centuries. It is sufficient praise and a monument of fame glorious enough for any band of scholars to envy, that in a volume of such extent more alterations are not requisite to render it a perfect expression of the original. As a specimen of English style this Bible has received enthusiastic praise; and here, perhaps, admiration for its sacred contents, and the delightful associations with its very phraseology, which piety and devotion cannot

fail to form, may warp our judgment on the question of its literary merits; yet, after all that can be said against it in this point of view (and that it has literary defects as well as excellences it were uncandid to deny), we must surely be struck with the fact that while our Bible possesses numberless specimens of English diction, full of rhythm, beauty, and grandeur, there are to be found in it so few words and modes of expression which the lapse of between two and three centuries has rendered obsolete or dubious.

The dedication to King James is, in its way, somewhat of a literary curiosity, but it is unworthy of the prominent place it retains in our Bibles, especially as the introduction, quite of another character, is frequently omitted. The king is styled Most High and Mighty Prince, and is described as succeeding the "bright occidental star," Queen Elizabeth, as "the sun in his strength dispelling supposed and surmised mists;" and then allusion is made to his majesty's "writing in defence of the truth, which hath given such a blow unto that man of sin as will not be healed." Possibly some readers may not understand the reference. It is to two treatises, one entitled "*Triplici nodo, triplus cuneus*, or an apology for the Oath of Allegiance, against the two Breves of Pope Paulus Quintus, and the late letter of Cardinal Bellarmine to G. Blackwel, the arch-priest;" the other "A Premonition to all most mighty monarchs, kings, free princes, and states of Christendom."

If, on the one hand, the dedication to the king is strongly marked by the fulsome adulation of the age; on the other hand, the address to the reader is a most valuable composition, abounding with much that is quaint and characteristic, and also containing a great deal of useful information, blended with pious sentiment. It is to be

regretted that, while the dedication appears in all the editions, the address to the reader is inserted in very few. It would be a good alteration entirely to cancel the former, and universally introduce the latter.

It commences with a reference to the opposition which had been made to the undertaking, and then proceeds in a strain of characteristic illustration to unfold the excellences of the sacred volume. It vindicates the making and circulating of vernacular translations, and supplies a succinct account of ancient versions. The Romanists are attacked for their unwillingness to place the Scriptures in the hands of the people, and the motives which induced the translators to engage in the work are stated and justified. The need of a new version is proved, and the imputations of Popish opponents repelled. The writer shows how laborious had been the task of preparing this amended translation, and he explains the reason for introducing marginal readings, for translating the same original expressions by different English terms, and for the retention of old ecclesiastical words.

The following is an extract from this composition, and it shows how thoroughly the writer was convinced of the great principle of Protestantism—that is, the sufficiency of the Scriptures—and how highly he valued, and how deeply he venerated the holy volume: “‘I adore the fulness of the Scripture,’ saith Tertullian against Hermogenes. And again, to Apelles, an heretic of the like stamp, he saith, ‘I do not admit that which thou bringest in (or concludest) of thine own (head or store, *de tuo*) without Scripture.’ So St. Justin Martyr before him, ‘We must know by all means’ (saith he), ‘that it is not lawful (or possible) to learn (anything) of God, or of right piety, save only out of

the prophets, who teach us by Divine inspiration.' So St. Basil, after Tertullian, 'It is a manifest falling away from the faith, and a fault of presumption, either to reject any of those things that are written, or to bring in (upon the head of them, ἐπισηγείν) any of those things that are not written.' We omit to cite to the same effect St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in his Fourth Catechism, St. Hierome against Helvidius, St. Augustine, in his Third Book against the Letters of Petilian, and in very many other places of his works. Also we forbear to descend to later Fathers, because we will not weary the reader. The Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence if we do not study them? of curiosity, if we be not content with them? Men talk much of *εἰρεσιώβη*,* how many sweet and goodly things it had hanging on it; of the philosopher's stone, that it turneth copper into gold; of *Cornu-copiæ*, that it had all things necessary for food in it; of *Panaces* the herb, that it was good for all diseases; of *Catholicon* the drug, that it is instead of all purges; of Vulcan's armour, that it was an armour of proof against all thrusts and all blows, etc. Well, that which they falsely or vainly attributed to these things for bodily good, we may justly, and with full measure, ascribe unto the Scripture for spiritual. It is not only an armour, but also a whole armoury of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves, and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat, and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal's

* An olive bough wrapped about with wool, whereon did hang figs, etc.

meat or two; but, as it were, a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and, as it were, a whole cellar full of oil-vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a panary of wholesome food against fenowed* traditions; a physician's shop (St. Basil calleth it) of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a pandect of profitable laws against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels against beggarly rudiments; finally, a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? the original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the Author being God, not man; the inditer, the Holy Spirit, not the wit of the apostles or prophets; the penmen, such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God's Spirit; the matter, verity, piety, purity, uprightness; the form, God's word, God's testimony, God's oracles, the word of truth, the word of salvation, etc.; the effects, light of understanding, stableness of persuasion, repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost; lastly, the end and reward of the study thereof, fellowship with the saints, participation of the heavenly nature, fruition of an inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never shall fade away. Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night."

A work of such magnitude and extent, and one calculated to awaken prejudice in certain minds, was not likely to escape adverse criticism. Hugh Broughton is reported to have been the greatest Hebraist and the first Rabbinical scholar of his age. He had inveighed against the Bishops'

* Mouldy.

Bible, and proposed a new translation "by some six in the longest students in the tongues." Being a man of immense conceit, he numbered himself amongst the six, and in 1596, 1605, and 1606, published parts of a new translation of the Old Testament. He attacked Bancroft, and punningly branded him "as the bane of the banned croft," and consigned him to Gehenna, whence he said King James, whom he flattered, would "behold him from Abraham's bosom." When the version of 1611 came out, Broughton said, "It was sent me to censure, which bred in me a sadness which will grieve me while I breathe; it is so ill done. Tell his majesty that I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses than any such translation, by my consent, should be urged on poor churches."* It is curious to notice the lengths to which prejudice has carried some men on this subject. The translators were charged with introducing such words as "familiar spirit," "witch," and "wizard," to please King James; whereas the Bishops', the Genevan, and the Great Bible had used "familiar spirit" and "witch" as well as similar renderings. In later days the version has been condemned for flattering James by the rendering, "God save the king;" and the monarch himself has been represented as the final reviser: "those royal hands, dripping with the blood of hundreds of innocent human beings, gave the final touches to it." Notwithstanding attacks made at the time on the work in some quarters, it met, on the whole, with a favourable reception, and soon, in a great measure, superseded the use of earlier versions: in the attainment of this pre-eminence, perhaps it was aided by the royal authority expressed on the title-page. But the Genevan version continued in use a good while.

* Eadie, *Hist.*, vol ii. p. 265.

In closing this chapter I cannot refrain from remarking how great is the debt which Englishmen owe to the men, who laboured through many a month and year of hard and prayerful study, to produce the translations described. Few who read cheap Bibles and Testaments ever think of the toil and expense, the patience and prayer, devoted to the preparation of the Book which has now happily become so easily procurable. The business of these early translators was a heavy task. It was hard work to roll back the gates of the temple of truth—so long closed; to remove from the mouth of the well of living water the stones that covered it—so old and moss-grown. All honour to them for their pious toils! Let them have a place among our country's best benefactors. We will inscribe, even above the names of poets, patriots, soldiers, and statesmen, those of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and the rest; yet with no feeling of idolatry, but in a spirit akin to that of St. Paul, who, when speaking of those who rejoiced in his labours and success, devoutly acknowledged, "They glorified God in me."

The persons engaged in the earlier period were not the great, the noble, the dignified in the world's estimation, but men for the most part poor, persecuted, and despised. Prouder names follow in the wake of these. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

There can be no reasonable doubt that the pre-eminence which distinguishes the history of England among the states of Europe for the last three hundred years is to be attributed

largely to the wide circulation of this volume, and the Bible-reading habits of the people. It has proved a pillar of strength, bearing up and giving stability to public and private virtue—to patriotism, loyalty, obedience, and domestic affection. It is a fountain of light and love, illuminating the intellect and purifying the heart—the true palladium of our liberties, our peace, and our prosperity.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE BIBLE IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

TYPOGRAPHY and bookbinding were matters regarded with much interest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The perfection of the art of printing as soon as it was invented has been noticed in a former chapter; and some early Bibles exhibit charming specimens of old English letters, sharply cut and carefully impressed upon thick, handsome paper. The binding was often worthy of the contents, embossed and gilded morocco being employed for the purpose. Black letter gave place to Roman before the end of the sixteenth century. The quarto Geneva Bibles and Testaments, printed upon thin paper and exhibiting rude woodcuts, did by no means equal in beauty their folio predecessors of the Coverdale and Great Bible class.

In the seventeenth century we meet with notices of handsome volumes, bound and ornamented for special purposes—for royal use, for service in parish churches, and for commemorating private friendship. Illustrations are at hand on all three points; and as they are presented they suggest

pictures, not only of persons and incidents with which they are immediately connected, but of family groups in episcopal palaces, baronial halls and chambers, of rich citizens gathered round tall folios in rich covers, lying on window-seats, beneath the light of sun-rays beaming through many-coloured panes.

Notes are preserved of costly charges expended on royal copies. In a bookbinder's bill for his majesty King James's Chapel there are the following items: "1619, three large church Bibles, gilded, with silk strings, £9. Two Bibles for his majesty's use, fair gilded, with silk strings, £8." Considering the value of money at that time, we have evidence of the ornate description of these royal volumes.* Another account shows that less was expended on books intended for the royal family. The charge for binding a large Bible in folio, for the Lady Elizabeth—afterwards the ill-fated Palatine Electress and Bohemian Queen—was only the modest amount of thirty shillings.†

Bishop Laud, on a Rochester visitation, 1634, inquired into the state of church furniture in his diocese, and one of the answers is to this effect: "For our church books we conceive that no church in England hath newer or fairer; for our great church Bible, and all our service books being bought not above one year since, or little more, and all our prick song-books have been pricked out new and true, and fairly bound, within the same time, to the great charge of the Church."‡

A splendid edition was issued in 1638 by the famous printers Buck and Daniel. Sir Matthew Hale left Richard Baxter forty shillings in token of his love. With the forty shillings, he says, "I purchased the largest Cambridge Bible,

* Report of Hist. mss. Com. vol. iv. p. 314. † *Ibid.*, p. 282. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

and put his picture before it, as a monument to my house. But waiting for my own death, I gave it to Sir William Ellis, who laid out about ten pounds to put it into a more curious cover and keep it for a monument in his honour." "A shrewd observer of manners and habits tells of a lady in Edinburgh, who had fallen into poorer circumstances, and lived in a room on the highest stair of Covenant Close, that she never read a chapter, except out of a Cambridge Bible printed by Daniel, and bound in embroidered velvet."*

These are trifles not without interest; and there may be added to them another notice of the fact already mentioned that the printing of the Bible was a monopoly—a circumstance which repressed private enterprise, but which some adventurous people sought to evade by getting the Scriptures printed abroad, and then importing them for home circulation. An entry in the calendar of the House of Lords brings to light a case of this kind, and the consequent trouble in which the invader of the patent involved himself.

"1640. January 15, petition of Thomas Cowper. Some years since petitioner imported 850 Bibles, 2,000 prayer-books, and 750 psalm-books, of the orthodox translation, which were seized at the Custom House and placed in the custody of the registrar of the High Commission Court. Petitioner has taken steps to recover possession—prays that in order the books may not be lost they may be removed to a room which he has hired, near the parliament-house, of which he shall have one key, and some officer of the House another."†

A more important matter is brought to light in the Report of the Historical mss. Commission. The library of Trinity College, Dublin, contains an English version of the Bible by

* Baxter's *Works*, vol. i. p. 337. Scott's *Redgauntlet*. Eadie, vol. ii. p. 296.

† House of Lords Calendar; Report of Hist. mss. Com., vol. iv. p. 40.

Ambrose Ussher, brother to the archbishop of that name, in three volumes, belonging to about the year 1620. The author must have been a somewhat eccentric person, if we may judge of him from the "epistle dedicatorie" to James I. He considered his work would be acceptable to one who had promoted the execution of the so-called Authorized Version, and who must be considered as desiring the perfection of such work. "Though your majesty," he says, "being presently desirous of your dinner, have dined aforehand, yet if, after dinner, come in some dainty dish unto you, and well prepared, you assuredly will take the taste of it." The writer had evidently a good opinion of what he offered. "Your majesty at your first coming were sharp set, and content with any, and the cook hasted you out a reasonable sudden meal; in the whiles you have been dining on that, I have leisurely and seasonably dressed and served out this other dish." Then he goes on to say that there are two things essential to a new version, a change of matter and a change of words. He had attempted both, and had amended "a thousand chief places," and "the worth of one place found out is well understood of them who in the Scriptures think to have eternal life—every place is a new Virginia to dwell in." As to matter, he said, he opposed to the new translation not old renderings already weighed and rejected, but fresh ones "that yield new consideration, and that fight not only with our English Bible, but likely with all translated Bibles, in what language soever." This brother of the archbishop was no conservative, but a determined advocate for what is new. As to words, what he did, said he, was this, to find and set down "due and just English phrase in all congruity, squared to the original, and flatly incident." The prophets were perfect orators, and the translator, therefore,

sought out words, "that like as in water, face answereth to face, as Solomon speaketh, so they answer in appearance form to form." This, he says, was carefully observed by some of the translators of the "authorized Bible;" but "other some, and therein deserving blame, in the body itself of their translations strangely keep the very original specialities and properties, and so clap them into the text." Yet he observes: "The Hebrew tongue, as wanting cases, doth resemble our common languages, and seldom doth admit any more dislocation than do they."

Whether this dedication ever met the eyes of King James does not appear: at all events, judging from extracts in the report, one would not highly estimate Ambrose Ussher's labour, though after all he said, the changes made by him are not so new and startling as might be expected. A few verses taken from the first chapter of Genesis run thus:

"And the earth was disordered and without shape (voyd and disordered), and darkness was upon ye face of ye deepe, and the Spirite of God overspread [the words "moved in" are substituted above] ye face of ye waters." "And God sayd, Lett there be a firmament in the middes of ye waters, and lett it distinguish between waters and waters. So God made ye firmament, and it distinguished between ye waters yt were beneath the firmament, and betweene the waters that were above the firmament, and it was so." "Then God sayd, Lett the earth bud forth *ye bud of herbe*, seeding seed, ye fruitfull tree bearing fruite after his kinde which hath his seed in it, upon ye earth, and it was so." "Then God sayd, Lett the waters *spawnne forth ye spawnne of living creature* [the words "bring forth in abundance every creeping thing yt hath life" are interlined], and lett ye foule flie upon ye earth, upon ye face of ye firmament ["ye open firmament" interlined] of

heaven. And God created the great *whales*, and every living thing yt creepeth [“yt liueth and moveth” interlined] which ye waters *brought forth*, in their kinde, and every winged [feathered] foule, according to his kinde. And God saw yt it was good [well].” “And God blessed them, saying, Fructifie and increase.” “And God sayd, Lett ye earth bring forth ye living *creature* [thing] after his kinde, ye cattle and every creaping thing [“yt which creapeth,” inserted above], and the beast of the earth [animal terrestrie] after his kind, and it was so.”*

These specimens suffice to show that the author marred rather than mended what had been done by the six companies; and a comparison of his renderings with those they were intended to rival serves to increase our wonder, how, in an age when so many oddities entered men’s minds, our translators completely escaped them.

Twenty-three years after the Archbishop of Armagh’s brother had completed his Biblical toils, a very different method of Biblical instruction was adopted. As soon as the civil war broke out, the Parliamentarians determined to provide the army with portions of Scripture. It is often supposed that Cromwell’s Ironsides had each a complete Bible put into his possession; the supposition no doubt has arisen from the fact that a publication was issued at an early period of the great strife with the following title: “The Souldier’s Pocket Bible: printed at London by G. B. and R. W. for G. C., 1643, containing the most (if not all) those places contained in Holy Scripture which doe shew the qualifications of his inner man, that is a fit souldier to fight the Lord’s battels, both before the fight, in the fight, and after the

* Hist. MSS. Com. vol. iv. pp. 589-9.

fight, which Scriptures are reduced to severall heads, and fully applyed to the souldier's several occasions, and so may supply the want of the whole Bible, which a souldier cannot conveniently carry about him: and may be also usefull for any Christian to meditate upon, now in this miserable time of warre. Imprimatur, Edm. Calamy." The texts are almost all taken from the Genevan version. The title fully explains the nature and object of the work.

Not complete Bibles, but tracts of sixteen pages, were distributed through the army; and of them no original copy is known to exist, except that which may be found in the British Museum; but, of course, the fact of such slender provision of Biblical instruction being made for the invincible troopers does not preclude the belief that many a man carried in the pocket of his buff leathern coat an entire Bible or Testament, which he would devoutly read at his "tent door in the heat of the day."*

In reference to the printing of Bibles at that period and at a still earlier period, it should be noticed that patents did not secure correctness, and complaints were made relative to inaccuracies. In the first and second issues of our present version many errors are found—some very gross. "Judas" stands for "Jesus;" "Christ" is spelt "Chkist;" we find "Let

* There is also in the British Museum another Scripture tract, entitled "The Christian Soldier's Penny Bible, shewing from the Holy Scriptures the souldier's duty and encouragement. A brief collection of pertinent Scriptures under xx. heads, for the soldier's or seaman's pocket when he is not furnished with or cannot well carry a larger volume in time of war. London, printed by R. Smith for Sam. Wade, 1693." It is a reprint of "The Souldier's Pocket Bible," a little altered. In reference to this publication the following American extract is given: "Not less than five distinct editions have been issued here since the slaveholders' rebellion broke out in this country. The first American issue for our army consisted of 20,000 copies, and, I presume, 50,000 or more have already been circulated.—Boston, Massachusetts, October 23, 1861."

my people go that they may serve *thee*," for "serve *me*." The edition of 1613 is worse, and there may be found "the fast of the beast" for "the fat of the beast;" "shall glean" for "shall *not* glean;" "in the throne of David" for "in the room of David;" "shined through darkness" for "walked through darkness;" "delighted herself" for "defiled herself;" and "I praise you" for "I praise you not." The list could easily be enlarged.* Nor did the invasion of the patent promote accuracy. In 1644 some members of the Westminster Assembly complained to the House of Commons "that there were errors and corruptions in divers Bibles of an impression from beyond the seas," and they prayed the House to suppress the circulation of them. It was resolved, in consequence, that foreign Bibles should not be sold until they had been "passed and allowed." It was stated in 1646, at Amsterdam, that an English printer there had sent out in five years 40,000 copies; that his last edition consisted of 12,000 copies, and that altogether in that Dutch city 150,000 English Bibles had been printed.†

But whatever the state of printing might be, the seventeenth century in England may be fitly described as a *Bible age*. From the beginning to the end of that period attention was paid to the study and criticism of the English version. Large editions were published and circulated; everywhere the book might be found, and it acquired more than ever a character of national importance. In this respect a comparison between the seventeenth century and the preceding one is curious and instructive. Until about the middle of the sixteenth century, not an English Bible or Testament was printed within the corners of the kingdom; other books

* See Eadie, vol. ii. p. 291-294.

† *Ibid.*, p. 297.

issued from the press, but not the Book of Life. Now printing offices in London teemed with copies in various forms, to slake the thirst of an ever-increasing demand. Down to the death of Henry VIII., and indeed to the end of Elizabeth's reign, the universities, as such, had taken no leading part in the work of translation. None of the representative scholars of Oxford or Cambridge are found among the earlier editors; but now the flower of those schools of learning appear in connection with the Authorized Version, which owed much more to the great national seminaries than to any rulers in Church or State. For fifty years in the preceding century the vernacular Scriptures, save within a short interval, had been forbidden to the common people; and when a Bible or Testament was in anybody's possession it had to be ingeniously secreted and read by stealth; now copies were to be seen everywhere, not only in the bishop's hall or the nobleman's mansion, but in the citizen's tenement and the peasant's cottage. The Bible—which before the Reformation was established, and whilst Romanist services were more or less strictly observed, formed no conspicuous object in the cathedral and parish church—was now, throughout a hundred years, to be seen on the reading-desk where Episcopalian worship was celebrated, and in the pulpit of the Presbyterian and the Congregationalist also; amidst the controversies and battles of the age, the English Bible did really serve as a bond of union between church and church, class and class, man and man. The Anglo-Catholic and Puritan, the Prelatist and the Presbyterian, the Independent and the Baptist, for the most part adopted the Authorized Version, though amongst Nonconformists of different shades a preference for the translation by the Genevan exiles continued to linger. In many cases the Roundhead used the same

edition as the Cavalier. It might be found in the camps of two hostile armies, striking, amidst the clang of war, a note of union, "On earth peace, good will toward men." And it is worth observing that at the installation of Oliver Cromwell as Lord High Protector of England a copy of the English version, "ornamented with bosses and clasps richly gilt," was presented to his highness by the Speaker of the Commons, with these remarkable words: "The Bible is a book that contains the Holy Scriptures, in which you have the happiness to be well versed. This Book of Life consists of two Testaments, the Old and the New. The first shows *Christum velatum*, the second *Christum revelatum*, Christ veiled and revealed. It is the Book of books, and doth contain both precepts and examples for good government."*

It does not appear that any Bible had been presented to an English sovereign at his coronation. The story respecting Edward VI. related in this volume, whatever its claims may be on our belief, does not indicate that any Bible was used on that occasion. In records of the crowning of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., no mention is made of the sacred volume as given to them at the time, nor is there any account of such a ceremony in connexion with Charles II. and James II. But what had been done under the Commonwealth was renewed at the Revolution; and ever since the coronation of William III.† the English Bible has been laid on the altar of Westminster Abbey amidst the regalia, and placed in the sovereign's hands, as the holiest of offerings. The Puritan precedent has been

* Forster's *Statesmen of the Commonwealth*, vol. v. App. D. p. 423.

† "This part of the ceremony was introduced (I believe for the first time) at the coronation of King William and Queen Mary."—*Maskell*, vol. iii. p. 199.

adopted by the Church of England; and thus the English Bible binds together successive Governments, and hallows the line of modern princes on the English throne.

Although these pleasant generalizations are based on sufficient facts, it remains to be noticed that in some quarters there existed discontent in reference to the state of English Bibles. It has even been alleged that in some editions the text was tampered with by sectaries, who sought by certain alterations to give a Divine sanction to their own views. It is said, as reported by Isaac D'Israeli, that Field received a present of £1,500 from the Independents to corrupt a text in Acts vi. 3, the corruption being the easiest possible, the putting a "ye" instead of a "we." But Field had nothing whatever to do with the error, for it had appeared fifteen years before, and is first found in the Cambridge folio of 1638, revised by Church divines. The story bears on it the stamp of party prejudice.*

Yet the Puritans of the middle of the seventeenth century, like their predecessors in the middle of the sixteenth, were fond of annotations, and wished to follow the Genevan fashion. "Divers of the printers and stationers of London were induced

* *Curiosities of Lit.* vol. iii. p. 427; Eadie, vol. ii. p. 299.

In 1653 a little pearl Bible was issued, and in some of the copies there are these errors,—“ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?” 1 Cor. vi. 9.—“ Ye cannot serve and mammon ” (God left out), Matt. vi. 24.

An edition of 1631, described in the *Catalogue of the Cantton Exhibition*, p. 162, is called the “ Wicked Bible,” from the fact of the negative being left out in the seventh commandment. Laud fined the printer £300, with which he is said to have purchased a fount of Greek type for Oxford. A German Bible just a century later contains the same error. In reference to this Mr. Stevens quotes from Cotton Mather, that “ a blundering typographer made him exclaim, in a Bible printed before 1702, ‘ Printers have persecuted me without a cause ’ ” (Psa. cxix. 161.)

to petition the House of Commons for licence to print them after some revision fitting to the present volume." The request was granted in 1644, and letters were directed to certain divines to undertake the task; and hence arose the well-known work improperly styled the *Assembly's Annotations*; others besides members were employed upon it, and it was never formally sanctioned by the Westminster divines.* Still more characteristic was the Puritan dislike to the Apocrypha, in which even Dr. Lightfoot shared. Preaching before the House of Commons in 1643, from the last verse in Malachi, he said, "Thus sweetly and nearly should the two Testaments join together, but that the wretched Apocrypha doth thrust in between, like the two cherubim in the temple oracle, as with their outer wings they touch the two sides of the house, from 'In the beginning' to 'Come, Lord Jesus;' so with their inner, they would touch each other, the end of the law with the beginning of the gospel, did not this patchery of human invention divorce them asunder." The aversion had so prevailed that the Apocrypha began to be dropped at a still earlier period; indeed, as early as 1633, such Bibles were becoming fashionable, for Chief Justice Richardson interposed, on behalf of the Recorder of Salisbury, suspected of Puritanism, saying, "I have been long acquainted with him; he sitteth by me sometimes at church; he brought a Bible to the church with him (I have seen it) with the *Apocrypha* and *Common Prayer Book* in it, *not of the new cut.*" And here it may be added, that Lightfoot, with his dislike to the Apocrypha, coupled a desire for a new revision of the canonical books, and urged in another

* Calamy's *Abridg.* vol. i. p. 86.

sermon before the House of Commons, delivered in 1645, "a review and survey of the translation of the Bible, that the three nations might come to understand the proper and genuine study of the Scriptures by an exact, vigorous, and lively translation."

The matter came before the House of Commons in 1657. On the 16th of January the Grand Committee for Religion ordered a sub-committee to confer with Dr. Walton, Dr. Cudworth, and others, respecting translations and impressions. They met at Whitelock's house in Chelsea the next month. He says, "They had the most learned men in the Oriental tongues to consult with in this great business, and divers excellent and learned observations of some mistakes in the translations of the Bible in English, which yet was agreed to be the best of any translation in the world."* This statement, perhaps, includes what followed at a later date. Mr. Bampfield made a report on the 11th of June from the Grand Committee of Religion, in consequence of which a sub-committee was empowered to send for godly and learned ministers and laymen, to consult respecting a better version of the Psalms. At the same time they noticed that the Scriptures had been grossly misprinted. "Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?" instead of "*not* inherit;" "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of *righteousness* unto sin," instead of "*unrighteousness*," are alleged by the committee as instances. The committee further noticed the entire omission of the words in John ix. 21, "Or who hath opened his eyes, we know not."

Some years ago a friend pointed out to me a document

* Whitelock's *Memorials*, p. 654.

in the State Paper Office, which proved to be a draft bill for revising the English translation. It recites that Dr. Hill charged the translators of the Authorized Version with making the New Testament speak a prelati- cal language; and it states that the most learned translators have found it necessary again and again to revise their work. Notice is taken of Ainsworth's Pentateuch, the Psalms, and Solomon's Song, "greatly commended by many of the learned." Then follows a Bill "for the reforming, rectifying, and repairing of the former injury to the new translation, and for preventing of so great inconveniences of such dangerous consequence, and for the furtherance (what in us lieth) and the benefit and education of many. Be it (enacted) that no person or persons whatsoever, within the dominions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, without the approbation of persons hereafter named, or to be named by authority, shall presume to print or publish any such translation of the Bible or New Testament."

Dr. Owen,* Dr. Cudworth, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. William Greenhill, Mr. Samuel Slater, Mr. William Cowper, Mr. Henry Jeffrey, Mr. Ralph Venninge, and Mr. John Row, were authorized to search and observe wherein the last translation "appears to be wronged by the prelates, or printers, or others;" that such places might be rectified, and the most material defects removed; and that these persons should examine Ainsworth's translations, and those made by themselves or others, seeking the best assistance for the general good, and should also consider "the marginal readings in Bibles, whether any of them should rather be in the line." Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Tuckney, and

* The name of Goodwin is altered into that of John Owen. Caryl's name is struck out.

Mr. Joseph Caryl, were appointed supervisors, with this large power entrusted to them, "that what these persons shall so approve of shall accordingly be printed and published for the general edification and benefit of the whole nation, to be read both privately and in the public congregation."

That party feeling entered into the spirit of the enterprise is manifest from this document, and that the bill came to nothing is also clear.*

Nothing was done by authority in the work of revision at the end of the Commonwealth. Bibles and Testaments remained the same as before, save as printers paid more or less attention to the typography. But the Book of Common Prayer, in the translation of Scripture, exhibits some changes, only in the way of conformity to King James's Bible. The Psalter, indeed, remained as before in Coverdale's version. "When the last changes in the Prayer Book were made, it was found, it is said, smoother to sing; but this is not a full account of the matter, and it cannot be mere familiarity which gives to the Prayer Book Psalter, with all its errors and imperfections, an incomparable tenderness and sweetness. Rather we may believe that in it we can yet find the spirit of him whose work it mainly is, full of humility and love, not heroic or creative, but patient to accomplish, by God's help, the task which had been set him to do, and therefore best in harmony with the tenor of our daily lives."† The introductory sentences to Morning

* The document belongs to *Domestic Interreg.*, Bundle 662, f. 12. I have printed the whole in the appendix to my *Church of the Commonwealth*, p. 543. Part is given in Dr. Eadie's *English Bible*, vol. ii. p. 344, without any clue as to where it may be found. He omits the opening paragraph, which is important.

† Westcott, *Hist.* p. 368.

and Evening Prayer, and the Epistles and Gospels for the Sundays of the year, were now taken from the Authorized Version.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century a number of thin square volumes were printed for the convenience of divines, who used them in the pulpit ; hence they came to be called Preaching Bibles. The paper was thin, the type distinct, and a few notes were sprinkled over the margin. These were often incorrectly executed, and indeed successive editions of the Bible in different forms exhibit various readings, attributable to carelessness or to the universal law of human imperfection.

In 1683 the text was corrected, and many references to parallel passages were added by Dr. Scattergood ; in 1700 a fine edition was published in large folio, under the direction of Dr. Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury, with chronological dates and index by Bishop Lloyd, and accurate tables of Scripture weights and measures by Bishop Cumberland ; this edition, however, is said to abound in typographical errors. A more complete revision was made by Dr. Blayney, under the direction of the vice-chancellor and delegates of the Clarendon Press at Oxford. In his edition, printed both in quarto and folio in 1769, the punctuation was thoroughly revised ; the words printed in italics were compared with the Hebrew and Greek originals ; proper names, to the etymology of which allusions are made in the text, were translated and entered in the margin ; summaries of chapters, and running titles at the top of each page, are corrected ; material errors in the chronology are rectified ; and the marginal references re-examined and corrected, with 30,495 new ones added. From the pains

bestowed on this edition it came to be the standard from which subsequent impressions were executed.

Another attempt in the same line seems to have been still more successful. The booksellers of the metropolis, having applied to his majesty's printers to undertake a new and handsome edition, confided its execution to Mr. George Woodfall in 1804. The copy selected for the purpose was the current Cambridge edition, with which the new edition agrees page for page. The proofs were read twice, and compared with the Oxford impression then in use, and were then transmitted to the Rev. Launcelot Sharpe, by whom they were read again, and compared with Dr. Blayney's 4to. edition of 1769. After the proofs returned for press had been corrected, the formes were placed upon the press at which they were to be worked, and another proof was taken. This was read by Mr. Woodfall's superintendent, and afterwards compared by Mr. W. himself with Dr. Blayney's edition, and any errors previously overlooked were corrected, the formes not having been removed from the press after the last proofs had been taken off. By this precaution was avoided a danger of frequent occurrence and considerable magnitude, arising from a removal of the formes from a proof-press to those on which the sheets were to be finally worked off. Of this edition, which was ready for publication in 1806, five hundred copies were printed on imperial 4to., two thousand on royal, and three thousand on medium quarto size. In the course of printing from the Cambridge copy a large number of gross errors were discovered in the latter; while the errors in the common Oxford editions were not so few as twelve hundred. The London edition of 1806 being exhausted, a new impression was put to press in 1810,

which was completed with equal beauty and accuracy in 1812, and published in 1813.*

The circulation of the Bible is intimately connected with the subject of this history. Before the end of the seventeenth century efforts were made to supply the poor with copies of the English Scriptures. Lord Wharton, a benevolent Puritan nobleman, who lived at Wooburn House, in the county of Bucks, directed by instructions, dated April 24, 1693, that 1,050 Bibles, with the singing psalms, should be provided for distribution in Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Buckinghamshire.† The Assembly's Catechism was to be distributed in like manner. The Christian Knowledge Society, instituted in 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, instituted in 1701, promoted the dissemination of Bibles and Testaments. One private trust at least,‡ in the course of the same century, took up the same object, and a like purpose no doubt animated many Christian minds; but it was not until the commencement of the present century, that any large combined catholic effort was made for the universal diffusion of the Word of God, without note or comment. The Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, in December, 1802, entertained "the idea of having a Bible Society established in London on a similar basis to that of the Religious Tract Society,—*i. e.*, the union of different denominations in a common work." It was soon resolved "that it would be highly desirable to stir up the public mind to the dispersion of Bibles generally, and that a paper in a magazine to that effect might be singu-

* This account is taken from Horne's *Introduction to the Bible*, 5th Edit., vol. ii. p. 253. I cannot find it in the last edition.

† *Hist. of Crendon Lane Meeting House, Wycombe.*

‡ Coward's Trust, of which I am an administrator.

larly useful." At length a committee met, when the object of the intended Society was maturely considered, and it was unanimously determined "to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in foreign countries, and in those parts of the British dominions for which adequate provision is not yet made, it being understood that no English translation of the Scriptures will be gratuitously circulated by the Society in Great Britain ;" and on the 1st February, 1803, an important minute appears,—“That the translation of the Scriptures established by public authority be the only one in the English language to be adopted by this Society.”*

* Minutes of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society.





CHAPTER XIV.

REVISION OF THE ENGLISH VERSION.



THE idea of a Revision of our English Bible at the period of the Commonwealth we have seen came to nothing; and in the eighteenth century it attracted no large measure of attention. There were, however, learned men who saw the desirableness of attempting the object, and expressed an opinion to that effect. They felt that Biblical criticism had made such strides, that so many mss. had been collected for the rectification of the original text, that the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New were being more carefully examined than they had ever been; that the learned labours of much more than a hundred years had thrown additional light on the meaning of revelation, and that therefore these advantages ought to be made available for the improvement of our vernacular Scriptures. They appreciated the excellency of what is called the Authorized Version; but as there are spots even in the sun,

they did not think it presumptuous, nor any just cause of offence to the most enthusiastic admirers of what was finished in 1611, to assert that it contained obvious imperfections, which ought to be removed. Amongst those who took this view were Waterland, Blayney, Lowth, and Kennicott, not to mention others. But it was a long time before public opinion was ripe for a due consideration of the question.

In the meanwhile distinguished scholars issued versions of particular books, accompanied by explanatory notes, and more or less of critical discussion. Lowth's translation of *Isaiah*, Blayney's of *Jeremiah*, Newcome's of the *Minor Prophets*, and (in the present century Henderson's version of all these books) also Campbell's work on the *Gospels*, and Macknight's on the *Epistles*, may be regarded as productions of a tentative character preparing for a larger and a united effort. Boothroyd's Bible, Alford's Testament, and other books might be added to the list. The perusal of these volumes, though on some they produced the impression, and not without reason, of the superiority of the common version as *a whole*, on many they left the conviction that it was a great pity so noble a version as that universally used should not be made still more admirable, through a judicious use of modern scholarship for the purpose. More and more it came to be seen that objections to a revision of King James's Bible were no more valid than had been objections to a revision of the Great Bible, or of Matthew's Bible, or of any other ancient one. Every merely human work—and translation is necessarily such a work—it was felt must admit of improvement, and that a careful distinction should ever be made between the perfect writings of men inspired,

and the rendering of them into a modern tongue by men uninspired.

In 1857 appeared a Revision of the Gospel of St. John by five clergymen—Dr. Barrow, Dr. Moberly, Henry Alford, B.D., William G. Humphry, B.D., and Charles J. Ellicott, M.A. In the preface to this publication they remark, “The subject of the revision of the Authorized Version of Holy Scripture has been for some time past brought before the minds of men in various ways. It has been urged in Convocation and in Parliament, and has been extensively debated in public journals, in pamphlets, and other publications, and at the meetings of religious societies. In America the same subject has attracted great notice; and the design of revision has been pursued with considerable labour by the American Bible Union. In Holland a revision of the Dutch Bible has been set on foot, and is now in progress, under the authority and supervision of the Synod of the Reformed Church.” “The two objects of this tentative revision of one Gospel,” the editors stated to be, “the one to exhibit in the fullest, most honest, and most loyal manner the actual meaning of the inspired Word of God, allowing no subjective preferences or preconceived views to interfere with the simple and faithful exposition in English of the original text of Holy Scripture; the other to show, as far as is compatible with this first and chiefest object, that the Authorized Version is indeed a precious and holy possession, and that the errors of it are very slight and few in comparison of its many and great excellences.”

In the year 1858 the then Dean of Westminster, Dr. Trench, now Archbishop of Dublin, boldly called public attention to the subject. “It is clear,” he remarks,

“that the question, Are we, or are we not, to have a new translation of Scripture? or rather—some few would propose this who did not wish to loosen from its anchors the whole religious life of the English people,—shall we, or shall we not, have a new revision of the Authorized Version? is one which is presenting itself more and more familiarly to the minds of men. This, indeed, is not by any means the first time that this question has been earnestly discussed; but that which differences the present agitation of the matter from preceding ones is, that on all former occasions the subject was only debated among scholars and divines, and awoke no interest in circles beyond them. The present is apparently the first occasion on which it has taken the slightest hold of the popular mind. But now indications of the interest which it is awakening reach us from every side. America is sending us the instalments . . . of a new version as fast as she can. The wish for a revision has for a considerable time been working among Dissenters here; by the voice of one of these it has lately made itself heard in Parliament, and by the mouth of a Regius Professor in Convocation. Our reviews, and not those only which are specially dedicated to religious subjects, begin to deal with the question of revision. There are, or a little while since there were, frequent letters in the newspapers, urging or remonstrating against such a step—few of them, it is true, of much value, yet at the same time showing how many minds are now occupied with the subject.

“On the whole I am persuaded that a revision ought to come; I am convinced that it will come. Not, however, I would trust, as yet, for we are not as yet in any respect prepared for it; the Greek and the English which should

enable us to bring this to a successful end might, it is feared, be wanting alike.”*

Difficulties are discussed, and the writer seems to grow more hopeful as he proceeds, recommending that the work of revision, when attempted, should be a united one, conducted by Churchmen and Dissenters together. Then he faces the question as to how such a work would be received. “Just as our ancestors,” he replied, “grew gradually in love with our present translation, Churchmen weaning themselves from the Bishops’ Bible, and Puritans from the Geneva, just as one and the other of these versions fell quite out of use, though living on, the latter especially, for some time after they had been formally superseded by the present version, Churchmen and Puritans finally agreeing in the decision, not that the old was better, but the new, so will it be here. What amount of difficulty those who lived in the reign of James I. found in reconciling themselves to the change, it is hard to say. We have curiously little on the subject in the contemporary religious literature, the very absence of such notices seeming to verify that the difficulty was not very great; but in one respect it ought to be much less now, inasmuch as, careful as our then translators were not to change wantonly for mere change’s sake, still the alterations which they made were considerable, many times more than would be necessary or desirable now.”†

This cautious treatment of a difficult subject scarcely augured that within a little more than ten years the matter would be effectually taken in hand. Yet so it was. In 1870 the work timidly desired by some, decidedly opposed by others, began in earnest.

* *On the Authorized Version of the New Testament*, by R. C. Trench, D.D., pp. 1-3.

† *Ibid.* p. 140.

On the 10th of February the then Bishop of Winchester, Dr. Wilberforce, brought the subject before the Upper House of Convocation for the Province of Canterbury, and moved "that a committee of both Houses be appointed to confer with any committee appointed by the Convocation of the Northern Province, to report upon the desirableness of a revision of the New Testament, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in all those passages where plain and clear errors, whether in the Hebrew or Greek text, originally adopted by the translators, or in the translation made from the same, shall, on due investigation, be found to exist." After advocating a revision, he expressed this opinion: "Without for a moment doubting that among the religious bodies outside ourselves there are men of great learning and ability, well able to help in a movement of this kind, or who might most profitably be consulted by those to whom it was entrusted, I think it would not be well to join them in a great authoritative or official action, which in this way would revise the translation which we put forth to the people of England, as being the translation of the New Testament."

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, in advocating a revision, adverted to circumstances which had led his right reverend brother and himself to deem it necessary now to take action in regard to this most weighty subject, and proceeded to refer to the growing desire for as correct a text as possible of Holy Scripture, dwelling upon the important results of the late discovery of the Sinaitic ms. of the New Testament. The Bishop of St. David's (Dr. Thirlwall) thought that an addition to the resolution of the Bishop of Winchester would be very desirable, that the Old Testament, as well as the New, should be revised, and did not see why

it would not be perfectly practicable to call in the aid of some of the more eminent and distinguished among the Dissenters, as this would have the effect of reconciling the minds of different religious bodies to this great undertaking. In illustrating the importance of what was contemplated, he entered into some details, which excited considerable controversy, not needing to be described here. There was further discussion carried on by the Bishop of Llandaff, who pointed out passages in the Old Testament needing revision ; and by the Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. Selwyn), who stated that the Wesleyan missionaries had successfully aided in the revision of the version for the natives of New Zealand. The Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Wordsworth) stated that he was not prepared for any alteration of the text ; and he dwelt at some length upon the value of the Authorized Version. The Bishops of Salisbury (Dr. Moberly) and Exeter (Dr. Temple) supported the motion, and it was at last unanimously agreed to adopt the Bishop of Winchester's resolution, adding the revision of the Old Testament to that of the New.

The resolution was presented to the Lower House on the 10th of February, and members were immediately appointed to confer on the matter with those selected for the same purpose by the Upper House.

On the 13th of the same month Dr. Alford, Dean of Canterbury, brought the subject under public notice in a sermon from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral. " We in this land," he said, " possess a version of Holy Scriptures which may challenge comparison for faithfulness, for simplicity, and for majesty with any that the world has ever seen. Perhaps its chief defect is that it admits of being too highly praised. Its pure use of our native tongue, the

exquisite balance and music of its sentences, the stately march of its periods, the hold on the memory taken by the very alliterations and antitheses, which were the manner of writing when it was made,—these and a hundred other charms which invest almost every verse, make us love it even to excess; and when we intensify all these claims to our affection by the fact that it has been for centuries, and is now, the vehicle to this great English race of all that is pure, and holy, and lovely, and of good report,—the first lesson of infancy, the guide of mature life, the comforter of sickness and death,—we can hardly be surprised that many and some of the best among us refuse to see its faults, and are unable to contemplate with any content the prospect of their being corrected. It is a spirit for which we ought to be deeply thankful, this earnest and affectionate cleaving to the English version of the Scriptures.

“The character and spirit of our version are all that we can desire. But it is utterly impossible for any one capable of judging to deny that it is disfigured by numerous blemishes, far too important to be put by or condoned. The gravest of these are due to manifest errors in rendering,—errors about which there could be but one opinion among Biblical scholars of all religious views. Others have arisen from principles adopted and avowed by the translators themselves, as, for instance, from the unfortunate one of allowing a number of apparently equivalent English words an equal right to represent one and the same word in the original, whereby very important passages have been disguised and confused. Others, again, owe their source to causes which have come into operation since the version was made. Certain words have, as time has gone on, passed into new meanings. Others, which could formerly be read without offence, have

now by their very occurrence become stumbling-blocks, and tend to remove all solemnity, and even all chance of fair audience, from the passages where they occur. Some few blemishes may also be due (and it is hardly possible altogether to put by this source) to doctrinal or ecclesiastical bias on the part of the translator."

Taking up the question, How shall the revision be accomplished? he replies: "Such a work should no more be done by one section of the Christian Church than by one man. The same concurrence and conflict of thought, the same variety of experience, the same differing shades of feeling and apprehension which render many men requisite for the work, render also many churches requisite."

On May 3, a report from the committee appointed by the two Houses was read in the Upper House, embodying these resolutions:

"That it is desirable that a revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures be undertaken.

"That the revision be so conducted as to comprise both marginal renderings and such emendations as it may be found necessary to insert in the text of the Authorized Version.

"That in the above resolutions we do not contemplate any new translation of the Bible, or any alteration of the language, except when, in the judgment of the most competent scholars, such change is necessary.

"That in such necessary changes the style of the language employed in the existing version be closely followed.

"That it is desirable that Convocation should nominate a body of its own members to undertake the work of revision, who shall be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong."

Respecting these resolutions much discussion arose. The Bishop of Ely, Dr. Harold Browne, advocated caution, and said he was favourable to marginal readings rather than changes in the body of the translation: the Bishop of Lincoln protested against altering what had been called "favourite texts:" the Bishop of Bath and Wells was in favour of revision, and the Bishops of Llandaff and Salisbury commended the undertaking.

The report of the committee came under consideration in the Lower House on the 3rd of May, when Canon Selwyn moved, and Archdeacon Allen seconded its adoption. Verbal alterations in the resolution were suggested by Chancellor Massingberd; and Dr. Jebb thought it "a fatal thing that a version, of which we have been now in possession for more than 250 years, should be subject to the criticism of this very hasty and not very orthodox age." The Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Mansell, maintained that, under existing circumstances, a revision was desirable; Dr. Fraser urged caution; Archdeacon Denison regarded the whole business with great suspicion, and lamented that so few members were present to discuss the question; Archdeacon Rose conceived there was no ground to fear any rash innovations; and another member was surprised that any opposition should be made to the resolutions of the committee. Dr. Kay believed there was unnecessary alarm at the proposal, and that the corrections made would be but few. Canon Woodgate, Canon Blakesley, Canon Gregory, Canon Hopkins, Archdeacon Clark, Lord A. Compton, and others shared in the discussion.

The Dean of Canterbury took an active part in the debate, and advocated the employment of any suitable assistance which could be obtained from learned Jews on

the revision of the Old Testament—an idea which was favoured by some, but opposed by others. At a later hour of the day, when the number of members present had diminished, the dean, in his scarlet robe as Doctor of Divinity, rose at the upper end of the Jerusalem Chamber, and standing near the prolocutor, delivered a speech which will not soon be forgotten by those who heard it. Alluding to the Jews, whose assistance had been a subject of debate, he said, “I regard that people, as we all do, as a wonderful phenomenon; but there is no part of that phenomenon which I regard as more wonderful than the ban that Providence seems to have placed upon every attempt to convert them to Christianity. I regard that people as wonderfully folded up by God’s Providence for some purpose, and I regard them (whatever ridicule may hang about the expression) as a race in many respects superior to our own. It has been well remarked by a very distinguished person that in most of the greatest acts of modern times that nation has had a part. I look forward into the dim distance of prophecy, and amid the mist which hangs over the end of the world, lighted by the setting rays of mundane glory, and by the rising luminary of a world to come, I see that form, despised and degraded as it may now be, rising into grandeur and magnificence, seven men taking hold of the skirt of one that is a Jew, and saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you;’ and when a work is undertaken involving the palladium of that race, it is out of all question that we should treat with scorn the idea of asking some of their learned men to come and tell us the meaning of phrases in their own language with which we believe them to be familiar.” I was present in the Jerusalem Chamber when my lamented friend delivered this speech,

and I felt it was impossible for any one who heard him to resist the force of his vigorous eloquence. It should be mentioned that the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Stanley, who had taken a great interest in the object from the beginning, in the course of his advocacy on this occasion also earnestly enforced the following points—which, indeed, had been urged by Dean Alford: *i.e.*, that there should be absolute impartiality in the selection of scholars to be employed; that the results of the labours of the committee of revision should be final; and that the question should not be brought back to the House for discussion. When the debate was concluded, the reported resolutions were carried by 23 against 7.*

Whilst these discussions proceeded in the Houses of Convocation, various opinions were expressed on the subject in the newspapers of the day, some adverse, but most of them favourable. The Nonconformists could not but take a deep interest in so vital a question, and generally they supported the idea of a careful and cautious revision.

At the annual meeting of the Congregational Union in the month of May, 1870, expression was given to the prevalent feeling of the Independent body in two papers, one read by Professor Newth, of New College, St. John's Wood; and another by Professor Simon, of Spring Hill College, Birmingham.

Professor Newth dwelt upon the immense amount of research which since the revision of 1611 had been given to the revision of the original texts. Also he pointed out the process of growth attaching to living language, and the consequent change which has taken place in the meaning of words since the time of the Tudors and Stuarts; he

* *Chronicle of Convocation* for 1870, p. 368.

likewise referred to the unfortunate fondness of the translators for variety, leading them to render by different English terms words that are identical in the original. As regards the method of procedure in a new revision, he insisted upon two points: first, that in the selection of translators means should be adopted to secure the most approved Biblical scholars in England and America, without regard to the denomination to which they might belong; and secondly, that each denomination should be invited to choose from amongst its own members a committee of correspondence, to which the revised translation should be submitted.

Professor Simon read another paper, in which he advanced further considerations in favour of revision; that it was expedient, because not to accomplish it was to be out of harmony with the spirit of the times; because it was requisite for the sake of the faith; because we owe it to the Bible itself; and then, in reference particularly to the audience he addressed, because it was in harmony with Congregational principles.

The committee appointed by Convocation held their first meeting on the 25th of May, when certain resolutions and rules were agreed to as fundamental principles on which the revision was to proceed.

The committee divided itself into two companies,—the one for the revision of the authorized version of the Old Testament, the other for the revision of the authorized version of the New Testament.

The company for the revision of the authorized version of the Old Testament was to consist of the Bishops of St. David's (Dr. Thirlwall), Llandaff (Dr. Ollivant), Ely (Dr. Harold Browne), Lincoln (Dr. Wordsworth), and Bath and Wells

(Lord Arthur C. Hervev, D.D.); and of the following members of the Lower House: Archdeacon Rose, Canon Selwyn, Dr. Jebb, and Dr. Kay.

The company for the revision of the authorized version of the New Testament was to comprise the Bishops of Winchester (Dr. Wilberforce), Gloucester and Bristol (Dr. Ellicott), Salisbury (Dr. Moberly); and the following members from the Lower House: the Prolocutor, the Deans of Canterbury (Dr. Alford) and Westminster (Dr. Stanley), and Canon Blakesley.

The first portion of the work to be undertaken by the Old Testament company was the revision of the authorized version of the Pentateuch.

The first portion of the work to be undertaken by the New Testament company was the revision of the authorized version of the synoptical Gospels.

The following scholars and divines were then invited to join the Old Testament company: Dr. W. L. Alexander, pastor of St. Augustine's Church, Edinburgh, and Professor in the Theological Hall of the Congregational Churches of Scotland; T. Chenery, Professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford; the Rev. Canon Cook, of Exeter; Dr. Davidson, Professor of Theology in the Free Church Hall, Edinburgh; Dr. B. Davies, Professor in the Baptist College, Regent's Park, London; Dr. Fairbairn, Professor in the United Presbyterian College, Glasgow; the Rev. J. Field, Rector of Heigham, Norwich; Dr. Ginsburg; Dr. Gotch, Principal of the Baptist College, Bristol; Archdeacon Harrison, Canon of Canterbury; Professor Leathes, of King's College, London; Professor McGill; Dr. Payne Smith, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford; Professor Perowne, of Cambridge; Canon Plumptre, Professor in King's College,

London; Canon Pusey, of Oxford; Dr. Wright, of the British Museum; and W. Aldis Wright, of Trinity College, Cambridge.

The following scholars and divines were invited to join the New Testament company: Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Trench; Dr. Angus, Principal of Baptist College, Regent's Park; Dr. Eadie, Professor in United Presbyterian College, Glasgow; the Rev. F. G. Hort, Vicar of Great Wymondley, Herts; Canon Humphreys; Canon Kennedy, Regius Professor of Greek, Cambridge; Archdeacon Lee; Canon Lightfoot, Professor at Cambridge; Dr. Milligan, Professor of Biblical Criticism, Aberdeen; Professor Moulton, Wesleyan College, Richmond; Dr. J. H. Newman, Oscott, Birmingham; Professor Newth, New College, St. John's Wood; Dr. Roberts, Professor, St. Andrew's University; Rev. G. Vance Smith, English Presbyterian College, York; Dr. Scott, Balliol College, Oxford; Rev. F. Scrivener, Rector of Gerrans, Cornwall; Dr. Vaughan, Master of the Temple; and Professor Westcott, Cambridge.

The resolutions adopted by both companies were,—to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness; to limit as far as possible the expressions of such alterations to the language of the authorized and earlier versions; to go twice over the portion to be revised, once provisionally, the second time finally; to adopt the Text for which the evidence decidedly preponderates, and where it differs from that in the Authorized Version to indicate the fact in the margin; to make or retain no change in the Text, on the second or final revision by each company, except by the approval of two-thirds of those present, but on the first revision to decide by simple majorities; in every case of proposed alteration which

may give rise to discussion, to defer voting until the next meeting, whenever the same is required by one-third of those present, the intended vote being announced in the notice; to revise the headings of chapters and pages, the paragraphs, italics and punctuation; and to refer on the part of each company, when considered desirable, to divines, scholars, and literary men, whether at home or abroad, for their opinions. It was further resolved, that the work of each company be communicated to the other as it is completed, in order that there may be as little deviation from uniformity in language as possible: and that the bye-rules of each company be—to make all corrections in writing previously to the meeting; to place all the corrections due to textual considerations on the left-hand margin, and all other corrections on the right-hand margin; and to transmit to the chairman, in case of being unable to attend, the corrections proposed in the portion agreed upon for consideration.

Of those members of Convocation who were originally appointed on the committee, Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, and Dr. Jebb, declined to serve; and amongst the scholars invited, Canon Pusey and Dr. J. H. Newman did not accept the invitation.

On the 2nd of June there was a celebration of the Holy Communion in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, attended by members of the two companies.

A public notice early appeared from the pen of Dean Alford in reference to the proceedings of the companies, in which he said that what had passed taught a double lesson, of which, however, both the branches tend one way, and ultimately unite. "The first rather to leave the onward steps of our work to the unfolding of God's Providence, than to be restlessly and anxiously desiring them for ourselves.

Like those who have had to deal with another well-known 'religious difficulty,' we encounter our greatest trouble, not in the matter of deeds, but of words." And the second lesson is the great fact that the Spirit of truth is opening the way before us both rapidly and surely. "Never was there a time in the course of history, never in the lifetime of the Church, when the intelligent Christian, when the faithful and loyal citizen, had more reason to thank God and to take courage."

The health of this warm advocate for revision and this earnest labourer in the earliest stages of the enterprise broke down at the close of the year, and on the 12th of January, 1871, he departed to his rest. Others have followed him. Dr. Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, died in 1873; Dr. Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's, died in 1875, also Canon Selwyn about the same year, and Professor Eadie in 1876; Dr. Scott, of Balliol, Oxford, afterwards Dean of Rochester, Dr. Tregelles, who was named after the first list of revisers had been completed, died at an early period. A few resignations have occurred; and now, in addition to the original revisers who remain, there are the following names: R. L. Bensley, of the University Library, Cambridge; Professor Birrell, St. Andrew's; the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, Oxford; Principal Douglas, Glasgow; S. R. Driver, New College, Oxford; the Rev. C. J. Elliot, Winkfield Vicarage, Windsor; the Rev. J. D. Geden, Wesleyan College, Didsbury; the Rev. J. R. Lumby, Cambridge; the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Oxford; Professor W. R. Smith, Aberdeen; and Professor Weir, Glasgow. These scholars are members of the Old Testament Company; and it should be noticed that Dr. Harold Browne, who succeeded Dr. Wilberforce in the see of Winchester, acts as chairman of this division, and Mr. Aldis Wright as

secretary. To the New Testament company have been added Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrew's, Professor David Brown, of Aberdeen, and Professor Palmer, Oxford. Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, acts as chairman, the Rev. J. Troutbeck as secretary.

At an early period it was thought desirable by Biblical scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, that Englishmen and Americans should combine in this great work for the benefit of the Anglo-Saxon race throughout the world. The steps taken for this purpose are described by the Rev. Dr. Philip Schaff, of New York, who from the commencement has taken a lively interest in the enterprise.

“The British committee is fully competent, without foreign aid, to do justice to the work committed to its care. Yet, in view of its practical aim to furnish a revision not for scholars, but for the churches, it is of great importance to secure at the outset the sympathy and co-operation of Biblical scholars in the United States, where the Authorized Version is as widely used and as highly respected as in Great Britain. Rival revisions would only add new fuel to sectarian divisions already too numerous among Protestants. Let us hold fast by all means to the strongest bond of interdenominational and international union which we have in a common Bible. The new revision, when completed, should appear with the imprimatur of the united Biblical scholarship of English-speaking Christendom. In August, 1870, Dr. Joseph Angus, President of Regent's Park College, London, and one of the British revisers, arrived in New York with a letter from Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the New Testament Company, authorizing him to open negotiations for the formation of an American Committee of Revision. At his request I prepared a draft of rules for

co-operation, and a list of names of Biblical scholars who would probably best represent the different denominations and literary institutions in this movement. The suggestions were submitted to the British committee and substantially approved. Then followed an interesting official correspondence, conducted, on behalf of the British committee, by the Bishop of Winchester, the Dean of Westminster, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, and Dr. Angus. I was empowered by the British committee to select and invite scholars from non-episcopal churches; the nomination of members from the American Episcopal Church was, for obvious reasons, placed in the hands of some of its bishops; but, as they declined to take action, I was requested to fill out the list. It is not necessary, in this place, to enter into details; I will only state the result of the negotiations.

LIST OF AMERICAN REVISERS.

The Old Testament Company.

Prof. Thomas J. Conant, D.D. . . .	Brooklyn, N.Y.
„ George E. Day, D.D. . . .	New Haven, Conn.
„ John De Witt, D.D. . . .	New Brunswick, N.J.
„ William Henry Green, D.D. . .	Princeton, N.J.
„ George Genten Hare, D.D. . .	Philadelphia, Pa.
„ Charles P. Kranth, D.D. . . .	Philadelphia, Pa.
„ Joseph Packard, D.D. . . .	Fairfax, Va.
„ Calvin E. Stowe, D.D. . . .	Cambridge, Mass.
„ James Strong, S.T.D. . . .	Madison, N.J.
„ C. V. A. Van Dyck, M.D. . . .	Beyrut, Syria.
„ Tayler Lewis, LL.D. . . .	Schenectady, N.Y.

The New Testament Company.

Right Rev. Alfred Lee, D.D. . . .	Wilmington, Delaware.
Prof. Ezra Abbot, D.D., LL.D. . . .	Cambridge, Mass.
Rev. G. R. Crooks, D.D. . . .	New York.
Prof. H. B. Hackett, D.D., LL.D. . . .	Rochester, N.Y.
,, James Hadley, LL.D. . . .	New Haven, Conn.
,, Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D. . . .	Princeton, N.J.
,, A. C. Kendrick, D.D. . . .	Rochester, N.Y.
,, Matthew B. Riddle, D.D. . . .	Hartford, Conn.
,, Charles Short, LL.D. . . .	New York.
,, Henry B. Smith, D.D., LL.D. . . .	New York.
,, J. Henry Thayer, D.D. . . .	Andover, Mass.
,, W. F. Warren, D.D. . . .	Boston, Mass.
Rev. Edward A. Washburn, D.D. . . .	New York.
,, Theo. D. Woolsey, D.D., LL.D. . . .	New Haven, Conn.
Prof. Philip Schaff, D.D. . . .	New York.

“In the delicate task of selection, reference was had, first of all, to ability, experience, and reputation in Biblical learning and criticism; next, to denominational connection and standing, so as to have a fair representation of the leading churches and theological institutions; and last, to local convenience, in order to secure regular attendance; some distinguished scholars were necessarily omitted, but may be added hereafter by the committee itself.”

On the 7th of December, 1871, a number of American revisers assembled in New York “for the purpose of effecting a temporary organization to co-operate with the British committee in the revision of the Authorized English Version of the Scriptures.” The Rev. Dr. Howson, Dean of Chester, at the time on a visit to America, attended this

meeting, at which was presented the following resolution from England, dated October 23, 1871 :

“ That the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol be requested to communicate with Dr. Schaff to the effect that the work of the New Testament revisers is at present only tentative and provisional, and that it may be considerably altered at the second revision ; but that, upon the assurance of Dr. Schaff that the work, so far as it is at present advanced, will be considered as *strictly confidential*, the company will send a sufficient number of copies for Dr. Schaff and his brother revisers, for their own private use, the copies to be in no way made public beyond themselves. For this purpose that Dr. Schaff be requested to send the names and addresses of the scholars associated with him in this matter, so soon as the company is completely formed.”

The names were forwarded, and on the 17th of July, 1872, the New Testament company at Westminster resolved “ that so many copies of the revised version of the first three Gospels be entrusted to Dr. Schaff for the use of the above-named, with the request that they be regarded as private and confidential, and with the intimation that the work itself is provisional and tentative, and likely to undergo considerable modification.” On the receipt of these copies the American committee, on the 4th of October, 1872, met together and commenced their labours, which have been continued down to the present time.

We have seen that during the Middle Ages a few men devoted themselves to the translation of Scripture, and the series of versions thus produced formed a living rill trickling along the desert waste. The age of Wycliffe showed noble and unprecedented attempts to put our countrymen in

possession of the Divine treasure; and the version which he executed, and which his followers revised, must ever remain a monument of honour to his name. At the commencement of the English Reformation opened the grand era of Biblical translation, which extended to the commencement of the seventeenth century. The revival of literature, leading to a knowledge of the original languages of the two Testaments, lent its aid to the sacred cause; whilst Christianity exerted a reflex influence, and gave a new and deeper impulse to the study of the Greek and Hebrew tongues.

The translation of the Word of God formed a principal object in the view of our Reformers; the wide circulation of Bibles and Testaments tended more than anything else to secure for Protestantism the firm footing it soon obtained; and their wider circulation since has mainly contributed to the permanent ascendancy of the Reformation. There is little fear of inimical antagonism so long as that circulation continues accompanied by the devout study of the Divine oracles; for the relapse of a nation, where the Bible has become a household book, into superstition and spiritual ignorance is an event unknown in the history of mankind, and seems to be a miracle not likely to occur.

Multitudes of Christians, in both hemispheres, anxious that the inhabitants of foreign lands should enjoy the blessing of vernacular translations, are supplying means for the achievement of the object; and it is a pleasant exercise of imagination to anticipate the time when all the world over, nations shall look back on the history of their own Bible version, as we do on ours, and join in saying, *Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours.*

The translation into English of the Book of books is connected with another history still more sacred than that of

the production of the original volume. We are not left in ignorance respecting the origin of the Greek and Hebrew documents of which it is composed. Learned investigation has pointed out their source and established their authenticity. They are in this respect, as in others, unlike the sacred books of pagan nations. They have not been brought out from caverns of mystery and darkness; but they rise on our view like the stars of heaven, and we can point to the part of the horizon and tell the time when they rose upon the night of the world's ignorance. It is most satisfactory to take up an old English Bible and trace back its history, beyond the origin of printing and the period of its first Saxon translation, to the times of the early church, when the original was received in the form of Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, and thence further backward to the first century, to apostles and others who wrote the New Testament, and to the yet more remote origin of the Old Testament in the Jewish Church. The examination of the literary history of the Bible, of its transmission from ancient to modern times, and of its original production, inspires the student with an intelligent confidence in this collection of books, which no insinuation or attacks can shake. From this point an advance to the belief of the credibility of the Bible narrative is but natural and reasonable; for it is contrary to all probability that persons should forge accounts of things that never took place, and successfully palm them upon persons who were contemporaneous or nearly so with the times when those events were said to have occurred. Knowing as we do so much about the books of Scripture, we are compelled to admit that they are as credible as they are genuine—as true as they are authentic. A crowning fact is evolved at the conclusion of

this literary inquiry; Christ *promised* inspiration to His apostles; it was *claimed* by them; the claim was *confirmed* by the reception which their writings met with from the early church; and nothing appears in the New Testament to contradict the claim asserted and acknowledged. The inspiration of the Old Testament is recognised in the New, and thus the chain of evidence is complete. Sophistical arguments and wild speculation have in vain attempted to overthrow the truth and authority of Scripture. The volume asserts its Divine character in its invincibility under opposition, and in the saving effect it produces. Nor shall time destroy it. This book alone is immortal. Sir Thomas Brown has justly said of the sacred volume, "Men's works have an age like themselves; and though they outlive their authors, yet have they a stint and a period to their duration. This only is a work too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish but in the general flames, when all things shall confess their ashes."

A devout and obedient temper, a willingness to walk by its practical rules, is the best preparation for an insight into its mysteries, and for receiving an indubitable conviction of its truth and authority. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Especially let the student of the Bible remember the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence for the appreciation of Scripture truth. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." That passage is receiving a daily verification. Multitudes, with the Bible in their hands, are blind to its truths. Any one who fervently offers the prayer of the Psalmist, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of

Thy law," shall find the study to be its own reward. The Bible will be to him amidst the scenes of life a treasure of matchless worth. "Bind it continually upon thine heart, and tie it about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." In youth it will form the character, stimulate the intellect, purify the taste, and yield richer pleasures than the world—so lavish in its promises, so poor in its performances—can supply; and in age it will strengthen under infirmities, and fill the soul with hopes of that state of being in which life shall never ebb, and health shall never languish! In prosperity it will tinge with brightest colours all our joys, while it leads to felicity in the favour of Almighty God, and is ever teaching the beautiful song:

"To Thee we owe our wealth and friends,
And health and safe abode:
Thanks to Thy name for meaner things;
But these are not my God."

In adversity, in sickness, in mental depression—when even friendship loses its soothing power, and literature can no longer afford solace,—this volume will shine like a beautiful star amidst beclouded skies.

Dr. Johnson relates in his *Lives of the Poets* that he visited Collins—a genius of no mean name—in his latter days, when he was broken down by physical debility and mental solicitude. He had withdrawn from study, and he travelled with no other book than a New Testament, such as children carry to school. When his friend took it in his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, "I have but one book," said Collins; "but that is the best!"

There is no other book which associates itself in the same way and to the same extent with the joys and sorrows of human life, with births, marriages, and burials, with our journeys, our country walks, our conversation round the family hearth, our silence by the sick-bed side—no other which like this would bear to be read over the coffin of the dead, at the mouth of the sepulchre. Why is it that people in their troubles cleave to what is written here as they do to nothing else in this wide world? “The fairest flowers of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragranc; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, more and more beautiful, their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odours are emitted and new sweets extracted from them. He who has tasted their excellences will desire to taste them yet again, and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them the most.” *

* Preface to Horne's *Commentary on the Psalms.*





I N D E X.

- Abbot, Dr., 298
Abbott, George, 244
Abraham, 8, 9, 62
Adam, 62, 63
Ælfric, 11, 66
Aldred, 14
Alford, Dean of Canterbury, 285, 290,
292, 295
Alfred, 14
Alfred's dooms, 10
Alexander, Dr., 292
Allen, Edmund, 173
Alleyn, Bishop of Exeter, 210
Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich, 54
Anderson, 79
Andrew, St., 62
Andrewes, Dr. (or Andrews), 239, 240,
241
Andrews, Roger, 242
Anglo-Saxon sacred books, 8 *et seq.*
Angus, Dr., 293, 297
Anne Boleyn, 103, 121, 130
Apocrypha, 103, 131, 139, 271
Arnold, Dr., 50
Arundel's Constitution, 53, 54, 122
Assembley's Annotations, 271
Assembley's Catechism, 277
Augustine, St., 29, 163
- Abber & Offor, 43
Bampffield, 272
Bancroft, 233, 236, 238, 257
Barker, Christopher, 220
Barker, Robert, 220
Barker, Matthew 236,
Barlowe, Dr., 244
Barnes, Dr., 118—120
Barrow, Dr., 281
Baxter, Richard, 261
- Becon, Thomas, 211
Bede, 19, 20
Bedwell, William 241
Belet, Jean, 64
Belward, Nicholas, 54
Bensley, R. L., 295
Bentham, Thomas, 189, 211 212
Beza, Theodore, 186, 197, 219, 227,
250
Bible, translations of, 3, MS copies,
6; Anglo-Saxon version, 7, 16—24;
Wycliffe's translation, 31, 33—42
54; later versions, 43—48; deriva-
tion of the word, 45; early printed
versions, 56—58, 68; Tyndale's
translation, 81, 100—107; copies
burnt, 92; revision of Tyndale's
translation, 97; Title pages,
102; translations mentioned by
Cranmer before Convocation, 122;
Coverdale's version, 123—127; title
pages, 128; Cranmer's attempt to
prepare an authorized version, 133;
Coverdale's, published by King's
licence, 136; Matthew's Bible,
138—148; the Great Bible, 149—
161; prohibited, 166; editions pub-
lished in Edward vi.'s reign, 171—
174; Cheke's version, 176; public
reading forbidden, 177; Geneva
version, 186—200; reading sanc-
tioned by Elizabeth, 206; an
authorized translation, 208 *et seq.*
Rhenish version, 221—228; autho-
rized version, 233—259; printing
and binding, 260; Ussher's version,
263—265; Soldier's pocket Bible,
265; errors in printing, 266; in
Cromwell's time, 269; presented

- to Sovereigns at coronation, 269 ;
proposed new version, 273 ; for
preaching, 275 ; revision of English
version, 279 *et seq.*
- Biblia pauperum, 55
- Bilney, Thomas, 119
- Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, 247
- Blakesley, Canon, 288, 292
- Blayney, Dr., 275, 276
- Block books, 55
- Bodleian Library, 15, 33, 196, 241
- Bodley, John, 196, 197, 206, 207
- Bodley, Thomas, 189
- Bois, or Boys, 244, 245
- Bonner, 150, 152, 153, 163, 178
- Boothroyd, 280
- Bouchier, Archbishop, 70
- Bradford, John, 210
- Bradwardine, 39
- Branthwaite, Dr., 244
- Breeches Bible, 198
- Brett, Dr., 242
- Bristow, Richard, 226, 227
- Broughton, Hugh, 219, 256
- Brown, Professor David, 296
- Browne, Dr. Harold, 288, 292, 296
- Bruges, 27, 41
- Bucer, 173, 174
- Buck and Daniel, 261
- Bude, L., 197
- Bullinger, 174
- Burgley, 241
- Burnet, 92
- Byddell and Bartlett, 147
- Byng, Dr. Andrew, 242
- Cædmon, 8, 14, 66
- Cæsar, 4
- Calvin, 186, 189 ; his preface to New
Testament, 191
- Cambridge, meetings of translators
at, 242, 244
- Castalio, 197, 217
- Cartwright, Thomas, 227
- Caryl, Joseph, 274
- Catherine Parr, 172, 174
- Caxton, William, 58 ; his Golden
Legend, 59—66, 69, 198
- Cecil, Lord Burleigh, 206, 216
- Chaderton, Dr. Laurence, 242
- Charles, Rev. Thomas, 277
- Chaucer, 45
- Chenery, T., 292
- Cheke, Sir John, 176
- Cheyne, Rev. J. K., 295
- Chichele, Archbishop, 44
- Chrysostom, St., 223
- Clarendon press, 275
- Clark, 288
- Clarke, Dr. Richard, 241
- Clement VIII., 226
- Cochlæus, 79, 82, 84, 86, 87
- Cole, 195
- Columba of Iona, 6
- Columbus, 67
- Commission, Historical MSS., 262
- Committee appointed for revision of
Scriptures, 291 *et seq.*
- Common Prayer, Book of, 274
- Compton, Lord A., 288
- Conant, Dr., 297
- Conference at Hampton Court, 230—
233, 249
- Convocation, 122, 133, 164, 216, 284—
290
- Conybeare, 8
- Cook, Rev. Canon, 292
- Cotton, Sir Robert, 15, 180
- Coverdale, Miles, 165, 176, 180, his
childhood and youth, 117 ; patro-
nized by Thos. Cromwell, 120 ; his
possible meeting with Tyndale, 123 ;
his Bible, 123—137 ; his great
Bible, 149—161 ; Bishop of Exeter
174 ; his exile, 183, 189 ; returns to
England, 213, his death, 214
- Cowper, Thomas, 262
- Cox, Leonard, 173
- Cox, Richard, 213
- Cranmer, 108, 121, 122, 133, 135, 144,
161, 164, 165, 180, 183
- Cromwell, Thomas, 120, 134, 135, 145,
146 ; his efforts to circulate the
Bible, 150—158, 162, 165
- Crooks, Dr. 298
- Cudworth, Dr. 272, 273
- Outhbert, Bishop of Durham, 162
- Outhbert, St. 13—15
- Dakins, 244
- David, 62
- Davidson, Dr. 292

- Davies, Richard, 210
 Davies, Dr. B. 292
 Day, Dr. 297
 Denison, 288
 Diatheke, 102
 Douglas, Principal, 295
 Downes, Andrew, 244, 245
 Driver, L. K., 295
 Dupont, Dr. John, 244
 Durham book, 13—16, 23
 Dyck, Dr. Van, 298
- Eadfrith, 13, 14
 Eadie, Dr., 140, 143, 227, 293
 Edward III. 27
 Edward VI. 48, 118, 127, 170, 174, 269
 Eedes, Dr., 244
 Elizabeth, Queen, 48, 183, 198, 200,
 202, 226, 227, 269
 Ellicott, Dr., 292, 296, 297
 Elliott, Rev. C. J. 295
 Ellis, Sir William, 262
 Erasmus, 67, 73, 75, 103, 118, 153
 Ethelwald, St., 14
- Fagius, 173, 174
 Fairhairn, Dr. 292
 Fairclough, 242
 Felmer, 169
 Fenton, 244
 Field, Rev J., 292
 Fletcher, Richard, 54
 Forshall and Madden, 31, 37, 43, 48
 Fox, Bishop of Hereford, 135
 Foxe, John, 20, 27, 78, 79, 91, 120,
 123
 Fraser, Dr., 288
 Frias, Duke de, 234
 Frith, John, 101, 112, 113
 Froben, Johann, 58
 Fry, 125, 128, 129, 130
 Fulke, Dr. William, 227
 Fuller, Thomas, 148, 223
 Furboshe, Sir William, 87
 Fust & Schöffer, 56
 Fyshe, 87
- Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, 167
 Gaunt, John of, 27, 50, 53
 Geden, Rev. J. D. 296
 Gilby, Anthony, 189, 195, 196
- Gifford, Sir Harry, 75
 Ginsburg, Dr., 292
 Golden Legend of Caxton, 59—66, 69
 Goodman, Gabriel, 195, 213
 Goodwin, Dr., 274
 Gospels, commentary on the, 30
 Gotch, Dr., 292
 Grafton, 66, 147, 150, 152, 154, 163,
 167.
 Green, Dr., 297
 Greenhill, 273
 Gregory, Canon, 288,
 Grey, Lady Jane, 210
 Grindal, Bishop of London, 206, 212
 Guest, 211, 213
 Gutenberg, 56, 57
- Hackett, Dr. 298
 Hadley, Dr., 298
 Hale, Sir Matthew, 261
 Hampton Court conference, 230—233,
 249
 Harding, Dr. John, 235, 242
 Hare, Dr., 298
 Harleian MSS., 31
 Harman, John, 244
 Harrison, Archdeacon, 293
 Hebilthwayte, William, 76
 Henderson, 280
 Henry II., 12
 Henry IV., 51
 Henry VI., 48
 Henry, VII., 48
 Henry VIII. 108, 130, 136, 145, 149,
 165, 166, 177
 Hereford, Nicolas de, 32, 33
 Hill, Dr., 273
 Hodge, Dr., 298
 Holkham Hall, 128
 Holland, Dr. Thomas, 242
 Hollybush, John, 146
 Hopkins, Canon, 288
 Horman, Richard, 87
 Horne, Robert, Bishop of Winchester,
 211
 Hort, Rev. F. G., 293
 Howson, Dr., Dean of Chester, 299
 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 48
 Humphreys, Canon, 293
 Hutchinson, Dr., 244.
 Hyde, John, 22.

- Jacquemayne, Lewis, 190
 James I., 229, 231, 232, 234, 235, 253
 Jebb, Dr., 288, 292, 294
 Jenkins, 273
 Jerome, St., 56
 Joseph, 62
 Joseph of Arimathæa, 4
 Joye, George, 100, 101, 108
 Jugge, John, 219
 Jugge, Richard, 214, 219, 220
- Kay, Dr., 288
 Kendrick, Dr., 298
 Kennedy, Canon, 293
 Kennicott, 280
 Key, Thomas, 172
 Kilbie, Dr. Richard, 242, 243
 King, Geoffry, 241
 Kirkby, Dame Margaret, 23
 Knighton, 85, 40
 Knox, John, 195
 Kranth, Dr., 298
- Lathbury, Johannes de, 23
 Latimer, Hugh, 77, 96, 121
 Laud, Archbishop, 261
 Lawney, Thomas, 134
 Layfield, Dr. John, 241
 Leathes, Professor, 293
 Lee, Dr., 298
 Lee, Archdeacon, 293
 Lelong, 195,
 Lever, Thomas, 119
 Lewis, Dr., 298
 Lightfoot, Dr., 271
 Lindisfarne, 13, 14, 15
 Lively, Edward, 233, 235, 242, 247
 Living, William, 193, 195
 Lloyd, Bishop, 275
 Lollards, the, 23, 49—55, 66
 Lowth, 280
 Luft, Hans, 88
 Lumby, Rev. J. R. 296
 Luther, Martin, 67, 80—81, 82, 84, 85,
 103, 107
 Lutterworth Rectory, 27, 32
- McGill, Professor, 293
 Macknight, 280
 Madden, Sir Frederick, 21
- Madden, Forshal and, 31, 37, 43,
 Maitland, 79
 Maldon, William, 161
 Mallet, Francis, 172
 Mansell, Dr., 288
 Marbeck, John, his concordance,
 —169
 Marburg, 88, 97
 Martin, Gregory, 226, 227
 Martyr, Peter, 174
 Mary, Queen, 177, 179, 180
 Mary, Queen of Scots, 228
 Matthew's Bible, 138—148
 Mazarin, Cardinal, 56, 57
 Melancthon, 81
 Meteren, Cornelius van, 124
 Meteren, Emanuel van, 124
 Meteren, Jacob van, 124—127
 Milligan, Dr., 293
 Milton, John, 240
 Moberly, Dr. 281, 285
 Monmouth, Humphry, 76, 77, 78, 81
 Montanus, 250
 More, Sir Thomas, 33, 79, 80, 116
 Morris, Richard, 13
 Moses, 8, 10, 62
 Moulton, Professor, 293
 Munster, 250
- Neale, Dr. Bishop of Durham, 240
 Nebuchadnezzar, 8
 Necton, Robert, 87
 Newcome, 280
 Newman, Dr., 293, 294
 Newth, Dr., 290, 293
 Nicholas, St., 62
 Nicholson, 130, 131
 Nix, Bishop of Norwich, 88
- Old, Dr., 173
 Oldcastle, Sir John, 51, 52
 Ollivant, Dr., 292
 Orm or Ormim, 12, 66
 Ortellius, 124, 126, 127
 Otmars of Augsburg, 57
 Overall, Dr. John, 240
 Owen, Dr., 273
 Oxford, meetings of translators at, 242,
 243
- Packard, Dr., 293

- Packington, Augustine, 88, 91, 96
 Palmer, Professor, 296
 Parker, Archbishop, 20, 206, 209, 215, 216
 Parkhurst, John, Bishop of Norwich, 212
 Paul, St., 4
 Paulinus, 5, 6
 Pearson, 169
 Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, 69, 70
 Peerson, Andrew, 211
 Perowne, Professor, 293
 Perrin, Dr., 244
 Peter, St., 81, 98, 99
 Phillips, 114
 Plumptre, Canon, 293
 Pocock, Dr., 241
 Poyntz, Thomas, 115
 Practice of Prelates, 97—100, 111
 Prick of Conscience, 22
 Purvey, or Purnay, his version of the Bible, 44—48, 131
 Pusey, Canon, 293, 294
- Rabbett, 244
 Radcliffe, Dr. Jeremiah, 244
 Rainolds, Dr., 231—233, 242, 248
 Rask, 11
 Ravens, Dr., 244
 Ravis, Dr., 238, 243
 Richard III., 48
 Richardson, Chief Justice, 271
 Riddle, Dr., 298
 Rinck, Herman, 82
 Roberts, Dr., 293
 Rogers, John, 141, 144; his martyrdom, 179, 180, 183
 Rolle, Richard, 22, 23, 66
 Rose, Archdeacon, 288
 Rushworth gloss, 15
- Salisbury, Earl of, 235
 Salus Animi, 12
 Sampson, Thomas, 189, 195, 196
 Sanderson, 243
 Sandys, Bishop of Worcester, 210
 Saravia, Adrian de, 241
 Sautre, 44
 Saville, Sir Henry, 244
 Saxon Chronicle, 11
- Sayce, Rev. A. H., 296
 Scattergood, Dr., 275
 Schoeffer, 84, 85
 Schorham, William de, 21, 22
 Scott, Dr., 293, 295
 Scrivener, Rev. F., 293
 Selwyn, Dr., 285, 288, 292, 295
 Sharpe, Rev. Launcelot, 276
 Short, Dr., 298
 Sixtus v., 225
 Slater, Samuel, 273
 Smith, Dr. Payne, 293
 Smith, Professor, 296
 Smith, Dr. H. B., 298
 Smith, Dr. Miles, 242, 247
 Soulehele MS., 66
 Sparke, Thomas, 232
 Spalding, Robert, 242
 Spenser, Dr., 244
 Schaff, Dr. Philip, 296, 298, 299
 Simon, Professor, 290, 291
 Sports, Book of, 234
 Stanley, Dr., Dean of Westminster, 290, 292
 Stevens, 130, 131
 Stokesley, Bishop, 133
 Stoughton, Dr., 239
 Stowe, Dr., 298
 Strong, Dr., 298
 Surtees Society, 21
- Taverner, or Tavernour, Richard, 147, 148
 Teigh, Dr., 241
 Temple, Dr., 235
 Tenison, Dr., 275
 Testwood, 169
 Thayer, Dr., 298
 Thorpe, 8, 10
 Thirlwall, Dr., 284, 292, 295
 Thomson, Richard, 241
 Tintoretto, 64
 Tomson, Dr. Giles, 244
 Tomson, Lawrence, 219
 Tonstall, 162
 Tregelles, Dr., 295
 Tremellius, 250, 251
 Trench, Dr., 281, 293
 Troutbeck, Rev. J., 296
 Tuckney, Dr., 274
 Tunstall and Heath, 161

- Tyndale, William, 33, 72, 131, 133, 139, 140, 143, 145; his studies, 74; Monmouth's friendship for, 76; visits Hamburg, 79; his probable visit to Wittenberg, 79; visit to Cologne, 81; his translation of Testament, 81; his flight to Worms, 84; publishes Testament, 85—87; at Marburg, 88; story of his selling Testaments to be burnt, 91; revises translation, 97, 100; his practice of prelates, 97—100, 111; his merits as translator, 102—107; his interviews with Vaughan, 112; his letter to Frith, 113; betrayed by Philips, 114; taken prisoner, 115; his execution, 115, 183; his character, 116
- Udal, Nicholas, 172
Ussher, Ambrose, 263, 264
- Vaughan, Sir Stephen, 108, 111, 112
Vaughan, Dr., 293
Vetus Itala, 6
Venninge, Ralph, 273
Vignay, Jehan de, 64
Voragine, Jacobus de, 63, 64
- Waller, 240
Walsh, Sir John, 71, 73
Walton, Dr., 272
Wanley, 125
Ward, Dr. Samuel, 244
Warham, Archbishop, 88, 95, 122
Warren, Dr., 298
Warton, 22
Washburn, Dr., 298
- Waterland, 280
Weir, Professor, 296
Westcott, Canon, 103, 140, 161, 217, 251
Westminster Assembly, 267
Westminster, meetings of translators at, 239—241, 244
Wharton, Lord, 277
Whitelock, 272
Whitchurch, 144, 147, 154, 161
Whitgift, Archbishop, 217, 227
Whittingham, William, 189, 190, 195, 201
Wilberforce, Dr., 284, 292, 295, 296
William, I., 11
William III., 269
Witt, Dr. de, 297
Wilkes, 219
Wittenberg, 80, 81
Woodfall, George, 276
Woodgate, Canon, 288
Woolsey, Dr., 298
Wolsey, 230, 231
Worde, Wynkyn de, 68
Wordsworth, Dr., 285, 292, 294
Wright, Dr., 293
Wright, William, 54
Wright, Dr., W. A., 293
Wycliffe, John, 23, 43, 44, 50, 52; 53, 63, 70, 102, 105; at Lutterworth, 25; visits Bruges, 27, 41; his writings, 28; appears before a synod, 29; his commentary, 30; his translation of the Bible, 31, 33—42; his death, 32.
- Zwingle, 132



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