MEN WITH A MISSION

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BY

REV. JAMES J. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE MESSAGES OF CHRIST," "HARNESS FOR A PAIR," "HENRY MORTON STANLEY," ETC. ETC.

"Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; earth, air, and skies,
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

—WORDSWORTH.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE surveyed most of the learning found among the sons of men," said the learned Seldon, "but I can stay my soul upon none of them but the Bible;" and precisely similar has been the experience of many others.

The Bible is in the Scripture declared to be that which the Holy Spirit employs both in conversion and in sanctification; it is therefore needful above all things that we should know our Bibles well. Nothing can compensate for the want of this, and at the same time a spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures will often atone for natural deficiencies, both in mental equipment and in social position.

The man, therefore, who brings the Bible to bear efficiently upon the hearts and lives of his

fellow-creatures is the true servant of God; what then shall be said in praise of William Tyndale?

Before his day such copies of Wycliffe's Version as still survived could only be consulted in secret; they were but few in number, and the language in which they were written had become obsolete. Tyndale conceived the bold idea of translating the Scriptures so that the poorest might be able to obtain and to understand them.

For this noble object he lived and died, and Englishmen should never forget that the priceless boon of an open Bible, which is the secret source of our national liberties and success, was paid for by Tyndale with his blood.

Tyndale does not regret the purchase now, for although duty exacts a heavy fine, it more than repays those who give up all things that they may possess her.

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WILLIAM TYNDALE.

CHAPTER I.

THE APOSTLE OF ENGLAND; OR, THE MAN WHO IS FORGOTTEN BECAUSE OF HIS SUCCESS.

"How seldom, friend, a good, great man inherits
Honour or wealth, with all his toil and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits,
If any man obtain that which he merits,
Or any merit that which he obtains."

—COLERIDGE.

"Did you ever sit and look at a handsome or well-made man, and thank God from your heart for having allowed you such a privilege and lesson?"—KINGSLEY.

"There is an inscrutability of truth which sometimes increases its power, while we wait with solemn reverence for the hour when it shall be fully revealed to us; and our faith, like the setting sun, may clothe celestial mysteries with a soft and rosy-coloured light, which makes them more suitable to our present existence."—CHEEVER.

"PUT IT ON THE SHELF!"—A BLANK WORLD!—CLEVERNESS NO CREDIT—THE FARMER'S SON—NEW LIGHT FROM THE OLD CHRONICLES—THE MIDNIGHT DARKNESS AND THE MORNING STAR.

"I HAVE long adopted an expedient which I have found of singular service to me," said Richard

Cecil. "I have a shelf in my study for tried authors, and one in my mind for tried principles and characters.

"When an author has stood a thorough examination and will bear to be taken as a guide, I PUT HIM ON THE SHELF!

"When I have most fully made up my mind on a principle, I PUT IT ON THE SHELF!

"When I have turned a character over and over on all sides, and seen it through and through in all situations, I PUT IT ON THE SHELF!"

William Tyndale is a man whose character may be placed upon the shelf, for he and his life have successfully endured the test of the ages that have in turn examined him, and sometimes not with the kindest of feelings. It is difficult for us to estimate adequately the magnitude of his success, because the whole current of religious life has changed since his time, and mainly because of what he accomplished. A great writer has imagined what would occur if some morning every sentence of the Scriptures were obliterated both from the printed page and from the minds of men; he believes that *a blank Bible would mean a blank world*, and that was largely the moral condition of things into which Tyndale was born. There was no Bible, at least in circulation, and therefore there were ignorance, tyranny, hopelessness, and discord. The Reformation was not only a bringing-in of a new life beyond the grave, it also gave fresh hope and meaning to the existence on

this side of death; so that commercial enterprise and national liberty are products of that period.

Frith, in his amusing autobiography, tells us of a picture-dealer who said of Dickens and his writings, "He couldn't help writing 'em. He deserves no credit for that. He a clever man! Let him go and sell a lot of pictures to a man that don't want 'em, as I have done lots of times; that's what I call being a clever man!"

The same has practically been long felt if not expressed about William Tyndale, for it is only of late years that his supreme ability has been admitted. Yet he was undoubtedly a great man; Foxe calls him "the true servant and martyr of God, who, for his notable pains and travail, may well be called the Apostle of England." Tyndale is rightly so called, for he, in spite of the Bishops, gave to the world a book which they did not desire, and in so doing he did more for the English Reformation than the King and Parliament combined.

Of the early days of this great man but very little is known. Foxe, in his Life of William Tyndale, says that he "was born about the borders of Wales, and brought up from a child in the University of Oxford, where he, by long continuance, 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*, insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen Hall, read privily to certain students and

fellows of Magdalen College some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures. His manners also and conversation, being correspondent to the same, were such that all they that knew him reputed and esteemed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition and of life unspotted. Thus he, in the University of Oxford, increasing more and more in learning and proceeding in degrees of the schools, spying his time, removed from thence to the University of Cambridge, where, after he had likewise made his abode a certain space, being now further ripened in the knowledge of God's Word, leaving that University also, he resorted to one Master Welch, a knight of Gloucestershire." In these few lines Foxe concentrates the history of several years, and these were years of supreme interest and importance both to the man and to us. Nor has subsequent research done very much to fill in this gap, although one or two things are now clear to us.

It was for a long time believed that William Tyndale was a son of Thomas Tyndale of Hunts Court, the manor-house of North Nibley, a village in Gloucestershire. Accordingly a monument has been erected upon Nibley Knoll (one of the Cotswold Hills) in his honour—a noble column which is still conspicuous from far in that pleasant country. But it has been shown that this could not have been, and that not to the manor-house, but to a farmhouse, must we look for the birthplace of our hero. At

Melksham Court, in the parish of Stinchcombe, there had long lived a family of Tyndales, who, it is said, had originally come from the North of England. This was during the Wars of the Roses, and in order to elude the proscription which in turn visited the adherents of each house, these Tyndales assumed the name of Hutchins.

It is probable that these farmers, whose lands were principally swamps that had been reclaimed from the Severn, were the ancestors of William Tyndale. The Tyndales of North Nibley were, however, probably relatives of these farmers. The precise date of William Tyndale's birth cannot be stated, but from the fact that, in his reply to Sir Thomas More, Tyndale said, "These things to be even so M. More knoweth well enough, for he understandeth the Greek, and he knew them long ere I did," it is inferred that More was at least some years the elder. More was born in the year 1478 A.D., and therefore it is conjectured that about 1480 was the date of Tyndale's birth. Of Slymbridge, his probable birthplace, Demaus says that it "was then, as now, wholly engrossed in the production of cheese and butter; a quiet agricultural parish, where life would flow on calmly as the great river that formed its boundary. The dairymaid was the true annalist of Slymbridge; and the only occurrence beyond drought which would distress the peaceful population would be occasional predatory incursions of their lawless

neighbours from the Forest of Dean, which waved in hills of verdure towards the west, as a picturesque counterbalance to the Cotswolds in the east. Such a place one naturally associates with stagnant thought and immemorial tradition."[1]

One would have been thankful for an account of the home life of the Tyndales, and especially for some information about the two parents. We can imagine the grave, sober farmer given up to religious observances like his neighbours, thinking grimly but silently of the evils which he saw in the Churches around him; perhaps also with a tinge of Lollardism as carefully concealed as might be. And the sober, diligent mother, not wholly occupied with the pursuits of the farm, but thinking high thoughts about God and life, that from time to time she communicated to her sons. From what we know of their children, we must form a high estimate of the parents.

Four sons, it would seem, formed the family group, and they were named respectively Richard Tyndale (who succeeded to the farm), Edward Tyndale, William the Martyr, and John Tyndale, a merchant in London.

It is a fact that the last named was fined for sending money to his brother William when the latter was abroad, and for aiding him in the circulation of the Scriptures, so that in all probability the brothers were of one mind in religious

[1] Demaus' "William Tyndale, a Biography."

opinions. One brother, Edward Tyndale, was appointed receiver of the revenues of Berkley, which had been left to the Crown in the year 1492, so that he at anyrate was fairly well-to-do.

Tyndale himself, in his "Obedience of a Christian Man," to which reference will be further made later on in this biography, makes the following allusion to his own childhood:—"Except my memory fail me, and that I have forgotten what I read when I was a child, thou shalt find in the English Chronicle, how that King Adelstone (Athelstone) caused the Holy Scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England, and how prelates exhorted him thereto."

We may therefore suppose that the child was taught at home in the ancient records of the Kingdom, and perhaps his attention was called by his father to the significant fact that then the Scriptures could not be read by the people, whereas this had been permitted in earlier days. It is singular that the boy should have noticed such a fact, and it suggests that some one significantly indicated it to him. It is certain that a strong sympathy for the opinions of Wycliffe and his followers existed all through the West of England, and probably William Tyndale's father hinted to his sons what he did not dare to speak out to others. And there were also here and there, men, in monasteries, vicarages, and dwelling-houses, who were beginning to discern the coming dawn.

"Midnight being past," says Fuller, "some early risers were beginning to strike fire and enlighten themselves from the Scriptures." And there was indeed great need for them to do so, for the religious condition of England was at that time lamentable.

As an example of the dissoluteness of the national manners, and principally amongst the clergy, it is said of Mr. Edmund Loud, a gentleman of rank in Huntingdonshire, that he "was disgusted at the dissolute lives of the monks of Sawtry, an abbey in his neighbourhood, and even ventured to chastise one of them who had insulted his daughter. For this, and other circumstances, they determined to be revenged; and he was waylaid and assaulted by six men, tenants of the abbey. He defended himself with a bill-hook for some time, till a constable came up and stopped the fray, and Mr. Loud was required to give up his weapon. They then proceeded peaceably with the constable; but, watching an opportunity, as Mr Loud was crossing a stile, one seized him by the arms, while another fractured his skull with the blow of a club, and he died seven days afterwards. The murderers escaped, and the influence of the Romish clergy prevented the matter being properly followed up."

Dr. Henry in his history of this period observes, however, that "there was one vice, indeed, which the clergy most zealously endeavoured to extirpate. This was what they called the damnable vice of heresy, which consisted in reading the New Testa-

ment in English, the works of Wickliff and Luther, and of others of that learning; in denying the infallibility of the Pope, transubstantiation, purgatory, praying to saints, worshipping images, &c. Notwithstanding the cruel punishments that had been inflicted on those who entertained these opinions, their number was still considerable, particularly in London, and in Colchester, and in other parts of Essex. They called themselves Brethren in Christ, and met together with great secrecy in one another's houses, to read the New Testament and other books, and to converse upon religious subjects. Many of them were apprehended, and brought before Cuthbert Tonstall, bishop of London, and Dr. Wharton, his chancellor. But Bishop Tonstall, being a prelate of uncommon learning and eloquence, and of great humanity, earnestly tried to prevail upon them to renounce, or rather to dissemble, their opinions, by which they escaped a painful death, but incurred the painful reproaches of their minds."

As a specimen of those who were brought before the tribunals, take these cases:—

"Elizabeth Wightil deposed against her mistress, Alice Doly, that speaking of John Hacher, a waterbearer in Coleman Street, London, she said he was so very expert in the Gospels and the Lord's Prayer in English, that it did her good to hear him. She was also said to have heretical books in her possession.

"Roger Hackman, of Oxfordshire, was accused for saying in the county of Norfolk, 'I will never look

to be saved for any good deed that ever I did, neither for any that I shall ever do, unless I have my salvation by petition, as an outlaw pardoned by the king;' adding, 'that if he might not have his salvation so, he thought he should be lost.'" If such doctrine as this was condemned, we cannot wonder at hearing of "certain heretical books called the Epistles and Gospels."

The darkness was indeed thick, but happily the dawning was at hand.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOLAR WHO OUTSTRIPPED HIS TEACHER.

"Meek souls there are who little deem
Their daily strife an Angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm."

—KEBLE.

"The voice of Nature never goes to the *heart* until it blend with the voice of Scripture."—PHILIP.

"It is by celestial observation alone that terrestrial charts can be constructed."—COLERIDGE.

HARD FARE MAKES FIRM MEN—WHAT ERASMUS WISHED, AND TYNDALE ACCOMPLISHED—WEALTH MADE THE TEST OF TRUTH—A MAN OF PUTTY HELPING A MAN OF IRON—DRIVEN AWAY, BUT NOT CONQUERED.

AT an early age William Tyndale was sent to Oxford, where he was entered at Magdalen Hall. Here we can perhaps picture him from the words of Thomas Lever, who in a sermon which was preached later describes the University life of his day. With some modifications, it may perhaps stand for Tyndale's experience:—

"There are divers there which rise daily between four and five o'clock in the morning, and from five

until six o'clock use common prayer, with an exhortation of God, and in a common chapel. From six until ten o'clock they use either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereat they be content with a greasy 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 then, 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."

With some few modifications, this description may stand for the student life of Tyndale, and it is certainly a picture of hard living and of stern training. In the year 1512 William Tyndale received his degree of B.A., and in 1515 he was licensed M.A. For some reason which cannot very clearly be discovered, Tyndale afterwards left Oxford for Cambridge, where Erasmus was at that time lecturing.

It has been pointed out by Demaus, in his admirable and exhaustive biography, that Tyndale's famous sentence was merely a re-echo of what Erasmus had said long before. In the exhortation prefixed to one of his works Erasmus wrote: "I totally dissent from

those who are unwilling that the Sacred Scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue, should be read by private individuals, as if Christ had taught such subtle doctrines that they can with difficulty be understood by a very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion lay in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings it were perhaps better to conceal, but Christ wishes His mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish even all women to read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. And I wish they were translated into *all languages of all people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by the Turks and the Saracens. I wish 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.*"

These are indeed noble words, and one wishes that Erasmus had possessed the courage of his convictions, but his selfishness, weakness, and love of ease prevented him from braving the risks that Luther and Tyndale incurred. He was like the courtier who advised Latimer to remain a papist until "it pleased God to add to Latimer's opinions converts in such honest number" as to make profession of his belief safe and respectable. Tyndale was of other and of harder material than Erasmus, and therefore he obtained the success that he did. Withes may be useful for making baskets, but heart

of oak and iron are required for the construction of warships. "In almost all plans of great enterprise," says John Foster, "a man must systematically dismiss at the entrance every wish to stipulate with his destiny for his safety. He voluntarily treads within the precincts of danger; and though it be possible he may escape, *he ought to be prepared* with the fortitude of *a self-devoted victim*. This is the inevitable condition on which . . . Reformers must commence their career. Either they must allay their fire of enterprise, or abide the liability to be exploded by it from the world." Such was William Tyndale; while the character of Erasmus is sketched in the words in which the same writer describes the man without decision of character: "He belongs to whatever can make capture of him. One thing after another vindicates its right to him while he is trying to go on, as twigs and chips floating near the edge of a river are intercepted by every weed and whirled in every little eddy."

At Cambridge, therefore, Tyndale remained, and there he not only began "to smell the Word of God," but he also made choice of his future profession. During his course at the Universities, Tyndale had at least one pupil to whom he made reference in his last letter to Fryth the martyr. In the year 1521 Tyndale left Cambridge and went to live as chaplain and tutor at the house of Sir John Walsh in Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire. The mansion of this local magnate "is charmingly

situated on the south-western slope of the Cotswolds, and enjoys a magnificent prospect over the richly wooded vale of the Severn, to the distant hills of Wales. Though somewhat shorn of its former dignity, and only in part inhabited, the house is still, in the main, intact; time indeed has dealt gently with it, and has added to the beauties of its graceful and varied architecture those mellowing touches which delight the eye of the lover of the picturesque." [1]

Here Tyndale lived for years, and in this quiet seclusion he had sufficient leisure to reflect upon the matters which had previously engaged his attention; it was here that he fully resolved to devote himself to the great enterprise with which his name is inseparably associated. For the intellectual revival that had set in all through Europe had reached England also; and men no longer cared to waste their time in discussing such puerilities as Erasmus states that in the solemn disputations of the scholars were discussed. As, for example, such questions as—"Whether the Pope can command angels?" "Whether he be a mere man, or, as God, participates in both natures with Christ?" "And whether he be not more merciful than Christ was, since we do not read that Christ ever recalled any from the pains of purgatory?"

Old Foxe who obtained his information from an eye-witness, who is believed by Demaus to have

[1] Demaus.

been Richard Webb, who was afterwards servant to Latimer, speaks thus of Tyndale's life in the old manor-house: "Master Tyndale being in service with one Master Walsh, a knight, who married a daughter of Sir Robert Poyntz, a knight dwelling in Gloucestershire. The said Tyndale being schoolmaster to the said Master Walsh's children, and being in good favour with his master, sat most commonly at his own table. Which Master Walsh kept a good ordinary commonly at his table, and there resorted unto him many times sundry abbots, deans, archdeacons, with divers other doctors, and great beneficed men; who there, together with Master Tyndale sitting at the same table, did use many times to enter communication, and talk of learned men, as of Luther and of Erasmus; also of divers other controversies and questions upon the Scripture. Then Master Tyndale, as he was learned and well practised in God's matters, so he spared not to show unto them simply and plainly his judgment in matters, as he thought; and when they at any time did vary from Tyndale in opinions and judgment, he would show them in the book, and lay plainly before them the open and manifest places of the Scriptures, to confute their errors and confirm his sayings. And thus continued they for a certain season, reasoning and contending together divers and sundry times, till at length they waxed weary, and bare a secret grudge in their hearts against him.

"So upon a time," continues Foxe, "some of

these beneficed doctors bid Master Walsh and the lady his wife at a supper or banquet, there having among them talk at will without any gainsaying. The supper or banquet being done, and Master Walsh and his lady being come home, they called for Master Tyndale, and talked with him of such communication as had been where they came from and of their opinions. Master Tyndale thereunto made answer agreeable to the truth of God's Word, and in reproving of their false opinions. The Lady Walsh, being a stout woman, and as Master Tyndale did report her to be wise, there being no more but they three, Master Walsh, his wife, and Master Tyndale: 'Well,' said she, 'there was such a doctor he may dispend two hundred pound by the year; another one hundred pound; and another three hundred pound; and what think ye, *were it reason that we should believe you before them so great, learned, and beneficed men?*' Master Tyndale, hearing her, gave her no answer; nor after that had but small arguments against such, for he perceived it would not help, in effect to the contrary."

The character of the disputes may be inferred from the following paragraph which has been compiled by D'Aubigné from Tyndale's writings:—

"In the dining-room of the old hall a varied group was assembled round the hospitable table. There were Sir John and Lady Walsh, a few gentlemen of the neighbourhood, with several

abbots, deans, monks, and doctors in their respective costumes. Tyndale occupied the humblest place, and generally kept Erasmus' New Testament within reach, in order to prove what he advanced. Numerous domestics were moving about engaged in waiting on the guests; and at length the conversation, after wandering a little, took a more precise direction. The priests grew impatient when they saw the terrible volume appear. 'Your Scriptures only seem to make heretics,' they exclaimed. 'On the contrary,' replied Tyndale, 'the source of heresies is pride; now, the Word of God strips man of everything, and leaves him as bare as Job.' 'The Word of God! Why, even we don't understand your Word; how can the vulgar understand it?' 'You don't understand it,' rejoined Tyndale, 'because you look into it only for foolish questions. Now, the Scriptures are a clue, which we must follow without turning aside until we arrive at Christ, for Christ is the end.' 'And I tell you,' shouted out another priest, 'that the Scriptures are a Dædalian labyrinth—a conjuring-book wherein everybody finds what he wants.' 'Alas!' replied Tyndale, 'you read them without Jesus Christ; that's why they are an obscure book to you. What do I say? A grave of briars; if thou loose thyself in one place thou art caught in another.' 'No; it is we who give the Scriptures, and we who explain them to you.' 'You set candles before images,' replied Tyndale; 'and since you give them light

why don't you give them food? Why don't you make their bellies hollow, and put victuals and drink inside? To serve God by such mummeries is treating Him like a spoilt child, whom you pacify with a toy, or you make him a horse out of a stick.'"

It is no wonder that such discussions (for this picture is probably a fair sample of many, that took place both in the hall of the manor-house, and in the houses of the neighbouring clergy and gentry) disturbed the minds of the knight and of his wife. As Tyndale could not reply to the argument from wealth, he called in the aid of Erasmus, who was then at the zenith of his fame. Some eleven years before, Erasmus had written a book entitled "The Manual of a Christian Soldier." This work Tyndale translated and placed in the hands of Lady Walsh. The opinions of Tyndale were, of course, despicable because he was poor, but Erasmus was the pet of princes, and his words could not well be disregarded. Erasmus in this book had condemned the follies of the Church teachers of his day, and demanded, concerning those things which pertain to faith, "Why, let them be expressed in the fewest possible articles; those which pertain to good living, let them also be expressed in few words, and so expressed that men may understand that the yoke of Christ is easy and light, and not harsh; that they may see that in the clergy they have found fathers and not tyrants; pastors, not robbers; that they are invited to salvation, and not dragged to slavery."

"After they had read this book," says Foxe, "these great prelates were no more so often called to the house, nor when they came had the cheer and countenance as they were wont to have, the which they did well perceive, and also that it was by the means and incensing of Master Tyndale, and at last they came no more there."

Tyndale had converted the knight and his wife, but he had also made for himself some implacable and restless enemies. He further increased their hatred by preaching in the villages round about, and, as one tradition asserts, even in Bristol. The priests inflamed one another with hatred against him, and at length Tyndale was summoned before the Chancellor of the diocese to answer for his conduct.

"When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog; and laid to my charge whereof there could be none accused brought forth," says Tyndale himself of this trial.

But Tyndale was not the man to desist when once he had learned what his duty was. He has chronicled the workings of his mind at this period thus: "A thousand books had they lever (rather) to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrines than that the Scripture should come to light . . . which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because *I had perceived by experience* how it was impossible to establish the lay-people in any

truth, except the Scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text: for else, whatsoever truth is taught them these enemies of all truth quench it again."

In his perplexity Tyndale sought for counsel and sympathy from "a certain doctor that dwelt not far off, and had been an old Chancellor before to a bishop. 'Do you not know,' said the ex-Chancellor, 'that the Pope is very antichrist, whom the Scripture speaketh of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life. I have been an officer of his, but I have given it up, and I defy him and all his works.'"

Soon after this visit "Master Tyndale happened to be in the company of a learned man, and in communing and disputing with him, drove him to that issue that the learned man said, 'We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's.' Master Tyndale hearing that, answered him, 'I defy the Pope and all his laws;' and said, 'IF GOD SPARE MY LIFE, ERE MANY YEARS I WILL CAUSE A BOY THAT DRIVETH THE PLOUGH SHALL KNOW MORE OF THE SCRIPTURE THAN THOU DOEST.'"

These noble words were, of course, soon published through the district, and they intensified the hatred of the priests still more against him. Tyndale was quite willing to leave the neighbourhood, and he even offered to settle in any English county if they would

but permit him to teach the children and to preach there. But seeing the peril to which he had exposed his friends, and perhaps still more acutely realising that his work could not be accomplished in Sodbury, Tyndale took leave of his patron, and came up to London.

CHAPTER III.

MARKING THE COURSE OF THE WORLD; OR, LEARNING WHOM NOT TO TRUST.

"In haste the fancied bliss to gain,
In the wrong path they go,
Unmindful that it surely leads
To everlasting woe.

Thus for the world's delusive charms
They barter joys sublime,
And forfeit an immortal crown
For the frail wreaths of time."

"A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender."—RELIGIO MEDICO.

"There's a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, of grace and impatience, of the sublime and the ridiculous, in most of the best men."—DAVID DAVIES.

NO ROOM FOR A BIBLE IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE—THE MERCHANT'S HOUSE A HOME—MONMOUTH'S GRACIOUS CHARACTER—AN EXILE FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE.

TYNDALE came to London (probably about 1523) provided with a letter of introduction to Sir Harry Guildford, the Controller of the Royal Household, and a great favourite with the King. This, Tyndale trusted, would also secure for him a favourable

reception from Tunstal, the Bishop of London, who was a friend of Erasmus and a patron of the new learning.

At the time of Tyndale's arrival in the metropolis, London was deeply agitated about Wolsey's tyranny; for the Cardinal had demanded from Parliament a subsidy that amounted to a tax of four shillings in the pound upon all property in England. When this was refused, as an utter impossibility, Wolsey dismissed the Parliament. This summary proceeding excited great indignation against the Cardinal, whose extravagance, pride, and tyranny were in every mouth. Moreover, the books of Luther were secretly in circulation among the people, and probably Tyndale saw at least some of them. He was himself unconscious of the steps by which he was being led to where alone he could effectually accomplish his life-work of translating the Scriptures. Now Tyndale presented his letter of introduction to Sir Harry Guildford, and freely stated his purpose of rendering the Scriptures into English. As a proof of his ability to perform this task, Tyndale submitted a translation of Isocrates. "I should be pleased to become chaplain to the Bishop of London; will you beg him to accept this trifle? Isocrates ought to be an excellent recommendation to a scholar; will you please to add yours?"

"Sir Harry Guildford," says Tyndale, "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 own acquaintance. . . . But God (which knoweth what is within hypocrites) saw that I was beguiled, and that that counsel was not the next way to my purpose. And therefore he gat me no favour in my lord's sight, whereupon my lord answered me, his house was full, 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 preachers) how they boasted themselves and their high authority; and beheld the pomps of our prelates, and how busy they were, as they yet are, to set peace and unity in the world, 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."

Thus were Tyndale's hopes of patronage from the Bishop of London utterly disappointed. But God had not deserted him, and He had already provided a benefactor for His servant. Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy merchant of London, who resided in Barking (which was at that time considered to be the extreme east end of London), happened to be in St. Dunstan's in the West when Tyndale preached there. Moved by one of those inexplicable impulses which are really the influence of God's Spirit,

Monmouth invited Tyndale to his house, and there he remained for six months. His host thus speaks of the guest whose character he thus had ample opportunity of studying: "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'. Afterwards he got of some other men ten pounds sterling more, the which he left with me."

Sir Thomas More, although a bitter enemy to Tyndale, confessed that "before he went over the sea, he was well known for a man of right good living, studious, and well learned in Scripture, and looked and preached holily."

Of Sir Humphrey Monmouth, Latimer relates an anecdote that cannot, though familiar, be well omitted here. When preaching before King Edward, Latimer said that a friend of his "knew in London a great rich merchant, which merchant had a very poor neighbour; yet, for all his poverty, he loved him very well, and lent him money at his need, and let him to come to his table whensoever he would. It was even at that time when Doctor Colet was in trouble, and should have been burnt, if God had not

turned the King's heart to the contrary. Now the rich man began to be a Scripture man; he began to smell the Gospel: the poor man was a papist still. It chanced on a time, when the rich man talked of the Gospel, sitting at his table, where he reproved popery and such kind of things, the poor man, being then present, took a great displeasure against the rich man; insomuch that he would come no more to his house, he would borrow no money of him, as he was wont to do before-times; yea, and conceived such hatred and malice against him, that he went and accused him before the Bishops. Now, the rich man, not knowing any such displeasure, offered many times to talk with him, and to set him at quiet; but it would not be: the poor man had such a stomach, that he would not vouchsafe to speak with him; if he met the rich man in the street, he would go out of his way. One time it happened that he met him so in a narrow street, that he could not avoid but come near him; yet for all that, this poor man had such a stomach against the rich man, I say, that he was minded to go forward, and not to speak with him. The rich man perceiving that, catcheth him by the hand, and asked him, saying, '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. Many one would have said, 'Set him in the stocks; let him have bread of affliction and water of tribulation.' But this man did not so. And here you see an ensample of the practice of God's words in such sort, that the poor man, bearing great hatred and malice against the rich man, was brought, through the lenity and meekness of the rich man, from his error and wickedness to the knowledge of God's Word. I would you would consider this ensample well, and follow it."

This tender-hearted man was also a great patron of men of letters, and probably it was at his table that Tyndale was advised by some unknown friend to go abroad. Upon the Continent he might reasonably hope to complete his translation, and to print it without molestation. Without knowing that he thereby doomed himself to exile which would only terminate in his martyrdom, and yet not shrinking from the ordeal, Tyndale left England in the month of May 1524, and sailed thence to Hamburg. No one observed with interest the austere, nervous man as he gazed for the last time upon his native land, but his voyage was of far more importance to England, and to the world, than any event of the period. Europe watched with mingled feelings Luther's heroic stand, and the German Reformer

was never at any time of his life without many friends who stood steadily beside him in his time of peril. With the exception of Monmouth, who only with much difficulty saved himself from death, Tyndale had no sympathy or helper at all; but, without complaining of this isolation, he went forward with true national persistence in the path of duty. He himself and his work were of such a character that they could not be adequately appreciated then, but long after Wolsey and his hat (to which the nobility bowed, and before which candles were burned) are forgotten, the work of Tyndale will be appreciated, and will exert a powerful influence in the lives of millions through the eternity that is yet to come.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EXILE, YET IN HIS FATHER'S LAND.

"The Scriptures have a might and magnificence all their own;
How comforting are its promises, how precious are its precepts!
How wise and kind and pure and good its influence on the soul!
How strong its hold upon the heart, its power within the mind!"
—TUPPER.

"Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss;
This book of stars lights to eternal bliss."

"To recollect a promise of the Bible, *this* is substance! Nothing will do but the Bible. If I read authors and hear different opinions, I cannot say, '*This is* truth!' I cannot grasp it as substance; but the BIBLE GIVES ME SOMETHING TO HOLD."—RICHARD CECIL.

HELPED BY LUTHER—FINDING A COMPANION—A BOLD VENTURE—DRIVEN AWAY—BURNING THE BIBLE DOES NOT DESTROY IT.

HAMBURG, as a centre of commercial activity, afforded a singularly good hiding-place for Tyndale, and it was also a most suitable port from whence he could send the Bible when printed into England. It is indeed, doubtful as to what his movements were; he may have remained for a year in Hamburg, or, as some have supposed, Tyndale may have left it upon a

visit elsewhere. Monmouth says that after Tyndale left England, "within a year he sent for his ten pounds to me from Hamburg, and thither I sent it to him." Foxe supplements this information by the statement that, "on his first departing out of the realm, Tyndale took his journey into the further parts of Germany, as into Saxony, where he had conference with Luther and other learned men." And Tyndale's great enemy, Sir Thomas More, said that "Tyndale, as soon as he got him hence from England, got him to Luther straight;" and adds "that at the time of his translation of the New Testament, Tyndale was with Luther at Wittemberg, and the confederacy between him and Luther was well known." It seems, therefore, probable that almost immediately after his landing at Hamburg, Tyndale made his way to Wittemberg. His admiration of Luther would be a quite sufficient inducement to lead him to take this step, and perhaps also his sense of loneliness and desolation influenced him. Upon the exile himself the effect of the visit must have been most beneficial. Demaus says: "For Tyndale thus to come into contact with the strong, joyous faith of Luther, to hear his lion voice echoing through the crowded University Church of Wittemberg, or to listen to his wonderful table-talk as he sipped his beer in friendly social intercourse, would be to have his whole soul inspired with courage, bravely to do whatever duty God had called him to, and to learn to repose with implicit

confidence in the protection of the Divine Master whom he served."

Here, in Wittemberg, Tyndale, it would seem, obtained a companion, one William Roye, who, however, proved to be a fickle, irrepressible bore, a man who must have inflicted acute torture upon his companion. But his help was a necessity if the Bible were to be speedily translated, and Tyndale had no choice whatever; it must be either Roye or no translation; and Tyndale suppressed all personal feeling in the matter. Roye's part in the translation was, of course, quite mechanical and subordinate, but in the laborious physical work of transcribing Roye was helpful to Tyndale.

"Imagination," says Dr. Stoughton of the after-life of the two at Cologne, "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 windows 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."

In the spring of 1525 Tyndale went to Hamburg, as we have seen, in order to obtain the money that had been sent to him from London. From Hamburg, Tyndale, accompanied by Roye, went to Cologne, and now the New Testament which had been translated was put into the press. Tyndale was prepared to venture upon an edition of six

thousand copies, but the printers were only willing to undertake half that number. The book was to be an octavo, and for a time the enterprise prospered and all went well. But a busybody, one John Cochlæus, who was at that time in Cologne, by some means or another obtained a hint as to the possible peril. He relates the incident with intense self-complacency, as if it were something to boast of. He says:—

"Having become intimate and familiar with the Cologne printers, he (Cochlæus) sometimes heard them confidently boast, when in their cups, that, whether the King and Cardinal of England would or not, all England would in a short time be Lutheran. He heard, also, that there were two Englishmen lurking there, skilful in languages, and fluent, whom, however, he never could see or converse with. Calling, therefore, certain printers into his lodging, after they were heated with wine, one of them, in more private discourse, 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 K, *in ordine quarternionem;* 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 it.

"Cochlæus 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 work was printing, according to the discovery of Cochlæus, 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 further 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."

Roye found a relief for his vexation in abusing Cochlæus, whom he calls—

> "A little, praty, foolish poade,
> But although his stature be small,
> Yet men say he lacketh no gall,
> More venomous than any toad."

Tyndale probably felt this hindrance to his work

far more keenly than Roye did, but he was not the man to descend to abuse. He probably closed his lips with a firmer resolve than ever to persevere in spite of all obstacles, and to thus avenge himself upon his adversaries. At Worms it would appear that Tyndale laid aside the quarto edition which had been so rudely interrupted, and that he there began to print an octavo edition of the New Testament. About the spring of 1526 the Testaments were not only ready, but they were in England, and they began at once to be circulated. They there commanded a wholesale price of thirteenpence per copy, and were retailed at about thirtypence per volume. Of course, it must be remembered that the present value of money is fifteen times more than it was at the period under consideration.

Not only had Cochlæus warned Henry and Wolsey of the intended act of atrocity, but Lee, who was King Henry's almoner, also wrote to England to say what he had heard of Tyndale's doings. He urged the King to persecute these criminals to the utmost, and thus to preserve his kingdom from danger. Henry required but little persuasion to become a persecutor, but the Bishops were determined to make his obedience quite sure. The Bishop of St. Asaph laid the matter before Wolsey, and he called a council of prelates to advise as to what was to be done about these dreadful books. Roye thus represents the discussion in a jingling poem that he published :—

Two priests' servants, named Watkyn and Jef-

fraye, are supposed to be conversing about the Testaments, and they discourse thus:—

"*Jef.* But nowe of Standisshe accusacion
Brefly to make declaracion,
Thus to the Cardinall he spake:
'Pleaseth youre honourable Grace,
Here is chaunsed a pitious cace,
And to the Churche a grett lacke.
The Gospell in oure Englisshe tonge,
Of laye men to be red and songe,
Is nowe hidder come to remayne.
Which many heretykes shall make,
Except youre Grace some waye take
By youre authorite hym to restrayne.'

. . . . . .

Wat. But what sayde the Cardinall here at?
Jef. He spake the wordes of Pilat,
Sayinge, 'I fynde no fault therin.'
Howe be it, the bisshops assembled,
Amonge theym he examened,
What was best to determyn?
Then answered bisshop Cayphas,
That a grett parte better it was
The Gospell to be condemned;
Lest their vices manyfolde
Shulde be knowen of yonge and olde,
Their estate to be contempned.
The Cardinall then incontinent
Agaynst the Gospell gave judgement,
Saying to brenne he deserved.
Wherto all the bisshoppis cryed,
Answerynge, 'It cannot be denyed
He is worthy so to be served.'

. . . . . .

Jef. They sett nott by the Gospell a flye:
Diddest thou nott heare whatt villany
They did vnto the Gospell?
Wat. Why, did they agaynst hym conspyre?

Jef. By my trothe they sett hym a fyre
Openly in London cite.
Wat. Who caused it so to be done?
Jef. In sothe the Bisshoppe of London,
With the Cardinallis authorite:
Which at Paulis crosse ernestly
Denounced it to be heresy
That the Gospell shuld come to lyght;
Callynge them heretikes execrable
Whiche caused the Gospell venerable
To come vnto laye meus syght.
He declared there in his furiousnes,
That he fownde erroures more and les
Above thre thousande in the translacion.
Howe be it when all cam to pas,
I dare saye vnable he was
Of one erroure to make probacion."

Tunstal preached at St. Paul's Cross at this burning of the Testament, and yet the people read the book, which continued to be circulated in spite of the priests. Tunstal thereupon further issued an injunction in which he ordered all copies of the Testament to be surrendered to him on pain of excommunication. But although the Archbishop of Canterbury also issued a similar mandate, the books continued to be sold and to be read, although in secret. Nay more, the printers of Antwerp, encouraged by the enormous demand for Testaments that had arisen, afterwards printed a large supply upon their own account, and, further, succeeded in smuggling them into England. In sublime ignorance of the law of supply and demand, the Bishops then resolved to purchase these Testaments in order to destroy them. The aged Archbishop of Canterbury

expended a sum amounting to nearly £1000, at the present value of money, for this purpose, but Tunstal is the chief hero of the incident. Old Hall, the chronicler, relates the event, which, though it occurred later, may be most conveniently referred to here :—

"It happened that one Packington, a merchant and mercer of London, was in Antwerp, and this Packington was a man that highly favoured Tyndale, but to the Bishop utterly showed himself to the contrary. The Bishop commenced of the New Testaments, and how he would gladly buy them. Packington said to the Bishop, 'My lord, I know the Dutchmen and strangers that have bought them of Tyndale and have them here to sell; so that if it be your lordship's pleasure to pay for them I will then assure you to have every book of them that is printed and here unsold.' The Bishop said, 'Do your diligence and get them; and with all my heart I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you.' Packington came to Tyndale and said, 'William, I know thou art a poor man, and hast a heap of New Testaments by thee for the which thou hast both endangered thy friends and beggared thyself, and I have now gotten thee a merchant, which with ready money shall despatch thee of all that thou hast.' 'Who is the merchant?' said Tyndale. 'The Bishop of London.' 'Oh, that is because he will burn them,' said Tyndale. 'Yea, marry,' quoth Packington. 'I am the gladder,' said Tyndale, 'for these two benefits shall come thereof; I shall get

the 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 print the same once again, and I trust the second will much better like you than ever the first.' And so, forward went the bargain: the Bishop had the books, Packington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money."

On 4th May 1530, therefore, at St. Paul's Cross, in the Churchyard, these Testaments were publicly burned. Burnet says: "This burning had such a baleful 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 kindled it, by which both their prejudice against the clergy and their desire of reading the New Testament were increased." Men said to one another that the book "was not only faultless, but very well translated, and was devised to be burnt because men should not be able to prove such faults as were at Paul's Cross declared to have been found in it were never found there indeed, but untruly surmised."

Commenting in after-years upon the carping criticisms that were passed on his work, Tyndale said: "There is not so much as one *i* therein if it lack a tittle over his head, but they have noted it, and number it unto the ignorant people for an heresy."

CHAPTER V.

A MAN WITHOUT A PATTERN, BUT WITH MANY IMITATORS.

"This Book, this Holy Book, in every line
Marked with the seal of high Divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last; this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of time
Stood casting in the dark her gracious bow,
And ever more beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs to read, believe, and live."

—POLLOCK.

CURIOSITIES OF TRANSLATION — ANCIENT VERSIONS — THE BOOK THAT TURNS THE HEART INSIDE OUT—TYNDALE'S QUALIFICATIONS—HIS PUNGENT GLOSSES.

A FEW pages may perhaps be devoted to those who had preceded Tyndale in the work of translation, but for all practical purposes, as it will be seen, they were of no aid to the work of Tyndale.

As an example of the errors of translators a few specimens may be subjoined, without any attempt at

preserving the order of time. Although of a later date, they indicate the difficulties that beset the work and the dangers into which the unwary were liable to fall.

Among singular editions of the Scriptures there is one that was printed in London in 1551, and which is called the Bug Bible because Ps. xci. 5 is printed, "Thou shalt not be afraid of the bugges by night."

In 1561 an edition of the Bible was printed at Geneva; it is called the Breeches Bible because of its translating Gen. ii. 7 thus: "They sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves breeches." But this was also done by an edition printed in 1568, in which also Jer. viii. 22 is rendered, "Is there no treacle in Gilead?" This word treacle was afterwards altered into rosin, and in 1611 rosin gave place to balm.

In one edition of the Bible which was printed in 1717, the first line of Luke xx. is misprinted into "The parable of the vinegar" instead of "The parable of the vineyard."

It is evident that God left much to the learning and common-sense of the men who translated the Scriptures, and yet He has so overruled things, that, upon the whole, no serious mistake has long continued in the Book of Truth. Yet, as an instance of the need of care, we are told that Eliot, the apostle of the Indians, when translating the Scriptures required the Indian word for lattice in Judges

v. 28. He crossed his fingers to represent a lattice and asked one and another what word that meant. They told him, and he put it into his Bible. But when he acquired more of the language he found that he had actually said, "The mother of Sisera looked out of a window and cried through the eel pots." Now, as language constantly changes, there thence arises a need for a continuous revision of the translation. In our English tongue, for example, all-to once meant altogether or entirely; anon meant immediately; bravery meant finery and not courage; carriage stood for baggage or that which could be carried by the hand. As men constantly change their speech, it is evident that we must vary the translation, if it is to be the living voice of God to men.

The Scriptures probably reached England with the Roman army, and they probably penetrated thence into Scotland. Of course, they were in Latin. The earliest attempt to render this Latin Bible into Saxon was that of Cædmon, a monk of Whitby, who lived about the seventh century. His work was indeed more of a paraphrase than anything else. The same may be said of what are called Alfred's Dooms, which were a free translation of the Ten Commandments by that King.

In the British Museum there is the celebrated Durham Book. It is most beautifully written, and is also ornamented by curious portraits of the evangelists and others. Among other stories that are

related of this book, it is said that the monks of Lindisfarne were once flying from the Danes; their ship was upset and the Durham Book fell into the sea. But through the merits of the patron saint, the tide ebbed out much farther than usual, and the book was found three miles from the shore, lying upon the sands, but unhurt by the waves! It was thereupon placed in the inner lid of St. Cuthbert's coffin, where it was afterwards found when, in 1104, the monks settled at Durham and built the Cathedral. This book is a Latin text, beneath which two hundred years later an interesting Anglo-Saxon translation was added.

Of translations proper the earliest we know of is that of the Venerable Bede, who died in 735. He was a monk of Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, and there his shattered high-backed chair is still preserved.

He is said to have been one of the most learned men of his time; to which fact we may attribute the legend that once while he was preaching the stones cried out, "Amen, Venerable Bede!"

An eye-witness has left us an account of his closing days. The scribe was writing the translation from the dictation of the dying man, when, as he finished the last verse of the twentieth chapter, he exclaimed, "There remains now only one chapter; but it seems difficult for you to speak." "It is easy," said Bede; "take your pen, dip it in ink, and write as fast as you can." And he did so as

rapidly as might be, for life was ebbing fast from the venerable teacher. "Now, master, now, only one sentence is wanting." Bede repeated it. "It is finished," said the writer, laying aside his goose-quill. "It is finished," said Bede. "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 so he passed away! His work was done; other men could copy his translation, and the Book that never dies could tell the sweet story of old to men who were then unborn!

One is reminded of Moffat's story after that he had rendered the Word of God into the Sechwana tongue. When the heathen beheld the converts reading the new book, they inquired "if their friends talked to the book." "No," was the answer; "it talks to us; for it is the Word of God." "What, then," was the astonished question, "does it speak?" "Yes," said the Christian, "it speaks to the heart." It indeed became a proverb among this African people that the Bible turned their hearts inside out! This is its privilege and function; it speaks to the heart, and it turns the heart inside out!

The Reformers were accustomed to point to the Anglo-Saxon versions as an argument against the Church of Rome, who then permitted what she afterwards forbade!

Sir Frederick Madden says, though, of several MSS. of Anglo-Saxon Gospels that are still in exist-

ence, "None appear to give the version in its original purity."

"It is very remarkable," says Dr Stoughton, "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." It is no wonder, therefore, that more attention was paid to them than to other parts of the Sacred Book, just as a correct instinct leads men now to bind up the Psalms with the Gospels.

We pass now to John Wycliffe, the morning star of the Reformation. It is indeed difficult to estimate the magnitude of his wonderful work. All men could see the evil of Romanism, but he alone saw the true remedy, and that was the Book of God in the speech of the people!

He was born about 1320, in Yorkshire, and died at Lutterworth in 1384. The carved oak pulpit in which he preached, the plain oak table upon which he wrote, the rude oak chair in which he sat, the robe he used to wear, are all preserved in the little town of Lutterworth, in the church of St. Mary, on the bank of the river Swift. Of this church he had been appointed rector by King Edward, as a reward for his services as ambassador when he met the representative of the Pope at Bruges. This was in 1374.

"One loves to picture this remarkable man pursuing his Biblical toils, now in 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 sympathised in his sentiments and loved to aid him in his hallowed enterprise." *

He is supposed to have commenced his work about 1378, and to have finished it about 1380, though the latter date is by some assigned to the New Testament alone. He began with a translation of the Book of Revelation; then came the Gospels in English with a commentary, and the other sacred books followed at unknown periods. This translation was from the Latin Vulgate by Jerome. It was multiplied and widely read by the people; preachers went up and down the country explaining it to the crowds who attended them; it seemed, indeed, as if the Reformation were to come in the fourteenth century instead of two hundred years later. But, just as in spring we often see a frost nip off the plentiful blossoms, so persecution put back the fair promise of fruit for a long time.

An attempt was made to destroy these translations of the Scripture, and yet, in spite of the many which were then destroyed, nearly 170 MSS. of this period remain to us.

* History of the Bible.

After escaping the malice of his enemies, Wycliffe died at home. "Admirable," says Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted with so many packs of dogs should die at last quietly sitting upon his form." The Council of Constance, in the next century, after burning Wycliffe's disciple Huss, ordered that Wycliffe's bones should be disinterred and burned, and with contemptible spite they further decreed that the ashes were to be thrown into the river Swift. "Thus," says Fuller, "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." John Purvey or Purnay, who had lived with Wycliffe, revised his master's work. It was Purvey who first termed the Sacred Book by its now familiar name of Bible.

This version had even a wider circulation than the first, and from its influence arose the Lollard movement. This was both a religious and a political revolution; it was an attempt to obtain reform both in the Church and in the State. It was a movement of all ranks, even among monks and nuns—alas! without success.

In 1408 a Convocation at Oxford enacted a law which forbade a translation of Scriptures into English, and warned all persons against reading such books under penalty of excommunication.

At this time a New Testament was worth

£2, 16s. 8d., or about £45, 6s. 8d. of our money! At this period we are told that a decent, respectable man could live well upon £5 per year. Writing was tedious, slow, liable to error, and expensive, so that the number of copies were limited; but about 1440 A.D., or sixty years after Wycliffe, the printing-press was invented. One of the first books that were printed was a Latin Bible; one of this edition was sold some years ago for £3400; another realised £2000.

In 1477 William Caxton brought this new art to England, and in Westminster Abbey he printed books under the protection of King Edward IV.

We have thus sketched briefly the history of the previous versions, and have come in the order of time to Tyndale's version of the Testament which Tyndale translated under so many difficulties. F. W. Faber (a Romanist) says:—"Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose gross fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its

phrases. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments; and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but oh how intelligible! voice of his guardian angel; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

To which may be added the testimony of the present Bishop of Durham, who speaks of Tyndale's work thus: "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 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. . . . 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."

Mr. Froude's testimony may perhaps be added here, not because it is requisite, but as the historian's tribute to a noble man: "Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the preternatural grandeur, unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man —William Tyndale."

As an example of this identity we take a passage from Tyndale's version; the words in italics remain as Tyndale placed them in both the Authorised and Revised Versions. The passage that we select is Matt. xviii. 19–27:—

"*Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree* in *earth* in *any* manner *thing* whatsoever *they shall* desire, *it shall be* given *them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

"*Then came Peter to him, and said,* Master, *how oft shall my brother* trespass *against me and I* shall *forgive him?* shall I forgive him *seven times? Jesus* said *unto him, I say not unto thee seven times, but*

seventy times seven times. *Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain King which would* take account of *his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents: but* when *he had* nought *to pay,* the *lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and his children and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant fell down and* besought *him saying,* Sir, give *me* respite, *and I will pay* it every whit. Then had *the Lord* pity on the *servant* and loosed *him and forgave him the debt.*"

It has been estimated that there are not more than 350 words in the whole book that are strange to us now, so that Tyndale may be justly regarded as one of the builders of our language.

Of the quarto testaments which were completed at Worms, after the hurried flight from Cologne, only one fragment remains, and that is deposited in the British Museum. It consists of thirty-one leaves only, and terminates at the 12th verse of the 22nd chapter of St. Matthew. It was discovered in the year 1836 by a London bookseller bound up with a tract by Æcolampadius. This fragment is all that remains of the three thousand copies in quarto that were commenced at Cologne and completed at Worms.

Of the three thousand octavo Testaments which, although commenced at Worms, were issued probably before the quarto, one perfect copy is preserved in the library of the Baptist College in Bristol.

This book was purchased for the Earl of Oxford about the year 1740, and he rewarded the agent who discovered the treasure with a donation of ten pounds, and an annuity of twenty pounds per year. This latter annuity was paid for fourteen years, so that the total cost of the book to the Earl was £290. At the death of the Earl of Oxford, his library was purchased by Osborne, the bookseller, for less money than the bindings had cost their collector. Osborne, in turn, sold the book for fifteen shillings; then it came into the hands of Dr. Gifford, a Baptist minister, who bequeathed it to the college in his native city. In the same college, amongst many other Biblical treasures and curiosities, is a copy of what is called the Droll-Error Tyndale. It is a handsome volume, well printed upon good paper, but full of printers' blunders. Amongst them is that which has given a name to the edition; thus, 2 Cor. x., instead of "Let him that is such think on this wise," the printer has put "Let hym that is foche (long *s*) think on his wyfe." This book is supposed to be later in date than either the octavo or quarto editions, but it may be perhaps most conveniently referred to here.

The spirit in which the work of translation was undertaken by Tyndale appears in his prologue:—

"I have translated, brethren and sisters most dear and tenderly beloved in Christ, the New Testament for your spiritual edifying, consolation, and solace, exhorting instantly, and beseeching those

that are better seen in the tongues than I, and that have higher gifts of grace to interpret the sense of Scripture and the meaning of the Spirit than I, to consider and ponder my labour, and that with the spirit of meekness, if they perceive in any places that I have not attained the very sense of the tongue or meaning of the Scripture, or have not given the right English word, that they put to their hands to amend it, remembering that so is their duty to do. For we have not received the gifts of God for ourselves only or for to hide them, but for to bestow them unto the honouring of God and Christ, and edifying of the congregation which is the body of Christ."

Of Tyndale's qualifications for his work there can be no doubt whatever. Buschius, a distinguished German scholar, speaks of him as "so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue."

The Greek text that he followed in his translation was, of course, that which Erasmus had given to the world, and although Tyndale was evidently more familiar with the second, he now and then uses the third edition. At the same time, it has been shown by Demaus that, "as he proceeded in his undertaking, Tyndale had before him the Vulgate, the Latin version of Erasmus, and the German of Luther, and that, in rendering from the original Greek, he carefully consulted all these aids; but he

did so not with the helpless imbecility of a mere tyro, but with the conscious independence of an accomplished scholar."

At the same time, it is but justice to bear in mind that some of the alleged faults of our version are due to Tyndale. For example, the manner in which he translates the same Greek word differently in the same connection, and sometimes in the same verse, adds indeed to the beauty, but it diminishes the force of the book.

But the most heinous offence in the eyes of the Papists, after his translating the Scripture at all, was the putting of notes in the margin.

Of these we select a few examples:—

"Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;" Tyndale says, "Here *all* bind and loose." Beside the words, "If thine eye be single, all thy body is full of light," he writes, "The eye is single when a man in all his deeds looketh but on the will of God, and looketh not for land, honour, or any other reward in this world; neither ascribeth heaven nor a higher room in the heaven unto his deeds: but accepteth heaven as a thing purchased by the blood of Christ and worketh freely for love's sake only."

"All good things cometh of the bountifulness, liberality, mercy, promises, and truth of God by the deserving of Christ's blood only."

"He that hath," he thus expounds. "Where the Word of God is understood, there it multiplieth

and maketh the people better; where it is not understood, there it decreaseth and maketh the people worse."

These notes, as we shall see, were subsequently omitted, but it is easy to see that they were calculated to give serious offence to the Romish authorities.

CHAPTER VI.

HATED BY THE CARDINAL, BUT WORKING FOR GOD.

"Many are the sayings of the wise,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, . . . unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold."

—MILTON.

"When such men use great plainness of speech we must not complain much, since they purchase it at a high price—THEIR LIFE-BLOOD."—DAVIES.

LEAVES WORMS FOR MARBURG—FARTHER FROM ROME, YET NEARER TO THE TRUTH—"THE WICKED MAMMON," AND "THE OBEDIENCE OF A CHRISTIAN MAN"—READ BY KING HENRY—"THE PRACTICE OF PRELATES"—NOTES ON THE PENTATEUCH.

TYNDALE, it is supposed, reached Worms after his hurried flight to Cologne about October 1525, and there he remained for two years. Until the following April or May, he would be fully occupied with the labour which the issuing of the three thousand octavo and the three thousand quarto Testaments

from the press involved. Immediately that this was accomplished, he parted cheerfully from his troublesome friend William Roye.

It has also been supposed that during his residence in Worms, Tyndale gave himself to the study of Hebrew, as a qualification for his work of translation.

In the year 1528 he left Worms for Marburg, which, under the rule of Landgrave Philip, was one of the most eminent of the Protestant cities of Germany. Here the work of the Reformation had been more thorough than in any other part of the Empire, as the Landgrave himself was a believer in Zwingle's doctrine. Here Tyndale was both in safety, and yet in the society of learned men, who were able to assist him in his arduous enterprise. For the Landgrave had done his very utmost to attract men of piety and letters to his capital, and the reformed flocked to it as to a second metropolis of religion, and as next to Wittemberg. Here Tyndale met with the heroic Patrick Hamilton and other young men from Scotland, and here, also, he conversed with Barnes, who was then a fugitive from the Papal persecution which still raged in England. Sir Thomas More declared that Barnes then induced Tyndale to abandon the Lutheran view of the Sacrament, and his testimony is probably correct. In his Confutation he says:—

"Friar Barnes was of Zwinglia's sect against the sacrament of the altar, believing that it is nothing but

bare bread. But Tyndale was yet at that time not fully fallen so far in that point, but though he were bad enough beside, he was yet not content with Friar Barnes for holding of that heresy. But within a while after, as he that is falling is soon put over, the Friar made the fool mad outright, and brought him down into the deepest dungeon of that devilish heresy wherein he sitteth now fast bounden in the chair of pestilence with the chain of pertinacity."

The diction and the spirit are certainly not to be commended, but Sir Thomas More sometimes endeavoured to compensate for a bad cause by virulent abuse. We shall have occasion to refer again to some of his coarse expressions with regard to the Reformers, and, therefore, we now only notice the fact that, while at Marburg, Tyndale adopted the Zwinglian view of the Sacrament. But a better companion than Barnes now came to comfort and sustain him; he was John Fryth, whom Tyndale called "his own son in the faith."

In him Tyndale found a man after his own heart, and the intercourse of the two friends was probably a mutual joy.

About the time of Fryth's arrival in Marburg, Tyndale issued a book which created as great a sensation in England as his Testament had done. This was the book which is generally known as "The Wicked Mammon," or more fully, "The Parable of the Wicked Mammon." "The Wicked Mammon"

is really an exposition of the parable of the Unjust Steward. Tyndale's main purpose in the book, however, was to set forth the cardinal doctrine of Justification by Faith, but in doing so he naturally assailed the gross errors of Rome.

In his preface Tyndale boldly declares the Pope to be Antichrist, an assertion which required much courage at the time, and said:—

"We had spied out Antichrist long ago if we had looked in the doctrine of Christ and His apostles; where, because the least seeth himself now to be sought for, he roareth and seeketh new holes to hide himself in; and changeth himself into a thousand fashions with all manner of yileness, falsehood, subtlety, and craft. Because that his excommunications are come to light, he maketh it treason unto the King to be acquainted with Christ. If Christ and they may not reign together, one hope we have —that Christ shall live for ever. The old Antichrists brought Christ unto Pilate, saying, 'By our law He ought to die;' and when Pilate bade them judge Him after their law, they answered, 'It is not lawful for us to kill any man;' which they did to the intent that they which regarded not the shame of their false communications should yet fear to confess Christ, because that the temporal sword had condemned Him. They do all things of a good zeal, they say; *they love you so well, that they had rather burn you than that you should have fellowship with Christ.* They are jealous over your armies, as saith

St. Paul. They would divide you from Christ and His Holy Testament, and join you to the Pope to believe in his testament and promise."

The New Testament had been issued without Tyndale's name upon it, but at length the secret of his authorship had leaked out. Now with a sublime scorn both for the prelates and for their malice, Tyndale continues:—

"Some men will ask peradventure why I take the labour to make this work, inasmuch as they will burn it, seeing they burnt the Gospel? I answer, *In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for;* NO MORE SHALL THEY DO IF THEY BURN ME ALSO; IF IT BE GOD'S WILL, IT SHALL SO BE."

Then Tyndale concludes his preface thus:—"Nevertheless, in translating the New Testament I did my duty, and so do I now, and will do as much more as God hath ordained me to do. And as I offered that to all men to correct it whosoever could, even so I do this. Whosoever, therefore, readeth this, compare it unto the Scriptures. If God's Word bear record unto it, and thou feelest in thine heart that it is so, be of good comfort and give God thanks. If God's Word condemn it, then hold it accused, and so do with other doctrines; as Paul counselleth his Galatians. Believe not every spirit suddenly, but judge them by the Word of God, which is the trial of all doctrine, and lasteth for ever. Amen!"

"That precious thing which must be in the heart ere a man can work any good work," says Tyndale, "is the Word of God which in the Gospel preacheth, proffereth, and bringeth unto all that repent and believe the favour of God in Christ. Whoso heareth the Word and believeth it, the same is thereby righteous. Therefore it is called the Word of life, the Word of grace, the Word of health, the Word of redemption, the Word of forgiveness, and the Word of peace. For of what nature soever the Word of God is, of the same nature must the hearts be which believe thereon and cleave thereunto. Now is the Word living, pure, righteous, and true; and even so maketh it the hearts of them that believe thereon."

Upon the duty of every man to help and to love his neighbour Tyndale is very emphatic, and his teachings are beautifully illustrated by his own self-denying life:—

"It is a wonderful love wherewith a man loveth himself. As glad as I would be to receive pardon of mine own life (if I had deserved death), so glad ought I to be to defend my neighbour's life, without respect of my life or my goods. A man ought neither to spare his goods, nor yet himself, for his brother's sake, after the example of Christ."

He even goes so far as to say: "If thy neighbour need, and thou help him not, being able, thou withholdest his duty from him, and art a thief before God. . . . Every Christian man to another

is Christ Himself, and thy neighbour's need hath as good right in thy goods as hath Christ Himself, which is heir and lord of all. And look what thou owest to Christ, that thou owest to thy neighbour's need. To thy neighbour owest thou thine heart, thyself, and all that thou hast and canst do. . . . Thus is every man that needeth thine help thy father, mother, sister, and brother in Christ; even as every man that doeth the will of the Father is father, mother, sister, and brother unto Christ."

Probably no Christian teacher in that age would have dared to have written such words as the following; for the spirit of national hostility was very strong, and the persecuting mania was terribly prevalent:—

"Moreover, if any be an infidel and a false Christian, and forsake his household, his wife, children, and such as cannot help themselves, then art thou bound, if thou have therewith, even as much as to thine own household. And they have as good right in thy goods as thou thyself; and if thou withdraw mercy from them, and hast wherewith to help them, then art thou a thief. If thou show mercy, so doest thou thy duty and art a faithful minister in the household of Christ; and of Christ shalt thou have thy reward and thanks."

Such doctrine was far in advance of the age, but it is interesting to notice how thus, as in some other things, Tyndale was far ahead of his contemporaries.

Simultaneously with "The Wicked Mammon,"

Tyndale issued another work, which was almost of as much importance to the Reformation as was his Bible. It is entitled "The Obedience of a Christian Man," and is both a defence of the Reformers from the charge of sedition, and also a call to them to persist in the path of duty in spite of persecution. "Adversity I receive at the hand of God is a wholesome medicine, though it be somewhat bitter," said Tyndale.

"O Peter, Peter!" he exclaims when speaking of the sins of the clergy, "thou wast too long a fisher; thou wast never brought up at the Arches, neither wast Master of the Rolls, nor yet Chancellor of England. . . . The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest pilleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner pareth; we lack but a butcher to pull the skin."

He concludes with these noble words: "Remember that Christ is the end of all things. He only is our resting-place, He is our peace. For as there is no salvation in any other name, so there is no peace in any other name. Thou shalt never have rest in thy soul, neither shall the worm of conscience ever cease to gnaw thine heart, till thou come at Christ; till thou hear the glad tidings, how that God for His sake hath forgiven thee all freely. If thou trust in thy works, there is no rest. Thou shalt think, I have not done enough. . . . If thou trust in confession then shalt thou think, Have I told all? . . . Likewise in our holy pardons and

pilgrimages gettest thou no rest. As pertaining to good deeds, therefore, do the best thou canst, and desire God to give strength to do better daily; but in Christ put thy trust, and in the pardon and promises that God hath made thee for His sake; and on that rock build thine house and there dwell."

Such words were well calculated to stimulate and to comfort the persecuted, and it is, therefore, no wonder that they introduced an element into English religious life that was most important and unhappily infrequent before. Bilney, for example, had recanted, but after suffering long and acute distress of mind, "he came at length to some quiet of conscience, being fully resolved to give over his life for the confession of that truth which before he had denounced. He took his leave in Trinity Hall of certain of his friends, and said he would go up to Jerusalem. . . . And so, setting forth on his journey toward the celestial Jerusalem, he departed from thence to the anchoress in Norwich, and there gave her a New Testament of Tyndale's translation and 'The Obedience of a Christian Man,' whereupon he was apprehended and carried to prison, there to remain till the blind Bishop Nixe sent up for a writ to burn him."

Of Bainham, who was another who had abjured, Foxe says that he "was never quiet in mind or conscience until the time he had uttered his fall to all his acquaintance and asked God and all the world forgiveness. And the next Sunday after he

came to St. Austin's with the New Testament in his hand in English and 'The Obedience of a Christian Man' in his bosom, and stood up there before all the people in his pew, there declaring openly, with weeping tears, that he had denied God. After this he was strengthened above the cruel death by fire with remarkable courage."

This book came into the hands of the King of England himself, and Strype thus relates the incident: "Upon the Lady Anne Boleyn waited a fair young gentlewoman named Mrs. Gaynsford; and in her service was also retained Mr. George Zouch, father to Sir John Zouch. This gentleman, of a comely, sweet person, was a suitor in way of marriage to the said young lady; and, among other love-tricks, once he plucked from her a book in English called Tyndale's 'Obedience,' which the Lady Anne had lent her to read. About which time the Cardinal had given commandment to the prelates, and especially to Dr. Simpson, Dean of the King's Chapel, that they should keep a vigilant eye over all people for such books that they come not abroad; that so, as much as might be, they might not come to the King's reading. But this which he most feared fell out upon this occasion. For Mr. Zouch was so ravished with the Spirit of God, speaking now as well in the heart of the reader as first it did in the heart of the maker of the book, that he was never well but when he was reading of that book. Mrs. Gaynsford wept because she

could not get the book from her wooer, and he was as ready to weep to deliver it. But see the providence of God; Mr. Zouch, standing in the chapel before Dr. Simpson, ever reading upon this book, and the Dean, never having his eye off the book in the gentleman's hand, called to him, and then snatched the book out of his hand, asked his name, and whose man he was. And the book he delivered to the Cardinal. In the meantime the Lady Anne asketh her woman for the book. She on her knees told all the circumstances. The Lady Anne showed herself not sorry nor angry with either of the two. But said she, 'Well, it shall be the dearest book that ever the Dean or Cardinal took away.' The noble woman goes to the King, and upon her knees she desireth the King's help for her book. Upon the King's token the book was restored. And now bringing the book to him, she besought his Grace most tenderly to read it. The King did so, and delighted in the book; for saith he, '*This book is for me and all Kings to read.*' And in a little time the King, by the help of this virtuous lady, had his eyes opened to the truth, to search the truth, to advance God's religion and glory, to abhor the pope's doctrine, his lies, his pomp and pride, to deliver his subjects out of the Egyptian darkness, the Babylonian bonds, that the pope had brought him and his subjects under."

Wyatt repeats this story with some interesting variations, for he says that Anne was "but newly

come from the King, when the Cardinal came in with the book in his hands to make complaints of certain points in it that he knew the King would not like of. And withal to take occasion with him against those that countenanced such books in general, and especially women, and as might be thought with mind to go farther against the Queen more directly, if he had perceived the King agreeable to his meaning. But the King, that somewhat afore disliked the Cardinal, finding the notes the Queen had made, all turned the more to hasten his ruin which was also furthered on all sides."

So that the Cardinal in reality digged a pit and then stumbled into it; and Henry for once in his life read and admired the faithful setting forth of truth! Alas that Tyndale's own obedience should be unto death! But so it proved to be with him.

In 1530 Tyndale left Marburg and returned once more to Hamburg. During the same year he also published another book, which he entitled "The Practice of Prelates."

In this book occurs the famous similitude, which we here subjoin:—

"And to see how our holy father the pope came up, mark the ensample of an ivy-tree: first it springeth out of the earth, and then awhile creepeth along by the ground till it findeth a great tree; then it joineth itself beneath alow into 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 burthen 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 choketh and stifleth 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 into 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 entitled 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, commendeth; 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 rents, St. Peter's lands, St. Peter's right; to cast a vain fear, and an heathenish superstitiousness into the hearts of men, that no man should dare meddle 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 Nebuchadnezzar gave his god Baal), 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 climbed up above all his fellowships, 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 climbed above the emperor, and subdued him also, and made stoop unto his feet, and kiss them another while. Yea, pope Cœlestinus crowned the emperor Henry the Fifth, 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 empire should but defend the pope, provided always 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, his members, the bishops, play in every kingdom, dukedom, and lordship: inasmuch 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."

But Tyndale was not only active in his attack upon error; he was not less indefatigable in promulgating truth. For on the 17th of January in the same year, 1530, he issued from the press his translation of the Pentateuch. The notes in the margin in this translation are even more vigorous than those in the New Testament. Thus Tyndale says: "To bless a man's neighbour is to pray for him and to wish him good, and not to wag two fingers over him." "If we answer not our prelates, when they be angry even as they would have it, we must to the fire without redemption or forswear God." Upon Exodus xxxiv. 20, "None shall appear before Me empty," Tyndale says, "That is a good text for the pope." To Balaam's question, "How shall I curse when God hath not cursed?" Tyndale notes, "The pope can tell how."

Such words are not to be considered without due reflection as to the circumstances under which they were written. Tyndale had been long an exile, and he knew that plots had been again and again laid to entrap him. Although for a time he might hope to elude his persecutors, he well knew that eventually he must fall a victim to their cruelty, as many others had done before him. And he believed himself to be called of God for the purpose of combating the gigantic form of error that, like Apollyon, "straddled right across" the King's highway and withstood the pilgrims in the way to the Celestial City. Yet, although some may not approve of the notes, the

counsel that is given in the prologue to Genesis will be read by all spiritual Christians with unqualified approval:—

"Though a man had a precious jewel and rich, yet if he wist not the value thereof, nor wherefore it served, he were neither the better nor richer of a straw. Even so, though we read the Scripture, and babble of it never so much, yet if we know not the use of it, and wherefore it was given, and what is therein to be sought, it profiteth us nothing at all. It is not enough, therefore, to read and talk of it only, but we must also desire God, day and night instantly, to open our eyes, and to make us understand and feel wherefore the Scripture was given, that we may apply the medicine of Scripture, every man to his own sores; unless that we intend to be idle disputers and brawlers about vain words, *ever gnawing upon the bitter bark without, and never attaining to the sweet pith within.*"

CHAPTER VII.

NOT SECOND TO A GLADIATOR; OR, STRONG FOR THE TRUTH.

"Thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; . . . we are selfish men.
Oh! raise us up, return to us again,
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power."

—MILTON.

"Reformers are not distinguished for their politeness—Luther and Knox, to wit. They are men raised by God to arrest the current of regenerate times, and to challenge sins which have become conventional and respectable; and, therefore, to tear in tatters sickly civilities which conceal beneath them a hell of sin and vice."—ECHOES FROM THE WELSH HILLS.

SIR THOMAS MORE THE ADVOCATE OF THE BISHOPS—TYNDALE'S CRUSHING REPLY—MORE'S GROSS ABUSE AND FOUL LANGUAGE—PUBLIC OPINION WITH TYNDALE.

TYNDALE, of course, was not suffered to continue his labours unassailed, for no less an antagonist than Sir Thomas More entered the lists against him. Whatever may be More's claims to admiration, it must ever be considered to be a foul blot upon his character that he assailed Tyndale with low, scurrilous abuse. As early as the year 1728, Tunstal, the

polished Bishop of London (who had previously so unceremoniously rejected Tyndale's offer of service), wrote to More inviting him to undertake the task of stemming the tide of heretical books which, in spite of his utmost endeavours, continued to flow into England. "Forasmuch," said the Bishop, "as you can play the Demosthenes both in our native tongue and in Latin, and are wont to be a most zealous defender of Catholic truth in every assault, you will never be able to make a better use of any spare hours that you can redeem from your occupation, than by publishing in our native tongue something that will expose even to rude and simple people the crafty malice of the heretics, and make them better prepared against those impious enemies of the Church." Copies of the books to which he was to reply were forwarded to More, and the Chancellor was reminded of the example of his monarch, who had won the title of Defender of the Faith by his book against Luther. More readily complied with this request, and after a year of study he published a large volume which specified Luther and Tyndale as his chief objects of attack. The book is in the form of a dialogue, which is, of course, a most convenient form of eluding an awkward attack.

"Look on Tyndale," says Sir Thomas More, "how in his wicked book of 'Mammon,' and after in his malicious book of 'Obedience,' he showed himself so puffed up with the poison of pride,

malice, and envy, that it is more than marvel that the skin can hold together. . . . He knoweth that all the fathers teach that there is the fire of purgatory, which I marvel why he feareth so little, as if he be at a plain point with himself to go straight to hell." Anderson, in his "Annals of the Bible," in speaking of this attack of More's says: "The English language has never been so prostituted before Sir Thomas More took up the pen. . . . No solitary selected expressions can convey an adequate idea of the virulence, not to say the verbosity and fallacious reasoning, of this writer;" and the majority of unbiassed readers will probably endorse this severe verdict. Sir Thomas More's book was published in June 1529, and during the spring of 1531 Tyndale published his reply to it—an answer which must be admitted by all impartial men to effectually dispose of More and his flimsy attempts at reasoning.

The following extract from the section in which Tyndale treats of ceremonies will furnish an example of his rugged, earnest method of argument. He says: "How cometh it that a poor layman, having wife and twenty children, and not able to maintain them, though all his neighbours know his necessity, shall not get with begging for Christ's sake in a long summer's day enough to maintain them two days honestly; when if a disguised monster come, he shall, with an hour's lying in the pulpit, get enough to maintain thirty or forty sturdy lubbers

a month long, of which the weakest shall be as strong in the belly when he cometh unto the manger, as the mightiest porter in the custom-house, or the best courser that is in the King's stable? . . . Who thinketh it as good a deed to feed the poor as to stick up a candle before a post, or as to sprinkle it with holy water? . . . As though God were better pleased when I sprinkled myself with water, or set up a candle before a block, than if I fed or clothed, or helped at his need, him whom He so tenderly loveth that He gave His own Son unto the death for him, and commandeth me to love him as myself. . . . Christ's death purchased grace for man's soul, to repent of evil, and to believe in Christ for remission of sins, and to love the law of God, and his neighbour as himself. Which is the true worshipping of God in the spirit; and He died not to purchase such honour for unsensible things, that man to his dishonour should do them honourable service, and receive his salvation of them."

This is vigorous writing, and is well calculated to answer its purpose; that is, of destroying the subtleties by means of which More and other Romish advocates endeavoured to deceive and to beguile the unwary. So keenly did the Papal party feel the importance of Tyndale's book, that More was compelled, in spite of all his many employments, to attempt a rejoinder at once. This volume, upon which he lavished great pains, More had to confess

to be a failure; men did not read it and one does not wonder at their reluctance. A specimen only will suffice of this vaunted defence of the Papacy upon the part of gentle Thomas More; in justice to Tyndale, this and similar passages should be remembered by all admirers of the Chancellor:—

"This devilish drunken soul (Tyndale!) doth abominably blaspheme, and calleth them (*i.e.*, the schoolmen) liars and falsifiers of Scripture, and maketh them no better than draff. But this drowsy drudge hath drunken so deep in the devil's dregs, that, unless he wake and repent himself, the sinner, he may hap ere long to fall into the mashing fat, and turn himself into draff, as of which the hogs of hell shall feed upon, and fill their bellies thereof."

Nothing can justify the employment of such language, and the offence appears to be the more heinous when we remember that Tyndale was at that time enduring poverty and exile, while More was enjoying the emoluments of office and the favour of the King and Bishops! To call such a man as Tyndale "a hell-hound, one of those that the devil hath in his kennel," can never be defended by any impartial reader, and our sympathies must therefore be wholly given to Tyndale in the controversy, as our judgment must also award the palm of victory to him. To Tyndale the controversy was one not merely of life and death, for he viewed the question in its eternal issues. One

would not wonder if he used somewhat strong language when he realised what the Papacy is in itself, and what its treatment of men, even of its adherents, means in degradation and defilement; but such scurrilous language as More employs at once stains his own character, and also shows his keen consciousness of having a bad case.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIBES AND BAIT; OR, THE FLY WHO WOULD NOT ENTER THE SPIDER'S WEB.

"The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to avenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife,
His adversary's heart to him doth tie.
And 'tis a fairer conquest, truly said,
To win the heart than overthrow the head."

—LADY CAREW.

"Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us."—DR. SMILES.

"Scarcely can we fix our eyes upon a single passage in this wonderful Book which has not afforded comfort and instruction to thousands, and been met with tears of penitential sorrow, or grateful joy, drawn from eyes that will weep no more."—DR. PAYSON.

ATTEMPTS TO INDUCE TYNDALE TO RETURN TO ENGLAND—THE INTERVIEW IN THE MEADOW—TYNDALE'S PATHETIC APPEAL AND HIS NOBLE OFFER.

IN England, Thomas Cromwell, the hammerman, had succeeded Wolsey in the supreme direction of affairs. So long as he possessed the King's ear, the Reformers were secure of at least one friend, and Henry him-

self was prosperous and successful so long as he followed the guidance of his great Minister.

Cromwell was a politician and not a Reformer, but all his instincts were in favour of those who pleaded for an overthrow of the Papal corruptions and tyranny. It is true that in pursuing his purpose Cromwell now and then adopted measures that cannot be defended, but his policy was, after all, that which, if pursued systematically instead of spasmodically, would have secured the independence and prosperity of the realm. Cromwell took Latimer into his favour, and endeavoured to employ his preaching talents in the furtherance of his designs. He now endeavoured to induce Tyndale to return home to England, hoping possibly that the great translator would also co-operate with him in working out his plans. Stephen Vaughan, one of the English envoys to the Low Countries, was the messenger who was employed for this purpose; and at Cromwell's instance he wrote three letters to three different places whence he supposed they might reach Tyndale.

This was in the year 1530; and the result of Vaughan's inquiries into the whereabouts and doings of the Reformer was a high appreciation on his part both of Tyndale's abilities and character. "The man is of greater knowledge than the King's Highness doth take him for," wrote Vaughan to Cromwell, "which well appeareth by his works. Would God he were in England!"

Tyndale probably did not take the same view of

the case as Vaughan, for about this time his brother John in England was sentenced by the Star Chamber to be exhibited in Cheapside upon horseback with his face to the horse's tail. John Tyndale was further compelled to pay a considerable fine, and this punishment was inflicted because he had sent money and letters to his brother William Tyndale, and had, moreover, committed the further enormity of receiving and selling Testaments!

Tyndale had means of obtaining information as to all these doings in England, and he was therefore somewhat sceptical as to the good faith of Vaughan. At last he consented to meet the English envoy, and accordingly an interview took place between them "without the gates of Antwerp, in a field lying nigh to the same. At our meeting, 'Do you not know me?' said this Tyndale. 'I do not well remember you,' said I to him. 'My name is Tyndale,' said he. 'But, Tyndale,' said I, 'fortunate be our meeting.' Then said Tyndale, 'Sir, 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 that his Grace, this considering, may either by himself think, or by 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?

"'Was there in me any such mind when I warned his Grace to beware of his Cardinal, whose iniquity he shortly after proved? Doth this deserve hatred? Again, may his Grace, being a Christian prince, be so unkind to God, which hath commanded His Word to be spread throughout the world, to give more faith to wicked persuasions of men, who, contrary to that which Christ expressly commandeth in His Testament, dare say that it is not lawful for the people to have the same in a tongue that they understand; because the purity thereof should open men's eyes

to see their wickedness? *As I now am, very death were more pleasant to me than life, considering man's nature to be such as can bear no truth.'"*

At a second interview Tyndale went further, and said, "with water in his eyes," as Vaughan observed, "If it would stand with the King's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of Scripture to be put forth among his people, like as 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 into his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his Royal Majesty, *offering my body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death his Grace will, so that this be obtained.* And till that time I will abide the asperity of all chances, whatsoever shall come, and endure my life, in as much pains as it is able to bear and suffer."

A third time Vaughan met Tyndale, and again the envoy attempted in vain to induce him to venture back into England. Tyndale knew Henry too well to do so, and he was providentially kept from making this rash experiment, for his work was not as yet finished.

It is somewhat difficult to believe, with Demaus, that King Henry was quite honourable in approving or in permitting these negotiations. The almost

unanimous opinion of all, until quite recently, was, that Henry was at least a consenting party to Tyndale's murder. To a man like Henry the life of Tyndale was but of little moment; and, from his treatment of others, it is probable that, had Tyndale ventured to return home, even with the promised security of the Royal word, he would have suffered the fate that befell many good men about this time. The rumours that reached Tyndale from time to time would make him chary of trusting Henry's promise; and at the very period that Vaughan was endeavouring to persuade Tyndale to confide in the King, Tyndale knew that a fierce persecution was raging in England against those who did not believe and act in religious matters as the King and Convocation were pleased to appoint.

For example, Tyndale would have heard that William Tracy, a Gloucestershire gentleman, and a former friend of his, had just before died, and that his will, instead of the usual invocation of Mary and of the saints, began thus:—

"First, and before all other things, I commit myself to God and His mercy; believing, without any doubt or mistrust, that by His grace, and the merits of Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of His passion and His resurrection, I have, and shall have, remission of all my sins, and also resurrection of body and soul, according as it is written: 'I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh shall see

my Saviour;' this my hope is laid up in my bosom. And, touching my soul, this faith is sufficient, as I suppose, without any other man's works or merits. My confidence and belief is, that there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, which is Jesus Christ; so that I take none in heaven nor in earth to be mediator between me and God, but only Jesus Christ. All others be but petitioners for receiving of grace, but none are able to give influence of grace, and, therefore, I will not bestow any part of my goods with an intent that any man should say or do anything to help my soul, for therein I trust only in the promises of Christ. And touching the distribution of my temporal goods, my purpose is, by the grace of God, to bestow them to be accepted as the fruits of faith, so that I do not suppose that my merit shall be by the good bestowing of them, but my merit is the faith of Jesus Christ only, by whom such works are good. And we should ever consider that true saying, that a good work maketh not a good man, but a good man maketh a good work; for faith maketh a man both good and righteous; 'for a righteous man liveth by faith, and whatsoever springeth not of faith is sin'" (Rom. xiv.).

This will was condemned by Convocation as "proud, scandalous, contradictory, impious, and heretical," and it was decreed that Tracy's body should be exhumed and cast out of consecrated ground as a heretic.

This dishonour to the dead was not the only proof of active hostility that the clergy and King manifested, for even the living were compelled to feel their vengeance. No wonder is it, when he heard of such things as the martyrdom of Bilney and of others, that Tyndale feared to return to England, even if he had the guarantee of the King's word. And yet he declared that he was ready to do so if only the King would permit a translation of the Scriptures to be circulated in England; to secure this boon for his fellow-countrymen Tyndale was quite content to die. Alas! the Bible was not to be as yet circulated in England.

CHAPTER IX.

A FRIEND UNTO DEATH; OR, COMFORTING A SUFFERER.

"A friend is worth all hazards we can run,
Poor is the friendless master of a world.
A world in purchase for a friend were gain."
—YOUNG.

"Be still, fond heart, nor ask thy fate to know;
Face bravely what each God-sent moment brings;
Above thee rules in love, through weal and woe,
Guiding thy king and thee, the King of kings."
—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

"It is not our business to stand before Scripture and admire it; but to stand within, that we may believe and obey it. In the way of inward communion and obedience only shall we see the beauty of its treasures."—DR. ANGUS.

THE BOOK OF JONAH TRANSLATED—POWER LENT BY GOD—WANDERING BUT WORKING—COMFORTING FRYTH—FRYTH'S NOBLE DEFENCE—TYNDALE'S MODE OF LIFE.

VAUGHAN, who during the interviews of which we have spoken had become strongly attached to Tyndale, was recalled by Cromwell in 1532, and a less scrupulous envoy was employed in his place. Sir Thomas Elyot, the new tool of Henry's policy, did

not seek for a friendly interview with Tyndale, as his predecessor had done; but, on the contrary, he sought by all possible means to apprehend the exile. Whether this indicated a change in the King's intention toward Tyndale, or were merely an unmasking of purposes which it had been deemed expedient to dissemble while Vaughan was the envoy, the danger to Tyndale was equally as great. "I gave many rewards," Elyot wrote to Cromwell, "partly to the Emperor's servants to get knowledge, and partly to such as by whose means I trusted to apprehend Tyndale, according to the King's commandment."

Encompassed as he thus was with snares and perils, Tyndale, however, did not desist from his heroic efforts. He eluded Elyot's plots, and successfully translated and published the Book of Jonah, and even prefixed his initials to the preface, as he had not done with the New Testament. So successful, however, were the efforts of the Papists to suppress this book, that for a long time no copy of it was known to be in existence; but in the year 1861 one was unexpectedly discovered in an old library. The Book of Jonah furnished Tyndale with a theme whereon he preached important truths to his fellow-countrymen. Nineveh he made a parable of England; and, as did Jonah, Tyndale preached the need of immediate repentance.

"Christ, to preach repentance," he wrote, "is risen once more out of His sepulchre, in which the

pope had buried Him, and kept Him down with his pillars and pole-axes and all disguisings of hypocrisy, with guile, wiles, and falsehood, and with the sword of all princes, which he had blinded with his false merchandise. And as I doubt not of the ensamples that are past, so am I sure that great wrath will follow except repentance turn it back again and cease it."

Beside this translation of Jonah, Tyndale also issued an "Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John" during the same year. From this "Exposition" we extract the following passage:—

"Preaching of the doctrine which is light," says Tyndale, "hath but small effect to move the heart if the ensample of living do disagree. . . .

"And that we worship saints for fear, lest they should be displeased and angry with us, and plague us, or hurt us (as who is not afraid of St. Lawrence? Who dare deny St. Anthony a fleece of wool, for fear of his terrible fire or lest he send the pox among our sheep?), is heathen image service, and clean against the first commandment, which is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God.' Now, God in the Hebrew is called *El*, or *Elohim* in the plural number; *i.e.*, *strength or might*. So that the commandment is: Hear, O Israel, He that is thy power and might; thy sword and shield is but One; that is, there is none of might to help or hurt thee, save One, which is altogether thine, and at thy commandment, if thou wilt hear His voice. And

all other might in the world is borrowed of Him; and *He will lend no might against thee, contrary to His promises.* Keep, therefore, His commandments, and He shall keep thee; and if thou have broken them, and He have lent of His power against thee, repent and come again unto thy profession; and He will return again unto His mercy, *and fetch His power home again, which He lent to vex thee,* because thou forsookest Him and brakest His commandments. And fear no other creature; for false fear is the cause of all idolatry."

The dangers thickened so rapidly around Tyndale that, in order to elude the restless vigilance of his powerful enemies, he left Antwerp for a time, and wandered from city to city in Germany, homeless and possibly lonely.

Yet he was not idle, for even during this period of wandering he issued his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. The spirit and style of this work may be estimated from the two following extracts, the one taken from the Prologue, and the other from the exposition upon Matthew v. 13:—

"To believe in Christ's blood for the remission of sin, and purchasing of all good promises that help to the life to come, and to love the law, and to long for the life to come, is the inward baptism of the soul; the only baptism that availeth in the sight of Christ; the only key also to bind and loose sinners; the touchstone to try all doctrines; the lantern and light that scattereth and expelleth the

mist and darkness of all hypocrisy, and a preservative against all error and heresy; the mother of good works; the earnest of everlasting life, and title whereby we challenge our inheritance."

With a terrible inner consciousness of his own lamentable condition, the exile wrote: "True preaching is a salt that stirreth up persecution, and an office that no man is meet for, save he that is seasoned himself before with poverty in spirit, softness, meekness, patience, mercifulness, pureness of heart, and hunger of righteousness, and looking for persecution also; and hath his hope, comfort, and solace in the blessing only, and in no worldly theory."

About this time, also, a great sorrow fell upon Tyndale, for his trusted friend, John Fryth, who had ventured into England, was there apprehended and brought up for trial as a heretic. Tyndale had some surmise as to his friend's danger before the tidings of Fryth's arrest reached him. He had written a tender letter of counsel and warning, in which he advised his friend to be prudent, and especially to avoid controversy about the Sacrament.

"Wherefore," said Tyndale, "cleave fast to the rock of the help of God, and commit the end of all things to Him; and if God shall call you, that you may then use the wisdom of the worldly so far as you perceive the glory of God may come thereof, refuse it not; and ever among thrust in that the Scripture may be in the mother-tongue, and learning set up in the Universities. But and if aught be required

contrary to the glory of God and His Christ, then stand fast, and commit yourself to God; and be not overcome of men's persuasions" to abjure. After professing his love for Fryth and his confidence in him, Tyndale says grandly:—

"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 pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me.*

"My soul is not faint, though my body is weary," he says pathetically and touchingly. He concludes his letter with a sentence which exhibits his own feelings:—

"He is our God, if we despair in ourselves and trust in Him; and His is the glory. Amen!

WILLIAM TYNDALE.

"I hope our redemption is nigh."

Fryth's bearing before his judges was princely. He confined his defence to four principal themes, and these he conclusively argued so that his accusers were silenced. They were:—"1. That the Pope's opinion respecting the Sacrament cannot be considered as an article of faith necessary to be believed upon pain of damnation. 2. That, as Christ's natural body was in all respects like unto ours, sin only excepted, there can be no reason why it should

be in two or many places at once, contrary to the nature of our body. 3. That we are not to understand Christ's words by what we may conceive to be the meaning of the words, but by comparing one passage of Scripture with another. 4. That the manner in which the Sacrament is administered by the priests is quite different from that in which it was administered by Christ Himself."

In the spirit of his friend Tyndale, is also Fryth's vigorous and noble reply to Sir Thomas More:—

"Until we see some means found by the which a reasonable Reformation may be had, and sufficient instruction for the poor commoners, I assure you I neither can nor will cease to speak. *For the Word of God boileth in my body like a fervent fire*, and will needs have issue, *and breaketh out when occasion is given.* But this hath been offered you, is offered, and shall be offered: *Grant that the Word of God, I mean the text of Scripture, may go abroad in our English tongue, as other nations have it in their tongues, and my brother William Tyndale and I have done, and will promise you to write no more. If you will not grant this condition*, THEN WILL WE BE DOING WHILE WE HAVE BREATH."

Tyndale wrote a second letter to his noble friend, and in it he says:—

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

"Fear not threatening, therefore, neither be overcome of sweet words; with which twain methods the hypocrites shall assail you. Neither let the persuasions of worldly wisdom bear rule in your heart, not though they be your friends that counsel."

In a postscript Tyndale adds a sentence behind

which there lies a breaking heart striving to accept the will of God in heroic faith :—

" Sir, your wife is well content with the will of God, and would not for her sake have the glory of God hindered."

The glory of God was not hindered, for Fryth went to the stake, and three years after his martyrdom, Tyndale was also called upon in like manner to suffer for the truth.

Meanwhile Tyndale had quietly settled down at Antwerp, and Foxe has given to us a picture of his life and doings there. The reader will probably prefer to read the narrative in Foxe's own words :—

"And here to end and conclude this history with a few notes touching his private behaviour in diet, study, and especially his charitable zeal and tender relieving of the poor. First, he was a man very frugal and spare of body, a great student and earnest labourer, namely [especially] in the setting forth of the Scriptures of God. He reserved or hallowed to himself two days in the week, which he named his days of pastime, and those days were Monday the first day in the week, and Saturday the last day in the week. On the Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England by reason of persecution into Antwerp; and those, well understanding their good exercises and qualities, he did very liberally comfort and relieve; and in like manner provided for the sick and diseased persons. On the Saturday he

walked round about the town in Antwerp, seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor person to dwell (as God knoweth there are many); and where he found any to be well occupied, and yet overburdened with children, or else were aged or weak, those also he plentifully relieved. And thus he spent his two days of pastime, as he called them. And truly his almose [alms] was very large and great; and so it might well be, for his exhibition that he had yearly of the English merchants was very much; and that for the most part he bestowed upon the poor, as aforesaid. The rest of the days in the week he gave him wholly to his book, wherein most diligently he travailed. When the Sunday came, then went he to some one merchant's chamber or other, whither came many other merchants; and unto them would he read some one parcel of Scripture, either out of the Old Testament or out of the New; the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly, and gently from him (much like to the writing of St. John the Evangelist), that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience to hear him read the Scriptures; and in likewise after dinner he spent an hour in the aforesaid manner. He was a man without any spot or blemish of rancour or malice, full of mercy and compassion, so that no man living was able to reprove him of any kind of sin or crime; albeit his righteousness and justification depended not thereupon before God, but only upon the blood of

Christ and his faith upon the same, in which faith constantly he died, as is said at Vilvorde, and now resteth with the glorious company of Christ's martyrs blessedly in the Lord, who be blessed in all His saints. Amen."

CHAPTER X.

TRAPPED AT LAST; OR, DYING FOR THE TRUTH.

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain
Can touch him not and torture not again;
He is secure, and now can never mourn."

—SHELLEY.

"He is strong that can bear another man's weakness."

—TYNDALE.

THE QUEEN'S BIBLE—THE TRAITOR—THE TRAP—THE WEARY YEAR OF IMPRISONMENT—THE TRIUMPH.

Two years (1533–1535) were spent by Tyndale in Antwerp, and while engaged in the manner that Foxe described in the paragraph which we quoted in the last chapter, he was also employed in revising his New Testament. The Bishop of Durham says of this second edition:—

"One of the few copies of this edition which have been preserved is of touching interest. Among the men who had suffered for aiding in the circulation of the earlier editions of the Testament was a merchant-adventurer of Antwerp, Mr. Harman, who seems to have applied to Queen Anne Boleyn for

redress. The Queen listened to the plea which was urged in his favour, and by her intervention he was restored to the freedom and privileges of which he had been deprived. Tyndale could not fail to hear of her good offices, and he acknowledged them by a royal gift. He was at the time engaged in superintending the printing of his revised New Testament, and of this he caused one copy to be struck off on vellum and beautifully illuminated. No preface or dedication or name mars the simple integrity of this copy. Only on the gilded edges in faded red letters runs the simple title, *Anna Regina Angliæ.* The copy was bequeathed to the British Museum by the Rev. C. M. Cracherode in 1799."

It was almost his last sacrifice for England, for in the year 1535 Tyndale was arrested. He had, during this last stay in Antwerp, resided with Thomas Poyntz, an English merchant who had settled in that town. This gave Tyndale protection against liability of arrest, so long as he kept within the house of his patron and friend. From Poyntz, Foxe obtained an account of Tyndale's capture, and we subjoin it here:—

"William Tyndale, being in the town of Antwerp, had been lodged about one whole year in the house of Thomas Poyntz, an Englishman. About which time there came thither one out of England whose name was Henry Philips, a comely fellow, like as he had been a gentleman, having a servant with

him; but wherefore he came, or for what purpose he was sent thither, no man could tell."

This man basely ingratiated himself into Tyndale's favour, and although Poyntz distrusted him, even he did not suspect that Philips was capable of the baseness of betraying Tyndale to his death.

At length the time arrived when Philips' arrangements for the capture of Tyndale were completed, and when perhaps this Judas had received the price of blood. It happened that Poyntz "went forth to a town being eighteen miles from Antwerp, where he had business to do for the space of a month or six weeks. And in the time of his absence Henry Philips came again to Antwerp, to the house of Poyntz, and coming in spake with his wife, asking her for Master Tyndale, and whether he would dine there with him; saying, 'What good meat shall we have?' She answered, 'Such as the market will give.' Then went he forth again (as it is thought) to provide, and set the officers whom he brought with him from Brussels in the street and about the door. Then about noon he came again and went to Master Tyndale and desired him to lend him forty shillings; 'for,' said he, 'I lost my purse this morning, coming over at the passage between this and Mechlin.' So Tyndale took him forty shillings, which was easy to be had of him, if he had it; for in the wily subtleties of this world he was simple and inexpert. Then said Philips, 'Master Tyndale, you shall be my guest here this

day.' 'No,' said Tyndale; 'I go forth this day to dinner, and you shall go with me, and be my guest, where you shall be welcome.' So when it was dinner-time Tyndale went forth with Philips, and at the going forth of Poyntz's house was a long narrow entry, so that two could not go in afront. Master Tyndale would have put Philips before him, but Philips would in no wise, but put Master Tyndale before, for that he pretended to show great humility. So, Master Tyndale being a man of no great stature, went before, and Philips, a tall comely person, followed behind him; who had set officers on either side of the door upon two seats, who, being there, might see who came in at the entry; and coming through the same entry, Philips pointed with his finger over Master Tyndale's head down to him, that the officers who sat at the door might see that it was he whom they should take, as the officers that took Master Tyndale afterwards told Poyntz, and said to Poyntz, when they had laid him in prison, that they pitied to see his simplicity when they took him. Then they took him and brought him to the Emperor's attorney, or Procuror-General, where he dined. Then came the Procuror-General to the house of Poyntz, and sent away all that was there of Master Tyndale's, as well his books as other things; and from thence Tyndale was had to the castle of Filford (Vilvorde), eighteen English miles from Antwerp, and there he remained until he was put to death."

Demaus assigns the 23rd or the 24th of May 1535 as the probable date of Tyndale's arrest. For more than a year the exile lingered in confinement before he was put to death.

His friend Poyntz did not desert Tyndale in this calamity, but at imminent risk of his own life he busied himself in fruitless efforts to save the life of the man whom he had learned to love.

"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 binds 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."

The efforts of Poyntz were alas useless, and he only brought himself into peril by his advocacy on behalf of Tyndale. Poyntz was arrested, and for four months he also was kept a prisoner. Indeed, had he not contrived to escape, he would probably have shared the fate of his friend.

The condemnation of Tyndale was already a foregone conclusion. The formality of a trial was indeed observed in his case, but he himself well knew that, with such enemies as his translation of the Scriptures had made for him, there was but one issue to his imprisonment.

One solitary letter, written during the winter of 1535, and addressed to the governor of the castle in which he was confined, has indeed been

preserved. We subjoin Demaus' translation of it:—

"I believe, right worshipful, that you are not ignorant of what has been determined concerning me (by the Council of Brabant); therefore I entreat your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here (in Vilvorde) during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat has been worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But, above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study. And, in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if any other resolution has been come to concerning me, that

I must remain during the whole winter, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the Grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen.

W. TYNDALE."

Says Foxe: "At last, after much reasoning, where no reason would serve, although he deserved no death, he was condemned by virtue of the Emperor's decree, made in the Assembly at Augsburg, and, upon the same, brought forth to the place of execution, was there tied to the stake, and then strangled first by the hangman, and afterwards with fire consumed in the morning, at the town of Filford, 25th of October A.D. 1536; crying thus at the stake with a fervent zeal and loud voice, 'Lord! open the King of England's eyes!'"

Concerning Tyndale himself Dr. Stoughton justly remarks: "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. The qualities of his heart were as remarkable as those of his head. He combined a calm and steady heroism with a childlike 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, and looking for no reward but the smile of his Heavenly Father."

Nothing need be added to these generous and just sentences, except that Tyndale's full merit will only be known and confessed when the secrets of all hearts are opened. He professed himself to be ready to wait for his reward until the great day of God, and then it will be seen that William Tyndale has not been far behind the apostles of the Lamb:—

> "How our hearts burnt within us at the scene!
> Whence this brave bound o'er limits fixed to man?
> His God sustains him in the final hour!
> His final hour brings glory to his God!
> Sweet peace, and heavenly hope, and humble joy,
> Divinely beam in his exalted soul;
> Destruction gilds, and crowns him for the skies
> With incommunicable lustre bright."
>
> —YOUNG.

THE END.

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