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GRACE.

For establishing whatever there is vital in personal Christianity, as well as for determining the exact doctrinal position of a teacher of Christianity, such Biblical concepts as "grace," "faith," and "righteousness" call for a careful inquiry and analysis. For these concepts are theological quantities of paramount value and importance that enter into the *articulus stantis atque cadentis ecclesiae*.¹⁾ Justification must remain a term of undefined extent as long as its coefficients are not exhibited in the full Scriptural value of their divinely intended meaning. According as a Christian understands, and a theologian explains, the meaning of these terms, he will hold as a net result of his efforts either a living spiritual reality, full of joy and solace, or a fantastic shadow that mocks his efforts at embrace. If the keynote of every genuine Christian hope for peace here and beyond has really been sounded, and the overshadowing issue of the Church's mission to fallen mankind has been fully stated in that momentous conclusion of the apostle: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith

1) "Above other matters in the Holy Scriptures the term grace, in particular, requires an explanation, not only because it is so widely used, but also because it is used in setting forth a matter by far the most important, namely, the article of justification, and, lastly, because ignorance of (the import of) this term has, before this time, occasioned the most pernicious errors." (Flacius, *Glossa*, ed. ultima, Basel, 1617; sub voce gratia, p. 370 a.)

THE WYCLIFFITE VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.¹⁾

It is singularly appropriate that John Wyclif, the Oxford schoolman who became "the Morning Star of the Reformation," should have been surnamed, by way of distinction, "the Evangelical Doctor." Although he first obtained fame and the friendship of princes in the political arena, as a sturdy champion of national rights against Romish aggression, refuting with his keen-edged dialectics the papal claim of feudatory tribute, nevertheless the corruption and ignorance of the clergy and the criminal neglect of pastoral care in days when pestilence and famine thinned the ranks of men and when social discontent was everywhere rife, together with the scandal of the Great Schism, when the rival popes of Rome and Avignon hurled anathemas at one another, led Wyclif to examine Popery in the light of the divine Word, and to see with increasing clearness in the Roman pontiff the features of Antichrist. This was for Wyclif a time for searching the Scriptures, which led him to abandon many false doctrines and idolatrous practices of ecclesiastical tradition, and to establish doctrine on the basis of "Goddis law." Even if he failed in some instances to penetrate to the true meaning of Holy Writ, if, to mention an instance, his doctrine of the Eucharist is unscriptural, and if his religious reforms were strongly tinged with political aims, he yet deserves the credit of clearly realizing that a reformation could only be brought about by means of the Gospel. This conviction gave birth to his demand for

1) Bibliography:—Forshall and Madden, *The Holy Bible, by John Wycliffe and His Followers*. (4 vols. Oxford, 1850.) W. W. Skeat, *The New Testament*. (Reprint from F. and M.'s ed.) (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1879.) F. A. Gasquet, *The Old English Bible*. (1897.) F. D. Matthew, in *The English Historical Review*. (January, 1895.) G. M. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*. (1900.) W. W. Capes, *The English Church in the 14th and 15th Centuries*. (1900.) "Dr. Gasquet and the Old English Bible," in *The Church Quarterly Review*. (October, 1900; January, 1901.) Jos. Carr, *Ueber das Verhältniss der Wycliffitischen und der Purveyschen Bibelübersetzungen zur Vulgata und zu einander*.

a vernacular Bible, which he at once set about to supply, with the aid of his Oxford friends, by his translation, and sought to make generally useful by training and sending forth his "poor priests" to preach the Gospel to the common people in their own tongue.

This venerable monument of the early English reformatory movement has been preserved to us. A fourteenth century Bible, extant in 170 manuscripts that represent an earlier and a revised version, was first published in its entirety in Forshall and Madden's four-volume edition, 1850. Tradition had declared this to be the Wyclif Bible, and the learned editors, after devoting twenty-two years to their labor and examining the evidence in the case, unhesitatingly acknowledged its Wycliffite authorship. Here the case rested until Dom. Gasquet, a learned English Benedictine, in the *Dublin Review*, July, 1894, took up a dissenting opinion that had already been voiced in the same magazine (1853), and formulated the astounding theory that the Bible in question, so far from being Wycliffite, was in reality an authorized Roman Catholic version. It should be observed that Dr. Gasquet submitted no evidence that was not known to Forshall and Madden, and his theory is due to imperfect command of the evidence and to adroit manipulation of authorities. He minimized Wyclif's claim to the authorship by contending, in the face of overwhelming testimony to the contrary, that neither the Reformer nor his adherents laid any stress on the promulgation of the Scriptures in the vernacular. He then endeavors to show that the attitude of the Church was not hostile to translations into the popular speech, and establishes a presumption in favor of his thesis by quoting from Sir Thomas More, Archbishop Cranmer, and Foxe to the effect that an orthodox version was supposed to exist. If, then, the Wycliffites had no Bible, and the Catholics had one, then this so-called Wycliffite book is it; for it is perfectly orthodox, not glossed or garbled as Lollard texts would have been; it is often extant in sump-

tuous copies such as poor Lollards could never have produced; and it is generally found in the possession of good Catholics.

Let us examine the evidence that led the Catholic historian to assume the existence of a Catholic version. He had read in the *Dialogues* of Sir Thomas More the well-known words: "As for old translations, before Wyclif's time, they remain lawful and be in some folks hands. Myself have seen and can show you, Bibles, fair and old, in English which have been known and seen by the Bishop of the Diocese and left in laymans hands and womens;" and: "The whole Bible was long before his [*i. e.*, Wyclif's] days by virtuous and well learned men, translated into the English tongue and by good and godly people with devotion, and soberness, well and reverently read." Again he had read Archbishop Cranmer's statement in the prologue to the second edition of the Great Bible: "If the matter should be tried by custom, we might also allege custom for the reading of the Scripture in the vulgar tongue, and prescribe the more ancient custom. For it is not much above one hundred years ago, since Scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue within this realm, and many hundred years before that, it was translated and read in the Saxon tongue, which at that time was our mother tongue, and when this language waxed old and out of common usage, because folk should not lack the fruit of reading, it was again translated into the newer language whereof yet also many copies remain and be daily found." He had also read what Foxe, the martyrologist, wrote in his dedication of his edition of the Saxon Gospels to Archbishop Parker: "If histories be well examined we shall find both before the Conquest and after, as well before John Wycliffe was born as since, the whole body of the Scriptures was by sundry men translated into our country tongue." This is the evidence.

Now, Foxe's testimony is manifestly unreliable, since there never was a translation of the whole Bible before

Wyclif's days. The same criticism applies to More's statement. Hence if More's Bibles really were older than Wyclif, they must have been translations of parts only, perhaps the Gospels or the Psalter, which might, of course, be called Bibles. If, however, he saw one or the other of the versions under consideration, he was evidently mistaken as to their date, and took one of the two Wycliffite versions for a Catholic one. At all events, his testimony only speaks of a Bible that was licensed. As we shall see later, the Wyclif Bible was thus licensed, and hence from More's remarks nothing follows but that the possession of Bibles was not general, and that here and there men had the bishop's license to own them. Cranmer, likewise, furnishes clear evidence that from the first half of the fifteenth century, the period following these versions, for a hundred years the Bible was not "accustomed to be read," and that in his day they were daily—mark the word—"found." Now, to posit seriously the existence of a Catholic Bible we should wish rather more distinct evidence. We should wish to see some decree authorizing a version, some individual or a body of men commissioned to execute the work; we should expect some contemporary writer speaking of such a translation as being in progress or receiving encouragement.

But while we set aside this superlatively mild evidence as not warranting the inference, may not many records have been lost and Dr. Gasquet's claim of a Catholic version, after all, be less romantic than it appears? He combats the idea that the spirit of revolt prompted vernacular versions, and contends that the clergy, so far from being hostile, was favorable to such translations. What, then, was the attitude of the Church? The early fathers had advocated Bible reading by the people. Witness the various Latin translations. The earliest monument of Germanic literature is the translation of the Scriptures for his people by Wulfilas the Goth in the fourth century. Gregory the Great (590 to 604), the father of early medieval theology, requires ac-

quaintance with Holy Writ not only from those in holy orders, but also from all Christians, on account of the importance of Scripture for obtaining grace, and is the author of the beautiful dictum that God's Word is a stream both shallow and deep, so that, while a lamb can wade in it, an elephant may swim in it. But already in the Anglo-Saxon period we discern a very pronounced change. Even then the Catholic Church did not desire the believer to see in the Bible anything more than a book for pious edification. Beyond the regular Lessons and the homilies based on them, occasionally turned into verse, little was known of the Scriptures by the people at large. There were, of course, versions of portions of the sacred text, chiefly of the Psalms and the Gospels, intended mainly for use in the services and for the private devotion of holy men. Even Aelfric, who wrote translations for his friend, the ealdorman Aethelweard, hedges and apologizes for yielding to the importunities of believing men. King Aelfred was perhaps the only man that conceived the idea of giving the Bible to the people in their own tongue, but he did not live to carry out the project. The translations of the Middle English period, such as Shoreham's and Hampole's Psalters, bear the same devotional character. Hence though there were versions "emanating from Catholic sources," they were not intended for popular use.—Add to this that the attitude of the Church on this question had been clearly defined long before Wyclif's time. The Council of Toulouse had decreed in 1229: "We also forbid the laity to possess any of the books of the Old or New Testaments, except perhaps some one out of devotion wishes to have the Psalter or Breviary for the divine offices, or the hours of the Blessed Virgin. But we strictly forbid them having any of these books translated into the vulgar tongue." It is not known that the Church ever repudiated this canon, and the Council of Trent continued to legislate in the same spirit. Soon the friars (*Domini canes*) were on the trail of

transgressors to bring them before the tribunals of the Inquisition. From such a temper no one will suspect bishops of giving orders for a translation of the Bible and of spreading it broadcast. But it causes no surprise to hear that, for example, a synod at Treves, in 1231, condemned early translations; and the inference is legitimate that these versions did not emanate from "good Catholic sources." Where the Church permitted translations they were for men in orders, or reluctant concessions to demands that could not be gainsaid. On the continent, laymen occasionally made their own translations in conscious opposition to the clergy. The reformatory movements that were beginning to react against the Church are so clearly connected with vernacular versions that we are constrained to ascribe these versions to "the spirit of revolt," and credit the Roman church with hostility to such undertakings.

With these considerations in mind, we approach the England of the closing decades of the fourteenth century, the years that produced our versions. Dr. Gasquet alleges that the English Church authorities only sought to safeguard the doctrine of the Church, but for the rest, if anything, favored the translation and dissemination of the Bible in the language of the people. As a matter of fact, the bishops had a Bill introduced into Parliament in 1391 to forbid the circulation of the English Scriptures. But John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, Wyclif's friend, answered right sharply: "We will not be the refuse of all other nations; for since they have God's law, which is the law of our belief, in their own language, we will have ours in English whoever say nay." Knighton, a contemporary chronicler, would seem to echo the sentiment of the clergy; for, speaking of Wyclif's Bible, he says: "So what is wont to be precious to clerks and layman is now rendered as it were the common jest of both, and the jewel of clerks is turned into the sport of layman." Having failed in her effort to have Wyclif's book crushed by the State, the

Church on her own part, under Archbishop Arundel, in 1408, legislated as follows: "It is a dangerous matter, by the witness of Blessed Jerome, to translate the text of Holy Scripture from one idiom into another, forasmuch as, in such translations, the same sense is not in all things easily preserved. The same Blessed Jerome, though he were inspired, admits that he had often erred in this. We command, therefore, and ordain that henceforth no one, of his own authority, translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English language or another, by way of book, booklet, or treatise: And that no such book, booklet, or treatise lately composed in the time of the said John Wyclif, or since, or that may hereafter be composed, be read, in part or wholly, in public or in secret, under pain of the greater excommunication: until, by the diocesan of the place, or, if necessary, by a Provincial Council, the translation shall have been approved. He who shall act otherwise is to be similarly punished as an abettor of heresy and error." (Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 317.) This provision, enacted at Oxford, does not approve and does not prohibit Wyclif's version; but it does arm the bishops with discretionary power in dealing with it. There is room for a vast deal of hostility behind this decree. And while it gave the bishops latitude to grant licenses to certain persons to possess this Bible, it was, in the main, an instrument to limit its circulation. There is no reason to disbelieve the words of the Prologue, p. 30: "And worldly prelatys and feyned relygious grounden hem on synful menis statutis, that sounnen pride and coueitise, and letten [hinder] the treuthe and fredom of Goddis lawe to be knowen and kept, and bringen cristen puple in nedeles thraldom and greet cost;" or when it speaks (p. 43) of "lordis and prestis, that wolen compelle men, for drede of prisoun and deth, to forsake the treuthe and fredom of Cristis gospel." Thus John Stafford, bishop of Bath and Wells, prohibits translations or the copying of translations under threat of excommunication (1431), and he makes no reser-

vation in favor of an authorized version. In fact, no enactment of any kind proves the good will of the clergy. Moreover, had there been an authorized version, Caxton, instead of contenting himself with printing the *Golden Legend*, would assuredly have considered the Scriptures far more marketable; but the Bible was never printed. The attitude of the clergy was uniformly hostile, and this agrees well with what we learned from Cranmer, that for more than a hundred years before his day the Scriptures were little read.

There is small evidence, then, for the existence of an hypothetical Catholic Bible. Yet a Roman writer has unearthed such a Bible, and invites us to acknowledge that the unexpected has happened. But our curiosity passes into amazement as we behold, not a new discovery at all, but the old Wyclif Bible, merely labeled Roman Catholic. Now it is obvious, if Dr. Gasquet carries his point, then either there was no Wycliffite version or it was lost; and if he fails to do so, then there was no Roman Catholic version. He sets forth his theory with admirable audacity and no little plausibility.

1) "Had the version been the work of Lollard pens, we might have looked for texts strained or glossed to suit their well-known conclusions." Since, however, the extant manuscripts of the Wyclif Bible show a plain rendering of the Latin text of the Vulgate then current, thoroughly orthodox, without any heretical bias, the version manifestly was not Wyclif's at all, but authorized by Mother Church.

2) "Many of these copies are written with great care and exactness, and illuminated with colored borders executed by skillful artists." Since "these must surely have been the productions of freer hands than the followers of Wyclif ever were allowed to have in England," again the version must have been sanctioned by the Catholic authorities.

3) Good Catholics possessed copies of this Bible. "Is it likely that men of position, of unquestioned orthodoxy,

and of undoubted hostility to Lollard aims and opinions, would have cherished the possession of copies of a Wycliffite Bible?" Ergo—.

To begin with the second argument, it may be stated that the earliest manuscripts are practically devoid of ornament, and that many of the less ornate volumes, such as were actually used by the heretics, were destroyed. The argument shows no more than that such Bibles were owned also by rich people. It is certain, however, that Wyclif, who had preached disendowment, the secularization of Church lands, and resistance to papal rapacity, from first to last had many staunch and influential supporters and protectors. At one time the Queen Mother forbade decisive measures against him. It would seem, too, that Anne of Bohemia, who became King Richard's queen in 1382, favored Wyclif; for her countrymen, passing to and fro between Bohemia and England after this union, introduced Wyclif's writings into Bohemia, where they produced the Hussite movement and were preserved to our days. The English Bible she read was clearly Wyclif's. Although his heresy on the Eucharist more or less alienated the sympathies of the Court and the nobility, yet throughout the kingdom many of the gentry favored Wyclifism, and the "heresiarch" remained unmolested to the end as rector of Lutterworth. When, in 1395, certain Lollard members of the Privy Council had failed to influence King Richard in favor of their coreligionists, they took advantage of his absence in Ireland to lay their opinions before Parliament. The leaders in this affair were Sir Richard Stury and Sir Lewis Clifford, Privy Councillors, Thomas Latimer, the powerful Northamptonshire landlord who had helped the Wycliffites on his own estates, and Lord John Montagu, brother of the Earl of Salisbury. And not only did such powerful men befriend Wyclif's cause, but even a number of bishops suffered Lollardry to grow up in their sees. Leicestershire, the counties bordering on Wales, and London, were Lollard centers.

Wyclif himself says: "One comfort is of knights, that they savour much the gospel and have will to read in English the gospel of Christ's life." Now granting that a Wyclif Bible existed, then surely many of this large class of sympathizers would wish to own one, and possess ample means to have sumptuous vellum copies illuminated and handsomely set forth in colors and gold.

The other two arguments, likewise, can be quite readily answered. Is it fair to deny the attribution of a version upon no other ground than that it is faithful? It requires sturdy prejudice to believe that men who drew their conclusions from the Scriptures, who hazarded their lives in professing the truths drawn from these Scriptures, who undertook the laborious task of turning into the vernacular this their most sacred treasure, should have dared to handle the inspired volume save with the utmost reverence for the literal meaning of every text, to tamper with Holy Writ to suit their own ends. Any departure from the text, furthermore, would have been an act of extreme folly, since any friar with a tincture of Latin would have been able to discredit the performance.

But while every consideration of conviction and policy would determine translator and scribe to deviate as little as possible from the received text, there was not, as in printed Bibles, a stereotyped form. The text varied very little, but "prologues" were added, in which were contained the Wycliffite application of Scripture to the burning questions of the day, or what the Church regarded as heresy. Bearing in mind the existence and character of these "prologues," we are in a position to understand the operation of the Oxford canon. The discretionary power there given to the bishops enabled them either to approve or to condemn such Bibles as came under their notice. The records show that certain *persons* were authorized to possess certain *copies* that had been inspected. The action of the bishop depended on the character of the petitioner and the character of the

book presented. If any priest or man of rank submitted a manuscript, that very act was *prima facie* evidence of orthodoxy. Where, however, the books were owned by men of humble station and were not submitted, it was safe to assume a taint of heresy. In dealing with men of power, the bishops would deem it wise to make a virtue of necessity, and grant a license. Many of the volumes were perfectly harmless, since the translation contained no heresy. Those copies that had the prologue could easily be rendered inoffensive by removing the obnoxious prologue. A Bible might thus remain as an ornament to some great man's library or for the devotional use of pious priests and nuns. When once good Catholics owned such Bibles with the approval of their bishop, they in course of time forgot that the translation had originally been made by heretics. In some copies, traces of the heretical prologue survive in spite of episcopal vigilance. King Henry VI, "enthusiastic in the cause of religion," possessed "a finely-executed vellum folio copy of the Scriptures, with illuminated borders," and he gave it to the monks of the London Charterhouse; hence, it is argued, it must have been known as a perfectly orthodox translation of the English Church. But the recto of the first leaf is found to have been filled with a portion of the "General Prologue" prefixed to Purvey's translation. Hence it was a Wycliffite book. Indeed, the whole Prologue has been preserved. It was not always necessary to destroy it. It might even be desirable to have a few heretical books within reach. The Convent of our Lady of Syon owned a copy of Wyclif's Bible, and, according to the library catalogue, the good sisters possessed among their literary treasures a little series of Wyclif's own writings, including even a work, *De Sacramento Altaris, cum aliis, de quibus cavendum est*. Also Bishop Bonner owned a Lollard Bible, and knew what it was. The following passage from Purvey's Prologue clearly shows that it was Wycliffite: "To absteyne fro oothis nedeles and unleeueful, and to eschewe

pride, and speke onour of God and of His lawe, and repreue synne bi weie of charite, is matir and cause now whi prelatis and summe lordis sclaudren men, and clepen hem lollardis, eretikis, etc." (p. 33.) The strongest proof of the Wycliffite character of these versions, however, is found in the Bible of Richard Hun, which was burned in London in 1514. Thomas More sets it down as a Lollard book, because in the "prologue" there were heresies. The thirteen articles, extracted from this "prologue" and read to the people at Paul's Cross, and preserved in the Register of Fitzjames, Bishop of London, were printed by Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*, IV, 186. And these thirteen heretical articles may be read, often verbatim, in the "Prologue" published in Forshall and Madden's edition. It is unnecessary to quote more than one. "First, The said book damneth all holy canons, calling them ceremonies and statutes of sinful men and uncunning, and calleth the Pope Satan, and Antichrist." (Foxe.) "It semith opyn heresie to seie, that the gospel with his treuthe and fredom suffisith not to salvacioun of cristen men without kepyng of ceremonies and statutis of sinful men and unkunynge, that ben maad in the tyme of Sathanas and of Antecrist." (Prologue, p. 3.)

Since, on Dr. Gasquet's own admission, the version and the "prologue" are by the same hand, nothing remains to be said. There was no Catholic version. The very fact that licenses were issued bears witness to its absence. The bishops simply appropriated the work of their opponents. Compelled to sacrifice the "Prologue," the Gasquet school still claims at least the version itself as a Catholic performance. (*Cath. World*, 1904, pp. 791—796.)

It is now time to present the evidence that speaks for the Wycliffite authorship. Huss, in his *Replica contra Jo. Stokes*, 1411, writes: "Per Anglicos dicitur, quod ipse tota Biblia transtulit de Latino in Anglicum." We have already had occasion to quote the decree of the Council of

Oxford, 1408, in which it is clearly implied that Wyclif was connected with some Bible version. Both Lyndewood, "the great fifteenth century canonist," and Sir Thomas More interpret the words of this constitution as referring to a translation of the Scriptures. A very weighty authority is the contemporary chronicler Henry Knighton, who says: "The Gospel which Christ committed [*contulit*] to clerks and doctors of the Church, that *they* might sweetly minister, as time and particular need required, to the lay and feebler folk, eager of appetite: [that Gospel] did this master John Wyclif translate [*transtulit*] from the Latin into the English tongue—the Angle, not the angel speech—and thence, by his means, it is become vulgar, and more open to laymen, and women who can read, than it is wont to be to clerks well-lettered and of good understanding; and so the gospel pearl is scattered and trodden under foot of swine; and so what is wont to be precious to clerks and laymen is now rendered as it were the common jest of both, and the jewel of clerks is turned into the sport of laymen." (*Chronicon Henrici Knighton, monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. J. R. Lumby, Rolls Ser. II, 151 f.) In the letter of Archbishop Arundel and his suffragans to John XXIII, in 1412, the English primate is explicit enough. "Hic enim est ille pestilens et damnandae memoriae miserrimus Johannes Wycliff, serpentis antiqui filius, imo et ipsius Antichristi praeuius et alumnus . . . quin immo et ipsam ecclesiae sacrosanctae fidem et doctrinam sanctissimam totis conatibus impugnare studuit, novae ad suae malitiae complementum scripturarum in linguam maternam translationis practica adinventae." (Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 350.) If we add that the manuscripts show such leading Wycliffites as Hereford and Purvey to have been connected with the version, that the later or revised text is found to be Purvey's, Wyclif's curate at Lutterworth, and that these very versions, together with Wyclif's followers, were persecuted by the Church, it seems clear that, while no other name has ever been mentioned as

deserving the honor of this translation, there is sufficient contemporary evidence to support the tradition of its Wycliffite origin.

Although the Reformer personally, at most, did only a part of the earlier version, he was, nevertheless, the soul of the enterprise. He is never tired of advocating the spread of the Scriptures in the vernacular. His writings abound with passages like the following: "Thus it helpeth here to Christian men to study the Gospel in that tongue in which they know best Christ's sentence." (*Sel. E. W.*, III, 184.) Since he and his assistants were Oxford men, it has been suggested to call their work the "Oxford" version. Wyclif is thought to have rendered the New Testament. To the text of the Gospels, extracted from his commentary upon them, were added, in new translations, the Epistles, the Acts, and the Apocalypse. The similarity in style between the New Testament books favors the supposition that they were done by Wyclif himself. Meanwhile one of his coadjutors was probably at work upon the Old Testament. The original copy of this translator, corrected throughout by a contemporary hand, is still extant in the Bodleyan Library, Oxford. A second copy in the same library was transcribed from the former previously to its correction, and in a note at the end assigns the translation to Nicholas of Hereford. Both end abruptly at *Baruch* 3, 20. Hereford was one of the leaders of the Lollard movement at Oxford, and his labors on the Old Testament seem to have been suddenly interrupted by the summons he received to appear before synod in 1382. Excommunicated for holding heretical opinions, he went to Rome to appeal to the Pope, and again became an obedient son of the Church. To judge from the nature of the translation, Wyclif himself finished the Old Testament. This earlier version being unsatisfactory by reason of its literalness, a revision was undertaken, no doubt with the concurrence and, perhaps, at the suggestion of Wyclif, who, however, did not live to see it completed,

having departed this life in 1384. This revision contains a prologue, in which the author sets forth the purpose and method of his work. In it he speaks of the Bible "of late translated" as requiring correction, and from the rules laid down by him the corrected version can be conclusively identified. He calls himself only "a simple creature." From allusions to contemporary events the date of the Prologue may with some degree of certainty be fixed at 1388. After Wyclif's death, his curate at Lutterworth, John Purvey, was the most prominent Lollard leader; hence it was natural to ascribe the version to him. A volume in Trinity College, Dublin, contains the Prologue in Purvey's own handwriting. Moreover, the General Prologue agrees closely in style, language, arguments, manner of quotation, and authorities quoted with the *Ecclesiae Regimen, or Thirty-seven Articles against Corruptions in the Church*, a treatise attributed upon most reliable grounds to John Purvey. It follows that Purvey was the author not only of the Prologue, but also of the revision of the text itself, inasmuch as the latter was evidently by the same hand. This revision is everywhere founded upon the previous translation, and presents but few substantial differences of interpretation.

Turning now to speak of the character of this translation, we may observe that, being a version of a version, it would, of course, perpetuate the errors of the Vulgate. Hereford has left traces of his Southern dialect in his work, and Wyclif has not altogether forgotten his native Northern speech. The general character, however, is East Midland as it was spoken about Oxford. Purvey's revision employed throughout the popular East Midland dialect. The two versions differ largely as to vocabulary and style. The fault of Hereford's translation was his servile adherence to the Latin Vulgate. Rendering word for word and observing even the order of words in the original, he produced constructions that were quite foreign to the English idiom, often involved and difficult, occasionally obscure, and at times incorrect.

While Wyclif offended less in this respect, even his style was strongly Latinized and required Englishing. He renders Latin words by forms etymologically related: V. *mini-straverit*. W. schal mynistre. P. serue. John 12, 26. Wyclif is strongly influenced by Latin in the use of particles. Thus he translates *autem*, as a rule, with *forsothe* or *sothli*; while Purvey renders it with *but*, *and*, *for*, *therefor*, or not at all, according to the exigencies of English usage. Wyclif's translation, in general, is nearer to the Anglo-Saxon than Purvey's, which is only rarely the more archaic. Another peculiarity of Wyclif's version, as distinguished from Purvey's, is his use of parallel readings: V. *animam*. W. his soule, that is, lyf. Occasionally Purvey corrects an error of Wyclif's. V. *in Cana Galilaeae*. W. in the Cane, or town, of Galilee. P. in the Cane of Galilee. John 2, 1. Upon the whole, the percentage of non-Germanic words is greater in Wyclif than in Purvey. Wyclif's syntax is even more Latin than his vocabulary. In Purvey's version the most awkward of these Latinisms are, to a great part, expunged. Thus Wyclif often retains the Latin tenses, whereas Purvey strives to find the English idiom. The Latin infinitive furnishes another obvious test: V. *audierunt eum fecisse hoc signum*. W. thei herden him to haue don this signe. P. thei herden that he hadde don this signe. Wyclif was no less careful to reproduce the ablative absolute than Purvey was anxious to resolve it: V. *coena facta*. W. the souper maad. P. whanne the souper was maad. Wyclif introduced numerous Latin words that never took root; e. g., *universite*, "world," etc.; but the same is true of many old English words, such as, *herie*, "to praise;" *gelding*, "eunuch." Some of his phrases, from their currency, acquired a kind of proverbial power; for instance, "strait gate," "narrow way," "beam and mote," etc. It should be borne in mind, however, that even Chaucer, that well of English undefiled, when translating from the Latin, is often very stiff and literal. It is of curious interest that the peculiar translation of Gen.

3, 7, which gave to the Genevan version the name of "The Breeches Bible," occurs also in Wyclif's, and is retained by Purvey. There are some passages that are more correctly rendered in this earliest English Bible than in our common version. 2 Tim. 3, 16 is an instance, where the older version has, "For all Scriptures inspired of God is profitable," etc. According to Wyclif, the "leaven" of Matt. 16, 6 is "sour dough," and John the Baptist was to drink neither wine nor "cider," Luke 1, 15.

That portion of the Prologue in which Purvey describes the nature and purpose of his recension is here appended. "For thoug couetouse clerkis ben woode by simonie, eresie, and manye othere synnes, and dispisen and stoppen holi writ, as myche as thei moun, git the lewid puple crieth aftir holi writ, to kunne it, and kepe it, with greet cost and peril of here lif. For these resons and othere, with comune charite to saue alle men in oure rewme, whiche God wole haue sauid, a symple creature hath translaid the bible out of Latyn into English. First, this symple creature hadde myche trauaile with diuerse felawis and helperis, to gedere manie elde biblis, and othere doctouris, and comune glosis, and to make oo Latyn bible sumdel trewe; and thanne to studie it of the newe, the text with the glose, and othere doctouris, as he migte gete, and speciali Lire on the elde testament, that helpide ful myche in this werk; the thridde tyme to counseile with elde gramariens, and elde dyvynis, of harde wordis, and harde sentencis, hou tho migten best be vndurstonen and translaid; the iiij. to translate as cleerli as he coude to the sentence, and to haue manie gode felawis and kunnynges at the correctyng of the translacioun. First it is to knowe, that the best translating is out of Latyn into English, to translate aftir the sentence, and not oneli aftir the wordis, so that the sentence be as opin, either openere, in English as in Latyn, and go not fer fro the lettre; and if the lettre mai not be suid in the translating, let the sentence euere be hool and open, for the wordis owen to serue to the

entent and sentence, and ellis the wordis ben superflu either false. In translating into English, manie resolucions moun make the sentence open . . . where to Englissh it aftir the word, wolde be derk and douteful. . . . At the bigynnyng I purposide, with Goddis helpe, to make the sentence as trewe and open in English as it is in Latyn, either more trewe and more open than it is in Latyn; and I preie, for charite and for comoun profyt of cristene soulis, that if ony wiys man fynde ony defaute of the truthe of translacioun, let him sette in the trewe sentence and opin of holi writ, but loke that he examyne truli his Latyn bible, for no doute he shal fynde ful manye biblis in Latyn ful false, if he loke manie, nameli newe; and the comune Latyn biblis han more nede to be correctid, as manie as I haue seen in my lif, than hath the English bible late translaid; and where the Ebru, bi witesse of Jerom, of Lire, and othere expositouris discordith fro oure Latyn biblis, I haue set in the margyn, bi maner of a glose, what the Ebru hath, and hou it is vndurstondu in sum place; and I dide this most in the Sauter. . . . God, of his grete merci, geue to vs grace to lyue wel, and to seie the truthe in couenable manere, and acceptable to God and his puple, and to spille not oure tyme, be it short be it long at Goddis ordynaunce. But summe, that semen wise and holi, seyn thus, if men now weren as holi as Jerom was, thei migten translate out of Latyn into English, as he dide out of Ebru and out of Greek into Latyn, and ellis thei shulden not translate now, as hem thinkith, for defaute of holynesse and of kunnyng. . . . Myche more late the chirche of Engelond appreue the trewe and hool translacioun of symple men, that wolden for no good in erthe, bi here witting and power, putte awei the leste truthe, yea, the leste lettre, either title, of holi writ, that berith substaunce either charge. . . . Lord God! sithen at the bigynnyng of feith so manie men translaiden into Latyn, and to greet profyt of Latyn men, lat oo symple creature of God translate into English, for profyt of English men; . . . whi shulden not English

men haue the same in here modir langage, I can not wite, no but for falsnesse and necgligence of clerkis. . . . God graunte to us alle grace to kunne wel, and kepe wel holi writ, and suffre ioiefulli sum peyne for it at the laste! Amen."

The impression produced by the new versions was immediate and profound. The colporteurs of the copies were the "poor priests." Many of the extant manuscripts are not complete Bibles. The Pentateuch, the Psalter, the Gospels, the Epistles, occur in separate editions. A table of the Lessons of the church service was inserted in some copies, and the passages were marked in the text by letters or rubrics in the margin. Some copies contain only the pericopes. If anything beside the cost distinguished the Lollard Bibles, it was an occasional preface or prologue with the Lollard heresies. Most of the early copies are small in size, and show no attempt at artistic workmanship, being intended for use rather than ornament. Soon also the wealthy grew anxious to possess "Goddis lawe," and thus ornate copies were executed with all the skill of the scriptorium. Knighton's bitter complaint that Wyclif had made the Gospel vulgar and common shows that the versions were so generally read as to be dangerous to the clergy. At first, the bishops, lacking power, were silent. But, in 1408, the Convocation at Oxford passed its far-reaching resolution, and the years that followed brought evil days for the Lollards. Wyclif's bones were exhumed and burned, and the fury of persecution fell upon his followers. But the transcribing of manuscripts still went on in secret. Although to own an English Bible "unbeknownst" meant to jeopardize one's life, yet many were ready to take the risk, so that numerous copies were produced after 1408. Copies of the New Testament were borrowed from hand to hand, or bought in partnership. Some owned only parts, like the Gospels, or only stray leaves. A load of hay was given for the loan of a few leaves of St. James or St. Paul. Copies were made, though the cost of a New Testament was equal to the salary of a curate

for a year. These Scriptures were often read at night, and eagerly listened to by such as could not read. Certain persons learned portions by heart, and recited them to their families and friends. Readers of the Bible were numerous in London, where they had several places of meeting, and they abounded also in the counties of Lincoln, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Buckingham, and Hereford. Even in Scotland the copies were secretly circulated. Of the numerous manuscripts that once existed many no doubt perished from use, others were lost by being destroyed or concealed by their owners to avoid detection, and not a few were burned. Hence only 170 manuscripts have come down to us. And yet this is nearly four times the number of manuscripts extant of so popular a work as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Thus this book of the first English Reformer became truly a popular book, the people's literature. And no doubt many found in it the salvation of their souls. Especially Purvey's recension exerted an influence somewhat akin to that of Luther's translation. When we consider how the language of a Bible molds both the spoken and the written language, we may ascribe to this version an influence not inferior to Chaucer's in establishing the position of the East Midland dialect as standard English. Thus the Bible language of the fourteenth century has become largely our own. Hence it is not so surprising that "not many years ago when the experiment of reading Wycliffe's translation aloud was tried in Yorkshire, there was hardly a word or an expression which seemed at all peculiar." (Eadie.) To illustrate how these Bibles would affect literary men, we can point to Pecoock, the author of the *Repressour of over-much Blaming the Clergy*, who frequently cites from Purvey's version and sometimes from other Wyclif manuscripts. Purvey's New Testament was later rendered also into the Scots vernacular of the early sixteenth century. The author, though unknown, was probably an Ayrshire Lollard. The manuscript was edited, 1899—1900, for the Scottish Text Society by

Dr. Thomas Graves Law. The vocabulary follows Purvey very closely, introducing changes only where Purvey's English would have been unintelligible or unfamiliar north of the Tweed. It is pretty certain that the old Bible exerted little direct influence on Tindale. Tindale himself makes the statement: "I had no man to counterfet, neither was holpe with englysshe of eny that had interpreted the same, or soche lyke thinge in the scripture beforetyme." (*Epistle to the Reder*, 2. Test. Worm., 1526.) The striking similarity in many passages of the King James version to the Wyclif-Purvey Bible may, therefore, partly be due to the popular speech, which had been strongly colored by many an old Scriptural phrase, and partly to the influence of the Rheims-Douay New Testament, translated in 1582 by Romanists, and made, like Wyclif's, directly from the Vulgate.

During the gloom that went before the glorious day of the Reformation there were not wanting those that valued "Goddis lawe" dearer than life itself. Their example should teach us to prize as our dearest treasure the Word of our God, which liveth and abideth for ever. "God graunte to us alle grace to kunne wel, and kepe wel holi writ, and suffre ioiefulli sum peyne for it at the laste."

C. ABBETMEYER.
