

I have now set before you God's command and promise. His command is plain and peremptory: "Come out from among them." Will you disobey it? His promise is persuasive and precious: "I will be a Father unto you." Will you disbelieve it? Do not confer with flesh and blood. Do not delay your decision. Act now. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith: To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

C. F. DREWES.

WILLIAM TYNDALE,

THE TRANSLATOR OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

(Concluded.)

Tyndale's Death in Holland.

King Henry sent Sir Thomas Elyot to the Continent to drag Tyndale to England, and for a time the Reformer wandered about in Germany to elude his pursuers, but later he again settled in Antwerp. In 1534 he reissued the Pentateuch and the revised second edition of the New Testament—"Tyndale's noblest monument." The prologues and glosses "have to a considerable extent been translated from the German of Luther." In 1535 Tyndale prepared yet another edition of the New Testament, with headings to chapters of the Gospels and the Acts, but without the marginal notes. It was a crime in any Englishman to sell, buy, or read a copy of the New Testament in his native tongue. A change was coming. Richard Herman, a merchant adventurer of Antwerp, was imprisoned for his "help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English." He appealed to Anne Boleyn, now Queen of Henry VIII, and in a letter to Thomas Cromwell she requested the release of the prisoner. And in gratitude for her favor, Tyndale struck off for her private use a copy of his New Testament on vellum, beautifully illuminated. Her name, in faded red

letters, may still be made out on the gilded edges of the book in the British Museum.

Ever since the middle of 1534 Tyndale had found a home with 'Thomas Poyntz at Antwerp in "The English House," granted to the English merchants with special privileges as far back as 1474. Tyndale also practiced what he preached: justification produced sanctification. "He reserved for himself two days in the week, which he named his days of pastime, namely, Monday and Saturday." The one of these was devoted to visiting all English refugees in the city and relieving their wants; on the other "he walked round about the town, seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor person to dwell, and where he found any to be well occupied and yet overburdened with children, or else aged or weak, those also he plentifully relieved: and thus he spent his two days of pastime."

Rigorous laws were enacted year after year, in order to check, if possible, the progress of Lutheran doctrines. In October, 1529, Charles V ordained that the "reading, purchasing, or possessing any proscribed books, or any New Testaments prohibited by the theologians of Louvain; attendance at any meeting of heretics, disputing about Holy Scripture, want of due respect to the images of God and the Saints" were to be treated as crimes, for which "men were to be beheaded, women buried alive, and the relapsed burnt." In spite of these terrible measures, Lutheranism continued to make rapid progress in the Netherlands; and the Emperor, in revenge, issued fresh edicts, more severe than before. Informers were encouraged by the promise of a liberal reward, and a share in the confiscated goods of all convicted heretics; and, lest the government officials should be wanting in severity, it was ordered that all who were remiss should be reported and punished. The Inquisition was armed with full authority to seize all suspected persons, to try, to torture, to confiscate, to execute, without any right of appeal from their sentence; and these tyrannical

powers they exercised with relentless cruelty. Charles V was not one whit less ferocious than his son Philip II.

From these bloody measures Tyndale was free in the "English House," outside he had no protection. His enemies thirsted for his blood. Stephen Vaughan, the royal envoy, was told to persuade him to return to England; but the exile refused: "Whatever promises of safety may be made, the king would never be able to protect me from the bishops, who believe that no faith should be kept with heretics."

After this Henry Philips, a smooth, treacherous villain in the employ of Stephen Gardiner, came over with Gabriel Donne, a monk of Stratford Abbey, and won the confidence of the simple-minded scholar, who lent him forty shillings. The plans being ripe, the Judas Philips invited the translator out to dinner and then arrested him through the Emperor's attorney, brought from Brussels, and put him in charge of Adolf Van Wesele, Lieutenant of the Castle of Vilvorde, the great state prison of the Low Countries, May 23 or 24, 1535. So skillful, secret, and prompt had been the arrest, that probably no one knew of it till the Emperor's Procureur-General, the terrible Pierre Dufief, came to search Tyndale's chamber and carry off his books, papers, and other effects.

The English merchants, aggrieved by the loss of an esteemed friend and by this treacherous assault on their rights and privileges, wrote to the Queen Regent, Mary of Hungary, entreating her to release Tyndale. King Henry VIII and Cromwell were appealed to, and Cromwell, with the king's consent, wrote to Carondelet, Archbishop of Palermo, and the Marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom, two of the most influential members of the Imperial Government. Poyntz delivered the letters, suffered labor, loss, imprisonment, risked his life for his friend; but it was in vain.

As Paul in prison converted the jailer of Philippi, so Tyndale in prison converted the keeper, his daughter, and

others of his household; and the rest that became acquainted with him said that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust. Even the Procureur-General called him "a learned, good, and godly man."

A single Latin letter, discovered by M. Galesloot in the archives of the Council of Brabant, written to the Governor of the Castle, Antoine de Berghes, Marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom, is all the autograph we have of this noble man of God; it is as follows:—"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 this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat is 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 lamp at 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, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, 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. Tindale."

The doctors of Louvain had thanked Beaton for burning Patrick Hamilton in Scotland, and promised "there shall be those among externe nations which shall imitate the same." Now they had the opportunity to imitate, and they used it. Tyndale was tried for heresy. "It is no great matter, whether they that die on account of religion be guilty or innocent, provided we terrify the people by such examples; which generally succeeds best when persons eminent for learning, riches, nobility, or high station, are thus sacrificed." Such was the sentiment of Ruwart Tapper, Doctor of Theology, Chancellor of the University of Louvain, one of the judges, who was foremost among the accusers of Tyndale, and most relentless in opposition to him. "If they shall burn me, they shall do none other thing than that I look for," Tyndale had said long ago when they were burning his Bibles. "There is none other way into the kingdom of life than through persecution and suffering of pain, and of very death, after the ensample of Christ." Friday, the sixth of October, 1536, he was strangled at the stake and his body then burned to ashes. "He cried," says Fox, "at the stake with a fervent zeal and a loud voice, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes!'"

Tyndale's dying prayer was heard. At the very time of the martyr's fiery death, the first Bible printed on English soil came from the press; and it was printed by the King's own patent printer Berthelet, or Godfrey. It was a folio of Tyndale's revised New Testament, with his prologues, and his name openly set forth on the title page; it closed with the words: "God saue the Kynge and all his well-wyllers."

Tyndale fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith, he made good his vow: "I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest." When Stokesley, Bishop of London, sneered at the Word of God which every cobbler was reading in his mother tongue, Fox, Bishop of Hereford, replied,

"The lay people do now know the Holy Scriptures better than many of us."

"Evil favored in this world and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted" — this is the picture Tyndale paints of himself. Even if true, what of it? Fox calls him "the Apostle of England;" the *North American Review* considers him "the chief of the English reformers;" the *Christian Observer* says, "Few are adequately conscious what an imperishable debt of gratitude is due his memory;" the *British Quarterly* judges him "perhaps the greatest benefactor that our native country ever enjoyed;" Froude writes, his "epitaph is the Reformation."

His admiring countrymen have reared to his memory a cross-crowned lofty and massive monument on Nibley Knoll in Gloucestershire, November 6, 1866, and in 1884 the Earl of Shaftesbury unveiled another in the Thames Embankment Gardens, near Whitehall Court, and the literary grace of Tyndale's Bible is the proud boast of all the educated English-speaking world, "the most splendid literary monument of the genius of our native tongue," as H. W. Hoare writes.

Tyndale's Influence on the Later Versions.

In 1535 or 1536 Miles Coverdale issued the folio "Biblia, translated out of Douche and Latyn into English." "He was especially indebted to Luther's Bible," says Prof. Pattison; and again, "The influence of Luther is very apparent." At Cambridge University Coverdale attended the meetings at the White Horse, called "Germany," because of the Lutheran opinions held there. Later he was twice a Lutheran pastor at Bergzabern, in Zweibrücken, also the Bishop of Exeter. He had a considerable share in the introduction of German spiritual culture to English readers. The first hymns sung by Protestant Englishmen were the forty-one "Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songs" which

Coverdale translated from Luther and others, in the original meter, so that they were sung to the original Lutheran melodies. When Bloody Mary became Queen the book was forbidden, to the great loss of English hymnology, as Herford laments.

In 1537 Matthew's Bible appeared. This was Tyndale's Bible, with the untranslated portions of his Old Testament pieced out with Coverdale's translation. The work was done by John Rogers, the literary executor of Tyndale, having been chaplain to the merchant adventurers at Antwerp. About 1536 Rogers went to Wittenberg, became well versed in German, was a pastor there, and prepared the whole Bible for the press of Hans Luft. The work contained a dictionary, a concordance, valuable prefatory matter, and the marginal notes from the first English commentary on the Bible. Hoare writes: "It is chiefly remarkable for the excessive Lutheranism of its annotation, in which it out-Tyndales Tyndale himself," and that it has the "character of a Lutheran manifesto;" he also calls it the first royally authorized English version. John Rogers was the first martyr under Bloody Mary, burned Monday, February 4, 1555; "he has been burned alive for being a Lutheran; but he died persisting in his opinion," wrote Count Noailles, the French Ambassador in London.

Richard Taverner, a London lawyer, the translator of the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology*, prepared a Bible, based on Matthew's, printed in London in two editions in 1539; it is prefaced by a manly dedication to the King.

The "Great Bible" appeared in 1539. This was Matthew's Bible revised by Miles Coverdale, and since Matthew's Bible was practically Tyndale's work, the old martyr now triumphed gloriously. The "Great Bible" was presented by Coverdale to Archbishop Cranmer, who, in turn, laid it before the King, who "authorized" it and by a specified day had it set up in every church throughout the kingdom and commended by the clergy!

Bonner put six copies in St. Paul's, and was sore distressed to find that people persisted in reading them even during the public services and while the preacher was declaring the Word of God. Crowds would gather around the book, which was chained to a pillar, and there would be eager discussions as to the meaning of the passages read aloud by some scholar who chanced to be present. An inscription on the title page told that "it was oversene and perused at the commandement of the King's Highness by the ryghte reverende fathers in God, Cuthbert bishop of Duresme, and Nicholas bishop of Rochester." And who, think you, was this "Cuthbert of Duresme"? None other than Tunstall, the same Cuthbert who had refused to Tyndale a scholar's room, who had denounced and burned Tyndale's Bible. This Cuthbert Tunstall officially recommended Tyndale's work! Tyndale did not live, labor, and die in vain.

During the six and a half years of the reign of Edward VI, thirteen editions of Bibles and thirty-five of Testaments were published in England. The days of Bloody Mary were not good days for Protestants and Bibles. But when Elizabeth made her entry into London and arrived at "the Little Conduit in Chepe," she was presented with a Bible. Raising it with both her hands, the Queen presses it to her lips, and then laying it against her heart, amid the enthusiastic shouting of the multitude, she gracefully thanks the city for so precious a gift. Three months later, in 1560, came the Geneva Bible, with a dedication "to the most virtuous and noble Queen Elizabeth." For the first time Roman type was used, and the chapters were divided into verses. The monopoly of printing it Elizabeth granted to John Bodley, founder of the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford. Eighty editions appeared.

Lord Bacon writes: "On the morrow of her coronation, it being the custom to release prisoners at the inauguration of a prince, . . . one of her courtiers . . . besought her with

a loud voice, "That now this good time there might be four or five principal prisoners more released; these were the four evangelists and the Apostle St. Paul, who had been long shut up in an unknown tongue, as it were in prison, so as they could not converse with the common people.'" Very early in Elizabeth's reign, a bill was enacted "for reducing the diversities of Bibles now extant in the English tongue to one settled vulgar, translated from the original." Archbishop Parker planned the work, and the Bishops' Bible appeared in 1568. "The influence of Tyndale is strongly felt," and of the notes it is said "their sturdy Protestantism is often worthy of Luther himself."

The Roman Catholic Rheims New Testament reached England in 1582, followed by the Douay Old Testament in 1609.

In 1611 there appeared King James' version, a revision of the Bishops' Bible, which was practically Tyndale's Bible. Of the Authorized Version the Roman Catholic scholar D. Alexander Geddes writes: "Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude, and expressed, either in the text or margin, with the greatest precision." The poet Rogers says: "Oh, the exquisite English of the Bible! I often feel as if the translators as well as the original writers must have been inspired." The historian John Richard Green says: "As a mere literary monument, the English of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language." "In Tyndale's translation we find most of the strength, as well as most of the sweetness of the Authorized Version. . . . There is a graphic simplicity about it which captures the ear at once. . . . The music of Tyndale's translation with equal ease rises to the stately majesty of a march, or falls to the homelike sweetness of a mother's lullaby. The arrangement of words of some sentences is in itself triumphal."

Even the Roman Catholic Faber writes: "Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is one of the great strongholds of heresy in our 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 to forego. Its felicities seem to be things rather than words."

"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 majesty and tenderness, the preternatural grandeur, the Saxon simplicity, unequaled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale." (Froude's *History of England*, III: 84.)

"From 1525 to 1884 the best Biblical scholarship of the English nation, not attempting to supersede Tyndale's work, has succeeded only in bringing a matchless work a little nearer perfection. Tyndale's influence in fixing the standard and exhibiting the noble possibilities of the English language has far exceeded that of any other writer. In his English New Testament Tyndale laid the 'grand foundation-stone of England's greatness,' and conferred the greatest of all spiritual blessings on all English-speaking peoples."

"That Tyndale's English is decidedly superior to the writings of his time which have come down to us, cannot be disputed; it is a noble translation, the basis of every subsequent English version, and on several accounts better than all subsequent versions; it has an individuality as pronounced as Luther's, its Saxon is racy and strong, sometimes majestic, and, above all things, it is hearty and true. The reader feels that the translator felt what he wrote, that his heart was in his work, and that he strove in prayer to

reproduce in his own mother tongue to the very best of his ability what he believed to be the true sense of the Word of God, as he understood it.”

In our present Bible eighty per cent. of Tyndale has been retained in the Old Testament, and ninety per cent. in the New, and in spite of many revisions, almost every sentence is substantially the same as Tyndale wrote it. No greater tribute could be paid to his industry, scholarship, and genius. To him we owe the exceeding beauty and tender grace of the language of our present Bible. For felicity of diction, and for dignity of rhythm, Tyndale never has been, and never can be, surpassed. Geo. P. Marsh calls it “the first classic of our literature—the highest exemplar of purity and beauty of language existing in our speech. . . . When we study our Testaments we are in most cases perusing the identical words penned by the martyr Tyndale nearly three hundred and fifty years ago.”

Dore speaks of Tyndale’s “strong Lutheran bias;” Bishop Marsh says “his translation was taken at least in part from Luther’s;” Gasquet says: “Luther’s direct influence may be detected on almost every page of the printed edition issued by Tyndale, and there can be no doubt that it was prepared with Luther’s version of 1522 as a guide;” another writer says: “Happily our own excellent translation of the Bible still retains striking evidence of the influence of his (Luther’s) admirable version, and perhaps it is not too much to say that the two most copious and energetic languages are greatly indebted to him (Luther) for their terseness and expression.”

WILLIAM DALLMANN.
