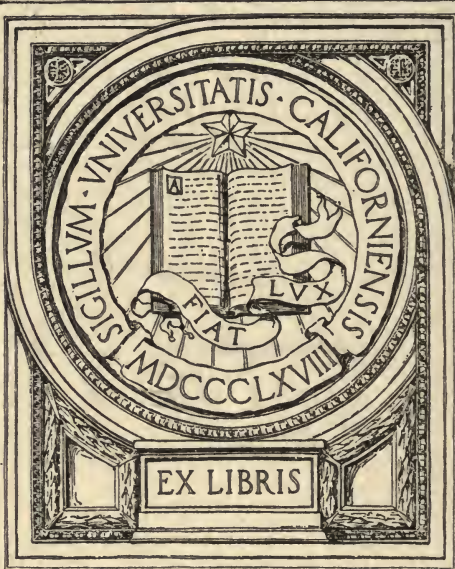


*The* BIBLE *and*  
*the*  
ANGLO-SAXON  
PEOPLE  
by  
WILLIAM CANTON



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**THE BIBLE**  
**AND**  
**THE ANGLO-SAXON PEOPLE**







JOHN WYCLIFFE

THE BIBLE  
AND THE  
ANGLO-SAXON PEOPLE

BY

WILLIAM CANTON

AUTHOR OF "A CHILD'S BOOK OF WARRIORS," "A CHILD'S BOOK  
OF SAINTS," "THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE AND W.V. HER  
BOOK," "THE STORY OF ST. ELIZABETH OF  
HUNGARY," ETC.



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*Ray - Alum.*  
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ALPHONSO

Guide of my fathers, their glory and joy,  
Comrade when sorrowful, comrade when gay !  
Woer and monitor, thou, of the boy,  
Gentle restraint of the youth that would stray,  
Be, in mine age, the same solace and stay,  
Leading my steps to the end of the way.

Thine be my reading, while able to mark ;  
Thine my last holding, with hand fallen weak ;  
Thine my last tears, on a page growing dark ;  
Thine, the last kiss when my lips cannot speak.

v



## PREFACE

IN this little book an attempt is made to trace, in outline, the history of Bible translation from its small beginnings among the earliest English people to its splendid accomplishment in the Authorized Version, to indicate the cost in human life and suffering at which it has been bought and preserved, and to suggest rather than to describe the place which the Word of God in the vernacular—however rude or fragmentary the form—has always taken in the life of the people of these islands.

The Latin verses which follow, and of which I have given a rough translation as the motto for this sketch, were found written in an eighteenth-century hand in a copy of the Book of Common Prayer (Thomas Parsell's Latin version, edition 1713). They are placed here as still more appropriate in their tenderness and beauty to the common fountain of our prayer and praise.

*Qui fueras Patrum decus et tutela meorum,  
Lætitiæ pariter tristiitiæque comes,  
Qui mihi jam puero suasor monitorque fuisti,  
Nec juvenem recta passus abire via,  
Solamen fias idem columenque senectæ,  
Quo duce supremum carpere fas sit iter ;  
Te versem studio vivus validusque diurno,  
" Te teneam moriens deficiente manu,"  
Supremis madeat lacrymis tua pagina nostris,  
Oscula sint chartis ultima juncta tuis.*

WILLIAM CANTON.





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# THE BIBLE AND THE ANGLO-SAXON PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNINGS

HARDLY had England been given its name by the adventurers from the fatherland of our race before the Prophets of the Old and the Apostles of the New Testament were speaking to the people in their rude Anglian tongue.

When Cædmon began his Song of the Beginning of Created Things it was scarcely forty years from the session of the great council in which Eadwin and his thegns discussed the teaching of the monk Paulinus. The ealdorman's story of the sparrow flitting for a moment in and out again through the cheerful hall in the dark winter-tide was still a story that was told round the ruddy hearth on a snowy night. There were folk yet alive who had seen Coifi the pagan priest as he rode like a warrior to battle, and, hurling his spear against the ancient gods, set fire to their temple of oak and ash at Godmundingham.

## The Bible and the

Lay-brother, or neat-herd, or whatever he may have been in the Abbey on the cliff above the Bay of the Beacon, Cædmon's dream doubtless came of his having heard the Scriptures read aloud from the Latin into his own speech. Much must have been stored in his memory long before he fell into that happy sleep in which it seemed to him that someone was calling him by his name ; and many a time when the harp went its merry round from singer to singer in the mead-hall, and he arose as it drew near his turn and left the feast, a shamefaced and songless man, thoughts must have stirred in his hot, inarticulate heart of the sweet and mighty songs which it would surely some day be given to some marvellous gleeman to make out of the sacred books. " I cannot sing," he answered in his dream, and explained abashed why he had stolen from his place in the hall. " For all that," the voice replied, " you have to sing to me."

The words were an Ephphatha. The songless man awoke with the noble rhythm of a new music on his lips. He sang of the creation of the world (wrote the Venerable Bede), and of all the annals of Genesis ; how Israel went up out of Egypt and entered into the Land of the Promise ; of other stories of the Sacred Scriptures a many ; of the incarnation of the Lord, and of His passion and resurrection, and ascent into heaven ; of the coming of the Holy Spirit also, and of the teaching of the Apostles.

# Anglo-Saxon People

Centuries afterwards William of Malmesbury told of the discovery of some of these poems, and the mere touch of them was then said to work miracles ; but none greater, I think, than those they wrought when Cædmon was living ; for, says Bede, they drew the souls of many from worldliness, and kindled many to the quest of the life celestial. Doubt not that the gleemen learnt and sang them in town and village, at the farmsteads under the wooded nesses, and among the huts of the churls, in nooks of the fells and of the rolling moorland north and south of the broken Roman Wall which stretched from sea to sea.

Criticism has not left us a line that can now be ascribed with certainty to Cædmon as its author ; but chance has preserved a cycle of old English verse,<sup>1</sup> the contents of which correspond so closely with Bede's account of Cædmon's themes, that even if these poems do not in any instance contain Cædmon's work, changed in dialect and wrought over by his contemporaries and successors, they at least show how

<sup>1</sup> The MS. folio discovered by Archbishop Ussher, edited and printed in 1655 by the scholar Du Jon (Junius), and now in the Bodleian. The first part of the Codex, in tenth-century writing, contains Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel ; the second, in later writing and entitled for convenience *Christ and Satan*, comprises the Fall of the Rebel Angels, the Harrowing of Hell, the Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, and the Temptation. Milton was probably acquainted with this volume, and what appear to be traces of its influence have been found in *Paradise Lost*.—See Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, and Stopford A. Brooke, *History of Early English Literature*.



## The Bible and the

the gleemen at the close of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century caught fire from his inspiration, and how the epic incidents of the Bible, realized in the colours of Northumbrian life and newly set in a landscape of purple moors and grey seas, were brought home to the unlettered masses of the English people more vividly than they could have been by any other instrumentality.

Already for two generations the Celtic missionaries had laboured among these bluff and warlike folk. Bede pictures them going forth far and wide over the heaths and among the hills to preach the Gospel, to visit the sick, to baptize. Neither wolves nor weather stayed them; sometimes they rode, more often they went on foot; and as they drew nigh some thorn-fenced thorp or homestead, the people hurried out to meet them, and bowed down joyfully for their blessing. There they would remain for days, for weeks, it might be for a month at a time, instructing old and young and gathering them together in prayer at the foot of the rude stone cross which was their first sanctuary; for these rugged English had learned to love the guileless teachers whose zeal was sweetened with the blithe cheer and the tenderness of their founder Columba, who took no thought of houses and land, who bestowed on the poor the money they received from the rich, who had nothing better than their own plain fare to set before

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WHERE CÆDMON DREAMED AND SANG.

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## Anglo-Saxon People

the king and his earls, who were content that even their bishop's church should be of hewn oaks thatched with reed.

But further afield than monk or priest roamed the minstrel, welcome alike among those who had accepted the Gospel and those who clung to the old gods and the pagan customs of their race ; welcome too, doubtless, if only for delight in the harp, among the British folk who survived, conquered or free, in the uplands, for the old inhabitants had neither been exterminated nor swept wholly out of the country. And now wherever the minstrel went he took with him the new lays of the Bible story, more wonderful and heart-stirring than any that had yet been heard in the English tongue. One can conceive the effect they must have had upon a people among whom in every time of trouble and stress—in murrain or dearth or pestilence—there was a constant temptation to seek for aid in sorcery and idol-worship. In the pagan recesses of the land it was perhaps the gleeman as much as the priest who decided in the end the long struggle between Thor and Christ. And when the scattered Britons had come to understand the language of these songs of Cædmon and his followers, it was perhaps the gleeman who softened the bitter hatred which they felt for the invaders.

These poems, indeed, were no more than para-

## The Bible and the

phrases, but about twenty years after Cædmon's death a beginning had been made in translation proper. In his isle among the Fens — a pleasant spot when willow-herb was in flower, and swallows dropped down from the sunshine upon his hand or shoulder ; but it seemed a very haunt of the Evil One on a night of snow and whistling wind and crying water-fowl—Guthlac the hermit translated the Psalter, but unhappily no fragment of that version is now known.

Somewhere about the same date another translation of the Psalms was made by Ealdhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury ; so sparkling and winsome a man that though he was one of the most famous scholars and builders of his age, every one loved him. When he was raised to the see of Sherborne his Malmesbury monks would hear of no other abbot in his place, and Abbot of Malmesbury he remained to the end. On his return from his journeys through his diocese, not only did they stream out to meet him with incense and music, but the common folk went before him, dancing for joy. He was just the kind of pastor from whom one might expect a translation of the Psalms, for seeing, as he travelled from place to place, that the people at fairs and markets kept away from Mass, he would take his stand like a gleeman on the bridge, and sing West-Saxon songs of his own making until a crowd had gathered, and then he would preach





JARROW, THE HOME OF BEDE.



## Anglo-Saxon People

to them. One of these songs passed into the homes of the people, and was still sung in the country round Malmesbury four hundred years after the good Bishop had been laid in his grave. But song and Psalter have long since disappeared, unless the latter should happen to be the imperfect version, the bulk of which is preserved in the National Library at Paris with other fragments in the MSS. of an old Benedictine service. Ealdhelm died in 709 at the little wooden church which he was building at Dulting in Somerset.

Then at Jarrow, on the low green hill by the Tyne, and in sight of the broken Roman Wall, the beloved Bede himself translated. Some have thought that his work included the Psalter and the whole of the New Testament; others argue that if he did not translate the four Gospels it was because the first three had already been rendered into English, otherwise he would have scarcely begun a translation with the Gospel of St. John.

It is all conjecture. But we do know that upon the day on which he died—Ascension Eve, May 9, 742<sup>1</sup>—as he lay in his cell while the brethren carried the relics of the Saints in procession round their fields, the young scholar, Wilberche, who attended upon him, wrote rapidly to his dictation the closing chapter of the fourth Gospel, all but the last verse; and as

<sup>1</sup> Mayor and Lumby, *Bedæ Hist. Eccl.* iii.-iv. p. 402.

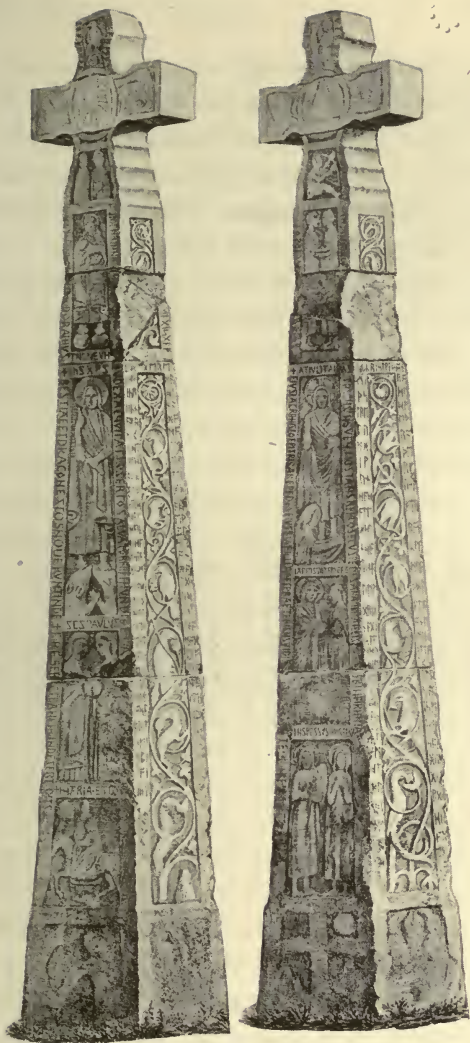
## The Bible and the

evening drew in, that too was penned, and Bede, "gazing fondly on the holy place wherein he was wont to pray," sank peacefully to his rest. Even this translation, endeared by one of the most beautiful stories in religious history, has been dropped into the "wallet of oblivion,"<sup>1</sup> and the only memorial of Bede that remains to us in his own tongue is the little verse of the soul's need-faring, which he spoke to the brethren at Jarrow in his last illness.

"After Cædmon sang there were others, of the English stock, who essayed to make sacred poems, but no one came near him." When Bede wrote thus, Cynewulf was but a stripling, looking out with clear eyes on the wonder and gladness of the world. It is from his poems alone that we are able to form for ourselves some picture of his life. He was of etheling blood, and doubtless such scholarship as he had he obtained from the monks; but nature had given him the light and eager heart of the gleeman, and the existence for which he thirsted lay far beyond the monastery walls. With his brown sword in his belt and his harp at his back, he wandered from court to court and from hall to hall, jocund and reckless in the heyday of his strength; but if he won "treasures of appled gold" among the rich, he was as frankly at home with the churls of the uplands as he was among warriors and sea-rovers.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 17 and 18.





THE CROSS OF CYNEWULF'S "DREAM."

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## Anglo-Saxon People

It was a wild and carousing life, but in the midst of it there came a stern awakening. What happened is not told, but it must have been swift and appalling. Awe and dread overshadowed him. The poet within him was struck silent, and he sang no more. The very runes of his name, shivering and full of care, seemed to flutter round him in eerie dispersion. Whether misfortune and misery overtook him, and how long he suffered, we cannot know ; but at last he made his peace with God, and perchance in the shelter of the cloister, when his spirit found rest, his gift of song was restored to him. Then a new note was struck in the Christian poetry of the north. Born again through the anguish of a spiritual crisis, the poet turned inevitably from the Old to the New Testament. He sang of the Nativity, of the Descent into Hell, of the Day of Judgment, of Andreas and the Apostles and other high themes ; but the highest was his *Dream of the Rood*, and in that vision the Cross itself, now wet with blood, now glittering with jewels and gold, recited to him its transcendent story.

A wonderful and noble lay it was, and soon came to be well loved and widely known. About that time all that old Anglian country was dotted over with stone crosses, some rough and rude, others wrought about with scroll-work, others again carved with New Testament imagery. But one great cross stood in Annandale, inscribed with runes, and a

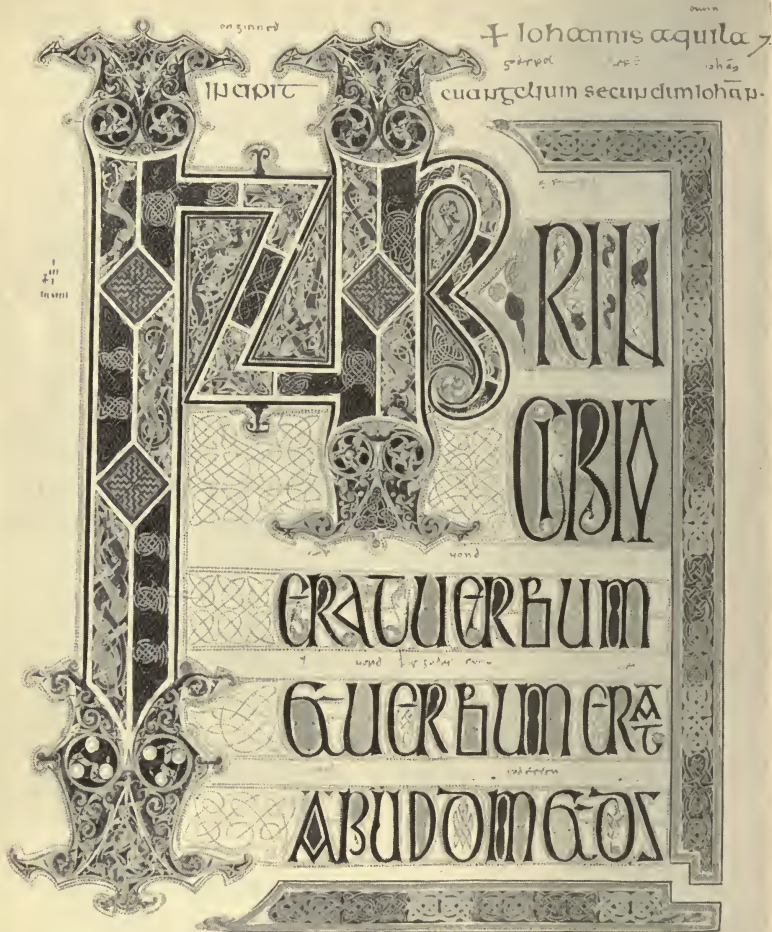
## The Bible and the

vine clambered about it with little wild creatures among the grapes and leaves. In the runes the cross told how it had borne Christ aloft ; trembling and steamed with blood and pierced with the spear, it beheld Him die ; it saw them " lay Him adown all destroyed, and stand at the head of His corse gazing." And the top of the cross bore the inscription, " Cædmon made me."

Years and centuries passed away ; but the cross with its gracious imagery survived all the shocks and changes of time. Its runes, however, became unintelligible, and a mystery they remained until in 1840 their true meaning was spelled out. Meanwhile in the Capitular Library at Vercelli, in Piedmont, Cynewulf's *Dream of the Rood* was found " in a half-ruined skin book," and what appeared to be the verses cut on the stone cross were discovered in its pages. They were not word for word the same, and on closer examination it became clear that the runes of the cross belonged to a poem of an earlier day, and that Cynewulf in the crowning poem of his renewed life, had caught up those verses, enriched them and woven them into the fervid beauty of his *Dream*.

After eleven hundred years there is yet a thrill in that voice of the cross, telling its story from far-off days when it was a green tree on the edge of the forest to the hour when " God's thegns " heard its sobbing





THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS.



# Anglo-Saxon People

in the deep earth where it had been buried, dug it up, and overwrought it with silver and gold. What must have been the feeling of the rude impressionable folk who heard the poem as Cynewulf chanted it to the wild music of his harp! The sound of every tree in the wind must have recalled the story and its closing strains :

“ Bid all men to this beacon betake them !  
On me aforetime the Son of God hung in anguish,  
Whence it comes that now I stand towering in splendour  
To heal every man who gazes in awe upon me.”

Cynewulf died probably towards the end of the eighth century. Whether the older poem was composed by Cædmon himself or by one of his school, and who was the other Cædmon, the builder or the sculptor of the stone cross, are questions to which there is no answer.

Three Anglo-Saxon Psalters which belong to the ninth century testify to the love of the Scriptures that prevailed in the next hundred years. All three alike are MSS. of the Latin Psalter, in which the vernacular translation has been written between the lines of the original text ; but one of them, the Latin version of which dates from the sixth century, is of supreme interest. Like the small grey church of St. Martin at Canterbury, it is one of the material things which put us in touch with the remote past, for, if we may believe the antiquarian, this Psalter was the gift of

## The Bible and the

Gregory the Great to Augustine, and reached Kent with the "many books," relics, and vestments which were sent over in 601 by the Pope, who loved England. The Anglo-Saxon reading was inserted, as we have said, in the ninth century, and the following verse from Psalm xxiii. (xxiv.) will give an idea of the speech of our forefathers when Alfred was a babe in his wicker cradle at Wantage :

Domini est terra, et plenitudo ejus ; orbis terrarum, et  
Dryht' is earðe, 7 fylnis his ; ymb-hwyrft eorðena, 7  
[Lord's is earth, and fulness of-it ; round of-lands, and

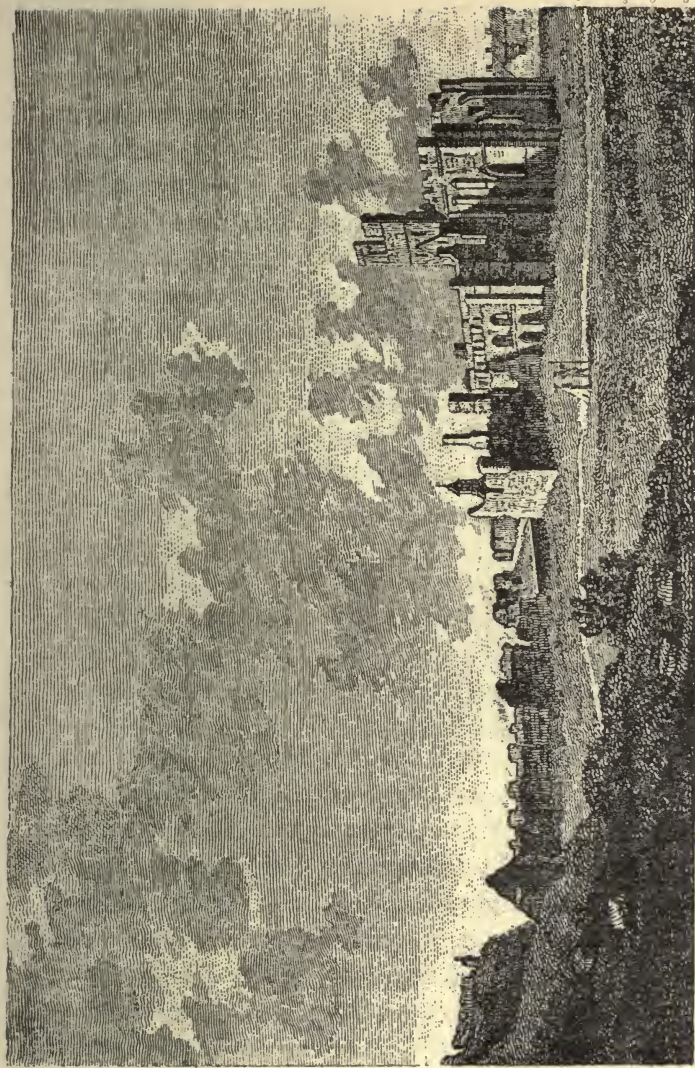
universi qui habitant in ea.  
alle ða eardiað in hire.  
all that abide in it.]

Ipse super maria fundavit eam, et super flumina  
He ofer seas ge-steaðelade hie 7 ofer fiodas  
[He over seas made-steadfast it, and over floods

præparavit illam.  
gearwað ða.  
put-in-gear it.]

Passing over the other two Psalters (one of them the Paris MS. already referred to), we may here take note of the noble illuminated folio known as the *Book of Durham* or *Lindisfarne Gospels*. "The book of Cuthbert the Blessed," it was called in the old time. It was begun on Lindisfarne in the lifetime of the sweet-natured saint, who loved not only the souls of men but all the wild creatures of earth and sea, and may have been intended as a gift to





LINDISFARNE, SITE OF ST. CUTHBERT'S CELL.

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## Anglo-Saxon People

cheer his old age. The writer was Eadfrith, who became eighth Bishop of Lindisfarne (698-724), and the large vellum leaves contained the Latin text of the Gospels, written in double columns in a singularly beautiful script, and divided into paragraphs by illuminated initials. Æthelwald, his successor, provided the book with a cover, which Bilfrith the goldsmith-hermit wrought in silver and embellished with gold and precious stones.

Then came the year of blood and fire, 875, when Halfdan and his Vikings harried Northumbria. Warned in time, the monks fled from Lindisfarne with their churls, flocks, and cattle, and bore with them the precious book and the body of St. Cuthbert; and the country folk with their children fled with them, crowding to the saint for protection. Clothed in priestly vestments, the holy man lay in his coffin, his feet sandalled, like those of their heathen forefathers when they went forth in their death-shoes; and for seven years he wandered with them over the moors and through the forests. Once, when all hope of living in peace in England seemed at an end, they attempted to cross over into Ireland. Furious storms beat them back, and in the fierce weather the Gospels were washed overboard in the Solway, but were found again on the sands at low tide, little the worse for the stains of sea-water on the edges of the leaves.

Some sixty or seventy years afterwards, when the

## The Bible and the

saint lay at rest in the wooden church of Eardulph at Chester-le-Street, Aldred the priest, son of Alfred and Tilwyn, "a good woman," interglossed the Latin text in honour of St. Cuthbert, and this was how the opening of Chapter IV. of St. Mark read about the year 950 : <sup>1</sup>

1. Et iterum cœpit docere ad mare, et congregata  
7 eftersona ongann læra to sæ, 7 gesomnad  
[And eftsoons he began teach beside sea, and gathered

est ad eum turba multa, ita ut in navem ascendens sederet  
wæs to him ðreat menigo, sua þte in scipp astagg gesætt  
was to him crowd manifold, so that into ship gone-up he sat

in mari, et omnis turba circa mare super terram erat.  
on sæ, 7 alle ðreat ymb sæ ofer eorðo wæs.  
in sea, and all crowd around sea upon land was.

2. Et docebat illos in parabolis multa et dicebat  
7 lærde hia in bispellum menigo, 7 cuoeð  
[And lore-d them in by-tales many things, and quoth

illis in doctrina sua,  
to him on lár his,  
to them in teaching his,

3. Audite ; Ecce, exiit seminans ad seminandum ;  
herað ; heono, eode ðe sawende † sedere to sawene ;  
[Hear-ye ; Ho, now ! go-ed the sowing-seed-er to sow ;

4. et dum seminat aliud cecidit circa viam,  
7 miððy geseaw oðer † sum feoll ymb ða strete,  
[and mid-while he sowed other-some fell round the way,

et venerunt volucres et comederunt illud.  
7 cwomon flegendo 7 fretton † eton ðæt.  
and came flying-things and tore-up-ate that.]

<sup>1</sup> In the third line, between brackets, an attempt has been made to suggest the Anglo-Saxon in the English of to-day.



## Anglo-Saxon People

A book which carries one with a curious home-feeling into lives long passed away ! On one page is written the touching prayer of Aldred the priest : " Thou living God, be mindful, Thou, of Eadfrith and Ædelwald and Billfrith and Aldred, sinful men. These four, with God, were busied about this book." <sup>1</sup>

It was in the third year of that harassed wandering in the Northumbrian wilds that St. Cuthbert is said to have appeared to King Alfred in a dream and promised him the victory of Ethandune, which freed Wessex from the Viking hordes. During the ravages of the Danes, the civilization and ecclesiastical splendour of a great part of England had perished ; churches and monasteries, with their numerous libraries, had been plundered and burnt down ; south of the Thames almost all knowledge of Latin had been extinguished. Alfred set himself to make good these losses, summoned scholars from West Mercia, from Wales, from France and Germany, added the translation of books to his numerous kingly tasks. It was his earnest wish that all free-born youth should continue their studies until they could read the Scriptures with ease in English.

The expression suggests the existence, in spite of

<sup>1</sup> In 1731 the *Lindisfarne Gospels* escaped uninjured from the fire which destroyed so many precious MSS. in Dean's Yard, Westminster, and are now in safe keeping in the British Museum. Their present sumptuous binding dates from the middle of last century.

## The Bible and the

the marauders, of native versions whereof no trace has reached our days. Alfred himself constantly carried a copy of the Latin Psalms in his breast, so that he might turn to it in his spare moments, and he had just begun a translation of the Psalter at the time of his death. The amount of his work in rendering the Bible into English was small, but the effect of his efforts to restore religion and scholarship can hardly be over-estimated.

A brief interval of time separates the Lindisfarne book from the bilingual "Rushworth Gospels." The Latin text of the latter was the scribe-work of an Irish penman, Macregol; the interlinear Anglo-Saxon was written for Farman, "priest of Harawuda," some unknown north-country Harewood, by an unknown Owun, for whom, says the book in its quaint way, "let him pray who useth me." The gloss is so largely a transcription, with phonetic or dialectic variations, of the Lindisfarne version as to suggest that this MS. was but one of various copies or adaptations of it for devout study.

In the last years of the tenth century the fleets of the Northmen were wringing a blood-stained and shameful ransom round our coasts. In 993 the great Earl Byrhtnoth met the sea-rovers at Maldon, fought them, and fell thanking God for the day's work He had given to his hands, and for all the delightfulness he had found in the world. Amid these stirring



# Anglo-Saxon People

deeds a nameless scribe, in the quiet of some monastic scriptorium, produced an exceptionally noticeable version of the Gospels in the mother-tongue. Then for the first time the Scriptures appeared in the vernacular without a Latin text. The translator worked from more than one Latin MS. and followed readings of an earlier date than the recension of Jerome.

What existing Anglo-Saxon rendering he made use of is unknown, but to one scholar at least there seemed reason to think that the Gospel of St. John represents the very translation which the beloved Bede completed in the waning light of Ascension Eve two and a half centuries before. Finally the numerous MSS. of this version which survive appear to indicate a wide use of this first substantive Anglo-Saxon translation; and one compares with interest its later speech with that of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.

## MARK IV. 1-4

1. 7 eft he ongan hi æt þære sæ læran; 7  
[And eftsoons he began them at (the) there sea to teach; and

him was mycel menegu togegaderod, swaþ he on scip eode,  
to him was mickle crowd gathered, so that he into ship went,

7 on þære sæ wæs; 7 eall seo menegu ymbe þa sæ  
and in (the) there sea was; and all the crowd round the sea

wæron on lande.

were on lande.

## The Bible and the

2. 7 he hi fela on bigspellum lærde, 7 him to  
[and he them many-things in parables taught, and them-to

cwæð on his lare,  
said in his teaching,

3. Gehyrað : Ut eode se sǣdere his sǣd to sawenne ;  
[Hear ! Out yode the seed-er his seed to sow ;

4. 7 þa he sew sum feoll wið pone weg, 7 fugelas  
[and as he sowed some fell about the way, and fowls (of the air)

comon 7 hit fræton.  
came and it ate-up.]

And if indeed the fourth Gospel of this codex should be the work of Venerable Bede, these were the words which the young scribe Wilberche wrote down before he took his dear master's head to rest on his bosom :

### ST. JOHN XXI. 25

Witodlice oðre manega þing synt þe se hælend worhte ; gif  
[Truly other many things are that the saviour wrought ; if

þa ealle awritene wæron, ic wene ne mihte þes middan-eard  
thae all a-written were, I ween not might this middle-earth

ealle þa bec befon. Amen.  
all thae books hold. Amen.]

At the time of the Maldon fight, and afterwards, Ælfric Grammaticus<sup>1</sup> was busy at Winchester

<sup>1</sup> Long mistaken for his contemporary, Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who is memorable for the saying that "when we pray we speak to God ; when we read the Bible God speaks to us."—See Brooke, *English Literature from the Beginning*, pp. 278-285, and Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, pp. 105-110, for fine sketches of Ælfric.

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with his *Grammar*, *Catholic Homilies*, and *Lives of the Saints*. A radiant literary figure in his day, curiously recalling Bishop Ealdhelm in personal charm and in scholarship tinged with poetic fancy, the gentle Benedictine monk was the delight of great nobles and ecclesiastics—very specially the friend of Æthelweard, son-in-law of the heroic Byrhtnoth, and even more closely of Æthelweard's son, Æthelmær the royal thegn. At the request of Æthelweard, who had already in his possession the latter half of Genesis, he translated the first twenty-three chapters; omitting, abridging, and using more or less partial versions by earlier men, he completed the Pentateuch; added Joshua, perhaps Judges, Esther, and Job; and tried to kindle the people against the Northmen with Judith and Maccabees. In 1005 Æthelmær made him abbot of the Benedictine house he founded at Eynsham, near Oxford; and there he wrote his treatise *Concerning the Old and New Testament* for the benefit of the laity, whom he exhorted to read those parts of the Scriptures which had been set forth in their native tongue.

Then when the Norman Conquest had established French as the language of State and Church, and "the men of the land" held stubbornly to their Anglo-Saxon until at length it won the mastery, and

"Learned and lewd, old and young,  
All understood the English tongue,"

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the vital influences of the Bible continued to stream out into the succeeding generations in its traditional written forms. Witness the *Ormulum*,<sup>1</sup> that vast metrical paraphrase, with homiletic commentary, of the daily Gospel portions of the ecclesiastical year, the work of Orm, an Augustinian canon of Mercia, late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century; the rhymed north-country version of the Psalms by an unknown poet who wrote about 1260-1280; the prose Psalter of William of Shoreham, near Sevenoaks (1313-1327), and that of Richard Rolle of Hampole (died 1349), whose task was undertaken for his beloved disciple (*dilecta sua discipula*), the anchoress Margaret Kirkby of Anderby.

In the unknown poet's north-country Psalter the twenty-fourth Psalm opens and closes with these verses:

“ Of Laverd <sup>3</sup> es land and fulhed *his (its)*,  
Erpeli werld, and alle þar-in is.

For over sees it grounded he,  
And over stremes *graiþed* it to be (*furnished*).

Oppenes your yates wide,  
Ye þat princes ere in pride;  
And yates of ai <sup>2</sup> up-hoven be ye,  
And King of blisse in-come sal he.

Wha es he þe King of blisse þat isse &  
Laverd of mightes es King of blisse.”

<sup>1</sup> A comparatively small portion of the *Ormulum*, yet it extends to upwards of 10,000 lines, has come down to us.

<sup>2</sup> *Laverd* = Anglo-Saxon *Hálford* = Lord.

<sup>3</sup> *Of ai* = of ever and *aye* = everlasting.



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Such, then, so incomplete and tentative in form, were the Scriptures which found a place in the life of the early English people. It is difficult to resist the conviction that in the rapine and wanton devastation recorded of those stormy centuries the bulk of unknown religious literature swept away must have largely exceeded that which escaped destruction. But even from the residue which has come down to us we can in some degree realize those Angle and Saxon forefathers of ours in that strange far-away life which is so different from our own.

We see them a rude, stout-hearted, swift-handed folk, full of imagination and superstition, eager as children for music, song, and saga, and as quick as children to assimilate the gleeman's teaching. To them the Bible comes most easily and effectively in the familiar rhythmic fashion. They have but little skill in letters, and the paraphrase fulfils, for many a day, all the practical purposes of a direct translation. Whatever may be lacking the priest supplies. The wonderful transforming power of the Bible enters into their world of thought and feeling, working the same magical changes that, in our own day, have borne witness to its presence among the heathen warrior tribes of Madagascar, New Zealand, and Ashantiland.

One might even surmise that the influence of those poetic interpretations never died out ; on the contrary

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that it persisted, just as that of the old folk-lore and folk-tales persists for untold generations, and became part of the everyday life and the common way of looking at things. And it may very well have happened that from these lays sprang up a sort of Scripture language, which entered into the later paraphrases and translations, until a kind of folk-Bible was formed in the consciousness of the people; and this not only stayed the inroads of a later paganism, but went far perhaps to determine the character of the diction in which the great English versions were afterwards made.

One gracious characteristic at least is to be noted. So far as the first English people had the Word of God, it was a Word of peace and goodwill. It lit up the background of a dour and stormy age as with the beauty of summer flowers on the edge of glacier ice. Wholly devotional in their origin and purpose, these Anglian versions—if we may use the word—aroused no controversy, and were mixed up with no political strife or social grievances. The people and their clergy were in happy union.

The Church indeed had not passed unspotted through the world (Bede complained of monasteries unworthy of the name, mere houses of ungodliness and luxury; ignorance and illiteracy were added to other evils in Alfred's time), but it was still the Church of the people. It had redeemed them from the



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bonds of heathenism. It stood between them and the oppression of the great. It had lightened the miseries of the serf. It had allied itself with the toils and sorrows of the men of the soil. It blessed plough and furrow, the fisher's net and the woodman's axe. It clothed the naked and fed the hungry. It held out its hand to the swineherd's child, led him into its schools, gave him a place in the cloister, in the scriptorium, at the altar; for humble birth was no bar to its highest ministry. Its cresset-stones, of which a rare example may still be seen in an ancient chapel or a ruined abbey, were a symbol of its spiritual mission and an instance of its homely service; from the floating wicks kept ever burning in those little cup-shaped wells of oil, the poorest churl was free to take light and fire for his cold hearth.

It filled wood and valley with the dreams of a beautiful and kindly hagiology; placed each day of the four seasons under the patronage and protection of a saint. The chimes of its bells floated over the land, disarming the evil spirits of darkness and tempest. The roads and hill-tracks of the traveller were patrolled by its crosses and wayside shrines. As time went on its minsters and great stone churches, dim with incense, thrilling with music, glowing with storied glass, lifted the believing earth close to that heaven whose keys were in its hands.

Even when this benign aspect of things was

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clouded over, when the great religious organisations deteriorated, and clerical wealth and power aroused the discontent and resentment of the people, the Word of God continued to be a Word of union and peace. Within forty years of the death of the hermit of Hampole all was changed. The whole Bible was translated into a more modern English; and it was a Bible of appeal and revolt.

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## CHAPTER II

### WYCLIFFE AND HIS WORK

IN the great monument at Worms Rietschel expressed in bronze and granite the personal forces which brought about the Reformation. Above the colossal figures of Waldo and Wycliffe, Huss and Savonarola, towered the statue of Luther, with his clenched right hand upon the Bible.

Historic details were treated in its bas-reliefs and medallions, but in such a medium elements of vital importance were necessarily omitted. A painter, with this theme, would have pictured Gutenberg and his "devilish" printing-press; and we should surely have seen Erasmus and Colet examining the precious codex of some learned Greek fugitive from Byzantium. A poet could not have foregone the monk Tetzal, with his red cross and iron coffer; and across his vision would have glimmered the caravels of Columbus which revealed a new world and widened the scientific horizons of the old. A historian would have called up for us the jurists and doctors of Paris who dared to investigate the sanctions of royal and papal dominion; would have noted the strange stirrings and groupings of sombre swarms of

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humanity who had scarcely yet become "peoples"; and would have traced down to their hidden fires the obscure mutterings and vibrations of a force which at length shook down the ancient oppressions of Christendom.

In an early phase of those symptoms of immense unrest sprang up the mystic doctrines and fantastic beliefs which were preached and practised at the foot of the Alps, on the banks of the Rhone and Garonne, in the valleys of the Pyrenees. Some took their rise in the shadow of the Northern forests; others came from the subtle and speculative East of the Crusaders. About the year 1170 appeared Waldo the Merchant with his newly translated French Gospels in his hand. His Poor Men of Lyons, wearing wooden sandals in imitation of the Apostles, asked no more of the Church than leave to follow the simple life and faith which Christ taught under the Syrian skies—a faith in which all men would be equal, a society in which wealth, and clergy, and nobles would be unknown. Their neighbours were the wild sects, often confused with them; men to whom church bells were "devil's trumpets," who broke the images of saints, burnt crucifixes, maltreated priests; Cathari, Puritans, Albigenses, driven to the extremes of fanaticism and licentiousness by the Persian tradition of two Creators, one of



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good and one of evil. St. Dominic preached to them, Waldenses and Cathari alike, and preached in vain. Threats and excommunications were useless. Then the whole of Provence was ravaged with fire and sword; towns were sacked, harvests destroyed, vineyards uprooted. Thousands were massacred—in the streets, in the great church, while the death-bells were tolled above them—men and women, greybeards and children, heretics and orthodox. “Slay all,” cried the Legate Arnold, Abbot of Cîteaux, “the Lord will know His own.” In that devastation perished the fair and joyous flower of Provençal literature. The Council of Toulouse, in 1229, policed the country with Inquisitors, deprived the people of the Scriptures, and forbade the reading of the word of God in the vulgar tongue.

Seventy years later Pope Boniface VIII. proclaimed the Great Jubilee. Rome was thronged with an immense multitude eager to secure the “plenary indulgence”—the complete remission of the temporal penalties of sin,<sup>1</sup>—promised to all who repented,

<sup>1</sup> In the Decretal of Clement VI. the scheme of Indulgences is dogmatically set forth to the following effect: “There is left to the Church an infinite store of merits and good works, founded by our Saviour Himself, and increased by the merits of the Blessed Virgin and the supererogatory works of the saints.” Of this store “the Pope has supreme control by virtue of the power of the Keys, and is able to remit the temporal punishment of sinners, living or dead, by offering to God in its stead a portion of this treasure as a satisfaction for the sin.”



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confessed, and visited daily for fifteen days the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul. The roads swarmed with wayfarers. Hostel and house and cloister were over-crowded. Men and women huddled on the streets and piazzas, in booths and tents, among the pines and cypresses on the hills, under the open skies. All that year 1300 there were never fewer than two hundred thousand pilgrims in the holy city; the number often exceeded two millions.

Dante and Giotto watched them crossing to the basilicas in two interminable streams over the old bridge near the Castle of St. Angelo. "I saw women, and men too, trampled underfoot," says the chronicler Ventura, "and more than once I narrowly escaped that danger myself." Everything was at its dearest—bread, wine, flesh, fish, grain; hay and lodging dearest of all. Every wind blew quails, every dawn dropped manna, and the Romans were overjoyed. "The Pope," if one may trust Ventura, "profited beyond count. There were two clerics busy day and night at the altar of St. Paul's with rakes in their hands, raking in infinite money." The coppers which the poor left at the tombs of the Apostles amounted alone to 50,000 gold florins, which could hardly have been less than £300,000 of our currency.

On the first day of the Jubilee the Pope appeared in pontifical splendour, a venerable figure of four score years and upward, the Father of Christendom,

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blessing his children of the West. On the next he was arrayed in the crimson mantle and crown of the Cæsars. Before him were carried the sword, sceptre, and globe of the earth, and the voices of the heralds rang out over the multitude in the daring proclamation: " 'Here are two swords.' Now, Peter, dost thou see thy successor; behold, O Christ, Thy vicegerent!" At that moment Boniface attained the pinnacle of his ambition. He saw at his feet the kingdoms of the world, but in the glory of them his eyes were dazzled to the tragic brink on which he stood.

The claim to the Two Swords reveals as by a flash of lightning the ignorance and credulity of the age. Incredible as it appears, the Pope left no doubt in his Bull *Unam Sanctam*, issued in 1302, that he grounded his claim to universal dominion on the undiscerning literalism of the disciples at the Last Supper and Christ's saddened reply:<sup>1</sup> " 'There are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Our Lord did not say of these two swords, 'It is too much,'

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 38. This method of appealing to the Scriptures survived at least till the seventeenth century. "Holy Father," said Cardinal Baronius, in an address delivered before Pope Paul V. (1605-1621), "the official function of St. Peter is twofold. It consists in tending and in putting to death, according to the words, 'Keep my sheep' and 'Kill and eat' (Acts x. 13). So, if the Pope has to do with opponents, he is directed to slay them and to eat them up"—the slaying being by no means metaphorical and the eating by no means literal.

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but 'It is enough.' Both are in the power of the Church . . . the former that of the priest, the latter that of kings and soldiers to be wielded at the command and by the sufferance of the priest. . . . Wherefore we assert, define, and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the Pontiff of Rome." With the double power of keys and swords, the old but unweakened dreamer of colossal projects might well conceive himself irresistible.

Yet he had already failed to daunt England with the Bull *Clericis laicos*; Edward I. promptly outlawed and quelled the clergy who refused to pay taxes to lay authority. His pretension to the feudal lordship of Scotland was flung back by Edward's Parliament: The kings of England never had submitted, and by the grace of God never should submit their temporal rights to the decision of any earthly tribunal.

In France his contentions with Philip the Fair blazed into deadly enmity. The Pope was accused of heresy, simony, and scandalous crimes through the royal advocates, Plasian and Nogaret, who clamoured for his deposition by a general council of the Church. Boniface decided to crush his adversary; he offered the kingdom of France to Albert of Austria, and was on the eve of excommunicating the king at Anagni when the streets rang with the cry of "Death to the Pope!" Nogaret and Sciarra

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Colonna, the proscribed Ghibelline, with several barons and troops of horse and foot had burst into Anagni under the fleurs-de-lys. The alarm-bell sounded, but the city captain sided with the assailants. The palaces of the Cardinals were stormed and pillaged. The Cardinals themselves fled ignominiously through the sewers. The Pope's nephew abandoned him and made terms for himself.

The aged Pontiff faced his enemies with nerves of iron. He had donned the mantle of St. Peter, the crown of Constantine on his white head, the keys and crosier in his hand. He was reviled and insulted. They demanded his abdication and unconditional surrender. "Like Christ," he replied, "I have been betrayed. I am ready to die; but I shall die Pope." Nogaret threatened to drag him in chains to Lyons for deposition. Colonna smote him in the face with his iron gauntlet—would have slain him where he stood, but that Nogaret interposed with the gibe, "See, thou sorry Pope, how thou art protected, even so far from France, by the goodness of my lord the King." He was placed on a restive horse with his face to the tail and led to prison.

A few days later the townsfolk, moved with remorse and encouraged by the small number of the enemy, drove out the French and rescued the fallen Pontiff. The pitiful old man—he had reached the age of eighty-six—stood in the public square of his native



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town weeping. He had not eaten for three days in his dread of being poisoned. "Good people," he said, "you see how I have been despoiled. If any good woman will give me bread and wine, or a little water if there be no wine, God and I will bless her. Whoever succours me in my need, be it never so little, I will absolve from all sin." Even Dante, who had committed him still living to the pit of torment, was touched by his appalling reverse of fortune.<sup>1</sup>

He was escorted to Rome by an armed band of the Orsini, whom he trusted as the hereditary enemies of the Colonnas. He was received with acclamations. But the inflexible spirit, the astute and daring intellect which had overawed Christendom, broke beneath the recollection of outrage and hunger, the loss of enormous wealth, "the infinite humiliation of infinite power." The Orsini played him false, and when he discovered that he was still virtually a prisoner, stupor turned to fury. On October 11, 1303, thirty-three days after his rescue at Anagni, Boniface VIII. died of rage and anguish.

Even that ghastly consummation failed to satisfy Philip's thirst for revenge; he used every means in his power to have the Pontiff's name blotted out on the roll of Popes, and his body dragged from the tomb and publicly burned. The world was spared that infamy; but the sequel to the ruin of Boniface

<sup>1</sup> *Purgatorio*, xx. 85-90.



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was the "Babylonish Captivity," the seventy years of papal exile and subjection to the French kings.

In such startling fashion—to give but a glimpse of things—had men and events moved across the stage of history when Wycliffe undertook the vast labour of giving the English people for the first time a complete translation of the Bible in their own tongue. One wonders whether in this purpose he was mysteriously led in ways that he knew not, or whether, enlightened by the philosophic survey of the papacy and its claims, he clearly recognised in a masterly knowledge of the Scriptures and an appeal to their ultimate authority the only possibility of Christian men recovering their intellectual and spiritual liberty.

He began his work with the Book of Revelation, "the meeting-ground of the Old and New Testament." In the pages of that book "one final symbol comes as an echo from the earliest symbol of Genesis; transplanted from Eden, the tree of life spreads healing leaves beside the river." The seventh trumpet sounds, and there are great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. An angel tells of Babylon fallen, fallen. The griefs and hurts of this old earth are forgotten in the promise of the new,

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where God shall wipe away all tears ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain. It seemed the very book for his own time.

It was an age of turbulence and pageantry, of misery and peasant revolt. The mind's eye is filled with brawling men-at-arms, and unruly barons in gilded steel ; hunting abbots with their jingling bells ; prioresses with love - rhymes on their brooches ; crowds of summoners to the Church courts ; pardoners with absolutions and indulgences " piping hot from Rome " ; begging friars with their tablets for the names of those who want their prayers. The wheedling Minorite goes from house to house collecting for a new church, whose high walls and wide windows are to be painted and beautified with gay glittering glass.

" And mightest thou amenden us • with money of thine own,  
Thou shouldst kneel before Christ • in compass of gold,  
In the wide window westward, • well nigh in the middle ;  
And St. Francis himself • should fold thee in his cope,  
And present thee to the Trinity, • and pray for thy sins.  
Thy name shall nobly be written • and wrought for the nonce,  
And in remembrance of thee • be read there for ever.  
And, brother, be thou nought afear'd ; • bethink in thy heart,  
Though thou ken not thy creed, • care thou no more !  
I shall assoil (absolve) thee, sir, • and set it on my soul." <sup>1</sup>

Through the noise and stir comes the cry of  
yeoman and serf, the ragged villeins of the oatcake,

<sup>1</sup> *The Creed of Piers Ploughman*, 243-262.





LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.

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the water, and the straw, the poor souls who for velvet and fur have but "pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields." Here over the English acres the rustic drives his team — four oxen, so hunger-bitten you can count their ribs. The man is in a coat of coarse stuff, "cary" the name of it. His hood is full of holes, and his hair stares through; his toes come out through his gnarled patched shoon; his hose and his ragged mittens are beslumpered with mire. His wife walks beside him with a long goad, in a short smock, with a winnowing sheet about her to protect her from the weather; her bare feet leave tracks of blood on the bare ice.

"And at the land's end lay • a little crum-bowl,  
And thereon lay a little child • lapped in clouts;  
And twain of two years old • upon another side.  
And all they sang one song • that sorrow was to hear;  
They cried all one cry, • a careful note.  
The sely (poor) man sighed sore, • and said, 'Children, be still.'"<sup>1</sup>

Poor folk like these are tethered to the soil. Most of them are merely chattels; my lord abbot may sell a family of them, my lord baron may grant a score of them to a chantry.

In a population of about two millions there are between twenty and thirty thousand clerics. They own a third of the soil. Their spiritualities amount to double the king's revenue. From their super-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 837-880.



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fluous wealth, the Commons aver, the king might maintain fifteen earls, 1500 knights, 6200 squires, and 100 hospitals for the comfort of the poor. Patronage is in the gift of Rome, and foreign ecclesiastics are appointed to English livings. The Black Death has left many a farm and village deserted, but the papal tribute from England alone is "larger than that of any prince in Christendom."

This was the age as recorded in the old rolls and charters and preserved in living colours by Langland, the dreamer of the Malvern Hills, and Chaucer, the genial hooded man with the "far-looking grey eyes"; and Wycliffe, most distinguished and fearless of Oxford schoolmen, seeing how many things needed reforming, was insistent that all Christian people "ought much to travail night and day about text of Holy Writ, and namely (chiefly) the gospel in their mother-tongue." He had made the New Testament his own rule of life, and by the diffusion of its simple teaching he looked for a revival of religion purged of corruptions and abuses. His treatise "Concerning Dominion," that subtle and far-reaching question of the jurists and political philosophers, was probably the occasion of his appointment as envoy to Bruges in 1374, to treat with the papal legate on the disregard of enactments against the aggressions of the Holy See. Statute had followed statute forbidding claims which irritated

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and impoverished the realm—the taxation of English religious houses by alien abbots and priors, papal nominations to English benefices, control of the election of bishops and other dignitaries, citation of litigants to the Court of Rome, but scarcely had they been passed or confirmed before these prohibitions were treated as dead letters.

On his return he was presented to the rectory of Lutterworth by the King. There he founded his fellowship of Poor Preachers; pestilent hedge-creepers, the Bishops thought them, “sons of perdition under the veil of great sanctity.” Possibly it was among them that Chaucer sketched the russet figure one loves to remember, the “poor parson,” who in all weathers travelled staff in hand to the houses, far asunder, in his wide parish, and “taught Christ’s love, but first he followed it himself.” This “good man of religion,” some have thought, was no other than John Wycliffe himself; but why need we doubt that there was many a “poor parson” in the land who followed simply and without guile in the footsteps of his Master?

Thenceforth he was busy with tongue and pen in his efforts for reform. So bold and trenchant an advocate could not escape impeachment for heresy. John of Gaunt, who had his own political ends to serve, stood beside him when he appeared to answer in St. Paul’s, and to the end he seems to have been

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protected by some unknown influence from the penalty of revolt. As to his position he left no room for doubt; and as time went on, and the Great Schism rent the allegiance of Christendom between the rival Popes of Rome and Avignon,<sup>1</sup> the more emphatic and revolutionary became his arraignment. He denounced the pretensions of the Holy See to temporal supremacy; held that a reprobate Pope had no power over the faithful of Christ, that cleric or layman might rebuke even a Pope for the good of the Church, that habitually delinquent churches might be deprived of their temporalities, that friars were bound to work for their living. The Mass he pronounced unscriptural, and confession superfluous and unprofitable. No man, he declared, could be excommunicated by the Pope, "unless he was first excommunicated by himself." With his formal denial of the dogma of Transubstantiation and his asseveration of the Bible as the one ground of faith, he had repudiated in 1381 the whole system of Romanism, with its "power of the keys," its indulgences, absolutions, compoundings for sin and crime, its benefit of clergy, its pilgrimages and relic-worship, its interdicts and excommunications, its requisition of the civil sword and stake. After Urban, he con-

<sup>1</sup> France, Scotland, Sicily, and the kingdoms of Spain supported Clement VII., the Anti-Pope; England and the rest of Europe adhered to Pope Urban VI.

WYCLIFFE'S PULPIT, LUTTERWORTH.



WYCLIFFE'S PULPIT, LUTTERWORTH.

1870



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tended, there should be no other Pope, "but Christendom ought to live, after the manner of the Greeks, under its own laws."

Meanwhile the Scriptures were in course of translation. About the year 1380 the New Testament was completed; and towards the close of the summer of 1382 the entire Bible was in the hands of the English people for the first time in their daily speech. Wycliffe himself translated, it is probable, the whole of the New Testament; most of the Old and the Apocrypha were rendered by one of his ardent Oxford disciples, Nicholas of Hereford, whose work, interrupted by his excommunication and imprisonment, was apparently finished by Wycliffe. With "much travail" and with the aid of "many good fellows and cunning at the correction of the translation," the version was thoroughly revised and winnowed into a clearer and more idiomatic diction by his intimate friend John Purvey about the end of 1388.

Copies of the various parts were rapidly multiplied and eagerly purchased.<sup>1</sup> News of the precious books was spread by the Poor Priests as they wandered, barefooted and russet-clad, over the country, "faithfully scattering the seed

<sup>1</sup> Obviously the Scriptures must have circulated in small portions, as the cost of manuscript reproduction was very great. "A small Bible," says Coulton (*Chaucer and his England*, p. 99), "was cheap at forty shillings, i.e. the equivalent of £30 in modern money."

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of God's Word." The Bishops, highly incensed because "God's law is written in English to lewd men," issued their prohibitions, but reading and circulation could not be arrested. Neighbours gathered after nightfall, and as they listened, their fear and trembling were forgotten in a great joy. Men or women who could recite a chapter were sent for to teach and solace others. Holy Scripture became "a vulgar thing, and more open to lay folk that knew how to read than it was wont to be to clerks themselves."

The books were carried beyond the Border. Sharp search was made for them, but they were hidden away with "devilish cunning," and escaped destruction. About 1520 Murdoch Nisbet, "a Lollard of Kyle," transcribed the New Testament from English into the south-western Scots for the benefit of the truth-seekers, who came to his place of hiding. The volume he wrote passed from father to son down to his descendant, John the Covenanter (who fought at Drumclog and Bothwell Brig, and suffered on the scaffold), and after many chances, survives to our own day.

While hearing Mass on the feast of Holy Innocents, Wycliffe was stricken down with "a violent fit of the palsie"; he died on the last day of the year 1384, and was buried beside his little church, among the trees on the hill at Lutterworth. That he escaped a violent

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death was a happy chance, due, perhaps, to the Great Schism. But the hatred of his enemies pursued him beyond the grave. The Council of Constance ordered his bones to be dug up and cast out on a dunghill; and four-and-forty years after his burial his remains were exhumed and burnt, and his ashes thrown into the brook at Lutterworth.

He died speechless, but his words, which had rung out loud and long, prepared men's minds for the struggle against old tyrannies. Of the men most closely associated with him, John Ashton, the itinerant preacher, recanted in 1382, but five years later was cited again, and disappeared into the gloom of some "straight prison"; Nicholas of Hereford recanted, became chancellor of Hereford cathedral, and died a Carthusian; Philip Repyngdon, one of the reformer's ablest supporters, was excommunicated, recanted, became Bishop of Lincoln and a "most bitter and extreme persecutor," and died Cardinal; John Purvey, the "library of Lollards," was "grievously tormented and punished in the prison of Saltwood," recanted at Paul's Cross in 1401, but was again imprisoned twenty years later, and so vanishes from human knowledge. Yet if courage failed at the prospect of the dungeon or the stake, the light which Wycliffe kindled burned in Oxford and London, Leicester and Bristol, long after it was thought to have been trampled out. The survival

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to this day of 170 manuscripts of the Bible and parts of the Bible, despite the ravages of time and the searchings and burnings of Inquisitors, bears irresistible testimony to the wide spread of the Scriptures and the intrepid love and reverence with which they were treasured.

Unhappily the issues raised by Wycliffe were irretrievably confused with the grievances of the poor by the peasant rising of 1381. It was in the nature of things that among the insurgents there should be large numbers who accepted the teaching of the Poor Priests, and that among the itinerant preachers there should be fanatics who far outran his projects of reform, preached Communism, and incited to lawlessness. From that moment the Lollards were not merely heretics but revolutionaries, and State and Church combined for their destruction.<sup>1</sup>

By the contrivance of Archbishop Courtenay the Bishops were empowered to direct the arrest and imprisonment for an indefinite time of all preachers of heresy and their abettors. The statute had been enacted without the consent of the Commons ;

<sup>1</sup> The name "Lollard," in use both in England and Germany long before the time of the Wycliffites, is involved in obscurity ; variously derived, from the Dutch *lollaerd*, a mumblor (of prayers and hymns), first applied to a sect in Brabant ; from Walter Lolhardus, a German ; from Walter Lollardus, an Englishman burnt for heresy in Cologne ; ingeniously, but not very credibly, from *lolium*, cockle, because "these sectaries sowed tares among the wheat."



## Anglo-Saxon People

Wycliffe protested, and the Commons had it withdrawn ; they were of no mind “ to be judged by, or to bind their descendants to, the Bishops more than their ancestors had been bound in times past.” But the alliance of politician and priest was too effective to be abandoned. In 1401 the Act for the Burning of Heretics was passed—that too without the assent of the Commons ;<sup>1</sup> and thirteen years later, after the martyrdom of Sir John Oldcastle, justices and magistrates were required by a still more stringent statute to detect and arrest persons suspected of Lollardy, and to deliver them to the ecclesiastical courts for trial. “ From the statute *De Heretico Comburendo* in 1401 down to the ‘ Act for preventing the growth of Popery ’ passed under William III. in 1700, successive governments found religious persecution the simplest way of dealing with their political opponents.”<sup>2</sup>

If the Government did not scruple to use the Church for its own ends neither the Government nor the people yielded one jot to the claims of the papacy. The great statute of *Præmunire* penalized the encroachments of Rome on the jurisdiction of the Crown, and the Commons petitioned for the secularization of Church property. The insurgent spirit falsely identified with Lollardy was crushed, but the spirit

<sup>1</sup> Taswell-Langmead, *English Constitutional History*, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Wakeman, *History of the Church of England*, p. 153.



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of Wycliffe's teachings lived on. The Scriptures were read, though in secret and at deadly risks, and in the early years of Henry VIII. the dangerous propaganda of the Poor Priests was taken up by the Association of Christian Brothers.

A word remains to be said of the Scriptures themselves. The first version, made by Wycliffe and Hereford, was probably at once superseded in general use by Purvey's revision, which was based on a more accurate Latin text, conformed to more idiomatic principles of translation, and merged in one lucid, simple and picturesque diction the conflicting styles of the first translators. Though here and there some quaint or poetic touch was lost, there was comparatively little to change in Wycliffe's work, from which, indeed, Purvey (probably a north-countryman like himself) seems to have taken his key-note.

The language was in a state of transition, and there was yet no printing to give it a certain fixity of form, yet among the old people on the north-eastern fells of Yorkshire, Wycliffite English is said to be still intelligible when read aloud. Except, in fact, for the uncouth spelling, the following brief passages show that it presents little difficulty to any reader : <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1731 that Wycliffe's New Testament was printed (in a very small edition), and the complete Bible was not published until 1850. The New Testament was the later Wycliffite version. The Bible was the noble edition in four large volumes, edited by the Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden, suc-

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## PSALM XXIII. (XXIV.)

HEREFORD : I. Off the Lord is the erthe, and the plente of it ;

PURVEY : *The erthe and the fulnesse therof is the Lordis ;*

the roundnesse of londis, and alle that dwellen in it.  
*the world, and alle that dwellen thereynne is the Lordis.*

2. For he vpon the ses foundede it ; and vpon the flodis he for-  
greithide it.

*For he foundide it on the sees ; and made it redi on floodis.*

7. Doth awei zoure zatus, zee princis ; and beth rerid out,  
*ze princes, take vp zoure zatis ; and ze euerlastynge*

*zee euerlastende zatis, and ther shal gon in the King of glorie.*  
*zatis, be reisd, and the Kyng of glorie shal entre.*

8. Who is this King of glorie ? a Lord strong and myzti, a  
*Who is this Kyng of glorie ? the Lord strong and myzti, the*

Lord myzti in bataile.

*Lord myzti in batel.*

The following is from the fourth chapter of the  
Gospel of St. Mark, the Wycliffe version :

1. And eft Jhesus bigan for to teche at the see ; and myche cum-  
pany of peple is gedrid to hym, so þat he, styng in to a boot, sat in  
þe see, and al þe cumpany of peple was aboute þe see, on þe lond.

2. And he tauzhte hem in parablis many pingis. And he seide to  
hem in his techynge,

3. Heere zee. Loo ! a man sowynge goþ out for to sowe ;

4. And þe while he sowip, an oþer seed felde aboute þe way, and  
bryddis of heuene (or of the eire) camen and eeten it.

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cessive Keepers of Manuscripts in the British Museum (1827-37,  
1837-66). It contains in parallel columns the earlier texts of  
Wycliffe and Hereford and Purvey's recension.

## The Bible and the

5. Forsope an oper felde doun on stony placis, wher it had nat myche erpe ; and anoon it sprong vp, for it hadde nat depnesse of erpe ;

6. And whenne þe sunne rose vp, it welwide for heete, and it dried vp, for it hadde not roote.

7. And an oper felde doun into þornes, and þornes stieden vp, and strangliden it, and it ȝaue not fruyt.

8. And an oper felde doun in to good lond, and ȝaue fruyt, stynging vp, and wexing ; and oon brouȝte þretty fold, and oon sixtyfold, and oon an hundridfold.

9. And he seide, He þat haþ eris of heeryng, heere.

10. And whenne he was singuler (or by hymself), þe twelue þat weren wip hym axiden hym for to expowne þe parable.

Wycliffe's hour was indeed that of the morning-star, between darkness and dawn. The Antipodes, the American Continent, the Cape passage, the planetary system, were all unknown. Patristic geography was yet an article in the creed of Christendom, and a century after his death the Council of Salamanca, confuting Columbus from the Fathers, tried to prove on his own showing that if he sailed from Spain he could never return, for the rotundity of the earth would be as a mountain, " up which he could not climb, even with the fairest wind." With all the limitations of communication, Wycliffe's influence went out far beyond his country and his own lifetime. Though John Huss was yet in his teens when Wycliffe died, he was as completely his disciple as if he had sat at his feet at Oxford or Lutterworth.

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Ideas, arguments, whole passages were adopted by the Bohemian from the pregnant writings of his master. The impulses of liberal thought and religious change vibrated through succeeding generations. Luther, unconscious of their occult pressure, was lost in astonishment when he discovered on reading one of Huss's works that "he and Staupitz and all the rest had been Hussites all along without knowing it."

Wycliffe died in 1384. Yet another century and a half and Tindale's New Testament, "dilygently corrected and compared with the Greke," leaves the press "in the moneth of Nouember"; spies are tracking the translator to his death among the narrow streets overshadowed by the tall houses of Antwerp; we are in the turmoil and strife of the Reformation.



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## CHAPTER III

### THE RENAISSANCE AND THE PRESS

WITH the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the Revival of Letters reached its height. Greek savants, fleeing with their treasures of art and literature, crowded half a dozen ships in their escape to Italy. The Italian cities were astir with the excitement and glitter of the new learning. From beyond the Alps the roads to Florence and Rome were filled with scholars flocking to the lectures of the exiles.

The quest for the works of old pagan and Christian authors was interminable. The towns of Greece were rummaged for medals, inscriptions, and books. The galleys of Cosmo de Medici brought from the East consignments of manuscripts more precious than their cargoes of Indian spices. While he was still a monk, Nicholas V. beggared himself by collecting; as Pope he spent vast sums on transcribers and translators, and his spies were scattered over half the world, searching schools, churches, and monasteries. Books, books! the "brown Greek manuscripts," the rich vellum codex, "creamy and smooth as old ivory!" The thirst was universal. "As soon as



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I get any money," wrote Erasmus, young and impecunious, "I shall buy Greek books; and then I shall buy some clothes."

The Renaissance was the escape of a society which had grown grey and hopeless under ecclesiastical tyranny, and which was making a last struggle to recover youth, to be reborn, in the fair humanities of antiquity. The spirit of beauty and the joy of life sprang, radiant and immortal, out of the ravage of the past. In the débris of a bygone age men looked for the hope of the world. It was strange how the romance of ruin took hold of the imagination. Broken arches and fallen columns were painted for the first time, and Christian art laid the scene of the Nativity among the shattered marbles of palace or temple. The earth of Rome, a handful of which once oozed under the pressure of Pope Gregory's fingers with the blood of the Martyrs, surrendered the beautiful buried statues of gods and goddesses and the sinful gaieties of its ancient mural decorations.

More wonderful than all, the grave was said to have given up one of the fairest creatures of a vanished time, not in the semblance of death, but lying, as it were, in the sleep of girlhood. In April, 1485, Lombard masons, working on the Appian Way, opened a sarcophagus bearing the inscription, "Julia, daughter of Claudius," and discovered

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within it the body of a Roman maiden of fifteen, which still kept the freshness and colours of life, with eyes and mouth half open. The Lombards fled with her jewels ; but the body was carried to the Capitol, and Rome flocked to see it. " Among the crowd were many who came to paint her ; for she was more beautiful than can be said or written, and were it said or written, it would not be believed by those who had not seen her." The maiden was buried beyond the Pincian Gate at dead of night by order of Innocent VIII., and her empty sarcophagus was left as a dubious memorial in a court on the Capitol.

Paganism exhaled like a miasma from this intense efflorescence of classicism. The writings of Jerome and Augustine were thrown aside for the lyrics of Horace and the " rare little roses " of Catullus. The newly discovered MSS. of the Greek Testament could not compete with a tractate of Cicero or a book of Homer. Prelates and cardinals were in dread lest the Vulgate itself should taint the purity of their diction—

" Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word."

The argument for the immortality of the soul was based upon the *Phædo* and *Scipio's Dream*. The bas-reliefs on the tomb mingled the dim Christianity and the florid heathenism of its consecrated occupant—

# Anglo-Saxon People

“ Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,  
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,  
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan  
Ready to twitch the Nymph’s last garment off.”

From pagan culture and irresponsibility it was an easy transition to an amazing scepticism and licentiousness.

On the other hand, mighty impulses were given to the human spirit. The mind ranged out into daring activities. One saw the beginnings of Bruno and Galileo. A translation of Galen gave a new start to science at Oxford. John Colet returned from Florence, one of the most exceptional figures in Europe. “ The knowledge of Greek seems to have had one almost exclusive end for him. . . . Greek was the key by which he could unlock the Gospels and the New Testament, and in these he thought he could find a new religious standing-ground.”<sup>1</sup> A recension of the Greek Testament, accompanied by a Latin translation, was the contribution of Erasmus to the great movement of his time. It was the first printed New Testament in Greek ever published. “ They have found out a new language, called Greek,” a French priest said from the pulpit in 1530 ; “ we must carefully guard ourselves against that language. It will be the mother of all sorts of heresies. I see in the hands of many people a book in that tongue called the New Testament. It is a

<sup>1</sup> Green, *A Short History of the English People*, p. 298.

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book full of brambles, with vipers in them." *Græculus* became in a little while another name for "heretic."

It was surely one of the "derisions of Time" which connected Constantinople with the Reformation. The transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, whereby the Bishop of Rome was left as the most august figure in the ancient capital, was the origin of that gradual and at first beneficent rise to power, which eventually led through perversion of truth, through fraud and forgery, through strife and spiritual terrorism, to usurpation of the visible supremacy of God on earth and appalling corruption in the Church of Christ.

While the Turks were storming Constantinople in 1453 large folio sheets in black-letter were passing through the press at Mayence. They were the Latin Bible, the first printed Bible, probably the first large book of any kind printed in Europe from movable metal types. The secret of the new invention, an unholy device of the Evil One himself it was suspected, was jealously guarded. Then, in 1462, Mayence, the glory of the Rhine, "Mayence the Golden," fell a bone of contention between its two rival Archbishop-Electors; was captured and sacked by the papal claimant; and in the dispersion of its printers the mysteries of their calling were revealed.



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German craftsmen reached Italy, and awakened such enthusiasm in the Librarian of the Vatican, Giovanni Andrea, Bishop of Aleria, that he "scarcely gave himself time to sleep." With his encouragement, the first fount of "Roman" type was cast by Sweynheym and Pannartz. Those clear graceful characters, which were to supersede the Gothic in Bible and Testament, to facilitate reading, and to become the household letter of the West, were founded, so to speak, under the eyes of the Pope himself, for Paul II., curious and interested, was a frequent visitor at the German printing-office. "What thanks you will receive from the literary and Christian world!" wrote the enthusiastic Bishop. "Is it not a great glory for your Holiness to have placed within reach of the poorest the means of forming a library at little cost, and of buying for twenty crowns correct copies of books which formerly they could hardly get for a hundred, although they were full of clerical mistakes? Now one may buy a volume for less than the old price of the binding." Into such questionable associations may even a Holy Father be drawn!

The first Latin Bible *printed in Rome* bears the date 1471.<sup>1</sup> That was the date also of the first Bible in

<sup>1</sup> Two volumes; its price, ten papal ducats, estimated at about equal to £50 of our current money. From the same press (Sweynheym and Pannartz) came in the same year the *Commentary of Nicolaus de Lyra*, the celebrated Jewish professor of theology in Paris (d. 1340). Of a later edition published at Nuremberg in 1481



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the vulgar tongue issued from the press in Venice— Venice, the one medieval city free from vassalage to Emperor or Pope ; wherein the Doge was head of the Church, the Cathedral of St. Mark an edition of the Bible in stone, and the Bible itself not the Vulgate. Between 1471 and 1500 twenty-six editions, besides various portions, of the vernacular Bible were printed at Venice, and sixty-three appeared in the following century.

Within a decade of the fall of Mayence presses were at work in thirty cities and towns ; before the century closed printed books were issuing from two hundred and twenty centres in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, as though the stars themselves were leagued in their courses against tyranny and wrong, human events converged for that renovation of religion which was to change the whole aspect of the world.

the monastery of Erfurt possessed a copy, and Luther may have pondered over its pages. The effect which it was supposed to have had on the mind of the Reformer gave rise to the jingle :

*Si Lyra non lyrasset,  
Lutherus non saltasset.*

(But for Lyra's fiddle-strings,  
Luther had not danced his flings.)

<sup>1</sup> Rag-paper, an almost indispensable printing material, had already been for a considerable time in existence. The "italic" character we owe to the Venetian printer Aldus.





WILLIAM TINDALE.

# Anglo-Saxon People

## CHAPTER IV

### WILLIAM TINDALE

FROM the monument of Tindale<sup>1</sup> on the breezy top of Nibley Knoll the prospect includes the place of his birth, whether it lay in a woody nook of the Cotswolds or among the meadows of the Severn.

In one direction you seek for the Towers of Berkeley, where John Trevisa<sup>2</sup> may perhaps have made the English translation of the Vulgate which Caxton says he undertook, but of which no trace has been discovered. Looking in another, you think of the ancient church of Aust, which Wycliffe served for some years. A few miles away, on a sunny south-western slope, stands the manor-house of Little Sodbury, in which Tindale himself was for a time tutor or chaplain in the family of Sir Thomas Walsh. Here it was that he declared, if God but spared his life, he would "ere many years cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures" than the beneficed doctors and learned prelates who

<sup>1</sup> In the only specimen of his writing known to exist, his letter to the governor of Vilvorde in 1535, Tindale spelt his name with an *i*.

<sup>2</sup> In the preface to the Authorised Version the translators refer to Trevisa as having translated the Scriptures; died 1412.



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had cheer and countenance under that hospitable roof. The brave words seem almost an echo of his master Erasmus : " I wish that even the weakest woman might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. . . . I long for the day when the husbandman shall sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them to the time of his shuttle, when the traveller shall while away with their stories the weariness of his journey."

It had been Wycliffe's thought more than a century and a half before ; and, like Wycliffe, Tindale perceived no hope of betterment for a world in which things had gone from bad to worse, save in the supremacy of civil law in matters of daily life, and the supremacy of the Bible in matters of faith. " Rome had seen, almost in succession, three scandalous Popes, the first of whom—Alexander VI., the celebrated Rodrigo Borgia—was a monster of depravity . . . ; the second—Julius II.—was a mere secular statesman with no piety, but a decided talent both for intrigue and for hard fighting ; the third—Leo X.—was a cultured atheist, of artistic tastes, who used to tell his friends that ' Christianity was a profitable superstition for Popes.' Under such pontiffs all the abuses of the medieval Church came to a head." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oman, *History of England*, p. 289.



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It was the thought which had begun to agitate the whole of Western Christendom. Hidden out of harm's way in the "romantic old Hill-castle of the Wartburg," Luther was at that moment dating his letters and sending out treatises, commentaries, and portions of his New Testament "from the mountain," "from amidst the birds that sing sweetly in the tall trees," "from my Patmos in the air"; the Bull excommunicating him had been published at the cross of St. Paul's; and the pulpits were ringing with anathemas against his books, which had been brought over to London in large numbers, and had spread his teachings among the colleges of the Universities.

But Tindale had learned from experience how impracticable it was "to establish the lay-people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text." With the object of meeting that need, and with the Greek Testament of Erasmus in his hand, he sought for some spot, free from disturbance and vexation, in which he might set about his chosen task of translation. He soon discovered that his search was hopeless. "There was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament"; no place, indeed, "to do it in all England." With Wolsey intriguing for election to the chair of St.

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Peter and Henry as "Defender of the Faith," England was never a less likely country than it was in 1523 to favour contempt of papal discipline.

In London, however, where he came into close contact with the fellowship of Christian Brethren, sprung from the Scriptures and teachings of Wycliffe, he found one staunch friend in the devout and affluent cloth-merchant Humphrey Monmouth, who made him welcome under his own roof for "half a year," and grappled to his soul another yet dearer—John Frith, the brilliant Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, then in his twentieth year, as learned as he was engaging and as blithe-hearted as he was heroic of temper; a most beautiful young spirit. Just at that time too the old poet-laureate and none too reputable priest, John Skelton, had taken sanctuary at the Abbey in Westminster, well-pleased to be out of reach of my Lord Cardinal. Look at *Speke, Parrot* and *Why come ye nat to Courte?* and it will be plain that Wolsey was the last man in England to stomach the gibes of his sometime friend and admirer. Then turn to the *Litel Boke called Colyn Cloute*, and consider how few things had been amended among the secular and regular clergy since the days of Langland and the *Creed of Piers Ploughman*. For Skelton's rhapsodical invectives, however, Tindale could have felt but cold disapproval. "It becometh not the Lord's servant," he wrote some years later, "to use

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railing rhymes, but God's Word, which is the right weapon to slay sin, vice and all iniquity."

Furnished with means by Monmouth and other courageous supporters, Tindale crossed the seas to Hamburg about the end of May 1524, and taking up his abode in Wittenberg, whose free air was quick with the morning-light of the Reformation, he brought his translation of the New Testament to a happy issue.

Hitherto all English translations and paraphrases of the Scriptures had been made from the Latin, and one of Purvey's lamentations was over the time and "much travail" spent in gathering old Bibles and commentaries for the production of a trustworthy text. Now, for the first time, the English scholar had drawn from the wells of the original Greek. He had used the revised text of the third edition of the Greek Testament of Erasmus (1522), and had been aided in his labours by Erasmus's Latin translation, which appeared in the same folio, by the text of the Vulgate, and by Luther's version.

In the summer of 1525 he and his capricious amanuensis, William Roye, were in Cologne, and a quarto edition of 3000 copies of the work was passing through the press when a spying priest, John Cochläus of Frankfort, surprised his secret. There was but time to escape with the sheets that had been printed, and after a dangerous voyage up the Rhine he

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reached Worms, which Luther had entered, scarcely five years before, chanting his storm-song :

“ And were this world all Devils o’er,  
And watching to devour us,  
We lay it not to heart so sore,  
Not they can overpower us.

. . . . .

And though they take our life,  
Goods, honour, children, wife,  
Yet is their profit small ;  
These things shall vanish all,  
The City of God remaineth.”

At Worms a fresh edition in octavo was got to press, and the ten quarto sheets saved from Cologne were probably completed. Six thousand copies were ready for the ice-break and the sailing of the spring ships. The precious volumes were smuggled across by the English traders, the Hanse merchants, the Easterlings of the Steelyard. They were carried to Scotland too by the luggers from Leith and St. Andrews. The King and the Cardinal had received warning from the zealous Cochläus, who afterwards complained bitterly that he had profited as little as Mordecai at the gate, but in spite of precautions large numbers were in circulation early in 1526.

On February 11 that year Wolsey had given at St. Paul’s a spectacular warning of the rigour with which heresy was to be suppressed. Luther’s books and



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other pernicious writings were burned in great basketfuls before the Rood of Norden,<sup>1</sup> in the presence of the Cardinal and six-and-thirty abbots, mitred priors and bishops, in damask and satin. Wolsey himself, "in his whole pomp," sat enthronised, mitred in purple, "even like a bloody Antichrist." Thrice round the fire, after they had knelt for the forgiveness of God, of the Catholic Church and of the Cardinal's grace, had walked certain Lollards and Lutherans of the Steelyard, casting their penitential faggots into the flames, and among these heretics, Dr. Robert Barnes of the Austin Friars at Cambridge, who had preached a Lutheran sermon, wherein he had mocked at his Grace's golden shoes, pole-axes and pillars. "We were jollily that day laughed to scorn!"—but he that laughs last has the best of the sport. So Dr. Barnes came within unpleasant distance of the rood-fire of Norden, and "the Cardinal departed under a canopy with all his mitred men, till he came to the second gate of Paul's, and then he took his mule"—one of the

<sup>1</sup> The great crucifix at the north door of St. Paul's. It was demolished by the Long Parliament. From time immemorial there had been a cross, erected in accordance with the mandate of the Emperor Justinian, and for centuries it had been the central point, as it were, around which revolved the scenes and incidents of the ecclesiastical life of the kingdom. On the initiative of the late Mr. H. C. Richards, M.P., who left £5000 for the purpose, it was decided to replace this venerable monument; and on October 31, 1910, a new cross, designed by Reginald Blomfield, A.R.A., was unveiled by the Lord Mayor and dedicated by the Bishop of London.

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Skelton mules, which ate gold while neighbours "dyed for meate."

But Lutheran tractates and such gear were of little moment beside the printing and circulation of the New Testament. In September Tunstall, the Bishop of London, preached against the book—condemned its 3000 errors and pestilent heresies, and publicly burnt it on the same spot. "They did none other thing than I looked for," was Tindale's comment. "No other thing shall they do if they burn me also. If it be God's will, it shall be so." In October Tunstall laid an injunction on his diocese that all copies should be given up under pain of excommunication. Within a fortnight the Archbishop issued a mandate for the searching of the whole province of Canterbury. So rapid and profitable, however, had been the sale that the book was pirated, and editions from the Low Countries made good the destruction in the bonfires.<sup>1</sup> The Testament, wrote one who watched the struggle, was "so spread, far and near, that for to let it thou hast little might." The English Ambassador in Brabant used every means to cut off that source of supply, but "the lords of Antwerp" stood on the privileges of their free city; no man, in that land of justice, might be banished, dishonoured, or confiscate of his goods,

<sup>1</sup> The cost, 2s. unbound and 2s. 6d. bound, is estimated as equal to £1 10s. and £1 17s. 6d. in the money of to-day.

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without they knew right well the ground and cause thereof.

Where the diplomat had failed the ecclesiastic hoped to succeed by a ruse of his own devising. Huge sums were spent by Tunstall in buying up the stock in Antwerp before it left the hands of the printers, and in May 1530 the faggots were heaped in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the smoke of a great burning went up round the Rood of Norden. "The Bishop of London," replied a prisoner when pressed to betray the friends who helped the heretics beyond the sea; "he hath bestowed among us a great deal of money upon New Testaments, to burn them; and that hath been, and yet is, our only succour and comfort."

Meanwhile the spy and the inquisitor had been busily at work. The Oxford colleges had been raided in 1527, numerous arrests made, some hundreds of forbidden books seized. Garret, curate of Honey-lane, London, who had sold many copies of the New Testament in Oxford, Dalaber who had helped him in an attempt to escape, and a number of suspected University men, canons and monks were sentenced to walk in procession round a great fire of books in the market-place, and each to throw a volume into the flames. John Frith was one of the number. Fortunately he obtained his release, fled overseas, and joined Tindale in Marburg early in 1529.

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So the first printed English Testament reached the people of England, was welcomed with joy, circulated through the land, treasured in presbyteries, nunneries, monasteries, colleges, hidden behind the rich man's wainscot or tapestry and under the poor man's floor, hunted out, consumed in the fire, yet for ever replaced with inexhaustible courage.

Of the quarto edition, with its "pestilent" prologue and glosses, eight sheets less the title-leaf, that is, sixty-two pages, of a solitary copy are the last remnant in existence. They were discovered by a bookseller, as late as 1836, bound up with a tract of the illustrious German reformer *Æcolampadius*, and are preserved in the British Museum. It cannot therefore be proved beyond dispute, though there seems little room for doubt, that the edition begun in Cologne was completed at Worms.

The octavo edition, the text of which was apparently the same as that of the quarto, was printed without the prologue and marginal notes. Of the 3000 copies two survive—one with seventy-one leaves missing, in the Cathedral Library, St. Paul's; the other, perfect but for the lost title-leaf, in the Baptist College Library at Bristol.

In the pages of that beautiful illuminated copy appears in its rude black-letter the earliest text of the New Testament of to-day; the linguistic changes and the consummate scholarship of three and a half





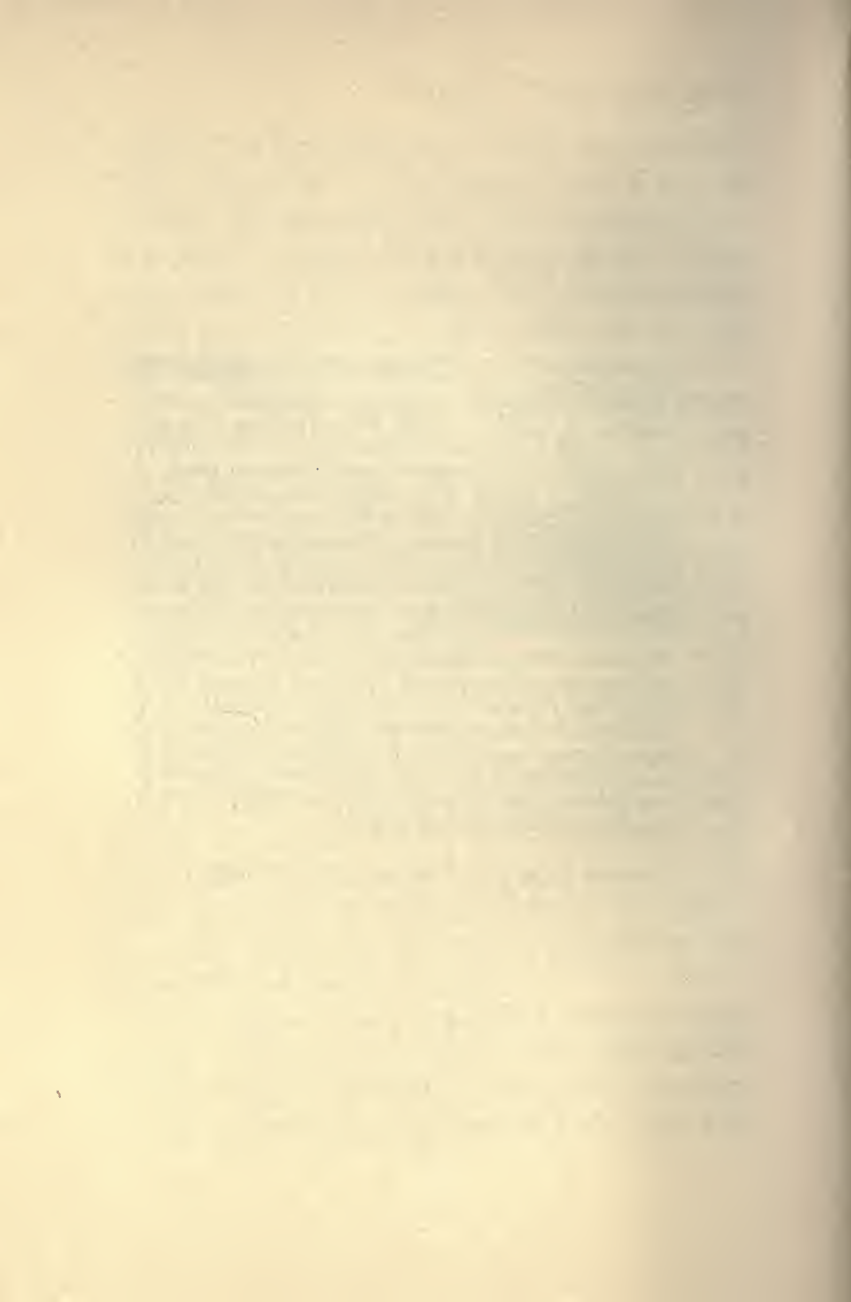
## W<sup>h</sup>ave here translated

( brethren and sisters moost dere and tenderly beloved in Christ ) the newe Testament for youre spirituall edifyinge / consolacion / and solace:

Exhortynge instantly and besychynge those that are better sene in the tonge then y / and that have hyer gyst of grace to interpret the sence of the scripture / and manyngge of the spryte then y / so consyde and pondre my labour / and that with the spryte

of meenes. And yf they perceyve in any places that y have not attained the very sence of the tonge / or manyngge of the scripture / or have not given the right englyssh worde / that they put to here hand y so amende it / remembryng that it is there dute to doo. For we have not receyved the gyst of god for oure selues only / or for to hyde them: but for to bestowe them onto the hononngge of god and christ / and edifyinge of the congregacion / wchich is the body of christ.

THE PREFACE TO TINDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT



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centuries have altered it so little that "even in the Revised Version," it has been computed, "at least eighty per cent. of the words stand as they stood in 1525." It seems so extraordinary to find one man originating and "fixing the type" of Biblical translation for his successors that the question arises, whether, instead of originating a type, Tindale did not rather conform to type, inherit a tradition due in part to the very genius of the language, but principally due to the democratic spirit which animated poem, paraphrase and translation. All these were meant for the people, were expressed in the forms of their everyday speech. At the back of them all there was indeed a Latin text, but that common cause of resemblance does not wholly account for what may be called the apostolic continuity in the diction of the old interpreters. Like the primitive superstitions, the folk-tales, the proverbs, the ballads, the singing-games, Christian teaching, Christian legend-lore and the Scriptures were transmitted from generation to generation, and the people preserved, as children and nations in their childhood always strive to preserve, the very words in which they received them.

In the execution of his task, Tindale records, he had before him no earlier translation to work over. He did not ape any man, "nether was holpe with englysshe of eny that had interpreted" the Scriptures. But even if the studious child, who stored up the fact

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that "King Adelstone" had Holy Scripture translated, had no acquaintance with the Wycliffite books, he could hardly have escaped the subtle influence "in the air" which, to this day, makes the man in the street use the phrases of a Bible he may have never opened. The Wycliffite "echoes" in Tindale's work were no doubt sounding in the current speech of his time, and with them, in all likelihood, echoes from days yet more remote. In any case it was given to Tindale to walk in the tradition of the "common people" who were Christ's glad hearers from the beginning; to study neither that "niceness in word which was always counted the next step to trifling," nor that scholastic obscurity which "darkens sense," but to let the Scripture "speak like itself, as in the language of Canaan."<sup>1</sup>

"In poverty, exile, and the bitter absence from my friends"—but still with the sunny-tempered Frith beside him—the years passed with Tindale in constant labour. Like Wycliffe, he supplemented his work as a translator with expositions and treatises, which blew into flame the smouldering embers of Lollardy, and which to this day, whatever may be deprecated in them, quicken the pulse with the clash and trumpet-calls of ancient controversy.

Late in 1530 (January 1531 in our mode of reckoning) he published at "Malborow in the lande

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the Authorized Version.



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of Hesse" (Marburg) the whole of the Pentateuch, the first portion of the Old Testament printed in English. The mention of it recalls a dim, confused sea-story—of gales and wreck among the Zeeland spits and sand-bars; of books, papers, money, all cast away; and of the whole toil of translation done over afresh with the help—perhaps as an amanuensis—of one Miles Coverdale.

As in the case of the New Testament, Tindale translated from the original, and here, too, his work became the warp, and often the weft, of succeeding versions. In the margin appeared annotations and comments, some of which—more piquant than edifying to-day—must have whetted the asperities of sufficiently embittered controversies.

A single copy of the Pentateuch has reached us perfect in its printed matter; but of the Book of Jonah published probably in the same year all trace of the text had long been lost, when in 1861 a copy, bound up with an old volume, was discovered at Ickworth Rectory, Gloucestershire, by Lord Arthur Hervey, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells.

How keenly Tindale felt the loneliness of a strange land, how readily he would have made peace with his enemies, yet how uncompromisingly he devoted his life to one supreme purpose, found expression at this time in his answer to those who would have persuaded him to return to England. "If it would

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stand with the King's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture to be put forth among his people. . . . I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more." Let his Majesty choose what translator he pleased ; let it be but such a version as the subjects of Christian princes possessed in the countries round him, and in two days he would kneel at the King's feet, " offering my body to suffer what pain or torture—yea, what death—his Grace will, so that this be obtained." Until that time he would endure his life in as much pains as it was able to bear and suffer.

Frith, unhappily, did return. One has an unforgettable glimpse of him, a " beloved vagabond," in the stocks at Reading ; charming the very learned schoolmaster, Leonard Cox, with his tripping Latin, gaily discussing scholastic topics with him, and completing the spell with magical Greek passages from the first book of the *Iliad*. What could a friend of Erasmus and learning do but speed to the magistrates and grievously complain of the despite done to so excellent and innocent a young man ? Freed from the stocks, Frith might have reached a place of safety, but for the treachery of informers. All the ways and havens were beset by the Chancellor, Sir Thomas More. Frith was on the beach near Southend, and a ship lay in the offing, when he was seized and hurried to the Tower.

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Other prisoners were in irons. "Frith wears none," wrote the Governor to Cromwell. "Although he lacks irons, he lacks not wit, nor pleasant tongue. His learning passes my judgment. As you said, it were great pity to lose him, if he may be reconciled." "Beloved in my heart," Tindale wrote to him, "there liveth not in whom I have so good hope and trust, and in whom my heart rejoiceth, and my soul comforteth herself, as in you; not the thousandth part so much for your learning, and what other gifts else you have, as because you will creep alow by the ground"; such a boyish and resilient modesty sweetened his scholarship as with a flower. "If it be a thing that maketh no matter, you will laugh and let it pass"—one almost sees the bright face and hears the pleasant sound of yielding good-humour; but in essentials, in the things necessary, where conscience can yield not a jot, "stick you stiffly and stubbornly."

Then, all unconsciously, the reformer pictured himself with the graphic luminousness of St. Paul: "If in me there were any gift that could help at hand, and aid you if need required, I promise you I would not be far off"—would in a twinkling be at your side to share your risks,—and commit the end to God. My soul is not faint, though my body be weary. But God hath made me ill-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men, speechless

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and rude, dull and slow-witted. Your part"—when all these troubles are over, and even now indeed—"shall be to supply what lacketh in me; remembering that as lowliness of heart shall make you high with God, even so meekness of words shall make you sink into the hearts of men. . . . Abundance of love maketh me exceed in babbling."

Strangely alive, in aged tenderness and in youthful grace, the faces of these two rise out of the wistful letters written three hundred and eighty years ago. Yet Tindale was not old—little over forty at the oldest; but care and loneliness wrinkle more quickly than time. In his anxiety for Frith, he hoped for the best, but he knew how often the Tower Gate led to the Hall of Lost Footsteps, and he did not blink his danger: "Dearly beloved, commit yourself wholly and only to your most loving Father. . . . Your cause is Christ's Gospel, a light that must be fed with the blood of faith." At Antwerp, Lille and Liège a number had sealed their testimony with their blood. In Rouen and Paris they were persecuting. "See, you are not alone! Be cheerful, and remember that among the hard-hearted in England, there is a number reserved by grace; for whose sakes, if need be, you must be ready to suffer. . . . Sir, your wife is well content with the will of God, and would not, for her sake, have the glory of God



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hindered." He had been married but a few months before his return to England.

In the afternoon of July 4, 1533, Frith went cheerfully to the stake in Smithfield. "One doctor Cook, a parson in London," angered the people by bidding them not pray for the martyrs—"no more than you would do for a dog"; but Frith, smiling, asked God to forgive him. It was a lingering death. The wind blew the flames away from him to his fellow-sufferer, a poor Kentish lad of four-and-twenty; but Frith, as though he felt no pain in that long torment, "seemed rather to rejoice for his fellow than to be careful for himself." The most intrepid and beautiful spirit of that time; and for Tindale such a light gone out as human companionship could never again kindle!

"For O! he stood beside him like his Youth,  
Transformed for him the real to a dream,  
Clothing the palpable and the familiar  
With golden exhalations of the dawn."

To 1534 belongs that scrupulous and scholarly revision of the New Testament of 1525, which has been called "Tindale's noblest monument." In addition to the text it contained "the 'Epistles' taken oute of the olde testament, which are red in the church after the Vse of Salsbury." A copy of this memorable black-letter volume is preserved in the British Museum. Beautifully printed and illumi-

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nated on vellum, it bears on its richly gilded edges the words *Anna Angliæ Regina*, and is believed to have been a gift to Queen Anne Boleyn from the translator himself, in recognition of the protection which she extended to Richard Harman, one of the godly men "who had for years been hunted as outlaws." Tindale's last revision was published in 1535, and in the following year, in London, appeared a folio edition, which is regarded as the first portion of the English Bible printed on English ground.

At that time there seemed at last to be breaking over England the light of a new day, in which men could call their souls their own. Momentous statutes had curtailed the inquisitorial powers of the Bishops, forbidden appeals to the papal court, abolished the annates, Peter's-pence and other exactions which wasted the resources of the country in tribute to Rome, and finally had declared the King to be "the only Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England called the *Ecclesia Anglicana*." The strongest incentive in Henry's revolt was the indulgence of a base and brutal temperament, yet out of the licentiousness of a king were gradually shaped the liberties of a nation. More full of hope for Tindale than the statute which thrust the clergy from the judgment-seat in heresy cases were the warning to preachers not to wrest Scripture, but to preach simply and sincerely the words and deeds of

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Christ, and the petition of Convocation for an authorized translation of the Bible. His own New Testament was still prohibited, but of what moment was that? Let his Majesty choose what translator he pleased, and he would offer his body to the torturers or the headsman, if only a bare text were granted.

Tindale was in Antwerp. He had so far escaped the snares spread by his enemies, and in the privileged house of the English Merchant Adventurers appeared to have found a place of security. In the mysterious abstention of Providence it was to fall out otherwise. While revising the New Testament once more, he was betrayed in May 1535 by an emissary of some of the English papal party, a wretch who had eaten his bread and salt, dipped into his purse, and at the moment of his treachery was going out with him as "my guest, where you shall be welcome"; and hurried away for the seven-towered bastille of Vilvorde. It was in the Belgian territory of the fanatical Spaniard Charles V., where for any heretical offence men were liable to be beheaded, women to be buried alive and the relapsed to be burnt at the stake.

The most powerful efforts were made to save him; Cromwell himself wrote on his behalf; but all was unavailing. The Gospel was still "a light that must be fed with the blood of faith." For a year and three-quarters he lay a prisoner at Vilvorde. Within its

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walls he continued his translation of the Old Testament, from the Pentateuch to the end of Chronicles, answered his accusers in voluminous written arguments; and converted, it is said, his keeper, the keeper's daughter, and others of his household. Even the Spanish procurator-general frankly testified that he was "a learned, devout and godly man."

The Emperor Charles V. at length pronounced his sentence. In the shortening days, at the fall of the leaf, on October 6, 1536, he was led from his prison and chained to the stake. A little time was given for prayer. "Lord, open the King of England's eyes" (his last words) was spoken in a loud voice.<sup>1</sup> For a moment, at least, the small figure, "ill-favoured" and "without grace," riveted the gaze of thousands, and assumed something of the greatness of the soul within it. The executioner tightened the strangling cord, and a torch set in a blaze the brushwood heaped about him. "No more shall they do if they burn me also. If it be God's will, it shall be so."

Here, then, we stand at the clear well-springs of the unrivalled translation, which drew from Jowett of Balliol the startling yet not unguarded phrase that,

<sup>1</sup> Is it merely a coincidence that in *Henry VIII.*, Act II., Scene 2, we read:

"Heaven will one day open  
The King's eyes, that so long have slept upon  
This bold bad man" &c



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“ in a certain sense the Authorized Version was more inspired than the original.” We give here one passage from that translation of the New Testament which, even in its most recent form, should still serve to remind us of the price that has been paid for the Word of God in our own tongue.

## MARK IV. 1-9

1. And he began agayne to teache them by the see syde ; and there gadered to gedder unto hym moche people, so greatly that he entered in to a shippe, and sate in the see, and all the people was by the see syde, on the shoore.

2. And he taught them many thynges in similitudes. And sayde unto them in his doctrine,

3. Herken to. Beholde ! the sower went forth to sowe.

4. And it fortunèd as he sowed, that some fell by the waye syde, and the fowles of the ayre cam, and devoured it uppe.

5. Some fell on a stony grounde, where it had not moche erth ; and by and by sprange uppe, because it had not depth of erth.

6. And as sone as the sun was uppe, it caught heet, and because it had nott rotyng, it wyddred awaye.

7. And some fell amonge the thornes, and the thornes grewe uppe, and choked it, so that it gave no frute.

8. And some fell apon good grounde, and did yelde frute, that spronge, and grewe ; and brought forthe some thirty folde, some fourty folde, and some an hundred folde.

9. And he sayde unto them, He that hath eares to heare, lett hym heare.

The following examples will suffice to show the character of the marginal comments which aroused such fierce animosity against Tindale.

On Genesis xxiv. 60 (“ They blessed Rebekah ”) :  
“ To bless a man’s neighbour,” writes Tindale,

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“ is to pray for him and to wish him good, and not to wag two fingers over him.”

On Exodus xxxii. 35 (“ And the Lord plagued the people ”): Tindale has the bitter gibe, “ The Pope’s bull slayeth more than Aaran’s calf.”

On Numbers xxiii. 8 (“ How shall I curse whom God curses not ? ”): “ The Pope can tell howe,” says Tindale.

On Deuteronomy v. 15 (“ And remember that thou wast a servaunte in the land of Egypte ”): “ God sheweth a cause,” writes Tindale, “ why we oughte to kepe his commaundmentes ; the Pope doth not.”

All very amusing and unedifying and ill-advised ; but Tindale saw in another light than ours, and these were matters of life and death to him.

Tidings of two events may have brought Tindale some comfort during his imprisonment in 1535. The whole English Bible had been given to his countrymen by Miles Coverdale ; and before the year closed the rupture between Rome and England was completed by the papal Bull which at the safe distance of the church doors of Dunkirk, deposed the King, released his subjects from their allegiance, and laid the realm under interdict.

Before his death the swing of the great movement for spiritual freedom was marked by the publication of the Bible in German, Italian, Swiss, Bohemian,

## The first Chapter.

A  
s.d  
.18.a  
o.b  
p.a  
44.c



**A** y begyn  
nyngē God  
created hea  
nen z earth:  
and y earth  
was voyde  
and emptie,  
and darck-  
nes was v-  
pon the de-  
pe, z y spie-  
te of God  
moued vpō  
the water.

And God sayde: let there be light, z there was light. And God sawe the light that it was good. Then God denyded y light from the darcknes, and called the light, Daye: and the darcknes, Night. Then of the euenyngē and mornynge was made the first daye.





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French, Dutch, Danish;<sup>1</sup> and far beyond this range of language the people sought for converse with God in their native speech. In Spain, as in Hungary and the North, it was recognized that Latin, which was once the *lingua franca* of Western Christianity, the tongue of the ancient mother of men baptized, now withheld the Scriptures from the common people more effectually than the decrees of Popes and Councils.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following dates of the first printing of the Scriptures may be of interest :

*German*, præ-Lutheran Bible, the first printed version in any modern language, 1466 ; Luther's New Testament, 1522 ; Luther's Bible, 1534.

*Italian*, Bible, 1471.

*French*, New Testament, 1474 (†) ; *Bible Historiale*, 1478 (†) ; Jean le Fevre's *Sainte Bible* (" the Bible of Antwerp "), 1530 ; the first Protestant Bible, by Olivetan, a kinsman of Calvin, 1535.

*Dutch*, Old Testament, 1477 ; New Testament, 1522 ; Bible (based on Luther's), 1526.

*Bohemian*, New Testament, 1475 ; Bible, 1488.

*Danish*, New Testament (Erasmus and Luther), 1524 ; Bible, 1550.

*Swiss*, Bible, 1529.

<sup>2</sup> The progress of translation is suggested by the following particulars. See Darlow and Moule, *Catalogue of Printed Bibles* :—

*Icelandic*, New Testament (based on Luther's), 1540.

*Swedish*, New Testament (Luther), 1541.

*Hungarian*, New Testament, 1541 ; Károli Bible, 1590.

*Spanish*, New Testament, 1543 ; Bible, 1569. The New Testament, translated from the Greek at Antwerp, was dedicated to the Emperor Charles V. Though he had accepted a copy, he had forbidden its publication, and suddenly the translator, Francisco de Enzinas, was seized and imprisoned. Luckily Francis of the Evergreen Oaks (Encinas), whence his various appellations of *Dryander*,

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*Du Chesne*, and *Eichmann*, escaped and reached England. 1569, the Bible; translated by the reformer, Cassiodoro de Reina, who escaped from Spain, and for some time in the reign of Elizabeth was preacher to a Spanish congregation in London.

*Romansch*, New Testament, 1560.

*Polish*, Bible, 1561.

*Portuguese*, New Testament, 1681.

*Lett*, Bible, 1689. In connection with this Bible a curious story is told. An Algerine corsair, roving far from home, pounced on the vessel which was taking the paper for this edition from France to Riga. When, however, the freebooters were told of the use for which it was intended, they let the ship go free, crew and cargo.

It may also be mentioned that in 1527 a Roman Catholic recension of Luther's New Testament was issued from the press at Dresden. Seven years later a Bible, of which a large part was apparently an assimilation of Luther's, was published by the Dominican Johann Dietenberger at Mayence, and was dedicated to Albrecht of Brandenburg, Elector and Archbishop, rather a notable personage in his day. As to his lack of money to pay for his *pallium*, and Pope Leo X.'s urgent need for money, and the expedient of sending round Tetzl with indulgences, see Carlyle, *Frederick the Great*, vol. i. p. 158. "The Devil of Mayence," "the Anti-Christ of Halle," Luther called him, but he was not so bad as the names imply; no worse than a tolerant, good-natured man of surprisingly easy morals—"I think your Grace would do well to be decently married."





MILES COVERDALE.



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## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT BIBLE

COVERDALE'S Bible must have been passing silently through the press—in Zurich, perhaps, or Antwerp—at the moment the Convocation of 1534 petitioned the King for an English version translated by scholars of his own choosing. Whatever knowledge of Greek and Hebrew Coverdale may have acquired, he did not translate from the original texts, but based his work on the Vulgate and four sixteenth-century versions—the Latin of Sanctes Pagninus, the German of Luther, the Swiss-German of Zwingli and Leo Juda, and Tindale. A North Riding man, he brought to his labours a strain of the old northern poetry, and produced “that most musical version of the Psalter, which passed into the Book of Common Prayer, and has endeared itself to generations of Englishmen.” More than that, he bridged over the great gaps which existed in the English Scriptures, and was the pioneer of their completion. Dedicated to “the most victorious Prynce and oure most gracyous soueraigne Lorde, kynge Henry the eyght,” it was published in October 1535, the first printed English

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Bible. In 1537 it was reprinted in folio and in quarto, and one of these was the first Bible ever printed on English ground.

In that year 1537 appeared a version yet more memorable. At the instance of the Archbishop (Cranmer), and through the influence of Henry's great Minister, Thomas Cromwell, it passed from the press with "the gracious licence" of the King himself. It purported to be translated by Thomas Matthew, and whether that name was used to cover the identity of Tindale or his own, the editor of this Bible was John Rogers, who was chaplain at Antwerp in 1534, had there come into close friendship with Tindale, and had been intrusted by him with the translations which occupied his last days at Vilvorde. Matthew's recension brought together the master-work of Coverdale and Tindale—Coverdale's translation from Ezra to the end of the Apocrypha; Tindale's New Testament, Pentateuch, and doubtless the Vilvorde books, Joshua-Chronicles—and more than adumbrated the peerless version of 1611. The printing is believed to have taken place at Antwerp; the English publishers were Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch; and the edition was one of 1500 copies.

The issue of an English translation of the Scriptures was a logical sequel to the "Articles of 1536," in which the King under his own hand declared the

The. xci. Psalm. Fol. lxxvij.

**I** t is a good thing\* to geue than-  
kes vnto the Lorde, and to synge a  
praysse vnto thy name o mooste hy-  
ghest. Heb. 13. 6.

To tel of thy louynge kyndnesse car-  
ly in the mornynge, and of thy truty in  
the nyghte sealon.

Vpon an instrumente of ten stringes,  
vpon the lute, & with a songe vpon the  
harpe.

\* For thou Lorde haste made me Sap. 13. a  
glade thowowe thy workes, and I wy- Roma. 6.  
reioice ouer the opperacion of thy vau-  
des.

O Lorde, how glorious are thy wor-  
kes thy thoughtes are very depe.

An vnwyse man wyl not knowe  
thys, and a foole wyl no; vnderstand it

\* That the vngodlye are grene as Psa. 72. b  
the graffe, and that all the workes of  
wyckednesse do flo: psh, to be destroyed  
for euer.

But thou Lorde o moost hyghest abay-  
dest worlde without ende.

For lo thyne enemyes (Lorde, )  
lo, thyne enemyes shall perysh, and al  
the workes of wyckednes shall be scat-  
tered abrode.

✽ But my hoine shall be exalted  
lyke the hoine of an Amicoine, & shall be Rom. 2; b  
anoynted with freshe oyle. 24. b.

L. i. Myne





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Bible to be the standard of faith ; but it was surely one of the most unaccountable of strange things that he should have thus approved the very books which he had condemned and burned at St. Paul's.

Two years later, 1539, came " The Most Sacred Bible," a revision of Matthew's version by the Greek scholar, Richard Taverner, which served to spread the Word of God among the people and to continue the royal privilege of circulation, but had little effect on the course of subsequent revisions.

But 1539 was signalized by an event which recalled the uplifting of the Scriptures on a throne of gold at the Council of Nicæa. A revision of the Matthew version had been intrusted to Coverdale by Cromwell, and an edition was passing through the press in Paris when, notwithstanding the special licence of the King of France, the Inquisitor-General stopped the work. The printed sheets, type and presses were saved and taken by the printers to London, where the edition was completed, and the first Great Bible was issued with the storied title-page ascribed to Holbein.

In an injunction to the clergy in the preceding September, Cromwell had directed that a copy should be placed in every church for the free use of the parishioners ; and as the people gathered around the noble black-letter folio, they saw pictured in the curious wood-cuts of its title-page one of the far-reaching events of English history. There was the

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Lord in the clouds of heaven sending forth His Word to accomplish all His will ; the King kneeling to receive it " as a lantern unto his feet " ; the King on his throne delivering it to the clergy and the laity of the realm ; Cranmer and Cromwell distributing it ; the preacher expounding it in the open air ; and last, they themselves, the people, old and young, mingling their shouts of " Vivat Rex ! " and " God save the King ! "

Thus, one hundred and eleven years after the ashes of Wycliffe had been cast into the brook at Lutterworth, the Great Bible—the " byble of the largyest volume," the " Cromwell Bible," " Cranmer's Bible," as it was variously called—was set up throughout the land, a visible token of the supremacy of the Word of God in England. Here, at length, in an " authorized version," in the first authorized version, were blended in one great organ-strain the scholarship of the master-spirits, the cadences of old poetic tradition, the haunting echoes of old translations.

Edition followed edition ; that of December 1541 was the seventh in three years. A royal proclamation gave warning of the heavy penalties that would be incurred by any parish neglecting to provide a copy for its church. The people, for all their illiteracy, seemed to awake from a heavy sleep. " It was wonderful to see with what joy this Book of God was

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received all England over." Old men learned to read solely that they might read *it*. Numbers who could not read got those who could to read aloud for them. "Even little boys flocked with the rest to hear portions of the Holy Scripture." In some places, indeed, it was regarded with indifference. There were churches, as Thomas Becon noted in the midst of his own troubles in Kent, in which a man might find the Great Bible wrapped in cobwebs, and might write its epitaph with his finger, *Ecce nunc in pulvere dormio*—"Behold I sleep now in the dust"; but the furrows scored on the Norman pillar at Waltham Abbey by the iron links as they were drawn to and fro tell a truer tale of the use of the chained Bible.<sup>1</sup>

Of the first edition a noble illuminated copy on vellum is preserved in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge. It was Thomas Cromwell's copy. Scarcely had the Great Bible passed into circulation before that far-seeing and powerful Minister fell a victim to the King's savage resentment and the intrigues of the Catholic party. Among the charges brought against him was that of "dis-

<sup>1</sup> Chained books in churches can be traced as far back at least as 1443. Erasmus noticed "the Gospel of Nicodemus" attached to one of the pillars at Canterbury. In 1515 Thomas, Earl of Ormond, left his Psalter (the Wycliffe version?) to be fixed "with a cheyne of iron" at his tomb in the church of St. Thomas Acon.—Cox and Harvey: *English Church Furniture*. Like the cups at our own drinking fountains, the Scriptures were chained to prevent them being taken away; they were the cups of the "living water."

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persing heretical books and secretly releasing heretics from prison, but his mortal offence was that poor Anne of Cleves—tall, unlovely, pitted with small-pox, and dressed in the heavy Dutch fashion “which would have made even a beauty frightful”—was not the fair and personable Lutheran the bloated King had expected. On July 28, 1540, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, perished on Tower Hill.

A more superb copy of the second edition may be seen in the British Museum. It was presented to Henry himself by the princely London haberdasher, Anthony Marler, at whose cost these editions of the Great Bible were printed, and who afterwards was privileged to sell bound and unbound copies of the costly folios at ten and twelve shillings each, or about £6 and £7 5s. in to-day's currency. In 1542, indeed, he had a monopoly of the press for four years.

The title page of the fourth edition (November 1540) describes the King as the “supreme head of this his church and realme of Englande,” and states that the text had been “overseen and perused” by the Bishops of Durham and Rochester. The Bishop of Durham was no other than Cuthbert Tunstall, in whose palace Tindale found that there was “no room to translate the New Testament” and who spent large sums in consigning his labours to the flames. And thus “the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges !”



## The fyrst Chapter.

How heauen & erth: the light: the firmament: the sonne: the moone: the sterres: and all beastes: foules & fyrrhes in the see were made by the wo:de of God. And how man also was created. †

**A**  
\* Psal. cii. d.  
Diere. r. b.  
Eccle. xviii. a.  
Iiii. clora. vj. c.  
Heb. i. c. xi. a



**A** the beginnyng \*  
God created heauen  
& erth. The erth was  
voyd & emptie, and  
darknesse was † vpo  
the face of the depe,  
& the sprete of God  
moued † vpo the fa-  
ce of the waters.

And God sayd: let there be made light,  
and there was light made. And God sawe  
the light that it was good. And God made  
a diuisiō betwene the lyght and darknesse.  
And God called the light, daye: & the dark  
nesse called he, night. And the euenyng &  
the moznyng was made one daye.

And God sayde: let there be a firmamēt  
betwene the waters, & let it make a diuision  
betwene wa:rs & waters. And God made  
the firmamēt, & set a diuision betwene the  
waters which were vnder the firmament, &  
the waters that were aboue the firmamēt.  
And it was so. And God calle the firma-  
mēt, heauen. The euenyng also & the moz  
nyng was made the seconde daye.



## Anglo-Saxon People

The seventh edition (December 1541) was the last Great Bible issued in Henry's reign, and it has been estimated that in the aggregate 20,000 copies had left the press.

Meanwhile, amid scenes of ribaldry and profanation, the monastic houses had been swept away, and Henry had lavished most of their vast possessions on the nobles and gentry about him as the most effectual measure for preventing a re-establishment of the papal dominion. Whatever hopes the Reformers may have entertained, they soon learnt that the Head of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* was merely an English Anti-Pope, as prompt to burn a Protestant for the denial of Transubstantiation as he was to behead a Catholic for impugning his supremacy. The freedom conceded in earlier years was curtailed. The use of the Bible was restricted in 1543 to noblemen, gentlemen and their wives, and merchants ; " no ordinary woman, tradesman, apprentice, or husbandman " was allowed to possess it. Tindale's version was proscribed, and the notes in all others were ordered to be expunged. One copy of the first Matthew Bible, which survived, with the flowers of a vanished summer pressed between its leaves, shows the pages partly obliterated with reddish-brown paint, to save the owner from the pains and penalties of the Act " for the advancement of true religion." " Orthodox " to the last, Henry died on January 27, 1547, King

## The Bible and the

and Pope in his own realms. According to Foxe, he left £600 a year for daily masses for his soul and for a sermon and distribution of alms on four days of annual commemoration.

It was not until the accession of Edward VI. that the severance from Rome was completed in dogma as in dominion. When the swords of his three kingdoms were presented to the Boy-King, he asked for the fourth, which was the most excellent of all—the “Sword of the Spirit.” One of his earliest acts was an injunction requiring the Great Bible to be placed in the church of every parish within three months, and that every one should be exhorted by the clergy to read it. His first Parliament began the radical reforms which provided for the administration of the Sacrament of the Altar in both kinds, the marriage of the clergy, and the “order of divine worship” contained in the Book of Common Prayer. The “incomparable” English liturgy took the place of the Latin ritual, which was intelligible to very few in any ordinary congregation. In 1548 two editions of the New Testament bore Tindale’s name on the title page, and during the six and a half years of Edward’s reign nearly fifty editions of the Bible and the New Testament left the press. A large part of one of the last editions to appear, the folio Great Bible of 1553, was destroyed by his successor, Queen Mary.



## Anglo-Saxon People

Of the next five and a half years of reaction it is useless to recall the bitter memories associated with her name. Yet how shall we forget February 4, 1555? In the dark of the early morning, Foxe tells us, John Rogers, the Antwerp chaplain and editor of the Matthew Bible, who had lain long in Newgate amongst thieves, "was suddenly warned by the keeper's wife to prepare himself for the fire." So soundly was he sleeping that it was hard to wake him. "At length, being roused, he was led down to Bonner, to be degraded; which done, he craved of him one petition—that he might speak a few words with his wife before his burning. But that was denied him." As he went towards Smithfield his wife and children met him. Never think but what the fond heart was shaken by "this sorrowful sight of his own flesh and blood," yet the steadfast spirit was unmoved. So he was brought, saying the Psalm *Miserere*, to the place of his ascension, "all the people rejoicing at his constancy, with great praises and thanks to God for the same." A little before the end he refused the pardon offered him if he would but recant. Then "the fire was put unto him; and when it had taken hold, he washed his hands in the flame, as though it had been in cold water"; and lifting them up to heaven, "he yielded his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father." He was "the first of all the blessed martyrs

## The Bible and the

that suffered in the reign of Queen Mary." It was nineteen years since the martyrdom of Tindale at Vilvorde.

Or how forget "the ditch over against Balliol College" at Oxford? There, on March 21 in the following year, Cranmer was chained to the stake on the spot where Ridley and Latimer had suffered. When the fire took him, "he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound." But the people saw him thrust his arm into the flame, repeating, "This unworthy right hand! This unworthy right hand!" Often, too, he used the words of Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And "in the greatness of the flames he gave up the ghost."

These things were part of the price which the English people paid for their Bible.<sup>1</sup> And terrible

<sup>1</sup> Of the ten persons openly connected with the production of these versions—three Bishops, three clerics, three merchants, and Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex—"trouble in some form or other attended all concerned in the work. Cranmer, Latimer, Tindale, and Rogers were burnt at the stake; Shaxton [first Protestant Bishop of Salisbury] died early, and so escaped; Cromwell was beheaded within a few months of the publication of the magnificent volume sometimes known as Cranmer's Bible; and Coverdale only avoided the flames by being claimed as a subject of King Christian of Denmark. Whitchurch [one of the printers of the Matthew Bible] alone seems to have escaped disaster, and he made a home for Cranmer's children by marrying his widow. Poyntz [Tindale's host and staunch friend at Antwerp] and Grafton [Whitchurch's partner] both died in penury, although both were of gentle birth and inherited property. These were both 'Grocers of London.'"

# Anglo-Saxon People

as such sufferings seem to us to-day, the Bible and all that was bound up in it were cheaply bought.

Upon the accession of the Queen, publication of the Scriptures suddenly ceased. But the freedom of Englishmen was bound up in the Bible, and the little company of English reformers who had taken refuge in Geneva began the version which has received its name from the hospitable city. Meanwhile a translation of the New Testament, by William Whittingham, one of these exiles, was published in 1557. It was the first English New Testament in which "Roman" type was used,<sup>1</sup> and the first in which the text was divided into verses.

Before we pass into new times, let us look for a moment at some of Coverdale's work. In the earlier part of the fourth chapter of St. Mark he follows very closely in Tindale's footsteps, and attempts little beyond giving the English a more modern cast.

## MARK IV. 1-9

1. And he begane agayne to teache by ye see syde. And there gadered moch people unto him, so that he went in to a shippe, and

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—*Incidents in the Lives of Thomas Poyntz and Richard Grafton, two Citizens and Grocers of London, etc.* By Dr. J. A. Kingdon, a Past Master of the Guild. (Privately printed, 1895.)

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition, however, of Tindale's Pentateuch (1531), Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy appeared in Roman type, while Genesis and Numbers were printed in the usual black letter.

# The Bible and the

sat upon the water. And all the people stood upon the londe by the see syde.

2. And he preached long unto them by parables, and sayde unto them in his doctrine,

3. Herken to, beholde, there wente out a sower to sowe :

4. And it happened whyle he was sowinge that some fell by the waye syde. Then came fowles under the heaven, and ate it up.

5. Some fell upon stonye grounde, where it had not moch earth : and anone it came up, because it had not depe earth.

6. Now whan the Sonne arose, it caught heate, and in so moch as it had no rote, it wythred awaye.

7. And some fel amonge the thornes, and the thornes grew up, and choked it, and it gave no frute.

8. And some fell upon a good grounde, which gave frute, that came up and grew. And some bare thirtie folde, and some sixtie folde, and some an hundreth folde.

9. And he sayde unto them, Whoso hath eares to heare, let him heare.

For the sake of comparison with the old translations, here, with its over-written *m*'s and *n*'s, is part of his rendering of the twenty-fourth Psalm, with the revised readings of the Great Bible underneath it. In a later chapter, however, we shall come to a clearer perception of the character of his workmanship.

## PSALM XXIV.

COVERDALE : The earth is the Lordis, & all that therein is ; the

GREAT BIBLE :       "       "       "       "       "

cōpase of the worlde, ād all yt dwell therein.

"       "       *they*       "       "

For he hath fouēded it upō the see & buylded it upon the flouēdes.

"       "       "       "       *prepared*       "       "

•       •       •       •       •       •       •       •



# Anglo-Saxon People

Open yor gates (o ye prices), let the everlasting dores be opened ;  
*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting dores,*

yt ye Kynge of glory maye come in.  
and " " shall "

Who is this Kynge of glory † It is the Lorde ströge and mightie  
" " " " "

even the Lorde mightie in batell.

" " "  
Who is this Kynge off glory † It is the Lorde of hoostes, he is  
" " " " " " "

the Kynge of glory.

" "

# The Bible and the

## CHAPTER VI

### IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH

QUEEN MARY was in her grave.

On the day she died her sister had been proclaimed; the people of London had feasted in the streets; joy-fires had purged the air of the reek of martyrdom; joy-bells had rung out the tyranny of Rome.

It was now Saturday, January 14, 1559, and London was out in crowds to watch "the passage" of Elizabeth from the Tower to Westminster, where she was to be crowned. The streets, with their jutting stories and peaked gables, glowed with rich hangings and cloth of gold and silver; streamers and banners floated out at every window and penthouse. It was the dead of winter, but poor women brought in their joy nosegays and branches of rosemary, and as her Majesty passed she was greeted with "prayers and wishes, cries and tender words." It was the first meeting of Queen and people—the people of Protestant London, who realized how much their hopes of the future were at stake, and who made their appeal to her in the only form that loyalty might use.

## Anglo-Saxon People

A series of pageants checked her progress. She was welcomed with the Gifts of Blessing Tongues and True Hearts. She was shown a semblance of herself on the Seat of Worthy Governance, with Pure Religion, Love of Subjects, Wisdom and Justice trampling down the Vices that destroy a State. A group of children represented the Eight Beatitudes applied to her own life. "And what is this?" she asked, as she drew near the Little Conduit in Cheap. She was told it was the pageant of Time. "Time!" she rejoined; "and Time hath brought me hither!"

Hard by the Little Conduit there were two hills. That on the north was the Hill of the Dead Tree, stony and barren; and under the dry boughs sat one mourning in poor raiment. Over his head was written his name, A Decayed Common Weal. On the south was the Hill of the Green Tree; the ground was full of flowers, and under the tree stood a fair figure in bright apparel—A Flourishing Common Weal. From a cave between the hills came forth a greybeard with wings and scythe, leading a maiden all clad in white silk. A tablet told that they were Time and the Daughter of Time; but upon the maiden's bosom was written her proper name, Truth, and in her hand she held a book, the title of which was *Verbum Veritatis*, the Word of Truth.

"Truth the Daughter of Time"—*Veritas temporis*

## The Bible and the

*filia*—had been Queen Mary's favourite motto ; she had chosen it as the inscription upon her coinage ; and not a soul in the crowded street, least of all Elizabeth herself, but must have thought of Mary, as a little scholar piped out from a stand by the Green Hill the verses which explained the pageant :

“ This old man with the scythe, old Father Time we call :  
And her, his daughter Truth, which holdeth yonder book :  
Whom he out of his rock hath brought forth to us all,  
From whence, these many years, she durst not once outlook.”

Hither, then, Time had led the Queen. Here Truth offered her the Book of the Holy Scripture. To most of those who stood near her it must have been a moment of intense expectancy. Elizabeth accepted the volume and kissed it ; then held it up in both hands, as though she wished that all might see it, and laid it upon her bosom.

Then past St. Paul's and an array of schoolboys—successors of the lads to whom Colet wrote, “ Lift up your little white hands for me ” ; through Lud Gate and across Fleet Bridge the crimson chariot rolled onward until it came, in Fleet Street, to the pageant of Deborah, with her Estates, consulting for the Good Government of Israel. It pictured the oppression of Jabin—

“ *Quando Dei populum Canaan rex premit Jabin* ”—

and the parliament of the prophetess sitting under



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the palm-tree in Mount Ephraim. She delivered her people, she provided for Juda, forty years she ruled in Israel.

*“ Sic, O sic, populum belloque et pace gubernas ;  
Deborah sis Anglis, Elizabetha, tuis ! ”*

(Thus, oh thus, in war and peace, govern thou thy people ; be a Deborah to thine English, Elizabeth !)

Never surely had people in this land looked upon a civic spectacle so crowded with Biblical allusions and so direct in its dramatic import.

The last episode was at Temple Bar, whose portals were guarded by the giants of old legend. Here, in the name of the city, another child bade her Majesty farewell in verses which rang the chimes upon one thought, the return to Bible truth ; and at each recurrence Elizabeth bade the people say “ Amen ! ” Her good-bye was taken as a single-hearted promise : “ Be ye well assured I will stand your good Queen ! ”

Then amid the shouting of the multitude and a great noise of ordnance, her Grace left “ the city that most entirely loved her,” and departed towards Westminster in the dusk of the short winter day.

On Monday, the day after her coronation, she observed the old custom of “ acts of grace.” One of the courtiers presented a petition, and, in a voice heard all over the large hall, prayed that four or five more prisoners might be released. Think if heads

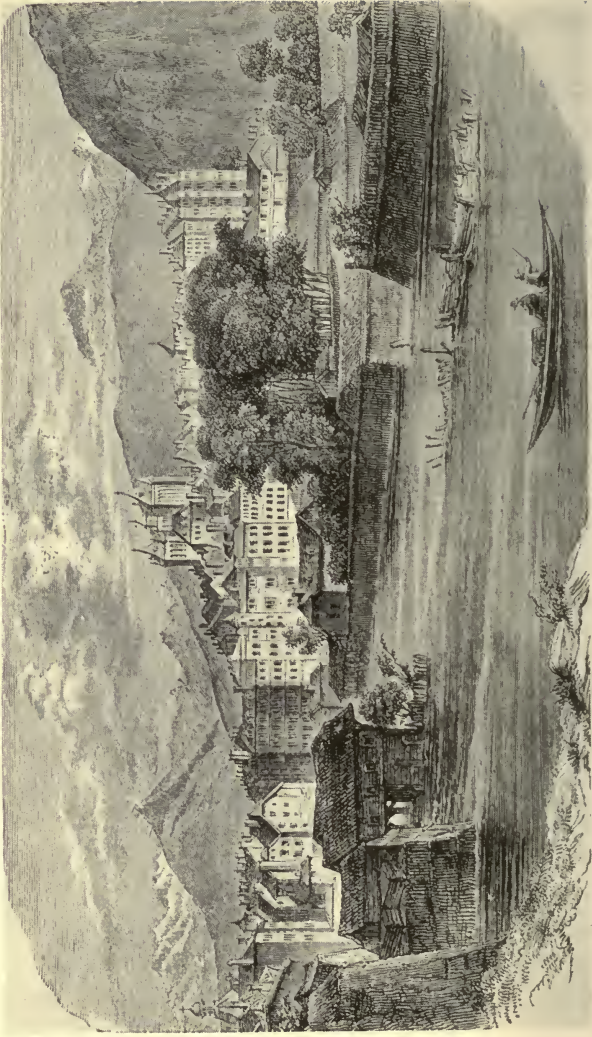
## The Bible and the

were bent forward and ears strained when he was asked to name them ! “ The four Evangelists and Apostle Paul,” he answered ; “ long shut up in an unknown tongue, as it were in prison, so that they cannot converse with the common people.” “ It were best,” replied the Queen gravely, “ first to inquire of themselves whether they would be released or no.”

At home and abroad England was in a position which called for the insight, courage, and moderation of great statesmanship, and, happily, these were not wanting in the young Queen and her Ministers. The country was at war with France. In Philip of Spain, her late sister's husband, there was the possibility of a still more dangerous enemy. The fierce old Pope, Paul IV., had already insulted her, and reminded Christendom that heretical princes were incapable of reigning. At home the need for a religious settlement was urgent ; and the pageants of London, quaint and unreal as they now appear to us, were a pressing request for immediate action.

Within a fortnight of the coronation this vital matter engaged the attention of her first Parliament. After stormy opposition from the Marian prelates and a number of the temporal peers, the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown was re-established and the constitution of the National Church restored, with a





THE CITY OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.



## Anglo-Saxon People

revised liturgy which was intended to conciliate moderate men of all parties. A few hundred persons refused the oath of spiritual obedience, but the great body of the people acceded to the new order of things, in which adhesion to the unreformed faith was compatible with allegiance to the throne.

The four Evangelists and St. Paul were set at liberty ; a fresh enactment replaced the Great Bible in the parish churches ; and in 1560 the Queen accepted from her " humble subjects of the English Church at Geneva " the dedication of the new version which was to take its place for nearly a century in the home life of the people.

Behind that version lay one of the world's splendid stories. In 1535 Geneva had destroyed its pleasant suburbs, manned its walls with a handful of citizen soldiers, renounced the Pope, shut its gates against the Duke of Savoy, and defied the Emperor himself. Since the days of Thermopylæ free men had beheld no such soul-stirring spectacle as that small city confronting the banded powers of tyranny. As if by a miracle Geneva triumphed. On May 21, 1536, the whole population solemnly abjured the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and accepted the Gospel as the rule of life ; a new coin was struck bearing the amended civic motto, *Post Tenebras Lucem*, " After Darkness Light " ; and the overthrow of the papal dominion on August 27, 1535, was recorded on a

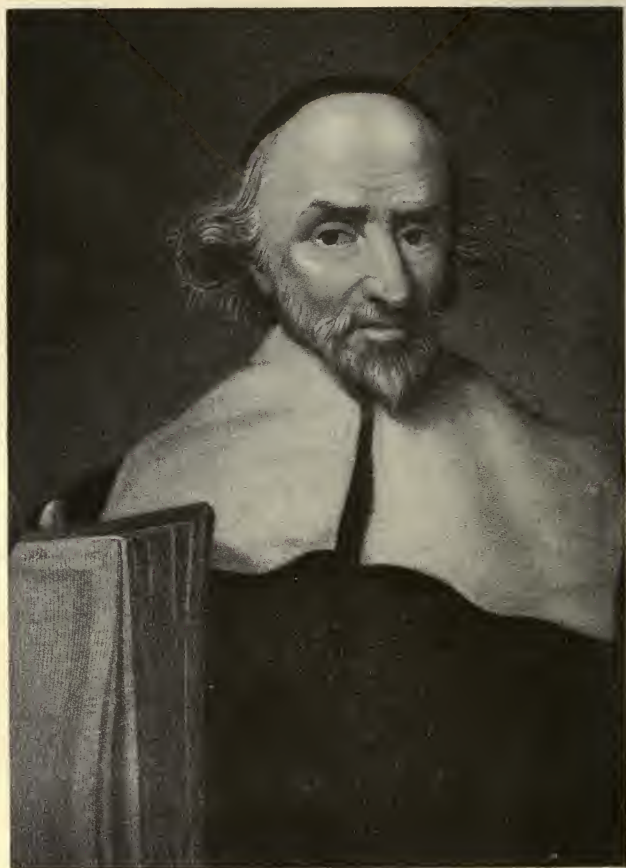
## The Bible and the

tablet of brass. Calvin completed the work begun by Farel and Froment.

Thenceforth that little city on its rock, in the lake-lit strath between the forests of Jura and the snow mountains, became one of the most illustrious in Christendom. It was more than a city of refuge, it was a true Philadelphia, a city of Christian Brotherhood. Suffering and banishment for Christ's sake turned strangers into spiritual kinsmen, to be protected, to be cherished; if need were, even to be housed and fed, and poor indeed was the godly burgher who had not welcomed some poorer refugee into his cheerful household. There was scarcely a language in Europe but might have been heard in the streets of Geneva.

Many of the strangers were men of birth and station, scholars, skilled craftsmen, deft artisans. They brought to the hospitable little town what money alone could never have bought—the amenities of culture, the wisdom of civic experience, the prosperity of new industries. Geneva in her turn was grateful, and too noble to feel a twinge of jealousy. With beautiful simplicity of mind, she made her refugees fellow-citizens. Up to the summer of 1555—when, by the way, the English congregation numbered two hundred communicants—as many as one hundred and forty foreign names, some of them still famous, were inscribed on her burgess-rolls.





JOHN KNOX.



## Anglo-Saxon People

“Several earls and peers of England,” wrote one of her historians, “may as rightly boast of being citizens of Geneva as Paul did of being a citizen of Rome.”

As the traveller of to-day tries to conjure up the dim old streets of the city of the exile, a score of shadowy forms arise, and the first to challenge recognition is not Calvin, or Beza, or any less notable person than the newly-appointed pastor of the English church in Geneva, the last of the preachers heard in Marian England. For seven months, as the voices of the Reformation fell into dead silence, the voice of this man went sounding on. An alert man of fifty, one takes him to be, with clear, intrepid eyes and tawny beard silvering—not at all like the commonly accepted “portraits” of him. In King Edward’s reign he was one of the royal chaplains; might have been Rector of All Hallows, Bread Street;<sup>1</sup> might even have been Bishop of Rochester, had he felt God’s leading in that direction. Curious!—how one forgets the share he took in shaping the Thirty-Nine Articles—Two-and-Forty in his time—and his prevision in urging the insertion in the Revised Prayer Book of the rubric which makes clear what the kneeling posture at Holy Communion does *not* mean. One hardly associates him at all with the English Puritans, but speaks of him as John Knox, the *Scotch* Reformer.

<sup>1</sup> Milton was baptized in All Hallows church fifty years later.

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Beside the Reformer are dimly seen the shadows of his wife, Marjory Bowes, and her mother Elizabeth. . . . This is William Whittingham, the Oxford scholar who has followed Knox from Frankfort to "Zion among the mountains"; these two beside him are Cambridge men—Thomas Sampson, in King Edward's day Dean of Chichester, and Anthony Gilby, one of the pastors in Geneva. Whittingham is busy with a translation of the New Testament; Sampson, Gilby and others will join him shortly in a larger undertaking. . . . Here is John Bodley of Exeter, with his wife and their three lads. The oldest, Thomas, a little fellow of ten, will some day be one of Queen Elizabeth's diplomatists, a knight of King James, and will build and endow the splendid library of his old university; Lawrence will become a canon of Exeter; five-year-old Josias will see stout service in the Low Countries and still more service in Ireland, and in his belted age will have charge of all the King's strongholds in the restless island. . . . This, at a glance, must be John Foxe, the indefatigable martyrologist, come over from Basel with copies perchance of his *Christus Triumphans* or proofs of his appeal for religious toleration. Thirty years hence, when he is a canon of Salisbury and is still an indefatigable old gentleman, a wild young poet of Stratford will be breaking the deer-park of Justice Shallow, his Charlecote pupil of long ago. . . .

b As a rude  
 lumpe. & with-  
 our anie crea-  
 ture in it for  
 the waters covered all.  
 c Darkenes  
 covered & de-  
 pe waters: for  
 as yet y light  
 was not crea-  
 ted

d He mainte-  
 ned this cause  
 hape by his  
 sacret power.

Ebr. 11. 3.

e. The light  
 was made be-  
 fore eiter sun-  
 ne or moone  
 was created:  
 th:refore we  
 must not attri-  
 bute that to y  
 creatures that  
 are Gods in-  
 struments, v  
 onely apperei-  
 neth to God.

¶ The 1 day.

¶ Psal. 33. 6. &  
 136. s. iere 10,  
 12. & 18. 15.  
 Or, *spouting*  
*uere, & ayre.*

f As the sea &  
 riners, from  
 those waters  
 that are in the  
 aloudes, which  
 are vpholden  
 by Gods pow-  
 er, lest they  
 shulde ouer-  
 whelme the  
 worlde

¶ Psal. 148. A-  
 g This is, the  
 region of the  
 ayre, and all y  
 is aboue vs  
 ¶ Th- 2. day.

¶ Psal. 33. 7.  
 & 89. 12.

b In that we  
 see it is the o-  
 nely power of  
 Gods worde  
 that maketh y  
 earth fruteful,  
 which els na-  
 turally is bar-  
 ren.

C H A P. I.

1 God created the heauen & the earth, 2 The light & the  
 darkenes, 3 The firmamēt. 4 He separateth the water  
 from the earth 5 He createth the sunne, the moone, &  
 the starres 6 He createth the fish, birdes, beastes 7 He  
 createth man and giueth him rule ouer all creatures,  
 8 And prouideth nourriture for man and beast.



N T H E. a beginning  
 \* God created y hea-  
 uen and the earth.

And the earth was b  
 without forme & voy-  
 de, and c darkenes was  
 vpon the depe, & the  
 Spirit of God d moued

vpon the waters.

3 Then God said, \* Let there be light; and  
 there was e light.

4 An l God sawe y light that it was good,  
 and God separated the light from the  
 darkenes.

5 And God called the light, Day, and the  
 darkenes, he called Night. ¶ So the euenig  
 and the morning were the first day.

6 ¶ Againe God said, \* Let there be a f firm-  
 ament in the middes of the waters: and  
 let it separate the waters from the waters.

7 Then God made the firmament; & par-  
 ted the waters, which were f vnder the  
 firmament, from the waters which were  
 \* aboue the firmament. and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament, s Hea-  
 uen. ¶ So the evening and the morning  
 were the seconde day.

9 ¶ God said againe, \* Let the waters vn-  
 der the heauē be gathered into one place,  
 & let the drye land appeare. and it was so.

10 And God called the drye land, Earth, &  
 he called y gathering together of the wa-  
 ters, Seas: & God sawe that it was good.

11 Then God said, h Let the earth budde





## Anglo-Saxon People

And this grey figure, who else is he if not the sweet singer, Miles Coverdale, in his old age ; Bishop of Exeter for a year or two, deprived in 1553, and at last only saved from Queen Mary and her prelates by the persistent good offices of Christian III. of Denmark ?

Whittingham's New Testament, published, as we have seen, in 1557, was not an independent translation but a scrupulous revision of Tindale's, with the aid of the Great Bible, the Greek text, and the " best approved translations." It was the prelude to this Geneva Bible, which was reared at great cost as the standard of faith by the English congregation, and the rallying-point no less of the old Lollard remnant than of the new Calvinist believers, " the Brethren " of England, Scotland and Ireland. Unhappily in their dedication of the book to Elizabeth, the Reformers forgot the Covenant under which they lived, and reminded her, not of Christ on Calvary, but of Asa breathing slaughter and Josiah burning the bones of the idolatrous priests on their own altars.

In the work of this Bible both Knox and Coverdale may have taken part ; substantially it was the achievement of Whittingham, Gilby and Sampson. The Old Testament was for the most part the text of the Great Bible, corrected from the Hebrew, and collated with the Greek and Latin versions and the Geneva revision of Olivetan's French Bible. The

## The Bible and the

New Testament was Whittingham's, once more revised in the light of Beza's Latin translation.

Without breaking that wonderful continuity which has ennobled and endeared the English Scriptures, the Geneva Bible marks an epoch in the history of religion in Great Britain. Its more convenient quarto form, its Roman type, its "most profitable annotations upon all the hard places, and other things of great importance," even its useful but if not altogether fortunate verse-divisions, made it a household book. It spread far and wide, growing every day more precious, weaving itself more closely into the lives of the people and colouring them more deeply. At least one hundred and forty editions of the New Testament and the whole Bible were issued between 1560 and 1644.

It passed into Scotland, inevitably. The first Bible printed north of the Border, it was published at Edinburgh in 1579, apparently for use in the churches. At that date copies of the Scriptures, brought from England or imported from Holland, were to be found in almost every house, and few persons had cause to fear the Act of James VI., which required every householder of a certain standing to have a Bible and a Psalm-Book under a penalty of £10. In 1606 the Geneva version was the only one that would sell in Scotland, and as late as 1640 the folio edition was still printed for public worship.

How much we owe to it would take many pages to

## Anglo-Saxon People

tell. Hundreds of its phrases have haunted the memory of generations—"The shadow of a great rock in a weary land," "It is good for us to be here," "Remember the days of old," "We see through a glass darkly," "Men of like passions with you," "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows"; while the happy accuracy of its scholarship gave it a pre-eminent place in the work of subsequent revisions.

It remains to say a word of the Geneva revisers, as one by one they drop out of the Elizabethan pageant. Whittingham was appointed to the Deanery of Durham in 1563. Fifteen years later, charges grounded on the alleged invalidity of his ordination and other matters were brought against him, and his life came to a close before that trouble was ended. He had married a sister of Calvin's wife. Gilby was presented to the living of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, was prosecuted for nonconformity in 1571, and died in 1585. Sampson became Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1561; stiffly opposed the use of vestments and distinctive clerical dress, was accordingly deprived and imprisoned in 1565, but five years later was appointed prebendary and penitentiary of St. Paul's, and died in 1589. Coverdale lived to the patriarchal age of eighty. Rector of St. Magnus, London Bridge, in 1563, he might have ended there peacefully but for the sharp controversy over ecclesiastical apparel. To

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the old Puritan popery lurked in cope and rochet ; he resigned in 1566, and confined himself to private ministration until his death two years later.

The overtopping position of the Geneva version, its rapid advance in popular favour, the furtherance which Puritanism derived from its annotations, the theories which alienated and embittered the two great parties in the Church led to the preparation of "the Bishops' Bible," under the supervision of Archbishop Parker. The work was essentially a revision—the last in Queen Elizabeth's reign—of the Great Bible, from the text of which the revisers were instructed not to depart without the warrant of manifest variation from the original. Printed in black-letter on a spacious double-columned page, and divided into verses in the Geneva fashion, it appeared in 1568, "in typography and illustration perhaps the most sumptuous in the long series of folio English Bibles."<sup>1</sup> It bore no dedication, and received no mark of royal approval ; but in 1571 the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury ordered copies to be placed in every cathedral, and as far as possible, in every church ; and in the hall of every high ecclesiastic there was to be a copy accessible to his servants and to strangers. The second folio edition, in 1572, was improved by many important

<sup>1</sup> Darlow and Moule, *Hist. Catal.*, p. 69. The price was 27s. 8d., or about £16 in our money.



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changes in the New Testament, and, curiously enough, it contained Coverdale's Psalter, in black-letter, side by side with the "Bishops" translation, in Roman character. But the new version never attained the dominant place for which it had been designed; about forty editions of Bible and Testament in thirty-eight years sums up its uneventful history.

One other translation closes the record of the English Scriptures in the sixteenth century. An interval of two-and-twenty years separates the Geneva Bible of the Marian exiles from the Douay version of the Elizabethan. Among these last were many distinguished University men, who had passed overseas for conscience' sake. The master-spirit among them was William Allen, Fellow of Oriel; in Mary's reign Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, and Canon of York; and on the eve of the sailing of the Armada "Cardinal of England." Most brilliant among the younger men was Gregory Martin: "Our Hebraist, Grecian, poet; the honour and glory of our college," was the eulogy of the Fellows of St. John's, after he had left them.

Martin was born in 1541, or the following year, at Maxfield, near Winchelsea—

*Quem tulit umbrosis tenerum Southsaxia silvis;*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His epitaph at Rheims:

"Whom, a small child, in shadowy woods Southsaxia (Sussex) bred."

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was apparently brought up in the reformed faith, but became a Catholic in boyhood; and in 1557 was entered with Edmund Campion as one of the original scholars of the newly-founded college of St. John's, Oxford. In 1569, under pressure of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, he found a place of safety as tutor to the children of Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk, who was big-hearted enough both to shelter Allen and to be patron of Foxe the martyrologist. A few months later Norfolk was involved in the troubles of Mary Queen of Scots, and Martin, who escaped to Flanders, was warmly received at Douay in 1570.

The seminary of missionaries for the conversion of England, founded by Allen and Dr. Vendeville of the University of Douay, had opened its doors on September 29, 1568. For a year or two its prospects were none of the brightest, but in 1575, in a letter to Campion, Martin gives a cheerful picture of the college at meal-time. "In our time we sat down about six at one table"; here at three tables were "nearly sixty men and youths of the greatest promise." The fare—"eaten so pleasantly you could have sworn they were feasting on English delicacies"—was "a little broth, thickened merely with the commonest roots." All the while the Old Testament was read out from the refectory pulpit.

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Familiarity with the Scriptures was a point on which Allen insisted. In the three years' course the Old Testament was read over and over a dozen, and the New Testament sixteen times. His missionaries must know the Bible thoroughly; especially must they "have at their fingers' ends all those passages which are correctly used by Catholics in support of our faith, or impiously misused by heretics in opposition to the Church's faith."<sup>1</sup> He was extremely desirous, too, that there should be an English Catholic version, so that texts might be accurately and uniformly quoted instead of being translated from the Latin on the spur of the moment. Early in 1578 the college removed from Douay to Rheims to escape the persecution of the Calvinists; and in that year, "on October 16, or thereabouts," Gregory Martin began his translation of the Bible. He did two chapters a day, "he himself translating; but that the work may be done as faultlessly as possible, our President, Dr. Allen, and our Master [of Studies] Dr. Bristow, carefully revise them."

Working steadily from Genesis to the Apocalypse, Martin completed his task, and Allen and Bristow, assisted probably by two other Oxford graduates, Dr. J. Reynolds and Dr. Worthington, their annotations, before the close of 1581. There was such a lack of funds, however, that the publication of the

<sup>1</sup> *Douay Diaries*, xl.

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Old Testament had to be deferred.<sup>1</sup> The New Testament, in quarto, and apparently in a large edition, appeared in March 1582. Thus much of his great labour Martin lived to see safely launched. He died of consumption on October 28, 1582. Bristow had already succumbed to the same disease, and his bosom-friend Campion had perished on the gallows.

Of the book itself we may safely accept Dr. Moulton's scholarly valuation: "Nothing is easier than to accumulate instances of the eccentricity of this version, of its obscure and inflated renderings; but only minute study can do justice to its faithfulness, and to the care with which the translators executed their work. Every other English version is to be preferred to this, if it must be taken as a whole; no other English version will prove more instructive to the student who will take the pains to separate what is good and useful from what is ill-advised and wrong." Strangely enough, though "all the English versions" were declared to be "most corrupt," Martin did not hesitate to derive what help he could from his predecessors in the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles. On the other hand where his translation, made from the Vulgate, threw a fresh light on the Greek text, or the translator attained some

<sup>1</sup> The college was in such straits that the sum of a thousand crowns, collected to pay the printer, was spent "on meat and drink" to satisfy the hunger of upwards of a hundred students.



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new felicity of expression, the King James revisers frankly availed themselves of his learning and his inspiration. The Old Testament (in two volumes quarto) did not appear until 1610, too late to be taken into the purview of their labours.<sup>1</sup>

At no point in the story of the English Bible is the reader more tempted than in these years which led up to the great deliverance to fill in the brief record of the Book itself with the throng and excitement of public events. Already, in 1570, Elizabeth had been excommunicated by Pope Pius V. ; within ten years the safety of England was imperilled by the mission-priests of Gregory XIII. ; now, at the sailing of the Armada, in which the twelve Apostles brought in their train the Vicar-General and friars of the Inquisition, Sextus V. deposed her and laid the kingdom under interdict. Though the people leaped to arms the moment the beacon-fires flashed the news that the enemy were in sight, there was a feeling from the first that this was a struggle in which mightier forces than those of earthly sovereigns were involved.

<sup>1</sup> In the 58 years, 1582-1635, four editions of the New and two of the Old Testament in this version were published. After an interval of 114 years the New Testament was issued in 1749 and the Old (in four volumes duodecimo) in 1750, both revised, simplified and modernized by Dr. Richard Challoner. So much has been changed in later editions that they cannot claim to be the Douay version.

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“ While this woonderfull and puissant Navie was sayling along the English coastes, and all men did now plainely see and heare that which before they would not be perswaded of, all people thorowout England prostrated themselves with humble prayers and supplications unto God ; but especially the outlandish Churches (who had greatest cause to feare, and against whom by name the Spaniards had threatened most grievous torments) enjoyned to their people continuall fastings and supplications, that they might turne away Gods wrath and fury now imminent upon them for their sinnes ; knowing well that prayer was the onely refuge against all enemies, calamities and necessities. . . . Likewise such solemne dayes of supplication were observed thorowout the united Provinces.”<sup>1</sup>

In the anxious weeks while the galleons and high sea-castles bore eastward and then were driven before the great gales through the North Sea, a prayer composed by her Majesty was offered every Wednesday and Friday in all the churches : “ We do instantly beseech Thee of Thy gracious goodness to be merciful to the Church militant here on earth. Oh, let Thine enemies know that Thou hast received England, which they most of all for Thy Gospel’s sake do malign, into Thine own protection. . . . Thou art our help and shield : oh, give good and prosperous

<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt, *Voyages*, vol. ii. p. 399.

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success to all those that fight this battle against the enemies of Thy Gospel."

The same sense of dependence on divine aid found utterance in the despatches of the busy sea-captains. "We have the army of Spain before us," wrote Drake, "and mean, by the grace of God, to wrestle a fall with it. . . . God grant ye have a good eye to the Duke of Parma, for with the grace of God, if we live, I doubt not ere it be long so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia as he shall wish himself at St. Mary Port among his orange trees." Anxious lest the ships should be too hastily paid off, Howard warned Walsingham that "a kingdom was a great wager, and security was dangerous, as they would have found, had not God been their friend."

Then on November 19 (29), 1588, when "the magnificent huge fleet had vanished into smoake"—such a fleet "as sayled not upon the ocean sea many hundreth yeeres before," there was a general thanksgiving in all the churches throughout England. Elizabeth attended divine service at St. Paul's, and having "given in person solemn thanks to God," was present at the sermon preached by the Bishop of Sarum at the Norden Cross. "Thou didst blow with Thy winds, and they were scattered," was the text; a streamer from one of the captured galleons fluttered from the top of the cross, which had been

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the silent witness of so many changing scenes in the story of the English Reformation.

The thanksgiving was not England's alone, but that of the Bible nations. "The Kings of Scotland, Denmarke, Sueden, Navarra, with the churches of Geneva and divers other cities of Germany, had done the like a little while before in their churches." The Zeelanders minted "new coine of silver and brasse," bearing the inscription on one side "Glory to God onely," and on the other pictures of great ships, "The Spanish Fleet," and in the circumference around the ships the words, "It came, went, and was." So, too, in Holland, wherever men bought and sold there passed from hand to hand an old proverb with a new significance, "Man proposeth; God disposeth, 1588." Little wonder! Since the Exodus there had been no such manifestation of the providence which shapes the world, no deliverance so momentous and far-reaching in the affairs of men.



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## CHAPTER VII

### SEA-KINGS AND POETS

THUS, "Englishmen had now in hand," says Jeremy Collier, "in every church and place, and almost every man, the Holy Bible and New Testament in their mother-tongue, instead of the old fabulous and fantastic books of *The Table Round*, *Launcelot du Lac*, and such other."

To what extent the Scriptures were in the hands of the people in Henry's reign is more largely a matter of inference than of direct knowledge. Foxe speaks of the night-long readings, of the large sums paid for a few chapters, "of the earnest seeking, the burning zeals, the sweet assemblies"; heresy charges and the destruction of books indicate a considerable distribution; and Henry's withdrawal of the Bible from the common people referred apparently to actual possession rather than to the disorderly scenes about the chained volume while Mass was being said. The cost of the Testament alone was more than working men could afford, yet we know how in our own day the Word of God has been readily bought at the price of a month's toil; and doubtless many a copy

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of the Gospels and other portions was patiently written out. It was the task of transcribing Matthew's Bible, which John Marbeck, organist of the Chapel Royal at Windsor, was too poor to buy, that led to making the first Concordance, published in 1550. But the clearest and most obvious confirmation on this point is afforded by the Elizabethan pageants of the citizens of London, which could never have brightened those busy streets had not the incidents and allusions they set forth been well within common knowledge.

In Elizabeth's own reign the Scriptures appear to have taken their place in the doings of every day. They were read at dinner and supper at the Universities. Every public and private office had a copy of the Bible. It entered into the morning and evening prayers of servants and apprentices. Even the poor housewife, with little money and less learning, used for "flat-irons" large stones inscribed with texts. In the churches the Old Testament was read through once in the year; the New Testament four times; and every thirty days the Psalter was begun afresh. Then, says Harrison, writing of the Elizabethan years 1577-87, "sith the minister saith his service commonly in the body of the church, with his face toward the people, in a little tabernacle of wainscot provided for the purpose, the ignorant do not only learn divers of the Psalms and usual prayers by heart,

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but also such as can read do pray together with him, so that the whole congregation at one instant pour out their petitions unto the living God for the whole estate of His Church in most earnest and fervent manner."

Remembering the noble poems which sprang out of the chapters translated by word of mouth in the Northumbrian cloisters, what might we not expect from the sunburst of that incomparable literature of the whole Bible with which the English people were in familiar converse? The marvels of a new world in the West were the talk in every "poor pelting village, sheepcote and mill," but this book carried them into a more marvellous East, and showed them cities which had

"Crumbled before the blessed Virgin lived."

They heard the Law on Sinai and the Gospel on the Mount of Beatitudes. Out of the past rang the voices of Isaiah and John. They saw the heavens opened by the river of Chebar and over the hillside of Bethany. "They looked into the faces of apostles and martyrs, of seers and kings, and walked with Abraham in the morning of time."

Other influences—the humanism of the Renaissance, the glamour of a new Italian literature, and, not least, the exultant spirit of nationality which had shattered the strength of Spain—combined with that illumina-

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tion of the soul to form the conditions of a new epoch. Every faculty of the mind quickened into vigorous activity—scientific experiment, methods of government, exploration, commerce, while in letters there was an efflorescence unknown before and unequalled since. More truly than it had ever been, England was now, in the joyous phrase of the old rhymer, a land of “free men, free tongues, the heart free”; and the essence of that freedom was a mingled sense of individuality, responsible but enfranchised in thought and action.

The New Testament may well have been, as some think, the book Sir Humphrey Gilbert was reading when the people of the *Golden Hinde* heard him say, “We are as near to heaven by sea as by land”; and that night they saw his lights go out suddenly in the rush of the dark seas. Whether that was so or not, many a page in the Voyages of the Elizabethan adventurers showed that these reckless “sea-dogs” carried the Bible in their hearts, if not in their lockers. Under Hawkins’s flag the ship’s company “gathered together every morning and evening to serve God.” Who forgets that the chivalrous Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, translated the Psalms between them? One of Drake’s officers, Thomas Doughtie, who was sentenced to death on the high seas, received the Holy Communion before his execution. “And our Generall himself accompanied



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him in that holy action : which being done, and the place of execution made ready, hee having embraced our Generall and taken his leave of all the companie, with prayer for the Queenes majestie and our realme, in quiet sort laid his head to the blocke, where he ended his life." Whereupon these stout sea-rovers were exhorted to loyal fellowship, obedience, and due regard for the success of their adventure, and all were bidden to receive the Communion on the following Sunday, " as Christian brethren and friends ought to." <sup>1</sup> With his last breath the great captain of *The Revenge* expressed the spirit of his time : " Here die I, Richard Greenvil, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true souldier ought to do that hath fought for his countrey, Queene, religion, and honour ; whereby my soule most joyfull departeth out of this body." <sup>2</sup> But even " ordinary English traders were found fighting Spanish warships on behalf of the Protestant faith."

So, too, with the explorers of the North and encirclers of the globe. Davis sails " in God's name " into the white realms of the Midnight Sun ; his purposes are conditioned " by God's grace " ; in deadly perils he is " manifestly delivered " by the mighty goodness of God ; he leaves his record of the divine protection in " The Cape of God's mercy." " The ice was strong, but God was stronger," says

<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt, *Voyages*, vol. viii. p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 37.

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one of Frobisher's men, after grinding a night and a day among the icebergs, not waiting for God to come down and split the ice for them. Nor is there a touch of the marvellous wanting in the scene of snow and hail, rain and wind on a lee shore outside the Straits of Magellan : " Most of our men having given over to travell, we yeilded our selves to death, without further hope of succour. Our captaine sitting in the gallery very pensive, I [John Jane] came and brought him some rosa solis to comfort him ; for he was so cold that hee was scarce able to moove a joint. After he had drunke, and was comforted in hearte, hee began for the ease of his conscience to make a large repetition of his forepassed time, and with many grievous sighs he concluded in these words : ' Oh, most glorious God, with whose power the mightiest things among men are matters of no moment, I most humbly beseech Thee, that the intollerable burthen of my sinnes may through the blood of Jesus Christ be taken from me : and end our daies with speede, or shew us some mercifull signe of Thy love and our preservation.' " Then, as he bade Jane say nothing of what had passed lest the men should be dismayed, suddenly " the Sunne shined cleere ; so that he and the Master both observed the true elevation of the Pole, whereby they knew by what course to recover the Streights."

Lastly that lover of ships, Richard Hakluyt, collecting the voyages, traffiques, and discoveries of our

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seamen, reflects with wonder how kindly natives from Japan and the Philippines take to our climate and learn to speak our language, and regards this strange fact as a pledge of God's further favour to us and to them, for "unto their doors I doubt not in time shall be by us carried the incomparable treasure of the truth of Christianity and of the Gospel, while we use and exercise common trade with their merchants."

Is it surprising that the same Biblical influence should show itself in the Elizabethan literature? "The *Faerie Queene*," writes Green, "in its religious theory, is Puritan to the core. The worst foe of its Red-Cross Knight is the false and scarlet-clad Duessa of Rome, who parts him for a while from Truth and leads him to the house of Ignorance." The wondrous horn, which shook the Giant's stronghold and flung open every door, was the Gospel:

"No false enchauntment, nor deceitfull traine,  
Might once abide the terror of that blast,  
But presently was void and wholly vaine."

Marlowe's *Faustus*, based on the old legend which the Reformers had associated with the Church of Rome, struck an eerie note that must have thrilled the religious feelings of an audience that had just been relieved from the tension of the struggle with Spain and the Papacy.

Shakespeare's Bible was the Geneva version. It had been first published four years before his birth,

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and one can scarcely doubt that it was one of the books, if not indeed the one book, in which he delighted from boyhood. As he grew, the spirit of his time took possession of him. "The closer the personal acquaintance which we can form with the English of the age of Elizabeth," says Froude, "the more we are satisfied that Shakespeare's great poetry is no more than the rhythmic echo of the life which it depicts." And the ringing lines—

" This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself,"

are not the language of the reign of John, but of Protestant England with its right hand pressed on the Bible.

The tracts and pamphlets of the time bear witness to the knowledge of the Scriptures which prevailed among the people; mere mention of the great literary names recalls the fine phrasing and natural melody of that Tudor English which appears to have become in a great measure the common speech, the mere sound of which fixes the date of any nameless writer who uses it, and which can scarcely have taken its rise from any other source than the supreme book of the nation.

Elizabeth died on March 24, 1603. In this place no more need be said of her than that she was her father's daughter. Her reign, like his, bore the



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stamp of an imperious and self-centred personality. Like him, she was determined to brook no rival in the temporal and spiritual sovereignty of England. From one point of view, at least, that was the outstanding fact in her career ; and in the midst of their sufferings and struggles for the cause of the Gospel the Puritans, whom she hated, never allowed it to be forgotten. Of religious earnestness, profound convictions, living faith, she had apparently none ; by temperament she leaned to the sensuousness of mediæval belief and ritual ; in her strife with the Papacy the object was political and personal—religion itself counted for little or nothing.

Long and fervently the Archbishop of Canterbury prayed by her side during her last conscious hours. Then she who had been sleepless so long, sank into a deep sleep, from which she never awoke. At three o'clock in the morning a sapphire ring was silently dropped from a window, and a horseman spurred into the north with the news that the King of Scots was James I. of England.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

ONE of the earliest incidents in the royal progress of James I. from Edinburgh to the capital of his new English kingdom was the presentation of what is known as the "Millenary Petition"—an appeal signed by something fewer than a Thousand of the Puritan clergy for removal of grievances, and relief from "the burden of human rites and ceremonies" which had been imposed upon them in the Church of England.

Curiously enough no mention of the episode occurs in the quaint Stuart tract which describes the peals of ordnance, presentation of civic keys and purses of gold, conduits running with white and red wine, creation of knights by the score, and all the other high junketings of the King's journey. James, however, consented to look into these matters, and accordingly in January 1604 a Conference met at Hampton Court. The hierarchy was represented by Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, eight bishops, five deans and two "doctors." Dr. Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College,

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Oxford, and three other divines appeared for the Puritans. So, to borrow a picture of the scene, in the state-rooms of Wolsey's superb old palace "awful devout Puritanism, decent dignified Ceremonialism (both always of high moment in this world, but not of equally high), appeared here facing one another for the first time. The demands of the Puritans seem to modern minds very limited indeed. That there should be a new correct Translation of the Bible (*granted*), and increased zeal in teaching (*omitted*); That 'lay impropriations' (tithes snatched from the old Church by laymen) might be made to yield a 'seventh part' of their amount, towards maintaining ministers in dark regions which had none (*refused*); That the Clergy in districts might be allowed to meet together and strengthen one another's hands as in old times (*refused with indignation*);—on the whole (if such a thing durst be hinted at, for the tone is almost inaudibly low and humble), That pious straitened Preachers, in terror of offending God by Idolatry, and useful to human souls, might not be cast out of their parishes for genuflexions, white surplices and such like, but allowed some Christian liberty in mere external things: these were the claims of the Puritans"<sup>1</sup>—these, and the abolition of confirmation, discontinuance of the churching of women, disuse of the sign

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters*, vol. i. p. 32.

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of the cross in Baptism, disuse of the ring in Marriage, and disuse of the Apocrypha.

The changes the petitioners desired "went far beyond a toleration of scrupulous consciences—amounted to nothing less than the founding of a new Church." James was the last man to make such concessions. He would have "none of that liberty as to ceremonies," would allow no argument as to "how far you are bound to obey." Neither would he allow anything in the nature of a "Scots Presbytery—which agrees with monarchy as well as God with the devil. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council and all our proceedings"—as they had done in Scotland. The hierarchy, he told the bishops, was the firmest support of the throne; in them (as he did not say) he hoped to find supple instruments for despotic rule and the divine prerogative of kings. "Your Majesty," cried Whitgift, "speaks by the special assistance of God's Spirit." Bishop Bancroft, on his knees, and almost moved to tears, thanked God for such a king "as, since Christ, has not been." So were sown the dragon's teeth which sprang up into "Ironsides" and a headsman at Whitehall forty years later.

Some slight alterations were made in the Book of Common Prayer, but ten of the persons who had presented the "Millenary Petition" were thrown into

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prison for following a course which "tended to sedition and rebellion," and Convocation set to work to enforce conformity and to drive opposition across the seas. Of which things anxious note was taken by a certain "poor people in Lincolnshire and the York borders," who had become "enlightened by the Word of God."

In the matter of a new translation of the Bible, King James took a lively interest. Probably it was more through petulance than from any thought on the subject that he declared "he could never yet see a Bible well translated in English." What he did see was a chance of ousting the Geneva version, with its obnoxious comments, and of replacing it with a new translation of such acceptable excellence that "this whole church [might] be bound unto it and none other." By the end of June 1604, about fifty of "the best learned in both universities" were appointed translators, and after a delay of about three years, probably spent in private preparation, the task was begun.

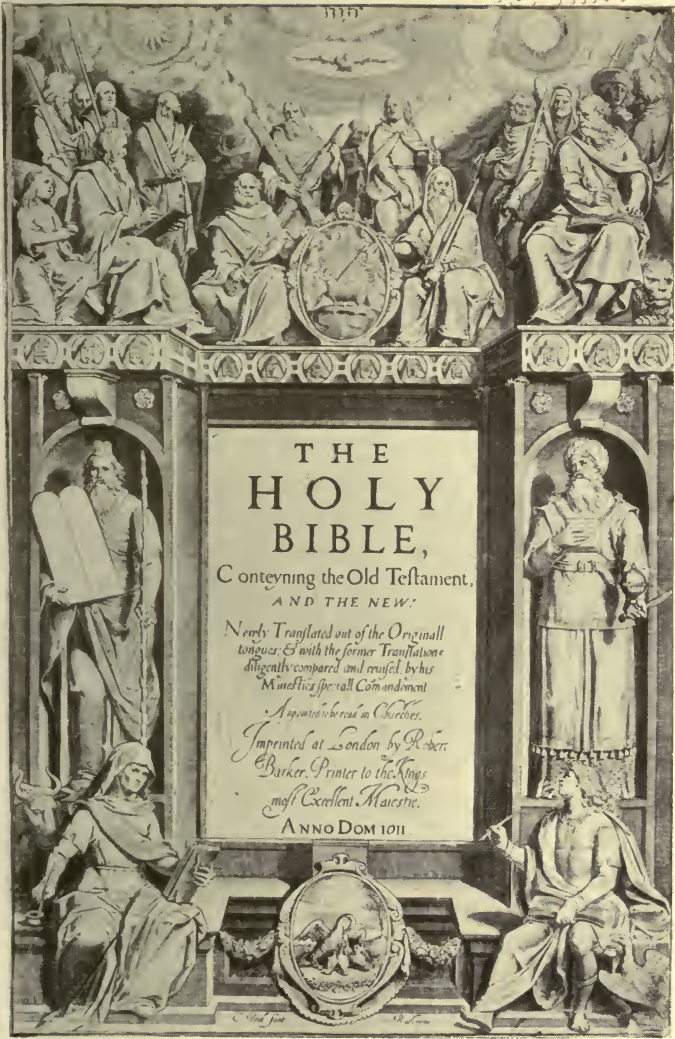
The translators sat in six companies—two at Westminster, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge—and the sections of the work allotted to each were submitted to mutual criticism. Burnett in his *History of the Reformation* (folio, vol. ii. p. 366) gives a list of ten who translated at Westminster "the Pentateuchon, and the story from Joshua to

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the first book of Chronicles exclusive ” ; of eight at Cambridge who did “ from the first of Chronicles, with the rest of the story, and the Hagiographa, viz. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes ” ; and of seven at Oxford who took up “ the four or greater Prophets, with the Lamentations, and the twelve lesser Prophets.” To seven others were assigned “ the prayer of Manasses, and the rest of the Apocrypha.” The Four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Apocalypse, were allotted to eight at Oxford, and the Epistles of St. Paul and the Canonical Epistles to seven at Westminster. In all, this list contains forty-seven names, or seven less than the number the King first mentioned.

Of these seven and forty translators oblivion has scattered her poppy over the names of many. No ordinary biographical dictionary contains half of them. Even in Jacobean times it could not have been easy to identify “ Mr. Smith ” of Oxford with Miles Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, and author of the fervid address of “ The Translators to the Reader.” We still associate a book of devotion with Launcelot Andrewes (afterwards Bishop of Winchester), who was master of fifteen languages and spent great part of five hours a day in devotion. “ Mr. Andrews ” of Cambridge was his brother Roger. It is pleasant to know that John Reynolds, the Puritan leader, was a man “ whose memory and





THE "AUTHORIZED VERSION"—OLD TESTAMENT TITLE PAGE.



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reading were near to a miracle." His younger brother, William, became Catholic and took part in the Rheims translation of the New Testament. John Overall, Dean of St. Paul's, became Bishop of Norwich, after holding the see of Coventry and Lichfield. He was "a correspondent of Grotius," the Dutch scholar and statesman who was so gallantly rescued by his wife from the fortress of Lövestein. Hadrian à Savaria mingled in high matters—Walloon Confession of Faith, and the like. Mr. Lively, Hebrew professor in Trinity College, Cambridge, who wrote *A True Chronology of the Persian Empire*, died in 1605; and Richard Edes, Dean of Worcester, was prevented by death from sharing in the work. "Mr. Savile," one of James's knights, Sir Henry, is a household name still through the Savilian professorships of geometry and astronomy at Oxford—the only layman among the translators. "Mr. Boyes" (John Bois, Dean of Canterbury in 1619) was a small Hebrew pundit at the age of five; did his own share of the translation, and took up another section; also assisted Sir Henry Savile in his celebrated edition of Chrysostom. Last, and perhaps most pleasantly memorable of them all, "Mr. Dean of Winchester" was George Abbot, son of a weaver and clothmaker at Guildford; who became Archbishop of Canterbury in the year the version was published, and a statesman to be counted

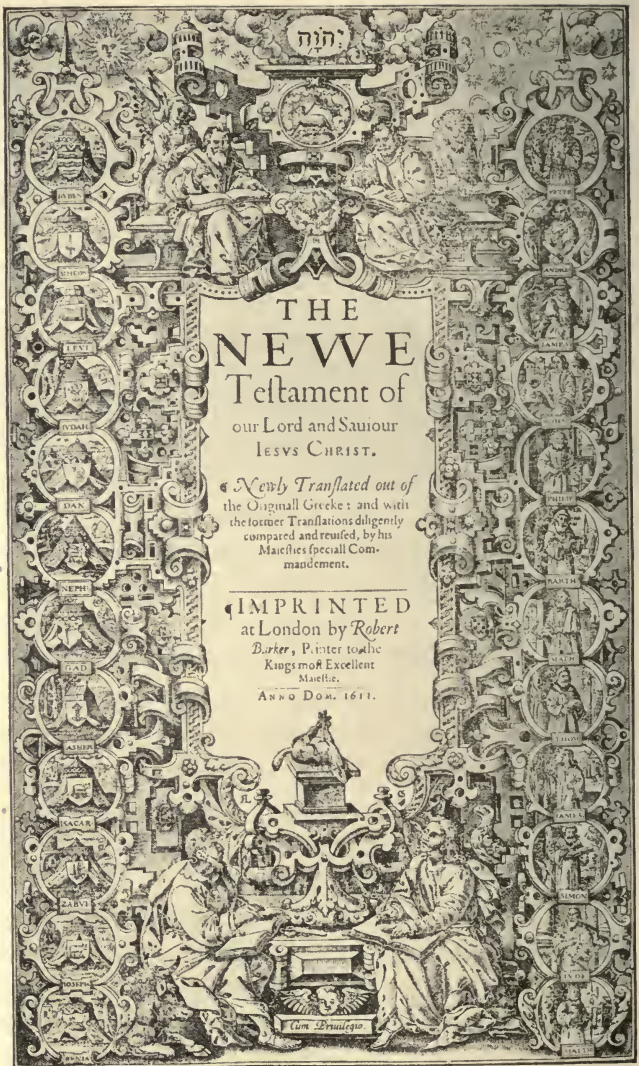
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with by kings and others ; and had (praise to his name) a warm place in his heart for Guildford and decayed tradesmen, and built them a "hospital," or home, which is stately and picturesque, with Flemish glass chapel windows and old sundial, to this day.

As to the scheme drawn up for the guidance of the translators, the material points were covered by the following instructions: The Bishops' Bible to be as little altered as truth to the original would permit, but renderings from Tindale, Coverdale, Matthew, the Great Bible, and the Geneva version to be used when they "agreed better with the text"; proper names and old ecclesiastical words to be preserved; chapter divisions not to be needlessly altered; the only marginalia to be verbal interpretations and "references"; sections to be mutually criticized, and the help of any learned men to be asked in cases of special obscurity. Scholars among the bishops and clergy were invited to volunteer observations. One rule directed the translators to prepare each a text for himself, and from these draughts a "union" translation was to be adopted. In case of at least part of the Apocrypha, according to Selden, in his "Table Talk," the procedure was somewhat different—one man read the proposed English text, the others checked him from versions in foreign tongues. Otherwise, for



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE "AUTHORIZED VERSION"—NEW TESTAMENT TITLE PAGE.

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details of method and range of collation and exercise of scholarship the companies were unrestricted.

The work was completed in about two years and three-quarters. It was revised by a committee who were paid for their sessions in London, and was seen through the press by the Bishop of Winchester (Thomas Bilson) and Miles Smith. Whether, as the King proposed, it was "reviewed by the bishops and the chief learned of the Church," or "presented to the privy council"; or "ratified by the royal authority"—that is, "Authorized"—are points on which little or nothing is known. Nor can much be said on the financial side of the subject. James proposed to recommend his translators to patrons of benefices which fell vacant, but for the most part the work was done gratuitously. The expense, which amounted to about £3500, was paid by the printer and patentee, and in 1611—on a date unrecorded, as it was not a "new book," the Authorized Version appeared in a stately black-letter folio which exceeded even the sumptuous Bishops' Bible in amplitude of page.

Technically it was not a "new book," but in an unquestionably true sense it was a new book, "newly translated out of the originall tongues," though its novelty did not consist in its resembling no other version. The object of the "translators" was not to make an original translation or to make a bad

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translation into a good one, " but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one." In the language of to-day, it was an elaborate revision of the text of the Bishops' Bible, collated with the Hebrew and Greek originals, corrected by the most advanced linguistic knowledge, checked from Tremellius and Beza and earlier Latin versions, and perfected in felicity of diction from the fine flower of the English versions of eighty years. Like the city of Greek legend, it rose from the music of Tindale and Coverdale ; like the transfigured Ark, its stones were laid with fair colours and its foundations with sapphires from the Bible of Geneva and the New Testament of Rheims.

So it came about that the translation unto which " the whole Church might be bound and none other," gathered every other within the pale of its catholicity. Around it lingered the lights and voices of the Patristic ages. Spain and the Netherlands, France and Italy helped to give it ecumenical sanction.<sup>1</sup> Many of its books were hallowed by memories of recent martyrs ; and if " whole pages visibly follow the rhythm and diction of Wycliffe,"<sup>2</sup> it preserves an English tradition that carries us back still further. Racial conquests, ravage of war, transitions of language seem to break

<sup>1</sup> " Neither did we think much to consult the translators and commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin ; no, nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch."—*The Translators to the Reader*.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the Eversley Edition (Macmillan).





In\* the beginning  
God created the  
Heaven, and the  
Earth.

2 And the  
earth was with-  
out forme, and  
boyd, and darke-  
nesse was vpon  
the face of the deepe: and the Spirit  
of God mooued vpon the face of the  
Waters.

3 And God said, \* Let there be light:  
and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was  
good: and God diuided † the light from  
the darknesse.

5 And God called the light, Day,  
and the darknesse he called Night: † and  
the euening and the morning were the  
first day.

6 ¶ And God said, \* Let there be a  
† firmament in the midst of the Waters:  
and let it diuide the Waters from the  
Waters.

7 And God made the firmament;  
and diuided the Waters. Which were vnder



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the continuity of our Bible story ; and yet it does not appear too fanciful to surmise that such a continuity may have actually existed in the lives of the people (among whom there was never any sudden break of language), and that, if time had spared them, old carols and Christian folk-song, if nothing better, might have linked in apostolic succession the Bible of King James with the Genesis of Cædmon.

The volume bore a dedication to "the most high and mightie Prince, Iames," but no proclamation announced its issue from the press, and no enactment furthered its acceptance. More convenient editions, in quarto and octavo, were issued in Roman type in 1612, and nine editions were called for in the course of two years. In 1617 and 1618 two compact duodecimos, about six by three and a quarter inches, became "guests and comrades" in many a home. By a number of people it was regarded with distrust and jealousy. The revisers themselves had looked for little less : "Was there ever anything projected that savoured anyway of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying or opposition ?" The Bishops' Bible and the Great Bible of an older generation were still chained on the lecterns of the churches ; the Geneva version was by numberless firesides.

But the new book won its way slowly, though it took thirty years or more to dispossess the

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latter in the affections of the people, and to pass gradually by way of the "little pocket Bibles with gilt edges" into universal use. By that time, it was the Authorized Version, though its only authorization had been its own excellence. The reading and distribution of this version of the Word of God began to be recognized in a number of the charities which sprang up; and in clauses of wills one came upon moneys left for "Bibles chained in the pews in church," and "Bibles in 8vo in English for poor men's children," while in 1645 provision was made by one good Christian to send "to every house a Bible to the world's end."

Of the fortunate circumstance that the new version was essentially but a revision, nothing can be said more suggestive than the following passages from the Introduction to the Eversley Edition :

"Had the translators had no existing English version but that of Wyclif to work on, it is probable that the necessary divergence [in language] might have proved so great that the result would have been a wholly new translation; and one can hardly doubt that it would have been a translation into the vocabulary and rhythms of Jacobean English, destined in all probability to ultimate supersession. . . . It is a curious and perhaps a hitherto unnoticed fact, that the headings of contents prefixed to the chapters of







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the Authorized Version are full of words which occur nowhere in the translation itself; and while these certainly include many which have continued in daily use—words so common as *brevity*, *cowardice*, *credit*, *condole*—a large number of them, words like *dehort*, *inconsideration*, *incorrigibleness*, *omnipotency*, *propinquity*, *calumniation*, have been on the whole rejected by the permanent genius of the language.” As it happened, there was a linguistic standard of Biblical translation before the revisers. “By a singular and surprising felicity, this joint result combined the merits rather than the faults of individual members, and the result was a permanent masterpiece of language.”

Leaving the broad characteristics, however, let us attempt to realize the sensitive craftsmanship with which the new translation was achieved by the seven learned men of Oxford to whom the Greater Prophets were assigned. We turn to Isaiah (xiv. 7-12)—to the vision of the sceptred dead, to that masterpiece of imagination, in which the dusky splendour, the appalling movement, the phantasmal hollowness, and the thin mockery of shadows seem to transcend the possibilities of expression.

Before the translators lies the original Hebrew, and they have the whole sequence of English versions to suggest to them the word, the phrase, the cadence

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which come nearest to the "large utterance" of the Prophet. At first sight Wycliffe's appears to promise no help at all :

Ech lond restede, and was stille ; it was ioiful, and made full out ioie.

Coverdale's, which has a certain spaciousness of feeling, passed unchanged into the Bishops' Bible :

And therefore ye whole worlde is now at rest and quyettesse, and men synge for ioye.

The Bishops left the Geneva reading unheeded :

The whole worlde is at rest, and is quiet ; they sing for joye ;

but the King James scholars caught it up, and gave it the final touch of accuracy and beauty :

The whole *earth* is at rest, and is quiet ; *they break forth* into singing.

" They break forth into singing ! " That is the new touch here, and yet—turn back to the naïve attempt to say the same thing in the older and ruder speech, " It made joy—full out ! " and the question arises whether the Oxford translators did not owe something at this point to Wycliffe.

In the next verse the different versions are so curiously related to each other, and the task of selection had been one of such nicety, that the manner in which our Authorized text has been reached will



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be seen most clearly from the following italicized renderings.

## WYCLIFFE

Also fir trees and cedris of the Liban *weren glad on thee ; sithen* thou sleptist, noon stieth (comes up) that kittith (cutteth) us down.  
(Older reading—sleptist, ther stegede not up that heewe us down.)

## COVERDALE

*Yee even the fyrre trees and cedres of Libanus rejoyse at thy fall, sayinge, Now yt thou art layde downe,* there come no mo up to destroye us.

## BISHOPS' BIBLE

Yee . . . to hewe doun us.

## GENEVA

Also *the fyrre trees rejoyced of thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid downe, no hewer came up against us.*

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Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

But it is in the ninth verse, at the réveillé of the dead, that the Oxford translators, much as they are indebted to their predecessors, pass far beyond them. The awe of the under-earth pervades even the diction of Wycliffe :

Helle undur thee is disturblid for the meeting of thy coming ; he schal rise giantis (giants) to thee ; alle the princes of erthe han rise fro her (their) seetis, all the princes of naciouns.

It has a large and craggy grandeur of its own, certainly

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not inferior to the cold and somewhat obscure reading of Coverdale :

Hell also trembleth at thy commynge. All mightie men and prynces of the earth steppe forth before thee. All kynges of the earth stonde up from their seates.

The Bishops' Bible begins to express the sense of eerie evocation and the irony of crowned shadows dimly recalling that they were once great kings :

Hell also beneath trembleth to meete thee at thy commynge, and for thy sake hath raised his dead, almightie men and princes of the earth ; al kingis of the earth stand up from their seates.

In the Geneva version the words of power, the rhythmic phrases fall into their place, but the perfect music is yet to come :

Hell beneath is moved for to mete thee at thy comming, raising up the dead for thee, even all the princes of the earth, and hath raised from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

At last, in the Authorized Version, we arrive at the consummate form :

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming : it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth ; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.<sup>1</sup>

Still more minutely one can trace, all through the dry and pitiless jeering of the dead, the growth of the Authorized text from version to version.

<sup>1</sup> Was "stirreth" an inspiration, or did the translators get the hint of it from Wycliffe's "disturblid" ?

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## WYCLIFFE

*Alle thei schulen answere, and thei schulen seie to thee, And thou art wounded as and we ; thou art maad lijk us. Thi pride is drawun doun to hellis ; thi deed careyn (dead carcasse) felle doun ; a moughte (moth) schal be strewyd under thee, and thin(e) hilyng (covering) schal be wormes. A ! Lucifer, that risidest eerli (early), hou feldest thou doun fro heaven ; thou that woundist folkis feldest doun togider in to erthe.*

## COVERDALE

That they may all (one after another) syng and *speake unto thee, Art thou woundid also as we ? art thou become like unto us ? Thy pompe and thy pride is gone downe to hell. Mothes shal be layde under thee, and wormes shal be thy coveringe. How art thou fallen from heaven (o Lucifer), thou faire morning childe ! hast thou gotten a fall even to the grounde, thou that (notwithstandinge) dyddest subdue the people !*

## BISHOPS' BIBLE

That they may al answeare and *speake* unto thee, *Art thou become weake also as we ? art thou become like unto us ? Thy pompe and thy pryde is layde downe into the pit, so is the melodi of thy instrumentes. Wormes be layde under thee, and wormes be thy coveryng. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, thou fayre morning childe ! How has thou gotten a fal even to the grounde, which didst weaken the nations !*

## GENEVA BIBLE

*All thei shal crye, and say unto thee, Art thou become weake also as we ? art thou become like unto us ? Thy pompe is broght downe to the grave, and the sound of thy violes ; the worme is spread under thee, and the wormes cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, o Lucifer, sonne of the morning ? and cut downe to the grounde, which didst cast lottes upon the nations ?*

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All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we ? art thou become like unto us ? Thy pomp is brought

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down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols ; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations †<sup>1</sup>

Still more complex and exquisite is the workmanship in Psalm civ. The first verse, three short lines, derives from the Coverdale, Geneva, and Bishops' Bibles, and the Authorized Version adds a stateliness of its own. From the Great Bible, with slight change, yet how effective in its slightness, we have verses 4 and 5—"Who (which) layeth the beams of his chambers." Verses 10 and 11—"He sendeth the springs," and verse 15—"And wine that maketh glad," are almost wholly Genevan. Or note the sources of the following :

16. The trees of the Lord are full of sap (COVERDALE) ;  
(Even) the cedars of Lebanon (Libanus), which he hath planted;
17. Where (wherein) the birds make their nests (GREAT BIBLE) :  
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house (AUTHORIZED  
VERSION).

In verse 20 Geneva touches sublimity, and with a strange suggestion of listening and stealthiness the Authorized inserts the monosyllable "do" :

Thou makest darkness, and it is night : wherein all the  
beasts of the forest *do* creep forth.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that in our Revised Version the text reads, as in Wycliffe and the Bishops' Bible, "All they shall *answer* and say," and as in Wycliffe and Coverdale, "Thy pomp is brought *down to hell.*" Of the other two changes "O day star" for "O Lucifer" does not seem very happy.



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Verses 21-22 stand almost as Coverdale wrote them, "The young lions," but the Great Bible gives us "man goeth forth unto his work."

The words in italics indicate how little has been altered in this glorious song-burst of Coverdale :

24. O Lorde ! how manifolde are thy workes !  
*Right wysely* hast thou made them all :  
*Yee* earth is full of thy riches.
25. So is this greate and wyde see *also*,  
Wherin are thinges crepinge innumerable,  
Both small and greate beastes.
26. There go the shippes *over* :

—in the Great Bible the revisers have struck out "over"—

*And there is that Leuiathan, whom thou hast made, to  
take his pastyme therin.*

In the Authorized Version "Right wysely" becomes "In wisdom,"<sup>1</sup> "Yee (yea) earth" "The earth"; "also" and "And" are omitted; and "to play" (from the Geneva Bible) takes the place of "to take his pastime."

So, too, in verses 28-29, with the omission of four words, the condensation of three into one ("return" for "are turned again"), and the insertion, from the Great Bible, of "troubled" for "sorrowful,"

<sup>1</sup> "Alle in wisidome made thou tha," says the north-country thirteenth-century Psalter. See *ante*, p. 20.

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the King James translators make Coverdale's work their own :

28. *When thou openest thine honde, they are fylled with good.*

29. *But when thou hydest thy face, they are sorrowful :*

*Yf thou takest awaye their breth, they dye,  
And are turned agayn to their dust.*

It is the magician of style changing diamond into still costlier ruby.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In regard to the passages mentioned above, it may be noted that our Revised Version reads, in v. 16, for "the trees . . . are full of sap," the Genevan phrase "are satisfied." From the same source, the Revised Version, in v. 18, substitutes "The high mountains are for the (wild) goats; the rocks are a refuge for the conies." In v. 25 "Yonder is the sea, great and wide" is apparently new; and in v. 26 "to take his pastime therein" is a return to Coverdale. The Revised Version passes by the contention (see Ewald, *The Psalms*, vol. ii. p. 290, and Wellhausen, *Book of Psalms, Polychrome Bible*, p. 204) that the translation should read, not "to play therein," but "to play *with him*." Very remarkably, the thirteenth-century Psalter just referred to has :

"pis dragoun pat pou made biforn,  
For to plaie with him in skorn."

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## CHAPTER IX

### CHIEFLY OF THE PURITANS

OUT of the bygone time floats the rippling music of a song so old that Anne Boleyn may have listened to it. The words are no profane love-song now, but a tremulous call to a soul which has wandered far from the light :

“ Come home again,  
Come home again,  
Mine own sweet heart, come home again ;  
Ye are gone astray  
Out of your way,  
Therefore, sweet heart, come home again ! ”

This was some of the “ fanatical trash,” as it has been called, which came of the “ foolish custom among the Puritans of moralizing popular songs ” ; and what a tender minor chord it strikes through the controversies of those stern uncompromising spirits !

The King James version had hardly been begun when sore troubles fell upon the Nonconformists in Lincolnshire and the Yorkshire borders, “ a poor people, who had become enlightened by the Word of God.” Forbidden by conscience to “ subscribe,”

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determined to resist "the lordly power of the prelates," they gathered themselves into "a church estate in the fellowship of the Gospel." They were harried by spies day and night; they changed their place of worship Sabbath after Sabbath; at length they felt, like Tindale, that there was no place for them in all England, and they looked sorrowfully across the seas to Holland, "where, they heard, there was freedom of religion for all men." But in 1607 they were not suffered to embark. Flitting silently from their homes in the following spring, they met on the wild heath above Barton. A boat was carrying them out to the ship that lay in the Humber when they were surprised by a body of horse. The women and children upon the shore were seized; but what crime was it that they should wish to go whither their husbands and fathers went? Indeed, when the magistrates came to realize their homelessness and destitution, they were glad enough to let them go whither they would, if only the country were well rid of them.

In the anxious and laborious years spent in the Low Countries the poor exiles suffered patiently, knowing that in truth "they were pilgrims," and "lifting up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, quieted their spirits." As fresh arrivals increased their numbers their thoughts turned wistfully to the New World in that radiant West which has ever



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been the goal of human dreams and longing. The Dutch would willingly have had them settle under their flag, but the ties of race and country were too strong to be broken even by persecution and banishment. They prayed King James for leave to found him a colony beyond the Atlantic and for a royal pledge that they should have religious freedom. "A good and honest purpose," answered James; "and fishing an honest trade, the Apostles' own calling"; but as for the pledge under the broad seal, rites and ceremonies and liberty of conscience were matters on which the prelates of Canterbury and London should be consulted.

But heroic and heart-wringing as it is, we need not linger over the familiar story. On Monday, December the eleventh day (old style), in the year 1620, the explorers from the *May Flower*, of 180 tons, landed on Plymouth Rock. "And for ye season," wrote Bradford the good Elder, in his history of the Plymouth Plantation, "it was winter. . . . What could they see but a hidious & desolate wildernes, full of wild beasts & willd men? and what multituds ther might be of them they knew not. Nether could they, as it were, goe up to ye tope of Pisgah, to vew from this wildernes a more goodly cuntrie. . . . What could now sustaine them but ye spirite of God & his grace?" This was the first outlook on the first continuous

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and permanent English settlement in the New World. As the scene dissolves before our view, it brightens under the spell of the poet. Priscilla sings at her wheel, while

“ Open wide on her lap lies the well-worn Psalm-book of Ainsworth,”

and Miles Standish, with his brazen howitzer on the church-roof, is prepared for any sachem or sagamore of them all,

“ Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon ! ”

“ Had New England been colonized immediately on the discovery of the American continent,” observes Bancroft,<sup>1</sup> “ the old English institutions would have been planted under the powerful influence of the Roman Catholic religion ; had the settlement been made under Elizabeth, it would have been before activity of the popular mind in religion had conducted to a corresponding activity of mind in politics.” God’s days and God’s delays ! —*habet Deus et horas et moras*. “ In the cabin of the *May Flower* humanity recovered its rights, and instituted government on the basis of ‘ equal laws for the general good.’ ”

In spite of all their bitter experience of persecution and exile, these New Englanders, one perceives with astonishment, had acquired for themselves neither

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *History of the United States*, vol. i. pp. 233, 234.

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the charity nor the forbearance which they had claimed from others. Now that they had attained freedom to serve God in their own way, they were as intolerant as their old oppressors had been of all religious views which differed from theirs. Practically they armed religion with that very iniquity of the Two Swords against which they had revolted. Only Puritan church-members were to be admitted to the rights of citizenship. The Book of Common Prayer was anathematized as a violation of the worship of God. It was forbidden to enter Episcopal places of worship. Even the observance of Christmas was made a legal offence.

But that is not the whole case. Let it never be forgotten that New England was a Church in the Wilderness, or in John Quincy Adams' phrase, "the colony of Conscience." In establishing their government, however, they lost sight of a condition which vitiated their claim to be an exclusive Calvinistic State—they owed allegiance to England and were subject to English law. They were not a Free City or an independent commonwealth on the edge of the aboriginal forest ; they used their power as if they were. But if that was their mistake, who that regards the antagonism of parties at home can deny the New Englanders this acknowledgment, that power has rarely been strained for purer purposes, in more exceptional conditions, and with nobler

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results? "Hardly a nation of Europe has as yet made its criminal law so humane as that of early New England."<sup>1</sup> Death, it is true, was the penalty for violation of the sanctity of marriage; death was the penalty of slave-trading, but "the idea was never received that the forfeiture of life may be demanded for the protection of property."<sup>1</sup> Their code was not sullied by horrors and barbarities which disgraced our own until within living memory, and they did not need two centuries to recognize that cruelty to animals was an abomination to be punished. Amid the darkness and confusion raised by the prejudices, errors, and passions of men the Bible was a steady light guiding the builders of this theocracy.

Out of those old times emerge two pioneers whose names should for ever be associated with the forest-days of the Eastern States.

In February 1631 Roger Williams landed at Nantasket—"the first person in modern Christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience."<sup>2</sup> Religious persecution, he boldly declared, was clean contrary to the teaching of Christ. "No one should be bound to worship, or to maintain a worship, against his own consent." Was not then "the labourer worthy of his hire"? Certainly—"from those who hired him." He spoke with derision of church-membership being made a

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, vol. i. p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 282.



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qualification for the magistracy ; did they choose pilots and doctors in that fashion ? On such subversive heterodoxy a Puritan court could come to one decision only. Williams was condemned, and in 1635 sentence of exile was passed at Boston. He was ordered to embark on a ship bound for England, and refused to obey the summons. A pinnace was despatched to Salem for his arrest. He had already fled. He wandered through the wilderness, in the snow of a bitter winter ; without company or guide, often without food or fire ; sheltering and sleeping in a hollow tree. After many sufferings and dangers he was welcomed by the Indians who had learned to honour his justice and courage ; the sachem of the Narragansetts " loved him as his son, to the last gasp."

Beside a spring at the edge of the forest on Rhode Island, which was still unappropriated, he founded a settlement, and called the place Providence. He desired that " it might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience." Preaching to the Indians to his last breath almost, he died in 1683, eighty years old or upwards. Throughout his long life no ungentle word against his persecutors ever passed his lips. Twice he saved them from Indian attacks, but to the end the neighbouring States refused to admit Rhode Island to their league.

In 1631, also, there landed in New England another

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Cambridge University man who settled at Roxbury, near Boston, as minister of a small congregation. He joined Richard Mather and Thomas Welde in the composition of the Bay Psalm-book, which appeared in 1640, the first book printed in America. Six years later he preached to the Mohicans in their own tongue, into which he had translated the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and a great number of Scripture texts. The place on which he stood was called Noonatomen, "Rejoicing," and afterwards became a Christian settlement, and within fourteen years seven townships of "praying Indians" were scattered over Massachusetts. His Mohican translation of the New Testament was published in 1661,<sup>1</sup> and his Old Testament in 1663. Both appeared under one cover as—

*Mamussee Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God  
naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk  
Wusku Testament. Ne quoshkinnumuk  
nashpe Wuttineumoh Christ noh asoowesit  
John Eliot—*

or in literal English: "The whole Holy his-Bible God, both Old Testament and also New Testament. This turned by the-servant-of-Christ, who is called John Eliot." Eliot died at Roxbury in May 1690,

<sup>1</sup> Twenty years before the printing of the first Portuguese New Testament.

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one of the most simple and sweet-natured of the Puritans of New England, and of the most deeply venerated. "There was no one on earth," wrote Richard Baxter, "whom I honoured above him."

While Williams and Eliot were landing on the shores of the New World, this is what was happening in England in the green Huntingdon country. To "a fair house set in a fair garden" children trooped to school from the neighbouring villages. They spent the summer mornings in the gallery, learning the Psalms by heart; in the winter they were warm in a room with a ruddy fire; for every Psalm well conned each small scholar received a penny. All day long and through the night-watches there were devout souls continually reciting the Liturgy of the English Church, the *laus perennis* of consecrated lives. The place seemed a nook of piety and good works preserved by some invisible ring-fence from old and innocent cloister days. The benighted traveller found gracious harbourage. Cordial waters, salves, and balsams relieved the sufferings of the aged and the poor. The little hamlet close by was "mightily changed" in these years. Instead of "naughty or lewd or else vain ballads," the "poetry of David's harp" was sung in the street; and after work fathers and mothers sat in their cottages listening to the children as they read or repeated verses from the Psalms. The

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master of the house, Nicholas Ferrar, wrote for them a harmony of the Gospels and of the Books of Kings and Chronicles. This was Little Gidding.

Perhaps there was but one Little Gidding in all England ; yet who would not rather believe, and on good grounds, that Ferrar's household was an extreme example of the gentle discipline and the domestic pieties which endeared many little country manor-houses to the villages near them ?

Nicholas Ferrar was one of those heavenly souls, the "sweet reasonableness" of whose mysticism and asceticism proved that the Anglican Church had preserved room within its borders for all that was most beautiful and ennobling in the lives of the old saints. One passage in his biography reads indeed as though it were a page from the *Fioretti* or the *Silva Gadelica*. Once when he was on his travels he was detained in quarantine on the Venetian boundary, but was allowed the freedom of the mountains. It was the holy season of Lent. In the morning he ascended to the high slopes of wild thyme and rosemary with a book or two, and there he spent the day with God, in reading, meditation and prayer. At sunset he came down to the small hill-town for his only meal—bread and a little fish and oil ; retired after evening-prayers and rose from his sleep for his midnight devotions. The "Little Brother" on



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Alvernia scarcely lived in greater or more blessed austerity.

It was in 1625, at the age of thirty-two, that he settled at Little Gidding with his mother and the families of his brother and brother-in-law ; and here, doubtless, on an early day in March 1633, " the good Mr. Edmund Duncon," whom he had sent as a spiritual consoler to Bemerton, brought back George Herbert's dying message, and perhaps even the news of his death. Herbert was one of Ferrar's disciples, or at least had been drawn by his persuasion to the priestly life. In 1630 he had married a young relative of the Earl of Danby, whom her father had long intended for him, and three months later, in the green April which comes to the great trees among the brimming Wiltshire streams, they settled in the rectory of Bemerton. Hard by was the great house of Wilton with its ancient monastic memories ; in a gap of the woods gleamed Salisbury spire not so far away but that the passionate musician might twice a week refresh his soul with the Cathedral services. Three blissful years, and then the end came.

" Sir," said the dying priest to Mr. Duncon, " I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Ferrar, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have past betwixt God and my soul before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master. . . . If he can think it may turn to the

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advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public." It was *The Church : Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (it was Ferrar who gave it the title by which it is now known, *The Temple*)—that book of "divinest love," of which Crashaw wrote :

" When your hands untie these strings,  
Think yo' have an anrell by the wings."

The volume was at once published.<sup>1</sup> Within forty years ten editions were issued. It was one of the books which King Charles read in prison.

Herbert was a model of conformity. " Though he abounded in private devotions," Ferrar writes, " yet he went every morning and evening with his familie to the Church ; and by his example, exhortations, and encouragements, drew the greater part of his parishioners to accompanie him dayly in the public celebration of divine service." Yet it may be doubted if he had any but kind words for those who did not accompany him. Judging by his poem " The British Church," his only feeling was one of pity

<sup>1</sup> Asked for his licence to print, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge demurred to the lines :

" Religion stands a-tiptoe in our land,  
Ready to pass to the American strand."

Ferrar refused to withdraw them, and the Vice-Chancellor gave way : " I knew Mr. Herbert well, and know that he had many heavenly speculations, and was a divine poet ; but I hope the world will not take him to be an inspired prophet."

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("What those misse!") both for "Her on the hills,  
who

"Hath kissed so long her painted shrines,"

and for "Her of the valley, who

"is so shie

Of dressing, that her hair doth lie  
About her eares."

One of his most haunting poems is that in which he recalls the divine manifestations of the Old Dispensation :

"Sweet were the dayes, when thou didst lodge with Lot,  
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,  
Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not  
Encounter Moses strong complaints and mone :  
Thy words were then, *Let me alone.*

One might have sought, and found thee presently  
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well :  
Is my God this way ? No, they would reply :  
He is to Sinai gone, as we heard tell :  
List, ye may heare great Aarons bell."

"Next God," Ferrar wrote of him, "he loved that which God himselfe hath magnified above all things, that is, His Word : so as he hath been heard to make solemne protestation, that he would not part with one leaf thereof for the whole world, if it were offered him in exchange."

In the succession of those serene spirits, let us remember Henry Vaughan, the young doctor, peacefully going his rounds, during the Civil War, among

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the Welsh peasantry in the Brecknock Hills, and seeing his *Silex Scintillans* through the press in 1650—the very year in which Christian England was enriched by the publication of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, Fuller's *Pisgah-Sight of Palestine*, and Baxter's *Saint's Everlasting Rest*. In the neighbouring county of Hereford was the still younger Rector of Crednell, Thomas Traherne. The two may have known each other; certainly the latter knew and loved Vaughan's poems, and among them, it may be, these lines :

### TO THE HOLY BIBLE

“ O Book ! Life's guide ! how shall we part,  
And thou so long seized of my heart ?  
Take this last kiss ; and let me weep  
True thanks to thee before I sleep.

Thou wert the first put in my hand  
When yet I could not understand,  
And daily didst my young eyes lead  
To letters, till I learnt to read.

But as rash youths, when once grown strong,  
Fly from their nurses to the throng,  
Where they new consorts choose, and stick  
To those till either hurt or sick ;  
So with that first light gain'd from thee  
Ran I in chase of vanity,  
Cried dross for gold, and never thought  
My first cheap book had all I sought.  
Long reign'd this vogue ; and thou, cast by,  
With meek dumb looks didst woo mine eye,  
And oft left open, would'st convey  
A sudden and most searching ray



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Into my soul, with whose quick touch  
Refining still, I struggled much.  
By this mild art of love at length  
Thou overcam'st my sinful strength,  
And having brought me home, didst there  
Shew me that pearl I sought elsewhere.

Living, thou wert my soul's sure ease,  
And dying mak'st me go in peace ;  
Thy next effects no tongue can tell ;  
Farewell, O book of God ! farewell ! "

As for Traherne, the works of the most clairvoyant of the poets of infancy lay forgotten in manuscript for over two centuries, and have at length seen the light in our own days.

In the heart of the Churchman, as in the heart of the Nonconformist, the Bible was everywhere, and, notwithstanding their failure to realize the ideal of One Fold and One Shepherd, it was their common standard of belief and conduct.

In the late thirties, while life in " the fair garden " went on in mystic serenity, the rest of the country was in turmoil over " privileges," " prelacy," " ship-money," and like matters. Numbers of people were emigrating to the Puritan settlements ; numbers more were preparing to go. Then suddenly the policy which in 1618 required the Lancashire Puritans to conform or leave the kingdom was changed, and the Puritans were ordered to conform because they should not leave the kingdom. In 1638—Nicholas Ferrar was then cold in his grave—

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Hampden and Cromwell, it is said, were actually embarked for the New World when the ships were stopped by an order of the Privy Council. It is a disputed point, but conceive what a difference it would have involved for the future of this country, and indeed for the future of the world, had Hampden and Cromwell left these shores in 1638.

Out of the stirring and complex life of England these events and persons arise like pictures in a dream; to understand the forces and conditions which produced them we turn to the broad movements of the period, and especially to that implacable struggle for the liberties of the people which was closed at last in appalling tragedy at Whitehall.

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## CHAPTER X

### DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS—AND MEN

WHEN James I. ascended the throne of England it was with pretensions far beyond the conception of the most powerful and arbitrary of his predecessors. He claimed to be monarch absolute, king by a divine sanction which it was impious to question ; a sovereign whose power and caprice were not to be limited even by his own most solemn oaths. Rights, properly speaking, the nation had none. Constitutional liberties, the very laws themselves, were in their nature privileges and conventions conceded out of grace, maintained by his will, and liable to be withdrawn at his discretion.

In Scotland his theory of divine right was checked by the claims of an authority which asserted an origin as sacred and unassailable as his own. Within its spiritual boundaries the Kirk derived from no earthly power, acknowledged no head but Christ, and owed obedience to no mandate but the Bible. To his chagrin James discovered that Scottish Presbytery agreed as well with Monarchy "as God and the Devil." In England the headship of

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the Church, inherited from the Tudors, placed in his grasp the spiritual authority which completed his system of Kingship. It was the rancorous memories of a little nature which prompted his bullying of the Puritans at Hampton Court, and his gracious treatment of the Bishops was due to his pleased recognition of the use he could make of the Establishment. The Prelates, on their side, were as quick-witted to see the advantage offered by the new order of things. Of their religious sincerity and their zeal there can be no doubt, but a more purely spiritual outlook might have revealed the danger of too close an association with the Crown, and a due sense of their office ought to have preserved them from the indiscretion with which they courted the royal favour. The indecent flattery of Whitgift and Bancroft ("Majesty speaking by special assistance of God's spirit"—"Such a king, as since Christ, had not been seen") degenerated into the subservience of Convocation in upholding "divine right" and the duty of implicit obedience, and passed into the sycophancy which did not hesitate to place people and Parliament at the King's disposal. Might not a heaven-appointed sovereign take what money he needed without all this voting in Parliament? "God forbid, sir, but that you should," acquiesced the supple Neile of Lincoln; "you are the breath of our nostrils." The King's pithy



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phrase, "No Bishop, no King," became the catchword of the Church party. Long afterwards people saw that it cut with a double edge.<sup>1</sup>

If hitherto the differences which separated the Puritans from the Church had been matters for compromise and accommodation, and complaints of the "burden of human rites and ceremonies," time speedily revealed the real character of their disagreement. The vivid light cast upon doctrine and Church polity by the new generation of theologians laid bare a divergence in dogma which was radical and irremediable. No concessions could harmonize a system which rested on belief in "election" with one founded upon "baptismal regeneration." Furthermore, now that England was safe from the intrigues of the Papacy and the Romanist Powers, the mass of the people naturally swung back to the brighter and more cultured form of religion. The Puritan, irritated by repression and soured by disappointment, insisted with grim tenacity on his rigid and narrow creed, while the Anglican, reviewing his position in the Church Catholic, reclaimed from his historic heritage ancient observances and gracious pieties which had been too hastily discarded.

<sup>1</sup> There were bishops and bishops. On James's referring the point to Launcelot Andrewes, "I think, sir," answered that saintly and most winsome-mannered prelate, "it is lawful for you to take my brother Neile's money, for he offers it."

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And indeed Puritanism in its morose enthusiasm had invested itself with an austerity which estranged many good and earnest men from its sturdy rectitude and its unflinching adherence to its conception of the Divine Will. In its thirst after righteousness it hedged life about with an hallucination of wickedness. "It was a sin to hang garlands on a Maypole, to drink a friend's health, to fly a hawk, to hunt a stag, to play at chess, to wear lovelocks, to put starch into a ruff, to touch the virginals, to read the *Faery Queen*." There might never have been minstrelsy at Cana, and it was as though Christ had not filled the water-pots with wine. On the other hand the Sunday was turned into a Jewish Sabbath, in flat opposition to the injunctions of Luther and Calvin; children were christened with Old Testament names; and "fierce and gloomy spirits brooded over acts which were assuredly not recorded as examples for our imitation."<sup>1</sup>

From the outset James's project was the extinction of popular liberty. Such a sense of trouble was in the air that at the opening of his first Parliament, in 1604, the House of Commons was thronged with members. The Commons wished for peace and a good understanding with the King, but they were in no temper to bate a jot of their constitutional freedom. In answer to the address from the Throne, the Speaker reminded his Majesty that the high court

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i. pp. 60, 61.

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of Parliament alone had power to legislate, and that every bill must pass the two Houses before it could be submitted to his pleasure. The warning was disregarded, and the outstanding fact in the long and stormy session was the presentation of a "Form of Apology," in which the Commons drew the King's attention to points on which he had been misinformed.

Their privileges and liberties, they declared, were theirs of right and inheritance, just as much as their lands and goods ; and the formal request made at the beginning of Parliament for their enjoyment of them was an act of good manners. The high court of Parliament had no rival whatever in authority or dignity ; with the royal assent it gave laws to other courts, it received laws and orders from none. Irregularities which it was intended to rectify had been passed over in the last reign in consideration of the Queen's age, but in this Parliament not privileges alone, but the whole liberty of the realm had been constantly "hewed at." In the matter of religion, his Majesty would be misled if he were informed that "the Kings of England have any absolute power in themselves, either to alter religion (which God forbend should be in the power of any mortal man whatsoever), or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than—as in temporal causes—by consent of Parliament."

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Firm and outspoken, the "Apology" of the Commons marked out the limits on which every encroachment would be resisted, and James thoroughly understood the force of the opposition which was massed behind it. "I had rather live like a hermit in the forest," was his angry exclamation, "than be a King over such a people that the pack of Puritans are that overrule the Lower House."

Two more uneasy sessions, and James dispensed altogether with his "pack of Puritans," took affairs into his own hands, and for two and a half years imposed taxes at his will. A financial crisis compelled him to summon Parliament in 1610, and once more he was confronted by an unyielding opposition. His impositions were declared illegal, and a bill, which was thrown out by the Lords, was passed to prevent their recurrence. The attempt to make new laws by royal proclamation was challenged, and the Judges pronounced that there was no power in the courts of High Commission and Star Chamber to create new offences or impose fines and imprisonment. "The King," they added, "had no prerogative but what the law of the land allowed him." Then so great a storm was raised by the absolutist doctrines contained in a new Law Dictionary, published under the patronage of Archbishop Bancroft, that the King himself was fain to order the suppression of the book. At last in the deadlock caused by the refusal to grant supplies



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until grievances had been redressed, Parliament was dissolved, and for three more years James went on his reckless way.

The expenses of his extravagant and profligate court were met by loans, arrears of fines, payment of old debts, and the sale of Crown lands, peerages, and the newly-devised hereditary order of the baronetage; but the revenue fell far short of his requirements, and in 1614 he was driven once more to Parliament for money. The Commons would grant nothing until arbitrary taxation had been made impossible. In a little over two months the Houses were angrily dismissed, and four conspicuous members were sent to the Tower.

Forced loans, monopolies, fines, and the exaction of old feudal dues enabled the King to play the autocrat for another six years. The hierarchy came to his aid with a handsome tribute. The court and the great nobles followed their example, and thereupon the authorities in the counties were invited to see to it that a similar voluntary gift or "benevolence" was raised from the kingdom at large.

With a silenced Parliament and an obsequious nobility and episcopate, the King had little restraint to fear except from the integrity of the Judicature. On the plea that he had the right to interpose in matters that touched the royal prerogative, he ordered delay in an ecclesiastical case which was being heard

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by all the twelve judges. They decided unanimously that his interference was contrary to the law, and proceeded to judgment. James was furious. The judges were cited before his Council, and he rated them soundly on their audacious disregard of his prerogative. The Chief Justice, Sir Edward Coke, alone defended their action, and when a pledge was demanded that in future the course of justice should be delayed when he saw good, Coke alone had the courage of his conscience : " When such a case should come before him, he would do what was fitting for a judge to do." <sup>1</sup> Within a few weeks the Chief Justice was severely censured and dismissed from his office.

Once again, in January 1621, the King was compelled to recognize Parliament. He made some show of conciliation, but the Commons were intent on the suppression of abuses. Their ancient right of impeachment was revived. The judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and the Bishop of Llandaff were charged with corrupt practices, and even the King's great minister, Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor, was brought to bar, convicted of receiving bribes, and irretrievably ruined. Reprisals were made on members of the House, but late in the year James was set beside himself by a petition which denounced the growth of Popery, called for the suppression of the Jesuits, and glancing at the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Taswell-Langmead, *English Constitutional History*, pp. 405-461.

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posed match with the Infanta of Spain, prayed the King to seek a Protestant princess for his son.

Before the petition could be presented he imperiously forbade the Commons "to meddle with mysteries of State" and matters far above their reach. They must not presume to speak of his son's marriage or to reflect on any ally of his. He preferred to describe their "ancient undoubted rights" as liberties and privileges conceded by the grace of his ancestors, and these he would respect, unless they compelled him to retrench them by their infringement of his prerogative.

The Commons were at once in a blaze. On December 18 they recorded in their Journals of the House their Protestation that "the liberties, franchises, privileges and jurisdiction of Parliament were the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England"; that the House was within its rights in discussing, when and how it willed, all matters regarding the King, the State, the Church, the defence of the realm, the maintenance and making of laws and the redress of mischiefs; that its members in taking part in its business were entitled to liberty of speech and freedom from molestation, and if the word or act of any were impugned, the King should not give credence to any private charge until the House had laid the merits of the case before him.

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It was the boldest and most complete assertion of rights that the Commons had yet made. James sent for the Journals, tore out the Protestation with his own hand, dissolved Parliament, and arrested Sir Edward Coke and half a dozen other members. When the Houses were summoned again in 1624 the Spanish marriage had been dropped and James was preparing to espouse the Protestant cause in the Palatinate. For the first time in twenty years King and people met without aggression or bitter resentment. It was James's last Parliament. In March 1625 he died.

During those twenty years the hierarchy had identified the interests of the Church with the pretensions of the sovereign. Conformity had been rigorously enforced. In 1604 alone three hundred of the Puritan clergy had been silenced, imprisoned or exiled. Trifling acts were prosecuted as grave offences. The powers of the High Commission were strained and exceeded. Persistent efforts were made to place the Church courts beyond the control of the Common Law. The reverence and sombre quiet of "the Sabbath" were deliberately invaded by the royal "Book of Sports," which was ordered to be read in the churches. Life in many places was made so intolerable that, as we have seen, loyal and God-fearing men fled the country. Bishop Andrewes, indeed, "who was accustomed to use copes and







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lights and incense, and the mixed chalice and wafer bread at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist,"<sup>1</sup> enforced no more than a fitting decency in public worship, and in various parishes a similar moderation was wisely observed, but in the main the Prelates were as ready as the King to claim for their system a divine origin.

James did not restrict his schemes of kingcraft and prelacy to England. It was still early days when the Scottish Presbyteries detected "the horns of his mitre weel enough"—signs as odious to them, to use Scott's expression, "as the horns of the Pope's tiara, or those of Satan himself." In 1605 he assumed the right to summon and dissolve the General Assemblies of the Church. The right was contested, and several contumacious ministers were banished the kingdom. Five years later he succeeded in instituting a dozen bishoprics, and Geneva cloaks brushed with disgust against Anglican lawn sleeves. In 1617 he visited Scotland, and took with him as one of his chaplains Dr. Laud, whom he had recently made Dean of Gloucester.

From that brusque and impatient extremist the King was little likely to receive counsels of prudence or tact. His innovations were pressed forward in the face of opposition and discontent. Gilded

<sup>1</sup> Wakeman, *History of the Church of England*, p. 362.

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statues of the Apostles appeared in the old Chapel Royal at Holyrood, which was to be the model for all parish churches. An altar was set up, and upon it were placed two closed Bibles, two empty chalices, and two candlesticks with candles unlighted ; and the dour Presbyterian promptly put his own meaning on what he saw :

*Cur stant clausi Anglis libri duo regia in ara—*

“ Why stand there on the royal altar high  
Two closed books, blind lights, two basins dry ?  
Doth England hold God’s mind and worship close,  
Blind of her sight, and buried of her dross ? ”

His most radical piece of work was setting in train the enactment of the Five Articles, which introduced Kneeling at the Communion, Private Communion, Private Baptism, Confirmation, and the observance of Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter, and Whitsuntide, all of which, as involving questions of dogma, were of fundamental significance. The Scottish Parliament gave its sanction to the Articles in 1618.

Before that year closed James had perpetrated one of the meanest and most dastardly acts that ever blotted the memory of a king.

On a keen October morning—the scaffold white with hoar-frost, Old Castle Yard humming with an immense crowd, adjacent windows filled with spectators of high rank—the last of the great Eliza-



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bethan adventurers laid his grey head on the block. Generations seemed to have come and gone since this old man spread his silk cloak in the mud for a queen to step on. Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, Sidney and Spenser and Shakespeare had all passed into the same shadows as the Virgin Queen. "We have not such another head to cut off," said Master Wiemark. How those brilliant and stirring years must have thronged to his memory after his wife had parted from him at midnight, and he sat alone with his Bible open before him. And it may well have been that his last and best recollection was of his half-brother, Humphrey Gilbert, reading in the stormy light of his last evening and bidding his crew be of good cheer. In those silent hours before his execution, Raleigh wrote his farewell lines in the book to which he had turned for strength and tranquillity of heart :

" Even such is Time, that takes in trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with age and dust ;  
Who in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days.  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up I trust."

James's death in March 1625 was followed by a sigh of relief ; but the hopes with which people looked forward to the new reign were

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bitterly disappointed. Charles's first Parliament had not sat two months when it was dissolved in a fit of royal impatience with the persistent discussion of grievances, and the King betook himself to his father's lawless methods for supplies. With a daring adroitness the Bishops availed themselves of his coronation to consecrate his pretensions to absolute power, and to assert the spiritual supremacy of their own order. As the usual ceremonies were brought to a close, and the King stood crowned and robed in white instead of the purple of his predecessors, he was addressed in the following terms : " Stand and hold fast from henceforth the place to which you have been heir by the succession of your forefathers, being now delivered to you by the authority of Almighty God, and by the hands of us and all the bishops and servants of God. And as you see the clergy to come nearer the altar than others, so remember that, in all places convenient, you give them greater honour ; that the Mediator of God and man may establish you on the kingly throne, to be a mediator between the clergy and the laity, and that you may reign for ever with Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

This amazing exhortation, which was attributed to Dr. Laud, was in keeping with the hardihood of that astute and masterful spirit. The struggle between King and people, prerogative and law,

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despotism and civil and religious liberty was renewed without disguise and carried on without respite.

The second Parliament was summoned and dissolved as abruptly as the first, and more arrogantly. Charles was recklessly upheld by the prelates in his illegal expedients for raising money. The pulpits resounded with the duty of complete and loyal obedience and denunciation of the seditious and impious doctrines which would limit the absolute sovereignty of the King. The sermons of these truckling divines were printed and scattered broadcast, and the preachers were marked out for honour and preferment. Opposition of any kind fell little short of high treason. Even the Primate, Archbishop Abbot, who refused to license one of these sermons, was ordered to retire to Canterbury and resign his authority to a commission of bishops.<sup>1</sup>

In the third Parliament, summoned from dire necessity in March 1628, the Commons drew up the famous Petition of Right, which insisted on the ancient heritage of free Englishmen — safety from imprisonment except through process of law, absolute property in their goods and estate, and freedom from tax and charge unless imposed with the consent of Parliament. The Upper House attempted to insert

<sup>1</sup> One of the revisers of the Authorized Version; a man of the old Church and a Puritan, compared with Laud. He was restored to favour in 1628. See p. 127.

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a servile reference to the King's "sovereign power"; the Commons refused to budge a hair's-breadth beyond the law. "Magna Charta is such a fellow," declared Sir Edward Coke, "that he will have no 'sovereign,'" and Sir Henry Martyn assured the Lords that the Commons knew what language had been used, on less provocation, by their predecessors. *Their* turn was not served with less than sharp inquiry as to the violators of their liberties—banishment of some, execution of others, demands for more freedom, with "other provisions written in blood." The present House, urged on daily though it was with grievous complaints from all parts, had been studiously temperate and restrained. The King's assent was wrung from him. Still it was a concession, and the people expressed their satisfaction by a blaze of bonfires and a revel of joy-bells.

Upon Laud, who within three years had been advanced from the see of St. David's to Bath and Wells, and thence to London, the menacing reminder of what the Commons had done on less provocation had the effect of a challenge. Before the year was out he issued a new edition of the Thirty-Nine Articles with a Declaration repudiating the right of Parliament to meddle with religious questions. These were reserved for the decision of the King as Head of the Church, and for the consideration of Convocation acting with his permission and approval. Hence-



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forth no man should either in writing or preaching put any interpretation of his own on the Articles ; they were to be taken in their literal and obvious sense.

When Parliament reassembled early in 1629 the Puritan blood in the Commons had kindled to a dangerous heat. The only valid meaning of the Articles had been determined by themselves, and it was resolved to summon the authors of innovations to the bar of the House. In the Eastern Church, Sir John Eliot told them, men rose to their feet at the recital of the Creed in testimony of their intent to maintain it not only with their bodies upright, but with their swords drawn. "Give me leave," added the fearless knight, "to call that a custom very commendable." Francis Rous called upon them to make a vow and covenant to hold fast thenceforth their God and their Gospel. Let a man meet a dog alone, and the dog's fearful, however fierce its nature ; but if the dog have his master with him, he will set upon the man from whom he fled before. At *their* back they had Omnipotence.

The session closed in a scene of violence and uproar. In the matter of illegal taxation the King would not have his officers called to account, and ordered the adjournment of the House. The formal motion was received with a storm of "Noes." The Speaker stated that he was under his Majesty's absolute

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command to stop all debate, and left the chair. He was seized and forced back to his place, broke away, and after a struggle was held down in his seat. "God's wounds!" exclaimed Denzil Holles, "you shall sit till we please to rise." The door of the Chamber was locked; members rose in hot and confused debate; and at last as the royal guard approached to force an entrance, a threefold resolution was passed by acclamation. Innovators in religion, promoters of false doctrine, and all concerned in the irregular levy of tonnage and poundage were declared capital enemies of the kingdom, while merchants and others who voluntarily paid these duties were pronounced betrayers of the liberties of England. Adjournment was voted by the House itself, the door was flung open, and an usher of the Lords removed the mace by the King's command.

Parliament was dissolved with most unkingly threats, leading members were imprisoned, the Constitution was practically suspended and the Great Charter torn to shreds. For eleven years Charles sowed the dragon's teeth of a disastrous autocracy. Royal proclamations took the place of Acts of Parliament. Obsolete laws and obligations were revived and rigorously enforced. The High Commission enjoined what was not enjoined by law, and prohibited what was not prohibited, and the Star Chamber inflicted its arbitrary penalties. Capital

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punishment and confiscation were the only matters left for decision in the ordinary courts of justice.

The hierarchy flourished in the sunshine of royal favour. With a lack of foresight which seemed almost a fatality, the King was conscious of no danger in the growth of a system which ascribed its authority to an origin as sacred and a sanction as indefeasible as those to which he ascribed his own. The Bishops improved their opportunity. They had flouted the control of Parliament ; they denied to the profane laity the right of private judgment in any spiritual question. They restored on their own responsibility such forms and practices as harmonized with their own theology. By degrees they encroached on the functions of the executive and assumed judicial power in courts of their own. The patience of the people and of many of the clergy was driven to the uttermost. Incumbents were ejected for refusing to read the "Book of Sports" from the pulpit. Attempts were made to impose oaths on churchwardens, and to turn them into spies and delators. The Geneva Bible, with its Calvinistic annotations, fell under Laud's ban, and its importation was stopped. The peaceful industries of the thrifty Walloon and French colonies were disturbed by orders that the third generation should abandon the worship of their fathers and conform to the Anglican. So strong was the antipathy of the new Primate to the

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Reformed Churches on the Continent that the English ambassador at Paris was instructed "to withdraw himself from the communion of the Huguenots," and the ritual of the Establishment was prescribed to troops on foreign service and the houses of merchant adventurers and companies trading abroad. He was well aware of the continual exodus of men and women who held the Gospel dearer even than their native land; he observed the growth of the recusant colonies beyond the Atlantic, and in April 1637 a proclamation was issued to restrain the emigration of Puritans.

More deplorable than the subservience and intolerance of these successors of the Apostles, more hateful than even their betrayal of the liberties of the nation, was their tyrannous and vindictive abuse of power.

In 1630 Alexander Leighton, a Presbyterian divine, was tried by the Star Chamber, fined £10,000, unfrocked, and sentenced to be whipped and set in the pillory, to have his ears cropped, his nose slit, his cheeks branded with "S.S." ("Sower of Sedition"), and to be imprisoned for life. His offence was the publication of "Sion's Plea against Prelacie," a coarse attack on the Bishops as satellites of despotism, and an appeal to Parliament to resist dissolution and rid the King of evil counsellors.

But even the powers of Star Chamber did not satisfy



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the overweening ruthlessness of the Prelates. In the case of Prynne, a bigoted Puritan lawyer, Bastwick, a Colchester physician, and Burton, a London rector, they proposed to prosecute on a charge of high treason. In his *Histrio-mastix*, an interminable attack on stage - plays, May - games, and other ungodly hilarities, Prynne was supposed to have glanced at the Queen's appearance in a court-masque ; Burton had charged Wren, the Bishop of Norwich, with Romanizing ; Bastwick, in prison for his *Scourge of Bishops*, had fiercely assailed his prosecutors. The Judges, who with few exceptions had justified the illegalities of the King, were still courageous enough to deny the "divine right" of Bishops. The offenders were dealt with by Star Chamber, fined, branded, mutilated, and banished to Scilly and the Channel Islands.

Worse still in its personal malignity was the persecution of John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln. A pre-eminent scholar and theologian, a broad-minded statesman, a tolerant priest, Williams had succeeded Bacon as Lord-Keeper. He obtained for Laud his first promotion from King James, and had afterwards incurred his implacable enmity. The Bishop was charged with divulging secrets of the Privy Council, committed to the Tower, and fined £10,000. In stripping his palace at Lincoln, the officers found thrown aside certain letters from Dr. Osbaldeston,

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master of Westminster School, in which allusions to "a little great man" and "a little urchin" applied, very obviously, to Laud, who was now Archbishop. The great little man was stung to fury. His old benefactor was arraigned because he had not turned informer, fined £8000 (£5000 to go to the King and £3000 to the Primate), imprisoned during pleasure, and suspended from his sacred office. A similar sentence was passed on Osbaldeston, who would have had his ears nailed to the pillory, before his school, had he not hastily left town, and, as he wittily put it, "gone beyond Canterbury."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile events were moving towards the inevitable crisis.

Hampden was tried by the Court of Exchequer, and Charles secured a dearly-bought victory in his condemnation. People of all classes had submitted to the burden of "ship-money" and other exactions, in the certainty that as a last resort they could obtain relief from the law. The Exchequer Judges held office at the King's pleasure. There were twelve. Two alone flatly pronounced the tax illegal; three were for acquittal for technical reasons: the rest upheld the inherent and absolute authority of the Crown, which, they declared, no Act of Parliament could

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Williams was released by the Long Parliament, became Archbishop of York in 1641, and, it is pleasant to add, held Conway Castle for the King in the Civil War, and after his execution died a broken-hearted man in 1650.

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limit or contravene. Men heard themselves, their liberties and their possessions surrendered "by sworn judges of the law, upon such grounds as every bystander was able to swear were not law."

The mischievous effects of this perversion of justice were soon to be visible enough in public affairs, but already a more formidable trouble was growing to a head north of the Border.

At his coronation in Scotland in 1633 Charles had highly displeased the Presbyterians by his pressure on the Scottish Bishops to use the richer vestments of the English prelates, and Laud given still greater offence by his insolent bearing. Little heed was paid to their discontent either by the King or the Archbishop, who knew nothing of the dour piety of the Scots, and whose aim was to assimilate the Kirk to the Anglican model in discipline and liturgy. In 1635 a code of ordinances, drawn up by the Archbishop, was issued without the consent of Parliament or of the General Assembly. It was received with resentment, but there was no show of opposition. The new liturgy followed in 1636. For the most part it was the same as that of the Church of England; where it differed, it was considered to be a nearer approach to "the abominations of Popery." Still there was no sign of hostility.

Sunday, July 23, 1637, was appointed for the introduction of the new service. The High Church of St.

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Giles, Edinburgh, was thronged. As the Collect for the day was announced, "the serving-maids began such a tumult as was never heard of since the Reformation." A stool was flung at the Dean's head; the women tore the surplice from his back; the voice of the Bishop was drowned by wild cries of "A Pape! A Pape! Antichrist! pull him down!" and stones crashed through the windows. The magistrates with difficulty cleared the church, and the Bishop owed his life to the Lord Privy Seal, whose escort bore him through the rabble with drawn swords.

A spirit of revolt flamed over the Lowlands; the liturgy was denounced from the pulpits; before the end of the year most of the gentry and members of the nobility had joined the movement, and the nation settled down into an inflexible resolve to put an end to the innovations of Prelacy. The King was fully informed of the inflammable temper of the people, but he was as passionately determined to have his will. On February 19, 1638, he issued a proclamation in which he condoned all past offences and called for a submissive acquiescence in the use of the Prayer Book.

Scotland was not slow to answer. Nine days later multitudes from all parts poured into Edinburgh to subscribe the National Covenant. Greyfriars Church was packed, the churchyard crowded. The great parchment on which was engrossed their protest



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against innovations which had no warrant in Scripture, and tended to the subversion and ruin of the true Reformed religion and of their liberties, laws and estates, was read in a loud voice, and a forest of right hands was uplifted and many faces were wet with tears as the congregation swore " by the great name of the Lord our God " to stand fast in that religion and to defend it to the uttermost. Hour passed after hour and still the signing of the Covenant proceeded ; the brief winter day darkened ; it was almost eight o'clock when the last names were inscribed by the light of flares and lanterns among the tombstones of the churchyard. Copies of the document were carried through the towns and villages, and rich and poor, young men and greybeards, women and lads set their hands to the oath in thousands and tens of thousands.

The King had aroused a nation which was neither to be quelled by threats nor appeased by tardy concessions. The General Assembly of the Church, convoked with his reluctant assent and summarily dissolved by his commissioners, refused to close their sittings till they had done their work as " the Council of Christ." Episcopacy was abolished. The Bishops were deposed ; all prelatial Acts, Articles, Canons from the accession of King James were annulled, and the Covenant was imposed throughout Scotland under pain of excommunication.

There was no course left but an appeal to the

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sword. The opposing armies came into touch among the low hills of Berwickshire—the English forces fairly matched by the Covenanters, whose camp glittered with new colours bearing the Scottish arms and the motto wrought in gold, “For Christ’s Crown and Covenant.” At the supreme moment the encounter seemed so hazardous, the consequences of defeat so disastrous, that Charles entered into negotiations, and on June 18, 1639, a treaty was signed by which a General Assembly and Scottish Parliament were to be convened at once for the settlement of ecclesiastical differences. It was an incredible arrangement. The General Assembly immediately confirmed the acts of its predecessor; Parliament stipulated for regular meetings and greater freedom of debate, and was on the point of ratifying the decisions of the Assembly when it was incontinently prorogued.

His forces disbanded, his treasury empty, Charles was compelled to summon his fourth Parliament at Westminster. It met in mid-April 1640. The King pressed for instant supplies to renew the war, and promised time for the consideration of grievances afterwards. But the Commons had not forgotten the broken faith and violence of eleven years ago. “Let us do what may be done with reason and honesty to comply with the King’s desires,” said Waller the poet, “but let us first give new force to

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the old laws for maintaining our rights and liberties. . . . The kings of this nation have always governed by parliaments ; but now divines would persuade us that a monarch must be absolute, and that he may do all things *ad libitum* ”—“ pulpit-law ” which they would do well to make an end of. The King offered to forego the prerogative of “ Ship-money ” for subsidies amounting to £850,000. The House refused to be blackmailed, and in a gust of wrath Parliament was dissolved after a session of three weeks.

The old methods of violence and lawlessness were resumed. Convocation, irregularly empowered to sit during pleasure, imposed new oaths and more vexatious canons, and voted a grant of £20,000. The King again took the field, but the Covenanters did not await his attack. Crossing the Border, they routed the Royalists at Newburn-on-Tyne, and occupied Newcastle. Once more, in his extremity, Charles had recourse to a treaty. Writs were issued for a new Parliament ; Hampden and Pym rode through the counties rousing the electors to return fearless men ; the harried Puritans, on the eve of emigration, put off their departure “ in expectation of a new world ” at their own doors.

November 3, 1640, saw the opening of the Long Parliament, that memorable assembly “ which, in spite of many errors and disasters, is justly entitled

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to the reverence and gratitude of all who, in any part of the world, enjoy the blessings of constitutional government.”<sup>1</sup> Before the session opened “a marvellous elated countenance” was observed in most of the members; caution and swift decision marked the proceedings in the House itself. In a few weeks all the chief Ministers of the Crown had been swept from their places; within fifteen months provision had been made for triennial parliaments, control of taxation had been secured, Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission abolished, and the Bishops excluded from the House of Peers. It would have been a happy consummation had the Commons been content with the recovery of their constitutional rights and not suffered themselves to be hurried into reprisals more detestable than the tyranny from which they had suffered.

In that tremendous reversal of power one of the first to pay the penalty of oppression was the Archbishop. A man of fervent piety and unquestioned private virtues, he did more than any of the King’s advisers to incite the King’s pretensions to a divinely sanctioned despotism, to subvert the constitution, to destroy liberty of conscience. He would declare “no tenet that might shut any Christian out of heaven,” yet he would tolerate no form of worship but his own. He had in his view the world’s

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i. p. 72.



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supreme warning against the union of spiritual and temporal dominion, yet all the public evil, like all the good, of his life was aimed to eke out the curse of the priest with the sword of the king. Anti-papal as he sincerely believed himself to be, two offers of the cardinal's hat probably imply the most correct estimate of the ultimate results of his policy. The desire of his heart was the triumphant mission of the Church—with this hyssop sprinkle his memory.

The Archbishop was impeached in March 1641. For nearly four years he lay a prisoner in the Tower. In the end he was sentenced not by judicial process but by the decision of Parliament. It was not a vindication of justice, but the revenge of vindictive power. On January 10, 1645, he died fearlessly loyal to the Church, "in whose bosom he was born and baptized"—"poor grey old little Laud."

Were these things, and the worse that followed, the outcome of no more than a wretched quarrel over clothes and ceremonies? "To the disgrace of that age and of this island, it must be acknowledged that the disorders in Scotland entirely, and those in England mostly, proceeded from so mean and contemptible an origin."<sup>1</sup> Must it?

Ask the Puritan. He looks back; he sees the shameful burning of the dead and the poor ashes

<sup>1</sup> Hume, *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 220.

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cast into the Swift ; he sees the harrying of the Lollards, the strangling of Tindale as the reeds and brushwood are kindled, the martyr-fires at Oxford and Smithfield ; he knows the cost at which he was enabled to call his soul his own, and behind the pageant of " lawn sleeves and embroidered copes " he descries the two swords of the Papacy.

Ask the Covenanter. His memory harks back to 1406 when John Resby, Englishman and Wycliffe preacher, was burned at Perth. He recalls the perilous days when the manuscript Gospels from Lutterworth were read in secret places and at the dead of night. In 1431 he sees the Bohemian, Paul Crawar, perish at the stake at St. Andrews, his last words choked by the brass ball thrust into his mouth. Some sixty years later he hears at Glasgow the trial of a score or more of Lollard gentlemen whose gallant bearing saves them, for the King loves fearless eyes and hardy speech in a man. At Leith or Montrose or Dundee, he watches the merchant-ships come in from Hamburg and Bremen, catches the eye of some stout skipper, and knows that there is a packet of Luther's tracts in safe-keeping for him. Now it is the precious New Testaments of Tindale, smuggled over from Antwerp, and in a day or two chapman and traveller and even the bare-foot friar are carrying copies far away inland.

This is St. Andrews, with its glorious cathedral

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and its grey castle looking out over the sea. It is the last day of February 1528. Chained amid a pile of faggots, Patrick Hamilton stands scorched and disfigured by a blast of gunpowder. Again and again the kindling is lighted, but the green wood will not burn. He has stood there in torture since noon. The wintry sun goes down red. At last the flames leap up in the dusk, and the martyr's last words are heard in the roar of the fire : " How long, O Lord, wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of men ? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ! " In his twenty-fourth year, of royal lineage, the flower of northern scholarship, but six weeks married.

" The reek of Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it did blow upon." Priest, monk, friar, gentleman, townsman are charged with heresy, tried perhaps before the young King (" all in red "), sentenced to death. The fires are lit on the rising ground near St. Andrews, to strike terror into the men of Angus and Forfar ; at the high Rood of Greenside above Leith, to strike terror into the men of Fife ; on the summit of the Castle Rock at Edinburgh, to strike terror through the Lothians. Cardinal David Beaton makes a purple progress through part of the country, burning and hanging men and drowning women.

There is a brief respite. The Earl of Arran is Regent, and in March 1543 an Act of Parliament

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proclaims the Bible a book which the lowliest in the realm may read openly and without fear. But these better days have scarcely begun when the Earl abandons the cause of the Reformation, makes his peace with Rome, and becomes the tool of the Cardinal and the unscrupulous Queen-Mother, Mary of Guise.

Eighteen years have gone by since the burning of Patrick Hamilton. It is the first day of March, and again the scene is St. Andrews. In the space before the castle a dense crowd gazes silently on a platform piled with faggots. The cannon of the fortress are trained upon it and the gunners have their linstocks alight to meet any attempt at rescue. The battlements are draped with tapestry for the Cardinal and his suite. At noon the heretic is led out to his doom. He beseeches the people not to be estranged from the Word of God by the risk of suffering, pardons his enemies, and kisses his executioner. Turning to the captain of the guard, "May God forgive," he says, "yonder man who lies so proudly on the wall. Within a few days he shall be seen lying there in as much shame as he now shows pomp and vanity." He is chained to the stake; the faggots break into flames; he is strangled with the rope, and his body is reduced to ashes by "the grim fire he fears not." So dies George Wishart, the friend of John Knox and the first constructive reformer of the Church of Scotland.



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Three months later the castle is taken without a blow by twelve or fourteen resolute men, and the Cardinal is slain with ruthless savagery. To the citizens who come clamouring for their Archbishop the dead body, naked and bleeding, is shown on the wall from which he watched the cruel death of Wishart. The castle is strong, provisioned too for a siege; the Regent attacks but cannot storm it. It becomes a city of refuge, and there in the spring of 1547 John Knox begins his ministry. In June sixteen French galleons sweep into St. Andrews bay. Cannonaded by sea and land, the garrison capitulate; they, and Knox with them, are conveyed in chains on board the fleet, and the stronghold, stained with the blood of a prince of the Church, is razed to the ground. The galleons get under way for France; as the reformer watches the morning sun glitter on the roof and light the grey pinnacles of the cathedral, a strange conviction is borne in upon him that, whatever his destiny, he will return and preach the Gospel in that great church.

Eleven years go by. From Fife to Ayr the adherents of the Reformed faith have gathered themselves into numerous little congregations, almost wholly without a ministry. In the shires where the great lords uphold the cause the English Book of Common Prayer, with its lessons from the Old and New Testament, is used in the parish churches on

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Sundays and holy days—read by the curate if he is willing, and if he is not by some suitable person.

Yet once more faggots are heaped about the stake at St. Andrews. The heretic is Walter Miln, the old parish priest of Lunan, condemned for heresy by Cardinal Beaton long ago, and captured by the spies at last. A pitiful old man, so frail and bowed with age and infirmity that little defence can be expected from him. But face to face with his judges, his voice rings out like a trumpet: "Ye shall know that I will not recant the truth, for I am corn and not chaff to be blown away by the wind." His dim eyes wander over the haze of upturned faces as he stands by the stake. "I am four score and two years old," he says, "and cannot live long by the course of nature; but a hundred better shall rise out of the ashes of my bones. I trust in God that I am the last that shall suffer death in Scotland for this cause." He is the last martyr of the Reformation in Scotland. The day is August 28, 1558. It is thirty years since the death of Patrick Hamilton. The townsfolk mark the spot with a cairn. Night after night the stones are carried away by the monks under cover of darkness. Every morning the cairn is piled up again. "It will not vanish, nor will the cry of it be silenced."

It is the beginning of June 1559. There have been turbulent doings at Perth—destruction of images and altars, "dinging down" of friaries Black and

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Grey, complete demolition of the superb Carthusian abbey founded by James I. ; the Queen Regent in arms before the city, the Lords of the Congregation in arms within it ; peace at last patched up between them. Nobles and gentlemen are gathering at St. Andrews for the establishment of the Reformed worship in the metropolitan church on Sunday the 4th of June. John Knox is the master-spirit in that enterprise. On Saturday evening the Archbishop rides in with a hundred spears, and warns the reformer that the moment he enters the pulpit he will be shot down where he stands. Lords and gentlemen counsel prudence and delay ; but for Knox this is the hour of supreme faith and courage—the hour of which he had been long ago premonished. On the morrow the cathedral is crowded. Conceive with what thoughts he ascends the pulpit ! No voice, no hand is raised against him as he describes how Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple of the old dispensation, and proceeds to picture the more iniquitous traffic which has long defiled the Temple of the new.

His burning words run through the land like fire in the heather. Images and pictures are cast out of the churches ; abbeys and priories are laid in ruins ; much that is beautiful beyond price is recklessly destroyed, but the conscience of men is released from an ancient thralldom, and Scotland is preserved a

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free nation. For the intrigues of France have been discovered. Warned that Scotland is being filled with French troops to invade England on the north while a Spanish descent is made in the south, the Ministers of Elizabeth decide to aid the reformers by land and sea. The French troops are beleaguered in their lines at Leith, when, on the 10th of June 1560, the death of the Queen Regent changes the whole aspect of affairs. The government passes into the hands of the Parliament. In August the Estates of the Realm abolish the jurisdiction of the Pope, suppress the hierarchy, forbid the celebration of Mass, and decree the adoption of the Protestant faith. The Reformation in Scotland is completed, but it is a Reformation in which Christ is the only Head of the Church, and no civil authority can interpose in what pertains to religion.

A quarrel over "embroidered copes and lawn sleeves" ? Something more than that, as the Puritan and the Covenanter saw it.



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## CHAPTER XI

### THE UNFAILING LIGHT

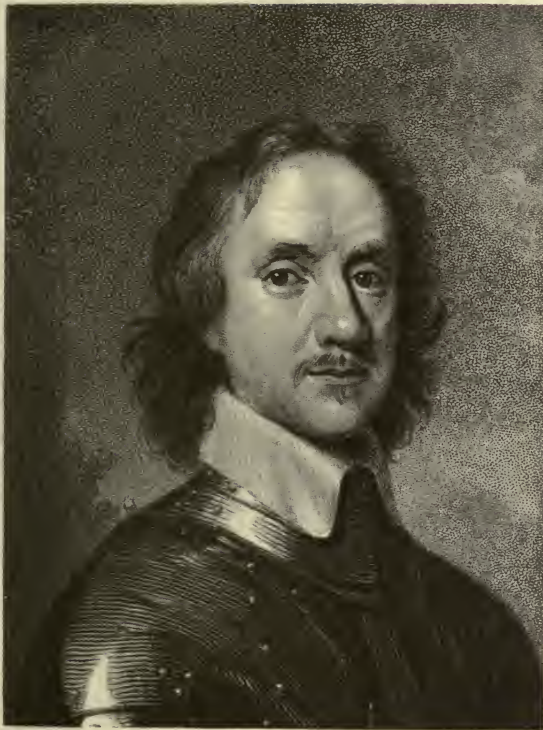
It is in these years of flaming violence and tragic disruption that the power of the Bible in shaping the destinies of a nation shines out in immense visibility. Never before or since has the vast mass of the population of Great Britain manifested such intense consciousness that a "living God" was present in their midst. Even Hume is too deeply impressed by a sense of power to scoff when he describes the Parliamentary troops :—

"To the greater number of the regiments chaplains were not appointed ; the officers assumed the spiritual duty, and united it with their military functions. During the intervals of action, they occupied themselves in sermons, prayers, exhortations ; and the same emulation there attended them which, in the field, is so necessary to support the honour of that profession. Rapturous ecstasies supplied the place of study and reflection ; and while the zealous devotees poured out their thoughts in unpremeditated harangues, they mistook that eloquence which to their own surprise, as well as that

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of others, flowed in upon them, for divine illuminations and for illapses of the Holy Spirit. . . . The private soldiers, seized with the same spirit, employed their vacant hours in perusing the Holy Scriptures in ghostly conferences, where they compared the progress of their souls in grace and mutually stimulated each other to farther advances in the great work of their salvation. When they were marching to battle, the whole field resounded as well with psalms and spiritual songs adapted to the occasion as with instruments of military music ; and every man endeavoured to drown the sense of present danger in the prospect of that crown of glory which was set before him."

Out of Cromwell's glowing soul had sprung these Maccabean stalwarts in leather and iron. He had seen how " gentlemen's sons and persons of quality " swept before them Hampden's " old decayed serving-men and tapsters and such kind of fellows." " You must get men of a spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go," he told Hampden ; " or else you will be beaten still." It was " a good notion," Hampden thought, but an impracticable one. Cromwell's reply was the Ironsides, men who " had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did " ; the Ironsides, with their *Soldier's Bible*, which was properly not a Bible, but a manageable booklet of Geneva texts fitted for a soldier's calling. " They were never beaten,"



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Cromwell declared thirteen years afterwards, "and wherever engaged against the enemy, they beat continually. And truly this is a matter of praise to God; and it hath some instruction in it, To own men who are religious and godly." Of a certainty.

It was great-hearts of this stamp who stood to their arms, with "the Lord of Hosts" for their watch-word, all night on the Lammermoor hills before the battle of Dunbar. As the regiments shifted position by the light of the harvest moon struggling through flying clouds and gusts of hail and sleet, Major Hodgson heard a cornet "praying in the night" with his company of poor men, drew rein, and dismounted for a moment to worship with them. As the first sunlight broke from the east, the Scots were shattered horse and foot, "and I heard Noll say, in the words of the Psalmist, 'Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered'"; and while the cavalry gathered for pursuit, "the Lord-General made a halt and sang the Hundred and Seventeenth Psalm"—in its Genevan form, no doubt:

"All nacions, praise ye the Lord: all ye people, praise Him,  
For His loving kindenes is great toward us. . . ."

In this Dunbar year, 1650, as we remember, four notable books saw the light—Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, Fuller's *Pisgah-Sight of Palestine*, Baxter's *Saint's Everlasting Rest*, and the *Silex Scintillans* of

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our Welsh poet and doctor, Henry Vaughan. And besides these familiar names there were two which, more than any others, give assurance of the influence of the Bible at that date and long afterwards : Milton, Bunyan. Happy in his parentage, happy in his youth which showed " how much of the gaiety, the poetic ease, the intellectual culture of the Renaissance lingered in a Puritan home,"<sup>1</sup> Milton was one of the high souls who brought within the amplitude of their religion all that was pure and lovely and of good report, wherever it might be found. He took the best that was in Puritanism ; he disallowed no virtue or gracious faculty in Cavalier or Humanist. Between the *Ode on the Nativity* and the last of his great Biblical poems came *L'Allegro, Comus, Lycidas* and other classic verse, which must have seemed Court revelry and ungodly vanities to a precisian.

In June 1655 this matter arose ; salient, soul-stirring. Duke Charles - Emmanuel had taken thought to convert his Protestant peasants in the Savoy valleys, descendants of the old Waldenses ; had sent friars to do the work, which they found could not be done in any way ; and had given it over accordingly to sundry regiments, revivalists of quite another cloth. " You Waldenses must convert yourselves forthwith, or leave forthwith." It was winter.

<sup>1</sup> Green, *A Short History of the English People*, p. 451.

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It was in the Alps. Those who reached the French frontier, what a tale of tragedy was theirs !

The reports of the bad business were officially confirmed in June. Signature of the French treaty was postponed till the French King had this affair put right. A general fast was appointed, a general collection made over England for these woeful Bible-people ; the Protector himself gave £2000 from his own purse. His heart hot within him, Milton wrote official Latin letters to all the Protestant States—dictated them rather, for he was blind now—and turned his sightless eyes to heaven :

“ Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter’d Saints, whose bones  
Lie scatter’d on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old  
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones  
Forget not : In Thy book record their groans  
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll’d  
Mother with infant down the rocks.”

For a time at least the Duke of Savoy ceased proselytizing. The Lord Protector, it was said, had threatened that “his ships in the Mediterranean should visit Civita Vecchia, and the sound of his cannon should be heard in Rome.” Such a power was the Bible in England in those days,<sup>1</sup> and so long an arm had this Lord Protector.

<sup>1</sup> In 1653, it may be noted, Cromwell sanctioned the printing of Dr. Brian Walton’s *Polyglot Bible* and exempted the paper from duty. When *Paradise Lost* was published (1671) the London book-sellers were circulating 30,000 Bibles a year.

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Cromwell was indeed one of the world's great Bible-men. The Scriptures were woven into the tissue of his thoughts and emotions, and as he thought and felt, so he spoke. There was nothing of the "gloomy Gospeller" in his nature; he delighted in music, in poetry too, and was, as far as he might be, a patron of learning.<sup>1</sup> And nothing of the wild-eyed or of the overweening fanatic, complacently familiar with the Almighty God: "I have learned too much of God to dally with Him and to be bold with Him. And I hope I never shall be bold with Him; though I can be bold with men, if Christ be pleased to assist." Bold, yes, with the swift trenchant finality of a man who fears to take liberties with divine Righteousness; yet with a heart as soft as a child's to natural affections. When his beloved daughter Elizabeth lay dying "under great extremity of bodily pain" he had read to him that passage in Philippians (iv. 11-13) which begins, "Not that I speak in respect of want," and as he mused over it, "This Scripture," he said, "did once save my life—when my eldest son died, which went as a dagger to my heart—indeed it did." Then

<sup>1</sup> "Ussher, notwithstanding his being a bishop, received a pension from him. Marvel and Milton were in his service. Waller, who was a relative, was caressed by him. . . . He gave £100 a year to the divinity professor at Oxford, and an historian mentions his bounty as an instance of his love of literature. He intended to have erected a college at Durham for the benefit of the northern counties."—Hume, *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 503.



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reading the tenth and eleventh verses, of Paul's submission to the will of God, "It's true, Paul," he said, "you have learned this, and attained to this measure of grace; but what shall I do? Ah, poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!" But reading on, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthened me," he said to himself, "He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ," and so found his strength and solace. In his own mortal illness, which quickly ensued, there was a resemblance which carries us far back to the last days of Venerable Bede. From the lips of each of them fell repeatedly the disquieting words, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God"; with each, disquietude was laid to rest by the same assurance, redemption in Christ Jesus.

As the end approached how mightily were "the hearts of God's people" stirred to tears and supplications and a "strong laying-hold on God" on his behalf. Strange, it might seem, in the case of a ruler so austere and inflexible!—and yet not strange, when one remembers that, long ago, men, thinking of him while they travelled, knelt among the bushes by the wayside, or withdrew into a thicket to pray for him, and to thank God for having sent him.

It was this man who, if he did not first conceive, was the first to give effect to the idea of religious toleration in England. That "papacy and prelacy"

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were excluded from recognition was due, not to denominational bitterness, but to the elements of national danger with which these religious systems were associated. This happy change took place in 1654; it was twenty years since Roger Williams had been cast out by the Pilgrim Fathers for his audacious assertion of liberty of conscience.

“There can be little doubt,” it has been said, “that if the ascendancy of the army had been maintained unimpaired for a generation after Cromwell’s death, the Church of England must have sunk into a small and insignificant body, largely consisting of exiles out of touch with the national life and tied to the fortunes of a ruined cause.”<sup>1</sup> Going back a stage, there appears to be as little doubt that if Stuart sovereignty and Laudian sacerdotalism had been maintained for another generation, Puritanism would have been expelled, and Great Britain would have passed once more under papal rule. In the providence of God the nation was preserved from each of these extremes.

To Milton the literatures of the world lay open; Bunyan had but one book. “He knew George Herbert—perhaps Spenser—perhaps *Paradise Lost*, but of books, except of the Bible, he was at no time a great student.”<sup>2</sup> It sufficed. All that the imagina-

<sup>1</sup> Wakeman, *History of the Church of England*, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> Froude, *Bunyan*, p. 84.

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tion needed, all the heart longed for was there— Bethel and the stones of vision. As one glances at the opening page—

“ I laid me down in that place to sleep. And as I slept I dreamed a dream,”—

memory flies back to Northumbrian Cynewulf, sleeping too with the Bible for his pillow and the Tree of the Cross revealed over him in the darkness :

“ Listen—of all dreams I'll the dearest tell,  
That at mid of night met me while I slept.  
I methought I saw  
All enwreathed with light, wonderful, a Tree,  
Brightest it of trees ! ” <sup>1</sup>

The *Pilgrim's Progress* belonged to 1676, written in prison (the old prison on Bedford Bridge, was it ?), and appeared in 1678. Eventful years were these for all men who stood out unflinchingly for the service of God in the freedom of the Gospel ; and nowhere more full of straits and sorrows, ay and of “ deliverances above all praise,” than in Scotland.

It is the year 1676 ; Charles II. is on the throne, and it is summer on the Berwick moors, whither the Children of the Covenant have been bidden to the celebration of the Communion. The floor and slopes of a grassy hollow are covered with thousands of worshippers, and there is a low mound which their old white-locked minister will use for a pulpit. To

<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke, *Early English Literature*, vol. ii. p. 287.

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guard against surprisal a ring of horsemen has been thrown out some distance away. Further off, a score or so keep watch in a second circle. Yet a third ring is scattered round among the heather ; and still other scouts, mere specks on the edges of the moor, sit scanning the horizon for the dragoons, while the Psalms roll up to heaven from the Church in the wilderness. In a little while Claverhouse and his troopers will be flung back, reeling among the moss-hags of Drumclog ; then Bothwell Brig will have been lost, and one thousand two hundred prisoners, half naked in the wind and snow, will bear testimony in Greyfriars Churchyard.

If the sword was not unsheathed in England, if no young girl in her bloom, no white-haired woman bent with age was bound to the stake in the swelling waters of Dee or Severn, merciless statutes (Corporation Act, Act of Uniformity, Conventicle Act, Five Mile Act, Test Act—which last struck the Lord High Admiral of England off the roll) harassed God-fearing men who did not shrink from suffering for conscience' sake. During the reign of Charles II. as many as 8000 Protestants, besides a large number of Roman Catholics, were imprisoned, and of 1500 Quakers 350 died in bonds. In spite of all persecution the light of the Word of God was unailing. Even in the licentious Court itself there was seen with wonder one lady of honour so angelic in purity,



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so sweet in human graciousness that Evelyn thought "Paula and Eustochium were come from Bethlehem to Whitehall."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing probably more truly reflects the character of an age than its poetry, and here we can trace, through periods now largely fallen dim and grey, a current of Biblical inspiration, from Bishop Ken and Addison—to take names almost at haphazard—to Isaac Watts, and from Christopher Smart and Toplady to Cowper and Blake and Hannah More. Or if we prefer the lives of men to their musings, let us pass from Bunyan's labours in his "bishopric" (where he would have twelve hundred hearers before seven o'clock of a winter morning) to the palace of Archbishop Sharp, who used to declare it was the Bible and Shakespeare that made him Primate of England; then to the fireside where little Philip Doddridge at his mother's knee learnt his first Bible stories from the pictures on the Dutch tiles; then to the scenes of the Whitefield and Wesley revivals. Even in that lifeless and apathetic time which befell the Church of England in the eighteenth century, when the sacraments were neglected and catechizing ceased and baptismal fonts were turned into flower-vases in the parson's garden and the very churches had a smell of the grave, the unfailing light burned on. Then with a singular unexpectedness, on an early

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn, *Life of Mrs. Godolphin*, p. 34.

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December morning in 1802, when the lighted windows were reflected in the dark waters of the Thames rolling past Old Swan Stairs, and the committee of the Religious Tract Society, who like all good business men kept early hours, were discussing the dearth of Welsh Scriptures in the Principality, the minister of the Baptist congregation at Battersea uttered the memorable words: "Surely a society might be formed for providing the Scriptures. But if for Wales, why not for the kingdom? Why not for the world?"

In so casual or so providential a fashion a new era in the circulation of the Scriptures began, and the idea was conceived of the Bible Society which came into being in 1804.

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## CHAPTER XII

### SOCIAL AND CIVIL PROGRESS

HERE, however, we must retrace our steps, and note some of the undertakings and initiatives which appear to have been, at least at the outset, direct promptings of the Holy Scriptures.

We have referred to the religious temper of the Elizabethan sea-stalwarts. In the year of the Armada, a "Company" was formed for the spread of the Gospel among the Red Men of Virginia. Sir Walter Raleigh was one of the subscribers, and his £100 is the first donation to Missions mentioned in Protestant annals. Long afterwards, the tracts of John Eliot, the "Apostle of the Indians," led to an Act of the Long Parliament (1649) establishing "a Corporation for promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England," and the parishes of England and Wales raised nearly £12,000 for the purpose under an order of the Lord Protector. Oliver himself seems to have had great missionary dreams of his own—did actually propose or project a scheme for a State department for the conversion of the world. After ten years of activity the New England Corporation lapsed, but was

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revived under a new charter in 1662, shifted to adjoining territory when New England parted from Old England, and does its work to this day, with some of its old Kentish property, a farm at Plumstead, still or until recently in its possession.

The New England Bible—the book which the Pilgrims brought with them from Holland—was doubtless the Geneva version. At what date the earliest copies of the King James version crossed the Atlantic is not clearly known;<sup>1</sup> but in the Western

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George H. Harrison of Woolwich writes: "I have in my possession a large folio Bible, Authorised Version, dated (Old Testament) 1633 and (New Testament) 1632. This has been in my father's family and handed down as John Eliot's Bible. The tradition as given to my father by his grand-aunt was that it was sent back to England at Eliot's death with a chest which she remembered as 'Eliot's chest.' This, of course, he could not have taken with him on his first going out (1631), but I suggest he took it back with him after a visit to England. It was possibly his pulpit Bible." Miss Hattie R. Stratton of Chattanooga, Tenn., U.S.A., author of *A Book of Strattons*, tells me of another interesting Bible: "This Bible, so tradition says, was brought from England by John Stratton, who came from London, and was one of the original 'nine first settlers' in Easthampton, on Long Island, in 1649. It has been handed down through the *Johns* in the Stratton family from that date to the present time. The book was rebound more than 150 years ago, and the original fly leaf was then pasted firmly down on the new cover. The oldest family record, on the second fly leaf, is dated 1742, at which date this record of these facts seems to have been entered. Since that date the history of the volume is well known in our family." This Bible is a black-letter copy of the Geneva version printed in London by Robert Barker in 1610, hallowed by the traditions of three centuries. The story of the *Book of Strattons* goes back to the year 1392, a hundred years before the discovery of America by Columbus.



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World as at home the new version won its way to supremacy, and in 1782 one of the first-fruits of Independence was the publication of the first English Bible printed on American ground, and it was a reproduction of the Authorized text.

Moved by the needs of the Welsh people, a number of godly merchants in London bore the expense of providing them with an octavo Bible in their own tongue in 1630.

Some forty years later, Thomas Gouge, one of Charles II.'s "ejected" clergy, turned his steps to the Principality, translated various devout books into Welsh, collected funds for his propaganda among the Bible-loving citizens of London, and enlisted the hearty interest of such men as Tillotson and Stillingfleet. In 1678 he and Stephen Hughes issued an edition of 8000 copies of the Bible, Prayer Book and Metrical Psalms, of which 1000 copies were given away and the rest were quickly bought up. Diffusion of such literature afterwards fell within the scope of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which was founded in 1698.

The founding of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701 is, perhaps, to be regarded rather as an efflorescence of Church life than a direct efflux of the Bible; yet it is of the very spirit and ensample of the New Testament. And in this connection how strange it is to think that while the Church had

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prayed daily for sixty years that God would make known "His saving health among all nations," the Book of Common Prayer at that time contained but one special petition for the conversion of the heathen—the Collect for Good Friday.

Similarly one should place on the border-line the (Nonconformist) Book Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge among the Poor, both of 1750; the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools, 1785; and the Religious Tract Society, 1799, though the circulation of the Scriptures entered into the scheme of all of these. One organization, however, was a blossom straight from the Bible stem—"The Bible Society" of 1780, which afterwards, in view of its scope, changed its name to the Naval and Military Bible Society. The *Royal George*, which went down at Spithead in August 1782, was the first ship on which it distributed the Scriptures—four hundred Bibles.

Then in the long list of charitable bequests and endowments, of benevolent and philanthropic enterprises, who can doubt that the Bible, even if a latent was yet a living force,

"And when unthought of, still the spring of thought"?

One of the strongest incentives to the charities of the past had become inoperative; but if men no longer sought to escape the flames which purged the sins

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“done in the days of nature,” they rose to higher views, and love of the visible body of Christ in His Church took the place of *pœnitentia* :

“I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.”

Helpfulness and compassion assumed numerous forms : doles for the poor, provision for the sick and impotent, lazar-houses and hospitals, relief for the blind and for maimed soldiers and mariners, homes for the aged—the first of these endowed by a Protestant (a “college” at East Greenwich where twenty poor people were clothed and fed) was founded by the noted antiquarian lawyer William Lambarde, in Elizabeth’s reign,—various kinds of schools, funds for the education of orphans, for the marriage of poor maids, for the aid of young tradesmen and decayed handicraftsmen, for the succour of prisoners at home and the ransom of Christian captives at Algiers.

We have already had a glimpse of these Algerine “sea-skimmers,” who chased and captured our ships in the Channel, and who raided and burnt down Baltimore in County Cork.<sup>1</sup> One of the most interesting of such benefactions was the bequest of Lady Mico, widow of a Lord Mayor of London, who left in 1670 “one of two thousand pounce” to redeem these poor slaves. The whole £2000 had

<sup>1</sup> p. 78.

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been intended for her niece and nephew on their wedding-day, but that day never came, and the legacy was invested in city property. After the pirates had been swept from the seas, Lady Mico's Charity went "snow-balling" down the years until 1834, when, the £1000 having grown to £120,000, Sir T. Fowell Buxton obtained a charter applying it to the Christian education of negro children in the West Indies, Demerara, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

In one direction or another philanthropy made its experiments, corrected its blunders, gradually turned a social ideal into a public institution. These things were some of the outward signs—gleams of white on the moving waters—which told of the spiritual progress of a new era. In spite of controversies and intervals of intolerance and reaction, an enlightened liberalism entered into legislation, the laws were humanized, disabilities abolished, and the civilization of the country was raised to a higher plane.

Think of the barbarities of our old penal code! On the Thames, with its picturesque houses and fair gardens, its gay barges and great fleets of white swans, evil-doers were gibbeted on the ooze and left "till three tides had washed over them." Paul Hentzner counted about thirty heads spiked on the tower of the wonderful stone bridge which crossed the river. At Temple Bar he might probably have



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counted half a dozen more. And to-day we shudder as we speak of Abomey, "the City of Skulls."<sup>1</sup> Women were burnt; highwaymen were hung in chains, sometimes alive, till their bones dropped piecemeal on heath or highway. "Our condemned persons doo go cheerfullie to their deths," observes Harrison, the Elizabethan historian, "for our nation is free, stout, hautie, prodigall of life and bloud"; and so they need well have been for many a day. It was death for sacrilege, forgery, letter-stealing; death for horse, sheep, and cattle lifting; death for housebreaking and pocket-picking; death for poaching and destroying young trees; death for blackmailing or appearing disguised on a public way: the law recognized two hundred and twenty-three capital offences.

Think, too, of the condition of the prisons which Howard did much to reform, and the horrors of Newgate when Elizabeth Fry visited it with the Bible. It was a very caravansary of iniquity and despair. There were men in hundreds, women in hundreds, women with numerous children. Unemployed, uncared for, herded together like brutes, they passed the time in gambling, drinking, fighting, masquerading, singing lewd songs, telling tales of vice and

<sup>1</sup> In 1910 a lady, in her hundredth year, told how she had seen pirates hanging on what must have been among the last of these river gibbets.

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villainy, planning fresh crimes. Among the prisoners there were boys and girls from nine to thirteen years of age, growing up for the gallows—though there was little need to grow, for a child of ten was not too young for the hangman. There was a chaplain, but, as a rule, he was neither fussy nor officious. When he received the intimation he attended funerals and read the customary prayers on the scaffold.

In every rank and condition of life the same forces of reform were at work, gradually dissipating class prejudices and vicious conservatism. Society began to frown on "three-bottle men" and "healths five fathoms deep." The general coarseness of the upper classes was touched by some gracious refinement. Society, which had once "clothed itself with cursing as with a garment," slowly laid aside its flamboyant apparel. "Profane swearing was the constant practice of gentlemen. They swore at each other because an oath added emphasis to their assertions. They swore at inferiors because their commands would not otherwise receive prompt obedience. The chaplain cursed the sailors because it made them listen more attentively to his admonitions. Ladies swore, orally and in their letters. Lord Braxfield offered to a lady, at whom he swore because she played badly at whist, the sufficient apology that he had mistaken her for his wife. Erskine, the model of a forensic orator, swore at the bar. Lord Thurlow

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swore upon the bench. The King (George IV.) swore incessantly. When his Majesty desired to express approval of the weather, of a handsome horse, of a dinner which he had enjoyed, this 'first gentleman in Europe' asserted his royal asseveration by a profane oath." <sup>1</sup> So too with the middle classes. "Books of the grossest indecency were exhibited for sale side by side with Bibles and prayer books. Indecent songs were sold without restraint on the streets of London, and sung at social gatherings by the wives of respectable tradesmen without sense of impropriety." <sup>1</sup> These things became intolerable.

The rapier dropped out of fashion, leaving two belt buttons at the back of the coat to remind us how ready our great-grandfathers were to clap hand to hilt in a quarrel. The first Quaker who entered Parliament for a hundred and forty years made duelling ridiculous, and in 1844 the War Office issued articles civilizing the "code of honour." Among the political leaders of the nation Fox, Pitt, Castlereagh, Canning, and the Duke of Wellington had fought duels, and Peel had twice been a challenger.

It was a boast of Elizabeth's reign that "England was too pure an air for slaves to breathe in," and at last, thanks to the labours of such staunch Biblemen as Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, and his friends, slavery was abolished in British dominions.

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie, *The Nineteenth Century*, Bk. II. ch. i.

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For three centuries (dating only from Tindale's time) the words of the supreme Lover of Children had sounded throughout England, but the English people, for the most part, had turned their children into serfs and wage-earners. Poverty and greed were mainly the cause, but philanthropy was not blameless. Even that "worthy and useful citizen" Thomas Firman (1676) added to the burdens and sorrows of childhood. From three to four the small mites were taught to read and to "know their place"; then they were trained to linnen spinning; by the time they were five or six they earned 2*d.* and afterwards 3*d.* a day. No doubt under Firman's eye they were treated with the rough kindness of that hardy generation. But think of the dawn of the soul, which should be every child's heritage, when one might "by mere playing go to Heaven";

"The age of mysteries! which he  
Must live twice that would God's face see;  
Which angels guard, and with it play!"

At the beginning of the nineteenth century hundreds of six-year-olds are in the factories—stunted, sickly wretches, with white faces and great eyes—working from thirteen to fifteen hours at a stretch, unless they drop asleep from exhaustion. Suddenly, amid drone and clatter of wheels and bands, there is a scream. Lucky if it is only the overseer's strap or cane, and sleepy-head has not fallen against the machinery!



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The attention given to infant mortality, child labour, cruelty to children, revolutionized the legal position of that real "fourth estate" in the realm; while home-life was distinctly modified by a closer approximation to the New Testament conception of the Child.

The rights of animals, too, were acknowledged with a sympathy unheard of since the days of St. Francis of Assisi; and the wild bird was protected, often without thought of advantage and for its own sake.

The effects of Public Opinion? Concede so much; and what was it that made Public Opinion more truly now than it had ever been since history began "the voice of God"?

Most significant, however, of all manifestations of ethical and political growth were the advances in religious liberty. The atrocious Act for the burning of heretics was annulled in 1677. To the Nonconformists, who had gathered strength in suffering, the Toleration Act of 1689 brought the first recognition of the right to worship ("on this mountain") outside the pale of the State Church; and at length, in the great revival days of Wesley, Lord Mansfield pronounced his memorable judgment in the House of Lords: "It is now no crime for a man to say he is a Dissenter; nor is it any crime for him not to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of

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England ; nay, the crime is, if he does it contrary to the dictates of his conscience. . . . There is nothing certainly more unreasonable, more inconsistent with the rights of human nature, more contrary to the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more impolitic, than persecution. It is against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy"—all which are brilliant commonplaces to-day.<sup>1</sup>

It was but the natural sequel that the penal laws and disabilities to which loyal Roman Catholics were subjected should be repealed, that the Jew should be admitted to Parliament, that the Universities should be thrown open to persons of any creed, and that, in the course of time, there should arise a longing and a hope for union among the sections of the Church of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Taswell-Langmead, *English Constitutional History*, p. 626.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### A PICTURE OF HOME

THE Bible movement, which began in 1804, was one of the most extraordinary events ever seen in Christendom. Within ten years of the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, one "Auxiliary" or more in each county brought the whole of England into touch with the Bible House in London. Two years later two hundred and thirty-six Auxiliaries and three hundred and five "Branches" were spread over the United Kingdom.

Strange to say, while these organizations included in their membership the poorest of the poor and people of every form of belief, the honorary position of patrons and presidents was in numerous instances filled by princesses and royal dukes, earls and countesses, prelates and peers, statesmen, and persons of the highest distinction. Probably in the history of the world no popular movement had ever drawn into such union thousands of men and women of all stations, of all creeds, of all shades of opinion. Magnificent donations, bequests, and subscriptions testified to the enthusiasm awakened by the idea,

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which was at once simple and yet almost inconceivable ; but it was the poor man's gift, the widow's mite, the contributions of children—in a word, the support of the people—which enabled the Society to do its work at home and abroad.

Very fortunately the Cambridge Press had adopted the process of stereotyping early in 1804, and in the following year the first stereotyped New Testament was ready for publication. The process not only secured the accuracy of text which was constantly endangered by the use of movable type, but it enabled the Society to issue the Scriptures at prices within the reach of the poor, and to produce at a moderate cost large grants for the destitute and for benevolent institutions. In 1811 so large was the demand that the presses of both Universities could barely keep pace with it.

The circulation of Bibles and Testaments was amazing ; but no more amazing than the use of them. They were sold everywhere—in towns and villages, at isolated farmsteads, woodmen's houses, cottages scattered on the hillsides and the moors, in barracks, among the ocean shipping, the small coasters, the barges and boats on rivers and canals, on the railways, among the navvies building new lines.

The shepherd read his Bible on the downs ; the road-mender, during the dinner-hour, marked his favourite chapters with blades of grass. It went



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down into the pit with the collier ; out to sea with the fishing-fleet, and on many boats a portion was read morning and evening. At Chester Lead Works the hands " turned up " half an hour before the morning bell to begin the day with a chapter and a prayer. On one of the East Coast " floating lights " seven men out of nine had their Bibles, and " we seldom have an angry word, for the Bible has taught us to bear one another's burdens." On the Northumbrian moors (O shade of Bede the Venerable !) the Tyndale Auxiliary collected subscriptions at the rate of £1600 a year, and people who did not read the Scriptures were not likely to pay for their distribution. Old men and women learnt their letters, simply to read the Word of God. One good lady began when she was eighty-five ; another, to whom pagination was a mystery, made a concordance of her own with innumerable shreds of different colours and material. When the poor were too needy to buy, the Society gave readily.

The blind had a new world opened to them. Hospitals were supplied with small volumes suitable for the sick-wards, and many a little book was afterwards found under the pillow of the dead. In prisons, penitentiaries, workhouses, the Bible wrought wonders. It was in the very early years that the convicts on board the *Three Bees*, bound for Port Jackson (the site of Sydney was still the " ancient

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solitary realm " of the kangaroo), sent their grateful thanks for a gift of the Scriptures, when they learnt that they had not been furnished by the Government. Long afterwards Dr. Colin Arrott Browning, Surgeon-Superintendent, called his convicts " prisoners of hope," distributed the Scriptures, and left " 232 sets of irons " to rust in the hold. " On no occasion was a prisoner placed under the care of a sentry."

There are no statistics to gauge the pressure which this Society brought to bear on the social questions of the time, the impulse it gave to education, the effect it had in checking the inroads of infidelity, and in keeping men sane and orderly in the midst of distress, labour troubles, and political excitement. During the terrible years of the Corn Laws, when the country labourer fed on roots and wild plants and died of starvation ; during the crises of desperation, when fixed bayonets and cavalry charges and hasty measures superseding the normal course of justice represented the political resources of the Government, hundreds of thousands of Bibles and Testaments were passing into the hands of the masses, and between two and three thousand Bible Society organizations were preserving the equilibrium of the nation. Only a working clergyman could tell, Hugh Stowell declared after the abortive Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common in 1848, how much we owed, not to the promptitude of our magistracy, not to the wise

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and timely measures of the Government—these, he believed, would have been insufficient to keep the people quiet and submissive in their distress; “it was the Bible that had done it.”

During the Lancashire Cotton Famine “the distress of that great manufacturing county produced no crime, no professional pauperism, no importunate complaints.”<sup>1</sup> The only explanation a president of the Wesleyan Conference could discover of that singular resignation and endurance was “the wide diffusion of the Scriptures, the knowledge of the Word of God, the instruction given to the children of the poor.” Through the terrible winter of 1862 there was no agitation, not even a murmur against the Federal Government which maintained the blockade. On the contrary, while a mass of influential people went over to the planters and slave-owners of the South, these starving workmen of Manchester sent President Lincoln an address of sympathy which he described as “an instance of sublime Christian heroism that had not been surpassed in any age or in any country.”

Neither can one estimate how much the Bible Society did for good feeling and a better understanding between class and class, denomination and denomination in all parts of the country—drawing rich and poor together so that each had glimpses of

<sup>1</sup> Paul, *A History of Modern England*, vol. ii. p. 326.

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the best side of the other ; getting Churchmen and Nonconformists to admit to themselves that the Bible included both Chapel and Church ; persuading men of all opinions that the knowledge and love of Christ and charity and righteousness of life came before every other question and interest. The annual meetings of the " Auxiliaries " and " Associations " did this in a way that was never possible before, for the Society knew no distinction in its world-wide catholicity.

What idyllic brightness — romance one might almost call it—was brought into lowly lives and quiet places by these annual gatherings ! In many a small town and village on " Bible Day " works and shops and schools were closed ; the bells were rung, flags hoisted, and the people kept high holiday. One heard of some great barn being decorated with greenery and devices in roses and daisies, or of the school-rooms being festooned with garlands of summer flowers ; of gold and silver trees and other fairy surprises. At Witchampton, in Dorset, for instance, it might be a fir-tree with coloured cotton bags instead of cones, and the bags contained a helpful sum in gold and silver ; or it might be a couple of lovely fuchsias in bloom, one hung with sovereigns and half-sovereigns among the white bells, the other with bright new silver pieces among the bells of crimson. In the sunny churchyard, on



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the tombs of a bygone generation, the visitor might read under the name of the departed: "He (or she) was for many years a sincere friend and contributor to the British and Foreign Bible Society."

Most delightful of all, perhaps, were the "Rose Meetings" at Manningford Bruce. They were begun and continued for nearly half a century by Mr. Joseph Stratton—one wonders whether he was a far-away kinsman of one of the "nine first settlers" in Easthampton on Long Island.<sup>1</sup> He was a great rose-grower, and on Coronation Day, or the nearest day to it, according to the caprice of the roses, the winding roads among the Wiltshire Downs were busy with holiday traffic. "From miles around," says my author, "the Society's friends, rich and poor, arrived on foot or in vehicles of all sorts—gigs, traps, dog-carts, carriages—with here and there a kindly farmer's wagon, 'the Ship of the Downs,' manned with a crew of rosy-cheeked maidens and school children. Sometimes a hundred vehicles were counted near the thatched and quaintly-gabled country house of the host, and the three hundred good folk of the valley were out-numbered, two or three to one, by their visitors. . . . It became a tradition that on the days of these Rose Meetings there was always golden weather. Pleasant hours were spent rambling among the roses; bounteous tables were spread for

<sup>1</sup> p. 206 n.

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tea ; there was perhaps a bazaar, or ' Bible boxes ' were opened ; the children sang hymns ; addresses were delivered ; some treasured Bible, it may be, was exhibited and its story told ; a missionary spoke of his labours in the East or in an isle of the South Seas and of the progress of the Society's work. Then came the leave-taking ; and all along the valley in the summer twilight you heard the sound of voices and the roll of wheels, until the last of what seemed a swarm of fire-flies disappeared, and the beat of the horses' hoofs died away in the windings of the Downs."

All through the year a new interest was added to the seasons for children as well as for the old people. All manner of things and creatures were dedicated to the Society and helped to increase its revenue. Among the hives there was often one of laborious and great-hearted " Bible bees," whose honey was of the finest quality flowers could furnish. There were " Bible fruit-trees " and " Bible flower-pots." " Bible hens " laid " Bible eggs " of special excellence, and brought up broods of " Bible chickens " in the way in which they should go—which was ultimately to market. An unusually fine turbot in the nets would occasionally bear a mystic Bible mark upon it ; a corner of a field would be allotted to the Society ; or an experiment would be made with a single potato until it had waxed into bushels. Then there were

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always the " Bible boxes " to fill with white money and brown. And all these things were outward signs of inward grace.

Indeed the picture of the religious life of the English people, as shown in the reports of the Society alone, might be made one of the most beautiful and surprising things in literature.



ARMS OF JAMES I.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### FIVE BRITISH TONGUES

It is time to bring within this survey the other languages through which the Bible reached large sections of the population of our islands, for whatever may have been our racial sources we are all one English people.

Eighty years, perhaps, before Coifi dashed his spear against the gods, Taliesin was the great Christian bard of the British. The Anglo-Saxon invasion was steadily driving the inhabitants westward across the Severn and into the hills, where they could hold their own. Among the poems which tradition has ascribed to Taliesin are several metrical paraphrases of Biblical incidents, and whether these were composed by the old bard or not, they point to the existence of a body of Scripture ballads which were sung at fairs and around the camp-fires, and so clung to the memory of the people. To that ancient influence Welshmen have ascribed the love of Bible story and the love of sacred music which are visible to this day among their countrymen.

The earliest written evidence of actual Bible



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translation, however, does not go farther back than the thirteenth century. In 1282 the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Peckham, was anxious to give the Kymri something more profitable to dream of than fabulous Trojan ancestors and legendary migrations, and bade the clergy of St. Asaph read and exhibit to their congregations the treasure of the cathedral, a Welsh version of the four Gospels. A number of the Psalms and several paraphrased narratives appeared between sixty and seventy years later, but to what extent these manuscripts were transcribed and spread abroad is unknown. A translation of the Pentateuch was in existence about 1527, according to the boyish recollection of Bishop Richard Davies of St. David's; and about 1540 Tindale's New Testament is said to have been translated, but it does not appear to have been printed.

About four years after the accession of Elizabeth it was enacted by Parliament that the Scriptures should be published in Welsh, and that a copy should be placed in each of the parish churches of the Principality; and in 1567 the New Testament was printed in London, and dedicated "to the most vertuous and noble Prince Elizabeth." The translation was the work of William Salisbury, the lexicographer and antiquarian, assisted by the Bishop of St. David's (Richard Davies), who had been one of the Marian exiles at Geneva. They were looking forward to

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rapid progress with the Old Testament when a disagreement over the meaning and etymology of one luckless word put an end at once to their collaboration and their friendship.

The Testament was revised by William Morgan, vicar of Llandraidr yn Mochnant, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff and of St. Asaph, who completed the version; and the first Welsh Bible, a black-letter folio, which was also dedicated to the Queen, appeared in the wild autumn which drove the tall ships of the Armada to destruction on the Irish coast. The Geneva Bible left its trace on this noble translation which, in its turn, influenced the work of our own revisers three centuries later; and among the scholars who assisted Morgan were Dean Goodman of Westminster, who had taken part in editing the Bishops' Bible, and Archdeacon Prys of Merioneth, to whom the people of Wales owe their beloved metrical Psalter. Efforts were doubtless made to comply with the instructions of Parliament, and to the joy of the people the great chained folio was placed in most, if not in all, of the eight hundred parish churches. For the critics who condemned the version as an impolitic encouragement of racial distinctions and prejudices, were put on record in the forefront of the volume the two unquestionable facts that "A common faith is a stronger bond of unity than a common language," and that "Religion, if it be not taught in the current speech, will remain untaught."

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The revision of the version was undertaken by Morgan's successor, Bishop Richard Parry of St. Asaph, and his chaplain Dr. John Davies, another lexicographer, who brought the text closer to that of our Authorized Version, and laid the foundation of all subsequent revisions. The new Bible was published in another black-letter folio, dedicated to James I., in the year of the *May Flower* sailing.

We have already mentioned the edition of the benevolent London merchants in 1630. It was the first of the books intended for general circulation—a small octavo in Roman type ; included the Archdeacon's metrical Psalter, printed nine years earlier and substantially the same as that in use to-day ; and made its appeal direct to the people :

“ Behold, now the Bible and all the forms of Common Prayer is presented to them in a volume of decent size, and easy to carry. And here you must acknowledge gratefully the great care and cost of certain pious and honourable citizens and merchants of London (among whom chiefly and specially are Sir Thomas Myddelton, an honourable knight, and Rowland Heylin, two aldermen of the said city). May God in His goodness remember them and all others who, in simplicity of good faithful hearts, are wishing and doing good to His Zion.”

Into many a lonely nook among the mountains this manageable volume found its way. Doubt not the

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children asked curious questions as they gazed at the woodcuts of the Garden of Eden, the four Evangelists, and David the King singing at his palace portal ; and many a thrifty peasant was of one mind with the poet-chancellor of St. David's when he sang of it in verse which laughs our English rhymes to scorn :

The Little Bible for a crown  
Thou mayest buy in any town—  
The Bible in thy mother's tongue,  
Ere that thou lack,  
Sell shirt from back !  
'Tis trustier than thy father's roof  
To keep thee sure and peril-proof.

In 1630, however, the crown-piece was worth between twice and thrice the value of the same coin to-day.

In 1647, when Charles I. was a prisoner and the future of England was reeling on the crests of a party crisis, there was issued the first New Testament printed for Nonconformists. Seven years later appeared the Bible which Welsh tradition vaguely associated with the name of Cromwell, and from which the Apocrypha, the Prayer Book, and the metrical Psalter were excluded.

An edition of ten thousand copies of the Bible was issued in 1718 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—the first of many editions, for between that date and 1787 as many as 65,000 Bibles and 5000 Testaments were put into circulation. Among a steadily increasing population of some hundreds



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of thousands even this considerable number went but a little way to satisfy the spiritual craving of the Welsh people ; there was a constant demand for the Scriptures ; and after the wonderful revival which spread through the Principality, like fire in heather, "from Maenol Dewi to Holyhead in Mona" in 1791-93, the ten thousand Bibles issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge were "scarcely dry from the press" when every copy was sold, and not more than one-fourth of the need was met.

In 1806, when the first Welsh New Testament of the British and Foreign Bible Society left the press, the earliest consignment was welcomed in a scene of idyllic rejoicing. The peasants of Bala "went out to meet the cart, welcomed it as the Israelites did the Ark of old, drew it into the town, and eagerly bore off every copy as rapidly as they could be dispersed." Late in the summer twilight young people were seen reading the books, and when night had fallen they still turned the pages by the glimmer of dim lamp or rushlight. In the morning the labourers carried them afield that they might turn to them in their intervals of rest.

From that day forward, though habits have altered and the influx of "strangers" has changed the look of the great labour centres, Wales has been conspicuously a Bible country. An enduring impulse was given to education, literature, music, pursuit of

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knowledge of every kind. The old-world Eisteddfodau were revived, and with them the perfervid spirit of legendary days. It was at one of these meetings of the bards that the Rev. John Blackwell said, if he were asked to name the points of special interest in Wales, it would not be the wooded glens, the sounding cataracts, the blue lakes, but the bold, virtuous, and intelligent peasantry, "among whom justice had sometimes to adjust the balance, but seldom to wield the sword."

Over eighty years have gone since those words were spoken, but those who saw, or read of, "The Unsheathing of the Gorsedd Sword" on the Mount of Songs, amid the wind and mist and rain of the Snowdon hills on the 6th January 1900, must have marvelled at the passion of the Old Testament Prophets and the romance of ancient Bards proving themselves political forces on the eve of the twentieth century. And since that time some of the large movements for the betterment of the people, for the relief of the poor and sick and aged in the three kingdoms, have sprung from that ancient inspiration, and the eloquence with which they have been advocated has caught its thrill from the Bible.

The Holy Scriptures are said to have been translated into Manx by John Phillips, Bishop of Sodor and Man, who translated the Book of Common

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Prayer in 1610. No trace, however, of his Bible work remains. The Gospel of St. Matthew—the first printed portion, indeed the first printed book, in the island tongue—was issued in 1748. Fifteen years afterwards (1763) appeared the Gospels and the Acts, from the version begun in the dungeon of Castle Rushen by Bishop Wilson in 1722, and revised under the direction of his successor, Bishop Hildesley; and in 1767 the New Testament was completed by the publication of the Epistles and the book of Revelation.

In 1771 the manuscript of Job-Malachi was one of the few things saved from the wreck of the ship in which it was being taken to the printers at Whitehaven. The Old Testament had been translated by a company consisting of one layman and three-and-twenty of the Manx clergy, and their second part of the work was in charge of John Kelly, one of the revisers, when the vessel struck. The sturdy grammarian—he was the author of the first Manx grammar—stood manfully to his trust, and for five hours held the manuscript, more precious than Cæsar's, above the surf which broke over the rock on which he had escaped. To Bishop Hildesley, now old, weak and ailing, the completion of the Manx Scriptures was light at evening time. He only wished to live, he would often say, to see them finished; then he would die happy. Later, in 1772,

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the translation snatched from the sea passed through the press of the Wares at Whitehaven, and the last sheet was laid in the Bishop's hands on the 28th of November. Nine days later he passed away in the seventy-fourth year of his age. The Old Testament was published in two octavo volumes in 1773, and in 1775 about forty copies of the complete Manx Bible were issued.

The British and Foreign Bible Society produced the first of its editions of the New Testament in 1810, and its first Bible in 1819. But apparently there was in the Isle little or none of that pathetic clinging to the mother-tongue which is associated with Keltic races. In 1825 an intimation was received from the Bishop that the Manx people preferred now to have the English Authorized Version ; but as late as the seventies Manx Scriptures were still sold among the islanders and the colonists abroad, who had not forgotten the old language of Ellan Vannin Veg Veen.

It was a copy of the Psalter which led to St. Columba's life of exile in Iona. On the day he died, in June 597, he had written the tenth verse of the Thirty-fourth Psalm in a copy he was transcribing. But these were in the Latin of the Vulgate, and all the old illuminated Gospels and Psalters appear to have been in the same language.

The earliest tradition of an Erse or Irish version of



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the Scriptures is linked with the name of Richard Fitz-Ralph—St. Richard of Dundalk, as he came to be called from the place of his birth and burial—Archbishop of Armagh in 1347, when Wycliffe was still a young man. Like Wycliffe, he was a stern opponent of the Mendicant Friars, denounced their way of life as unscriptural, in a course of sermons at Paul's Cross in 1357, and was in consequence cited to Avignon, where he fearlessly maintained his position before Pope Innocent and the Cardinals. If indeed he translated the Bible, no vestige of his labours survives ; yet it is pleasant to discern another reformer in the dim field before the rising of " the Morning Star of the Reformation."

The first portion of the Scriptures in Irish, the New Testament, begun in 1573 by Nicholas Walsh, afterwards Bishop of Ossory, and completed and seen through the press by William Daniel, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, was printed in 1602, from type presented by Elizabeth thirty years earlier " in the hope that God in mercy would cause some to translate the New Testament into their mother-tongue." The Queen died before it was published, and the volume was dedicated to her successor, James. It was a costly folio, only 500 copies were published, and nearly eighty years went by before anything further was done to put the Word of God in the hands of the people.

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In 1367, seven years after Fitz-Ralph's death, the Statute of Kilkenny had banned everything Irish as irreclaimably barbarous and intolerable, and for generations it had been the aim of the Government in Ireland to extinguish the native tongue. William Bedell, the saintly Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh (1629), so little regarded the tacit understanding on which ecclesiastical appointments were made that he not only founded schools throughout his diocese, and distributed a short Erse and English catechism, but he learned Gaelic himself and undertook with native aid a translation of the Old Testament. His wise and generous course was bitterly resented by Archbishop Ussher and his colleagues, but it endeared him to the Irish. Taken prisoner in the rebellion of 1641, he was treated with every attention and affectionate regard, and when, in the following year, he succumbed to the hardships he had endured, the insurgents fired a volley over his grave, crying *Requiescat ultimus Anglorum* ("May the last of the English rest in peace!"), and an Irish priest was heard praying for companionship with him in the world to come—" *Sit anima mea cum Bedello!* "

In 1685, more than forty years after his death, his translation was published, the first Irish version of the Old Testament. The second edition of the New Testament had appeared in 1681, and these two volumes formed a complete Bible in quarto. Only

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about 500 copies of each were printed, and eighty sets were shipped to Scotland for the Highlanders. Six copies of the Old Testament are still preserved in the parishes for which they were sent, but travel and traffic were so precarious and difficult at that time that probably many of the books never reached their destination. The Erse was near enough to the Gaelic of the Highlands to be intelligible, but the Irish characters were so little known that 3000 copies of the whole Bible in one comparatively small volume were printed in 1690 in Roman type. The transliteration from one alphabet to the other was undertaken by the minister of Aberfoyle, the Rev. Robert Kirke, of whom we shall hear again.

There was never any great supply of the Erse Scriptures in Ireland, and in 1809, when the British and Foreign Bible Society brought out its first edition of the New Testament, the scarcity was extreme among those who spoke only their mother-tongue. At that time Irish was used almost throughout the island, and in a population of six millions, two millions could not follow a sermon or an address in English. Fresh editions were called for. The Bible was issued in 1817. The Word of God became the class-book of the " hedge-schools " ; people gathered of evenings to learn to read and to hear the Scriptures read to them ; for a time even the Roman Catholic clergy admitted the books to their schools and

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encouraged the sale among their people. When poverty drove thousands to seek new homes beyond the Atlantic the Bible went forth with them, neither as a cloud nor as a fire, but as the familiar speech of the old country.

In the Channel Islands French, for the nonce, was one of our British tongues ; and when the Bible Society began its work the Scriptures were so scarce that " old second-hand family Bibles sold at £2 and £4—which none but the rich could afford." The wants of both French and English were speedily supplied, and so active and far-ranging were the Society's agents that the Authorized Version was perhaps the only common book among the fishermen, kelp-burners, and pilots of the Scilly Isles, which no one had yet thought of laying out in fields of early spring-flowers.

We have already had glimpses of Scotland ; but that was in the Lowlands. In the north and north-west lay the wild Gaelic land of heath and mountain, where in the eighteenth century the feudal days of chieftain and vassal had come to an end, and the small farms and homesteads of the clansmen had been swept away to make room for sheep.

Illiteracy hung like a mist over the land. Up to 1732 schools had been founded in about a



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hundred parishes, but for a generation to come nearly double that number of parishes were destitute. Old Lachlan Shaw, minister, historian and antiquary, could in 1775 look back to the time when from Speymouth, through Strathspey, Badenoch and Lochiel to Lorne, one would have discovered but a solitary schoolmaster. And when the means of education were multiplied, the children were so widely scattered over tracts of moorland, marsh, and rock, that attendance at school was often impossible.

In many places such religion as existed was a singular blending of half-forgotten Roman Catholicism and the superstitions of an immemorial nature-worship—observance of heathen customs, belief in charms, incantations, holy wells and Beltane fires, and an awe-struck credence of wood-spirits, washers of the ford, and the Men of Peace in the elfin hillocks. The earliest translations, or rather paraphrases of Scripture in the Gaelic of the Highlands appear to have been the Fifty Psalms of the Synod of Argyle (1659), and the metrical Psalter of the Rev. Robert Kirke, who transliterated the Erse Bible of 1690 into English characters. Curiously enough this poetic minister of Aberfoyle was not only a grave believer in the Men of Peace, but if one may believe the account of his successor, was actually spirited away by the little people in green who haunted

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the mound, clustered with old trees, near the manse. As late indeed as 1840, a pious Highlander, verging on his hundredth year, used to include in his "grace before meat" a petition for preservation "from the power and dominion of the fairies and from the malicious effects of an evil eye."

The first "Highland" New Testament was printed in Edinburgh in 1767. The opposition of certain members of the Scottish Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to a project which might give fresh life to the mother-tongue of the Jacobite clansmen drew from Dr. Johnson an indignant protest against "the crime" of obscuring the light of revelation upon merely political motives. Ten thousand copies were put into circulation. Two other editions followed, and in 1701 appeared the Old Testament in four volumes.

Notwithstanding these issues and the hundreds of copies of the Irish version, the Scriptures were still very dear, and extremely scarce, when the Bible Society published its first Gaelic Bible in 1807. That date was the beginning of a new era. Large editions were conveyed to the Highlands and the Islands on the west coast. The low prices—3s. 6d. for a Bible, and 10d. for a Testament—placed the books within reach of thousands who had long wished for them in vain. A new impulse was given to education.

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Such excitement had surely never been seen hitherto in these wild spots. Weekly and bi-weekly Bible meetings were held; small Bible schools grew too big for accommodation, and "hived off" on their own account; and once or twice a month, on moonlight nights, all met together at the "mother-school," and so maintained a common interest and friendliness over a long country-side. "What times to remember were those moonlight nights! The hush of the hill, the silvered rock and tree, the school-room lit with dim iron *crusies*, the strange gathering of faces"; for from two to three hundred people—lads and lasses, men and women—attended these monthly meetings, and grey-headed folk came with their spectacles to learn to read their native language. Year after year, as the people turned their faces to the distant lands where life appeared happier, and thrift and toil were less grudgingly rewarded, no emigrant ship that left a Scottish port but was visited by the agents of the Society, and the Bible in the cradle tongue was often the last memorial of the old country.

The auxiliary organizations in Scotland made all this work their own, but it was not until all these bodies united to form the National Bible Society of Scotland in 1861 that the great English Society felt that active co-operation was no longer needed in the Highlands. Its Gaelic circulation between 1809 and

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1817—32,000 Bibles and Testaments—was only 3000 volumes less than the issues of the thirty-seven years 1767-1804.

The Society's printings in the six languages spoken in the United Kingdom amounted, from its formation in 1804 to 1817, to 801,339 Bibles and 803,883 Testaments, an aggregate of 1,605,000 volumes, but many of these books found their way to the extremities of the earth.



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## CHAPTER XV

### “ UNTO ALL NATIONS ”

IT would be difficult to find a single illustration of what the Bible has meant and still means to England and English-speaking peoples more impressive than the work of the Bible societies. We may perhaps conceive of some other nation originating the scheme which took shape in 1804 ; England at least was the only country which at that time could have possibly carried through the undertaking to so successful an issue. It will surely be one of the curious facts in the history of Victorian literature that of all the men whose vision was filled with the ideas and actions which fashion the destinies of States, no great writer has thought it worth while to notice a movement that can hardly be matched in duration, continuity, range and results by any other in our time. For a hundred years and more the lands and seas of the planet have been the stage for a play of forces alive with political and social significance, with spiritual experience, with tragic heroism ; yet no man of genius has attempted to picture the phenomenon or to estimate its influence in practical affairs.

From the outset the immense faith of the founders

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projected itself into an extraordinary variety of enterprises which put them in touch with the four quarters of the globe and began to make them as cosmopolitan in language as they actually were in their mission. Within thirteen years they had spread the Bible or some portion of it over an area which seems almost incredible. "Armed frigates, convict-ships, merchantmen under their clouds of canvas, had borne it over the seas of the world. The Eskimo read it on the verge of the polar ice-cap; the Hottentot child spelt it beneath the pear-tree in the Kloof of Baboons. The Red Indian carried it in his breast as he threaded the forest or paddled on the Great Lakes; on the Russian steppes it was in the hands of the Tartar herdsman; it had reached the Brahman and the Sudra. The Negro learnt it by heart on the West Indian plantations; the Chinaman pondered over it and burnt his idols of rice-paper; the South Sea islander waited to exchange for it his bamboo full of cocoa-nut oil." <sup>1</sup>

Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick were among the earliest scenes of activity. There the Scriptures were needed in four languages, in English, in French for the descendants of the original settlers, in Welsh and Gaelic for the emigrants who landed year after year in ever increasing numbers. The work extended rapidly up the great river to

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of the Bible Society*, p. 88.

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Quebec and Montreal, and the clearings in the West. The population of Canada in 1800 was estimated at 470,000 ; the site of Ottawa was hidden in the bush ; Christianity might roughly be said to lie within the old French Province of Quebec, a land " practically parcelled out among the Saints, so far as the nomenclature of the towns and villages was concerned." But as the unceasing tide of colonization rolled in, and the forests were cleared and settlements sprang up in the track of the sun, auxiliary Bible societies were founded, the vast tracts were mapped into dioceses, and outside the land of the Saints there arose " in the clearings of pine and maple, on the great rivers, along the lake shores, towns and villages of a new England, a new Scotland, a new Ireland in an odd geographical medley. Iona and Durham and Innisfail ; Melrose, Lambeth, and Tara ; Paisley, Battersea, Tyrone—scores of names from the three kingdoms—made the Far West homely," and one of the homeliest things in it was the Bible. In the later years of the century the Scriptures were required in forty-five languages for the motley throngs of settlers and Yukon gold-seekers, while from Manitoba, the house of the Manito, to the edge of the Arctic Circle, the Indian tribes read in their own tongues of " the Great Spirit " whom they had ignorantly worshipped.

Scarcely had the Society begun its work in Canada

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when its attention was drawn to the Eskimo on the coast of Labrador. In 1810 the famous mission-ship *Harmony* took them out the Gospel of St. John, which they delighted to hear some child read at evening by the glimmer of the moss in the lamps of soapstone ; in 1871 the completion of the Eskimo Bible gave an additional glory to the centenary of the Moravian Labrador Mission.

The example of England was readily followed in the United States. The first Bible Society there was founded at Philadelphia in 1808. At that date the "Far West" was well on the Eastern side of the Mississippi ; the Union consisted of eighteen States, and the total population, including slaves, was scarcely seven millions. Within eight years 130 organizations were in operation, and in May 1816 these combined to form the American Bible Society. Its agents crossed the Mississippi with the earliest settlers, and appeared on the shores of the Pacific in the first rush for gold. In 1854 its auxiliary societies exceeded 2800. It completed its fourth house-to-house visitation of the States for the supplying of the Scriptures in 1889. Its first agent abroad appeared in the Levant in 1836 ; in 1895 there were eleven at work in the great mission fields of the world.

The British Society's first contact with the West Indies occurred in 1807, and its efforts reached out to the coasts of Central America and the Guianas.



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Thanks to the spread of the Scriptures, which even the old plantation slaves learned to read in English, or their own Negro-English, the horrible fascination of Obeah was largely dispelled, and the abolition of slavery took effect without the disorder, drunkenness and bloodshed which many had declared to be inevitable. Indeed when the day of emancipation came round, it was made memorable in quite another fashion. On the evening of July 31, 1834, the churches and chapels on the islands were filled with negroes; as midnight drew near they fell upon their knees, slaves awaiting their deliverance; when the last stroke of twelve sounded, they sprang to their feet free men. August 1 was a Friday; on the following Monday work was going on as usual in the plantations; but the labourer had shaken the chains from his soul.<sup>1</sup>

In South America activity was intermittent, until in 1856 the introduction of the agency system into Brazil and the Argentine enabled the British Society to include not only these regions but Chili, Peru, and the Republics of the Andes within the scope of its operations. In the extreme south the publication of the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts in Yahgan proved that even Darwin's "miserable and degraded

<sup>1</sup> In commemoration of their emancipation, nearly 100,000 copies of the New Testament and Psalms were sent out by the Society for free distribution among the negroes who could read.

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savages " were not beyond its ministrations, and that the Patagonians who, it was said, could not count beyond five or distinguish in words between hand and finger, possessed a language into which the most extraordinary book in the world could be translated.

The story of the South Seas is the romance of Missions. There, too, the Scriptures were rendered into strange and barbarous tongues, which became as regenerative as those of the living Apostles. Savage spears were turned into pulpit-rails, the altars of human sacrifice into printing-presses ; and the descendants of cannibals of these isles went forth as Christian teachers for New Guinea.

Through all the history of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand the record of the Society's work runs like a golden thread. To-day in New Zealand glittering towns on bay and inlet, great tracts of corn, sheep-runs, cattle pastures, collieries, blackbirds and thrushes in the gardens, sweetbriar in the hedges (" the missionary plant," the Maoris called it), trout in the streams, starlings on the moors, have made the South Island seem a sunnier England. The days of the chivalrous warrior-chiefs are passing into oblivion, but here we may recall one incident of the early mission time, which Englishmen might well be proud to tell of their own race. At a Communion service a Maori convert was observed to rise, withdraw

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hurriedly, and in a little while return to his place. He explained afterwards that as he approached the table he did not know at whose side he would chance to kneel: " Suddenly I saw that I was beside a man who some years ago slew my father and drank his blood, and whom I then swore I would kill the first time I saw him. So I went back to my seat, and when I was there I saw in the spirit the upper sanctuary, and seemed to hear a voice which said, ' Thereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' That made a deep impression on me ; and at the same time I thought I saw another sight ; it was a cross and a man nailed upon it, and I heard Him say, ' Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then I went back to my place at the table."

Of the voluminous record of Christian Missions no part is more generally known than the account of the remote East—Ceylon, India, Burma, the Malay Archipelago, the Philippines, China, Japan, Korea. Wherever in these enormous regions the missionary has penetrated, the Bible is in evidence ; and far beyond the utmost range of any missionary some Gospel, passed from hand to hand, has again and again carried the story of the Divine Life and fallen like seed into the hearts of men.

In Madagascar the missionaries were driven out ; the Malagassy Scriptures remained in the land, and men and women were willing to die for their faith.

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They went singing to the stake on Faravohitra. "They sang again, even while in the fire." There was a rainbow in the heavens at the time ; so close to the place of burning that it seemed to touch them, and some of the spectators fled in terror at the sight. When they ceased singing, they prayed for their persecutors. "Then they died, but softly, gently ; indeed, gentle was the going forth of their life."

From very early years the Bible House was in correspondence with West and South Africa, and language after language was mastered and lifted to the levels of Christian civilization. Like the Malay, the Zulu bragged of his native version of the Scriptures : Englishmen had railways, telegraphs, breech-loaders ; they were a great people—but they had not the Gospels in Zulu ! At first the Bechuana thought the Bible was magic to destroy them, or a charm against sickness ; the white man spoke to it. They discovered it was the Bible that spoke—"Yes, it speaks to the heart." It began to speak in Swahili, and the Cathedral of Zanzibar rose upon the site of the horrible slave-market, and where the blood-stained whipping-post once stood Bishop Steere, the great Swahili translator, was laid to his rest in 1882. For the first time an Englishman looked on Uganda in 1862 ; in 1897 the Bible in the speech of Uganda was in circulation ; in 1902 the Christian Katikiro (Prime Minister) of Uganda attended the



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coronation of King Edward. When the century closed, a network of languages into which some part, if not the whole, of the Scriptures had been translated, linked the Cape with Suez on the east and with Sierra Leone on the west.

When the Bible Society was founded, however, it was on Europe—Europe beleaguered by the colossal ambition of Bonaparte—that the eyes of Englishmen were most eagerly bent, and Europe was made the scene of its most vigorous enterprise. In May 1804 the German Bible Society was established at Nuremberg. Two years later the Prussian Bible Society was formed at Berlin. The Russian Bible Society was sanctioned by the Tsar on December 18, 1812, and at that moment the remnants of Napoleon's Grand Army were retreating in desperate confusion across the ice of the Niemen. The Brunswick Bible Society was organized on the day Waterloo was lost and won. People remember how the war-songs of Arndt pierced through the roll of the French drums ; for the most part they have forgotten how the hearts of a nation were uplifted by the testimony that a divine justice overruled earthly oppression.

Through all those tempestuous years when Napoleon was checked and baffled and finally overthrown by "English gold," English gold built up a spiritual coalition which counted for more in the

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progress of the Continent than historians have recorded. Since that time the Bible has been a constant, if unobtrusive, influence in every country in Europe ; has affected the peaceful movements for religious freedom and civilization, and has been a still small voice in camp and bivouac and hospital in every outbreak of hostilities, from the Crimean war and the struggle between North and South down to the last upheaval in the Balkans.

The Napoleonic troubles were not yet over when the Bible movement was extended into Scandinavia ; and the Netherlands Bible Society, destined for much good work in the East, was founded ; and English agents in the Mediterranean organized the system which afterwards included in its scope North Africa, Greece and Turkey, Syria and Asia Minor, the Nile Valley and Abyssinia.

The Bible Society of Russia was suppressed in 1826, on the initiative of the Greek Church. A Protestant institution was sanctioned, but the British and Foreign Society had established an independent basis for its own operations. Its representatives crossed into Georgia and Tiflis ; Turkestan was annexed as a new field ; Persia became an additional district in 1880 ; and in 1894 the agency for Siberia covered the seventy degrees of longitude between the Urals and Vladivostock.

Even from outlines so bare and roughly sketched

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one divines a work which, apart from its highest, and indeed its sole object, cannot but have enriched to an unprecedented degree the scientific knowledge of the world.

It has been estimated that at the beginning of the nineteenth century all the Bibles in existence, in every land, and in all languages, spoken or extinct, did not greatly exceed four millions, in forty or fifty tongues. When Cleopatra's Needle was erected on the Thames Embankment in 1878, copies of the Scriptures in four languages and a booklet containing the verse, John iii. 16, in two hundred and fifteen, were enclosed in the pedestal of that historic column whose inscriptions Moses may have read in his boyhood, and whose gold-cased peak flashed across the brick-fields of Pharaoh. The booklet represented the languages into which at that date some portion at least of the Bible had been translated. In the space of forty years the number was doubled. Up to 1913 the Bible, the New Testament, or some complete portion of these had been published in 450 different tongues,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The actual work of translation in these 450 tongues may here be seen at a glance :—

Languages	Bibles	Testaments	Portions
Europe . . .	37	19	22
Asia . . .	40	42	80
Africa . . .	19	29	64
America . . .	3	8	22
Oceania . . .	12	10	43
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	111	108	231
	253		

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and during the course of its existence the British and Foreign Bible Society alone had issued close upon 244,500,000 copies of Scripture. Of these upwards of 87,000,000 were in our own tongue.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the English people may have done or have failed to do in this unparalleled enterprise, they have at least writ large their own veneration and love for the Holy Scriptures. And these figures are but part of the large writing.

<sup>1</sup> Of these books and booklets in English over thirty-nine millions were Bibles and Old Testaments ; nearly thirty-five millions were New Testaments, with or without the Psalms ; and little short of thirteen millions were complete portions. It would be hard to find any group of English-speaking people so isolated that the Scriptures are beyond their reach. On Pitcairn Island, the hilly speck two and a half miles long by a mile wide in the Pacific, the great-great-grandchildren of the *Bounty* mutineers have their Bibles. So, too, have the Palmerston Islanders, between Samoa and the Hervey clusters—some forty or fifty descendants of an English sailor, who inhabit a group of ten islets within a ring of coral, the largest a mile in circumference and three feet above sea-level.



# Anglo-Saxon People

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ONE THING LEFT

LITTLE has been said of the production of the Authorized Version, or of its later history. No record appears to have been kept of the conditions in which it was carried through the press by "Robert Barker, Printer to the King's most Excellent Maiestie," and it is only within the last thirty years that bibliographers have disclosed the curious fact that when the stately folio edition of 1611 was published, a second folio edition, obviously "set" from copy not strictly uniform, had passed or was still passing through the press.

These editions are distinguished as the "He" and "She" Bibles from the peculiarity that in the one Ruth iii. 15 reads, "and he went into the city," and in the other, "and she went into the city." That the "B" folio was, as is pretty generally agreed, the earlier impression, is in some measure borne out by the fact that the quarto Bible and an octavo Bible of 1612 contain the "He" text; but, on the other hand, a second octavo of 1612 contains the "She" text, and the folio known as the "Great She Bible" doubles the confusion by bearing, as a rule, the date

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1613 on the general title-page, and 1611 on the title-page of the New Testament.

This is no more than the outline of a complicated problem,<sup>1</sup> towards the solution of which it has been suggested that, in order to save time, the work was simultaneously taken up by two different "chapels" of printers, that the "He" edition went through satisfactorily, and that the "She" printing was delayed by incorrect setting, fire, or some other accident. Whatever the actual history of these editions may have been, we may note that it is the "She" reading of Ruth which appears in our Authorized Version to-day, and the "He" which takes its place in the Revised Version.

Notwithstanding the care bestowed upon it, even the first noble folio of King James did not escape "the fatality of misprints" which dogs the most vigilant of press-readers. In the Great She Bible, Matt. xxvi. 36 appeared as "Then cometh Judas with them into a place called Gethsemane," and—not to heap up examples—the folio of 1613 omitted the *not* in 1 Cor. xi. 17: "I praise you (not) that you come together . . . for the worse"; a page of one of the quartos was headed "S. Suke"; and a quarto of 1614 changed *breasts* into *beasts* in "weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts" (Isaiah xxviii. 9).

<sup>1</sup> See Scrivener, *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, Preface.

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A noticeable effort at correctness was made in the first small folio, 1616, printed in Roman type. In keeping with its tradition the University of Cambridge produced its first issue of the King James Bible in 1629, and the revised text of that fine edition served as a basis for the more thorough revision of the Cambridge Bible of 1638. Among the new readings of this later edition was the *not* inserted in Matt. xii. 23—"Is not this the sonne of David?"—which is still repeated in the Authorized Version to-day, and has been struck out of the Revised.

This 1638 was the luckless year in which Charles and Archbishop Laud roused the Scots to renew their Covenant. Fourteen years later the Puritans were in the ascendant and the question of a new translation was mooted in the Long Parliament in 1652, and remitted to a committee for investigation. Happily nothing came of the project. The best Orientalists and classics of the time, while acknowledging errors, declared the revision "to be the best of any translation in the world," and all further risks and chances were forestalled by the dissolution. In 1662 the prestige of the version was further enhanced by the re-issue of the Book of Common Prayer, in which the Authorized text was adopted for the Epistles, Gospels, and other Scripture portions.

Whether or not the effect of the long monopoly in the printing of the English Scriptures (the exclusive

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patent dated from 1589) was to beget greed and carelessness, so many complaints had been made of the incorrectness of the text, the poor quality of the paper, and the unreasonable sale prices, that in April 1724 a royal order insisted, among other details, on the price of each book being clearly given on the title-page. From that date there appeared a good number of editions, ranging in price from 2s. to 6s. unbound, and probably an attempt was made to free the text of its misprints. In 1727, at least, the King's Printers in Edinburgh issued an edition in which were amended and corrected in the Notes on the Old Testament, "several thousands of errors," which were in all, or most, of the former editions whether printed at Edinburgh or elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Two more University editions—that of Cambridge in 1762, edited by Dr. Paris of Trinity College, and the Oxford standard edition of 1769, edited by Dr. Blayney of Hertford College, who worked on the lines of his predecessor and adopted most of his improvements—not only amended spelling, punctuation and printers' errors, but, according to Scrivener, modernized "the diction of the version, from what it was left in the seventeenth century, to the state wherein it appears in modern Bibles."

It was reserved for the early nineteenth century to welcome the novelty of a Bible presented, "like the

<sup>1</sup> Darlow and Moule, *Catalogue*, p. 265.



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editions of our best English books," in handy volumes about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, printed in sections and paragraphs, without the references but with the alternative readings placed at the foot of the page. The originator of this new format, which was published in 1802, was John Reeves of the Middle Temple, King's Printer, and author of a *History of English Law*. The edition, which was known by his name, ran to ten volumes with the Apocrypha and Notes, but two less voluminous editions followed.

As the century advanced, the strong religious spirit which had awakened among the people stirred in the minds of the educated a keen interest in the original texts of the Scriptures, in the difficult task of translation, and in the extremely delicate question of a revision of the Authorized Version. It was felt that we were on the threshold of a new time when the august documents of our faith should be reviewed in the light of advanced scholarship, and the results embodied with the least possible detriment to the literary heritage which had grown into the life of the nation.

As early as 1848-51 the American Bible Society had carried through an independent revision of the Bible, but in 1857 they discontinued their new recension in deference to the appeals and protestations of their supporters. In the course of their proceedings, however, a collation of their standard

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edition with the original text of 1611 and four Bibles recently printed in London, Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh disclosed "some 24,000 variations."

The preparation of the notable edition of the Bible, afterwards known as *The Speaker's Commentary*,<sup>1</sup> was begun in 1864, but meanwhile the plea for revision was effectively urged by "Five Clergymen,"<sup>2</sup> whose recensions of the Gospel of St. John and groups of the Epistles (1857-61) did much to modify the intense feeling against any changes being made in the Authorized Version.

There was still, however, a very wide divergence of opinion among Churchmen when, in February 1870, the subject was raised in the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. The Northern Province, doubtful both of the seasonableness and the advantage of a revision, declined to take part in the preliminary inquiry; but in May the Southern Convocation decided to proceed. Before the month closed two Companies were appointed, one for the revision of the Old Testament, and the other for that of the New; the co-operation of eminent men was invited, irrespective of nationality or

<sup>1</sup> The undertaking was suggested by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Hon. J. Evelyn Denison, and the Commentary appeared in 1881.

<sup>2</sup> The "Five Clergymen" were Dr. Barrow, Principal of St. Edmund Hall; the Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Moberly); Dean Alford; Prebendary Humphry of St. Paul's; and Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester.

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religious denomination ; and rules were laid down, the most important of which provided that, with due regard to fidelity, as little as possible should be altered in the version, that its diction and that of the earlier English versions should be followed in the changes made, and that no alteration should be finally admitted into the text except on a vote of two-thirds of the revisers present.<sup>1</sup>

The New Testament Company met for the first time on June 22, 1870, and of the twenty-eight scholars who then assembled, twenty-four survived at their last meeting, November 11, 1880. The New Testament was published on May 17, 1881, eleven years from the decision of Convocation. The Old Testament Company, who consisted of thirty-seven revisers, first met on June 30, 1870 ; twenty-seven remained when the work was completed on June 20, 1884. Publication took place in the following year on May 19.

Had the revision of the New Testament been carried out on the lines followed in the revision of the Old, it is possible that the Bible of 1885 might have marked a new epoch in the religious life of the people ; but in their eagerness for a punctilious and almost literal accuracy, the majority of the revisers

<sup>1</sup> See Prefaces to the Revised Old and New Testaments ; also for full personal details, Dr. W. F. Moulton's *History of the English Bible*, pp. 215-223, 232.

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went far beyond the limits set by Convocation, failed to secure the unanimity of the clergy, and estranged the laity.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, is the story in brief outline of the Bible of our fathers and our own.

We turn once more to the book itself, to that special form of it, in which the words are for us "the holiest and yet the most familiar of all words; the first that the opening intellect of the child receives with wondering faith from the lips of its mother;

<sup>1</sup> Upwards of 36,000 alterations—at the rate, it is reckoned, of 4·5 to every verse—were made in the New Testament. Whether a strict fidelity to the original required such extensive change is a point upon which even the learned appear unable to agree; but the new reading of Philippians iii. 21, as Dr. Moulton pointed out, is sufficient evidence that the revisers were neither insensible to the beauty of the version they were correcting, nor incapable of assimilating it. Let the reader judge for himself whether the more accurate translation is not by far the more noble in phrase and rhythm:—

"Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself";  
and

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Probably the general opinion at this moment finds expression in the words used by Dean Bickersteth in 1884: "The least that can be said of it is that it is confessedly one of the best Commentaries on the New Testament, and a most important contribution towards a new Version."



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the last that tremble on the tongue of the dying as he commends his soul to God." <sup>1</sup>

What other book has ever been, or has ever been called, the Book of the People? What other book called Sacred has been so intelligible to the humblest on all that it concerns them to know? In point of language it is of childlike simplicity; a one-syllable book, one might almost say. Take the first narrative in the Gospels—Matthew ii.—and you will find that nearly eighty words in every hundred are monosyllables; indeed, if names of places and persons are left out of count, that eighty-five in every hundred are words of one syllable. Yet in what experience of existence, in what thought of the mind, in what emotion of the heart, has it been found tonguetied? On the other hand, recall the varied character of the Old Testament, the imagery and fervour of the prophets, the great stories of the historical books, the beauty and splendour of the Psalms, and endeavour to realize that all this marvellous Old Testament was built up out of 5642 Hebrew words—little more than twice the number of English words that many a child of ten knows.

The works of our great poets, dramatists, and novelists abound in characters and pithy sayings; but this is the supreme book of types, comparisons, allusions. It has furnished everyday talk with an

<sup>1</sup> Demaus, *William Tindale, a Biography*, p. 545.

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unbounded variety of phrase and metaphor. Who is at a loss when there is a reference to the judgment of Solomon, to the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the hairiness of Esau, the strength of Samson, the driving of Jehu, the dearness of Benjamin, the guiles of Jezebel, the friendship of Jonathan and David, the age of Methuselah, Cæsar's dues, the goodness of the Samaritan, the treachery of Judas, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the first stone, whited sepulchres, bricks without straw, pearls and swine, whips and scorpions, straining at gnats,<sup>1</sup> new wine and old bottles, the ewe lamb, the coat of many colours, the balm of Gilead, the labourer and his hire, the tree and its fruit, the prodigal's return, the eleventh hour, the loaves and fishes, the relation of Dan to Beersheba? Its proverbs have been on the lips of the people from the earliest days of English.

As it has entered into the common knowledge and the current speech, so it has entered into the formation of character; and for those national traits which have given Britain its place in the world—hatred of falsehood, respect for law and order, love of fair play, reasonableness, and a singular freedom from the passionate outbreaks that have marked so much of

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless we shall go on to the end "straining at gnats," and choking over them, in spite of being corrected. It is curious that "strain out" (of the drink) which appeared in Baskett Bibles from 1753 to 1768 should have apparently been rejected up to the Revised Version.

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the history of other nations—we owe an incalculable debt to the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Even when the passions of men broke bounds, in the blood-stained days in which order and justice and humanity were flung to the winds, there was constantly in evidence a visible faith, however confused and bigoted, in the eternal righteousness, and an adherence, however mistaken its methods, to what was believed to be the will of God.

As in the past the Bible was the book of wild adventurers by sea and land, so it has been the book of the foremost sailors and soldiers in our own time. Its pages have been strength and cheer in the dangers and depression of the polar north, and the uttermost Arctic grave bears the inscription, "Wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow." In the story of the Indian Mutiny little is said of that unseen presence which was felt in the hours of extremity, but the people of England have not forgotten that our dominion in the East was preserved by the faith of Bible-loving men. It was that outstanding Christian administrator, Sir Henry Lawrence, who first checked the fury of the rebellion; it was "the saints" of the "preaching, praying, psalm-singing Baptist," Sir Henry Havelock, who broke its force

<sup>1</sup> "How calm and quiet England has kept during the storm," said a friend to Guizot when the Continent was swept by revolution in 1848. "Yes," replied the old French statesman; "and England owes it to her religion."

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so that retribution should begin. And both these clear-headed leaders again and again recognized that it was neither to skill nor courage that they owed the issue: "Nothing but a series of miracles saved us. . . . To Him alone be all the praise!" How gallantly that tradition was handed on, let the name of Gordon recall; and let the death-song that goes up from sinking ships bear testimony to the trust: "In the uttermost parts of the sea—even there shall Thy hand lead me."

We have already touched on the influence of the Bible on our literature. At the close of three centuries we are able to say that more than Shakespeare, probably more than all the great writers together—for what book has been read and heard read so constantly as this?—the Bible has preserved not only the beauty and nobility of the language, but the language itself. In the whole of the Authorized Version the number of words or senses of words which have fallen obsolete since 1611 is only 388. The poetic revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century synchronized, as we have seen, with a Biblical revival, and the period was as profoundly imaginative as it was fervidly religious. In one form or other it would not be difficult to trace the stream of Bible influence from *Heaven and Earth* or *Cain* to the *Strange Medical Experience of Karshish*, and right through to the end of the century. Nor



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would it be a dull or profitless task to survey the poetic work of the period from that point of view, to recall names shining in their day though now fallen dim or wholly forgotten, and to realize how much has come down to us so expressive of our own hopes and needs, joys and sorrows, that the verse beats still with emotion as when it was penned. Whether the same influence is yet abroad to-day we need not question while our poets can sing of *The Everlasting Mercy*, and India can send us back, in the lyric prose of the *Gitanjali*, the Christian mysticism of the West steeped in the colour and music of Bengal.

It is the same if we turn to many of the great masters of prose. Ruskin has told of the daily discipline to which he attributed "the best part of his taste in literature." He had read through the Bible at least six times with his mother before he was fifteen. Much of it he knew by heart. Every word was "familiar to his ear in habitual music." His books are full of it. In *Modern Painters* 258 passages are quoted, and in the *Stones of Venice* 125, to take no account of phrases and incidents which drew some of the most vivid and pregnant sentences from his glowing pen.

As Burke in the Georgian days enriched his rolling periods from "the most valuable repository of rhetoric in the English language," so John Bright, in our own, used the same resources with a simpler

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skill. His "Cave of Adullam" took its place in the graphic vocabulary of politics. He gave the work of Lloyd Garrison and his friends on behalf of the slave an epic colour from Hebrews xi. 32-34. We could not consult the Urim and Thummim, the oracular gems on Aaron's breastplate, he once said on a question of policy, but we had the unchangeable principles of the moral law. For many a year men repeated with a thrill his appeal for peace during the Crimean War: "The Angel of Death is abroad in the land; you may almost hear the very beating of his wings. There is no one to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the side-posts of our doors that he may spare and pass on."

It is still the same if we regard the work of the artist and the musician. A sequence of sacred art extends through the century; we pass from the wild grandeurs of Martin and Danby—"The Feast of Belshazzar," "The Fall of Babylon," "The Opening of the Sixth Seal"—and the heroic figure-subjects of Etty and Gilbert to the new conceptions of Dyce, of Tidey, of Armitage, with his "Remorse of Judas." The splendour of fresh inspiration breaks in upon us as we stand in front of Ford Madox Brown's "Elijah restoring the Widow's Son" and "The Coat of Many Colours," Holman Hunt's "Triumph of the Innocents," Rooke's tragic suites of "Jephthah" and "Naboth's Vineyard," and Bell Scott's "Eve of

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the Deluge." Watts and Poynter, Millais, Leighton, with his Michael-Angelesque "Sea giving up its Dead," prove once again that the magic of vision is in the mind of the seer. Lest we should lose an old-world phase of truth, Rossetti and Burne-Jones embody a mystic and allusive beauty which lift us out of place and time, and this art, too, holds its own beside the imaginative realism of the "Samson" of S. J. Solomon, the beast-pictures of Briton Riviere, and Hunter's "Finding of Moses."

We seem to perceive a steady progress, from an imaginative effort to visualize events and landscapes beyond experience, to a demand for actuality and for such representation of bygone scenes as travel and research can realize. Are changes of this kind merely incidental to the development of art, or are they the unconscious expression of the mind of the people? Was it Puritanism or the Evangelical temperament, for example, which placed the Old Testament, in curious contrast with the Middle Ages, on the same artistic level as the New; and is the desire for realism and veracity in sacred art a protest—not the less significant because instinctive and undesigned—against the negative spirit in so much Biblical criticism?

But more than all, it is in the most secret and intimate consciousness of the individual man that the power of the English version works like an indissoluble

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spell. Once felt, it accompanies him through all chances and changes to the end of his days. "Who will say," wrote Father Faber after he seceded to Rome, "that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great 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. . . . The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. 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 the 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 O 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."

It is under this aspect of the Holy Scriptures that we approach those secret things of the heart,



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those intimate and thrilling experiences which, in many instances, are almost too sacred to speak of; those sudden enlightenments and redemptions and re-births which are so often associated with the Psalms; those traditions of family piety, which date perchance from a shepherd-lad learning his New Testament on the hill-sides; those strange assurances of safety in danger, of relief in need, which in our doubting moments we are tempted to regard as coincidences. Life abounds in them. "On most occasions of very sharp pressure and trial," wrote Gladstone, "some word of Scripture has come home to me as if borne on angels' wings."

In the Indian Mutiny two English ladies, with some little children, were kept close prisoners at Sitapur and expected death from hour to hour. One of the children fell ill, and a native doctor was allowed to send in some medicine. It was wrapped in printed paper, and as the ladies unfolded it they read the following verses from Isaiah li.:

"12. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

13. And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

14. The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that . . ."

From that moment they were assured of their safety,

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and their hearts knew neither fear nor anxiety until they were rescued.

This was no stranger, and no less strange, than Spurgeon's experience in his cholera-stricken district. Weary in body and heavy at heart, he felt he was sickening, when, on his way home, he observed a written notice in a shoemaker's window. It was a passage from Psalm xci., and he stopped to read it :

“9. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation ;

10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

The effect was instantaneous. “I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality. . . . I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm.”

It is with such messages that after-thought is busy, accounting for things “naturally.” We can mostly explain everything away, except the little chance that it just happened so, and chance is the angel's wing between heaven and earth.

Last of all, we turn to those larger utterances, the value of which does not lie in the tribute paid to the imperishable beauty of a particular version, but in the recognition of the Bible in every language as the story of the unveiling of God Himself, and of a people rising under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through long stages of a moral and spiritual evolution.

“What, after all,” asks Carlyle, “is meant by

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*uneducated*, in a time when Books have come into the world ; come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilized world ? In the poorest cottage are Books ; is one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is Deepest in him ; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed ; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result."

" There are certain truths," exclaims Theodore Roosevelt, " which are so very true that we call them truisms ; and yet I think we half forget them in practice. Every thinking man, when he thinks, realizes that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally—I do not mean figuratively, but literally—impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed. We should lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals ; all the standards towards which we, with more or less of resolution, strive to raise ourselves. Almost every man who has by his life-work added to the sum of human achievement . . . has based his life-work largely upon the teachings

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of the Bible. Sometimes it has been done unconsciously, more often consciously."

Testimony the same in character comes from men who reject all confessions and forms, but whose pure and brilliant intellects have discovered no truth, no goodness that was not already in the New Testament, and who, whether they will have it so or not, are within the Christian fold outside all Churches. Half of these words of Huxley might well be inscribed in every school and the other half in the Houses of Parliament: "Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this Book has been woven into the life of all that is noblest and best in our history, and that it has become the national epic of our race; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form; and finally, that it forbids the veriest hind, who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries, and other civilizations, and of a great past, stretching back to the farthest limits of the oldest nations in the world.

"By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between the eternities, and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its efforts to do good and hate evil? . . .



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“ The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and of the oppressed. Down to modern times, no State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account, in which the duties, so much more than the privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Nowhere is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State, in the long-run, depends upon the righteousness of the citizen, so strongly laid down. The Bible is the most democratic book in the world.”

Upon such a note one would wish to close, but another word remains to be said.

Upwards of a dozen years ago the *Spectator*, speaking of the dryness and sterility coming over the mind of the English and Scottish peasantry, attributed this change to “ the loss of that familiarity with the Old Testament, which the more intelligent among them formerly possessed. The Hebrew Scriptures may be called by some a limited literature, but they are a great literature ; and when the Bible was the one book of the English poor, they derived from it a literary training which is ill replaced by a knowledge what to expect from a mixture in a glass jar of two single chemical elements.”

Others have noticed the growing change, have seen the causes in action, and have found that they did not always include a thirst for elementary science.

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Visiting a west-country village or small town, a clergyman called at a weaver's cottage. In a room on the ground-floor the old man had his loom, and on some ledge or beam of the loom, clear of threads and play of the shuttle, lay a Bible. Every now and again the loom is stopped for some reason, and during these pauses of a few minutes the old man read his Bible. Then his feet were busy once more with the treadles, the healds drew up and down, the shuttle flew to and fro. Remembering how the Knitters of the French Revolution knitted the names of those they hated into their work, one fancies what thoughts and feelings streamed into warp and woof from his reading. In the room overhead was another loom. "My son's," said the old weaver, as he showed the visitor in. On the young man's loom, ready to hand against the spare moments, lay a newspaper.

The change is not confined to the country villagers or to the poor. "I speak with rather a heavy heart," said the Bishop of Birmingham, a little while back, "for although I have referred to the growing fabric of Biblical knowledge, I am depressed by the fact that there is at the same time a neglect of the study of the Bible by the ordinary Christian of all denominations. I believe that Biblical criticism and the questions which it has raised are used as an excuse, and in combination with other causes, have made

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ordinary Christians read the Bible less than they once did. The ignorance of Scripture shown by boys and girls at school is most disheartening. In our most refined homes—homes where there is the least excuse for it—this great neglect is found, and so far as I can make out, it exists among all denominations.”

Such a decline in faith or practice would be a sorry conclusion to the glorious sequence of history which we have outlined in these pages ; and no sadder presage of evil days could befall this England than doubt of the fact, or indifference to the fact, which has been so well stated by August von Hase :<sup>1</sup> “ The greatest blessing which Protestantism has up to the present bestowed upon the world, besides the spiritual freedom which is another name for itself, is the familiarity of the people with their Bible. Catholicism has taught the people at least partially to read. Protestantism has put into their hands what was best worth reading. A house, in which the Bible is the book of reading and edification for young and old, will gradually be as much familiarized with God as were the patriarchs, with Christ as were the disciples.”

Let not questions of Biblical criticism trouble us. We have lost nothing, we *can* lose nothing that we

<sup>1</sup> Author of the excellent *Handbook to the Controversy with Rome*, a translation of which is published by the Religious Tract Society.

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need regret, through inquiry and research. Criticism has cleared away difficulties and misconceptions, has schooled the Western mind to the idiosyncrasies of the East, lit up with wonderful brightness many a passage in the ancient records, confirmed what some deemed questionable, established what others denied. On the other hand criticism, forgetful of the provisional character of so much of its learning, has had, and will have, its seasons of negation and dogmatism. Patience ! science has not yet said its last word ; the buried past has not yet given up its last relique. A line of Ovid, pronounced spurious by the scholiast, was found scribbled on a wall in Pompeii ; and to-morrow or the next day a papyrus leaf from a Nubian tomb, a clay tablet from an Assyrian mound, may settle our doubts and misgivings.

“ These things shall vanish all,  
The City of God remaineth.”

Enough for us to possess our souls in confidence ; equally on guard against the narrowness which would make the Scriptures a fetich, and the dilettantism which would treat them as a mere collection of old-world songs and sagas ; though we should be none the worse if we took even the old sagas and songs for what they indeed are—the words of men and women who had their joys and sorrows under the sun, and who would have given war-gear and ships and the



## Anglo-Saxon People

gods themselves to know that life was something more than the flitting of a bird from darkness to darkness through the lighted hall at winter-tide.

For the rest the position has been summed up for Christian men in the words of Professor Richard G. Moulton :

“ We have done almost everything that is possible with these Hebrew and Greek writings. We have overlaid them, clause by clause, with exhaustive commentaries ; we have translated them, revised the translations, and quarrelled over the revisions ; we have discussed authenticity and inspiration, and suggested textual history with coloured type ; we have mechanically divided the whole into chapters and verses, and sought texts to memorize and quote ; we have epitomized into handbooks and extracted school lessons ; we have recast from the feminine point of view, and even from the standpoint of the next century. There is yet one thing left to do with the Bible : simply to read it.”<sup>1</sup>

“ Take it and read it ! ” It was the child’s song—perhaps the words of some singing-game—which Augustine heard as he lay weeping on the grass under the fig-tree in the garden at Milan, fifteen hundred years ago. In the end child and scholar deliver the same message—“ *Tolle, lege.* ”

<sup>1</sup> *A Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible*, pp. iii.-iv.



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