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William Tindale

Translator, Reformer, and Martyr

By T. J. WATERMAN.



Commendatory Note by A. T. Schofield, Esq, M.D.

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COMMENDATORY NOTE.

I have carefully read this memoir, and am charmed with it. It is a terse and most carefully arranged picture of a wonderful life. The happy use of the historic present has made the little book live; and the reader finds a singular pleasure in following the lively narrative. The author has given us to-day a picture of great value of a noble man, obsessed with the one idea of the living power of the sacred Word—his great gift to England. At the present day this little book is of great value.

A. T. SCHOFIELD, M.D.



Acknowledgments are due to authoritative works on Tindale for help derived in the preparation of this little book.

J. T. W.

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Life of William Tindale

Translator, Reformer, and Martyr.

WE are to review the life and work of one of the most illustrious of England's benefactors—William Tindale. It is now 390 years since that great man was gathered to his rest! But his memory can never fail, for to him British born Protestants are indebted under God for the priceless heritage of an open Bible and all the blessings flowing therefrom.

Let us recall a singularly appropriate passage of Scripture:—

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”—Rev. ii. 2-3.

“We can conceive these words being pronounced by the Divine Head of the Church to the true confessors and martyrs of Christianity in successive ages. We seem to hear them addressed to Ignatius, as he is led out upon the arena of the Roman Amphitheatre to fight with wild beasts—to the hoary-headed Polycarp, as his ruthless murderers bind him to the stake at Smyrna—to Cyprian, as he falls beneath the headsman's sword near the gates of Carthage—to the noble Vaudois and Waldensians in their ‘vale of tears,’ amidst the smoking ruins of their cottages, and their mountain streams crimsoned with the blood of their faithful brethren—to Huss and Jerome of Prague, as they are consumed to ashes in the old City of Constance. But to no single individual can we imagine these words of Christ more emphatically applicable than to him whose illustrious work and heroic example we propose to simply unfold and enforce to-night. For not only did he die a death of extreme violence, but his whole life was a continued martyrdom.” We shall see *that* “no gleams of prosperity shot over his path”; *that* he was driven by priestly persecution

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from his home—from the land of his fathers; *that* many of his days were spent in bitter exile; *that* he was pursued by human bloodhounds, and thereby constrained to flee from place to place to escape their murderous hands. And, finally, we shall see, *that* in spite of these colossal difficulties, the nature of which was calculated to unnerve and defeat the intentions of the stoutest heart, he finally accomplished the object of his dearest ambition, the translation into English of God's inspired Word; a work which shall perpetually surround his name with a bright halo of honour and admiration.

Tindale's Birth and Education.

Surrounding the birthplace and date of the great Reformer there is much obscurity. The latest historical research has pointed out Slymbridge, Gloucestershire, as the probable place of his birth, and the year 1495 as the date. His father, says tradition, was a substantial yeoman in the beautiful vale of the Severn, and, being naturally desirous to see his son a learned man, sent him very early to Oxford to study grammar and philosophy. This is proved by Foxe, the martyrologist, who says that, "Tindale was brought up from a child in the University of Oxford." As time passed on his facility for the acquisition of languages was observed to be extraordinary, and being a studious, hard-working youth, he rapidly attained to great proficiency under the tuition of Grocyn, Latimer, and Linacre, who were his masters.

It was now 1516, and a book had just been published, destined to be the instrument of Tindale's conversion. What was it? None other than the Greek New Testament from the pen of that intellectual giant—Erasmus. This Book, called afterwards, "the egg of the Reformation," was, at this time, making a great sensation at Oxford. Nowhere had the "autocrat of the literary world" more friends and admirers. This Greek Testament, which one writer describes as "A fair and beautiful temple of sacred erudition," was the one theme of discussion and conversation. Our young student, whom Foxe says was "of most virtuous disposition and life unspotted," was drawn to the study of this wonderful book. He became fascinated by the elegance of its style,

and charmed by the sublimity of its teaching; and very soon a consciousness, born of conviction, seized upon him that it possessed some marvellous unexplainable power of which every other book he had ever studied was destitute. Others certainly had invigorated his intellect, this one regenerated his heart. He had discovered a priceless treasure and he would not hide it. A Divine Master, even God Himself, spoke to him with regenerating power in the holy, heaven inspired Words; and the cry of the Greek philosopher, "I have found it, I have found the secret of life," rushed to his lips, and from that hour a strong, over-mastering passion to make others as blessed as himself gripped his soul. Accordingly, Tindale, young though he was, began to give public lectures on this pure Book. These were a great success—too great a success to be allowed to continue unmolested. The monks, awake, watchful, ever on the alert for any signs of heresy, became uneasy, and soon took the alarm; and within a little time had stirred up enmity to such an extent that Tindale shook off the dust of his feet for a testimony against them and fled to Cambridge, where he arrived in 1517.

He found there a brilliant young scholar named Bilney, and these two were soon joined by a third, a young man of blameless life and elevated soul, John Frith. He was the son of an innkeeper at Sevenoaks, Kent, and was endowed with remarkable talents, together with a delight and diligence in learning equal to his genius. He was considered one of the best mathematical students at Cambridge. "He could have opened for himself," says Foxe, "an easy road to honours and dignities had he not wholly consecrated himself to the service of the Church of Christ." This conversion was the first fruits of Tindale's influence. For Foxe says: "It was William Tindale who first sowed in his heart the seed of the Gospel."

Thus these three young students were perfectly emancipated from the yoke of the Papacy; and their deliverance had been accomplished by the Word of God alone. No infallible Church had interpreted that book to them. They read their Testaments with prayer to the Spirit, and as they read the eyes of their understanding were

opened, and the wonders of God's Law were revealed to them. They came to see that it was FAITH that unlocked the blessings of Salvation: that it was FAITH, and not the priest, that united them to Christ; that Christ, by the wondrous efficacy of His atoning blood, was the source of forgiveness, and Whose righteousness alone, and not the merits of men, either dead or living, was the foundation of the sinner's Justification. These views they had not received from Wittenberg, for Luther was only then beginning his public career; their knowledge of these Divine realities they had received from the Bible, and from the Bible alone.

We follow our Hero to Sodbury.

Having thus given and received comfort at Cambridge, Tindale, driven from that refuge also by the clamour which his doctrines aroused, returned like a hunted hare to his native vale of the Severn. He soon obtained employment as tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, of Sodbury Hall, which stood on the rising ground overlooking the waters of the Severn. The whole of the beautiful country surrounding the old mansion house had been famous in the bloody wars of York and Lancaster. In an old British fort that crowned the summit of Sodbury Hill, the adherents of the Red Rose had halted for a few hours' rest in their flight from the fatal field of Tewkesbury; and, on the plain below, the victorious soldiers of the White Rose had paused in the flush of victory. The village children could still point out the King's tree, beneath which Edward IV. had stood while his exulting squadrons swept past him in eager pursuit of the flying foe.

The tutor of Sodbury, wandering amid these memorials of a conflict now happily over, would no doubt often recall the past while he mapped out in his fertile brain the plan of a nobler campaign, and designed more glorious triumphs than the victories of Edward IV. or the conquests of Margaret of Anjou; for the battles yet to be waged, unlike those gained by the Yorkist or Lancastrian champions, were to be achieved by truth and intelligence over superstition and ignorance.

Here, then, for a time Tindale's lot was cast. At the

table of his patron he met daily the clergy of the neighbourhood, "Abbots, Deans, Archdeacons, with divers other doctors, and great beneficed men." In the conversations that followed, the name of Luther—which was fast becoming a household word—was often mentioned. The young student from Cambridge made no attempt to conceal his sympathy with the German Monk, and kept his Greek New Testament ever beside him to support his sentiments. The disputants often grew warm. "That is the Book that makes heretics," said the priests, glancing at the unwelcome volume. "The source of all heresies is pride," would the humble tutor reply to the puffed-up clergy of the rich valley of the Severn. "The vulgar cannot understand the Word of God," said the priests, "it is the Church that gave the Bible to men, and it is only her priests that can interpret it." "Do you know who taught the eagles to find their prey?" asked Tindale; "that same God teaches His children to find their Father in His Word. Far from having given us the Scriptures, it is you who have hidden them from us." Such bold statements could not escape priestly censure, and a tremendous commotion ensued in the Romish hive. The monkish drones swarmed forth and raised the cry of heresy against the tutor, hoping by this means to speedily silence the young reformer. "The lower clergy," says Foxe, "resorted to the ale-house, and harangued those whom they found assembled there, violently declaiming against the errors of Tindale." A secret accusation was then hatched and laid against him before the Bishop's Chancellor, but Tindale defended himself with such admirable power that he escaped out of the hands of his enemies.

A little breathing time was now afforded him, in which he commenced a definite ministerial work. In the beautiful part at Sodbury stood the pretty little Church of St. Adeline. By special request of his patron, Tindale, in this Church, now began to explain the Scriptures to Sir John Walsh, his household, and tenantry. This he did with so much force and unction, combined with such gracious tenderness, that the little Church became too small for the crowds of hungry listeners. He then extended his labours to the neighbouring villages, scatter-

ing with his living voice the precious seed of the Word, to which, as yet, the people had no access in their mother tongue in a printed form. He next extended his preaching tours to Bristol, where multitudes of citizens flocked to hear the gracious words which fell from his lips in a large meadow called St. Austin's Green. But no sooner had he sowed the seed than the priests hastened to destroy it. Following in his wake, they plucked up the good seed and planted in its place the Papal tares. Poor Tindale became all but disappointed and disheartened. "Oh!" said he, "if the people of England had the Word of God in their own language, this would not happen." This realisation was soon to assume more definite shape, and when, shortly afterwards, a priest arrogantly said to him: "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's," Tindale replied, "I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spare my life I will, before many years have passed, cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do." Noble words! It was now that the sublime idea of translating the Greek Testament of Erasmus entered his mind. In the remarkable preface to his Testament, Erasmus had said concerning the Scriptures:—

"I long that the husbandmen should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of the journey."

And this desire of the great Erasmus was intensified in Tindale, and he determined with unflinching resolution to mature it, for the unshakable conviction of his soul found expression in the weighty words: "It is impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scriptures be plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue." From that moment the work of translation became a cherished hope and labour of his life. He thought of it as keenly as did Cardinal Wolsey of the Papal diadem, of which he was so eagerly desirous.

Tindale Departs From Sodbury.

But where was this great work to be accomplished? It was impossible for him to do it at Sodbury. The

bitter hostile spirit was everywhere in unmistakable evidence:—

"The myrmidons of Rome rushed upon me," says he, "like a herd of unclean beasts, tearing my good name in pieces, and assailing me with threats of the heretic's accustomed doom, the faggot and the stake."

The future looked dark, clouds and blackness covered the horizon, and Tindale, remembering the words of our Lord, "When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another," gathered together his goods and prepared for flight. Collecting his property, chief papers, and manuscripts, he bade Sir John and Lady Walsh goodbye and commenced his tedious journey to the London Metropolis. Arriving safely, he immediately directed his footsteps to the household of Tonstall, Bishop of London. The great Dutch Professor, Erasmus, had lauded to the skies the learning of the good Bishop. Such being the case, the young scholar persuaded himself that, coming as he did on a learned and pious errand, he should find an instant and cordial welcome. A friend to whom he had brought letters of recommendation from Sir J. Walsh brought him to Bishop Tonstall. He was granted an audience, but alas! only to have his hopes dashed to pieces. "My house is already full," said the Bishop coldly. Tindale, with heavy feet and heavier heart, turned away, there was no room in the Episcopal Palace to translate the Scriptures. But if the doors of the Bishop's Palace were closed against him, the doors of a rich London merchant were providentially opened for his reception in the following manner.

He had a letter from Sir John Walsh to Sir Harry Guildford, Controller of the Household to King Henry VIII. This gentleman was successful in getting Tindale an invitation to preach in St. Dunstan's Church. The eloquence which had made him so famous at Sodbury did not fail him at St. Dunstan's, for great crowds were attracted by his preaching. Among his hearers was one named Humphrey Monmouth, who was secretly a heretic, having learned to love the Gospel from the lips of Dean Colet. When repulsed by Tonstall, Tindale told Monmouth of his keen disappointment and despair. "Come and live with me," said the wealthy merchant.

The invitation was gladly accepted, and Tindale went straightway to the merchant's house. He lived frugally at a table loaded with delicacies, studying night and day at his beloved translation, being intent on kindling a torch that should illuminate the heart of England.

In the midst of his labours, his friend, John Frith, the mathematician, arrived in London. He, too, was received into Monmouth's hospitable mansion. His arrival was a great assistance to Tindale. Shut up together in his little room, they worked eagerly and assiduously side by side. Chapter after chapter passed from the Greek into the mother tongue of England. The two scholars had been a full half-year engaged in their work, when lo! the storm of furious persecution broke out afresh in London. Diligent inquisition was made for all who had Luther's works in their possession; any found guilty of reading them were threatened with the fire. Tindale, labouring within a few yards of the Bishop's Palace, suddenly looked up from his translation to find the stake staring him in the face. "If," said he, "to possess the works of Luther exposes one to the faggot, how much greater must be the crime of translating the Scriptures!" His friends surged in upon him, entreating him to immediately fly, for death was at hand! Tindale reluctantly realised that if he desired to accomplish his task there was no alternative but to adopt the course his friends advised. Momentarily sick at heart he uttered these words: "I understood at the last not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's Palace to translate the Scriptures, but also that there was no place to do it in all England." Once more bundling up his papers, and taking his Greek New Testament, he left the busy city, and stepping on board a vessel in the Thames that was loading for Hamburg, he sailed for Germany, never again to gaze upon the land of his fathers.

Tindale on the Continent—A Wandering Exile.

Hamburg.—In due course he arrived with his precious manuscripts at Hamburg. "He was met," says one writer, "by a little company of Christians, and furnished with a lodging in one of the dim winding streets of the ancient city." He immediately resumed his task. Need-

ing a little assistance he engaged, in an evil hour, the services of William Roye, formerly a friar of Greenwich. Although an accomplished scholar, he was passionate and crafty. His companionship soon overwhelmed Tindale with annoyances; his debts had to be paid; and his irregularities borne with; and the noble Reformer, seeing his scanty stock of money drawing to a close, was obliged to eke it out by the most severe and pinching economy. While Wolsey was spending princely sums in giving entertainments to the King in his palace at Greenwich, Tindale, the exile, in his poor lodgings, pinched with cold and hunger, toiled day and night to give the Bible to wealthy England. Towards the close of 1524 two Gospels were finished, Matthew and Mark. These he sent to London to his faithful friend, Monmouth, as the first fruits of his great task. In return the London merchant sent him a much needed supply of money, £10, and straightway Tindale prepared to leave Hamburg and his troublesome associate.

Wittenberg.—Whither should he go? Not back to England, for there the air was thick with the smoke of the death fires which Wolsey had kindled for the persecuted flock of Christ. Wittenberg, the headquarters of the Continental Reformation, alone reared its head. It was at that time a city of refuge for all distressed evangelists. To this hospitable city he therefore went. There his spirit was enlivened and cheered. "He drank the wine his soul sorely needed in Luther's jubilant infectious joy of his faith, his lion-hearted voice of assurance and defiance, and the brilliant sparkle of his table talk."

Cologne.—In the spring of 1525 he again turned his face toward the Rhine. He halted at Cologne. Cologne was at that time the most superstitious of all cities. Its churches and priests were innumerable. From all parts of Europe crowds of pilgrims, priests, nuns, monks, friars, mendicants and penitents poured into it to adore the pretended relics of the three wise men of the East and of the 11,000 martyred virgins. No place on earth seemed more unfavourable for the inauguration of a great movement of reform; and yet, here, amid countless monks and friars, and the constant babel of chants and prayers, the weapon was forged that was to strike from

England the galling chains of priestly tyranny, darkness and superstition. In this city there was a celebrated printer, Francis Byrckman. To the house of this printer Tindale boldly went and ordered 3,000 copies of the New Testament. The work went on apace! Sheet after sheet passed through the press. Great was Tindale's joy! He had taken every precaution, meanwhile, against a seizure, knowing this archiepiscopal seat to be vigorously watched by a numerous and jealous priesthood. The tenth sheet was actually in the press when the compositors idly drop a boast that "England will soon rub her eyes." This boast was heard by Dean John Cochlaus, who had come directly from England on the track of this very New Testament. He plies them copiously with wine and learns all. Startled and horrified, he went straight to the authorities, and they sent an immediate notice to the printer to instantly cease printing the obnoxious sheets. Byrckman hurried to Tindale and informed him that the Senate had ordered the work to immediately cease. Tindale was stunned! All was discovered! Must the labour of his life now be seized and destroyed? Must the weary years of toil and privation all go for nothing? His faith almost failed him, but it was only for a moment; the next he was alert and active. His resolution was taken on the spot. With great alacrity he hastened to the printing house, collected the precious sheets, and bidding his servant follow, hurried to the Rhine, slipped in a boat, and fled up the river. Scarcely had Tindale gone when the officers of the Senate burst into the printing house on their mission of intolerance—to seize the work. But, thank God, they were too late! The treasure of England was happily saved and already beyond their reach.

Worms.—"Past mountains, glens, rocks, picturesque vales, and beetling crags, our translator sped up the rapid river. No glance was wasted on smiling vineyards, peaceful villages, or antique tower of robber baron. What were they to him? His was the careful guardianship of the priceless jewel of God's Word, and the avengers of blood, the wolf-hounds of the Church, were hot upon his track. God, however, hid him, and after a voyage of five days, full of hair-breadth escapes, and daily and nightly terrors, he arrived safely at Worms."

"He had escaped out of the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." Quietly he entered the city, which had, since Luther's visit, become surrounded with a halo of historic glory. The illustrious, distinguished hero of Germany had entered it to the blast of the trumpet and amid the plaudits of the people. But not so Tindale. He entered unknown, unattended, shrinking like a criminal from every eye, lest the sharp glance of a priest or friar should fall upon his precious burden. After a diligent search he discovered a printer, Peter Schaefer, the grandson of Faust, one of the original inventors of the art. With a light heart he safely conveyed his precious sheets to his printing house. The printing was instantly resumed, but to mislead the spies, who, he thought it probable, would follow him to Worms, he changed the form of the work from the quarto to the octavo, which was an advantage in the end, as, being smaller, it greatly facilitated the circulation. The printing of the first two editions was completed by the end of 1525, and within a short time 1,500 copies were ready for England. By the end of 1526, 6,000 Testaments were printed, and bound for shipment to his native land.

"Give diligence"—so ran the solemn charge that accompanied them—"unto the Words of eternal life, by the which, if we repeat and believe them, we are born anew, created afresh, and enjoy the fruits of the blood of Christ."

At last Tindale rejoiced with exceeding great joy; the labour of his life's ambition was accomplished. He had plucked the sword of the Spirit from the scabbard where it had long been uselessly rusting. While Wolsey, seated in the splendid halls of his palace, had been intriguing for the tiara, and covering himself with lies as with a garment, that he might conserve the darkness that covered England, the humble Tindale, in obscure lodgings in the German and Flemish towns, had been toiling day and night, pinched with cold and hunger, to unseal the fountain of heavenly light that might illuminate it.

Arrival of Tindale's New Testaments in England.

A very formidable difficulty now presented itself. How shall his Testaments be got into the English homes? Tindale realised that every port was being watched. A

happy idea suddenly entered his mind; he had them packed in cases, barrels, and bales of merchandise, sacks of flour and grain. One ship after another weighed its anchor, and very soon the restless waves were wafting the eternal Word to the shores of his native land. With characteristic shrewdness Tindale had entrusted his Testaments not to one, but to several merchants. As they ascended the Thames uneasiness crept over them touching their venture. Cochlaus had already sent information that the Bible translated by Tindale was about to be sent to England, and had strictly enjoined that all the ports should be closely watched, and all vessels from Germany carefully examined. It was therefore highly probable that the merchants, on stepping ashore, would find the King's Guards waiting to seize their books, and cast them into prison. But God ruled otherwise. They were allowed, astonishing to say, to unload their vessels without the slightest molestation. The King was at Eltham keeping his Christmas. Bishop Tonstall had gone to Spain. Wolsey had some pressing political matters on hand; and so the portentous arrival of the hated books of which they had been informed was quite overlooked. The merchants conveyed the precious treasure to their establishments in Thames Street. The Word of God in the language of the people was at last actually in England. A pious Curate named Thomas Garret, of All Hallows', Honey Lane, was sought out to undertake the dangerous work of circulating the Testaments. He had them conveyed to his house, where he hid them, till he could conveniently arrange for their distribution. Meanwhile, he read one, and discovering how full of light was the Holy Book, he became filled with a burning desire to scatter them. He began their circulation in London, by selling copies to his friends. He next journeyed to Oxford, carrying with him a large supply. Foxe says: "That students, doctors, monks, and townspeople began to purchase and read." It soon found its way to Cambridge, and from the two Universities it became rapidly diffused over the whole kingdom. The day had dawned in England with the Greek New Testament of Erasmus; now it was approaching noontide splendour with Tindale's English New Testament. "We in this age find it

impossible to conceive the transition that was now accomplished by the people of England. To them the publication of the Word of God in their own tongue was the lifting up of a veil from a world of which before they had heard tell, but which now they saw. The wonder and ravishment with which they gazed for the first time on objects so pure, so beautiful, and so transcendently majestic, and the delight with which they were filled, we cannot at all realise. There were narratives and doctrines, there were sermons and epistles, there were incidents and prayers, there were miracles and apocalyptic visions, and in the centre of all these glories (stood) a majestic Personage, so human and yet so Divine, *not* the terrible Judge which Rome had painted Him, but the Brother, very accessible to men, "receiving sinners and eating with them."

In four years 15,000 copies pass the ports, and are scattered broadcast; commotion, alarm, and fury seize the breasts of the Pope's priestly satellites. Later thousands of copies are confiscated, and burned with pompous ceremony at St. Paul's Cross. Tindale cares not. "If Wickliffe's quills so pestered the Bishops, his printing press can defy them." Still the Testament pours into the Kingdom. It is too dreadful and must be stopped. The Lord Bishop of London therefore determines to lay the axe at the root of the tree. So he buttonholes Master Packington, merchant, to buy up all Tindale's Testaments at the printers abroad. Tindale is delighted, for his head becomes possessed by a new project—even "a new imprint," and, says he, "I trust the second will be much better than ever was the first." The Bishop gets all the old copies to burn. Tindale uses the Bishop's money to pay his debts, and bring forth his revised "imprint." Soon this comes to England, "thick and threefold," and all England laughs. Why this fury of the Bishops? A chaplain discloses the more special secret. He says: "By this translation shall we lose all those Christian words—penance, charity, confession, grace, priest, church." Tindale defined "church" as the whole multitude of them that believe in Christ in a parish, town, city, province, land, or throughout the world, and not the spirituality, the clergy only.

The Closing Years and Death of Tindale.

Our story of the heroic Tindale is now nearly told. Having thus successfully achieved the translation of the New Testament, he did not cease his labours, but leaving Worms, he went to Marburg. Here the exile laboured and prayed. The agents of Wolsey hunted relentlessly high and low for the reformer, and actually passed and repassed Marburg, but did not approach the calm village in which he was concealed. From this sequestered retreat he sent forth two striking books entitled, "The Wicked Mammon" and "The Obedience of a Christian Man."

I can only mention the historic duel of the pen between Tindale and Sir Thomas More. The exile's New Testament and books were so permeating English life, that the Bishops were at their wits' end. Edicts and curses, bonfires and stake-fires, had signally failed. What really must be done? They would turn upon the enemy his own weapon—the press. Accordingly Sir Thomas More was earnestly besought to take up the sacred duty. There was no fitter scholar in all England, a man of fine genius, and of incomparable culture and standing; if he failed, the case was lost. His Dialogue "is considered an able attempt at defence, but left untouched the gross and obvious evils before everyone's eyes."

Tindale's answer was crushing. Sir Thomas, conscious of defeat, grew tedious, and his language became charged with animated virus, styling his opponent as a "beast." There was no question of Tindale's facts, nor in the mind of literary England as to the victor; even Erasmus was forced to admit the superiority of Tindale in this great dispute. The result was the uplifting of the Translator's name and the truth he upheld.

Some two years—1533-1535—he spent in Antwerp, and here "he hallowed to himself two days a week, Monday and Saturday," to visit English refugees and the city's poor. Longing to step on his native shores, he hears good news of hope. He caused a copy of his New Testament to be printed on vellum, and illuminated, as a present meet for the Queen. It was duly given to Anne Boleyn, and is now in the British Museum. His New Testament is his "crown of glory, which fadeth not away."

All this time a remorseless search was maintained, the priests determined on revenge through his blood. Tindale shall die—if such end can be compassed by power of money or loathsome serpents in human shape. A friend of Sir Thomas More's, one Phillips, a treacherous villain, drawing his pay from two English benefices, undertakes the vile work. He professed to be deeply impressed by Tindale's Testament, but being doubtful on a few points, he sought the Translator's aid. He finds Tindale "simple and inexpert in the wily subtleties of the world," lays his scented trail, smiles, and worms his way, receives sincere confidences and gives false ones. He then borrowed forty shillings on the ill-fated night, and went out. The plans being ripe and lurking accomplices ready, the innocent Tindale, in simple trust of friendship, is decoyed from his house to dine, seized, and hurried to the dungeons of the castle of Vilvorde, the State prison of the Low Countries. It was the story of Judas Iscariot re-enacted. The priest had done his work well. It is not on record that he possessed the same decency of remorse as to go and hang himself.

Tindale remains in the dungeon sixteen months. There is a mockery of a trial. He defends himself; there is no doubt of his heresy from the articles alleged against him:

- (1). He had maintained that Faith alone justifies.
- (2). He maintained that to believe in the forgiveness of sins and to embrace the mercy offered in the Gospel was enough for Salvation.
- (3). He denied that there is any Purgatory.
- (4). He affirmed that neither the Virgin nor the Saints, pray for us in their own person.
- (5). He asserted that neither the Virgin nor the Saints should be invoked for us.

Whose eyes are not constrained to moisten as we listen to the poor exiled Tindale, wearied by fears of dread and poverty, pleading from his damp cell?

"For a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from a perpetual catarrh, much increased by this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings. My shirts, too, are worn out." Above all he pleads for his Hebrew Bible. Such was his condition during his imprisonment.

Tindale once expressed a sad and true foreboding.

When the news of the burning of his Bibles reached him, he said, "If they burn me also they shall do none other than I look for."

On Friday, October 6th, 1536, near the Castle, he was strangled at the stake and burned to ashes. His last words are, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

We have reviewed the life and work of William Tindale. May what we have read deeply impress us all. May it create within us a keener love for His Holy Word, and a sharper zeal for spiritual Protestantism. May we ever hold up our Bibles in the face of priestly error and aggression. Tindale is a type and model of a great heart and heroic soul.

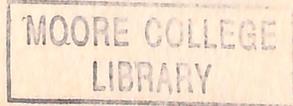
Think of the unparelled constancy and unswerving devotion to duty of this noble martyr of old; of his sickness resulting from damp dungeons; of the freezing cold to which he was exposed and long delay; of his disappointments, of his heart sickness and privation; of his matchless courage and brave uncompromising patient endurance; maintaining with splendid heroism an unshakable fidelity to God through it all! What tongue can faithfully describe all the suffering through which he passed, and the awful suspense perforce he endured through those long, drawn out years of his bitter exile and imprisonment, and finally, his feelings as he is brought to the stake, and despatched in a chariot of fire into the presence of the Supreme Eternal. Noble sorrow, and nobler sacrifice! "Is he not in Thy Book?" "Yea, Lord, his name shall shine as the sun, for ever and ever."

Surely, then, we have seen how appropriate to Tindale are the words of our Lord, with which I prefaced this brief memoir:—

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." (Rev. ii. 2-3.)

"He climbed the steep ascent to heaven
Through peril and through pain,
Oh God, to us may grace be given
To follow in his train."

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