1.—William Tindale.

From the Magdalen Hall Portrait now in Hertford College, Oxford.
THE ROYAL "INJUNCTIONS" OF 1538
AND
THE "GREAT BIBLE," 1539-1541.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE years 1938 and 1939 mark the four hundredth anniversaries of two of the most memorable events in the history of our English Bible.

The first was the publication in September-October, 1538, of the second set of Injunctions drawn up by Thomas, Lord Cromwell, Lord privy seal, and Vice-gerent to the King for all his jurisdictions ecclesiastical within the realm; and issued by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, under the authority of King Henry VIII, to the archdeacons of the province and their officials, in other words, to the clergy, requiring them to provide on this side the feast — next coming, one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume, in English, to be set up in some convenient place within the church of which they had cure, so that their parishioners might most commodiously resort to the same and read it.

This set of Injunctions was followed in April of the following year (1539) by the publication of the "Great Bible" (the Bible of the largest volume), which together with the publication of the Injunctions, formed one of the most important epochs in the history of the Reformation in England.

Considerable attention is being directed in the press and elsewhere to these events, and it will not be out of place in these pages briefly to retrace the principal steps which led up to this great undertaking.

In the five years which followed the publication of Tindale's

1 Gee and Harding, Documents, p. 275; and Wilkins, Concilia, iii, p. 815.
2 Although Gee and Harding, and other authorities insert " Easter " in the space left open for the insertion of the Feast, Wilkins leaves it blank.
Revised New Testament of 1534, no fewer than four complete Bibles in English were placed within reach of the people of England: Coverdale's in 1535; the "Thomas Matthew Bible" in 1537; Taverner's in 1539, and the "Great Bible" also in 1539.

Each was the outcome of an effort to give to the English people a true account of the Word of God, on which so many current dogmas and practices in those days were said by churchmen to be founded. Each was the work of a reformer. Each was a material contribution to the Reformation, and between them they had made the Reformation in England complete.

But while each of these Bibles has for us a special interest, the "Great Bible" has most, since it was the culmination of all the work in English Bible-making that had been going on from the day when Tindale set about his translation of the New Testament.

The story of the translation of the Bible into English, and of its circulation by means of the printing press is one of the most heroic and fascinating chapters in our history.

The Bible for the English-speaking nations was largely the work of one heroic, simple-minded, scholarly man, William Tindale. He was followed by an army of workers, who devoted labour, thought, and scholarship to the improvement of his translation, but in justice to him, it must be said, they have done little more than polish up and improve his work.

It is true that we now know much more accurately than was possible in 1520 to 1525 what is the true text of the New Testament, for scholarship has developed in a multitude of ways. Nevertheless, it was given to William Tindale, under God's grace, to be the first great worker. He entered deeply into the abiding spirit of the Bible by close study and intimate knowledge of the original Greek and Hebrew texts before he began to translate. He sought to render the Bible into English that his fellow-countrymen might rejoice in the same liberty and salvation which Jesus Christ had revealed to him.

In this work the fact that king and church and all in authority were against him only made him the more determined to accomplish it at all costs, and we know at what supreme cost he carried out his self-imposed task.
2.—Miles Coverdale, 1488-1568.
The story of the birth and early years of William Tindale is involved in obscurity, and equally obscure is the story of the early life of Miles Coverdale, the next translator, to whom we are indebted for the first entire Bible to be printed in the English language, and who was also largely responsible for the production of the "Great Bible".

Miles Coverdale was born in 1488, and it is assumed that his surname is derived from the district of his birth, "Coverdale," in what is called Richmondshire, in the North Riding, so that, like Wyclif, he was a native of Yorkshire. (Plate 2.)

From childhood, like his great contemporary, Tindale, he was devoted to learning, and at an early age was sent to Cambridge, where he studied philosophy and theology. In 1514 he was admitted to priest's orders at Norwich, and entered the monastery of the Austin Friars at Cambridge, where he fell under the influence of Robert Barnes, well known in the early records of the Reformation.

Meetings of those who inclined to Protestantism were frequently held at a house in Cambridge near St. John's, called the "White Horse," derisively known as "Germany," because of the Lutheran opinions held there. Here Coverdale met many kindred spirits from the neighbouring colleges.

He also had acquaintances among the highest in the land and was a visitor at the house of Sir Thomas More, where he made a powerful friend in the person of Thomas Cromwell, then one of the dependents of Cardinal Wolsey, and afterwards his successor in the king's favour.

Meanwhile the way had been prepared for Coverdale's great work by the publication of the Greek New Testament of Erasmus, in 1516, containing the first published Greek text and a new Latin translation in parallel columns, one of the most important events in the progress of letters. When it appeared in Cambridge it was immediately proscribed by a number of the leading scholars of the day, and one college forbade it to be brought within its walls. Yet the book they condemned was the very instrument by which God intended to promote His own designs.

One student, having procured a copy of the Testament, was
so affected by it that it produced in him a great moral change. This was none other than Thomas Bilney, "Little Bilney," as he was called, Fellow of Trinity Hall, the future martyr of 1531, whose preaching was followed by great and powerful results, for, among others, Hugh Latimer and Robert Barnes owed their conversion to him.

Barnes, after proceeding through the schools at Cambridge, had entered the monastery of Austin Friars in 1514. Having then gone to Louvain, where he took the degree of Doctor of Theology, he was, upon his return in 1523, made prior and master of the monastery, and became one of the great restorers of learning at Cambridge. He had already introduced the study of the classics and was reading Terence, Plautus, and Cicero, but being brought to the knowledge of the truth, through Bilney, he proceeded to read openly with his scholars the Epistles of St. Paul.

Some time before this, Latimer, who also had been enlightened through Bilney's preaching, was proclaiming the truth with great decision and effect. Whether Latimer was actually in expectation of Tindale's New Testament does not appear, but he was powerfully preparing the way for it, by frequently dwelling upon the great abuse of locking up the Scriptures in an unknown tongue.

Nicolas West, Bishop of Ely, after hearing him, was professedly impressed, but ultimately prohibited him from preaching in any of the churches belonging to the University, or within his diocese. Happily the monastery of Austin Friars was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, so the prior, Dr. Robert Barnes, boldly licensed Latimer to preach there, and, as a result, the place was unable to contain the crowds that assembled to hear him. At the same time Barnes having been invited to preach in the neighbouring parish at St. Edward's church resolved to comply.

This was on Christmas Eve, Sunday, the 24th of December, 1525. It was a memorable evening on account of its effects. Indeed, it was a crisis, for understanding now the way of truth more perfectly, and being alive to the state of things around him, and of Wolsey's extravagance, Barnes led the way in publicly
and boldly exposing the gorgeous and tyrannical bearing of the lofty Cardinal, with the result that he was immediately accused of heresy.

He was apprehended and forthwith carried to London, where he was brought before Wolsey, who, on reading the articles of condemnation, came to one personal to himself, for the accusers knew how to touch Wolsey to the quick. "What, Master Doctor," exclaimed the Cardinal, "had you not a sufficient scope in the Scriptures to teach the people, that my golden shoes, my pole axes, my pillars, my golden cushions, my crosses did so offend you, that you must make us *rediculum caput* before the people? We were jollily that day laughed to scorn. Verily it was a sermon fitter to be preached on the stage than in a pulpit, for at the last you said I wear a pair of red gloves, 'I should say bloody gloves,' quoth you, 'that I should not be cold in the midst of my ceremonies.'"

Whether these charges were correct does not transpire, but Barnes, as yet unmoved, replied, "I spake nothing but the truth out of the old doctors." In the end he delivered to the Cardinal six sheets of manuscript, to confirm and corroborate all that he had spoken. Wolsey, smiling, said, "We perceive that you mean to stand to your articles and to show your learning." "Yes," said Barnes, "that I do intend by God's grace, with your lordship's favour." Then said the Cardinal, "You must be burnt," and was about to commit him to the Tower when Edward Fox and Stephen Gardiner interceded and became sureties for his appearance before the bishops to whom Wolsey had committed him. During the whole night Barnes was engaged in preparing his defence, in which he was assisted by Coverdale and two other students, who had followed him to London, and wrote at their master's dictation.

At the trial he was treated with marked severity. After long disputation, threatening and scorn he was called upon to say whether he would abjure or burn. Barnes was in great agony of mind, but after taking counsel with Fox and Gardiner, to whom he was sent, he was persuaded to yield and to abjure. After a time he relented, was again condemned and sentenced to be burnt at the Austin Friars at Northampton, but contrived
to escape to the Continent and again succeeded in eluding the
stake, but only for a time, since he suffered the extreme penalty
in 1540, the year in which Thomas Cromwell also was executed.

Coverdale escaped personal accusation, and about this time
left the monastery in order to give himself entirely to evangelical
preaching, assuming the habit of a secular priest.

Early in 1528 he was at Steeple-Bumpstead, where Richard
Foxe was minister, preaching against confession and the worship
of images.

For a period of fourteen years (1515-1529) Henry was content
to leave the real government of the country to Thomas Wolsey.
The irony of this extraordinary man's career is that while all his
ambitions were bound up with the Papacy, nobody did more to
prepare the way for an Erastian state. By himself replacing the
Pope in England as Legatus a Latere, and by gathering up into
his hands all the reins of ecclesiastical power, Wolsey superseded
the mediæval constitution of the native Church, and taught
Henry to be master in his own house. He was the last of the
great ecclesiastical statesmen to govern England. After him the
laymen began to come into their own. But during his fourteen
years of power he was, by permission of the King, autocrat of
England, unchecked by colleagues, by Parliament, or by Convoca-
tion. The King was content to delegate the hard work of
government to a servant who was so able, industrious, and sub-
missive to himself. When the great Cardinal fell, his master
addressed himself to the task of extending his own authority
through the British Isles.

The years between 1529 and 1535 were eventful years. In
1529 Wolsey was dismissed from office, the great seal was given
to Sir Thomas More, and Cranmer received his first public
appointment. The place left vacant by Wolsey's fall was in
part filled by a layman who had been trained in the Cardinal's
service, and had there learnt that the way to the King's favour
was dispatch, assiduity, and subservience. Thomas Cromwell
undertook the task very much in the spirit of an unemotional,
unscrupulous solicitor, who handles a hard and intricate matter
of business for a shady but important client. In 1533 the King
married Ann Boleyn, in spite of the threats of the Pope, and
3.—A Page of the Text of the Worms Octavo "New Testament," 1523
(Baptist College, Bristol).
To the Reder.

Be diligent, Reder (methought ye be) that you come with a pure mind and as the scripture saith with a single eye unto the words of health and of eternal life by which we repent and believe them. We are borne in a new creature, and enjoy the fruit of the blood of Christ. Which the blood eth not for blood of Abel; but hath purchased life, love, favour, grace, baptism, and whatsoever is promised in the scriptures, to them that believe and obey God, and standeth between us and wrath, vengeance, curse and whatsoever the scripture threatenth against the unbelievers and disobedient, which rests and consenteth not in their hearts to the laws of God, that it is right, holy, just, and ought to be.

Mark the places and many places of the scriptures and in doubtfull places set thou aside no interpretation contrary to them; but as Paul saith, let all be conformable and agree to the scripture of the gospel. The oneareth and receiveth the word and evilareth and forgiveth. The oneareth the word and receiveth all good things to them that set their trust in Christ only. The gospel signifies gladness and joying; and is not a promise but it promiseth all good things. All is not gospel that is written in the gospel book. For if the law were a way, thou couldst not know what the gospel meant. Even as thou couldst not pardon, favour, and grace except the law were rebuked, ye and declared unto thyself, my Redeemer and teacher.

Repent and believe the gospel as saith Christ.
shortly afterwards papal authority in England was formally annulled. In 1534 Henry assumed the title of “Supreme Head of the Church of England,” and in the following year Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, the two greatest figures in that last age of Catholic England, paid the penalty of their lives for their denial of the King's supremacy. These rapid changes had a marked influence on the fortunes of the English Bible.

In 1531 Coverdale took the degree of Bachelor of Canon Law at Cambridge, and three years later he brought out his first book, Ye olde God and the Newe, translated from the Latin version of H. Dulichius; which was followed by a translation of A Pharaphrase upon all the Psalms, through the Latin of Joannes Campensis. But for these facts Coverdale is lost sight of until the appearance of the first English Bible of 1535.

It was early in 1526 that the first copies of Tindale’s New Testament had reached England. Henry and Wolsey had been warned of this threatened invasion of England by the Word of God, and they did everything in their power to defeat it. Fortunately, the enterprise of the merchants was more than a match for the power of the sovereign and the hostility of the bishops, and in spite of all warnings and precautions the Word of God was conveyed into England, packed in the heart of bales of merchandise, and there widely circulated. (Plates 3 and 4.)

It was immediately proscribed and denounced as replete with dangerous heresies by Cardinal Wolsey, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, and William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who commenced their crusade against all books of the so-called new learning, requiring all copies to be given up, and ordering a systematic search for copies to be made. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, was charged to preach at St. Paul’s Cross denouncing the books as replete with error. At the conclusion of the sermon, at which Wolsey, surrounded by bishops, abbots and friars, was present, great baskets of the New Testaments were brought out and burned. Wolsey was determined to strike terror to the heart of the enemy, and so rigorous was the search for copies carried out that only two copies of the first edition have survived, one in St. Paul's Cathedral Library, the other in the Baptist College at Bristol.
Three years later the King issued a proclamation against heretical books, and amongst these Tindale's writings, including his New Testament, were expressly specified. In 1530 the condemnation of these books by an assembly of learned men, after a conference of twelve days, was succeeded by another royal proclamation "against great errors and pestilent heresies, with all the books containing the same, with the translation also of Scripture corrupted by William Tindale, as well in the Old Testament as in the New, and all other books in English containing such errors."

In a "Bill in English to be published by the prechours," which was issued in May, 1530, we read:

"Finally it appeared that having of the whole Scripture is not necessary to Christian men; and like as the having of the Scripture in the vulgar tongue and in the common people's hands hath been by the holy Fathers of the Church in some times thought meet and convenient, so at another time it hath been thought not expedient to be communicate amongst them. Wherein, forasmuch as the King's Highness, by the advice and deliberations of his council, and the agreement of great learned men, thinketh in his conscience that the divulging of this Scripture at this time in the English tongue, to be committed to the people, should rather be to the farther confusion and destruction than the edification of their souls. And it was thought there in that assembly, to all and singular in that congregation, that the King's Highness and the Prelates in so doing, not suffering the Scripture to be divulged and communicate to the people in the English tongue at this time, doth well. 'And I also think' (was the preacher to say) 'and judge the same; exhorting and moving you, that in consideration his Highness did there openly say and protest that he would cause the New Testament to be by learned men faithfully and purely translated into the English tongue, to the intent he might have it in his hands ready to be given to his people, as he might see their manners and behaviour meet, apt, and convenient to receive the same.'"

In a letter written in December, 1530, by Hugh Latimer to the King, he boldly reminded Henry of his promise; and as the faithful monitor was soon afterwards made a royal chaplain,
it can hardly be doubted that the promise faithfully expressed the intention of the King.

In 1533 Thomas Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury. This Cambridge divine, rendered great assistance to the King during the last fourteen years of his reign, and has left an enduring mark on the English Reformation. It is said that he lacked courage, and in the sordid business of annulling the marriage of the Queen he gave timid compliance. But despite this grave weakness he conferred upon the English Church two immortal services. He is the main author of the Anglican Prayer Book, to which he contributed the Litany and the Collects. By so doing he gave a strength to the newly established religion it could never have drawn from any other source.

In March, 1534, Convocation, over which the Archbishop presided, considered the question of the papal supremacy, and decided by a large majority that the Pope has no greater power or jurisdiction bestowed on him by God in the Holy Scriptures in this realm of England than any other bishop.

In November of the same year, the Church of England was liberated from papal control by the passing of the “Act of Supremacy,” making the King the only head on earth of the Church of England called the Anglicana ecclesia.

Henry quarrelled with the Pope on purely personal and selfish grounds, because the latter refused consent to his divorce from Catharine of Aragon.

He punished with equal severity Protestants as well as Catholic dissenters who dared to doubt his headship of the Church of England.

But while he thus destroyed the power of the Pope and of the monasteries, a more important movement went on among the people, under the influence of the revived tradition of Wiclif and the Lollards, of the writings of the Continental reformers, and chiefly of the English version of the Scriptures.

The provisions of the “Act of Supremacy” (26 Henry VIII, cap. 1) may be summarised as follows: “The King is supreme head of the Church of England and is so recognised in Convocation. That title, ‘the only supreme head of the Church,’ is...
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confirmed to him and his successors who shall have power to visit ecclesiastically and to redress ecclesiastical abuses."

Henry's first act after he had assumed the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England was to appoint Thomas Cromwell, in 1535, his Vicar-general or Vice-gerent in all things spiritual, and Cranmer and all the bishops took their orders from him, especially about having the King's supremacy preached within their dioceses.

As early as 1527 Coverdale was in intimate association with Cromwell and More, and in all probability it was under their patronage that he was able to prepare his translation of the Bible. In an undated letter to Cromwell, he earnestly solicits assistance in the prosecution of his sacred studies in the following words: "Now I begin to taste holy Scriptures; now, honour be to God! I am set to the most sweet smell of holy letters, with the godly savour of ancient and holy doctors, unto whose knowledge I cannot attain without diversity of books, as is not unknown to your most excellent wisdom. Nothing in the world I desire but books as concerning my learning: they once had I do not doubt but Almighty God shall perform that in me which he of his plentiful favour and grace hath begun."

Cromwell, who must have been well aware of the turn which opinion had taken, seems now to have urged Coverdale to commit his work to the press. At any rate, by 1534, he was ready "as he was desired" to "set forth," in other words to publish, his translation.

The Bible was printed on the Continent by a foreign printer, in a folio volume, in a small German black-letter type, in double columns, with illustrations and a map, under the title (Plate 5):

"BIBLIA | The Bible that | is, the holy Scripture of the | Olde and New Testament, faith- | fully and truly translated out | of the Douche and Latyn | into Englishe. | MDXXXV. |

The imprint states "Prynnted in the yeare of our Lord 1535 and fynished the fourth daye of October."

The dedication to Henry VIII is signed "Myles Couerdale, who submits his poore translacyon unto the spirite of truth in your grace."
BIBLIA
The Bible that
is the holy Scripture of the
Oilde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out
of Douche and Latyn
in to English.
M.D.XXXV.

S. Paul. II. Tessa. III.  
Praise ye the Lord with the ut of God: make you glad, and be joyfull.

S. Paul. Col. III.  
Let the word of Christ dwell in you plentifully in all wisdom.

Jesue I.  
Let not the hope of this same depart out of your mouth, but exercis thyselfe therein day and night.

5.—Original [Zurich?] Title-Page of "Coverdale's Bible" of 1535.
It is not possible to ascertain the exact relation in which the first edition of the Bible stood to the civil authority. The work was undertaken by the desire of Cromwell, but when it was issued in October, 1535, he appears to have been unable to obtain a definite licence from the King; or it may be that he thought it more prudent to await the publication of the book. So much is certain that the first edition was issued without any distinct royal sanction, but was not suppressed.

It was not until 1537, on the title-page of the quarto edition "overseen and corrected," printed by James Nicolson, of Southwark, that we find "Set forth with the kinges most gracious licence."

The Rylands Library is fortunate enough to possess two copies of the Coverdale Bible of 1535, and one of the edition of 1537.

For reasons yet to be explained it was judged better, very early in the book's history, to reprint the preliminary matter, and to add to it the somewhat fulsome dedication "unto the most victorious Prynce, and oure moost gracyous Lorde Kynge Henry the eyght." It is probable that for some reason it was found that a dedication to Henry VIII would improve the chances of the book's free circulation, and so it was added.

The first leaf of the dedication in one of the Rylands copies contains the words: "your dearest just wyfe and most vertuous Pryncesse Quene Anne" (who was executed on 19th May, 1536). The second copy refers to "Quene Jane." By the month of February, if not earlier, the very name of Anne, far from being a passport to royal favour, was fatal to anything to which it was affixed. Cromwell had fallen in with the King's barbaric intentions, so that until another queen arose in the person of Jane Seymour the book may have remained unpresented.

The place of printing and the name of the printer have never been wholly determined, though most bibliographers agree that it was printed abroad by Christopher Froschouer of Zurich.

Turning now to a consideration of the genesis of Coverdale's translation, we find that on the original title-page stood the
phrase "faithfully and truly translated out of Douche [i.e. German] and Latyn", which accurately describes the case.

Towards the end of the "Dedication to Henry VIII" Coverdale says: "I haue nether wrested nor altered so much as one worde for the mayntenaiuce of any maner of secte: but haue with a cleare conscience purely and faythfully translated this out of fyue sundry interpreters, hauyng onely the manyfest trueth of the scripture before myne eyes."

And near the beginning of the "Prologe" he writes: "And to helpe me herein, I haue had sondrye translations, not onely in Latyn, but also of the Douche [German] interpreters: whom (because of theyr synguler gyftes & speciall diligence in the Bible) I haue ben the more glad to folowe for the moste parte."

These quotations from Coverdale himself at once fix the character of the version. He did not profess that his work was a direct translation from the original Hebrew and Greek texts; he describes it as a translation of translations. This was the meaning he intended the reader to gather. Hence Coverdale's work has never ranked as the true primary version of the English Bible. That proud position is held by the "Thomas Matthew Bible" of 1537, which enshrined the latest results of the scholarship of William Tindale.

Modern research, based upon the sure foundation of internal evidence, has succeeded in practically demonstrating the authorities Coverdale had in mind when he wrote "fyue sundry interpreters." They were the German-Swiss version of Zwingli and Leo Juda, in the dialect of Zurich, and printed at Zurich 1524-29; the Latin version of Pagninus, the first edition of which bears the date 1528; the German version of Luther; the Latin Vulgate; the Pentateuch (1529-30), and the New Testament (1525) of Tindale. As proof of the great use he made of the latter we find that the whole of the New Testament and a large part of the Old Testament give practically Tindale's text.

The very emphatic words which stand in the first paragraph of the "Prologe," where Coverdale says: "I called to my remembrance ye aduersite of them, which were not onely of rype knowlege but wolde also with all theyr hertes haue perfourmed yt they beganne, yf they had not had impediment,"
THE "GREAT BIBLE," 1539-1541

can hardly refer to anybody but William Tindale, and to his work. The "impediment" was the imprisonment which the heroic translator was enduring when Coverdale's Bible issued from the press, and which ended only with his martyrdom.

Internal evidence shows how closely Coverdale followed Tindale, the most striking evidence being the Epistle of James, where he departs from Tindale's 1534 Testament in only three words, going back to Tindale's earlier 1525 rendering. The Epistle of Jude stands verbatim as in Tindale's 1534 Testament. As evidence of the influence of the Zurich Bible Dr. Westcott adduces the Book of Malachi, where in many places Coverdale follows that authority against both the Hebrew and the Vulgate.

Although Coverdale's is but a secondary translation, a version derived from other versions, its importance in the history of the English Bible is very great. We cannot too carefully bear in mind that in three-fourths of the Old Testament this was the first printed version presented to the English reader. Throughout this large portion of the Bible Coverdale for the present stands alone. The New Testament, also, which is chiefly based on Tindale's translation, as we have already shown, has considerable literary merit, and many charming touches in the authorised version of 1611 belong to Coverdale.

The most interesting portion of Coverdale's Old Testament is the Psalter. It is hardly too much to say that this portion is still familiar to all who read the Book of Common Prayer, for the Prayer Book Psalter is in essence the Psalter of the Coverdale Bible of 1535, and has obtained an abiding place in the literature of the English-speaking peoples, affecting the religious life of the generations of Englishmen, to whom, since Coverdale's day, it has become familiar.

In the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, under the heading "The order how the Psalter is appoynted to bee redde," it is stated, "where any Psalms are appointed the nombre is expressed after the greate English Bible." The Psalter is not printed at the end in the Prayer-Books of 1549 and 1552, after the modern fashion, but a psalm appears as an Introit before every collect. A careful scrutiny of these at once reveals the fact that
they are taken verbatim et literatim from the "Great Bible" of 1539, incorporating also the changes made in the various editions between 1539 and 1541. The Psalter as read is substantially the same as that printed in 1535, and actually the same as that printed in the "Great Bible."

As the result of a comparison of the Psalms of the 1535 Bible with the text of the Zurich German-Swiss Bible of 1524-1529, it has been clearly established that the Zurich version was the genesis of the translation, and that Coverdale followed it very closely, but there is evidence that he worked also with the Vulgate of Sebastian Münster of 1534-35, and the changes he made in the 1539 "Great Bible" are due to this version, upon which he evidently relied.

Out of the seventeen verses in the Prayer Book version of Psalm xc, a very difficult Psalm, twelve stand exactly as they stood in 1535; in the six psalms, xc-xcv, the amount of difference is little more than two words in each verse. The numbering of the Latin version is retained so that Psalm ix is joined with x, Psalm cxiv with cxv; cxvi and also cxlvi are divided into two. In each case a note of explanation is supplied. The greater freedom of the translation, the introduction of words which may make the sense clearer, the tender rhythm, for the sake of which expansion and paraphrase are not unfrequently adopted, are characteristics which with many go far to atone for the inferiority of the version in point of exactness. A multitude of passages, remarkable for beauty and tenderness, and often for strength and vigour, are common to both our versions of the Psalms, and are due to Coverdale.

For the illustrations sixty-eight separate wood-blocks were employed, but by being used twice or thrice, and in one case as often as eleven times, they are made to form no less than one hundred and eighty-eight distinct pictures. This practice is most noticeable in the Apocrypha, where, including the title, eleven blocks are made to do duty for thirty-three illustrations. A battle scene is used five times, a hand-to-hand conflict five times, and the storming of a city seven times in the eighty-three pages.

Between parts one and two is a map measuring 15½ by 11½ inches, printed from a wood-block, the headline of which reads:
Descrìpcio Terrae Promissionis Quae Alias Palestina, Canaan, Vel Terra Sancta Nuncupatur." Very few copies of this map are known to exist. It is drawn so that the top is towards the south and the bottom towards the north.

In 1536 Henry called a new parliament, the opening of which took place on the 8th of June, just about four months before Tindale received the crown of martyrdom, and Cranmer resolved to try what a sermon could effect at the opening of Convocation, which met on the day after the assembling of Parliament, and Latimer was appointed to preach before Convocation.

In the course of two sermons preached by Latimer on the 9th of June, from the parable of the Unjust Steward, the keen and searching power of which had seldom if ever been equalled, he bore testimony to the piety prevailing among the people of England, and inveighed against the clergy, not only for the little they had done to promote that piety, but for the opposition they had offered to the cause of truth. He concluded his discourses by saying:

Come, go to, my brethren, go to, I say again, and once again go to, leave the love of your profit; study for the glory and profit of Christ, seek in your consultations such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at the last something that may please Christ—Preach truly the Word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be ye children of the light, while ye are in the world, that ye may shine in the world that is to come, bright as the sun, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be all honour, praise and glory.—Amen.

This stringent and intrepid discourse must have been as gall and wormwood to many who were present, but it was certainly meet, that some such address should salute their ears and at such a time as this. It was fit that they should be told when thus all assembled to hear, that already there were among the people many children of light, while they had not yet done one thing whereby the inhabitants of England had profited one hair. It was fitting that Tunstall should be reminded thus publicly of his miserable injunction of 1526, of his torturing examinations of 1528, and of his burning of the Sacred Volume in 1530, nay that in the very Saint Paul's, where after his return from Spain he had denounced the New Testament, of which now so many editions had been sold and circulated, he
should have to sit and listen to such harrowing interrogations as these.

This testimony was delivered before an assembly of friends and foes, consisting of sixteen bishops, forty mitred abbots and priors, with fifty members of the lower house, including twenty-five archdeacons, seven deans, seventeen proctors and one master of a college.

On the 23rd of the same month of June, after long discussion of a long list of what the lower house styled *mala dogmata* or erroneous doctrines to the number of sixty-seven, it was for Cranmer, Latimer and others to say what was to be done with them. The puerility and absurdity of most of the terms evince the degraded state of the mind of those who sanctioned the list; while on the other hand some of the very items proved that in the face of the most furious opposition Divine Truth had already found its way into a thousand channels. God had been carrying forward His work with secret energy.

The Vicar-general (Cromwell) commenced by stating that they had been convened "to determine certain controversies concerning the Christian faith in this realm," that the King had studied day and night to set a quietness on the Church, that such controversies must now be fully debated and ended through their determination, and he desired that they would conclude all things by the Word of God, for his Majesty would not "suffer the Scriptures to be wrested or defaced by any glosses, or by any authority of Doctors or Councils, much less would he admit any articles or doctrines not contained in the Scripture." Finally that His Majesty would give them high thanks if they would "determine all things by the Scripture as God commanded in Deuteronomy."

After much brawling Cranmer reminded Convocation that the very subject they had met to discuss as well as their own character and office forbade brawling about mere words, that the controversies now moved were not light things but the true understanding of the right difference of the Law and the Gospel, of the manner how sins may be forgiven, of comforting doubtful and wavering consciences, by what means they may be certified that they please God, seeing they feel the strength of
the Law accusing them of sin, of the true use of the sacraments, whether the outward work of them doth justify a man, or whether we receive our justification through faith, what constituted good works, what were the traditions which bound men’s conscience, and, finally, whether the ceremonies which were not instituted by Christ ought to be called sacraments or no.

This assembly to a man already acknowledged Henry to be Supreme Head of the Church, and now also had made obeisance to his Vice-regent, their Vicar-general, but such was the catalogue of affairs brought forward and explained by Cranmer that it presented a field for strife and debate, and exhibited a mixture of truth and error, and he pointed out that it was necessary first to agree upon the number of the sacraments.

Such was the uproar which arose that the King was asked to intervene, and he did so by sending a message which stilled the tumult. These men he declared had been convoked not to discuss but to do the King’s business.

The form which the settlement took was in that of “Articles” to which all must subscribe. Articles devised by the “King’s Highness’s Majesty, to establish Christian quietness among us and to avoid contentious opinions.”

These, the first Articles to be propounded in England, though not composed by Henry, were carefully revised by him, and their issue was one of the first acts of the King in the exercise of his new authority. After simply allowing the particulars of the Christian faith to be contained in the Scriptures, by joining with them the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, they comprise nine propositions: Baptism, Penance, Sacrament of the Altar or Mass, Justification, Images, Honouring of Saints, Praying to Saints, Rites and Ceremonies, and Purgatory. These Articles were subscribed by 109 individuals, including Cromwell, 2 archbishops, 16 bishops, 40 abbots and priors, and 50 archdeacons and proctors, and set forth by the King’s authority, and eventually printed by Berthelet in 1536.

The absurdity of this blind consent to certain propositions is obvious when it is remembered that never yet had this assembly been able to agree upon any translation of the sacred volume, nor if left to themselves would they ever have been.
Having thus professedly recognised the Scriptures as containing the essentials of the Christian faith they could not agree upon a translation into their own language, neither could they approve of that translation through which so many people were already so much better acquainted with Divine Truth than they themselves.

They agreed, however, to present a petition to the King beseeching him graciously to indulge unto his subjects of the laity the reading of the Bible in the English tongue, and that a new translation of it might be forthwith made for that end and purpose.

This was a convenient way of postponing the subject, but fortunately neither the petitioners nor the King they addressed were to be allowed to furnish that translation which was ultimately to become their own.

Although the Convocation of 1536 was fruitless of any benefit to the kingdom, yet when we come to the actual history of the English Bible the year 1536 turns out to have been the most remarkable year of all that had preceded it.

It seems next to incredible that in this year there should have been as many editions of Tindale’s Revised New Testament as of the earlier editions in most of the preceding years put together.

Tindale could not have been altogether in ignorance of this fact, since his jailor and family were won over to his principles, and he must have been cheered by this news upon the eve of his entry to the haven of eternal rest.

During the sixteen months of his incarceration at Vilvorde he had been engaged upon the completion of his great work, and there is good reason for believing that he left behind him in manuscript a translation of the books of the Old Testament from Joshua to 2 Chronicles, and that this part was included by his friend and literary executor, John Rogers, in the “Thomas Matthew Bible” of 1537.

Following upon the publication of The Ten Articles, Cromwell, as the King’s Vicar-general, issued a set of “Injunctions” to be observed by the deans and clergy having cure of souls.
This practice of acting by "Injunctions," or orders relating to ecclesiastical matters, was devised by Cromwell, as a means of giving effect to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction assumed to be conferred upon the crown by the Act of Supremacy of 1534.

Two sets of such Injunctions were issued by Cromwell on the sole authority of the King, the first during the summer of 1536, which was the first act of supremacy done by the King, for in all that had gone before he had acted with the concurrence of Convocation.

The following is a brief summary of its provisions:

It calls upon the clergy, "all with the cure of souls," to observe and keep all laws and statutes for the abolition of the Bishop of Rome's usurped power and jurisdiction within this realm and for the establishment and confirmation of the King's authority and jurisdiction, to preach against the Pope's usurped power. The clergy are also required to explain to their people the Ten Articles lately devised with a view to securing the decent and politic order of the Church, to abrogate certain superfluous holy days, to forbear superstitious ceremonies and to teach the people that it shall profit their soul's health if they bestow on the poor and needy what they would have bestowed on images and relics. They are to procure the teaching of the Lord's prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments to their children and servants, and to encourage the proper instruction and welfare of the young. They are to provide for the due administration of the Sacraments. They are not to haunt taverns but to give themselves to the study of Scripture, and to be good examples. Because the goods of the Church are called the goods of the poor all beneficed men, not being resident upon their benefices, shall distribute the fortieth part of the fruits and revenues yearly among their poor parishioners. Clergy with means are to support exhibitions in the Universities or grammar schools.

It would appear that the Royal Injunctions were not observed by many of the clergy and religious persons to whom they were addressed, for the Bishop of Worcester (Hugh Latimer), on the occasion of the visitation of his diocese, and in particular of the Convent of St. Mary's House, Worcester, in 1537, found it necessary to admonish the brethren upon their intolerable ignorance and neglect, and commanded them to observe and keep inviolably a new set of injunctions, which he had drawn up, and which to some extent anticipated the second set of Royal Injunctions issued in 1538.

1 Wilkins, Concilia, iii, p. 832.
The principal of these episcopal injunctions, briefly summarised, are as follows:—

That the King's Injunctions of 1536 be faithfully observed from henceforth.

That the prior shall provide at the monastery's charge, the whole Bible in English, to be laid, fast chained, in some open place, either in the church or cloister.

That every religious person have at least a New Testament in English, by the feast of the nativity of our Lord next ensuing.

That whenever there shall be any preaching, all manner of singing and other ceremonies shall be laid aside, and all religious persons shall quietly hearken to the preaching.

That a lecture of Scripture be read every day in English.

That no layman or woman or any other person shall be discouraged from reading any good book either in Latin or English.

That the prior at his dinner or supper every day have a chapter read from the beginning of Scripture to the end, as that in English, and shall have edifying communication of the same.

The concluding Injunction is: "that all these my Injunctions be read every month once in the chapter house before all the Brethren."

The year 1537 was also marked by the appearance of two books, one of temporary, the other of lasting importance in the history of the English Church. The "Institution of a Christian Man" was a statement of Anglican dogma, reached after discussions which occupied the bishops and divines from February to the middle of July, 1537. In this treatise, commonly known as the "Bishops' Book," the four sacraments, which had been left unnoticed in the "Ten Articles" were "found again," made the subject of formal exposition. The treatise was submitted to the King, who informed the Bishops that not having time fully to examine it, but trusting to their wisdom he was willing that it should be read on Sundays and holy days for the next three years. The authorisation of the "Thomas Matthew Bible," however, was an event of far deeper significance than 1 This must have been a Tindale New Testament.
the judicious compromise of the "Bishops' Book". The English Bible sank into the general consciousness of the people and gave to the movement for reform a power of permanent appeal, because it put within reach of the humblest member of the community a sacred literature of great beauty and richness.

The second set of the Royal "Injunctions," the set the publication of which we are commemorating this year, was drawn up by Cromwell and sent by him to Cranmer in a letter dated 30th September [1538], and on 11th October of the same year Cranmer issued to the Archdeacons of the Province, or their officials, a mandate for their publication.

The following is a brief summary of the Injunctions, except in the case of those relating to the setting up of the Bible and the promotion of the reading of the Bible, and the opening address, which are quoted in full. The text is given in a modernised form.

"In the name of God, Amen. By the authority and commission of the most excellent Prince Henry, by the grace of God king of England and of France, defender of the faith, lord of Ireland, and in earth supreme head under Christ of the Church of England, I, Thomas, lord Crumwell, lord privy seal, vicegerent to the king's said highness for all his jurisdictions ecclesiastical within this realm, do for the advancement of the true honour of Almighty God, increase of virtue, and discharge of the king's majesty, give and exhibit unto you... these injunctions following, to be kept, observed, and fulfilled upon the pains hereafter declared."

The [first] Injunction confirms the Injunctions heretofore given [i.e. in 1536].

The [second] Injunction: "Item, That you shall provide on this side the feast of — next coming, one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume, in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that you have cure of, whereas your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same, and read it; the charges of which book shall be rateably borne between you, the parson, and the parishioners aforesaid, that is to say, the one half by you, and the other half by them."

The [third] Injunction: "Item, that you shall discourage no man privily or apertly from the reading or hearing of the said Bible, but shall expressly provoke, stir, and exhort every person to read the same, as that which is the very lively word of God, that every Christian man is bound to embrace, believe, and follow, if he look to be saved; admonishing them nevertheless, to avoid all.

1 Gee and Hardy, Documents, and Frere and Kennedy, Visitation Articles and Injunctions, both fill in this blank by the insertion of "Easter," but I can find no authority for this; Wilkins leaves it blank.
contention and altercation therein, and to use an honest sobriety in the inquiry
of the true sense of the same, and refer the explication of obscure places
to men of higher judgment in Scripture."

The [fourth] Injunction requires regular instruction to be given in the
Articles of the Christian faith.

The [fifth] Injunction directs that the people’s knowledge in the foregoing
is to be tested every Lent.

The [sixth] Injunction requires that one sermon shall be preached every
quarter at least, wherein the very Gospel of Christ shall be purely and sincerely
declared, and superstitious practices such as wandering on pilgrimage, offering
of money, candles or tapers to images or relics, or kissing or licking the same, or
saying over a number of beads shall be discouraged.

The [seventh] Injunction requires that in order to avoid that most detestable
offence of idolatry that such feigned images as are so abused shall forthwith
be taken down, and that henceforth no candles, tapers or images of wax shall be
set afore any image or picture, but only the light that commonly goeth across the
church by the roodloft, the light before the Sacrament of the Altar, and the light
about the sepulchre shall suffer to remain.

The [eighth] Injunction directs that where the clergy are non-resident such
curates shall be appointed in their stead, who by their ability both can and will
promptly execute these Injunctions and do their duty.

The [ninth] Injunction directs that no man shall be admitted to preach in
any of your benefices or cures unless sufficiently licensed by the King, the Arch-
bishop of Canterbury, or the bishop of the diocese.

The [tenth] Injunction calls upon the clergy to recant any erroneous teaching
about pilgrimages, relics, images, or any such superstition.

The [eleventh] Injunction directs that any man who withstands the tenor of
these Injunctions shall be presented to the King, his honourable council, his
Vicegerent, or the justice of the peace next adjoining.

The [twelfth] Injunction requires every parson, vicar, or curate to keep one
book or register for weddings, christenings, and burials made in their parishes,
which for the safe keeping, shall be laid in a sure coffer with two locks and two
keys, one to remain with the parson, the other with the wardens.

The [thirteenth] Injunction directs that these and the other former Injunctions
shall be read openly and deliberately before all parishioners once every quarter.

The [fourteenth] Injunction deals with Tithes as by law established, which
must be paid, and the clergy who neglect their duty in this respect must be
reported.

The [fifteenth] Injunction declares that the clergy shall not alter fasts of
services as prescribed without authority, except the commemoration of Thomas
à Becket which shall be clean omitted, and the ferial service used instead.

The [sixteenth] Injunction requires the abandonment of the knelling of the
Aves after service and at other times, which was begun by the pretence of the
Bishop of Rome’s pardon.
6.—Title-page of the "Thomass Matthew" Bible of 1537.
The [seventeenth] Injunction: Whereas in times past it was the custom in divers places in their processions to sing *Ora pro nobis* to so many saints that they had not time to sing the good suffrages in the Litany *Parce nobis Domine* and *Libera nos Domine*; it is better to omit *Ora pro nobis*, and to sing the other suffrages.

The Injunctions conclude with the following charge: "All which and singular Injunctions I minister unto you and to your successors, by the king's highness's authority to me committed in this part, which I charge and command you by the same authority to observe and keep, upon pain of deprivation, sequestration of the fruits, or such other coercion as the king's highness, or his vicegerent for the time being, shall be seen convenient."

Meanwhile, in August, 1537, the "Thomas Matthew" Bible, which was the second complete Bible to appear in the English language, was brought out under the superintendence of John Rogers, the friend of William Tindale. It is a composite book, made up of Tindale's Pentateuch and New Testament of 1534, and from Deuteronomy to the end of the second Book of Chronicles from the manuscript translation left behind by Tindale. The rest is from Coverdale's Bible, excepting the Prayer of Manasses in the Apocrypha, which was translated by Rogers from the French Bible of Olivetan, printed at Neufchastel, in 1535. (Plate 6.)

John Rogers was born about the beginning of the sixteenth century, he took his B.A. degree at Cambridge in 1525, and seven years later obtained a rectory in London. He left London during the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII, and took up his residence at Antwerp, where he acted as Chaplain to the English Company of Merchant Adventurers, an office which had previously been held by Tindale. He remained abroad for some years after the death of his friend. In 1548 he returned to England, held several livings in succession, and was presented to a Prebendal Stall in St. Paul's Cathedral, where he was a Divinity Lecturer, but in 1555 he was condemned as a seditious preacher and put to death.

Thomas Matthew was either the name assumed by Rogers when at Antwerp, or a pseudonym adopted to conceal the fact that a considerable part of this Bible was the translation of
Tindale, whose writings had been condemned by the English authorities.

There is now little doubt that this Bible was printed at Antwerp by Matthew Crom. It is a large folio volume, enriched with nearly eighty woodcuts and the pages of print measures twelve inches by six and a half. The first title runs:

"C THE BYBLE | which is all the holy Scrip-| ture: In which are contayned the | Olde and Newe Testament truly | and purely translated into En-| glysh by Thomas | Matthew. |

"C Esaye. j. | Hearken to ye heauens and | thou earth geaue | eare: For the | Lorde speaketh. | M,D,XXXVII.

"SET FORTH WITH THE KINGES MOST GRACYOUS LYCÉCE."

This title is printed in the centre of a fine and elaborate woodcut, which conveys the lesson that the Law condemns and leads to death, while looking to the crucified Saviour redeems and saves.

Nothing can take from Coverdale the glory of having set forth the editio princeps of the English printed Bible; nothing can rob Tindale of the honour of having given to the English Bible its literary form. Hence it was, that although Coverdale's Bible was issued in 1535 it was speedily supplanted by the large folio Bible of 1537.

Strange to say, the King's licence was extended to this Bible, although the most cursory inspection must have revealed Tindale's connexion with the book. This protection was obtained at the suit of Archbishop Cranmer, who in 1534 had tried in vain to induce the bishops to undertake a translation of the Bible. Having failed in his endeavour, the Archbishop, in a letter to Thomas Cromwell, Chief Secretary of State, dated 4th August, 1537, begs him to read the book, a copy of which he sends with the letter assuring him that, so far as he has examined the translation, it is more to his liking than any translation heretofore made. He prays Cromwell to exhibit the book to the King, and to obtain from him a "licence that the same may be sold, and rede of every person, without danger of any acte, proclamacion, or ordinaunce heretofore granted to the contrary, until such tyme that we, the Bisshops, shall set forth a better translacion, which I thinke will not be till a day after Domesday."
As a translation Matthew’s Bible was of greater merit than Coverdale’s, but it was accompanied by prologues and notes of the editor’s own, which were too fierce and free to be palatable to all sorts of people. Like Tindale, Matthew or Rogers was a zealous and extreme reformer, who, ultimately during the reign of Queen Mary, in her persecution of the Protestants, in 1555, suffered martyrdom for his opinions.

Cromwell probably, and Cranmer possibly, did not know that this “New Translation” was so largely Tindale’s work. Cromwell laid the book before the King, obtained the royal licence, and it at once began to circulate. This book having been printed abroad, could only find an entrance into England by being sold complete in sheets to some English printer, hence the expenses of the edition of 1500 copies were borne by Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, who were later to play such an important part in the production of the “Great Bible.”

Neither of the two Bibles of Coverdale and Matthew was altogether satisfactory. The inaccuracy of Coverdale’s version caused it to lose ground, and the boldness of Matthew’s notes was unpalatable. It was necessary, therefore, to meet a widely felt want by revising all the existing translations.

Richard Taverner, an excellent Greek scholar, was induced to undertake the work. Like Frith, Taverner had been selected by Wolsey as a fellow of Cardinal College, Oxford, now Christ Church. He was arrested on the charge of reading Tindale’s Testament, but being released studied law, was admitted to the Inner Temple, and coming into contact with Cromwell, while the latter was Chancellor of Cambridge, in 1537 became Clerk of the Signet to Henry VIII. Taverner, who was a graduate of Cambridge, was attracted to Oxford by the fame of Cardinal Wolsey’s College, where he would find congenial society with men of the “new learning,” and the love he afterwards showed for the Greek language and literature no doubt was here implanted in his breast.

Such little time was given him for the work that he did little more than correct the English of Matthew’s Bible by the Vulgate, and suppress many of its notes. He explains in his
dedication how absurd it was for any one to suppose that a faultless translation of the Bible could be made in a year’s time by a single man.

The Bible was printed “at London by John Byddell for Thomas Barthlet” in 1539, and was allowed to be read in the churches, but it exercised very little influence on subsequent versions.

In the course of time the true history of Matthew’s Bible came to be known, and the King’s advisers realised the very unpleasant fact, that in procuring for it a royal licence they had befuddled the King. With the deliberate advice of the fathers of the spirituality his Majesty had ordered Tindale’s translations to be burned as replete with error, and he had employed an agent to search for Tindale and apprehend him as a preacher of heresies and sedition. And yet the King had been persuaded, unawares, to grant a licence for the circulation of what was practically Tindale’s translation. It was extremely awkward for Henry’s advisers. When Cromwell and Cranmer discovered the real import of their act they set to work, as quickly and as quietly as possible, to minimise the effects of the licence.

Cromwell resolved to supersede Matthew’s Bible by a new version, the basis of which should be Matthew’s version shorn of its polemical annotations. The execution of this project was entrusted to Coverdale, who had given proof of his moderation and courtesy in the treatment of ecclesiastical questions.

We now find Coverdale in Paris, engaged under Cromwell’s direction and patronage upon Biblical work, and in 1538, the printer Nicolson at Southwark produced two editions of a Latin and English New Testament in order that readers might be able to compare the Vulgate and English versions.

Coverdale was in hearty accord with Tindale and others in the defiance of the Romanist conservative forces, then all-powerful in the church life of England. But he was at heart a man of peace, and he was willing to go great lengths to assure the timid, and to draw over the wavering. For these good ends he prepared this edition of the New Testament, giving, side by side with the Latin Vulgate text of that day, a very literal English version, which differs from his former translation.
7. Title-page of the "Great Bible" of 1539.
The first of these two editions is a handsome well-printed volume, but so full of blunders that when Coverdale received it in July, 1538, while superintending the printing of the “Great Bible” at Paris, he put to press, in that city, a more accurate edition, which was finished in November. Nicolson then produced another edition, in spite of Coverdale’s remonstrance, and placed upon the title-page the name of “John Hollybush.” It differs from the first, but is also very incorrect.

As long as Cromwell lived, Coverdale seems to have retained a close connexion with his patron, who had charged him with the duty of preparing another Bible, differing in some important respects from the two already in circulation: his own of 1535 and that bearing the name of Thomas Matthew, neither of which was felt to be satisfactory. The latter gave offence because of the polemical character of many of the notes, and also because of its close connexion with the work of Tindale, and so with the assistance of Cromwell, Coverdale undertook to revise the text of the Bible and see it through the press. The title-page of the new Bible says that it is “truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges.” These words do not mean, as they might, that the version was a new translation, executed by a body of competent scholars collected for the purpose, but that Coverdale had availed himself of the great influential authorities, some of which were not available for the 1535 Bible. It is probable that in revising the text for the “Great Bible” Coverdale used a copy of the “Matthew Bible” of 1537, and annotated that, just as the revisers of the 1611 version are said to have annotated a copy of the “Bishops’ Bible.” (Plate 7.)

The excellence of Parisian paper and typography is said to have been the cause for the selection of this city for the work, or it may be that in 1538 there was no press in England competent to execute so great a task, and so the services of Francis Regnault, the famous Paris printer, were secured. There was nothing stealthy or secret in the procedure adopted. Cromwell was the patron of this special undertaking, and through his
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The excellence of Parisian paper and typography is said to have been the cause for the selection of this city for the work, or it may be that in 1538 there was no press in England competent to execute so great a task, and so the services of Francis Regnault, the famous Paris printer, were secured. There was nothing stealthy or secret in the procedure adopted. Cromwell was the patron of this special undertaking, and through his
influence a licence was obtained from the King of France, Francis I, by which Coverdale and Richard Grafton, the London printer, were authorised, in consideration of the liberty which they had received from their own sovereign, to print and transmit to England the Latin or the English Bible on condition that there were no private or unlawful opinions in the new work, and that all dues, and other obligations, were properly discharged. Under this protection Coverdale and Grafton, about May, 1538, entered into an arrangement with Regnault to fulfil their commission.

For seven or eight months Coverdale and his associates seem to have been left unmolested to proceed with their work. Bishop Bonner, afterwards Bishop of London, at that time ambassador in Paris from the Court of England, was able to render most essential service by affording protection to Coverdale and Grafton, and they gratefully acknowledged, in several letters extant, his great liberality and kindness to them. Writing on the 23rd June, 1538, Coverdale and Grafton inform Cromwell that they are sending two copies of what was afterwards known as the "Great Bible" of 1539, and state that they "folowe not only a standynge texte of the Hebme, with the interpretation of the Chaldee and the Greke, but we set, also in a pryvate table the dyversitie of redinges of all textes, with such annotacions in another table, as shall douteless delucidate and cleare the same."

There is little doubt these two copies were conveyed to London by Bishop Bonner, who, as ambassador, had the right to travel without having his luggage examined.

In December, however, there came a mandate from the Inquisition forbidding the work. Fortunately a portion was already safe in England. Many sheets were seized, yet, even these were in large measure afterwards recovered, "four great dry vats full" being repurchased from a haberdasher, to whom they had been sold. The interruption caused a slight delay, and the result was hurried and imperfect. The Englishmen fled from Paris, and Regnault was arrested.

But Cromwell was not the man to be foiled in his purpose. Being unable to secure the accomplishment of the work in
France, assisted by Bishop Bonner, he brought over types, presses and men to England, and in April, 1539, the volume was completed by Richard Grafton and his associate, Edward Whitchurch, "cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum," and this "Bible of the largest size," as it was then spoken of, inasmuch as the type page measures 13½ by 7½ inches, or the first edition of the "Great Bible," was issued from the press.

The title-page of the first edition reads:

*C The BYBLE IN | Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scrypture, bothe of ye olde and newe testament, truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Creke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges. [C Prynted by Rychard Grafton & | Edward Whitchurch. | Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum- | dum solum. | 1539. |]

Miles Coverdale was the editor and chief translator, but there is no record of the names of the "dyuerse excellent learned men" by whom he was assisted.

A number of letters from Coverdale to Cromwell are extant which throw considerable light on the history of the genesis of this book. They are dated from Paris, at the time when Coverdale, accompanied by Richard Grafton, were there to see the book through the press.

Cromwell was evidently paymaster, as Coverdale speaks of the book as "your work."

The Bible was a great improvement on that of Coverdale's of 1535; the divers excellent learned men who assisted the editor did not slavishly follow the first version.

Between April, 1539, and December, 1541, seven editions of this version were printed, each of which was more or less revised. These were printed in this rapid succession in order to meet the demand for the copies that had to be placed in the churches, and also to satisfy the general desire for them. It has been calculated that no less than twenty thousand of these great folios were thus issued.

The publication of the "Great Bible," and the injunction for its free exhibition in the parish churches marked a memorable epoch. The King, in a declaration appointed to be read by all
curates upon the publishing of the Bible in English, justly dwells upon the gravity of the measure.

This was no doubt the "complete English text of the Scriptures" provided for public use, which by the injunction framed beforehand (in September, 1538) Cromwell, as the King's Vice-gerent, required should be "set vp in sum convenient place wythin the said church that ye have cure of, where as your parishioners may moste cômodiously resorte to the same and reade it." It has been suggested that "Matthew's Bible" was the one intended, but there can be little doubt that it was the "hole byble of the largyest volume" that was ordered to be set up.

Bishop Bonner set up six Bibles in certain convenient places of St. Paul's church after the King's proclamation of May, 1540, with admonition to readers to bring with them "discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence, and quiet behaviour." That there should be no such number meet together as to make a multitude.

The "Great Bible" is often called "Cranmer's Bible," but without any reason. Cranmer's direct connexion with the book begins with the second edition, which made its appearance in April, 1540, with Cranmer's prologue, which henceforth was attached to all editions of the "Great Bible," of which six editions appeared in 1540 and 1541, each having peculiarities which distinguish it from the rest.

A copy of the edition of April, 1540, on vellum and illuminated, now in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge, was designed for Cromwell. Another copy, also on vellum, was presented to the King by Anthony Marler, a member of the Haberdasher's Company who was responsible for the expense of printing the second edition. This latter copy is preserved in the British Museum.

On the 14th November, 1539, Henry bestowed on Cromwell, for five years, the exclusive right to grant a licence for the printing of the Bible in the English tongue. A letter from Cranmer to Cromwell is extant, bearing the same date, in which the Archbishop conveys the undertaking of the printers to sell the Bible at a price not exceeding ten shillings, on condition of
THE “GREAT BIBLE,” 1539-1541

receiving a monopoly of the publication. In this letter Cranmer asks “the king’s pleasure concerning the Preface of the Bible,” which had been sent to Cromwell to “oversee.” This Bible had been committed by Henry to Gardiner and others among the bishops for their judgment. “After they had kept it long in their hands, and the King was divers times sued unto for the publication thereof, at last being called for by the King himself, they re-delivered the book; and being demanded by the King what was their judgment of the translation, they answered that there were many faults therein. ‘Well,’ said the King, ‘but are there any heresies maintained thereby?’ They answered there were no heresies that they could find maintained thereby. ‘If there be no heresies,’ said the King, ‘then, in God’s name, let it go abroad among our people.’ According to this judgment of the King and the bishops, M. Coverdale defended the translation, confessing that he did now himself espy some faults, which if he might review it once over again, as he had done twice before, he doubted not but to amend it, but for any heresy he was sure there was none maintained by his translation.”

In April, 1540, the revised Bible was issued with Cranmer’s preface.

Coverdale had intended to prepare as a companion to the “Great Bible,” another volume dealing with many points of difficulty and interest, and with this end in view he introduced many pointing hands and other marks into the Bible. These had to be explained, and he does this in a prologue. The volume referred to in this prologue never saw the light, or, if it did, no copy is known to have survived. What is more probable is that with the fall of Cromwell in July, all hope of publishing the companion was given up, and in the subsequent editions the pointing hands and other marks were removed.

The title-page of the “Great Bible” is worthy of notice. It is said to have been designed by Hans Holbein. It served to answer the purpose of Cromwell, at the moment, in his gross flattery of the reigning monarch. Cranmer, Cromwell, and the King himself, at full length are here distinguished by their respective shields or coats of arms. At the top in the centre
the Almighty is represented in the clouds looking down upon Henry VIII, who, seated upon his throne, fills the centre of the upper third of the engraving, and is handing large Bibles, inscribed VERBUM DEI, with his right hand to Cranmer, representing the Church, and with his left hand to Cromwell representing the laity, both of them bareheaded. Below on the right hand Cromwell appears again delivering the Word of God to the laity, and on the other side is Cranmer placing the sacred volume in the hands of one of his clergy. Below stands a preacher enforcing the duty of prayer and thanksgiving on behalf of kings, and a crowd of men, women, and children fills the whole foot of the plate in a state of jubilation crying VIVAT REX, depicting the joy of all classes at the dissemination of the Bible in English.

It is sad to relate that the man to whose efforts the "Great Bible" of 1539 was due, and who in many other ways had helped to obtain for the people of this country the right to read the Bible in their own tongue, and also to possess copies for themselves, fell into disgrace. His conduct to the bishops was most overbearing, and at length retribution overtook him, for having been proved to have enriched himself by taking bribes to prevent justice and being found guilty of other malpractices, the disgraced favourite ended his days on the scaffold in July, 1540, within a few months of his creation as Earl of Essex. He was condemned under an Act of Attainder, without trial, a process of his own devising. His great friend Cranmer voted for his attainder.

After Cromwell's execution, the same engraving was employed in all subsequent editions of the Bible, but Cromwell's arms were cut out from the title-page, and the shield left blank. (Plate 8.)

The engraving deserves very careful study in detail as offering a contemporary delineation of costume and of classes of people in Tudor times.

In November, 1540, the fourth edition was ready for issue, though it was not published until 1541. It appeared under strange auspices, as the title shows: "The Byble in Englyshe in the largest and greatest volume, auctorysed and apoynted by the commaundemente of oure moost redoubted Prynce, and
8.—Title-page of the "Great Bible" of 1541, showing the Blank Shield of Cromwell's Arms.
THE "GREAT BIBLE," 1539-1541

soueraygne Lorde, Kynge Henry the VIII, supreme heade of this his church and realme of Englande: to be frequented and vsed in every churche w'in this his sayd realme accordyng to the tenour of hys former Iniuctions geven in that behalfe: Oversene and perused at the commandement of the kinges hyghnes, by the ryghte reuerend fathers in God, Cuthbert [Tunstall], bysshop of Duresme, and Nicholas [Heath], bisshop of Rochester." Printed by Richard Grafton [in other copies by Edward Whitchurch]. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum, 1541."

Lest the work in which Cromwell had taken so deep an interest should suffer after his fall, other names, representing widely different tendencies and sympathies must give it warrant and authority, in place of the name of Archbishop Cranmer. In two later editions, issued in May and December of the same year, Cranmer's name reappears on the title-page.

We are not told how large were the impressions of later editions, but as the first edition consisted of 2500 copies, we may reasonably conclude that the number circulated during these years was large.

Only by an output on this scale could it be possible for every parish church to supply itself with a copy, as Cromwell had directed in the Injunctions, which as Vicar-general he issued in September, 1538, and as the King commanded afresh in a proclamation of May the 6th, 1541—the limit of date being then fixed at the feast of All Saints (1st November), under penalty of a fine of forty shillings for each month's delay.

This liberty was not of long duration, for after Cromwell's disgrace the opposite party attempted to avail themselves of Coverdale's scheme of annotations on difficult texts, for the purpose of checking altogether the printing of the Bible. Grafton the printer was committed to the Fleet, and bound under a heavy penalty not to print or sell any Bibles until the King and clergy should agree on a translation.

The plan for a new translation soon fell to the ground, for it was evident that the bishops had no real wish for a vernacular translation.

The King now directed that the universities should be
entrusted with the work, but the design was frustrated by adverse influences.

About this time Anthony Marler, a haberdasher of London, who had borne the expense of earlier editions of the "Great Bible," received from Henry a patent conveying to him the exclusive right of printing the English Bible during four years. The price at which the Bibles were to be sold was fixed at 10s. unbound, and 12s. bound, and a royal proclamation was issued forcing the curates and parishioners of every parish, under a penalty of double the cost of the book per month, to purchase a copy for the common use of the people before the Feast of All Hallows, 1540. In 1543, however, the reading of the Scriptures was by Act of Parliament placed under severe restrictions. Tindal's translations, and three years later, Coverdale's Testament, was placed under the same ban, and permission to read was only accorded to certain classes. These restrictions were enforced by heavy penalties. It was a reaction against the growing love of the Scriptures, which the opponents of the Reformation spared no pains to crush, but it was suddenly stayed by the death of the King in January, 1547.

On the execution in 1540 of his patron, Thomas Cromwell, and also of his friend and tutor, Robert Barnes, Coverdale found it expedient to leave England.

Shortly afterwards he married Elizabeth Macheson, sister-in-law of Dr. Joannes Macchabaeus MacAlpinus, who had assisted in the translation of the first Danish Bible.

This practical protest against the doctrine of the celibacy of the priesthood identified Coverdale with the reforming party. He lived for a time at Tübingen, where he obtained the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Later he became a Lutheran pastor and schoolmaster at Bergzabern, in Zweibrücken, Bavaria, where he lived in poor circumstances between 1543 and 1547, and "where by translating in his leisure hours . . . various religious works into our language . . . he is of very great service in promoting the Scriptural benefit of those persons in the lower ranks of life, who are anxious for the truth."

During Coverdale's exile he took the name of Michael Anglus.
In the proclamation of the 8th of July, 1546, Coverdale's Bibles and other works appeared among those books forbidden to be imported, bought, sold, or kept.

As soon as Henry had "ceased from troubling," in January, 1547, the zeal for the art of printing burst forth afresh. Of the forty-five printers who had started to print in London, during the thirty-eight years of Henry's reign, fourteen survived when Edward came to the throne, and within twelve months of his accession eight new men had started in business as printers, and in the brief space of the succeeding six years the numbers of printers had risen to fifty-seven. What is interesting to remark is that of these fifty-seven printers not fewer than thirty-one, and those the most reputable, were engaged either in printing or publishing the Sacred Scriptures.

Before the end of 1547 an Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament, for the restoration of the Communion Cup to the laity. This change rendered necessary a slight addition to that part of the service which regulated the communion of the laity, and the opportunity was taken of preparing a short English office both of preparation and communion. An English "Order of Communion" was issued under royal authority on the 8th of March, 1548. In January, 1549, the first Act of Uniformity was passed, and appended to it was the first English "Book of Common Prayer," which included the new "Order of Communion."

This "Order of Communion" reached Frankfurt during the fair time, and Coverdale translated it into German and Latin. The latter was sent to Calvin with a hope that he might cause it to be printed, but this was not done.

Coverdale returned to England in March, 1548, was well received at court, through the influence of Cranmer, and was appointed chaplain to the King and almoner to Queen Catherine, whose funeral sermon he preached in September of that year.

In 1549 Whitchurch printed the second volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus, with a dedication by Coverdale, who assisted in the translation.

He was one of thirty-one persons to whom was issued in January, 1550, a commission to proceed against anabaptists as
well as those who did not administer the sacraments according to the "Book of Common Prayer."

In 1550 there appeared a translation of Otto Wermueller's "Spyrytuall and most precious Pearle," with a commen-
datory preface by the Protector Somerset, who alluded to the consolation he received from the book but did not mention the author or the translator. These are specially mentioned, however, by H. Singleton, who reprinted the "Pearle," with the following prefatory note: "I have thought it good to set it forth once againe, according to the true copy of that translation that I received at the hands of M. Doctour Milo Coverdale, at whose hand I received also the copies of three other works of Otto Wermullerus . . . 'The Precious Pearle,' which the author calleth of 'Affliction,' another of 'Death,' the third of 'Justification,' and the fourth of 'The Hope of the Faithful,' these I have imprinted." Of these the original editions seem to have been printed abroad.

On July the 20th, 1550, Coverdale received a gift of forty pounds from the King, and on the 24th of November he preached Sir James Welford's funeral sermon at Little Bartholomew's in London.

When Lord Russell was sent down against the western rebels, in 1551, Coverdale accompanied him to assist the secular arm with his preaching, and he subsequently delivered a thanksgiving sermon after the victory. His behaviour in Devonshire gave great satisfaction.

On the 7th of March, 1551, he preached at Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the funeral of Lord Wentworth, and went with Peter Martyr and others, on the 19th of May, of the same year, to visit Magdalen College, Oxford.

He acted as coadjutor to John Voysey, Bishop of Exeter, who resigned his see in 1551, and Coverdale was appointed to the bishopric by the King's letters patent, on the 14th of August of the same year. He was consecrated at Croyden on the 30th of the month and was enthroned on the 11th of September. Cranmer specially interested himself in this appointment. He was one of the eight bishops and twenty-four other persons, who were appointed in the same year, to reform the ecclesiastical laws.
John Vowell, the historian, tells us that Coverdale "most worthilie did performe the office committed unto him, he preached continuallie upon euerie holie daie, and did read most commonlie twice in the weeke, in some church or other within this citie." He was hospitable, liberal, sober, chaste, and modest. "His wife was a most sober, chaste, and godlie matron."

On his accession to the episcopal bench he was very constant in his attendance at the House of Lords, during the Parliaments of 1552 and 1553.

The young King Edward VI died of consumption on the 6th of July, 1553, when barely sixteen years of age, and on the 28th of September following, Coverdale was deprived of his see, and John Voysey was reinstated as Bishop of Exeter.

Coverdale was required to find sureties, and when the protestant prisoners drew up a declaration about a proposed disputation between them and certain Roman Catholic champions, he signed in order to signify his consent and agreement.

At the instance of Dr. J. Macchabaeus MacAlpinus, Coverdale's brother-in-law, Christian III, King of Denmark, wrote a letter to Queen Mary, dated the 25th of April, 1554, on Coverdale's behalf. In her reply the Queen stated that he was only charged with a debt due to the Treasury; but a second appeal from King Christian (24th Sept.) brought permission to him to leave England for "Denmark, with two of his servants, his bagges and baggage without any theire unlawful lette or serche." One of the two servants is supposed to have been his wife. He was cordially received by his brother-in-law, and the King offered him a benefice, which, however, was not accepted.

He then went to Wesel in Westphalia, where there were many English refugees, and for some time he preached there, until he was sent for by the Duke of Zweibrücken, to undertake the pastoral charge of Bergzabern once more.

It has been stated that he assisted in the preparation of the Genevan version of the Bible. It is true that he was in Geneva in December, 1558, when he signed a letter to those of Frankfort in congratulation at the accession of Queen Elizabeth, praying that all private dissensions should be set
aside, but Coverdale had returned to England before the first edition of the Genevan Bible made its appearance in 1560, as he preached at Paul's Cross on the 12th of November, 1559, and again on the 28th of April following, before the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and a large congregation.

In spite of his deprivation in the previous reign Coverdale assisted, with other bishops, at the famous consecration of Archbishop Parker, on the 17th of December, 1559. It is possible that it was owing to his scruples about vestments that he did not again take the bishopric of Exeter, on the deprivation of Turberville in 1559.

In 1563 Coverdale obtained the degree of Doctor of Divinity, from the University of Cambridge, and in the same year he recovered from an attack of plague.

On the 3rd of March he was collated to the living of St. Magnus, close to London Bridge, by Grindal, who petitioned the Queen to release him from the payment of first-fruits, which came to more than £60, a request which was ultimately granted.

Grindal, who had a very high opinion of Coverdale's piety and learning, offered him other preferments, and endeavoured to obtain his appointment as bishop of Llandaff, but his objections to vestments and other failings in uniformity stood in the way.

On the 10th of April, 1564, he was given power by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge to admit Grindal as Doctor of Divinity, and in the same year he published his last book: Letters of Saints and Martyrs.

In 1566 the Government determined to enforce a stricter observance of the liturgy, and Coverdale resigned his living. Many of those who attended the churches of other deprived London ministers "ran after Father Coverdale who took that occasion to preach the more constantly, but yet with much fear, so that he would not be known where he preached, though many came to his house to ask where he would preach next Lord's day." He preached on eleven occasions, between the 1st of November, 1567, and the 18th of January following, at the Church of the Holy Trinity in the Minories.

There is considerable difference of opinion among his
biographers as to the date of Coverdale’s death, but the register
of burials of St. Bartholomew’s places the burial on the 19th of
February, 1568, and Thomas Fuller in copying his epitaph, gives
the date “1568, Jan. 20” as part of it.

He was eighty-one years of age when he died. He was a
celebrated preacher, admired and followed by all the puritans,
but the Act of Uniformity brought down his reverend hairs with
sorrow to the grave.

He was buried at St. Bartholomew’s behind the Exchange,
and was attended to his grave by vast crowds of people.

His epitaph

"Hic tandem requiemque ferens, sinemque laborum,
Ossa Coverdalis mortua tumbus habet.
Exoniae qui Praesul erat dignissimus olim,
Insignis vitae vir probitate sue.
Octoginta annos grandævus vixit & unum,
Indignum passus sœpius exilium.
Sic demum variis jactatum casibus, ista
Exceptit gremio terra benigna suo.
Obiit 1568. Jan. 20." ¹

was copied by Fuller from the brass inscription on his marble
tombstone under the communion table in the chancel, which
was destroyed in the Great Fire of London. The church was
pulled down in 1840 to make way for the New Exchange, but
what were thought to be his remains were carefully reburied
on the 4th of October, 1840, in a vault in the south aisle of the
Church of St. Magnus, where the parishioners in 1837 had
erected a monument to his memory.

A portrait of Coverdale, engraved by T. Trotter from a
drawing at one time in the possession of Dr. Gifford, is
contained in Middleton’s Biographia Evangelica, and has been
re-drawn and re-engraved on several occasions. This we repro-
duce although its authenticity is said to be doubtful.

The name of Coverdale will always be honoured as the man
who first made a complete translation of the Bible into English.
He was not a figure of marked historical interest. He was some-
what weak and timorous, and all through life he leaned on more

¹ Fuller, T., Church History, 1655, ix, 65.
powerful natures. Barnes, Cromwell, Cranmer, and Grindal were successively his patrons. In the hour of trouble he was content to remain in obscurity, and left the crown of martyrdom to be earned by men of tougher fibre. But he was pious, conscientious, laborious, generous, and a thoroughly honest and good man. He did little original literary work. As a translator he was faithful and harmonious. He was well read in theology, and became more inclined to puritan ideas as his life wore on. All accounts agree as to his remarkable popularity as a preacher. He was a leading figure during the progress of the reformed opinions, and had a considerable share in the introduction of German spiritual culture to English readers in the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

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