

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

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That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—PETER.

B. J. UNDERHILL,
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NEW SERIES.

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Religious.

THE PRINTED ENGLISH BIBLE.

And who was William Tyndal, the man who gave to England its greatest treasure—the printed English Bible?

There is a book called "Anderson's Annals of the English Bible," which contains the life of Tyndal. It was a life devoted entirely to this great object. From his youth, he felt he had this one thing to do,—to translate the word of God into his native tongue, and print it. He did so, and was martyred for its sake.

He was born in 1484, 100 years after Wicliffe, and about a year after the birth of Luther, and also of Zuingli. He passed his youth in the midst of monks and friars, and was sent early to Oxford, where he made great progress, especially in languages.

Now, Oxford was the city in which the New Testament, just published in Greek by Erasmus, met with its warmest welcome, and William Tyndal read it,—first only as a work of learning, but soon he found it to be something more. That Book spoke to him of God, of Christ, and of being born again, till it completely subdued him. He felt that he had in his hand the Divine Revelation, and that he could not keep the treasure to himself. He therefore read these Greek and Latin Gospels with many of his fellow-students, at Oxford. He then went to Cambridge, and, forming new friendships, became, it is said, "well ripened in God's word."

There were two young men at Cambridge, who had also been reading this Greek New Testament,—Thomas Bilney and John Froth,—both afterwards martyrs. When Tyndal joined them, they gained fresh courage, and began to address to all around that saying of Christ's, "Repent, and be converted." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Bilney and Tyndal left Cambridge in 1519. The friends had not then finished their persecution of the Lollards; and that same year, Thomas Man, one of their number, who had preached to the conversion of many persons, under the great Oaks of Windsor Forest, was burnt alive for his doctrine, as well as Dame Hawtyn, the mother of several little children, for having in her possession a parchment, on which were written the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, in English.

But of what avail was it to silence those obscure lips, while the New Testament of Erasmus could speak? And God so ordered it, that Erasmus was a favourite with Henry VIII, King of England, who whispered in the ear of a bishop very worth with the Greek Testament, and at the same time ignorant enough to declare that Paul's Epistles had been written in Hebrew; so that even preaching in St. Paul's cathedral against the book was, as it is said, "of no avail."

Erasmus was so highly esteemed, that he was called "the king of the schools." What he had given to the learned, Tyndal was about to bestow upon the people. When he was between thirty and forty years of age, he was engaged as tutor and chaplain in the house of Sir John Walsh, a knight of Gloucestershire, and at his table he met with many of the neighbouring priests, and whose ignorance he was deeply grieved. He exhorted them also to read the Scriptures, keeping it in mind, Erasmus's New Testament always with him, to prove what he advanced. The priests disliked to see that book appear, and said it only served to make heretics, adding, "Why even we don't understand God's word, as you call it; and how should the vulgar understand it? It is a conjuring book, wherein every body finds what he wants." "Ah!" said Tyndal, "you read it without Jesus Christ; that is why it is obscure to you." "Nothing is obscure to us," said another priest; "we only can explain the Scriptures." "No," said Tyndal; "you hide them, you burn those who teach them, and, if you could, you would burn the Scriptures themselves."

This kind of talk is said to have induced the priest rather to give up Squire Walsh's good cheer, at Solihull Hall, than encounter "the sour sauce" of Master Tyndal's company.

They soon declared themselves his open enemies; and if he preached, they threatened to expel him from the church those who listened to him. "Oh!" said Tyndal; while I am soving in one place, they ravage the field I have just left. I cannot be everywhere. If Christians had the Scriptures in their own tongue, they could themselves withstand these sophists: without the Bible it is impossible to establish the faith in the truth." He went on arguing with all whom he met, in favour of translating the Scriptures, till one day a papist doctor, angry with the strength of his arguments, said: "Well; we had better be without God's laws than the pope's." This fired the spirit of Tyndal, and he answered, with righteous indignation, "I defy the pope and all his laws; and if God give me life, ere many years the ploughboys shall know more of the Scriptures than you do."

He henceforth passed the greater part of his time in the library, and avoided these conversations. He prayed, he read, and carried on his translation, and seems to have read it, as he proceeded, to Sir John and Lady Walsh, who were determined to protect him. He soon, however, left them for the sake of their safety, and proceeded to London, to seek another retreat, where he might follow out his work.

He found a quiet room in the house of Humphrey Mowmouth, a pious and benevolent alderman, near Temple Bar, and dwelt with him six

months, "studying most part of the day and night at his book." Humphrey Mowmouth was afterwards sent to the Tower, on a charge of having aided Tyndal; but he thus justified himself: "When I heard my Lord of London preach at Paul's-cross, that Sir William Tyndal had translated the New Testament into English, and that it was naughtily translated, that was the first time that ever I suspected or knew any evil of him." The worthy citizen was soon set free. It seems he afterwards contributed largely to the printing of the New Testament.

Tyndal began to fear lest the stake should interrupt his labour. "Alas!" he exclaimed; "Is there then no place where I can translate the Bible? It is not the bishop's house alone that is closed upon me, but all England!" There lay at that moment, in the river Thames, a vessel loading for Hamburg: Humphrey Mowmouth gave him ten pounds for his voyage; and, carrying with him only his New Testament, he went on board. "Our priests have buried the Testament of God," said he; "and all their study is to keep it down, that it rise not again; but the hour of the Lord is come, and nothing can hinder the word of God, as nothing could hinder Jesus Christ of old from issuing from the tomb."

"That poor man, then sailing towards Germany, was to send back, even from the banks of the Elbe, the eternal gospel to his countrymen."

He left England in 1526, and never returned to it. Humphrey Mowmouth and other kind friends supplied his simple wants while sitting down to his work in a foreign land.

He had now entered with great vigour on the two most important years of his life. He seems to have printed first, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and in 1524 he sent them to his friend Mowmouth, and then removed to Cologne. Being again disturbed in the midst of printing the whole New Testament, he gathered up the ten already printed sheets, and fled to Worms, where he finished it. It crossed the sea to England in 1526.

Cochleus, that enemy who had desired to strangle it in its birth at Cologne, wrote home to King Henry and the bishops, to watch closely all the ports against the entrance of "the pernicious book"; while the Bishop of London, having gained possession of one of the copies, took care to tell the people, in case they met with such a book, that he had found in it upwards of 3000 errors and heresies. Moreover, he had at once entered into a secret speculation to buy it up through a merchant named Puckington, saying, "Gentle Master Puckington, do your diligence and get them, and I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you; for the books are naughty, and I intend surely to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul's-cross."

So you see the Roman Church burnt, run, and and books, and books, but all to no purpose. William Tyndal, understanding this purpose of Bishop Tomsall, sold him the books, saying, "I shall get money of him for these books to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out at the burning of God's words, and the overplus of the money that shall remain to me shall make me more studious, to correct again, and newly to imprint the same." And so forward went the bargain: the bishop had the books; Puckington had the thanks; and Tyndal had the money; and afterwards more New Testaments came thick and threefold into England.

The more these New Testaments were suppressed, the greater was the desire of men to possess them, and to examine their contents, and this in spite of punishment. The sentence on John Tyndal, a merchant of London, and brother to William, by Sir Thomas More, was, "that he should be set upon a horse with his face to the tail, and have a paper pinned upon his hand, and many sheets of New Testaments sewn to his cloak, to be afterwards thrown into a great fire kindled in Chancery, and then pay to the king a fine which should ruin him."

What would the citizens of London think now, if they saw one of its wealthy and honourable merchants that treated for having a New Testament in his possession?

Tyndal's own words about the persecution raised were,— "In burning the New Testament, they did none other thing than I looked for: no more shall they do, if they burn me also, if it be God's will that it shall be so. I purpose, with God's help, to maintain unto the death, if need be; and therefore, all Christian men and women, pray that the words of God may be unshaken and runne to and fro among his people: Amen."

The great Lord Chancellor More publishes seven large volumes against Tyndal. He held the error of the ancient Pharisees, that the Bible did not contain the whole revealed will of God, but that the traditions of the church are of as great authority; and he said that Satan had marked both Luther and Tyndal with an "H" in the forehead, for denying it, "with a faire home irony, fetched out of the flames of hell." These are the very words of the friend of Erasmus,—the learned, witty, and eloquent Sir Thomas More. Tyndal only answered him, that the written word of contains all his revealed will, perfect as his Divine Author; and that "if any man add to it, or take away from it, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in the book."

The clergy, delighted with More, their champion, pressed upon him the acceptance of five thousand pounds. He was a noble-minded man, and refused to accept a penny of it; and he seems to have foreseen that the "New Learning," as he called it, would eventually prevail. He himself chose a violent death rather than deny his conscience concerning King Henry's second marriage;

and, in reviewing his life in comparison with Tyndal's, one cannot but discern so much that is similarly great in their characters, that had their souls been truly and intimately known to each other, we are ready to believe they would have been united in the bonds of the highest friendship, and that when More gave up to his "dear daughter Margaret," on her visiting him in prison, the knotted whip with which he had chastised himself from his youth, and the hair shirt he had worn constantly to aggravate the stripes, he had (enlightened by the reading of the forbidden New Testament) seen the way to heaven clear, through Christ alone, and renounced his faith in penance and self-torture. If so, he must have had much to forgive himself with regard to Tyndal and many others.

(To be Continued.)

LOST CONVICTIONS.

BY PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

If you have the strivings of God's Spirit, God has met you, led you to reflect upon your sins, made you sensible that you are in danger of hell, awakened your concern for your soul, and inclined you to seek salvation. Take heed that you do not lose your convictions, and grow careless of eternal things; that you do not return to your former careless way of living, and your former sins. Consider—

1. There is danger of this. Not all who are concerned for their souls, and who, by the strivings of God's Spirit, are seeking and striving for salvation, hold out to the end. Many things intervene between the beginning and the end of the race, which direct, and stop, and turn back those who commenced well. There are many who seem to be under strong convictions, and to be very earnest in seeking, when convictions are but short-lived. And some who seem to be much concerned about salvation for a considerable time, it may be for years together, yet by degrees grow careless and negligent.

There is much in your own heart which tends to stupify you. It is the natural tendency of sin to stupify the conscience. And as corruption is reigning as yet in your heart, it will ever be ready to exert itself in such a way as will have a great tendency to drive away your convictions. And Satan is doubtless diligently watching over you, striving in all ways to shake and hinder your convictions. He joins in with the sloth and lusts of your heart to persuade to negligence, and to turn your mind to other things. And the world is full of objects which tend to take off your mind from the soul's concerns.

2. Consider, if you lose your convictions, it will be no advantage to you that you ever had them, as to any furtherance of your salvation. Whatever truths you have been under about damnation, to what ever reflections you have been brought concerning your sins, whatever strong desires you have had after deliverance, and whatever earnest prayers you have made, all will be in vain. What you have suffered of fear and concern will turn to no good account; and what you have done, the pains you have taken, will be utterly lost. When you have striven against sin, and laboured in duty, have stemmed the stream, and have proceeded a considerable way up the hill, and made some progress towards the kingdom of heaven, if once you lose your convictions, you will be as far from salvation as you ever were; you will lose all the ground you have gained; you will go quite down to the bottom of the hill; the stream will immediately carry you back. All will be lost; you may as well never have had those convictions as to have had them and then lost them.

3. You do not know that you will ever have such an opportunity again. God is now striving with you by his Spirit. If you should lose the strivings of his Spirit, it may be that God's Spirit will never return to you again. If you are under convictions, you have a precious opportunity, which, if you know the worth of it, you would esteem better than any temporal advantages. You have a price in your hands to get wisdom, which is more valuable than gold or silver. It is a great privilege to live under means of grace, to enjoy the Word and ordinances of God, and to know the way of salvation. It is a greater thing to live under the powerful dispensation of the means of grace by an instructive, convincing ministry. But it is a much greater privilege still to be the subject of the convincing influences of the Spirit of God. If you have these, you have a precious advantage in your hands. And if you lose it, it is questionable whether you will ever have like advantages again.

We are counselled to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.—(Isa. lv. 6.) A time in which God's Spirit is striving with a man by convictions of his sin and danger, is especially such a time. It is a sinner's best opportunity. It is especially a day of salvation. God may be said to be near, when he pours out his Spirit upon many in the place where a person dwells. All should be calling upon God as near at such a time. But especially is God near, when he is pouring out his Spirit in convincing and awakening a man's own soul. If God's Spirit is now striving with you, you have a precious opportunity. Take heed that you do not by any means let it slip. It may doubtless be said concerning many, that they have missed their opportunity. Most men who live under the gospel have a special opportunity, or there is a certain season which God appoints for them, which is, above all others, a day of grace, when they have a very fair opportunity of securing eternal salvation, if they did but know it and had hearts for it.

If the Spirit of God is now striving with you, it may be it is your time, and it may be your only time. Be wise, therefore, and understand the

things which belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes. You have not the influences of the Spirit of God in your own power. God is sovereign as to the bestowment of them. If you are ready to flatter yourself, that although you neglect now when you are young, yet you shall be awakened again, that is a vain and groundless presumption.

4. If you lose your convictions, and return again to a way of allowed sinning, there will be less probability of your salvation than there was before you had any convictions. Sliding or losing convictions is a very dangerous and pernicious thing to men's souls, and is often spoken of as such in God's Word; which was signified in the awful dispensation of God in turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, to be a standing emblem of the danger of looking back after one has set out in a way of religion.

The ill to which they are subject who lose their convictions is not merely the loss of their convictions. Their convictions are not only a means of no good to them, but they turn to much ill. It would have been better for them that they had never had them, for they are now farther from salvation than they were before. Having risen towards heaven, and falling back, they sink lower and farther down towards hell than ever they were. The way to heaven is not blocked up with greater difficulties than ever it was. Their hearts have now become harder; for light and convictions being once conquered, they evermore are an occasion of greater hardness of heart than there was before.

Man's heart is hardened by losing convictions, as iron is hardened by being heated and cooled. If you are awakened, and afterwards lose your convictions, it will be a harder thing to awaken you again. If you were only growing older, they grow less and less susceptible of convictions, evil habits grow stronger and more deeply rooted in the heart. But you greatly offend God by quenching his Spirit and returning to sin. And there is danger that God will say concerning you, as he did concerning Jerusalem, "Because I have purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." (Ezek. xiv. 13.) If you were but sensible of one half of the disadvantages of it, and the many woes and calamities in which it will involve you, you would be careful not to lose your convictions. That you may be the better directed in taking care not to lose them, consider—

1. Persons falling into sin is very often the occasion of their losing their convictions. Some temptation prevails over them; they yield to some sinful appetite; they indulge in strife, or malice, or revenge; and thus provoke God to anger, and drive away the Holy Spirit.

2. Sometimes there happens some diverting occasion. Their minds are taken off for a short time, they are drawn into company. It may be they see something which revives a desire of worldly enjoyments and entertainments, or they are engaged in some business which diverts their minds. They become less strict in attending private duties; and carelessness and stupidity by degrees steal upon them, till they wholly lose their convictions.

3. Some change in their circumstances takes off their minds from the concerns of their souls. They are taken up with new pleasures and enjoyments, or with new cares and business in which they are involved. It may be they grow richer. They prosper in the world, and their worldly good things crowd in and take possession of their minds; cares increase upon them, and the soul is neglected and left to perish.

And what wilt thou say when God shall call for thee, or what wilt thou do when he shall deal with thee?

INTERMEDIATE STATE OF THE DEAD.

The clear light of revelation upon this subject, seems to be this: the righteous dead are represented as being with Christ. Such seems to have been the view of the first martyr when he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Such also seemed to be the view of St. Paul, when he expressed "a desire to depart and be [not in the place of separate spirits, somewhere this side of heaven, but] WITH CHRIST, which is far better, Phil. i. 23. And again, when not only speaking for himself, but for the great body of believers, he says, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. The apostle here expresses the strongest conviction that believers, from the moment of death, instead of being in a separate place, "are with the Lord." But where is the Lord—where is Christ? Most certainly he has not only ascended on high, but he has entered into heaven itself. "For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are but the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. ix. 24. And again, "Of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such a high-priest, who is set on the right hand of throne of the majesty in the heavens." Heb. viii. 1. From these facts it is clearly evident, that death delivers the believer into the immediate and glorious presence of Christ.

"One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;
We scarce can say, 'They're gone';
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne."

How consoling such a truth! To know that we shall be with Christ, sweetens the bitterness of the dying agony. Death removes us from our kindred here; but it brings us into the presence of that friend who is dearer than any brother. What

enlargement and beautification of the souls power shall be realized even at the hour of death! and how glorious shall be that transition—even though made through pain and agony—which brings us into presence of Christ! Feeble nature may drop her tears of sorrow over the departed good;

"But reason and religion, better taught,
Congratulate the Lord, and crown his tomb
With wreath triumphant."

—Ladies Repository.

RIDICULE OF THE BIBLE.

"Is your Bible a sacred book? I should think not, from the manner you treat it." Well might the scooner say this, while Christians, who at least believe in the Bible, throw ridicule upon it by their irreverent quotations.

An infidel would not abuse Tom Paine's Age of Reason as we do the Word of God; a heathen at least treats his very idols with respect; the Brahmin would scorn to make his sacred books objects of mirth; the Musselman exhibits the utmost decorum in his mention of the Koran. But we talk glibly of men with whom God, the Eternal, held converse; we connect those names that should at least command reverence, for that very reason, with jokes and jibes.

In this sense, is there decency, above all, is there wit in this? Every candid mind will say no.

What thinks the thoughtless boy, who is told to take that holy book for his guide, when in reading his favorite literature he meets with some smart repartee, bandying those honored names? Who would show such vulgar taste as to call the father of his country "Granny Washington," or insult his memory by weaving in his name to illustrate some ridiculous personification? And are the prophets, holy men, who walked with God, less to be honored than he?

We beseech you, cease this practice. If indeed we write for the good of mankind, and not merely for gold or fame, we should consider whether we are weaving for ourselves a pleasant remembrance for our future. Do we believe there is a God? How then shall we account to him for making his Word ridiculous to the comprehension of the thoughtless?

If the Bible is the Book of books, let it be distinguished above all others; we would as soon cut off our right hand, as to raise one laugh at the expense of its divine character.

Ridicule any, everything else, but leave the Holy Bible untouched. It had better never be read than for such debasing purposes.—Mrs. Denison.

A MODERN LONDON CONGREGATION.

Take your stand there at eleven on the sabbath morning. What a glare of silks and satins—of feathers—of jewels—of what cynics would call the pomps and vanities of the world! With what an air does that delicate young female—I beg her pardon, I mean young lady—foot it. Jeannes behind carrying her Book of Common Prayer! United Belgravia could hardly do the thing in better style. Enter the Church, and you will see the same delightful air of fashionable repose. If the grace that is divine be as common there as the grace that is earthly, Dr. Dale's charge must be a happy flock indeed. With what an air does it bow at the name of Jesus! with what a grace does it confess itself to consist of "miserable sinners!" One would hardly mind, in the midst of such rich city merchants, and their charming daughters, being a miserable sinner himself. Such equable misery and fashionable sin seem rather enviable than otherwise. At any rate, the burden of such misery and such sin seems one easily to be borne.—London Pulpit.

A MODERN LONDON PREACHER.

There is the preacher, and already the magic of his voice has charmed every ear. I know no more magnificent voice. I know no stouter air. It always carries me back in fancy to the days of the elder Pitt—or to the earlier times of Bolingbroke—or to that still earlier day when the Hebrew Paul preached and the Roman Felix trembled on his seat of splendour and of power. Tall, of dark complexion, with black hair and blue eyes, with a face lit up with genius—the most brilliant preacher in the English Church: such is Henry Melville. His section is simple and singular. When he commences scarcely any is observable. Then as he flies along, and warns as he proceeds, the head is drooped with a conclusive jerk, and the right hand is raised, and the climax is ejaculated (for so rapid is his delivery it can scarcely be called preaching) with a corresponding emphasis. No sooner is the text enunciated than he plunges at once into his subject, developing and illustrating his meaning with a brilliancy and rapidity unparalleled in the pulpit at the present day. You are kept in breathless attention. The continuity of thought is unbroken for an instant. Every sentence is connected with that which precedes or follows; and, as the preacher goes on his way like a giant, every instant mounting higher, every instant pouring out a more gorgeous rhetoric, every instant climbing to a loftier strain, you are reminded of some monster steamship ploughing her way across the Atlantic, proudly asserting her mastery over the mountain-waves, landing her precious cargo safe in port. When she started you trembled for her safety; she was so lavish of her power that you feared it would fail her when she needed it most. But on she wends her gallant way, scattering around her the mad waves as in play. I can compare Melville with nothing else, as he stands in that pulpit—in that sea of human souls—drowning all discord by his own splendid voice, mastering all passions by his own irresistible will, piercing all scepticism by his own living faith.—The same.