

Thus ended Tyndale's dream of an English version of the Bible made in the Bishop of London's house. He had no visible justification for calling Tunstall a hypocrite. The Provincial Council of Oxford (1408), in enacting that 'no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or other language', had indeed contemplated the possibility that a translation might be approved by the diocesan of the place as well as 'if need be' (*si res exigerit*) by a provincial council. A bishop of London had, therefore, the power to approve a translation of Tyndale's making; but for a single bishop to relax a prohibition of vernacular Bibles which had been in force for over a century would have been a step of the utmost gravity, and Tunstall was not the man to take it, more especially when Luther had already raised the standard of revolt in Germany, and the applicant had himself been in trouble for heresy. Tyndale had a harder path to tread than he had anticipated, and (with some lack of charity towards those who drove him to it) he trod it unflinchingly. Nor was he altogether without helpers, for English merchants, who perhaps knew that large illustrated Bibles had been published and circulated without hindrance in Germany and at Venice (and on a smaller scale in France and Holland), were ready to make some sacrifices for an English Bible. One of these, a London alderman, Humphrey Mummuth or Monmouth, who had heard Tyndale preach two or three times at St. Dunstan's in the West, now took him into his house for half a year. When himself in trouble for heresy three or four years later, his doing this was one of the charges brought against him, and in answering it he declared:

the said Tindall lived like a good priest, studieng both night and day. He would eat but sodden meate, by his good will, nor drink but small single beere. He was never seene in that house to weare linnen about him, al the space of his beyng there. Whereupon the sayd Mummuth had the better liking of hym, so that he promised him ten pound (as he then sayd) for his father and mothers soules, and all christen soules, which money afterward he sent him over to Hamborow [Hamburg], according to his promise.

Tyndale himself carries on his narrative in the preface to *Genesis* :

And so in London I abode almoste an yere, and marked the course of the worlde, and herde oure pratars, I wold say oure preachers, how they bosted them selves and their hye autorite, and beheld the pompe of oure prelates and how besyed they were, as they yet are, to set peace and unite¹ in the worlde (though it be not possible for them that walke in darkenesse to continue longe in peace, for they can not but ether stomble or dash them selves at one thinge or another that shall clene unquyet all togedder) and sawe thinges wherof I deferre to speake at this tyme, and understode at the laste not only that there was no rowme in my lorde of Londons palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all Englonde, as experience doth now openly declare.

Tyndale is reckoned to have left England in the early summer of 1524, and for the next year our only certain indication of his whereabouts is Mummuth's statement that the promised £10 was sent to Hamburg. Fox asserts that Tyndale 'went into the further parts of Germany as into Saxony, where he had conference with Luther and other learned men in those quarters', and his statement is confirmed by Sir Thomas More, who in his *Dialogue* of 1529 states explicitly (fol. lxxx) that 'at the tyme of thys translacyon Hychens (i. e. Tyndale) was wyth Luther in Wytttenberge, and set certayne glosys in the mergent, framed for the setting forthe of that ungracious sect'. Johann Dobneck also, of whom we shall soon hear more, writes in 1525 of Tyndale and a companion as 'two English apostates who had been sometime at Wittenberg'. The fact, however, that Mummuth sent the £10 to Hamburg would naturally suggest that Tyndale was then staying there, rather than (as has been suggested) that he merely journeyed to Hamburg for the purpose of claiming it. Our knowledge of his work and movements is very vague until he is heard of at Cologne in 1525 supervising the printing of his translation. He had then in his company William Roy, a Cambridge student from a Franciscan friary at Greenwich, who while Tyndale was waiting in vain for 'a faithful companion'

¹ unity.

(doubtfully identified with John Frith) had offered to help him and been engaged as an amanuensis 'both to write and to helpe to compare the textes together'. With Roy's aid in this quite subordinate capacity the translation had been finished, and news of the presence of the 'two apostates' at Cologne came to Dobneck, a Roman Catholic controversialist better known by his Latin pen-name 'Cochlæus', while himself at Cologne editing a book which was being printed by a well-known Cologne firm, that of Peter Quentell. In his *Commentaria de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri* (1549) Dobneck tells his readers, writing of himself in the third person, that by his own business with them :

Dobneck had become well acquainted and familiar with the Cologne printers and one day heard them boasting confidently over their wine that, whether the King and Cardinal of England liked it or no, all England would soon be Lutheran. He heard also that there were there in hiding two Englishmen, learned, skilled in languages and ready of speech, whom, however, he could never see nor speak to. Dobneck therefore asked certain printers to his inn and when they were warmed with wine, one of them in confidential talk revealed to him the secret business by which England was to be brought over to the side of Luther, namely that there were in the press three thousand copies of the Lutheran New Testament translated into English, and that in the order of the quires they had got as far as letter K ; funds were being freely supplied by English merchants, who meant secretly to import the work when printed, and disperse it surreptitiously through all England before King or Cardinal could discover or forbid it.

Alarmed and bewildered as he was, Dobneck disguised his grief under an appearance of admiration ; but the next day, weighing the greatness of the danger, he began to think by what means he could conveniently thwart the wicked project. He went, therefore, secretly to Hermann Rinck, a patrician of Cologne and military knight, intimate with the Emperor and the King of England and of their counsel, and to him disclosed the whole business as, thanks to the wine, he had heard it. Rinck, to make more certain, sent some one else to the house where, according to Dobneck's discovery, the work was being printed,¹ to search.

¹ From a woodcut used in the Cologne fragment being found after 1525 in one of Peter Quentell's books, it has been argued that he was the printer of the fragment. Dobneck's narrative does not suggest this, but he may not have wished

When this man reported that the facts were as stated, and that a great quantity of paper was lying there, Rinck approached the Senate and brought it about that the printers were forbidden to go on with the work. The two English apostates, hastily taking with them the printed quires, made their escape by boat up the Rhine to Worms, where the people were in the full fury of turning Lutherans, in order that there, by another printer, they might complete the work. Rinck and Dobneck, on their part, presently advised the King, Cardinal, and Bishop of Rochester of the affair by letters, so that they might take diligent precautions at all the English ports to prevent these pernicious wares being imported.

How many of the 3,000 copies which had presumably been printed off of the ten sheets (80 pages) of his translation Tyndale succeeded in carrying to Worms we do not know. Only the copy in the British Museum, lacking the first leaf and the whole of sheets I and K, has been preserved, i. e. of the eighty pages printed only sixty-two are now extant in the one copy reproduced in this facsimile. It would seem, however, that a substantial part of the stock was brought to Worms and that Tyndale, when he had found a new printer there, went on with the work in the same form as far as the end of the gospel according to St. Mark. The eight Cologne sheets which have survived have marginal notes and are in quarto: the first complete New Testament, which was now put in hand at Worms, in the winter of 1525-6, is an octavo without notes. The sixty-two pages still extant of the Cologne fragment contain Tyndale's Prologue and the text of St. Matthew to the middle of chapter xxii; the ninth and tenth quires should have brought this down to nearly the end of chapter xxvi, but would have left the gospel still incomplete.

Now in 'the confession of Robert Necton that bought and sold New Testaments in English'¹ we have a positive statement that the

to reveal that it was his own printer against whom he informed. On the other hand, if Quentell was employed in the search, the type and woodcut may have been confiscated and thus passed into his possession.

¹ Printed by Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822 ed., i. ii. 63-5), from Bishop Tunstall's Register.

first of Tyndale's books which he possessed was 'the chapters of Matthew', and this suggests that some of the copies of the sheets saved from confiscation at Cologne were put into circulation by themselves. In another confession, that of John Tyball,¹ we have a reference to 'the gospel of Matthew and Marke in English', and in a letter from Robert Ridley, chaplain to the Bishop of London, to Henry Gold, chaplain to the Archbishop of York (dated 24 February, almost certainly of 1527), we have a reference to the 'comentares & annotations in Matthew & Marcum in the first print'. We may best explain this by supposing that fewer copies of sheets I and K were saved than of the first eight (perhaps because the last batches of them were not dry enough to be packed), that the excess copies of the eight sheets were put into circulation as 'chapters of Matthew', and the others completed to the end of Mark, when Tyndale resolved to make a new start.

As already noted, 'the second print' of Tyndale's translation is in a smaller size, and without the marginal notes which perhaps dictated the quarto form of the first. In the absence of positive evidence it would be wrong to press the point very far, but it seems probable that the resolution to start afresh with an unannotated text was not Tyndale's own policy, but was pressed on him by some of the English merchants who were providing him with funds and desired to read the Bible in English simply for its own sake. Tyndale's own resolve to translate the Bible originated, as we have seen, in the necessities of controversy. His opponents, we gather, quoted isolated texts against him apart from their context and therefore not in their natural meaning, and Tyndale wanted 'the laye people' to have the scripture 'before their eyes in their mother tonge, that they might se the processe, ordre and meaninge of the texte'. Towards enabling readers to see the order and meaning more clearly and quickly, along the lines he thought right, suggestive annotations were obviously helpful, and so he used them

¹ Also printed by Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, i. ii. 50-6.

for his 'first print', and reverted to them in his subsequent version of the Pentateuch.

We have another indication of Tyndale's attitude in a conversation with him in 1531 reported by Stephen Vaughan, who three years later became Governor of the English Merchant Adventurers at Antwerp. With the authorization of Cromwell, Vaughan urged Tyndale to return to England and submit himself to the king, holding out hope of a merciful reception. Tyndale met his overtures with the assurance that :

if it wolde stande withe the kinges most gracious pleasure to graunte only a bare text of the scriptures to be put forth emonge his people, be it of the translation of what persone soever shall please his magestie, I shall ymedyatly make faithfull promyse, never to wryte more, ne abide ij dayes in these parties after the same, but ymedyatly to repayre into his realme, and there most humbly submytt my selfe at the fete of his roiall magestie, offerynge my bodye, to suffer what payne or torture, ye what dethe his grace will, so this be obteyned.

According to Vaughan, tears stood in Tyndale's eyes when he made this protestation, and his whole life testifies to the complete sincerity of every word of it ; but the 'processe, ordre and meaninge' of his assurance shows that just as he regarded it as a sacrifice that he should promise never to write more, or that another man's translation should be used rather than his own, so he regarded it as a sacrifice to consent to 'only a bare text' of the Scriptures being put forth instead of one annotated to support the increasingly protestant opinions which he held dear.

If the view here put forward is right, while Tyndale believed that the circulation of an English translation of the Scriptures even in 'only a bare text' would sufficiently support his views for it to be worth while to give up his annotations and make every personal sacrifice in order to obtain it, it seems probable that in 1526, as in 1531, it was only to conciliate those more powerful than himself that he was willing to omit his notes. Unfortunately the fact that

Matthew and Mark had already appeared with controversial notes considerably diminished the effect of his sacrifice.

Besides its notes and prologue, both of which are partly taken from Luther's New Testament of 1522, there was another feature in Tyndale's translation which caused it to be regarded from the outset as stamped with Lutheran partisanship and a spirit of innovation. This was his entirely honest attempt to find new renderings for certain Greek words of which the customary English equivalents had acquired, in the course of fourteen centuries of ecclesiastical use, technical associations which he believed were not present in the minds of the Evangelists. Thus for the more or less generally accepted renderings *church, priest, grace, confession, penance, charity*, he substituted *congregation, senior, favour, knowledge* (in the sense of acknowledgement of sin), *repentance, love*. As to some of these words his innovations won subsequent support, and it is notable that *charity*, which in the great passage in 1 Corinthians xiii had been retained in the version of 1611, finally gave way to *love* in the Revision of 1881. Other of these renderings, e.g. *senior* for *priest*, have found no favour. At the outset every one of them hindered the acceptance of Tyndale's translation and was fastened on by his opponents as intended to support heretical views.

While Tyndale omitted his controversial notes from the Worms octavo of 1526, he added to it an Epilogue, and the closing paragraph of this is written with such simple earnestness and humility that it must be quoted in full :

Them that are learned Christenly I besече—forasmochē as I am sure and my conscience beareth me recorde, that of a pure entent singilly and faythfully I have interpreted itt, as farre forth as God gave me the gyfte of knowledge, and understondyngē—that the rudnes off the worke nowe at the fyrst tyme offende them not: but that they consyder howe that I had no man to counterfet, nether was holpe with Englysshe of eny that had interpreted the same,¹ or soche lyke thinge in the scripture before

¹ This must be taken as a definite statement that Tyndale made no use of the Wyclifite translations.