

# William Tindale

## A Biography

Being a Contribution to the Early History of the  
English Bible

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## CHAPTER VI

### TINDALE'S LIFE AT WORMS: RECEPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ENGLAND: LITERARY LABOURS: HOSTILITY OF WOLSEY

A.D. 1525-1527.

IT was, as we formerly saw, about the month of October, 1525, when Tindale, driven from Cologne, took up his abode in Worms; and here, so far as we know, he remained for nearly two years, till renewed violence compelled him once more to seek safety in flight. The same mystery, however, as before, continues to shroud all his movements; and his history is still conversant not with the man but with his work. Of the personal incidents which make up the staple of most biographies we have few, indeed, to relate; Tindale was like one of the ancient prophets whom men seldom saw, whose way of life was little known, but whose voice seemed to pervade all the nation. He had left England some eighteen months before, unnoticed and unknown; yet a few months, and his words were scattered far and wide through his native land; and Henry and his prelates began to recognize in this unknown exile the most formidable of all the opponents of their religious system.

For some months after his arrival at Worms he was, of course, busily engaged in superintending the issue of the two editions of the New Testament in quarto and octavo, both of which we suppose to have been printed there. It is not likely that this would be accomplished till February or March, 1526, at the very earliest; and the greater part of the summer would find Tindale still busied in making arrangements with merchants, English and foreign, for the rapid and secret transmission of the precious volumes to England. The customary anxiety of the author for the success of his work was, in Tindale's case, exchanged for still more noble care lest a work which had been finished with so much difficulty should, from any want of precaution, fail altogether in reaching its destination. He must have suspected—perhaps, indeed, he knew—that Cochloeus had disclosed his designs to the authorities in England, who would, therefore, be on the alert to seize his New Testaments; and it was accordingly necessary to devise precautions for eluding the vigilance of his enemies. With what success this was accomplished we shall presently see; meantime some attempt must be made to arrange the few fragmentary notices that have floated down to us of his life at Worms. These are of the most meagre description, scarcely affording us even a passing glimpse of the life of Tindale.

One of the earliest incidents of his residence at Worms has been already alluded to, his final separation from his amanuensis, William Roye, whose indiscretion and insubordination Tindale could no longer tolerate. As soon, therefore, as his great work was so far advanced that the assistance of Roye in writing and revision could be dispensed with, Tindale gladly bade farewell to a troublesome companion whose restlessness and total want of all self-restraint were in the last degree unfavourable to an undertaking that needed to be conducted in silence and secrecy. Tindale's precaution in getting quit of so dangerous an associate was by no means uncalled for; his own conduct in venturing to publish the New Testament in English was quite enough to excite the ecclesiastical authorities against him; but in the eyes of Wolsey it was a far more serious offence that he was supposed to be associated with Roye in the production of his satirical rhymes; and, indeed, it was in consequence of this groundless suspicion that he was compelled to abandon his refuge in Worms and seek safety elsewhere.

It was probably early in 1526, in February or March, that Roye left Worms for Strasburg; but before his departure Tindale had been visited by that distinguished scholar whose testimony to his acquirements as a linguist has already been cited. Hermann Buschius found Tindale residing at Worms with two other Englishmen, and it was doubtless as the result of his own interviews with the translator that the illustrious German spoke so highly of his acquirements in Greek, Hebrew, and other languages. It is not improbable that some correspondence continued to be maintained between Tindale and Buschius; at all events, it is not unworthy of note that when Tindale was compelled to leave Worms, he found a refuge in that university town of Marburg, where Buschius had also taken up his abode as Professor of Poetry and Eloquence. There can be no reasonable doubt that part of Tindale's leisure at Worms was devoted to the study of Hebrew. He must have acquired some knowledge of that language before his arrival in the ancient Rhenish city, not improbably during his residence in Wittemberg; but Worms with its colony of Jews, and its ancient synagogue, established, according to tradition, shortly after the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, would doubtless possess teachers, from whose instructions Tindale might acquire that mastery of the Hebrew tongue which he exhibited in his translation of the Old Testament.

For some time even after the New Testament was circulating in England, Tindale was unknown by name to the authorities as the translator; his abiding-place was, however, well enough known to some faithful friends, from whom he received assistance, and with whom he maintained regular communication. Both in England and Scotland there were many who had imbibed the opinions

of Luther, and to whom their native land was no longer a safe home. These men naturally looked to Germany as their appropriate shelter; and had no difficulty in ascertaining from merchants friendly to their cause, where previous exiles from the shores of England were already settled. For many years a constant stream of refugees of all classes, but mainly priests and friars, passed from England to Germany, directing their course chiefly to such cities as Wittenberg and Strasburg; and from them Tindale learned how affairs were proceeding in that dear land, which, though an exile, he never ceased to love as his home with all the warmth of a patriot's affection. Roye was not the only friend with Tindale at the time of the visit of Buschius;<sup>1</sup> and friends were not unfrequently passing through Worms. About a year after Roye had left him, in the spring, therefore, of 1527, another Observant friar from the same monastery at Greenwich to which Roye belonged, passed through Worms on his way to Strasburg. This was, to use Tindale's own words, 'One Jerome, a brother of Greenwich also [as well as Roye], saying that he intended to be Christ's disciple another while, and to keep, as nigh as God would give him grace, the profession of his baptism, and to get his living with his hands, and to live no longer idly, and of the sweat and labour of those captives which they had taught not to believe in Christ, but in cut shoes and russet coats [the dress of the Observants]. Which Jerome with all diligence I warned of Roye's boldness, and exhorted him to beware of him, and to walk quietly and with all patience and long-suffering; according as we have Christ and His apostles for an example; which thing he also promised me. Nevertheless, when he was come to Argentine [Strasburg], William Roye, whose tongue is able not only to make fools stark mad, but also to deceive the wisest (that is, at the first sight and acquaintance), gat him to him, and set him a-work to make rhymes, while he himself translated a dialogue out of Latin into English, in whose prologue he promiseth more a great deal than, I fear me, he will ever pay. Paul saith (2 Tim, ii), "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be peaceable unto all men, and ready to teach, and one that can suffer the evil with meekness, and that can inform them that resist, if God at any time will give them repentance for to know the truth." It becometh not, then, the Lord's servant to use railing rhymes, but God's Word; which is the right weapon to slay sin, vice, and all iniquity<sup>2</sup>.'

Of these 'railing rhymes,' which were, in truth, a pungent and most offen-

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<sup>1</sup> The time of the visit of Buschius can only be fixed approximately: it is entered in Spalatin's diary as the day after St. Laurence's day, i. e. August 11, 1526; but this was the date of the conversation of Buschius with Spalatin, and his visit to Worms had, of course, preceded it. See Schelhorn, *Amoenitates Literariae*, vol. iv. p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Tindale, Preface to *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*.

sive satire upon Cardinal Wolsey, we shall have to speak more fully in a subsequent part of this chapter; meantime, however, as Tindale had been accused of possessing a fierce and quarrelsome disposition, which rendered it impossible for any one long to remain his friend, it may here be remarked that Roye's satire is so coarse and violent as to furnish the most complete justification of Tindale's procedure in getting rid of so troublesome a companion. The biographer of Tindale, however, owes something even to these licentious lines of Roye, as they throw considerable light upon various transactions of which no other record appears to exist.

It seems well ascertained that before the close of 1526 Tindale printed at Worms, or possibly at Strasburg, his famous *Prologue to the Epistle to the Romans*. No copy, indeed, exists of this book in a separate state; but this is not surprising when the diligent search after Tindale's writings is borne in mind; and there are references to its existence and circulation as a separate treatise sufficient to establish its publication as well as to assign it to the year 1526. Dr. Ridley, writing in February, 1527<sup>3</sup>, speaks of the *Introduction to the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, by Tindale and Roye, as then in existence, and condemns it as full of the 'most poisoned and abominable heresies that can be thought.' And Sir Thomas More, in the Preface to his *Confutation*, likewise mentions the 'Introduction' as a separate treatise, which he too condemns as 'bringing the readers into a false understanding of St. Paul<sup>4</sup>.'

Nothing could show more strikingly than this work the great ascendancy which the German Reformer had now obtained over the mind of Tindale. The 'Introduction to the Romans' is in truth hardly an original work, but is much more correctly described as a translation or paraphrase of Luther's Preface to the same Epistle. Luther's work, originally in German, had been translated into Latin by Justus Jonas in 1523; and it is evident on examination that Tindale used both the German and the Latin copies<sup>5</sup>. A thoroughly competent critic has shown that sometimes Tindale employs expressions which occur in Luther's original German, but for which there is no precise equivalent in the Latin; and that sometimes he borrows phrases from the Latin to which there is nothing that exactly corresponds in the German original. Yet even while acting in the main as a mere translator of the work of his great contemporary, Tindale was not content to sink entirely his own individuality and to be the echo of another.

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<sup>3</sup> See Anderson's *Annals*, vol. i. p. 153. I believe, on the whole, that Anderson is right in assigning this letter to 1527; the original is in the Cotton Library: *Cleopatra*, E. v.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Thomas More's *Confutation of Tindale's Answer*.

<sup>5</sup> Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, pp. 194, 195; where passages are quoted in proof of Tindale's use both of the German and Latin.

He uses his own judgement in the selection from the two versions of the most suitable phraseology; and where the subject seemed to have been imperfectly elucidated by Luther he makes further expositions of his own, and has added at the close a brief but clear summary of the whole argument, both of Luther's Preface and of St. Paul's Epistle. If, however, the little treatise cannot be cited as adding much to Tindale's reputation as an original author, it was accepted by his countrymen as a most valuable contribution towards instructing them in the right understanding of the Holy Scriptures; and the vehemence with which it was denounced by the adherents of the teaching of the Church, may be regarded as no unfair criterion of its value in the eyes of the English Reformers.

Like his translation of the New Testament, his Introduction was issued anonymously; and both were no doubt disposed of in the customary way; Tindale himself being in the habit of repairing to the great fairs at Frankfort, where he met merchants from England and from Antwerp, through whose energy and skill the forbidden works were clandestinely conveyed to Britain, and widely circulated long before they came to the knowledge of the authorities.

A complete and trustworthy chronicle of the early circulation of Tindale's New Testament in England is still one of the great desiderata in our literature. Some slight sketch, however, must here be attempted as a necessary part of this biography, without which, indeed, the story of Tindale's life would be incomplete, and almost unintelligible. To the reader who is acquainted with Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible*, it may, perhaps, appear superfluous to do anything more than merely cite from his voluminous details the portion which belongs to this part of our subject; but in truth that writer has been unfortunately so completely mistaken in his history of the first introduction of the New Testament into England, that one necessary step towards any true narrative is to dismiss from our minds what he has written on the matter.

It is impossible to say *when* Tindale's New Testament first reached England. We have seen reason to believe that it could scarcely have been before the spring of 1526; and the earliest notice we have of its existence in England confirms this supposition. John Pykas of Colchester was examined on March 7, 1528, before Tunstal, in the chapel of that palace where Tindale had in vain solicited the bishop's patronage; and amongst other things he confessed that '*about a two years last past he bought in Colchester, of a Lombard of London, a New Testament in English, and paid for it four shillings, which New Testament he kept, and read it through many times*<sup>6</sup>.' The date thus somewhat vaguely indicated may with little hesitation be assigned to April or May, 1526;

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<sup>6</sup> Harleian MSS., 421.

and there is no sufficient reason for believing that the New Testaments were introduced much earlier than this. For some time they continued to circulate in secret without attracting the notice of the authorities, in spite of the warning which Rinck, and Lee, and above all Cochloeus, had conveyed.

*When or how* the authorities became aware that these forbidden books were actually in circulation still remains undiscovered; but it is quite certain that none of Tindale's New Testaments were amongst the basketfuls of Lutheran works which were consumed at Barnes's recantation, February 11, 1526, for the obvious reason that none of them had yet reached England. During the course of the summer, however, some copy, apparently of the quarto, with glosses, seems to have fallen into the hands of one of the bishops; and forthwith steps were devised for undoing the mischief which had thus, as they believed, been introduced amongst the people. Curiously enough we are indebted for the most detailed account of these proceedings to Tindale's discarded amanuensis, William Roye, who has given us, in the uncouth and 'railing rhymes' of that very satire which Tindale has so severely condemned, a connected narrative of the whole transaction.

According to Roye, it was Standish, Bishop of St. Asaph, whom he represents as a liar and a gambler, who brought the matter under the notice of Wolsey. Several of the principal prelates were immediately summoned, under the presidency of the cardinal, to deliberate upon the course of conduct which they ought to pursue. Wolsey, with his customary liberality, and his shrewd appreciation of the urgent necessity of a Reformation, is said to have expressed himself on the matter in the words of Pilate, 'I find no fault therein'; but such a policy found no adherents in that audience. Tunstal urged a stringent prohibition of the book; and it was resolved with unanimous consent that the English New Testament should be publicly burned wherever it was discovered. Roye was, of course, deeply interested in the work in which he had himself been so intimately concerned; he enjoyed many opportunities of communication with England; and his statements maybe accepted as probably, in the main, correct. They are certainly corroborated by everything else that has been recorded. Thus Henry, in the preface to his English translation of his reply to Luther's letter, after specifying as an aggravation of Luther's guilt that he had fallen 'into device with one or two lewd persons, born in this our realm, for the translating of the New Testament into English, as well with many corruptions of that holy text, as certain *prefaces* and other pestilent *glosses in the margin,*' proceeds to inform his 'dearly-beloved people' that out of his 'special tender zeal towards them' he had 'with the deliberate advice of the most reverend father in God, Thomas Lord Cardinal, Legate *de latere* of the See Apostolic, Archbish-

op of York, Primate and Chancellor of this realm, and other reverend fathers of the spirituality, determined the said and untrue *translations to be burned*<sup>7</sup>.’

It was probably the end of August or the beginning of September, 1526, when this conclave of bishops deliberated as to the appropriate treatment of the Word of God in the English language; and their resolution was not allowed to lie long inoperative. It was determined to mark unmistakably their judgement regarding the circulation of the English New Testament by one of those public displays of which the age was so fond. Tunstal was appointed to preach at Paul’s Cross, and denounce the work as replete with errors and dangerous heresies; and at the conclusion of his sermon the condemned book was publicly thrown into the flames<sup>8</sup>. The reader may not disdain to read the account of the transaction in Roye’s rhymes:—

JEFFRAY.<sup>9</sup> Did’st thou not hear what villany

They did unto the Gospel?

WATKINS. Why? did they against him [it] conspire?

JEFFRAY. By my troth they set him a-fire

Openly in London city.

WATKINS. Who caused it so to be done?

JEFFRAY. In sooth, the Bishop of London,

With the Cardinal’s authority;

Which at Paul’s Cross earnestly

Denounced it to be heresy,

That the Gospel should come to light

Calling them heretics execrable

Which caused the Gospel venerable

To come unto laymen’s sight.

He declared there in his furiousness

*That he found errors more and less*

*Above three thousand in the translation.*

Howbeit, when all came to pass,

I dare say unable he was

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<sup>7</sup> See the Preface in Dibdin’s *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 488.

<sup>8</sup> A letter written by one John Sadler, to Harman, the Antwerp merchant, arrested for circulating the New Testaments, and dated September 3, 1526, states that ‘the news in England was that the English New Testaments should be put down and burnt’: the burning, therefore, was subsequent to September 3.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffray and Watkins are the interlocutors in the poem which in Roye’s rough language, was supposed to be ‘made by a belly beast engendered among the greasy or anointed heap, otherwise called the papistical sect.’

Of one error to make probation<sup>10</sup>.

Rumour soon disseminated the fame of Tunstal's sermon all over Europe; it certainly accomplished its end in attracting public notice, though whether this was any gain to him and his brethren may well be doubted. It was frequently remarked that the smoke of the fires which consumed the martyrs seemed to infect all upon whom it blew; and the sermon of Tunstal seems to have convinced many of his hearers, not of the truth, but of the falsehood and weakness of his position. 'Men mutter among themselves,' says the spokesman in More's *Dialogue*, 'that the book was not only faultless, but very well translated, and was devised to be burnt because men should not be able to prove that such faults as were at Paul's Cross declared to have been found in it, were never found there indeed, but untruly surmised.' What the nature of the charges against Tindale's translation may have been we can only conjecture; probably they were not unlike those subsequently urged by Sir Thomas More; and some of them were, in all likelihood, captious and trifling enough; 'there is not so much as one i therein,' says Tindale, 'if it lack a tittle over his head, but they have noted it, and number it unto the ignorant people for an heresy<sup>11</sup>.'

The sermon at Paul's Cross was not the only exhibition of Tunstal's hostility. On October 24 of the same year, 1526, he issued an injunction in which he speaks of the English New Testament as the work of 'many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith,' and asserts that they had 'craftily translated the New Testament into our English tongue, intermingling therewith many heretical articles and erroneous opinions, seducing the simple people, attempting by their wicked and perverse interpretations to profane the majesty of the Scripture, which hitherto hath remained undefiled, and craftily to abuse the most holy Word of God.' These books 'containing most pernicious poison,' he had discovered, were widely dispersed throughout his diocese, in great numbers, 'some with glosses and some without'; and he accordingly enjoined his archdeacons to warn all that lived in the diocese of London to deliver up their English Testaments to his Vicar-general under pain of excommunication<sup>12</sup>. A similar mandate was issued by Warham, Archbishop of

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<sup>10</sup> Arber's reprint, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Preface to *The Pentateuch: Tindale's Works*, vol. i, p. 393.

<sup>12</sup> See Foxe. It is not easy to decide whether the sermon or the prohibition came first; possibly the sermon, for a letter from Campeggio, dated Rome, November 21, refers to the burning of the Bible as then known at Rome, which was quite a month's ordinary journey from London. Campeggio states that he 'has heard with pleasure of the burning of the translation of the Bible: *no holocaust could be more pleasing to God.*' Cotton, *Vitellius*, B. viii.

Canterbury, on November 3<sup>13</sup> such was the reception which the Word of God in the native English language experienced at the hands of those who claimed to be the spiritual guides and overseers of the people.

It will not have escaped the notice of the reader that these denunciations of the New Testament do not contain any mention of Tindale as the translator, but ascribe the work vaguely to ‘children of iniquity, servants of the Lutheran faction.’ It is not easy to say *when* the secret of the authorship of the anonymous work which so greatly troubled the bishops, first became known to the authorities in England. Tunstal was evidently unaware when he issued his injunction, that the book which he denounced so vehemently was the work of that unknown country scholar whom he had coldly repelled from his presence some years before; though it would almost appear as if he had discovered this when he preached at Paul’s Cross. ‘When I heard my Lord of London preach at Paul’s Cross,’ says our former friend, Humphrey Monmouth, ‘that Sir William Tyndale had translated the New Testament in English, and [that it] was naughtily translated, that was the first time that ever I suspected or knew any evil by him<sup>14</sup>.’ Monmouth, however, was in the secret of the authorship, and possibly it was his own private knowledge, and not the voice of the preacher, that added the translator’s name.

It is, at all events, certain that about the close of 1526, it came to be known that Tindale and Roze had been concerned in the production of the translation and against them, accordingly, the vengeance of the authorities was afterwards specifically directed. How the secret was disclosed is not yet ascertained; but it seems a highly probable conjecture, that the sending of a special envoy to Cologne in the autumn, who resided for some months in that city, and was in daily communication with the former ally of Cochloeus, Sir Herman Rinck, may have led to the discovery of the actual authors, as their names could not but have been known to Quentel and others in Cologne<sup>15</sup>.

The earliest mention of Tindale as the translator of the New Testament occurs in that letter of Robert Ridley which has been already referred to, and

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<sup>13</sup> Wilkins’s *Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 706.

<sup>14</sup> Harleian MSS., 425.

<sup>15</sup> Sir John Wallop was sent to Cologne, where he arrived September 30; it was through him that Henry’s letter to Luther was conveyed, November 30, to some of the German princes; Herman Rinck acted as his chief friend and confidential agent; and I feel certain, though I cannot prove it, that this was the channel through which the discovery came to the English authorities. Wallop’s letters, which are preserved in the Cotton Manuscripts (*Galba*, B. ix), contain no statement on the point; but it might easily be communicated through the trusty servants whom he sent to Wolsey.

which is so curious that it may be given entire:—

‘Master Golde, I heartily commend me unto you. As concerning this *common and vulgar translation of the New Testament done by Mr. William Hichyns, otherwise called Mr. W. Tyndale*, and Friar Roye, manifest Lutherans, heretics, and apostates, as doth openly appear, not only by their daily and continual company and familiarity with Luther and his disciples, but much more by their commentaries and annotations on Matthew and Mark in the first print, and also by their preface in the second print, and by their introduction into the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, altogether most poisoned and abominable heresies that can be thought. He is not a son of the Church that would receive a Gospel of such damned and precisid [excommunicated] heretics, though it were true; like as Paul and our Saviour Christ would not take the true testimonial of evil spirits that praised Christ true, saying that He was the Son of God, and that Paul was the servant of the true God<sup>16</sup>. As for errors, if ye have the first print with annotations on Matthew and Mark, and the preface [i.e. probably the prologue to the quarto] all is mere frenzy: he saith that “the Gospel is nothing else but the sweet promise of grace,” so that by that means “do penance” is no part of the Gospel; the *paternoster* is no part of the Gospel; “go ye cursed into everlasting fire,” no part of the Gospel; but only such [as] “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” “ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Also he writeth in that preface and annotations that there is no difference between virginity [i. e. the vow of chastity], and a whore of the stews if she come to repentance: also that like as no man doth evil to the intent that he should be punished or hanged therefor, so no man should do good to have any reward therefor, contrary to [the words of Scripture following, viz.], “That thou mightest be justified when thou punishest,” and the assertion in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning Moses, “for he looked to the recompense, or the recompenser,” and to the passage, “Make to yourselves friends of Mammon, that when ye shall fail they may receive you into eternal habitations.” Also [he saith] that by good works we do nothing merit, in opposition to the passage in Corinthians, “That every one may receive according to his deeds, whether good or evil,” and to the words of Genesis spoken to Abraham, “Because thou hast done this thing,” &c. [in blessing I will bless thee]; and also to the words of Matthew, “Because I was athirst, and ye gave me drink,” &c., and “Come ye blessed of my Fa-

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<sup>16</sup> Ridley’s letter is a patched and piebald affair, filled with scraps of Latin from the Vulgate; these I give in English, so as not to interrupt the sense. Mr. Arber has printed it as it stands in the MS.

ther.” Also he saith that he that doth anything to have high place in heaven is proud as the Devil and Lucifer. *I have none of these books, but I only remember such things I read in the prefaces and annotations.*

‘As for the text of the Gospel, first the title is heretical, saying that it is print as it was written by the Evangelists<sup>17</sup>, although it agrees neither with the old version [i.e. the Vulgate] nor that of Erasmus. “This is the book of generation of Jesus, the Son of Abraham, and also the Son of David” [i.e. Tindale had translated it so, according to Ridley, whose memory had, however, failed him], whereas in the original it is expressed absolutely [i.e. *The book*, not *This is the book*] ... *Voluit clam ab ed divertere* [St. Matt. i. 19], he translates, “*he would have put her away*”: *in quo omnes peccaverunt* in the Epistle to the Romans [he translates], “*in so much that every man hath sinned*”: and, fool that he is, he translates *poenitentiam agite* [Matt. iii. 2] *repent*. By this translation shall we lose all these Christian words, *penance, charity, confession, grace, priest, church*, which he alway calleth *a congregation*, as if there were no such thing as a congregation of Turks or beasts, or as if that, too, might be called a Church; *idolatry* calleth he worshipping of images. I would that ye should have seen my Lord’s books [i.e. Tunstal’s copies of the Testament, which doubtless had all the mistakes marked in the margin].

‘I certify you, if ye look well, ye shall not look three lines without fault in all the book; but I have not the book to mark them out; you should have had leisure yourself to have done it. Howbeit, it becometh the people of Christ to obey and follow their rulers which hath [*sic*] given study, and is learned in such matters as their people should hear and believe; they should not judge the doctrine of Paul nor of Paul’s vicars and successors, but be judged by their learning as long as they know nothing contrary [to] God’s laws.’

Unable to restrain his indignation, Ridley returns again to the charge in a postscript:—

‘Likewise the expression of Paul “*avoid foolish questions,*” is translated, “beware of foolish problems or questions in the schools “; this was undoubtedly said out of hatred of the scholastic theology and the Universities. Such a thing is in the translation, though it be not in the same words. *Ego et eater unum sum us* [he translates] *we are one*, as if Christ said, *we are one person*, and not one substance or one thing. Show ye to the people that if any be of so proud and stubborn stomach that he will believe there is no fault nor error except it be declared [made clear] to him that he may see it, let him come hither

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<sup>17</sup> No title-page, either of the quarto or octavo, has been preserved, but probably it simply ran thus: ‘The New Testament as it was written by the Evangelists and Apostles.’

to my Lord, which hath examined all, and he shall see and hear errors, except that he be blind and have no eyes<sup>18</sup>.'

As Ridley was one of Tunstal's chaplains, and high in the bishop's favour, we may not unnaturally conclude that he is here merely echoing the criticisms of his master; and that it was such renderings as those which he has condemned, that were paraded at St. Paul's Cross amongst the three thousand errors which Tunstal boasted of having discovered in Tindale's New Testament.

The confession of Tunstal that the New Testaments were thick spread over all his diocese is the best proof of the success with which the merchants had accomplished their undertaking to convey the books in safety to England. For a time the distributors of the work eluded the authorities in a wonderful manner. Within half a mile of Tunstal's own palace, Barnes, even when a prisoner at large in Austin Friars, had New Testaments to sell; and a month before the issue of Tunstal's injunction he sold one of Tindale's books to John Tyball for three shillings and twopence, making at the same time remarks about the New Testament in Latin being no better than 'a cymbal tinkling and brass sounding,' which would have filled his neighbour the Bishop of London with horror<sup>19</sup>.

In fact, the desire to possess the Word of God in the native language was so strong and so widely prevalent, that already enterprising printers began to perceive that it was a safe mercantile speculation to reprint Tindale's translation; and before the close of 1526 Christopher of Endhoven had prepared an edition at Antwerp for the *supply* of the eager demand for the New Testament which existed in England. Attempts were made by the English ambassador at the Court of the Princess Margaret, Regent of the Low Countries, to punish the printer, and to prevent any further importation of English New Testaments; but his efforts were to a large extent frustrated by the resolute conduct of the Lords of Antwerp; and though he succeeded in seizing and burning some three hundred books, many more escaped his hands, and found their way in due course to London<sup>20</sup>. But though open violence had thus proved abortive, in the midst of a mercantile community jealous of its privileges as were the citizens of Antwerp, the English authorities did not desist from their efforts to arrest the introduction of New Testaments from the Low Countries. More subtle schemes were tried, and it was hoped that money might succeed where force had failed; and, accordingly, gigantic efforts were made to suppress entirely the hated

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<sup>18</sup> Cotton MSS., *Cleopatra*, E. v.

<sup>19</sup> Harleian MSS., 421.

<sup>20</sup> See the correspondence, which is very voluminous, in Cotton MSS., *Galba*, B. ix, or Anderson's *Annals*, vol. i. p. 125, &c.

work by purchasing all the copies abroad wherever they could be found. Warham expended nearly seventy pounds in this preposterous attempt; a prodigious sum, for which he may, probably, have received in return not many short of a thousand Testaments *with* glosses and *without*; but as Tindale had printed six thousand at Worms, and Endhoven more than two thousand at Antwerp, Warham had not succeeded quite so well as he supposed, in what one bishop calls his 'gracious and blessed deed, for which God should reward him hereafter<sup>21</sup>.' Thus secure of purchasers, both amongst friends and enemies, the Dutch printers again reprinted the Testament<sup>22</sup>, and, in spite of Warham's extravagant expenditure, London was once more supplied with hundreds of the obnoxious volumes.

It is impossible to say at what precise time or in what exact manner the bishops first became aware of the agency through which England was thus supplied with Tindale's New Testaments. It seems probable, however, that the secret in some way oozed out in consequence of what occurred at the trial of Bilney in November and December, 1527. Bilney defended himself, with great ingenuity, and witnesses were summoned to prove that he had not preached against the teaching of the Church. One of these was Dr. Forman, Rector of All Hallows, in Honey Lane, who with his curate, Thomas Garret, and his servant, John Goodall, had for some time been occupied in purchasing and distributing prohibited books on a large scale. Whether or not the suspicions of the authorities were then roused, it is certain that in a very short time after the examination of Forman, Wolsey was in possession of the clue to the secret. No time was lost in following up the clue once discovered; Garret was seized; Oxford was searched; no fewer than three hundred and *fifty-four* volumes of prohibited works, including some of Tindale's New Testaments, were found to have been lately introduced there; and Clark, Frith, and others who had been implicated were arrested and imprisoned. The whole agency was discovered by the voluntary admissions of some of those who were then examined. Tunstal instituted a rigorous inquisition; and in a short time the extensive ramifications of the 'brethren' in Essex and other parts of his diocese were brought to light; scores of simple country people, who had for some time been secretly rejoicing in that new treasure the Word of God in their native tongue, were summoned before

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<sup>21</sup> Nix, Bishop of Norwich: see Anderson's *Annals*, vol. i. p. 159.

<sup>22</sup> George Joye gives the following account of the two Dutch reprints: 'The Dutch men got a copy, and printed it again in a small volume, adding the Kalendar in the beginning, concordances in the margent, and the table in the end.... After this they printed it again in a greater letter and volume, with the figures [illustrations] in the Apocalypse; of these two prints there were about five thousand books printed.' George Joye's *Apology*, Arber's reprint, p. 20.

the bishop or his official, and compelled to abjure; the merchants whose enterprise had introduced the condemned books were imprisoned, or forced to flee for safety; and for a time, doubtless, the circulation of the New Testament in England was sensibly arrested<sup>23</sup>.

Of these rigorous measures for hunting down the English New Testament, Wolsey was not so much the instigator, as the passive instrument in the hands of the prelates. This attitude of passive hostility was, however, exchanged for a feeling of bitter animosity by the appearance of those 'railing rhymes' which Roye and Jerome had concocted at Strasburg. The cardinal was not very seriously affected by attacks upon the doctrines and ritual of the Church; but he could not brook any reflections upon his own faults; and the satire, which bore on its very frontispiece the coarsest insinuations against him, stung him to the quick. The work appeared anonymously, and was at first attributed to Tindale<sup>24</sup>, who had already suffered enough from his association with his troublesome companion, without being made responsible for his violent and offensive poetry. Tindale took the earliest opportunity, therefore, of disclaiming all connexion with Roye; and however desirous of 'doing his good deeds secretly, and being content with the conscience [consciousness] of well-doing, and that God seeth us,' he prefixed his own name to his next publication, that he might not be saddled with the offences of others. For a time, however, his disclaimer was not believed; and Wolsey, who was still in the plenitude of his power, and had agents willing to serve him at all hazards, was diligently endeavouring to ascertain the abiding-place of Tindale and Roye, that he might, if possible, not only seize their books, but also get possession of their persons. Hackett, too, the envoy in the Low Countries, was indefatigable; but there were no laws of extradition in those days, and Wolsey's influence with the German emperor was on the wane; so that Tindale had ample warning of his designs, and long before the cardinal had finished his inquiries, the translator had removed to a place of safety, where even Wolsey was powerless to annoy him.

At first it seems to have been supposed that Tindale and Roye had gone to the Low Countries, and West, a priest of that order of friars to which Roye and Jerome belonged, was sent to track Tindale and his associates. In a letter dated from the convent of the Observants at Antwerp, September 2, 1528, he thus

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<sup>23</sup> The whole may be seen in Foxe, vol. i, with the appended documents, which are very valuable, in the Religious Tract Society's edition: Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. parts I and II, &c.

<sup>24</sup> "Who made that second book [the satire]?" asks the interlocutor, in More's *Dialogue*. "Forsooth," quoth I, "it appeareth not in the book; for the book is put forth nameless, and was in the beginning reckoned to be made by Tyndale; and whether it be so or not, we be not yet very sure." So writes Sir Thomas at the close of 1528.

communicates his success to Hackett, the English envoy in the Low Countries:—

‘I have spoken to Francis Byrkman, bookbinder of this town, and he tells me that Petygnell (*sic*), Roye and Jerome Barlowe, friars of our religion, and Hutchyns otherwise Tyndall, made the last book that was made against the King and my lord cardinal [Roye’s *Rede me*, which, however, Tindale had no hand in], and that John Schott, a printer of Strasburg, printed them. There is a whole pipe of them at Frankfort, and he desired me to write him a letter whether he should buy them or not. If so he intends to send Roye with the other two to Cologne to receive the money for the books, where I and Herman Ryng of Cologne shall take them.’

This nicely concocted scheme, however, proved abortive, as the letter of the other conspirator, Herman Rinck, to Wolsey will show:—

‘The letter of your Grace given to me by Master John West, priest of the Observant Order of St. Francis, written the 5th of August, at Hampton Court, in your Grace’s palace, was sent and conveyed to me from Cologne to Frankfort in two days, by a speedy messenger, on the 21st of September, concerning the purchasing up everywhere books written in the English language, and *seizing Roye and Hutchins*. But they and their accomplices have not been seen at Frankfort since Easter [April 12] and the market next to Lent [February 26]; nor is it known where they have gone to, or whether they are alive or dead. And John Schott, a citizen of Strasburg, and their printer, declares that he does not know where they have disappeared to. Their books, however, are crammed with heresy, and full of envy and infamy against the magnificence and honour of your Grace; books which, very wickedly and contrary to Christian charity, render his royal highness, my most gracious lord, and most noble and illustrious prince, infamous to all worshippers of Christ. I, however, as your most humble, faithful, and diligent servant, heard and understood, three weeks before the receipt of your Grace’s letter, that those books had been pledged to the Jews at Frankfort for a sum of money, and I was then anxiously considering with myself how to obtain possession of them as soon as possible. John Schott, the printer, demanded, in addition to the interest that must be paid to the Jews, payment for his labour and the cost of the paper; and declared he would sell them to whoever offered most money; and therefore when your Grace sent the letter and the instructions to me from England, at once, as in duty bound, I spared neither person, nor money, nor pains; but I availed myself of the privilege formerly conferred by his imperial majesty; by gifts and presents I conciliated the consuls of Frankfort and several senators and judges, so that I might collect and gather together all those books from all quarters. This has been

done in three or four places; so I hope that all the books of this kind which have been printed are in my possession, except two, which your Grace's agent, the aforesaid John West, requested and received of me for the greater benefit and advantage of the King and your Grace. And these books, but for my discovering and interposing, would have been packed into paper wrappers and concealed; and having been inclosed in ten hampers cunningly covered with flax, would have been in due time sent across the sea to England and Scotland, there to be sold simply as clean paper; but I believe that very few, if any, have been carried away or sold. Moreover, in the presence of the consuls of Frankfort, after exchange of oaths, I procured that the books should not be printed again; and the printer was bound by oath to send the original copy and manuscript of them to me<sup>25</sup>. Besides, I shall endeavour with the utmost care both to seize the foresaid Roye and Hutchins and other rebels against the King and your Grace, and to ascertain what places they frequent.'

All this trouble and expense, he explains, he had willingly incurred in the service of Wolsey and Henry; hoping, however, that some suitable reward would at a future time be bestowed upon him. He then enters into a detailed and somewhat unintelligible account of his public services since the year 1502, apparently intending to remind Wolsey that he had been of considerable assistance in securing for the King of England the right of searching through the whole German empire for traitors against his authority. This privilege, he suggests, might easily be obtained in even a more extended form from Charles V, so as to include not only traitors, but, still more, heretics. 'Edmund de la Pole, who called himself Duke of Suffolk,' he continues, 'was demanded of King Philip, to be brought into England; and William Roye, William Tyndale, Jerome Barlow, Alexander Barclay, and their adherents<sup>26</sup>, formerly Franciscans of the Observant order, now apostates, also George Constans [Constantine], and many others who rail against your Grace, ought to be apprehended, punished, and delivered up, both in order to destroy the Lutheran heresy, and to confirm the Christian faith, as was exceedingly necessary in England.' The full consideration of this most important matter, however, he leaves to Wolsey's superior wisdom; he himself undertaking, as soon as he received the necessary authority, to put it into force with all his energy. Again returning to what had happened at Frankfort, he once more supplies us with some further information concerning Tindale. 'In the presence of the consuls, judges, and senators of

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<sup>25</sup> The manuscript is here illegible from the effects of fire; but the above is certainly the sense of the passage.

<sup>26</sup> Here a blank occurs in the MS., probably representing some other name, which Rinck at the moment had forgotten.

Frankfort, I compelled John Schott, the printer, on oath to confess how many books of that sort he had printed in the English, German, French, or any other language. And on taking the oath he acknowledged that he had only printed one thousand copies of six signatures, and in addition a thousand of nine signatures, in the English language, and this by the orders of Roye and Huchyns; who being in want of money were not able to pay for the books that were printed, and much less to procure their being printed in other languages. Wherefore almost the whole of these books having been purchased by me are kept by me at my house in Cologne. Dated at Cologne, October 4, 1528<sup>27</sup>.

Rinck's narrative need not be implicitly received by us, either as to his own exploits or as to his version of the evidence given by the Strasburg printer; it affords us, however, an interesting and authentic glimpse of the dangers and annoyances amongst which Tindale had to pursue his work. To the poverty of which the printer spoke to Rinck, Tindale was no doubt occasionally exposed, notwithstanding the liberality of his friends in England; for the golden age of authorship had not yet dawned; Tindale received no copymoney for that glorious work of his which no amount of money could ever have adequately rewarded, and had no doubt to guarantee the printer against any contingent loss.

In spite of Schott's confession, it is still considered doubtful whether any of Tindale's works were printed at Strasburg<sup>28</sup>; the description given by the printer would, indeed, correspond sufficiently well to the size of *The Wicked Mammon*, or *The Prologue to the Romans*; but no copy of either book is in existence which has any claim whatever to have issued from Schott's press. In short, it seems certain that Rinck's information was somewhat stale and out of date; the copartnership of Tindale and Roye had been dissolved long before 1528; and Rinck, with all his indefatigable energy, had failed to strike upon the track of either of the offenders. Roye seems actually to have been in England at the very time when the Cologne senator was spurring in hot haste in search of him<sup>29</sup>; and Tindale had in all probability found a quiet restingplace on the banks of the Lahn, nearly a year before Rinck had set out in quest of him.

The very names of the associates who are mentioned in Rinck's letter suffice

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<sup>27</sup> Cotton MSS., *Vitellius*, B. xxi. pp. 49, &c. The entire letter, which is in many parts extremely obscure, has been printed by Arber in his edition of the *Grenville Fragment*.

<sup>28</sup> Arber says the first edition of Roye's *Rede* we consists of *nine* signatures. This would be the book referred to by Schott. The other of six quires might be Roye's *Dialogue between the father and the son, inter patrem Christianum et filium contumacem*. This dialogue was published by Adolf Wolf at Vienna, 1874.

<sup>29</sup> See a letter of West to Cromwell, December 17, 1528, Greenwich, in which he complains that he is not allowed to 'come to London to seek for them that my lord knoweth of and to enquire where Roye was, when he was in England with his mother,' &c. Cotton MSS., *Vitellius*, B. x. 171.

to show that it was about Roye rather than Tindale that he had succeeded in gaining information. Jerome Barlow, if, as seems natural, we suppose him to be the Jerome, a member of the same Observant Monastery at Greenwich to which Roye belonged<sup>30</sup>, whom Tindale mentions in the Preface to his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, had left Worms in the beginning of 1527 to join Roye at Strasburg. Alexander Barclay, also, totally unknown as a friend of the Reformation, is the wellknown author of an exceedingly clever sarcastic poem, *The Ship of Fools*; and this tendency, we may be sure, was not likely to recommend him as an associate of one who protested so emphatically as Tindale did, against the impropriety of ‘using railing rhymes,’ instead of that Word of God which was, in his eyes, the only ‘right weapon to slay sin, vice, and all iniquity.’

For the time, therefore, Tindale had eluded his enemies; dangers, indeed, threatened him on every side, but his work was not yet done; he had still much to accomplish before the approach of that terrible end which, from the first, he foresaw to be in store for him.

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<sup>30</sup> West’s letter, quoted on p. 190, makes it absolutely certain that Jerome Barlowe had been an Observant friar.