

William Tindale

A Biography

Being a Contribution to the Early History
of the English Bible

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Popular Edition, Revised

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The Religious Tract Society

4 Bouverie Street; 65 St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.

1904

CHAPTER VII

TINDALE AT MARBURG: PUBLISHES 'THE WICKED MAMMON,' AND 'THE OBEDIENCE OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'

A.D. 1528.

SOME fifty miles north of Frankfort, in the beautiful valley of the Lahn, that tributary which pours its waters into Father Rhine opposite Coblenz, the picturesque city of Marburg fringes the foot of an eminence whose summit is crowned by a venerable castle, the residence in Tindale's time of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. Philip the Magnanimous, the Landgrave of that day, had been among the first of the German potentates to espouse the cause of the Reformation; and having thrown the whole vigour of his nature into the movement, he had acquired a position of great prominence amongst the Reformers, and might in 1528 almost be looked upon as sharing the responsibility of the leadership with Luther himself.

The Landgrave was commonly styled 'the disciple of Melancthon,' that gentle Reformer having been mainly instrumental in inducing him to adopt the doctrines of the Reformation; but Philip the Magnanimous of Hesse-Cassel had not very much in common with Philip the Scholar of Wittemberg. He had already diverged from the opinions of Luther and Melancthon, and had exhibited a very decided preference for the bolder and more sweeping views of Zwingle and the Swiss and French Reformers. In 1527, inspired with an eager desire to promote learning in his dominions, he founded a University in his quiet and somewhat secluded capital, the earliest of the Universities to which the Reformation gave birth, and which, in spite of many vicissitudes, still continues to flourish.

At the same period, also, and probably in consequence of the Landgrave's patronage, Hans Luft established a printing-press in Marburg, whose productions, albeit by no means masterpieces of the typographic art, were for many years the favourite reading of the lovers of the Reformation in England, and are now of priceless estimation in the eyes of collectors. In short, under the protection of the young and enthusiastic Landgrave, Marburg had become one of the great centres from which the principles of the Reformation were vigorously propagated; and for a few years this great inland town, so little known to fame, that some historians of literature have written about 'Marlborough in the land of Hesse,' as if it were an entirely

mythical locality,¹ divided public interest with Wittenberg, Speyers, and the other great cities of the Empire.

Nowhere was the Reformation more thoroughly carried out, or the doctrines of the Reformers more rigorously pushed to their logical conclusion. All practices that savoured of idolatry or superstition were retrenched; the old-established constitution of the Church was abolished, and was reconstructed from the very foundations, modelled after a pattern of democratic simplicity, suggested by the clear-headed Frenchman, the famous Francis Lambert, of Avignon, who was entrusted with chief authority in ecclesiastical matters. This reconstruction, moreover, was carried out with a consistency which was then certainly without parallel in any of the Churches of the Reformation², in accordance with Lambert's favourite maxim, 'Whatever is deformed must be reformed.'

Into this quiet resting-place, undisturbed as yet by any of those unfortunate tendencies which afterwards made Marburg and its Landgrave unhappily notorious, Tindale had come for shelter some time during the year 1527; leaving Worms probably when the publication of Roye's satire seemed likely to compromise his safety. At Marburg there was much to solace him in his exile. Here at least he was to all appearance safe, in an unknown retreat, beyond the reach of Wolsey's emissaries, and under the protection of a prince who was a zealous adherent of the doctrines of the Reformation. In the literary labours which he was diligently prosecuting, the infant University would probably be of some assistance to him; and through the press of Hans Luft he enjoyed a ready means of instructing the inhabitants of his dear native land. Of personal incidents during his residence in Marburg this biography has still very few to tell; it is, as before, not of the man, but of his work that we have to speak. Indeed, to Tindale himself may, with eminent appropriateness, be applied his own quaint words concerning John the Baptist. He, too, might have said to the English nation what John said to the Jews, 'I am the voice of a crier: my *voice* only pertaineth to you; those outward things which ye wonder at [the strange vicissitudes of his life] pertain to myself only, unto the taming of my body: to you am I a voice only, and that which I preach³.'

We have not, in fact, any authentic record of a single incident in his life at Marburg; yet, from what we know from various sources, we can supply what may at least be accepted as illustrations of his residence there.

Whether or not he was present at the formal inauguration of the University in the old Dominican Convent on May 30, 1527, we may feel assured

¹ See a curious passage in Dr. Mombert's *William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses*, pp. xxix–xxxiii. See also the *Athenæum* for April 18, 1885.

² See D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, and the authorities he quotes.

³ *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon: Works*, vol. i. p. 104.

that he enjoyed the friendship of the eminent men of learning whom the liberality of the Landgrave had attracted to Marburg. Foremost among these was the Professor of Divinity, the pious and eloquent Lambert of Avignon, already alluded to, who, after a life of vicissitude and adventure, which would admirably qualify him to be the companion and consoler of Tindale, had come to Marburg to enjoy, alas! only three years of peace before the sweating sickness prematurely cut short his days. Hermann Buschius, too, who had already met Tindale at Worms, had found in the infant University on the banks of the Lahn a peaceful refuge from the opposition which the sallies of his too witty pen had provoked; and Tindale, himself a man of shrewd satirical humour, must have listened with no ordinary relish to one who had played so prominent a part in the revival of letters, who had been the associate of Erasmus and Von Hutten, whose reminiscences would embrace much of the secret history of those mighty movements in learning and religion, which will make the commencement of the sixteenth century for ever memorable in the annals of mankind.

Moreover, though Marburg was sufficiently secluded to render it unlikely that any emissaries from Tindale's enemies in England would resort thither, it was well enough known to the friends of the Reformation on the Continent; and religious refugees from England and Scotland were continually passing through it on their way to or from Wittemberg. It was at Marburg, therefore, in all probability that the interview between Tindale and Barnes took place, which Sir Thomas More declares to have had such important results. 'I am right credibly informed,' writes Sir Thomas, 'by a very virtuous man, whom God hath of His goodness illumined and called home again out of the dark Egypt of their blind heresies [Barlow probably is meant], that at such time as Friar Barnes and Tyndale first met, and talked together beyond the sea, after that he [Barnes] fled out of the Friars [Austin Friars in Northampton], where he was enjoined to tarry for his penance after he had borne his faggot, Tyndale and he were of sundry sects. For Friar Barnes was of Zwinglius' sect against the sacrament of the altar, believing that it is nothing but bare bread. But Tyndale was yet at that time not fully fallen so far in that point, but though he were bad enough beside, was yet not content with Friar Barnes for the holding of that heresy. But within a while after, as he that is falling is soon put over, the Friar made the fool mad outright, and brought him blindfold down into the deepest dungeon of that devilish heresy, wherein he sitteth now fast bounden in the chair of pestilence with the chain of pertinacity¹.' Sir Thomas, indeed, whose language the reader will have perceived is somewhat violent, is not implicitly to be trusted in matters which he only repeats at second-hand; but

¹ Sir Thomas More's *Confutation: Works*, p. 482.

his information is never to be despised; and whatever we may believe as to the process by which Tindale's opinions on the Sacrament were changed, it seems tolerably certain that they were, in point of fact, changed between the commencement of 1528 and 1530.

Whatever may be thought of Barnes's visit to Marburg, there is no doubt that during part of the summer and autumn of 1527, there resided there a young Scotsman of high rank, of considerable learning, and of sound judgement in Holy Scripture. Patrick Hamilton, who had incurred suspicion in his native country by his zeal for the Reformation, had left Scotland with three companions on the customary- pilgrimage to Wittenberg. The plague, however, was then raging in the Saxon University, and the young Scotsmen consequently repaired for a short time to the new school of learning at Marburg, where their names are still to be seen enrolled in the University Album¹.

Hamilton's residence at Marburg was of very brief duration, for at the close of 1527 he was again in his native land; but it was long enough to conciliate the warm affection of Lambert, who subsequently paid a grateful tribute of admiration to the zeal and piety of the noble stranger who only returned home to perish at the stake, the proto-martyr of the Scottish Reformation².

Short as was Hamilton's residence in Marburg, it was not uneventful. Following the practice of Luther and other Reformers, he had exhibited at Marburg certain *theses* or doctrinal propositions, treating almost exclusively of that which formed the main burden of the teaching of the German Reformation—the doctrine of Justification by Faith; and as this was the first effort of the kind in the nascent University, it naturally created considerable excitement. 'Patrick's Places,' as they were called, originally written, of course, in Latin, were translated by Frith after his arrival at Marburg; and the Martyrologist Foxe has reproduced them at length in his *Acts and Monuments*³.

It may be assumed as extremely probable that Tindale and Hamilton

¹ Three names are inscribed, Patrick Hamilton, John Hamilton, and Gilbert Winram from Edinburgh.

² Lambert's eulogy is contained in his Commentary on the Apocalypse. (See Lorimer, *Precursors of Knox*, p. 238.) If Marburg was indebted to Hamilton, he, too, was indebted to Marburg, as the Scotch poet, John Johnstone, has elegantly confessed in his eulogy on Hamilton:

'E coelo alluxit primam Germania lucem,
Qua Lanus, et vitreis qua fluit Albis aquis.
Intulit hinc lucem nostrae Dux praevious orae;
O felix terra! hoc si foret usa Duce.'

See Appendix to McCrie's *Life of Knox*.

³ Foxe, vol. iv. p. 563, &c.

were contemporaries at Marburg, and if they did actually meet there, there was one mighty bond to join them in cordial amity. For Tindale's New Testament had not merely been conveyed to the translator's native land; Scotland, too, had participated in the benefit. Hackett, the busy emissary of Wolsey, whose zeal in seizing copies of Tindale's Testament in various parts of the Low Countries has already made him known to the reader, intimates to Wolsey in January, 1527, that 'divers merchants of Scotland bought many of such like books, and took them to Scotland, a part to Edinburgh, and most part to the town of St. Andrew.' With his usual ready officiousness, the English envoy had attempted to seize them, and make a 'good fire of them'; but he was too late: the ships had sailed the day before he arrived in Zealand, and were thus able to proceed unmolested with their blessed cargo¹. If Hamilton was aware of what was passing in his absence in his native country, as it is extremely probable he was, we may easily conceive how he would value the opportunity of enjoying Christian communion with one whom he would regard as having conferred an inestimable benefit upon Scotland.

The intercourse between Hamilton and Frith, which has by some recent writers been supposed to have occurred while both were resident in Marburg, must now be finally rejected as impossible. Frith, it is quite certain, did not leave England till the close of 1528; and long before he joined Tindale at Marburg, the brave young Scotsman had glorified God in the flames². Nearly a year after Hamilton's departure, Frith arrived at Marburg; and with such a companion, the confidant of former years when hopes were brighter, Tindale must have spent some months of happiness that would seem like an oasis in the desert. It is difficult, indeed, for us, accustomed to rapid and frequent communication with our distant friends, to realize the comfort which the presence of Frith brought to Tindale.

Four weary years had now been spent in exile; and though cheered by the occasional visits of friends, yet he had hitherto had no companion entirely like-minded with himself, and able to give him full information of those matters which he longed so earnestly to know. In Frith, however, his 'own son according to the faith,' he had at length procured a comrade whose opinions were entirely in accordance with his own, and who, having been himself at one of the great centres of action, could report the success of that great cause, for the promotion of which Tindale had abandoned all the delights of home and country. Frith could tell, as few others could, the whole story of the progress of the Reformation, both in Cambridge and Ox-

¹ Letter from Hackett in Cotton MSS., *Galba*, B. vi.

² He was burned at St. Andrew's on the last day of February, 1528: '*Pridie kalendas Martii*,' says his friend Lambert, in his eulogy on him.

ford. The work of Bilney, the conversion of Latimer, the fall of Barnes, the secret circulation of the English New Testament, the hostility of the bishops, the proposed Royal divorce, the hopes and fears that were beginning to find expression in England—all these were well known to Frith; and in the interest which the narrative thus told from personal experience would excite, Tindale would almost forget that he had been so long absent from the land which he loved so well. That Frith should express himself with some bitterness of the cardinal and the bishops was natural and inevitable; he had been imprisoned, degraded, compelled to abandon his country, for no crime, except merely for reading the Word of God in the English language, and studying the works of the Continental Reformers; and surely it was neither inexcusable nor blameable, that Tindale should have felt indignant at the conduct of those who thus sought to deprive the people of England of that book, which God had ordained for their spiritual guidance and comfort. From this time onwards we can trace in Tindale's works an accession of sharpness in writing of the proceedings of the clergy: let those who feel inclined to censure him for 'speaking evil of dignities,' first of all make some attempt fairly to estimate the provocation offered to him.

But we are somewhat anticipating the course of our narrative. Some months before the arrival of Frith, Tindale had issued from the press of Hans Luft, one of the most famous of his works, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*. Foxe, indeed, in his collected edition of the works of Tindale, has assigned *The Wicked Mammon* to an earlier date, May 8, 1527; and the bibliographers, adopting the statement without inquiry¹, have asserted, with almost unanimous consent, that the work was issued at Worms on the day mentioned by Foxe, and was reprinted on the same day in the next year by Luft at Marburg. Not only, however, has no one ever pretended to have seen this edition of Worms, but such an early date is in plain contradiction to Tindale's own express words. In the Preface he gives the account of his separation from Roye, which has been already quoted, and adds the following very precise narrative of what occurred subsequently:—'After we were departed [separated] he went and gat him new friends . . . and when he had stored him of money, he gat him to Argentine [Strasburg] a year after that, and now twelve months before the printing of this work, came one Jerome

¹ See Lowndes, Tanner, Lewis, Wood, or any other writer, professing to give the dates of Tindale's works. Anderson, as has been already mentioned, assigns the book to 1527; yet even he was startled by the curious fact of the first and second edition being issued on the same day in successive years. I need not say that in the case of books of this early date, the ordinary bibliographical manuals are not of much value; they usually repeat the statements of previous writers without any inquiry, and even when they describe a book from actual examination, they take for granted that everything stated on the title-page is literally and exactly true, with a simplicity that is singularly unsuspecting.

through Worms to Argentine.’ According, therefore, to Tindale’s own express statement, *The Wicked Mammon* was not printed till quite two years after Roye had left him; but Roye was with him, as we know from the testimony of Cochloeus, in September, 1525, and remained with him till ‘that was ended which he could not do alone without one both to write, and to help him to compare the texts together,’ that is, probably, till March or April, 1526, so that it seems extremely probable that Hans Luft’s edition of May 8, 1528, was the first issue of Tindale’s work¹.

The Parable of the Wicked Mammon is an exposition of what is more usually known in this country as the Parable of the Unjust Steward. In reality, however, the work is a treatise on the doctrine of Justification by Faith, in which Tindale with great clearness and acuteness examines all those texts which were usually cited as incompatible with that doctrine, and shows that when rightly interpreted, according to the general scope of the New Testament, they were not inconsistent with it. Besides this negative clearing away of objections, *The Wicked Mammon* also contains a plain summary of the real meaning of the doctrine, and an exposition of the passages of Scripture which seem most precisely to affirm it. The choice of subject may fairly enough be considered an indication of the paramount influence which Luther now exercised over the mind of Tindale; and, indeed, there are several striking similarities of sentiment and expression which were almost certainly suggested by the writings of the great German Reformer. Tindale, at the same time, treats the subject in a perfectly original manner, with the boldness and clearness of a man who had perfectly grasped it in his own mind; and also, it must be added, without any of that occasional extravagance of language which has, not altogether without reason, exposed Luther to the animadversions of more cautious theologians. The work itself, however, will be its own best expositor; and both from its own importance in the history of the English Reformation, and from its value as illustrating the opinions of Tindale, the reader may naturally demand a few passages by way of sample of its contents.

If the ‘ancient doctor,’ near Little Sodbury, who first hinted to Tindale the idea that the Pope was Antichrist, survived to read *The Wicked Mam-*

¹ That this is not inconsistent with Tindale’s words in his *Practice of Prelates*, will be shown subsequently. One other circumstance connected with the bibliography of *The Wicked Mammon* may here be explained. There are in existence two different editions, one in quarto, the other in octavo, both bearing the imprint of Hans Luft, Marburg, May 8, 1528. This has been explained by Professor Walter, by supposing that the one was for rich readers, the other for poor. On inspecting the quarto in the British Museum, my suspicions of its genuineness were aroused; and Mr. Bullen, of the Museum, who was kind enough to examine it with care, assures me that it was not printed in 1528, nor in Germany, but almost certainly in London, and in the reign of Edward VI; so that Professor Walter’s theory must be discarded.

mon, he must have contemplated with feelings of satisfaction, almost of amazement, the powerful hold this idea had taken of the mind of Tindale. Thus boldly, for example, he treats the subject in the Preface; and, as we shall subsequently see, the idea seemed to grow and to strengthen with years in his mind, and he waxes ever bolder and more bitter in his treatment of it.

‘Mark this also above all things, that Antichrist is not an outward thing, that is to say, a man that should suddenly appear with wonders, as our fathers talked of him. No, verily; for Antichrist is a spiritual thing; and is as much to say as, *against Christ*; that is, one that preacheth false doctrine, contrary to Christ. Antichrist was in the Old Testament, and fought with the prophets; he was also in the time of Christ and the Apostles, as thou readest in the epistles of John, and of Paul to the Corinthians and Galatians, and other epistles. Antichrist is now, and shall (I doubt not) endure till the world’s end. But his nature is (when he is uttered [disclosed], and overcome with the Word of God) to go out of the play for a season, and to disguise himself, and then to come in again with a new name and new raiment. As thou seest how Christ rebuketh the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel, (which were very Antichrists,) saying: “Woe be to you, Pharisees! for ye rob widows’ houses; ye pray long prayers under a colour; ye shut up the kingdom of heaven, and suffer not them that would to enter in; ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye make men break God’s commandments with your traditions; ye beguile the people with hypocrisy and such like ”; which things all our prelates do, but have yet gotten them new names, and other garments and weeds, and are otherwise disguised. There is difference in the names between a pope, a cardinal, a bishop, and so forth, and to say a Scribe, a Pharisee, a senior, and so forth; but the thing is all one. Even so now, when we have uttered him, he will change himself once more, and turn himself into an angel of light. Read the place, I exhort thee, whatsoever thou art that readest this, and note it well. The Jews look for Christ, and He is come fifteen hundred years ago, and they not aware: we also have looked for Antichrist, and he hath reigned as long, and we not aware: and that because either of us looked carnally for him, and not in the places where we ought to have sought. The Jews had found Christ verily, if they had sought Him in the law and the prophets, whither Christ sendeth them to seek. We also had spied out Antichrist long ago, if we had looked in the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles; where because the beast seeth himself now to be sought for, he roareth, and seeketh new holes to hide himself in, and changeth himself into a thousand fashions, with all manner wiliness, falsehood, subtlety, and craft. Because that his excommunications are come to light, he maketh it treason unto the king to be acquainted with Christ. If Christ and they may not reign together, one hope we have, that Christ shall

live for ever. The old Antichrists brought Christ unto Pilate, saying, “By our law He ought to die ”; and when Pilate bade them judge Him after their law, they answered, “It is not lawful for us to kill any man ”; which they did to the intent that they which regarded not the shame of their false excommunications, should yet fear to confess Christ, because that the temporal sword had condemned Him. They do all things of a good zeal, they say; they love you so well, that they had rather burn you, than that you should have fellowship with Christ. They are jealous over you amiss, as saith St. Paul. They would divide you from Christ and His holy Testament; and join you to the pope, to believe in his testament and promises. ‘Some man will ask, peradventure, Why I take the labour to make this work, inas-much as they will burn it, seeing they burnt the Gospel. I answer, In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God’s will it shall so be.

‘Nevertheless, in translating the New Testament I did my duty, and so do I now, and will do as much more as God hath ordained me to do. And as I offered that to all men, to correct it, whosoever could, even so I do this. Whosoever, therefore, readeth this, compare it unto the Scripture. If God’s Word bear record unto it, and thou also feelest in thine heart that it is so, be of good comfort, and give God thanks. If God’s Word condemn it, then hold it accursed, and so do all other doctrines: as Paul counselleth his Galatians. Believe not every spirit suddenly, but judge them by the Word of God, which is the trial of all doctrine, and lasteth for ever. Amen.’

Tindale’s purpose was, as has been already stated, to give what he considered the true meaning of those passages of Scripture which were generally interpreted as opposed to the doctrine of Justification by Faith, or as he himself, imitating the phraseology of Erasmus, expresses it, ‘to expound them aright and to bring the Scripture unto the right sense, and to dig again the wells of Abraham, and to purge and cleanse them of the earth of worldly wisdom wherewith these Philistines have stopped them.’ Of the nature of his teaching on the subject the following specimen will abundantly satisfy the reader:—

‘This is plain, and a sure conclusion, not to be doubted of, that there must be first in the heart of a man, before he do any good work, a greater and a preciouser thing than all the good works in the world, to reconcile him to God, to bring the love and favour of God to him, to make him love God again, to make him righteous and good in the sight of God, to do away his sin, to deliver him and loose him out of that captivity wherein he was conceived and born, in which he could neither love God nor the will of God. Or else, how can he work any good work that should please God, if there were not some supernatural goodness in him, given of God freely, whereof the good work must spring? even as a sick man must first be

healed or made whole, ere he can do the deeds of an whole man; and as the blind man must first have sight given him, ere he can see; and he that hath his feet in fetters, gyves, or stocks, must first be loosed, ere he can go, walk, or run; and even as they which thou readest of in the Gospel, that they were possessed of the devils, could not laud God till the devils were cast out.

‘That precious thing which must be in the heart, ere a man can work any good work, is the Word of God, which in the Gospel preacheth, profereeth, and bringeth unto all that repent and believe, the favour of God in Christ. Whosoever heareth the Word and believeth it, the same is thereby righteous; and thereby is given him the Spirit of God, which leadeth him unto all that is the will of God; and [he] is loosed from the captivity and bondage of the devil; and his heart is free to love God, and hath lust to do the will of God. Therefore it is called the word of life, the word of grace, the word of health, the word of redemption, the word of forgiveness, and the word of peace: he that heareth it not, or believeth it not, can by no means be made righteous before God. This confirmeth Peter in the fifteenth of the Acts, saying that God through faith doth purify the hearts. For of what nature soever the Word of God is, of the same nature must the hearts be which believe thereon, and cleave thereunto. Now is the Word living, pure, righteous, and true; and even so maketh it the hearts of them that believe thereon.’

If it was objected to this teaching that there were many who believe, or professed to believe, and yet in whose lives no change was perceptible, Tindale replied:—

‘These are they which Judas [Jude] in his epistle calleth dreamers, which deceive themselves with their own fantasies. For what other thing is their imagination, which they call faith, than a dreaming of the faith, and an opinion of their own imagination wrought without the grace of God? These must needs be worse at the latter end than at the beginning. These are the old vessels that rend when new wine is poured into them; that is, they hear God’s Word, but hold it not, and therefore wax worse than they were before. But the right faith springeth not of man’s fantasy, neither is it in any man’s power to obtain it; but it is altogether the pure gift of God poured into us freely, without all manner doing of us, without deserving and merits, yea, and without seeking for of us; and is (as saith Paul in the second to the Ephesians) even God’s gift and grace, purchased through Christ. Therefore is it mighty in operation, full of virtue, and ever working; which also reneweth a man and begetteth him afresh, altereth him, changeth him, and turneth him altogether into a new nature and conversation; so that a man feeleth his heart altogether altered and changed, and far otherwise disposed than before; and hath power to love that which before he could not but hate;

and delighteth in that which before he abhorred; and hateth that which before he could not but love. And it setteth the soul at liberty, and maketh her free to follow the will of God, and doth to the soul even as health doth unto the body, after that a man is pined and wasted away with a long soking [exhausting] disease: the legs cannot bear him, he cannot lift up his hands to help himself, his taste is corrupt, sugar is bitter in his mouth, his stomach abhorreth¹, longing after slibbersauce and swash, at which a whole stomach is ready to cast his gorge. When health cometh, she [it] changeth and altereth him clean; giveth him strength in all his members, and lust to do of his own accord that which before he could not do, neither could suffer that any man exhorted him to do; and hath now lust in wholesome things, and his members are free and at liberty, and have power to do, of their own accord, all things which belong to an whole man to do, which afore they had no power to do, but were in captivity and bondage. So likewise in all things doth right faith to the soul.

‘The Spirit of God accompanieth faith, and bringeth with her [i. e. with faith] light, wherewith a man beholdeth himself in the law of God, and seeth his miserable bondage and captivity, and humbleth himself, and abhorreth himself: she [faith] bringeth God’s promises of all good things in Christ. God worketh with His Word, and in His Word: and when His Word is preached, faith rooteth herself in the hearts of the elect; and as faith entereth, and the Word of God is believed, the power of God looseth the heart from the captivity and bondage under sin, and knitteth and coupleth him to God and to the will of God; altereth him, changeth him clean, fashioneth, and forgeth him anew; giveth him power to love, and to do that which before was impossible for him either to love or do; and turneth him unto a new nature, so that he loveth that which he before hated, and hateth that which he before loved; and is clean altered, and changed, and contrary disposed; and is knit and coupled fast to God’s will, and naturally bringeth forth good works, that is to say, that which God commandeth to do, and not things of his own imagination. And that doth he of his own accord, as a tree bringeth forth fruit of her own accord. And as thou needest not to bid a tree to bring forth fruit, so is there no law put unto him that believeth, and is justified through faith, as saith Paul in the first epistle to Timothy, the first chapter. Neither is it needful; for the law of God is written and graved in his heart, and his pleasure is therein. And as without commandment, but even of his own nature, he eateth, drinketh, seeth, heareth, talketh, and goeth; even so of his own nature, without co-action or compulsion of the law, bringeth he forth good works. And as a whole [healthy] man, when he

¹ Apparently some words are here omitted; and in the copy in the Museum the words *good meat* are supplied in ink by an old hand.

is athirst, tarrieth but for drink, and when he hungreth, abideth but for meat, and then drinketh and eateth naturally; even so is the faithful ever athirst and an hungred after the will of God, and tarrieth but for occasion. And whensoever an occasion is given, he worketh naturally the will of God: for this blessing is given to all them that trust in Christ's blood, that they thirst and hunger to do God's will. He that hath not this faith, is but an unprofitable babbler of faith and works; and wotteth neither what he babbleth, nor what he meaneth, or whereunto his words pertain: for he feeleth not the power of faith, nor the working of the Spirit in his heart; but interpreteth the Scriptures, which speak of faith and works, after his own blind reason and foolish fantasies, and not of any feeling that he hath in his heart; as a man rehearseth a tale of another man's mouth, and wotteth not whether it be so or no as he saith, nor hath any experience of the thing itself.'

The treatise, however, is not entirely occupied with doctrinal discussions; Tindale had a practical English mind, and entertained quite as high an opinion of the extent of the obligation under which we lie to our neighbours, as of the value of that doctrine which it was the chief purpose of his treatise to expound. 'If,' says he, 'my neighbour need and I give him not, neither depart [share] liberally with him of that which I have, then withhold I from him unrighteously *that which is his own*. And this unrighteousness in our mammon see very few men, because it is spiritual; and in those goods which are gotten most truly and justly are men much beguiled. For they suppose they do no man wrong in keeping them; in that they got them not with stealing, robbing, oppression, and usury, neither hurt any man now with them.' And with still more emphatic plainness he declares, 'If thy neighbour need, and thou help him not, being able, thou withholdest his duty from him, and art a thief before God': 'Among Christian men love maketh all things common; every man is other's debtor, and every man is bound to minister to his neighbour, and to supply his neighbour's lack, of that wherewith God hath endowed him.' And still more copiously in a passage well worthy of the consideration of those who suppose that Tindale was merely a fierce polemical theologian:—

'The order of love or charity, which some dream [of], the Gospel of Christ knoweth not of, that a man should begin at himself, and serve himself first, and then descend, I wot not by what steps. Love seeketh not her own profit (2 Cor. xii); but maketh a man to forget himself, and to turn his profit to another man, as Christ sought not Himself, nor His own profit, but ours. This term, myself, is not in the Gospel; neither yet father, mother, sister, brother, kinsman, that one should be preferred in love above another. But Christ is all in all things. Every Christian man to another is Christ Himself; and thy neighbour's need hath as good right in thy goods as hath Christ Himself, which is heir and lord over all. And look what thou owest

to Christ, that thou owest to thy neighbour's need. To thy neighbour owest thou thine heart, thyself, and all that thou hast and canst do. The love that springeth out of Christ excludeth no man, neither putteth difference between one and another. In Christ we are all of one degree, without respect of persons. Notwithstanding, though a Christian man's heart be open to all men and receiveth all men, yet because that his ability of goods extendeth not so far, this provision is made, that every man shall care for his own household, as father and mother, and thine elders that have holpen thee, wife, children, and servants. If thou shouldest not care and provide for thine household, then wert thou an infidel; seeing thou hast taken on thee so to do, and forasmuch as that is thy part committed to thee of the congregation. When thou hast done thy duty to thine household, and yet hast further abundance of the blessing of God, that owest thou to the poor that cannot labour, or would labour and can get no work, and are destitute of friends; to the poor, I mean,

Tindale practised what he preached 217 which thou knowest, to them of thine own parish. For that provision ought to be had in the congregation, that every parish care for their poor. If thy neighbours which thou knowest be served, and thou yet have superfluity, and hearest necessity to be among the brethren a thousand miles off, to them art thou debtor. Yea, to the very infidels we be debtors, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ, or to blaspheme Christ. Thus is every man that needeth thy help, thy father, mother, sister, and brother in Christ; even as every man that doth the will of the Father is father, mother, sister, and brother unto Christ.

'Moreover, if any be an infidel and a false Christian, and forsake his household, his wife, children, and such as cannot help themselves, then art thou bound, and [i.e. if] thou have wherewith, even as much as to thine own household. And they have as good right in thy goods as thou thyself: and if thou withdraw mercy from them, and hast wherewith to help them, then art thou a thief. If thou show mercy, so doest thou thy duty, and art a faithful minister in the household of Christ; and of Christ shalt thou have thy reward and thanks. If the whole world were thine, yet hath every brother his right in thy goods; and is heir with thee, as we are all heirs with Christ.'

And these were not mere idle words in Tindale's case, expressing nothing more than pious sentimentalism; he believed them with all his heart, and honestly attempted to walk in accordance with them. 'He reserved for himself,' says Foxe in his account of his life at Antwerp, 'two days in the week, which he named his days of pastime, namely, Monday and Saturday': the one of these was devoted to visiting all English refugees in the city and relieving their wants; on the other 'he walked round about the town, seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor per-

son to dwell, and where he found any to be well occupied and yet overburdened with children, or else aged or weak, those also he plentifully relieved: and thus he spent his two days of pastime.’

Such passages as these, which are a fair specimen of the style and teaching of *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, will probably be regarded by the reader as embracing at once sound theology and admirable morality. Even those who might be inclined to object that some of the doctrinal interpretations of the writer are over-refined, would admit that his speculative subtlety was amply compensated by the lofty tone of pure moral teaching which pervades the book. It was not thus, however, that Tindale’s *orthodox* contemporaries judged of the work. In a public instrument issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury, *The Wicked Mammon* was singled out for condemnation as ‘containing many detestable errors and damnable opinions.’ The work was also condemned by an assemblage of prelates and doctors summoned by Henry to deliberate as to the character of the English books then in circulation in the country. Preachers were instructed to hold it up to public detestation, and to exhort their hearers to expel from their hearts all evil influences that they might have imbibed by reading so pernicious a book. A catalogue of nine- and-twenty distinct heretical propositions was drawn up from the dangerous publication, and was held up to execration, that all good Christians might abhor ‘those great errors and pestilent heresies¹.’ To possess a copy of a book esteemed so wicked was a heinous fault; and those who were guilty were rigorously examined, whether they were prepared to adopt Tindale’s opinions and to incur the consequent penalties, or to renounce and retract them.

Perhaps, however, nothing so completely demonstrates the perfect hatred with which the book was received by the authorities of the Church in England, as the bitter language which Sir Thomas More uniformly employs in speaking of what he calls, with wilful metathesis, ‘The Wicked Book of Mammon,’ ‘very *mammona iniquitatis*, a very treasury, and well-spring of wickedness’ . . . ‘a book by which many have been beguiled, and brought into many wicked heresies; which thing (saving that the devil is ready to put out men’s eyes, that are content willingly to wax blind) were else, in good faith, to me no little wonder: for never was there made a more foolish frantic book².’ Of the amount of provocation given by the book to the authorities, the reader is perfectly qualified to judge, for the only passage that could be considered in any way offensive is that on Antichrist, which has already been quoted; and if in the sequel we shall find Tindale waxing sharper and fiercer in the language which he employs, it must not be forgot-

¹ Wilkins’s *Concilia*, vol. iii; Foxe, vol. iv.

² Sir Thomas More’s *Confutation of Tindale’s Answer*.

ten that his first writings, though comparatively mild and temperate, were notwithstanding condemned as ‘frantic,’ and abounding ‘in pestilent heresies, contagious, and damnable.’ But it has never been easy to propitiate the approbation of the ‘children sitting in the market-place.’

One other remark on *The Wicked Mammon* is of sufficient interest to be inserted before we pass on to the consideration of Tindale’s next and greater work. By way of exegetical comment upon the word ‘Mammon,’ Tindale ventures to say, ‘Mammon is an Hebrew word, and signifieth riches or temporal goods; and namely [especially] all superfluity, and all that is above necessity, and that which is required unto our necessary uses; wherewith a man may help another, without undoing or hurting himself: for *hamon*, in the Hebrew speech, signifieth a multitude, or abundance or many; and there hence cometh *mahamon* or *mammon*, abundance, or plentifulness of goods or riches.’ Without entering into any philological disquisition, it will be apparent to any one acquainted with Hebrew that Tindale’s criticism is that of a man who well understood the genius of that language; and, in Tindale’s time, it probably indicated an amount of knowledge and familiarity with Hebrew such as only the fewest possessed.

It seems not improbable that *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* had been written some time before it was printed; possibly, indeed, it was written at Worms, and its publication was delayed by the necessity under which Tindale lay of consulting for his safety by flight. On the very same day on which it issued from the press at Marburg, there also issued, according to some authorities, the largest of all Tindale’s original works, his treatise entitled, *The Obedience of a Christian man, and how Christian rulers ought to govern, wherein also, if thou mark diligently, thou shalt find eyes to perceive the crafty conveyance of all jugglers*. The date is not an impossible one, although it lacks confirmation: but if *The Obedience* were printed at the same time as *The Wicked Mammon*, it was certainly written after it, for it contains allusions to *The Mammon*, as a work previously composed¹.

In fact, it is plain, from an examination of *The Obedience*, that it was not printed until the outburst of that first violent assault upon the circulation of the English Bible, which marked the commencement of the year 1528. ‘The Preface to the Reader’ was inspired by the occurrences of which Tindale probably had just heard through the narrative of some refugee for conscience’ sake. The arrest and recantation of Bilney and Arthur, the flight of George Joye, the discovery of Garret’s proceedings at Oxford, the imprisonment of Frith and Clarke and their associates, the infirmity of so many of

¹ Tindale, in his *Practice of Prelates*, which was probably written at the close of 1530, says, ‘Well toward three years agoe I set forth *The Obedience*’; to which May, 1528, would pretty well correspond; October, the date of the next edition, though not totally inconsistent with Tindale’s words, does not quite so well answer to them.

the brethren, who, to secure themselves from danger, revealed all that they knew of the manner by which the New Testament and other books were introduced into England, all this had evidently come to the knowledge of Tindale, and he writes accordingly in that tone of consolation which befitted men overwhelmed with innumerable misfortunes. Tribulation and persecution, he reminds his readers, were in general a sign of the favour and love of God; the truth had always been opposed by the world; and those whom God designed to honour with His special favour, were generally led through tribulation and adversity. ‘If God,’ says he, in a passage which smacks of the boldness of Luther, ‘promise riches, the way thereto is poverty; whom He loveth, him He chasteneth: whom He exalteth, He casteth down; whom He saveth, He damneth first. He bringeth no man to heaven, except He send him to hell first. If He promise life, He slayeth first: when He buildeth, He casteth all down first. He is no patcher; He cannot build on another man’s foundation.’

The Obedience is the largest and most elaborate of all Tindale’s works; next to his translation of Holy Scripture, it was the book by which he was best known to his contemporaries, that which exerted the greatest influence upon those who were friendly to the Reformation, and which gave deepest offence to the authorities of the Church: it is the book, in a word, in which the mind of Tindale is most fully portrayed by himself; and it is entitled, therefore, to a prominent place in a biography which attempts to give to posterity an image of the mind of the great Reformer. No apology therefore, it is conceived, is due for the length of the following extracts, without a careful perusal of which, indeed, the work of Tindale and his position will scarcely be intelligible to the reader.

Henry, as we have seen, had ordered Tindale’s translation to be burned; and Tunstal and Warham had stigmatized it, even in the edition without glosses, as ‘containing pestiferous and pernicious poison.’ But, in truth, it was not merely against Tindale’s translation that their rage was directed, but against any version in the English tongue. It was, for example, asserted that it was not necessary for the people to have the Word of God in their own native language, and that many disagreeable and disastrous consequences might follow if the laymen had the Holy Scriptures in their hands in the mothertongue. Against this monstrous opinion, Tindale argues at considerable length and with great acuteness in his Preface:—

‘The sermons which thou readest in the Acts of the Apostles, and all that the Apostles preached, were no doubt preached in the mother-tongue. Why, then, might they not be written in the mother-tongue? As, if one of us preach a good sermon, why may it not be written? Saint Jerom also translated the Bible into his mother-tongue: why may not we also? They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue, it is so rude. It is not so rude as they

are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one: so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into English, word for word, when thou must seek a compass in the Latin, and yet shall have much work to translate it well-favouredly, so that it have the same grace and sweetness, sense and pure understanding with it in the Latin, and as it hath in the Hebrew. A thousand parts better may it be translated into the English, than into the Latin. Yea, and except my memory fail me, and that I have forgotten what I read when I was a child, thou shalt find in the English Chronicle, how that King Adelstone caused the Holy Scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England, and how the prelates exhorted him thereto¹.

‘Moreover, seeing that one of you ever preacheth contrary to another; and when two of you meet, the one disputeth and brawleth with the other, as it were two scolds; and forasmuch as one holdeth this doctor, and another that; one followeth Duns [Scotus], another St. Thomas [Aquinas], another Bonaventure, Alexander de Hales, Raymond, Lyre, Brygot, Dorbel, Holcot, Gorram, Trumbett, Hugo de Sancto Victore, De Monte Regio, De Nova Villa, De Media Villa, and such like out of number¹²; so that if thou hadst but of every author one book, thou couldst not pile them up in any warehouse in London, and every author is one contrary unto another. In so great diversity of spirits, how shall I know who lieth, and who sayeth truth? Whereby shall I try and judge them? Verily by God’s Word, which only is true. But how shall I that do, when thou wilt not let me see Scripture?

‘Nay, say they, the Scripture is so hard, that thou couldst never understand it but by the doctors. That is, I must measure the meteyard by the cloth. Here be twenty cloths of divers lengths and of divers breadths: how shall I be sure of the length of the meteyard by them? I suppose, rather, I must be first sure of the length of the meteyard, and thereby measure and judge of the cloths. If I must first believe the doctor, then is the doctor first true, and the truth of the Scripture dependeth of his truth; and so the truth of God springeth of the truth of man. Thus Antichrist turneth the roots of the trees upward. What is the cause that we damn some of Origen’s works, and allow some? How know we that some is heresy and some not? By the Scripture, I trow. How know we that St. Augustine (which is the best, or one of the best, that ever wrote upon the Scripture) wrote many things

¹ There seems to be no authority for this, which is also stated in Foxe: perhaps there was some confusion in Tindale’s memory, or in the Chronicle, between Athelstone and Alfred.

² These, the reader will sufficiently understand, are the names of some of the most famous of the schoolmen: they and their works do not concern us here; those who wish to know more regarding them may consult the customary authorities on such matters.

amiss at the beginning, as many other doctors do? Verily, by the Scriptures; as he himself well perceived afterward, when he looked more diligently upon them, and revoked many things again. He wrote of many things which he understood not when he was newly converted, ere he had thoroughly seen the Scripture; and followed the opinions of Plato, and the common persuasions of man's wisdom that were then famous. . . .

'Finally, that this threatening and forbidding the lay people to read the Scripture is not for the love of your souls (which they care for as the fox doth for the geese), is evident, and clearer than the sun; inasmuch as they permit and suffer you to read Robin Hood, and Bevis of Hampton, Hercules, Hector and Troilus, with a thousand histories and fables of love and wantonness, and ribaldry, as filthy as heart can think, to corrupt the minds of youth withal, clean contrary to the doctrine of Christ and of His Apostles: for Paul saith, "See that fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, be not once named among you, as it becometh saints; neither filthiness, neither foolish talking nor jesting, which are not comely: for this ye know, that no whoremonger, either unclean person, or covetous person, which is the worshipper of images, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And after saith he, "Through such things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of unbelief." Now seeing they permit you freely to read those things which corrupt your minds and rob you of the kingdom of God and Christ, and bring the wrath of God upon you, how is this forbidding for love of your souls?'

The whole book, in fact, is argumentative and governors are ordained of God, and are even the gift of God, whether they be good or bad. And whatsoever is done to us by them, that doth God, be it good or bad. If they be evil, why are they evil? Verily, for our wickedness' sake are they evil; because that when they were good, we would not receive that goodness of the hand of God, and be thankful, submitting ourselves unto His laws and ordinances; but abuse the goodness of God unto our sensual and beastly lusts. Therefore doth God make His scourge of them, and turn them to wild beasts, contrary to the nature of their names and offices, even into lions, bears, foxes, and unclean swine, to avenge Himself of our unnatural and blind unkindness, and of our rebellious disobedience. . . . Evil rulers then are a sign that God is angry and wroth with us. . . . Let us receive all things of God, whether it be good or bad; let us humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and submit ourselves unto His nurture and chastising, and not withdraw ourselves from His correction. Read Hebr. xii for thy comfort; and let us not take the staff by the end, or seek to avenge ourselves on His rod, which is the evil rulers. The child, as long as he seeketh to avenge himself upon the rod, hath an evil heart; for he thinketh not that the correction is right, or that he hath deserved it, neither repenteth, but rejoiceth in

his wickedness: and so long shall he never be without a rod: yea, so long shall the rod be made sharper and sharper. If he knowledge his fault and take the correction meekly, and even kiss the rod, and amend himself with the learning and nurture of his father and mother, then is the rod taken away and burnt.

‘So, if we resist evil rulers, seeking to set ourselves at liberty, we shall, no doubt, bring ourselves into more evil bondage, and wrap ourselves in much more misery and wretchedness. For if the heads overcome, then lay they more weight on their backs, and make their yoke sorer, and tie them shorter. If they overcome their evil rulers, then make their way for a more cruel nation, or for some tyrant of their own nation, which hath no right unto the crown. If we submit ourselves unto the chastising of God, and meekly knowledge our sins for which we are scourged, and kiss the rod, and amend our living; then will God take the rod away, that is, He will give the rulers a better heart. Or if they continue their malice and persecute you for well-doing, and because ye put your trust in God, then will God deliver you out of their tyranny for His truth’s sake. It is the same God now that was in the old time, and delivered the fathers and the prophets, the apostles, and other holy saints. And whatsoever He sware to them He hath sworn to us. And as He delivered them out of all temptation, cumbrance, and adversity, because they consented and submitted themselves unto His will, and trusted in His goodness and truth; even so will He do to us, if we do likewise.

‘A Christian man, in respect of God, is but a passive thing; a thing that suffereth only, and doth nought; as the sick, in respect of the surgeon or physician, doth but suffer only. The surgeon lanceth and cutteth out the dead flesh, searcheth the wounds, thrusteth in tents, searcheth, burneth, seweth or stitcheth, and layeth to caustics, to draw out the corruption; and, last of all, layeth to healing plaisters, and maketh it whole. The physician likewise giveth purgations and drinks to drive out the disease, and then with restoratives bringeth health. Now if the sick resist the razor, the searching iron, and so forth, doth he not resist his own health, and is cause of his own death? So likewise is it of us, if we resist evil rulers, which are the rod and scourge wherewith God chastiseth us; the instruments wherewith God searcheth our wounds; and bitter drinks to drive out the sin and to make it appear, and caustics to draw out by the roots the core of the pocks of the soul that fretteth inward. A Christian man, therefore, receiveth all things of the hand of God, both good and bad, both sweet and sour, both wealth and woe. If any person do me good, whether it be father, mother, and so forth, that receive I of God, and to God give thanks: for He gave wherewith, and gave a commandment, and moved his heart so to do. Adversity also receive I of the hand of God, as a wholesome medicine, though it be somewhat bitter. Temptation and adversity do both kill sin, and also utter [manifest] it.

For though a Christian man knoweth every thing how to live, yet is the flesh so weak, that he can never take up his cross himself, to kill and mortify the flesh: he must have another to lay it on his back. In many also sin lieth hid within, and festereth and rotteth inward, and is not seen; so that they think how they are good and perfect, and keep the law: as the young man Matt, xix said, he had observed all of a child; and yet lied falsely in his heart, as the text following well declareth. When all is at peace and no man troubleth us, we think that we are patient and love our neighbours as ourselves; but let our neighbour hurt us in word or deed, and then find we it otherwise. Then fume we, and rage, and set up the bristles, and bend ourselves to take vengeance. If we loved with godly love, for Christ's kindness' sake, we should desire no vengeance; but pity him, and desire God to forgive and amend him, knowing well that no flesh can do otherwise than sin, except that God preserve him. Thou wilt say, What good doth such persecution and tyranny unto the righteous? First, it maketh them feel the working of God's Spirit in them, and that their faith is unfeigned. Secondly, I say that no man is so great a sinner, if he repent and believe, but that he is righteous in Christ and in the promises: yet if thou look on the flesh, and unto the law, there is no man so perfect that is not found a sinner; nor any man so pure that hath not somewhat to be yet purged. This shall suffice at this time as concerning obedience.'

To charge such sentiments as these with any tendency to encourage insubordination and rebellion, is a manifest absurdity; they are, in fact, tantamount to a profession of passive obedience in its strictest and simplest form.

But Tindale does not rest satisfied with merely defending himself and his friends from the imputations made against them by their enemies; he carries the war boldly into the enemy's camp. It was *not* the Reformers, it was the pope and the clergy, he asserted, who in reality instigated men to refuse obedience to the civil power. They claimed for themselves a superiority to all secular authority. They had presumed to excommunicate kings, and to lay nations under interdict. They refused to bear their share in the ordinary burdens which devolved upon subjects. They declined to submit to the jurisdiction of the secular courts. In open defiance of the example of Christ and the admonition of His Apostle, 'Let every soul submit himself unto the higher powers; whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'; popes and bishops, monks and friars, had arrogated to themselves an exemption from the authority of the temporal sovereign. Here, Tindale maintained, was the true fountain of insubordination and rebellion; here were the true apostles of sedition against whom the terror of the civil authority should be wielded. 'If,' says he, 'the office of princes, given them of God, be to take vengeance of evil-doers, then by God's Word

are all princes damned [condemned], even as many as give liberty or license unto the spirituality to sin unpunished; and not only to sin unpunished themselves, but also to open sanctuaries, privileged places, churchyards, St. John's holds; yea, and if they come too short unto all these, yet to set forth a *neck-verse* to save all manner trespassers, from the fear of the sword of the vengeance of God, put in the hand of princes to take vengeance of all such¹.' The ambition of the clergy had thrown all civil government into confusion; they had almost monopolized all offices of authority in the State, to the great injury both of religion and of good government.

'Is it not a shame above all shames,' asks Tindale, 'and a monstrous thing, that no man should be found able to govern a worldly kingdom save bishops and prelates, that have forsaken the world, and are taken out of the world, and appointed to preach the kingdom of God? . . . To preach God's Word is too much for half a man: and to minister a temporal kingdom is too much for half a man also. Either other requireth a whole man. One therefore cannot well do both. He that avengeth himself on every trifle is not meet to preach the patience of Christ, how that a man ought to forgive and to suffer all things. He that is overwhelmed with all manner riches, and doth but seek more daily, is not meet to preach poverty. He that will obey no man, is not meet to preach how we ought to obey all men. . . . Paul saith, "Woe is me if I preach not." A terrible saying, verily, for popes, cardinals, and bishops! If he had said, "Woe be unto me if I fight not and move princes unto war, or if I increase not St. Peter's patrimony, as they call it, it had been a more easy saying for them.'"

These were sharp words, sure to give offence to the English prelates; but these are not the sharpest of Tindale's utterances in his *Obedience*. General charges, however strong, lack the force of specific and detailed accusations; and Tindale's most damaging attack upon the Church of Rome, was his detailed and elaborate exposure of the false pretences of 'The Apostles of Antichrist.'

'Christ, when He had fulfilled His course, anointed His Apostles and disciples with the Spirit, and sent them forth, without all manner disguising [i. e., as he explains it, neither shaven nor shorn, nor anointed with oil], like other men, to preach the atonement and peace which Christ had made between God and man. The Apostles likewise disguised no- man, but chose

¹ The clergy, as is well known, had, by long persevering efforts, succeeded in establishing for themselves an exemption from the ordinary civil courts; they had opened sanctuaries of various kinds where criminals might find refuge, and evade the lay courts. To such an extent did this abuse go, that any one who declared that he was, or meant to be, in holy orders, and could, as a proof, repeat the first verse of the fifty-first psalm, might claim to be handed over to the spiritual courts. Hence the popular name for the verse, which often saved a man's neck from the hangman's rope.

men anointed with the same Spirit; one to preach the Word of God, whom we call, after the Greek tongue, a bishop or a priest; that is, in English, an overseer and an elder. . . . This overseer, because he was taken from his own business and labour, to preach God's Word unto the parish, hath right, by the authority of his office, to challenge an honest living of the parish, as thou mayest see in the Evangelists, and also in Paul. For who will have a servant, and will not give him meat, drink, and raiment, and all things necessary? How they would pay him, whether in money, or assign him so much rent, or in tithes, as the guise now is in many countries, was at their liberty. Likewise in every congregation chose they another after the same example, whom, after the Greek word, we call deacon; that is to say, in English, a servant or minister, whose office was to help and assist the priest, and to gather up his duty, and to gather for the poor of the parish, which were destitute of friends, and could not work.' With this Christian and Apostolic order he contrasts that of Antichrist:—

'ANTICHRIST of another manner hath sent forth his disciples, those "false anointed," of which Christ warneth us before, that they should come and show miracles and wonders, even to bring the very elect out of the way, if it were possible. He anointeth them after the manner of the Jews; and shaveth them and sheareth them after the manner of the heathen priests, which serve the idols. He sendeth them forth not with false oil only, but with false names also: for compare their names unto their deeds, and thou shalt find them false. He sendeth them forth, as Paul prophesied of them, with lying signs and wonders. What sign is the anointing? That they be full of the Holy Ghost. Compare them to the signs of the Holy Ghost, which Paul reckoneth, and thou shalt find it a false sign.

"A bishop must be faultless, the husband of one wife." "Nay," saith the pope, "the husband of no wife, but the holder of as many concubines as he listeth." God commandeth all degrees, if they burn, and cannot live chaste, to marry. The pope saith, "If thou burn, take a dispensation for a concubine, and put her away when thou art old"; or else, as our lawyers say, *Si non caste tamen caute*; that is, "If ye live not chaste, see ye play the knave secretly."

"Harborous "[hospitable]; yea, to whores and bawds; for a poor man shall as soon break his neck as his fast with them, but of the scraps and with the dogs, when dinner is done.

"Apt to teach," and, as Peter saith, "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that ye have, and that with meekness." Which thing is signified by the boots which doctors of divinity are created in, because they should be ready always to go through thick and thin, to preach God's Word; and by the bishop's two-horned mitre, which betokeneth the absolute and perfect knowledge that they ought to have in

the New Testament and the Old. Be not these false signs? For they beat only, and teach not. "Yea," saith the pope, "if they will not be ruled, cite them to appear; and pose them sharply, what they hold of the pope's power, of his pardons, of his bulls, of purgatory, of ceremonies, of confession, and such like creatures of our most holy father's. If they miss in any point, make heretics of them, and burn them. If they be of mine anointed, and bear my mark, disgrace them (I would say, dis- graduate them), and after the ensample of noble Antiochus (2 Macc. vii), pare the crowns and the fingers of them, and torment them craftily, and for very pain make them deny the truth." "But now," say our bishops, "because the truth is come too far abroad, and the lay-people begin to smell our wiles, it is best to oppress them with craft secretly, and to tame them in prison. Yea, let us find the means to have them in the king's prison, and to make treason of such doctrine: yea, we must stir up some war, one where or another, to bring the people into another imagination." "If they be gentlemen, abjure them secretly. Curse them four times in the year. Make them afraid of everything; and, namely [especially], to touch mine anointed; and make them to fear the sentence of the Church, suspensions, excommunications and curses. Be they right or wrong, bear them in hand that they are to be feared yet. Preach me and mine authority, and how terrible a thing my curse is, and how black it maketh their souls. On the holidays, which were ordained to preach God's Word, set up long ceremonies, long matins, long masses, and long evensongs, and all in Latin, that they understand not; and roll them in darkness, that ye may lead them whither ye will. And lest such things should be too tedious, sing some, say some, pipe some, ring the bells, and lull them and rock them asleep." And yet Paul (1 Cor. xiv) forbiddeth to speak in the church or congregation, save in the tongue that all understand. For the layman thereby is not edified or taught. How shall the layman say Amen (saith Paul) to thy blessing or thanksgiving, when he wotteth not what thou sayest? He wotteth not whether thou bless or curse.

'What then saith the pope? "What care I for Paul? I command by the virtue of obedience, to read the Gospel in Latin. Let them not pray but in Latin, no, not their *Pater noster*. If any be sick, go also and say them a Gospel, and all in Latin: yea, to the very corn and fruits of the field, in the procession week, preach the Gospel in Latin: make the people believe, that it shall grow the better." It is verily as good to preach it to swine as to men, if thou preach it in a tongue they understand not. How shall I prepare myself to God's commandments? How shall I be thankful to Christ for His kindness? How shall I believe the truth and promises which God hath sworn, while thou tellest them unto me in a tongue which I understand not?

‘What then saith my lord of Canterbury to a priest that would have had the New Testament gone forth in English? “What,” saith he, “wouldest thou that the lay-people should wete [know] what we do?”

“No fighter: “which, I suppose, is signified by the cross that is borne before the high prelates, and borne before them in procession. Is that also not a false sign? What realm can be in peace for such turmoilers? What so little a parish is it, but they will pick one quarrel or another with them, either for some surplice, chrisom, or mortuary, either for one trifle or other, and cite them to the Arches? Traitors they are to all creatures, and have a secret conspiracy between themselves. One craft they have, to make many kingdoms, and small; and to nourish old titles or quarrels; that they may ever move them to war at their pleasure; and if much lands by any chance fall to one man, ever to cast a bone in the way, that he shall never be able to obtain it, as we now see in the emperor. Why? For as long as the kings be small, if God would open the eyes of any to set a reformation in his realm, then should the pope interdict his land, and send in other princes to conquer it.

“Not given to filthy lucre, but abhorring covetousness;” and, as Peter saith, “Taking the oversight of them, not as though ye were compelled thereunto, but willingly; not for desire of filthy lucre, but of a good mind; not as though ye were lords over the parishes.” Over the parishes, quoth he! O Peter, Peter, thou wast too long a fisher; thou wast never brought up at the Arches, neither wast Master of the Rolls, nor yet Chancellor of England. They are not content to reign over king and emperor, and the whole earth; but challenge authority also in heaven and in hell. It is not enough for them to reign over all that are quick, but have created them a purgatory, to reign also over the dead, and to have one kingdom more than God Himself hath. “But that ye be an ensample to the flock,” saith Peter; “and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive an incorruptible crown of glory.” This “abhorring of covetousness “is signified, as I suppose, by shaving and shearing of the hair, that they have no superfluity. But is not this also a false sign? Yea, verily, it is to them a remembrance to shear and shave, to heap benefice upon benefice, promotion upon promotion, dignity upon dignity, bishopric upon bishopric, with pluralities, unions and TOT QUOTS.

‘First, by the authority of the Gospel, they that preach the Word of God in every parish, and other necessary ministers, have right to challenge an honest living like unto one of the brethren, and therewith ought to be content. Bishops and priests that preach not, or that preach aught save God’s Word, are none of Christ’s, nor of His anointing; but servants of the beast, whose mark they bear, whose word they preach, whose law they maintain clean against God’s law, and with their false sophistry give him greater power than God ever gave to His Son Christ.

‘But they, as insatiable beasts, not unmindful why they were shaven and shorn, because they will stand at no man’s grace, or be in any man’s danger, have gotten into their own hands, first the tithe or tenth of all the realm; and then, I suppose within a little, or altogether, the third foot of all the temporal lands.

‘Mark well how many parsonages or vicarages are there in the realm, which at the least have a plow-land apiece. Then note the lands of bishops, abbots, priors, nuns, knights of St. John’s, cathedral churches, colleges, chauntries, and free-chapels. For though the house fall in decay, and the ordinance of the founder be lost, yet will not they lose the lands. What cometh once in, may never more out. They make a free- chapel of it; so that he which enjoyeth it shall do nought therefore. Besides all this, how many chaplains do gentlemen find at their own cost, in their houses? How many sing for souls by testaments? Then the proving of testaments, the prizing of goods, the bishop of Canterbury’s prerogative; is that not much through the realm in a year? Four offering days, and privy tithes. There is no servant, but that he shall pay somewhat of his wages. None shall receive the body of Christ at Easter, be he never so poor a beggar, or never so young a lad or maid, but they must pay somewhat for it. Then mortuaries for forgotten tithes, as they say. And yet what parson or vicar is there that will forget to have a pigeon-house, to peck up somewhat both at sowing-time and harvest, when corn is ripe? They will forget nothing. No man shall die in their debt; or if any man do, he shall pay it when he is dead. They will lose nothing. Why? It is God’s; it is not theirs. It is St. Hubert’s rents, St. Alban’s lands, St. Edmund’s right, St. Peter’s patrimony, say they, and none of ours. Item, if a man die in another man’s parish, besides that he must pay at home a mortuary for forgotten tithes, he must there pay also the best that he there hath; whether it be an horse of twenty pound, or how good soever he be; either a chain of gold of an hundred marks, or five hundred pounds, if it so chance. It is much, verily, for so little pains-taking in confession, and in ministering the sacraments. Then bead-rolls. Item chrysome, churchings, banns, weddings, offering at weddings, offering at buryings, offering to images, offering of wax and lights, which come to their vantage; besides the superstitious waste of wax in torches and tapers throughout the land. Then brotherhoods and pardoners. What get they also by confessions? Yea, and many enjoin penance, to give a certain [sum] for to have so many masses said, and desire to provide a chaplain themselves; soul-masses, dirges, month - minds, year-minds, All-souls’-day, and trentals. The mother-church, and the high-altar, must have somewhat in every testament. Offerings at priests’ first masses. Item, no man is professed, of whatsoever religion it be, but he must bring somewhat. The hallowing, or rather conjuring, of churches, chapels, altars, super-altars, chalice, vestments, and bells.

Then book, bell, candlestick, organs, chalice, vestments, copes, altar-cloths, surplices, towels, basins, ewers, ship, censer, and all manner ornament, must be found them freely; they will not give a mite thereunto. Last of all, what swarms of begging friars are there! The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner parreth; we lack but a butcher to pull off the skin.

‘What get they in their spiritual law, as they call it, in a year, at the Arches and in every diocese? What get the commissaries and officials with their somners and apparitors, by bawdery in a year? Shall ye not find curates enough which, to flatter the commissaries and officials withal, that they may go quit themselves, shall open unto them the confessions of the richest of their parishes; whom they cite privily, and lay to their charges secretly? If they desire to know their accusers, “Nay,” say they, “the matter is known well enough, and to more than ye are ware of. Come, lay your hand on the book; if ye forswear yourself, we shall bring proofs, we will handle you, we will make an ensample of you.” Oh, how terrible are they! “Come and swear,” say they, “that you will be obedient unto our injunctions.” And by that craft wring they their purses, and make them drop, as long as there is a penny in them. In three or four years shall they in those offices get enough to pay for a bishop’s bull. What other thing are these in a realm save horse-leeches, and even very maggots, cankers, and caterpillars, which devour no more but all that is green; and those wolves which Paul prophesied should come, and should not spare the flock; and which Christ said should come in lambs’ skins; and bade us beware of them, and judge them by their works?

‘Though, as I have before sufficiently proved, a Christian man must suffer all things, be it never so great unright, as long as it is not against God’s commandment; neither is it lawful for him to cast any burden off his back by his own authority, till God pull it off, which laid it on for our deservings; yet ought the kings everywhere to defend their realms from such oppression, if they were Christians; which is seldom seen, and is a hard thing verily, though not impossible. For, alas! they be captives or ever they be kings, yea, almost ere they be born. No man may be suffered about them but flatterers, and such as are first sworn true unto our most holy fathers the bishops; that is to say, false to God and man.

‘If any of the nobles of the realm be true to the king, and so bold that he dare counsel him that which should be to his honour and for the wealth of the realm; they will wait a season for him, as men say; they will provide a ghostly father for him. God bring their wickedness to light! There is no mischief whereof they are not the root; nor bloodshed but through their cause, either by their counsel, or in that they preach not true obedience, and teach not the people to fear God. If any faithful servant be in all the court,

he shall have twenty spies waiting upon him; he shall be cast out of the court, or, as the saying is, conveyed to Calais, and made a captain or an ambassador; he shall be kept far enough from the king's presence.

'The kings ought, I say, to remember that they are in God's stead, and ordained of God, not for themselves, but for the wealth of their subjects. Let them remember that their subjects are their brethren, their flesh and blood, members of their own body, and even their own selves in Christ. Therefore ought they to pity them, and to rid them from such tyranny, which increaseth more and more daily. And though that the kings by the falsehood of the bishops and abbots, be sworn to defend such liberties; yet ought they not to keep their oaths, but to break them; forasmuch as they are unright and clean against God's ordinance, and even but cruel oppression, contrary unto brotherly love and charity. Moreover, the spiritual officer ought to punish no sin; but and if any sin break out, the king is ordained to punish it, and they not; but to preach and exhort him to fear God, and that they sin not.

'And let the kings put down some of their tyranny, and turn some unto a common wealth. If the tenth part of such tyranny were given the king yearly, and laid up in the shire-towns, against the realm had need, what would it grow to in certain years? Moreover, one king, one law, is God's ordinance in every realm. Therefore ought not the king to suffer them to have a several law by themselves, and to draw his subjects thither. It is not meet, will they say, that a spiritual man should be judged of a worldly or temporal man. O abomination! see how they divide and separate themselves: if the layman be of the world, so is he not of God! If he believe in Christ, then is he a member of Christ, Christ's brother, Christ's flesh, Christ's blood, Christ's spouse, coheir with Christ, and hath His Spirit in earnest, and is also spiritual. If they would rob us of the Spirit of God, why should they fear to rob us of worldly goods? Because thou art put in office to preach God's Word, art thou therefore no more one of the brethren? Is the Mayor of London no more one of the city, because he is the chief officer? Is the king no more of the realm, because he is head thereof? The king is in the room of God; and his law is God's law, and nothing but the law of nature and natural equity, which God graved in the hearts of men. Yet Antichrist is too good to be judged by the law of God; he must have a new, of his own making. It were meet, verily, that they went to no law at all. No more needed they, if they would study to preach God's Word truly, and be contented with sufficient, and to be like one of their brethren.

'If any question arose about the faith of the Scripture, then let them judge by the manifest and open Scriptures, not excluding the laymen; for there are many found among the laymen, which are as wise as the officers. Or else, when the officer dieth, how could we put another in his room? Wilt

thou so teach twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, that no man shall have knowledge or judgement in God's Word save thou only? Is it not a shame that we Christians come so oft to church in vain, when he of fourscore years old knoweth no more than he that was born yesterday?'

Even this by no means exhausts the catalogue of charges which Tindale brings against the clergy. They had corrupted the teaching of Holy Scripture regarding the sacraments. Baptism, and 'the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ,' had promises annexed to them¹, and were, therefore, true sacraments; but to these they had added other ceremonies which had no right to the title, and which had been the source of many abuses. They had invented purgatory; they had introduced pilgrimages and worshipping of saints, for the sake of the offerings. They had debased prayer by selling it for money. Above all, they had obscured the meaning of Scripture, by overlooking the literal sense, and inventing imaginary 'tropological, allegorical, and anagogical senses.'

Tindale had already, in treating of the sacraments and prayers to saints, shown himself far in advance of the position which the English Reformers were as yet prepared to take up; and his clearness of view on the subject of the true interpretation of Scripture, is worthy of more than a mere passing note. 'Scripture,' he says, with excellent judgement, far beyond the theology of his time, '*hath but one sense*, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. . . . Allegory proveth nothing, neither can do. For it is not the Scripture, but an ensample or a similitude borrowed of the Scripture, to declare a text or a conclusion of the Scripture more expressly, and to root it and grave it in the heart. For a similitude, or an ensample, doth print a thing much deeper in the wits of a man than doth a plain speaking, and leaveth behind him [it] as it were a sting to prick him forward and to awake him withal. Moreover, if I could not prove with an open text that which the allegory doth express, then were the allegory a thing to be jested at, and of no greater value than a tale of Robin Hood.' Such words as these may seem mere reiteration of truisms to a modern reader; but in Tindale's time, when all true theology had been lost in a wilderness of wild, allegorical, and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, these assertions, which pointed men to the only true method of expounding the Word of God, were not commonplaces, but startling novelties, the first enunciation of a true system of exegesis.

¹ Tindale expresses himself so briefly and cautiously on the subject of the Holy Communion, that it is impossible to decide whether he still held Luther's opinion or had adopted Zwingle's.

One other passage may be cited as a specimen at once of Tindale's clear grasp of his subject, and of the vigorous logic, diversified with occasional touches of grim irony, with which he conducts his argument:—

'The spirituality increaseth daily. More prelates, more priests, more monks, friars, canons, nuns, and more heretics (I would say heremites), with like draff. Set before thee the increase of St. Francis' disciples in so few years. Reckon how many thousands, yea, how many twenty thousands, not disciples only, but whole cloisters, are sprung out of hell of them in so little space. Pattering of prayers increaseth daily. Their service, as they call it, waxeth longer and longer, and the labour of their lips greater; new saints, new service, new feasts, and new holidays. What, take all these away? Sin? Nay; for we see the contrary by experience, and that sin groweth as they grow. But they take away first God's Word, with faith, hope, peace, unity, love, and concord; then house and land, rent and fee, tower and town, goods and cattle, and the very meat out of men's mouths. All these live by purgatory. When other weep for their friends, they sing merrily; when other lose their friends, they get friends. The pope, with all his pardons, is grounded on purgatory. Priests, monks, canons, friars, with all other swarms of hypocrites, do but empty purgatory, and fill hell. Every mass, say they, delivereth one soul out of purgatory. If that were true, yea, if ten masses were enough for one soul, yet were the parish priests and curates of every parish sufficient to scour purgatory: all the other costly workmen might be well spared.

'The pope, which so fast looseth and purgeth in purgatory, cannot, with all the loosings and purgations that he hath, either loose or purge our appetites, and lust, and rebellion that is in us against the law of God. And yet the purging of them is the right purgatory. If he cannot purge them that are alive, wherewith purgeth he them that are dead? The Apostles knew no other ways to purge, but through preaching God's Word, which Word only is that that purgeth the heart, as thou mayest see (John xv). "Ye are pure," saith Christ, "through the Word." Now the pope preacheth not to them whom they feign to be in purgatory, no more than he doth to us that are alive. How then purgeth he them? *The pope is kin to Robin Goodfellow; which sweepeth the house, washeth the dishes, and purgeth all by night; but when day cometh, there is nothing found clean.*'

The peroration is not unworthy of what had preceded:—

'Remember that Christ is the end of all things. He only is our resting-place, and He is our peace. For as there is no salvation in any other name, so is there no peace in any other name. Thou shalt never have rest in thy soul, neither shall the worm of conscience ever cease to gnaw thine heart, till thou come at Christ; till thou hear the glad tidings, how that God for His sake hath forgiven thee all freely. If thou trust in thy works, there is no rest.

Thou shalt think, I have not done enough. Have I done it with so great love as I should do? Was I so glad in doing, as I would be to receive help at my need? I have left this or that undone; and such like. If thou trust in confession, then shalt thou think, Have I told all? Have I told all the circumstances? Did I repent enough? Had I as great sorrow in my repentance for my sins, as I had pleasure in doing them? Likewise in our holy pardons and pilgrimages gettest thou no rest. For thou seest that the very gods themselves, which sell their pardon so good cheap, or some whiles give them freely for glory sake, trust not therein themselves. They build colleges, and make perpetuities, to be prayed for, for ever; and lade the lips of their beadmen, or chaplains, with so many masses, and diriges, and so long service, that I have known of some that have bid the devil take their founders' souls, for very impatency and weariness of so painful labour.

'As pertaining to good deeds, therefore, do the best thou canst, and desire God to give strength to do better daily; but in Christ put thy trust, and in the pardon and promises that God hath made thee for His sake; and on that rock build thine house, and there dwell. For there only shalt thou be sure from all storms and tempests, and from all wily assaults of our wicked spirits, which study with all falsehood to undermine us. And the God of all mercy give thee grace so to do, unto whom be glory for ever! Amen.'

The extracts which have been given will enable the reader to form a tolerably adequate notion of the style and character of the largest and most elaborate of all Tindale's original works. *The Obedience*, it is almost superfluous to remark, after such specimens, is characterized by plain, bold speaking. The trumpet gives forth no uncertain sound. Nor is it the production of a man who was simply dissatisfied with the state of religion around him, and who was longing for redress and reformation. Tindale writes as one who had not only a keen eye to detect the abuses that everywhere existed, but who had also the rarer faculty of discerning how and whence it was possible to provide a remedy. He was not simply, as some Reformers have been, destructive; he could not only assist in the overthrow of error and superstition; he saw clearly how the fabric could be reconstructed on a firmer foundation. He had, in the seclusion of his exile, seen and thought much, and had carefully examined all the opinions which formed his religious belief; and as the result, he had to a wonderful extent divested himself of all the ecclesiastical traditions in which he had been 'noselled.'

Nor is it unworthy of notice that he wields the English language with a strength and facility, such as make his writings easy and pleasant reading even in our day. There is no trace of obsolescence about *The Obedience*; which contains many passages worthy of the writer to whom we owe the plain, strong English of our Bible. Tindale was no vulgar railer, like Roye, although his language is sharp, and his condemnation sufficiently energetic.

If there be any to whom it appears that he sometimes degenerates into unjustifiable violence, the present biographer does not venture to apologize for violent personal abuse, whether used by Tindale or by his opponents; he ventures, however, to suggest that violence is a relative term, and that the man who in calm curiosity looks at the field of battle when all is peace, and the verdure of three centuries hides the desolation of the combat, is not precisely the fittest person to gauge the excitement of the struggle, when life and death were in the issue of every blow.

To us, the gigantic papal system of the sixteenth century, that wonderful *imperium in imperio* with its proud claims, its tens of thousands of satellites, its endless abuses, is in general little more than some extinct geological system, which we study with the mild excitement of antiquarian curiosity. To Tindale it was a terrible chimera, devouring the life of all religion and all thought; or a huge, pitiless machine, remorselessly pursuing its own purposes, reckless of the lives and happiness of those who stood in its onward path; or, as he himself would probably have preferred to say, it was very Antichrist, arrayed in lies, and armed with vengeance against all the true followers of Christ.

The reader is, of course, prepared to be told that *The Obedience* was severely condemned by the English prelates; it assailed them, root and branch, and they visited it with no measured condemnation in return. Sir Thomas More pours out the full vials of his wrath upon ‘that frantic book of *Obedience* . . . a book able to make a Christian man that would believe it, leave off all good Christian virtues, and lose the merit of his Christendom . . . a book wherein the writer railleth at large against all popes, against all kings, against all prelates, against all priests, against all religions, against all the laws, against all saints, against the Sacraments of Christ’s Church, against all virtuous works, against all divine service, and, finally, against all thing that good is . . . a malicious book, wherein the writer showeth himself so puffed up with the poison of pride, malice, and envy, that it is more than marvel that the skin can hold together; for he hath not only *sowked* out the most poison that he could find through all Luther’s books, or take of him by mouth, and all that hath *spette* out in this book, but hath also in many things far passed his master, running forth so mad for malice that he fareth as though he heard not his own voice¹.’

In proportion to the violence with which More and the prelates condemned the book, was the esteem in which it was held by those in England who sympathized with the doctrines of the Reformation. Full of consolation and encouragement, it seems to have contributed in a marked manner to

¹ Sir Thomas More’s *Confutation*: the reader will perceive that Sir Thomas was, to say the least, quite a match for Tindale in violent language.

revive the sinking spirits of the English Reformers, who had been awed into timidity and retractation by the vigorous measures of the bishops. It is certainly noteworthy that Bilney, when, after his lamentable fall, he felt his spiritual strength again returning to him, and set out, as he so pathetically expressed it, 'to go up to Jerusalem,' carried with him, apparently as powerful sources of support, Tindale's New Testament and his *Obedience of a Christian Man*.

And Bilney was not the only one who derived strength to be faithful unto the end from the noble teaching of Tindale. Bainham, who, like Bilney, had been terrified into recantation, was filled with remorse for his apostasy; and after weighing the matter carefully in his heart, and, no doubt, imploring strength from the Lord whom he had denied, and now wished to confess before men, 'he came the next Sunday to St. Austin's with the *New Testament* in his hand, in English, and *The Obedience of a Christian Man* in his bosom; and stood up there before the people in his pew, declaring openly, with weeping tears, that he had denied God; and prayed all the people to forgive him, and to beware of his weakness, and not to do as he had done.' 'After this,' adds the Martyrologist, 'he was strengthened, and bore the cruel death by fire with remarkable courage.'

But the utility of Tindale's work must not be measured even by such instances as these, noble proof though they be of its power to inspire fresh life into the fainting hearts of the English Reformers. *The Obedience* brought for the first time into prominence the two great truths which constitute the very essence of the English Reformation—the supreme authority of Scripture in the Church, and the supreme authority of the King in the State. Truths such as these, so sweeping in their application, so obvious to the comprehension, when set forth with all Tindale's wonderful force of expression and clearness of argument, at once took root in the minds of the English people. From this time forward the Reformers in England had a definite aim and purpose; and the goal being once placed before them, their progress became steady and rapid. A few years of strife and confusion, and the clergy were shorn of their civil independence; the king was acknowledged supreme head over all subjects, clerical and lay; the Holy Scripture was recognized as the ultimate standard by which all controversies were to be decided; and those principles were generally received, of which the English Reformation was the natural result, and the normal, though, perhaps, not the complete, development.

To this consummation Tindale's writings most powerfully contributed; it was he that pointed out the goal towards which their course was to be directed; it was his works that gave clearness and distinctness to what had formerly been but vague feelings of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, and indefinite longings after their improvement. The impulse which

he communicated was propagated by others; in the writings of such men as Latimer the thoughts and words of Tindale can perpetually be traced; and thus the distant exile continued through life to be the prophet and instructor of that country which he was never again to see; and was one of the prime originators and directors of that mighty movement in England which he was not himself spared to witness. For to the end he worked without reward, and like the Jewish patriarch, only saw in distant vision that promised land which he was not to be allowed to enter.

To what has already been written of the influence, open and secret, actual and probable, which *The Obedience* exercised in England, an addition has still to be made which savours more of the sentimental excitement of a love-story than of the calm dignity of history, and yet rests on trustworthy authority. Of all Englishmen the man whom it was most desirable, and at the same time most unlikely that the book should reach, was the man whose strong hands then swayed the destinies of England. To him, also, however, in a strange manner the words of Tindale were conveyed, through the operation of that lawless passion which was to be overruled for the accomplishment of such mighty events. The tale, which sounds like an extract from a novel, and reads best in the simple language of the old memorialist who has recorded it¹, is here subjoined for the reader's benefit.

'Upon the Lady Anne [Boleyn] waited a fair young gentlewoman named Mrs. Gaynsford; and in her service was also retained Mr. George Zouch, father to Sir John Zouch. This gentleman, of a comely sweet person, a Zouch indeed [Zouch = douce=dulcis=sweet], was a suitor in way of marriage to the said young lady; and among other love-tricks, once he plucked from her a book in English, called Tindale's *Obedience*, which the Lady Anne had lent her to read. About which time the Cardinal had given commandment to the prelates, and especially to Dr. Sampson, Dean of the King's Chapel, that they should have a vigilant eye over all people for such books that they came not abroad; that so, as much as might be, they might not come to the King's reading. But this which he most feared fell out upon this occasion. "For Mr. Zouch"—I use the words of the MS.—[Foxye's MSS.], "was so ravished with the Spirit of God, speaking now as well in the heart of the reader as first it did in the heart of the maker of the book, that he was never well but when he was reading of that book. Mrs. Gaynsford wept, because she could not get the book from her wooer, and he was as ready to weep to deliver it. But see the providence of God: Mr. Zouch, standing in the chapel before Dr. Sampson, ever reading upon this book, and the Dean never having his eye off the book in the gentleman's hand, called him to him, and then snatched the book out of his hand, asked

¹ Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. pp. 172, &c

his name, and whose man he was. And the book he delivered to the Cardinal. In the meantime, the Lady Anne asketh her woman for the book. She on her knees told all the circumstances. The Lady Anne showed herself not sorry nor angry with either of the two. But, said she, ‘Well, it shall be the dearest book that ever the Dean or Cardinal took away.’ The noble woman goes to the King, and upon her knees she desireth the King’s help for her book. Upon the King’s token [the royal signet probably], the book was restored. And now bringing the book to him, she besought his Grace most tenderly to read it. The King did so, and delighted in the book; for, saith he, ‘*This book is for me and all kings to read.*’ And in a little time the King, by the help of this virtuous lady, by the means aforesaid, had his eyes opened to the truth, to search the truth, to advance God’s religion and glory, to abhor the Pope’s doctrine, his lies, his pomp and pride, to deliver his subjects out of the Egyptian darkness, the Babylonian bonds, that the Pope had brought him and his subjects under.”

It may seem preposterous to look for any formal confirmation of the truth of this ‘love-trick,’ yet singularly enough it is corroborated, in at least its substance, by the narrative of George Wyatt, grandson of the poet, who was a contemporary of Anne Boleyn, and whose name, indeed, has been unjustly associated with that of the unfortunate Queen as having been one of the partners of her guilt. He repeats what, with variations in detail, is essentially the same story. Anne Boleyn it seems had, notwithstanding all prohibitions, obtained and read *The Obedience*¹, marking with her nail such passages ‘as seemed worthy of the King’s knowledge; her maid took up the book as it lay in a window, and her suitor in his turn walked forth reading it, and met one of Wolsey’s men, who borrowed the book and carried it to the Cardinal. Anne was informed of what had happened, and immediately told the King how she had been treated and what was the nature of the book thus seized. ‘And,’ says Wyatt, ‘she was but newly come from the King, but [when] the Cardinal came in with the book in his hands to make complaints of certain points in it that he knew the King would not like of [so that Wolsey also had read *The Obedience*], and withal to take occasion with him against those that countenanced such books in general, and specially women, and, as might be thought, with mind to go farther against the Queen [so Wyatt calls Anne Boleyn, but she was not yet Queen] more directly, if he had perceived the King agreeable to his meaning. But the King that somewhat afore distasted [disliked] the Cardinal, finding the notes the

¹ See Wyatt’s narrative in Singer’s edition of Cavendish’s *Wolsey*, vol. ii. *The Obedience* is not specified; Wyatt merely says that ‘it was a book of those controversies then waged concerning religion, and specially of the authority of the Pope and his clergy, and of their doings against Kings and States’; a description which leaves no reasonable doubt that *The Obedience* was intended.

Queen had made, all turned the more to hasten his ruin, which was also furthered on all sides.’

No truer criticism was ever pronounced on *The Obedience* than that here ascribed to Henry, that it was a book for him and all kings to read; and whatever deduction may be made from Foxe’s panegyric, on the score of his partiality having led him to attribute an exaggerated influence to Tindale’s work, it cannot be doubted that it was perused by Henry most opportunely at a momentous crisis, when he was about to assume into his own hands the reins of power which Wolsey had hitherto held; and whether or not the future policy of the English monarch was in any way derived from the inspiration of Tindale’s pages, it is unquestionable that in *The Obedience* we can see as in prophetic forecast the outlines of those great measures which have made the reign of Henry for ever memorable.