

Three Centuries Ago.

Before me lies a version of the Bible which came to me lately. It belonged to the late scholar, Rev. Chas. Tupper, D. D., who was possessor of copies of the Sacred Word in several languages. I have somehow fallen heir to three or four of them, but this one is a great treasure. It is printed in Old English, ("black letter," it is called, and like the German text of our old copy books at school) and is a little difficult to read; but it is worth while familiarizing oneself with these obscure characters, because we are thereby brought into contact with our ancestors of nine generations since. The very words, dark looking letters of curious type, have an old-world reminding effect. The words we are reading our fathers did read, and as we peruse them the line flames true for us.

"The thoughts we are thinking our fathers did think." But by certain facts connected with the publishing of this Book we are brought still more into sympathy with those who have gone before us. This edition, printed in England in 1584, by permission of her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, is a revision of the version made by some English exiles in Geneva, in 1557, and hence called the "Geneva Bible." It is also known as the "Breeches Bible," on account of the rendering of Gen. 3:7, "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves breeches." Our suffering ancestors made and read this book. They fed upon its truths, and stayed themselves with its promises. They witnessed a good confession with its very words upon their lips. They are not greatly different from Tyndale's, but there is some difference; they vary also from King James' version in many instances. It is well to see the actual phrases which these older people used, with their quaint spellings, their u's for v's and long s's. Perhaps the printer will indulge us by printing one verse for us in this Old English, so that we may catch the color of a bye-gone time. We will transcribe the Psalm 50:3, which was no doubt often read and quoted by these persecuted ones:

Our God shall come, and shall not keepe silence: a fire shall deuoure before him, and a mightie tempest shall bee moued rounde about him.

The margins were wide when this Bible was printed, but have been cut down probably more than once. On this margin there is a pithy commentary, so arranged as to fill all the space on the outside of the page, and it is generally to the point and so of use to the reader. For example Psalm 51:2, when David cries, "Wash mee thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and cleanse mee from my sinne," the comment is, "My sinnes sticke so fast in mee, that I have neede of some singular kinde of washing." There is also the further help of an "argument," or summary, prefixed to every book, giving in briefest outline the end and aim of the author.

We find, moreover, that the modern helps, so frequently found in Teacner's Bibles and others, are anticipated. "Two right profitable and fruitfull Concordances, or large and ample Tables Alphabetically," occupy as much space as in some of those of our own time. It is really the genesis of the modern Concordance, and it is instructive to note how our fathers went about such a good work. In the first "Table," or part, is given the interpretation of the "Hebrue, Caldean, Greeke and Latine wordes and names, scattering dispersed throughout the whole Bible." In the second part the principal words are given by which we may find particular texts. Instead of giving the bare text, as in Cruden and those following him, the idea is emphasised. For example, under "Sinne and sinner," we have this expressive style: "Adam layd his sinne to his wife and she to the serpent, Genesis 3:12, 13." "Sinne taken for the roote of peruersitie, Rom. 6 and 7 chapters, and for a sacrifice for the satisfaction of sinne, Rom. 8:2, 2 Cor. 5:21." So that it was interpretation of the text, and not simply the text itself, that these first helpers were after.

This incipient Concordance in no case quotes the words of the text, but invariably gives a characterization of its own. For example, under "elect" we have, "The elect are few in number, Matt. 7:14," etc. "The elect of God cannot be condemned, Rom. 8:33, 34." "St. Paul knew that the Thessalonians were elect, 1 Thess. 1:4." "The elect only beleene, Acts 13:48," and so all through. We give the full texts; our fathers commenced at the other end, by giving their own view of a text, and then pointing to the place where one might verify their view.

The old Book smacks of Geneva. John Calvin his mark is all over it. Wherever there is the slightest chance the decrees of God are thrust in your face. Calvinism pure and simple is here served up as the Bread of Life. "The elect feare God and be mindful of pleasing him, Mal. 3:16," is an instance of persistent reading a doctrine into a verse whether it is there or not. For myself, I respect Calvin, and for the most part honor his presentation of a certain part of Divine truth. I think that we do well to hold by the Divine Sovereignty, and that we are weaker today for blinking the doctrine. It is there, in this Bible, and in all Bibles. It is the meat which has made heroes fight. But it is not everything.

It has its place, but not in every sermon; not for a poor enquiring sinner anyway, nor yet for those who are young, nor indeed for many real believers, ignorant, with no capacity to grasp the gigantic ideas, nor yet ability to collocate man's responsibility with God's absolute determination. I know that some men make free with these things, but for myself I cannot lightly handle them. I shall, in continuing these observations on the religion of our ancestors, return to this point in my next.

D. A. STEELE.
Rupert St., Amherst, Jan. 1899.

"Mean—Very!"

It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining brightly. On the sands children were busily employed with their little spades in throwing up sand banks and laughing merrily as the sea ran in upon and around them. Men and women strolled leisurely along, while here and there fishermen might be seen repairing their boats and nets in readiness for future use.

A short distance from the promenade and sheltered by a long chain of rocks, some bathers were disporting themselves in the sea.

One of these, who seemed the best swimmer in the group, had gone some distance from the shore, when all at once he uttered a cry, threw up his hands and disappeared. All was now consternation, men and women ran hither and thither, and fear and dismay were written upon every face; some cried for one thing, some for another, but in the midst of all the excitement one man, at least, was cool and therefore prepared to act.

No sooner was heard the cry, "a man drowning," than a fisherman, who up to this point had been employed in mending some nets, sprang into his boat, and bending almost double, was soon flying through the waters on his way to rescue the drowning man.

But with all the haste he had made he was not a moment too soon, for already the man had sank twice, and as he rose the third time, the brave fisherman grasped him by the hair of his head and then taking fresh hold under his arms dragged him into the boat, where he lay exhausted and insensible, while smiling joyfully the brave fisherman rowed towards the shore.

But here a fresh danger arose, for in his joy and haste he had forgotten the presence of a large rock that lay between him and the beach, the whereabouts of which he knew as well as he did that of his own home, but not thinking of it rowed straight upon it, knocking a large hole in the bottom of his boat which rapidly began to sink. But nothing daunted the brave fellow, quick as thought, took off his Jersey and with it plugged the hole and again pulled for the shore, but notwithstanding all the boat rapidly filled with water and sank.

There was great excitement on shore, but this gave way to the wildest manifestations of joy, and a loud ringing cheer went up from the crowd assembled as the brave fisherman with his insensible, half-drowned man in his arms waded through the water safely to land. The gentleman was immediately conveyed to his hotel where he remained in bed some few days, and the fisherman was congratulated on every hand for his courageous conduct.

But now the brave fellow began to be a little troubled—his boat was a wreck, his means of livelihood for the time being gone.

He should have a new boat, was the general cry, and he richly deserved one. So a subscription list was started and put into the hands of the fisherman, with the request that he should take it first to the gentleman whose life he had saved, for him to head the list, every one thinking, of course, that his donation would be a large one.

The fisherman did as he was requested, and calling at the hotel sent up his paper to the gentleman who was still in bed and awaited patiently the reply—soon it came, and as the man glanced at the coin in one hand and the gentleman's signature on the paper in the other, he stood like one dumfounded, the name was there and opposite the sum subscribed, which he held in his hand—50c! And although the people in the town quickly made up the required amount, so that the fisherman had his boat, they all with one accord said, "Shame, upon him, he's the meanest man on earth," and with that verdict, you and I, dear reader, will I am sure agree.

And yet, on second thoughts, there are actions meaner and baser far than the one here recorded enacted every day, and perpetrated it may be by those who are reading these lines.

The meanest persons in the world are unconverted men and women, and a few words will suffice to convince any one not totally blinded by the devil, of the fact.

We are each and everyone indebted to the Great Author of our being for the life we enjoy.

We are indebted to Him for the enjoyment of this world's goods, whether we possess much or little. For it is certain that we brought nothing into the world, and it is equally certain that we shall take nothing away with us when we go.

We are indebted to Him for mental and physical

strength, and the many comforts that more or less surround us all. We are indebted to Him for the sacred ties of the home circle, the fellowship of true friends, and the loving sympathy of hearts that beat in happy unison with our own.

We are indebted to Him for every talent we possess, and the opportunity for employing the same that has helped to lift our lives above the mere level of sordid and selfish mediocrity.

For these and countless gifts besides, God asks but one return. "Son, daughter, give me thine heart."

And the reply is cold indifference and in some cases unconcealed enmity. And as if to add insult to injury, the affections of the best men and women are but too often bestowed upon the most unworthy objects.

And, moreover, how often do we hear them say when remonstrated with, as to their conduct towards God, "It will be all right, plenty of time yet," which simply means in plain English,—I want a little more of the world, a little more of the pleasures of sin, and then when I am worn out and, humanly speaking, fit for nothing, I will give my heart to God.

They think and talk as though God had nothing else to do but wait in close attendance upon themselves, forgetting all the while that, "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy."

And again, the drowning man of whom we spoke in the beginning of this article, was snatched from the jaws of death, as he was sinking for the last time.

And who knows but that this warning may be the last that some of the readers of these lines are destined to receive? The last warning will come sooner or later, and the word of an offended God will go forth "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground." If this should be true of you, dear reader, how will it fare with you then? These are solemn truths, so often repeated, that they seem to lose their power by frequent repetition. Nevertheless the truth still stands, and may be summed up in one little sentence.

"There are no acts of pardon past
In the dark tomb to which we haste!"

And then think of the great white throne before which the unsaved will have to stand, not to be judged, but to receive the awful sentence: "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Whatever "the torments of hell" may mean, it seems to me the greatest torment of all will be an eternal consciousness that will afflict the lost soul throughout eternity, that they are there not because God willed it, but because they themselves refused the offer of mercy, and thus condemned their own souls.

Again, when this rescued man was brought in from the sea, a crowd of people waited upon the shore, and cheered to the echo, so great was their joy in seeing a fellow creature rescued from the jaws of death.

So on the eternal shores, there will not be wanting loved ones who have gone before, who will join with the angels before the throne, in rejoicing over another trophy snatched as a brand from the burning.

Shall it be so in your case, reader? The answer remains with you. Come to Jesus. God help you.
Havelock, N. B. FREDERICK T. SNELL.

"Go Forward."

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLVE.

"Go Forward" in faith, looking off unto Jesus,
Just reckon self dead, leave dark Egypt behind;
The Lamb has been slain and the precious blood
sprinkled,
"Go forward" and fulness of blessing you'll find.

"Go forward," "go forward," fear not the veiled future,
The rod of thy God doth command the way through;
"Go forward," "go forward," triumphantly singing
The living way keeps distant Salem in view;
"Go forward, go forward" keep step with thy leader;
The past's in the sea, the Egyptians behind;
"Go forward, go forward," don't fret for to-morrow,
Just rest in the Lord and His comfort you'll find.

"Go forward, go forward," yes going while resting,
He bears us along in the arms of His love;
Look up in His face, and you'll grow in His likeness,
And know Him by faith ere you see Him above.
Havelock, N. B. FREDERICK T. SNELL.

It is well sometimes to think that right in our homes, sitting right at our tables, there may be those whose hearts are hungering for a little of the ministry of joy. They would find much spiritual profit in a little sympathetic appreciation, in thoughtfulness for their comfort, in the lighting of the face at their presence.—The Watchman.

Religion leads beyond philosophy. The Christian rises side by side with the philosopher into the starry heavens. They tread, foot by foot, the zodiac around. Together their souls expand and burn and wonder and adore. And here the Christian bows to his learned companion, and leaves him in the Milky Way, and on his wings of faith ascends the upper skies enters the Paradise of God, soars through fields of light, and surveys the mansions of the blest.—Bishop Thomson.