

little by little to have a sight of his own errors. Whereupon Peter Martyr was wont to say that he was not much troubled about his other opponents, but that he was greatly moved concerning Gilpin, "for he doeth and speaketh all things with an upright heart." Doubtless God heard the prayer of Martyr that he would be pleased at the last to convert unto His truth the heart of Gilpin, for from that time forth Gilpin drew near to the light of the truth, not upon a sudden, but as he himself confessed, by degrees. When he came to search in the Roman religion, he was forced to acknowledge that many errors were crept into the church, "which hinder and obscure the matter of our salvation, insomuch that they are no small offence to as many as hunger and thirst after righteousness."

He found that there is not so much as a word touching seven sacraments before Peter Lombard (A.D. 1159); that the use of the Lord's Supper in one kind only was contrary to express Scriptures; that transubstantiation was a devise of the schoolmen; that the adoration of images was instituted against the distinct command of God, and so forth. While he was distracted in mind by these discoveries, the rule of Roman faith, lately changed in the Council of Trent, utterly confounded him. He had observed that according to the ancient writers, as well as the later ones, such as Lombard, Scotus, Aquinas, and the rest, the rule of faith was to be drawn only from the Holy Scriptures, but in the Council of Trent he beheld human traditions made equal with the Scriptures. Therefore he began to doubt whether the Pope might not be that anti-christ foretold in the Scriptures, and the Roman Church plainly anti-christian. He was wont to say that the churches of the Protestants could not give any firm and solid reason for their separation unless this supposition were true, but afterwards he became a conscientious member of our Reformed Church, without, it would seem, having ever attained to his previous condition, which indeed was not necessary to justify secession. There was no forsaking of the Catholic Church on the part of England or on the part of Gilpin, at the Reformation, in spirit, it was exactly the contrary.

The time was now come for him to apply his wonderful gifts to the work of an evangelist in one of the many English districts which under Romanism had become wastes of superstition, ignorance, savage strife, and sensuality. Gilpin shrank from such a solemn trust, but King Edward VI. pressed upon him the acceptance of a crown living in Durham. As a preliminary step he was expected to preach before the king, which he did with such effect as to stir the consciences of all and to secure the lasting regard of several prominent men, one of whom, Secretary Cecil,

procured for him the rare privilege of a general license to preach through the country, a privilege afterwards renewed in Elizabeth's reign. He began his work in the North with burning zeal, but he was not quite happy, because not yet fully persuaded in his own mind, and he desired to go abroad for a season that he might converse with the more distinguished theologians of the Continent. So he resigned his living and sailed for Holland. The whole period of his voluntary exile, which extended over three years, was devoted to travelling from city to city and searching into the things which belonged to his peace; the result being that he returned to England, heart and soul and mind consecrated to the cause of the Reformation. In his case, the blessed old words were fulfilled, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The unhappy and fanatical Mary was now on the throne of England, but in the distant diocese of Durham, and under the protection of his uncle Bishop Tunstal, Gilpin found a safe asylum and a sphere of pastoral labour. His clerical brethren at the bishop's palace tried hard to entangle him in his talk, especially as he was a thorn in their side, owing to their ignorance, their scandalous lives, and their neglect of duty.

But at last he found the desired field where he was to spend his strength and his days. An immense parish, seven miles from Durham, was committed to his care, comprising some fourteen villages, a district so remote that King Edward's efforts on the subject of reform had not even been heard of there during that monarch's lifetime.

In addition to preaching incessantly and visiting from house to house, Gilpin founded a school where he trained young men for the work of the ministry. He kept open house for all, and people came to rely on his judgment, sympathy, and candour to terminate all their disputes.

Nor can we wonder that the moral aspect of his parish began to brighten, and that the power of his preaching was at times so irresistible that men would stand up in church and publicly confess their sins, unable to endure in silence his appeal to their conscience.

Other eyes, however, than those of friends were watching his career. The neighbouring clergy felt that his life was a standing rebuke to themselves, and they longed to get rid of him. It seemed that their wishes would be gratified when he was summoned to London by Bishop Bonner on a charge of thirty-two articles of heresy, the assurance being given that in the course of a fortnight he would be brought to the stake.

Gilpin was accustomed to say that nothing can