

revision seems to have met with very general favour, if we may judge from the fact that out of the hundred and seventy copies of Wycliffe's version now extant, one hundred and thirty-seven belong to Purvey's revision.

Such therefore was the first form in which the Word of God was brought within the reach of the English people; and the clergy of England very speedily shared their opinion of Wycliffe's work. The Convocation which assembled at Oxford in 1408, after forbidding any man to translate Scripture into English of "his own authority," solemnly prohibited the reading of Wycliffe's translation under "pain of the greater excommunication!" By way of justifying this monstrous decree, Sir Thomas More asserted, as some modern writers have done, that Wycliffe's version was accompanied by offensive "prologues and notes;" but this is untrue; the work contained no "notes," and the "prologues" were exact and literal translations of those of St. Jerome, the compiler of that very Vulgate which was so sacred in the eyes of the church.

But while the bishops were thus condemning the English Bible as the work of a man who was "the instrument of the devil," the people had found it to be in very deed that bread of life for which their souls had long pined, and not all the threats of Convocation could deter them from reading it. The sanguinary laws against heretics passed in the commencement of the fifteenth century succeeded, after a time, in repressing the open profession of Lollard opinions; but men still continued to read in secret the precious words of truth which Wycliffe and Purvey had given to England. In the Bishop's Registers we catch interesting glimpses, in the records of trials for heresy, of private assemblies of humble mechanics and labourers who were in the habit of meeting under the protection of night to hear the Word of God read from some tattered fragment of Wycliffe's Gospels, and who by the help of this Divine light had discovered the errors and abuses under which religion was overwhelmed. The influence of Wycliffe's own writings passed away, but his labours on the Word of God produced permanent results; they prepared the way for that great movement of which he was the bright precursor. It is not too much to say that nearly all the spiritual life and light in England during the century preceding the Reformation may be traced to the circulation of Wycliffe's version of the Holy Scriptures among the English people.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st FEBRUARY, 1878.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, Dec. 11th, at 7.30 P.M. The Hon. William McMaster in the chair. The Secretary read the circular which had been sent to the London Branches, and which was approved.

Reports were submitted from the following Agents: the Rev'ds. W. W. Moss, A. Young, Dr. Beaumont, J. Gray, C. R. Matthew. R. Hay, J. J. Rice, T. M. Reikie