

JOHN WYCLIFFE.



THE most conspicuous name in the religious history of England during the fourteenth century is that of John de Wycliffe.* He was born about the year 1320, near Richmond, in Yorkshire; and died at Lutterworth, on the last day of the year 1384. His life is closely connected with the University of Oxford, in connection with which he held in succession various important offices—in 1356 he is Seneschal (or steward) of Merton College, in 1361 Master of Balliol, in 1365 Warden of Canterbury Hall, a foundation afterwards merged in that of Christ Church. In 1374 we find him at Bruges, one of the commissioners sent by the king, Edward III., to treat with the Papal Nuncio on the subject of "reservation of benefices," an encroachment by which many of the livings in England had been drawn into the hands of the Pope. In the same year he was presented by the king to the rectory of Lutterworth, which preferment he retained to the close of his life. His last years were troubled by persistent attacks from the enemies whom his uncompromising resistance to the abuses of the times had aroused against him. In 1377 he is summoned before Convocation, at St. Paul's, to answer charges of erroneous teaching; in the following year he appears before a synod at Lambeth; three years later the Chancellor of the University of Oxford condemns opinions on the Eucharist which were ascribed to Wycliffe and his followers. Amidst these assaults, occasioned by his faithful teaching, and his vehement opposition to the "begging friars" (whom he pronounced to be the "cause, beginning, well, and maintaining of perturbation in Christendom, and of all evils of this world"), he pursued to the last his course of unremitting devotion to the work of teaching and preaching. The powerful patronage of John of Gaunt and others of high station and great influence saved Wycliffe from the fierce persecution which overpowered many of his adherents. Nicholas de Hereford was excommunicated and imprisoned, and seems to have regained his liberty at the sacrifice of his collar opinions. Ashton gave way for a time; Repeington desisted, and became a persecutor of his former friends.

* Or Wyellf, or Wic'lf. The name is written in twenty or thirty different ways.

John Purvey, who was Wycliffe's associate at Lutterworth, suffered imprisonment in 1390; in 1400, terrified by the fate of Sautre, who was burnt alive as a heretic, he publicly retracted his obnoxious tenets; the record of a second imprisonment in 1421 affords evidence that he rejoined the party of which he had been the leader.

[The above is an excerpt from that admirable and practically exhaustless work, "The Bible Educator," (published by Messrs. Cassell) - a series of volumes that everyone would do well to possess.]

IN BONDAGE.

BY D. L. MOODY.

I WAS with General Grant's army when they went into Richmond. I had not been in the streets of Richmond more than a few hours before we heard that the poor slaves were just coming into liberty, and upon whom the light of liberty was just shining, were going to have what they called a jubilee meeting. The meeting was only for coloured people; but I managed to get in. There was a crowd of 3000 men and women. The bright light of liberty was just shining upon them, and they were rubbing their eyes and looking round to see where they were. Liberty had come upon them so suddenly that they did not realise their position. They had some chaplains of some of our Northern regiments for speakers. We had coloured chaplains to coloured regiments. I have heard a great many orators in our country of America, but never any like I heard that day. One coloured orator stood up and said, "Mothers, we bring you good news to-day. You are for ever free. That little child has been torn from your bosom and sold to a distant state for the last time." And those mothers just believed the glad news, and wept, and shouted, "Glory to God in the highest." It was a very enthusiastic meeting. They believed the Gospel, and there was a shout went up from them. It was glad tidings; they were for ever free; they were no longer bondsmen. Then, turning to the young men, the orator said, "Young men, rejoice to-day; you have been put on the auction block and sold, you have heard the crack of the slave-driver's whip, for the last time. You are free for ever, and your posterity. You are never to be sold again as cattle; you are never to be sold as horses. You are for ever free." And the young men believed it, and they clapped their hands and shouted for joy, and the tears run down their cheeks. They just believed the good news. They believed Abraham Lincoln's proclamation he had proclaimed true, and they freely believed it. I want to have you believe the Gospel to-night, that Christ is able to set every bondsman free to-night. Then the orator said, "Young maidens, you have been sold at the auction block for the last time. You and your posterity are for ever free. You are no longer slaves to any one. You can go where you please, and do what you please. You are for ever free." And those young maidens clapped their hands and shouted for joy. What made them do that? Because they believed it. It was Gospel to them. They had been slaves for a long time, and had never expected liberty; but their fetters were broken, and they were free for ever.

But let me tell you, my friends, that no slave in the Southern States of America ever had so hard a master as you have got. You have a harder master than any Southern slave ever had. You are serving the devil. What does he pay you for it? Did you ever see a man serving Satan who was satisfied? The longer you go on in his service, the harder it will become; and by-and-by, after he has done with you here, he will take you to his place of torment. You may laugh at it, and make light of it now; but I pity the man who is

A SLAVE OF THE DEVIL.

I come to-night to tell you you can be free if you will. God sent Christ into the world not only to heal the broken-hearted, but to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the recovery of sight to the blind. I do not think it would take more than five minutes to prove that the world is blind to their own interests. What downright blindness, what madness for a man to reject salvation, to reject the Saviour of the world, God's gift; to reject eternal life, to reject pardon, to reject the offer of mercy! But, my friends, Christ came to open blind eyes. May He open many a blind eye here to-