

It is evident at a glance that this book is no reprint of Coverdale's translation. Yet, notwithstanding the measure of favour shown to Coverdale's Bible, the new volume made its way into England with surprising ease and success. The first notice of it that we find is in a letter from Crammer to Cromwell, dated August 4, 1537. The Archbishop begs Cromwell to read the book, a copy of which he sends with his letter, assuring him that, so far as he has examined the translation, it is more to his liking than any translation heretofore made. He prays Cromwell to exhibit the book to the king, and to obtain from him a "licence that the same may be sold and read of every person, without drafter of any act, proclamation, or ordinance heretofore granted to the contrary, until such time that we the Bishops shall set forth a better translation, which I think will not be till a day after doomsday." A few days later Crammer again writes, expressing his most hearty thanks to Cromwell for having obtained from the king that the book "shall be allowed by his authority to be bought and read within this realm." This translation may therefore be called the first authorised version of the English Bible. The initials mentioned above, R. G. and E. W., are those of the London printers, Richard Grafton and Edward Whitechurch, at whose expense the volume was printed. From a letter written by Grafton to Crammer, in which he seeks protection against unauthorised reprints, we learn that the impression had consisted of 1,500 copies, and that Grafton had ventured in the undertaking the sum of £500—a large venture at that time. The whole impression appears to have been sold within a short period. The royal licence had removed all obstacles which could embarrass the sale or the reading of the book, and the English nation joyfully welcomed the gift of the Scriptures translated into their mother tongue.

But it is time to ask, Who was Thomas Matthew? What is the meaning of the initials I. R. and W. T., which, we have seen, are found in this book? The second of these questions may be easily answered. Foxe's testimony, though of doubtful accuracy in some details, is of itself sufficient to show that under "I. R." we must understand John Rogers, the first who suffered for his religion in the reign of Queen Mary.

John Rogers was born about the year 1500. Soon after taking the degree of B.A. at Cambridge, in 1525, he received an invitation to Christ Church, Oxford, then known as "Cardinal College." About the year 1534, he accepted the office of chaplain to the Merchant Adventurers at Antwerp, in which city Tyndale was then residing. Foxe relates that in Antwerp Rogers chanced "to fall in company with that worthy martyr of God, William Tyndale, and with Miles Coverdale, which both for the hatred they bare to Popish superstition and idolatry, and love they bare toward true religion, had forsaken their native country. In conferring with them the Scriptures, he came to great knowledge in the Gospel of God, inasmuch that he cast off the heavy yoke of Popery, perceiving it to be impure and filthy idolatry, and joined himself with them two in that painful" (*i.e.* difficult) "and most profitable labour of translating the Bible into the English tongue, which is entitled, 'The Translation of Thomas Matthew.'" Rogers's association with Tyndale seems to have been very intimate, though of but short duration. His Bible was published a few months after Tyndale's death. In 1537 he married, and removed to Wittenberg, where, probably, he remained until 1547. During the short reign of Edward VI., he received many marks of favour from the party then in power. His elevated position and his courageous advocacy of Protestant opinions marked him out as an early victim in the persecution which followed; and in February, 1555, he was burned alive in Smithfield.

The nature of Rogers's Biblical labours will appear when we examine the internal character of Matthew's Bible. Enough has been said to show that "W. T." can hardly have any other meaning than "William Tyndale." It is much more difficult to deal with the remaining question, relating to Thomas Matthew. Foxe intimates that this was merely a name which Rogers assumed