



WYCLIFFE AND LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.

## JOHN DE WYCLIFFE.

BY EVALENA I. FRYER.

THE kind, patient woman who rocked a cradle in the little village of Wycliffe, in Yorkshire, England, about the year 1324, could not know that the sleeping occupant of the swinging cradle would grow up to become one of the foremost men of his times, and so she rocked and nursed and crooned lullabys, and the baby slept and ate and grew, just like all other babies.

The next time we see this baby he has grown to be a man and is among the students in the scholastic Oxford. While there Wycliffe was a faithful pupil, for besides studying the writings of the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle and the writings of the Church fathers, like Augustine and Basil and Jerome, he studied civil law and canon law, and he even went to the Bible for knowledge, which was a very unfashionable thing to do in those days, the biblical teachers being called "the bullocks of Abraham." Wycliffe was nicknamed "The Gospel Doctor."

When our knight was about thirty-two years old he entered on a long struggle with the various orders of friars. These friars pretended to be very poor, and with wallets on their backs went about begging with piteous air, while at the same time they lived in palaces and dressed in costly garments. They used to kidnap children and shut them up in monasteries. When the orders were first organized their idea was to become a body of self-denying and consecrated men, who would go about arousing the people to a better life. At first their influence was very good, but when they became very popular and very powerful, they became also very degenerate.

But there was one man who was not afraid to tell them what he thought of them, and he did his duty so thoroughly and so fearlessly that Rome became alarmed, and at last summoned the Gospel Doctor to appear at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on the nineteenth of February, 1377, and answer to the charge of heresy.

The cathedral was crowded and yet a very little thing scattered the crowd. Lord Percy, who attended Wycliffe, desired him to be seated. But the Bishop of London declared that Wycliffe "should not sit, and that according to law an accused person should stand during the time of his answer." A controversy soon followed, and in the tumult the whole assembly was broken up and the next day was succeeded by a riot. As for Wycliffe, he was dis-

missed with the injunction to be more careful about his preaching in the future. But public opinion declared in his favour.

"If he is guilty," the people said, "why is he not punished? If he is innocent, why is he ordered to be silent?"

In 1379, Wycliffe was seriously ill. The mendicant friars thought that their opportunity had now come. They went in much state to see him and solemnly tried to make him recant. He ordered his servant to raise him on the pillows, and to the great astonishment of the friars, the apparently dying man, fixing his eyes on his enemies, said: "I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars."

His enemies left him and the great reformer did live. He was yet to put the finishing touches to his greatest work—the translating and scattering of the Word of God, that the people might read it in their own tongue. For ten or fifteen years he worked steadily at this task, and at last, in 1380, it was completed. This was a great event in the religious history of England. To us to-day it sounds like odd English. The first verse of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians reads like this:—

"If I speke with tungs of men and of aungels, and I have not charite, I am maad as bras sownynge or a cymbal tynklynge."

The work met with a wonderful reception. Citizens, soldiers, the rich and the poor welcomed it with delight. Even Anne, the wife of Richard II, began to read the Gospels. John de Wycliffe had indeed become The Gospel Doctor. It cost a large sum to own a Testament—estimated to equal one hundred and fifty dollars of our times.

To carry the Bible into the remotest hamlets was the sole idea of The Gospel Doctor, and for this purpose he sent forth preachers, bidding them,—

"Go and preach; it is the sublimest work; but imitate not the priests whom we see after the sermon sitting in alehouses or at the gaming table. After your sermon is done, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind, the lame."

These "poor priests," as they were called, went about barefoot, staff in hand, and dressed in coarse robes; they lived on alms and were satisfied with the plainest food. Their theme was Christ and they preached with wonderful eloquence.

Wycliffe continued in his glorious work for many years, until one day, as he stood in the midst of his little flock in the Lutterworth Church, administering the communion, he was stricken with paralysis and

was carried home to die in two days at the ripe age of sixty years. He was buried beneath the chancel of Lutterworth Church, but thirty years after, Rome directed that his body should be disinterred and thrown far away from church walls. They took up the body, burned it, and cast the ashes into an adjacent brook.

"The brook," says Fuller, "did carry his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." If Luther and Calvin are the fathers of the Reformation, Wycliffe is its grandfather.—*The Well Spring.*



## Epworth League.

W. H. WITTHROW, Secretary for Canada.

## PRAYER-MEETING TOPICS.

NOVEMBER 12, 1893.

## Junior Epworth League.

GIVING WITH PRAYER AND LOVE.—Acts 20. 35; 1 John 3. 17; Matt. 10. 8; 2 Cor. 9. 7; 2 Chron. 29. 27; Matt. 23. 34-40; 10. 42.

## Junior E. L. of C. E.

HOW DOES CHRIST MAKE US RICH?—1 Tim. 6. 17-19; 2 Cor. 8. 9. (A Missionary topic.)

## LESSON NOTES.

## FOURTH QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES.

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A. D. 57.] LESSON VII. [Nov. 12.

## THE GRACE OF LIBERALITY.

2 Cor. 8. 1-12.] [Memory verses, 7-9.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.—2 Cor. 8, 9.

## OUTLINE.

1. An Example, v. 1-5.
2. An Exhortation, v. 6-12.

PLACE.—Macedonia.

## CONNECTING LINKS.

Paul left Ephesus about Pentecost, 57 A. D., for Troas. He stayed there some little time, hoping to meet Titus and to hear something concerning his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Failing to meet him there, he went to Macedonia, where he learned the mind of the Macedonians, and made a collection for the poor saints.

## EXPLANATIONS.

"We do you to wit"—We make known unto you. "The grace of God bestowed on the Churches" Paul means the charitable contribution made by these churches, to which they were excited by the grace of God. "The churches of Macedonia"—These were Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, etc. The persecution of these Christians had been unusually severe—"a great trial of affliction"—and these persecutions had, by the grace of God, resulted in two things: first, superabounding joy; second, almost famishing poverty. And these two things working together led to "riches of liberality." Not so much riches of contributions as a richness of single-mindedness, in which they had their eyes of love fixed exclusively upon their brothers' need. "Praying us with much entreaty"—The very embodiment of whole-hearted liberality. "Abound in this grace also"—If a man has not the love that freely gives dollars and comfort to others, his love is not of much value to God or man. "Forwardness"—Promptitude. "Be forward a year ago"—The Corinthians had begun well a year before this; now let them consistently carry out what they then began.

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where does this lesson show—

1. That self-denying liberality is a godly grace?
2. That all other godly graces, without this, will not avail.
3. That good resolutions, without good performance, will not avail?

4. That God never expects the impossible?

## THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. For whom was Paul collecting money? "For the poor saints of Jerusalem." 2. Out of what two things had come the rich liberality of the persecuted Christians of Macedonia? "Abundance of joy and deep poverty." 3. What does the apostle say of our Lord? "He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 4. What is needful besides faith, and knowledge, and diligence, and love? "Abundance of liberality." 5. What is God's measure of liberality if there be a willing mind? "According to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The love of Christ.

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

What was the humiliation of Christ? He was made man, and lived a life of poverty, suffering, and neglect.

## A SCHOOLBOY'S COMPOSITION ON BONE.

BONES are the framework of the body. If I had no bones in me I should not have as much shape as I have now. If I had no bones in me I should not have as much motion, and grandmother would be glad, but I like to have motion. Bones give me motion because they are something hard for motion to cling to. If I had no bones, my brains, lungs, heart and blood-vessels would be lying around in me and might get hurtled, but now the bones get hit. If I was soaked in an acid I would get limber. Teacher showed us a bone that had been soaked. I could bend it easily. Some of my bones do not grow close to my body, snug, like the branches of a tree, and I am glad they don't, for if they did I could not play leap-frog and other nice games I know. The reason why they don't grow that way is because they have joints. Joints is good things to have in bones. They are two kinds. The ball and socket, like the shoulder, is the best. All my bones put together in their right places make a skeleton. If I leave any out, or put any in their wrong places, it ain't no skeleton. Cripples and deformed people don't have no skeletons. Some animals have their skeletons on their outside. I am glad I ain't them animals; for my skeleton, like it is on the chart, would not look well on my outside.—*Exchange.*

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