

wich. Pym entreated and warned Wentworth. "You will make your choice," he said. "You will leave us, but you will be undone. I warn you solemnly that, though you leave us, I will never leave you while your head is upon your shoulders."

Not many years afterwards all England was watching with intense interest a great trial held in Westminster Hall. Thomas Wentworth had made his choice. He had reached a place among the greatest. In England and in Ireland he had wielded vast power. He had become Earl of Strafford, but now, in this crowded hall, he was on trial for his life for treason against the liberties of England. Who is it that, day by day, conducts the case against him? Who is it that speaks for Wentworth's condemnation with a vehemence that is scarcely held in check by the refined taste of the scholar and the gentleman? John Pym accuses Strafford before his peers. He demands the great earl's life as a penalty for his crimes. Once, it is said, Pym's and Strafford's eyes met, and Pym turned pale and became confused. The man against whom he asked for judgment had once been his friend. But Strafford had made his choice—a choice that was to end in the cruel ignominy of the scaffold. Pym's words were terribly true, "I will never leave you while your head is upon your shoulders." Strafford filled a felon's grave, and not long after him Pym was carried with all honor to a tomb in Westminster Abbey.

To each of us these times for making a choice come. Men walk along side by side until some day the path forks, and they stand at the parting of the ways, uncertain which to walk in. It seems easy to pass into either path. Ruth and Orpah live as sisters, are companions in widowhood, and belong to the same nation. But a time comes when they must choose between staying where they are and going out, strangers and forlorn, to share the lot of Naomi, their widowed mother-in-law. They stand at the parting of the ways, but at last Ruth goes forward and Orpah turns back. The ways lead far asunder. Ruth becomes an honored mother in Israel, the great-grandmother of David, the ancestress of our Lord. Orpah is lost in the unrecorded fate of the heathen people among whom she had chosen to stay.

A blessed or a terrible fate hangs upon our making of a choice. We may thank God that we cannot forecast the future. With us rests the simpler duty of choosing

to-day whom we will serve. Strafford turned from Pym because he shut his ears to the warning voice. Ruth follows Naomi because in her grief she had found strength and peace in their common worship of the God of comfort. "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Our path, when we are perplexed, is, after all, plain enough, if we make our choice in the spirit in which Ruth made hers—God and His truth first, last, and always. Then the crooked way becomes straight and the puzzled mind finds rest. Not a day passes but we are repeating the choice, and each renewed decision takes us a step further on—towards God, or towards that other goal which is without God. The felon's tomb or Westminster Abbey; a home with the darkened and savage Moabites, or peace with the people of God; the wailing and gnashing of teeth, or the calm joy of God's eternal rest;—these are the things that we are choosing every day.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

SOME GREAT CHURCHMEN.

VII.

THOMAS SCOTT.

THOMAS SCOTT was one whose name is entitled to every mark of respect, and whose memory should be kept fresh and green. Sir James Stephen, writing of that great body of the Church of England which takes the name "Evangelical," designates as "her four evangelists John Newton, Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner, and Henry Venn." Newton, he says, was the great living example of the regenerating efficacy of evangelical principles, Scott was their interpreter of Scripture, Milner their ecclesiastical historian, and Venn their systematic teacher of the whole Christian institutes.

William Carey, the celebrated Baptist missionary and oriental scholar, who edited no less than twenty-four different translations of the Scriptures in the various dialects of India, confessed, "If I know anything of the work of God in my soul, I owe it to the preaching of Mr. Scott."

Yet Thomas Scott lived in comparative obscurity, was neglected by the ruling powers in Church and State; was never made a bishop, a dean, an archdeacon, or offered any high position; was left to struggle on in poverty, appreciated only by the few, left practically alone to do his work for God, his writings being his only monument, and his spiritual children his richest reward.

It is a truism to say that the world knows nothing of its greatest men. Thomas Scott's name does not appear in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that wonderful universal library. His distinguished grandson, Sir Gilbert Scott, the celebrated architect, is mentioned in the *Encyclopædia*, and had the honor of being interred in Westminster Abbey, the Chapter House of which he restored; but for his great ancestor the stately pile opened not its doors, and no epitaph was written to commemorate his services to the English Church and people. The Christian public, however, have recognized his worth by spending no less a sum than two millions and a half of dollars in the purchase of his expositions upon the Word of God.

Thomas Scott was born in the year 1747, in a small Lancashire farmhouse. His father was a farmer, who raised and dealt in cattle. His early education was acquired at a grammar school at Scorton. He gained there a fair knowledge of Latin, but his school life brought with it a knowledge of evil ways. For five years he never visited his parents, thus losing all the gracious influences of home life, and at the end of the time he left the school with little credit to himself. He was then apprenticed to a surgeon, but his conduct was so scandalous that he was summarily dismissed. This disgrace was a great blow to his parents. At the age of sixteen he began life anew on his father's farm, having the hardest work, and the dirtiest, assigned to him. It was, nevertheless, a rich experience. But the exposure consequent upon such a life led to more than one serious illness, and his life was at times despaired of. Such seasons caused serious thoughts concerning his spiritual condition. But returning health brought back old companions and old habits. In the midst of his drudgery his mind was enslaved with the prospect of inheriting the farm upon which he had spent so much labor, but the discovery that his father had given it to his brother dissipated all his hopes in that direction. New ideas, however, gained possession of his mind; he took up again his long-neglected studies of Latin and Greek. He devoted time also to the study of theology. He began to think of entering the ministry. He sought ordination at the hands of the Bishop of Lincoln, was at first refused, but a year later, on having passed a creditable examination, he was accepted.

Thomas Scott was now (1773) a minister of the Church of England. His first appointment was that of curate of Stoke