

horrible in their pulpy stillness than in the infernal wriggle of maturity. But no sooner is the stone turned and the wholesome light of day let in on this compressed and blinded community of creeping things than all of them that have legs rush blindly about, butting against each other and everything else in their way, and end in a general stampede to underground retreats from the region poisoned by sunshine. Next year you will find the grass growing fresh and green where the stone lay—the ground bird builds her nest where the beetle had his hole, the dandelion and the buttercup are growing there, and the broad fans of insect-angels open and shut over their golden discs as the rhythmic waves of blissful consciousness pulsate through their glorified being.

The stone is ancient error, the grass is human nature, borne down and bleached of all its color by it, the shapes that are found beneath are the crafty beings that thrive in the darkness and the weak organizations kept helpless by it. He who turns the stone is whosoever puts the staff of truth to the old lying incubus, whether he does it with a serious face or a laughing one. The next year stands for the coming time. Then shall the nature which had lain blanched and broken rise in its full stature and native lines in the sunshine. Then shall God's minstrels build their nests in the hearts of a new-born humanity. Then shall beauty-divinity taking outline and color—light upon the souls of men as the butterfly, image of the beautified spirit rising from the dust, soars from the shell that held a poor grub, which would never have found wings unless that stone had been lifted."

The man who lifted that stone in England was John Wycliffe. From his quiet parsonage at Lutterworth, communicated though he was, he gave to England for the first time in her history a complete version of the Scriptures in the language of the people.

#### The Third Step.

Moreover, the time was now at hand, in the providence of God, for the third great step necessary to make the Bible a universal book, viz., the Rapid and Cheap Multiplication of Copies. The first step, as we have seen, was the invention of the art of alphabetic writing. The second was the process of translation. The third was the invention of the art of printing. Up to this time all copies of the Bible had to be made slowly and laboriously by hand. "But with Wycliffe's days this toilsome manuscript period closes forever."

About twenty years after the death of Wycliffe there was living in the old German town of Mainz a boy named Johann Gensfleisch, that is, in plain English, John Gooseflesh. Of this boy the story is told\* that one morning he had been cutting the letters of his name out of the bark of a tree, and being left alone in the house soon after, he amused himself by spreading out the letters on a board so as to form again the words Johann Gensfleisch. A pot of purple dye stood beside the fire boiling hot. By some accident one of his letters dropped into it. Without stopping to think he snatched it out of the boiling liquid, but instantly dropped it again from his scalded fingers. It fell on a white dressed sheep skin which lay on a bench near by, with the result that a beautiful purple H appeared on the white parchment. Smyth says that whether the boy admired the beautiful marks on the sheep skin or meditated ruefully of future marks on his own skin as a possible consequence history does not record, but somehow that image rooted itself in his mind,

\*Feterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible*, p. 74.

to bear rich fruit on a future day. For, thirty years afterwards, when all Germany was ringing with the name of John Gutenberg and his magical art of printing, the good people of Mainz recognized in the inventor their young townsman Gensfleisch, who had meantime taken his maternal name of Gutenberg. Whatever truth there may be in the story, certain it is that Gutenberg's printing press was working in Mainz about the year 1450, and the first completed book that issued from that press is said to have been the Latin Bible. Momentous event! the word of God PRINTED! It had been preached. It had been written. It had been copied by hand thousands of times. But now it was printed. That meant the emancipation of the minds of the masses. That meant the unshackling of the souls of the people.

The century that followed was crammed with epoch-making events which contributed to the same great result. In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople and drove out multitudes of Greek and Christian Scholars who fled Westward and found refuge in the cities and universities of Europe, and became a mighty factor in the intellectual and religious awakening of the Western world. "Greece rose from the grave with the New Testament in her hand." One of the results of that awakening was that in 1516 Erasmus edited the first printed Greek New Testament. It was quickly followed by the great Complutensian Polyglot, printed in six magnificent folio volumes. More significant still was the translation and printing of the Scriptures in the spoken languages of Europe—German, Russian, Slavonic, Bohemian, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch and Danish.

But as yet no one had printed a Bible in the English language. Wycliffe's Bible, it will be remembered, had been copied by hand and circulated in manuscript. But England's time was now at hand and England's man was ready. Just when Erasmus completed his edition of the Greek New Testament at Cambridge, a studious youth by the name of William Tyndale came to the University. He plunged at once into the study of this wonderful new book. He revelled in it as a work of scholarship. But he soon found that it was far more than his—that it was the very word of life to his soul. He could not keep silent about the treasure he had found. He exhorted the priests to study the Scriptures for themselves. One of them replied "We had better be without God's laws than the pope's;" to which Tyndale indignantly rejoined—"I defy the pope and all his laws; and if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of Scriptures than the pope does." He did it, but it cost him his life. Determined to give the word of God to the common people of England by means of the new invention of printing and driven into exile by the hostility of the blind ecclesiastics, he left his native land, never to see it again, went first to Hamburg, then to Cologne, working at his translation amid constant danger, escaped to Worms, and there at last "accomplished his design; producing for the first time a complete printed New Testament in English." The books were sent into England by every secret method that could be devised—in barrels, in bales of cloth, in sacks of flour; "and in spite of the utmost vigilance in watching the ports, many of them arrived and were scattered far and wide through the country." Everywhere they were talked about and read. The tide of public opinion set in strongly in favor of the People's Bible. Neither king nor pope could now stay it pro-

gress. "Over England's long night of error and superstition and soul-crushing despotism God had said, 'Let there be light' and there was light." But the man who brought the light did not himself live to see the full day. Arrested by the treachery of a pretended friend, Tyndale was strangled at the stake and then burnt to ashes, praying with his last breath, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." This is the man to whom we are chiefly indebted for the matchless beauty and power of our English Bible. Froude says, "The peculiar genius which breathes through the English Bible, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the grandeur, unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man, and that man William Tyndale."

The martyr's prayer, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes," was answered sooner perhaps than he hoped. Just sixty-seven years after Tyndale died at the stake with that petition on his lips James the First, King of England, himself, undertook the direction of a new revision of the English Bible for all the people, and in 1611 that consummate flower of all Bible translations, embodying all the music and power of Tyndale's masterpiece, and ever since known as King James's Version, was given to the world.

Now indeed was the word of the Lord to run and be glorified. From that day to this the work has gone on with ever accelerating speed. With the days of persecution for translating, printing and circulating the Scriptures past forever, except in certain decadent papal lands, with Gutenberg's invention improved and perfected, with power presses whirling throughout all Christendom, with leaves flying everywhere for the healing of the nations, the wildest dreams of Wycliffe and Tyndale had been far surpassed by the reality. "The Bible which took Wycliffe's copyists ten months to prepare can now be produced by a single firm at the rate of 120 per hour, that is two copies every minute; while, for cost of production, we may compare the Wycliffe Bible at a price equal to \$300.00 of our money with a New Testament complete in paper covers that has lately been published for two cents." The Bible is now the poor man's book. It is everyman's book. It is the world's book. It has been rendered into all the chief languages of mankind. It may now be read in more than six hundred human tongues. It is accessible to-day to four-fifths of the human race in their own mother speech.

What of the remaining one-fifth. It is our task, my brethren, to make it accessible to them also. This venerable Society whose Centennial we celebrate to-night has pointed the way, has taken the lead, has provided the organization and machinery and now only asks our hearty co-operation in giving to others the book which has given to us our Christian civilization, with its civil and religious liberty, its systems of popular education, its sweet and uplifting domestic and social life, above all its gospel of God's grace, and its glorious hope of a blessed immortality.

To us God has given the honor of crowning the work which through so many centuries He has carried on through His other chosen servants—an honor that archangels might envy—the honor of completing the work of giving the Word of Life to the whole race of men.

'Twas a thief said the last kind word to Christ;  
Christ took the kindness and forgave the theft. —Browning.

#### HOME MISSIONS AND THE KINGDOM.

By Rev. Arthur G. Jones, D. D.  
(These are extracts from a sermon by Dr. Jones.)

The advance of the kingdom is along the line of the weak, struggling, little churches—monuments of the faith and heroism of men and women who believe the promises of God—outposts pushed across the line of the Usurper's domain—the advance guard of the kingdom. I see it yonder—the little church at the front—plain and bare—no artistic beauty—no glory in the eyes of the world—but it is Bethel, the House of God, the Gate of Heaven. Immortal souls out there where life is hard, passing through into the city of God. If so be that the gates of the city are pearls, then yonder humble little chapel is one of God's jewels, and the keeper of the gate not only a shepherd of the scattered sheep of today, but a herald at the front proclaiming the coming of the King. What if we seem to see denominational rivalry, sectional pride, sectarian bigotry, apparent overlapping and competition and waste here or there? These things are but little ripples upon the surface of the one Home Mission tide which with ever wider and deeper power is flowing in to make our beloved country God's country.

Let us look at the broad lines upon which this movement is projected, and consider the variety and magnitude of the human needs which are calling for Home Mission help.

The feature of Home Missions to which our thought most readily turns is the Frontier Work. The constantly moving line where the wilderness and the waste places fall back before the onward march of the pioneers who build their homes and seek their fortunes in an undeveloped country. Frontier days are hard days, hard for the man, hard for the women, hard for the children. Resources are meager and comforts are few. But frontier days are critical days for the kingdom. The pioneer's cabin of today is the prophecy of the farms and towns and cities of tomorrow. If the lost and scattered sheep out in the desert and ready to die are to be shepherded today; if the frontier homes and little ones are to be blessed with the sweet influences of religion; if the populations of tomorrow are to be inspired and dominated by the ideals of the gospel, so that the expansion of our national life shall move toward the happy consummation of making our country God's country—then must Home Missions keep pace with the frontier and labor hard in its day of beginnings. Neglect of the pioneer today will mean irremediable loss for the kingdom tomorrow.

Another distinct feature of Home Mission responsibility is the alien. Drawn to our shores by the lure of a larger and happier condition of life, each year sees an incoming tide of foreign immigrants. It is a mixed multitude. Some of them promise to become quickly worthy citizens and a real gain to our country. But many of them, because of the traditions behind them and their exceeding ignorance and poverty, raise a serious question as to the possibility of their healthy absorption into the citizenship of the land. These less desirable millions tend to congest in foreign colonies, and in crowded districts in our cities, where in large degree they are cut off from every ameliorating influence of American ideals and where they become an unhappy prey to the unscrupulous of every sort. If our country is to be a blessing to them, if they are to be an asset and not a menace to our national destiny, it is imperative that these alien millions