

## Miscellaneous.

## ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

The following table shows the manner and order of time in which the Bible was translated into English:—

DATE.	TRANSLATORS.
706—	Adhelm, Saxon Psalms.
721—	Egbert's Four Gospels.
734—	Bede's St. John's Gospel.
880—	Alfred's version of the Psalms.
1340—	Rolle's (or Hampole's) Psalms.
1380—	Wicliff's Bible.
1526—	Tyndale's New Testament.
1530	— Pentateuch.
1531	— Jonah.
—	G. Joye, Isaiah.
1534	— Jer., Psal., Song of Moses.
1535—	Coverdale's Bible.
1536—	Matthew's (i. e. J. Roger's) Bible.
1539—	Crammer's Great Bible.
—	Tavernar's Bible.
1560.	Geneva Bible.
1568—	Bishop's Bible. (Parker's.)
1582—	Rheims' New Testament. ( <i>Roman Catholic</i> )
1609—	Douay Bible. ( <i>Roman Catholic</i> .)
1611—	Authorised version.

In speaking of the different translations of the Bible, such expressions are frequently used as would lead those unacquainted with the facts to suppose that they formed so many independent works; but there is, in fact, but one version of the Protestant English Bible in print, altered and improved by different hands, and which has received the subsequent amendments of learned men, but from the first to the last there has been but one actual translation.

Let any one compare the earliest and the latest, and he will find a diversity indeed of words, but such a similarity of expression as cannot be accidental. Let him then look at two independent translations of the same book, of Thucydides for instance, by Hobbes and Smith, (or Homer, by Pope and Cowper,) and the difference will be very visible. The resemblance in the versions of Scripture is so great, that it might safely be maintained that none of the authors of a new one undertook the task without the full assistance of such previous translations as had been made. The wisdom of such a procedure is obvious, unless there be some actual error of translation, and the mere fact that the version has been already received, and is familiar to the ears of the people, is a strong reason why nothing should be altered.—*Short's History of the Church of England.*

## THE PURITANS OF ENGLAND.

There are a few epochs in the history of the Church, and fewer still in the annals of our country, so full of glory as that of the Puritans. Its deep earnestness, its unexampled development of the Christian character in living power and beauty, its theological literature, colossal in its proportions and Scriptural in its teachings, its grand principles, religious and political, vindicated by grand achievements, have rendered that age memorable, and largely influenced the destiny of this great empire. To the Puritans the Church owes some of the brightest examples of spiritual life; to their talents and learning she owes her full-orbed exhibition of Divine science; and to their heroism she is indebted for her preservation, when Popery conspired with princes for her destruction. To the Puritan's deep hatred of oppression, whether beneath a crown or a mitre, and to the battle of freedom which he fought, our nation is indebted for the civil and religious liberty of her constitution, the possession of which has raised her to her present rank and moral grandeur among the kingdoms of the world.

For two centuries, unmeasured obloquy has been heaped on the name, the theology, and the deeds of the men to whom Britain owes her fairest inheritance of glory. This arises from the fact that their history has been chiefly written by their enemies. The partisans of that Church which, in the day of their haughty power, persecuted the Puritans in the flesh, have not been slack to use every means, by the pen of the historian and the preacher, to malign, when dead, the memory of the men who overthrew their domination, because it was a despotism. This was to be expected. Those who canonised the infamous Charles as a saint and martyr, while they unearthed the bones and outraged the ashes of Cromwell, the Puritan prince, were not likely to show much respect for truth in the inscription which they placed on the Puritan's tomb. The consequence has been, that in our general histories the Puritans have been grossly misrepresented. Of late, however, there have been signs of vigorous reaction of opinion, and we are at length beginning to awake to some conception of our great inheritance. Through the efforts of Macaulay, Carlyle, D'Aubigné and others, darkness is rolling from off the Puritans' history; but the full light has not yet arisen. We long for a complete delineation of the character, ideas, devotedness, and tendencies of that age. Nevertheless we hail, especially at present, the incipient efforts that are being made to do justice to the memory of the mighty dead.

The present is an age of resurrection and revival. While the idols of ancient paganism are being dug from the tomb of centuries, the idolatries of Romanism are germinating once more to the light from the bosom of the English Church. Rome, with her cardinals, is re-entering England, and erecting her altars on the "high places" of the land. But with their reappearance we rejoice to see the noble spirit of the old Puritan, before whose frown they once trembled and fled, likewise ascending from the grave. The present is a momentous crisis. The "coming struggle" that appears in the European horizon is one between liberty and despotism—Protestantism and Popery. It behoves us, therefore, to look back into the former history of our country, and imbibe the inspiration of our lofty traditions.

The distinguishing principles of the Puritans were few and simple. The headship of Christ over the Church instead of the headship of the sovereign—the supreme authority of the Scriptures alone, not merely as a standard of faith, but also of Church government and discipline—liberty of conscience from all save the lordship of God—and the right of the subject to resist the unconstitutional conduct of the sovereign. These were the leading principles, which as they talked to the cry, "Who is on the Lord's side, who?" they emblazoned on their banners. To the advocacy of their cause they brought the power of no mean erudition. In collegiate scholarship they were eminent throughout the reigns in which they figured; and when, in their civil ascendancy, they were appointed to the professorships of the English universities, they gave to them an impetus which issued in the mighty minds of Whitby, Boyle, Locke, Newton, and others trained up under them, and the vibrations of which are still felt within their halls. If we view them as theologians, we are constrained to exclaim, verily "there were giants in those days." Their contributions to the literature of Christianity would shed a glory on any age or country; and from them, be it known, is derived much of the theological reputation of the Church of England, which, in ignorance of its source, is often paraded, with a view to overshadow our humble Presbyterianism.

There is Philip Henry, with his household gathered around the family altar, whose soul, as it soars in prayer, revels in the joys of the upper sanctuary. There is Richard Rogers, the Enoch of his day, distinguished for closeness of walk with God; and Thomas Hocker, the prophet of New England, pillow his dreams on some selected Scripture for the theme of his walking meditation; Preston, whom the ambitions of the world could not allure; and Hildersham, the convert, suffering the loss of his inheritance and the love of his parents that he might win and confess Christ. And there are Stoke, and Burr, and Gouge, glowing with holy earnestness in the service of their God; and what shall we say of Owen, as, with the death-touche of genius, he pictures the "glory of Christ;" of Charnock, who, in describing the "attributes of God," moves around the altitudes of the Eternal King; and of Baxter, whose soul ever yearns after immortality, and who seems, even while on earth, to anticipate the "Saints' Everlasting Rest."

Such were the Puritan clergy. Faith was their great characteristic; and never did the Spirit of the Most High evince His power over the human heart more than by the strength given to this principle in the breast of the Puritan. It was the living and pervading power of his being, the framer of his disposition, and the regulator of his conduct. Calvinistic in his creed, he regarded himself as the special object of the solicitude of the Almighty. For him had Godhead held counsel together away in the distance of remote eternity. For him had the earth been formed; and sun, and moon, and stars ordained. For him had Deity walked the earth, and Gethsemane witnessed the bloody sweat, and Calvary the cruel crucifixion. For him had the Comforter been sent, and angels made ministering spirits. And for him had his heavenly Father prepared a kingdom beyond death and the grave, of which he was a prince by the gift of an unfading crown. Such was his faith; and as he bent himself to its realisation, it passed almost into sight, and from it resulted the great humility and the stern dignity of his character. Though humble, and simple as a child, he was as inflexible in his purpose as is the Alp in its mountain strength. When he spoke he was in earnest, and when he acted it was with a sublime intrepidity. Such were the men. Let us now speak of their mission.

This had, for one of its objects, the evangelisation of England. In that country the Reformation was largely a political movement. By it the Church was only outwardly reformed. It was not the result of the religious conviction of the nation—of the awakening of conscience among the masses. The yoke of the Pontiff was indeed removed from the neck of the people; but the bondage of Popery was still sealed upon their hearts. Such was their state when said to be reformed; and to remove it to make them Protestants in conviction as well as in name, to make them sensible in their own souls of the life-giving power of Divine truth, to develop among them holiness of heart and life, was the mission given to the Puritan; and with his attempts to regenerate the nation, the Reformation of England in reality began. The land was like the valley in the vision of Ezekiel; and to the Puritan the call was sent to take up his mantle and prophesy. With an energy unwearied, with a heroism undaunted, with a patriotism heaven-kindled, he entered on the enterprise; and He who walks in the midst of the Churches created at his voice a spiritual awakening, such as modern times have seldom witnessed. The Puritan was the prophet of England.

From this mission resulted his effort to reform the abuses of the English Church Establishment. Its robes, rites, and ceremonies were Popish, and therefore polluting; they were unscriptural, and therefore unbecoming a