

trained in the sixteenth century, that means, if it means anything, minds trained in and influenced by the traditions of a Catholicism "abolished as far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it," to say nothing of the natural conservation of all true scholarship, to an extent which we can hardly realize. One translation, or revision of the Bible links itself, so to speak, in an unbroken succession, to a preceding one, from King James' translators back to the venerable Bede, and the influence of the vernacular Scriptures on English literature is no less profound and far-reaching in the eighth century than in the sixteenth. It were well for us could we add: "Or in the twentieth!"

A study of Gairdner's chapter on "The Reign of the English Bible," in the second volume of his "Lollardy and the Reformation in England" — which I also commend to your particular notice — will give you an insight both into the methods of unauthorized translators of the Bible—or virulently heretical, as Tyndale—and into Henry's motives for issuing, as "English pope," an official version. It will also prove—if it needs proving, that the Bishops, against whose authority the king had, for his own evil purposes, secretly encouraged every pestilent pamphleteer whom he had previously banished, objected, not to vernacular versions of the Scriptures,—which they had sanctioned for the use of the faithful—but to unauthorized, one may say wilfully falsified versions, containing notes and commentaries aggressively and scurrilously anti-Catholic. It was only attacks on his own authority which Henry resented. That he should first forbid, and then permit, the importation of such works into England, as it happened to suit his ends and policy, is merely consistent with his character.

The above claim as to the Church's share in giving the English Bible, in all its revisions, from Bede's to James the First's, to a Catholic and to a non-Catholic England alike, anticipates, to some extent, the inference I wish to submit, presently, to your consideration. I will, therefore, content myself, in conclusion, with a brief reference to that other work, the influence of which, on England's literature, Freeman ranks, as we have seen, with "our nation's" translation of the Bible," namely, "our national prayer book," as he calls it.

Not only has the English Bible, "the sole literary, as it is the sole spiritual reading of countless millions of English people" — to quote Freeman once more — produced a very distinct and characteristic type of British Protestant, or did, till the dawn of the "higher criticism," but the Book of Common Prayer,