

Mark the English Bible in 1535—in an imperfect translation, in a ponderous form, of a costly price, with but few who were capable of reading and appreciating it, and with fewer still to spread it far and wide. Mark the English Bible of 1835—in a translation, which, with all its alleged remaining defects, stands unrivalled, or at least unsurpassed, in the world—in every form of beauty—adapted alike to the eyes of age and youth—of every price, suited to rich and poor—the most costly price of the Society being cheapness itself, compared with its pecuniary value in older times. See multitudes ready to give it a welcome admission to their houses; and the period fast approaching when the benevolent wish of our late beloved monarch, George the Third, shall be realized, 'that every child in his dominions should be able to read the Bible.' See multitudes ready not only to welcome it to their own abodes, but to obtain an entrance for it into the dwellings of others; a well-compact Society, expressly and singly formed to promote its circulation—untired, and, it is humbly trusted, untiring in its labours; a variety of ingenious devices formed for aiding its circulation; obstacles removed:—a contrast this, proclaiming aloud the gracious goodness of God. Mark again: the English Bible of 1535 standing alone, one edition, of at most a few thousand copies; the English Bible of 1835, surrounded by the Irish and the Welsh, the Gaelic and the Manx, for domestic circulation—and in such request, that in one day in the last month a variety of editions were ordered, to the extent of 365,000 copies; while the aggregate issue, during thirty-one years, has been several millions, in the British dominions, and in the British languages.

But, in 1535, British Christians had enough to do to provide *themselves* with an English Bible; little opportunity had they of thinking or providing for other lands; but, in 1835, the English Bible finds itself in the company of translations into more than 150 other languages. They then 'did what they could;' may a like honourable tribute be paid to the present generation by some future historian!—But, well does it befit British Christians to think of foreign lands; and well does the society designate itself the British and Foreign: for where was the Bible of 1535 printed? It was printed at Zurich, by the care of one who had been driven, by the fear of persecution, to seek refuge in Switzerland;—no voluntary exile, travelling for pleasure's sake, to enjoy the magnificent scenery of that interesting country, nor yet for the purpose of amassing wealth in the pursuit of commerce, nor even as those who now happily often make themselves

exiles, that they may discover and relieve the wants and the woes of their fellow-men; but an exile for religion—the memorable Coverdale. What do not Christians owe for that Sacred Volume, which he first sent forth in its entire form to our land! To foreign churches the Society has begun to pay the debt of gratitude which the nation owes, for the asylum then afforded to that venerable servant of God. In Zurich, more particularly, it has been the honoured instrument of promoting the circulation of the Scriptures to the extent of 10,814 copies. Moreover, Britain has, in her turn, through the medium of the Society, printed on her own shores, and sent forth to the continent of Europe, (or provided the means of printing in the different parts of that continent itself,) the Scriptures, in the languages spoken throughout its length and breadth—besides meditating and executing much in the blessed enterprise of spreading the Sacred Volume through the length and breadth of the world. Oh may the civil and religious liberty, now enjoyed by us, be more and more sanctified—be more and more consecrated to the advancement of the glory of God in the earth!

And are there no special obligations arising out of this contrast? Are there no lessons of wisdom to be heeded? When we survey what England has been for three hundred years, and what England, through the mercy of God, still is; and when we recollect to what, as a principal instrument in the hands of God, she owes her distinguishing privilege, does not "Wisdom cry aloud in our streets," and bid us use our best exertions that "the book of the law may not depart out of the mouth" of the people, but that they may have the means of meditating therein day and night, "that they may observe to do according to all that is written therein—for then shall they make their way prosperous, and then shall they have good success? Do evils still remain—evils of appalling magnitude—evils distinctly traceable to this one source, the neglect of the Sacred Volume? for truly spake the prophet, "Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?" Do evils remain, and shall we neglect the remedy? Or, if we would succeed in raising mankind, in other lands, to the enjoyment of the same privileges as ourselves, will not wisdom teach us to employ the same means as have been found, in our own case, so excellent and so efficacious? Far be the day, when endeavours to promote religion and happiness, whether at home or abroad, shall be dissevered from His holy word!—Are there no obligations of compassion suggested? We live in the light, and know that there are multitudes walking in darkness and in the shadow of death; we