

been called), and others of that character, had left their imprint on the English tongue and literature. Bacon flourished at this time; and was soon followed by Milton, Baxter, Howe, Bates, and others, whose writings still retain their classical character and remain among the standards of pure English. The translation, too, was made at that precise period when churchmen and nonconformists could and did act together in harmony in producing a version acceptable to all. Will such a time ever come again? We doubt it.

We cannot enter more fully into this subject; but we may remark, that Westcott corrects some minor inaccuracies in Anderson, and exposes vigorously important errors of Froude on the English Bible, in his history of Henry VIII. But without enlarging on the subject, we present some specimens from the book, from which the reader may gain an idea of its scope and aim:

"Thus, step by step and in slow degrees, under every variety of influence, the English Bible assumed its present shape, and the record of its progress is still partially shown in our public services. Whatever else may be thought of the story which has been thus imperfectly told, enough has been said to show that the history of the English Scriptures is, as we remarked by anticipation, unique. The other great vernacular versions of Europe are the works of single men, definitely stamped with their impress and bearing their names.

A German writer somewhat contemptuously remarks, that it took nearly a century to accomplish in England the work which Luther achieved in the fraction of a single lifetime. The reproach is exactly our glory. Our version is the work of a Church, and not of a man—or, rather, it is a growth, and not a work. Countless external influences, independent of the actual translators, contributed to mould it; and when it was fashioned, the Christian instinct of the nation, touched, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, decided on its authority. But at the same time, as if to save us from that worship of the letter which is the counterfeit of true and implicit devotion to the sacred text, the same original words are offered to us in other forms in our prayer book, and thus the sanction of use is distinguished from the claims to finality. Our Bible, in virtue of its past, is capable of admitting revision, if need be, without violating its history. As it gathered into itself, during the hundred years in which it was forming, the treasures of manifold labours, so it still has the same assimilative power of life.

One version only in old times—the Latin Vulgate—can, in this respect, be compared with it. This also was formed by private efforts, silently and slowly, till it was acknowledged by the acceptance of the Western Church. One supremely great man, Jerome, partly revised and partly renewed it; and by a strange coincidence, even he could not displace the old Psalter which had been adopted for public use. But the English Bible has what the Latin Bible, as far as we know, has not. It has not only the prerogative of vitality, while the other has been definitely fixed in one shape, but it has also the seal of martyrdom upon it. In this, too, it differs from the other great modern versions.

Luther defied his enemies to the last. Lefèvre, in extreme old age, mourned that, when the opportunity was given him, he had not been found worthy to give up his life for Christ. Calvin died sovereign at Geneva. But Tyndale, who gave us our first New Testament from the Greek, was strangled for his work at Vilvorde. Coverdale, who gave us our first printed Bible, narrowly escaped the stake by exile. Rogers, to whom we owe the multiform basis of our present version, was the first victim of the Marian persecutions. Cranmer, who has left us our Psalter, was at last blessed with a death of triumphant agony.

The work was crowned by martyrdom, and the workmen laboured at it in the faith and with the love of martyrs. The solemn words in which they commend the Bible to their readers, the prayers which they offer for the