

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

REVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ADDRESS TO THE TEACHERS OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL OF ENOCH CHURCH, TORONTO, BY WM. MONTGOMERY CLARK, SUPERINTENDENT.

PART I - AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Shortly after his accession to the throne of England, King James received the famous Millenary Petition. This important document was subscribed by many of the Puritans, and prayed for redress of ecclesiastical grievances, revision of the order of service, and the enforcement of religious discipline. The idea of acting as an arbitrator in such matters well suited the taste of James, and he was by no means unwilling to summon the parties in difference to his presence, where he might display his theological acumen, and play the novel part of a royal moderator. Accordingly on the 24th October, 1603, a meeting was called for the 14th, 15th and 16th January, 1604, to meet at Hampton Court Palace, to determine "things pretended to be amiss in the Church." At this Assembly, now known historically as the Hampton Court Conference, the High Church party was represented by Archbishop Whitgift, Bishop Bancroft, seven other bishops of lesser prominence, and five deans; and the Puritans were represented by Dr. Rainolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Dr. Sparke, Mr. Knewstubs and Mr. Chaderton. So far as accomplishing any settlement of the questions at issue between the contending parties was concerned, the conference was a failure, but it incidentally resulted in giving us in the authorized version one of the greatest blessings the English-speaking churches ever received.

At the meeting held in the drawing room of the palace on Monday, 16th January, 1604, Dr. Rainolds moved "that a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek, and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all Churches of England in time of Divine service." The insertion of the "words without marginal notes," was owing to the king's strong objections to certain notes in previous translations. The royal displeasure was particularly excited by the note in the Geneva version on 2 Chron. xv. 16, when Asa is said to have lacked zeal in deposing only and not killing his mother; and also by a note on Ex. i. 19, where the disobedience of the Hebrew mid-wives was said to be "lawful." In the opinion of James, such notes were "seditious, and savoured of dangerous and traitorous conceits." The proposal of the Puritan Rainolds was opposed by the churchmen, and Bancroft, Bishop of London, remarked that, "if every man's humour should be followed there would be no end of translating." The king however sided with the Puritans in this instance, and it must be said to the credit of James, that had it not been for his action the scheme would have fallen to the ground. "Never," says Dr. Strivener, "was a great enterprise like the production of our authorized version carried out with less knowledge, handed down to posterity, the labourers, their method and order of working. The first information we have of the progress of the scheme is in a letter of 22nd July, 1604, from the king to Bancroft, written after the settlement of all the details, for in this letter James speaks of his having appointed fifty-four learned men to meet in various companies at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge, to carry out the work. The royal interest in the translation does not seem to have been so great as to induce any expenditure from the privy purse to aid the work, for we find the king enjoining the Bishops, whenever any living of £20 was vacant to let him know of it, in order that he might commend to the patron one of the translators. On the same day, the Earl of Salisbury, Chancellor of Cambridge, wrote to the Vice-Chancellor and masters of the various colleges, informing them that it was the king's pleasure that they should recommend fit persons to assist in the work, and that they should entertain the translators at the colleges without expense. The Bishops were also applied to for assistance in providing funds, and it is amusing to note how careful the king was not to involve himself in any pecuniary liability, and in being generous at another's expense, to act out Sidney Smith's definition of benevolence. The financial question was for some time a great difficulty, but it seems that the sum of £3,500, paid by one Barker, citizen and stationer of

London, for the copy of the translation formed the chief fund from which the expenses were defrayed. It is uncertain how many translators were appointed. The king, in his letter to Bancroft, mentions fifty-four, but the preserved lists include only forty-seven names. The translators were divided into six parties or companies, two of which sat at Oxford, two at Westminster, and two at Cambridge. The company meeting at Westminster, had charge of the translation of the Pentateuch and the historical books, as far as the Second Book of Kings. Dr. Launcelot Andrewes presided. He was a hard student, and was said to have understood fifteen languages. With him were associated Dean Overall, Dr. Adrian de Saravia, a Frenchman, and the only foreigner engaged in the work; Bedwell, the compiler of an Arabic Lexicon and a Persian dictionary, and six others of less note. The second company sat at Cambridge, and consisted of eight persons. This company prepared the translation of the books from 2 Chronicles to the Song of Solomon inclusive. The president of this party was Edward Lively, Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge. Amongst the others, may be named his successors in the Hebrew chair, Robert Spalding, and Dr. Andrew Byng, and the Rabbinical scholar, Dr. Laurence Chaderton. The prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi, were translated by the third company, which met at Oxford. The president of this company was Dr. John Harding, the Professor of Hebrew at Oxford. Dr. Rainolds, the Puritan, at whose suggestion the translation was made, Dr. Miles Smith, Dr. Richard Kilbie, a famous Hebraist, and others, were his coadjutors. The fourth company assembled at Cambridge, and to them was assigned the Apocrypha. Andrew Downes, Professor of Greek, and Mr. Bois, one of the most indefatigable of the translators, and afterwards revisers, were the most noted names in this company. The fifth company had their sittings at Oxford, and translated the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. This company consisted of Dr. Ravis, president; Sir Henry Saville of Etou; Dr. Perrin, Greek Professor; George Abbott, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The Epistles were assigned to the sixth company, consisting of their president, Dr. Barlowe, afterward Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Spencer, Mr. Fenton, and four others of comparatively little reputation.

The following rules were issued by royal authority for the direction of the translators.

"1. The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

"2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained, as near as may be, according as they are vulgarly used.

"3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *congregation* not to be translated *congregation*.

"4. When any words have divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogies of faith.

"5. The division of chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

"6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be enforced in the text.

"7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit references of one Scripture to another.

"8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and, having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinks good, all to meet together, to compare what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

"9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously; for his Majesty is very careful in this point.

"10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof, to note the places, and there withal to send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

"11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place.

"12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send their particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the king's letter to the archbishop.

"13. The directors in each company to be the deans of Westminster and Chester, for Westminster, and the king's professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two universities.

"14. These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible: Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's [Roger's], Whitchurch's [Cranmer's], Geneva."

In order that the meaning of these instructions may be understood, notice must here be taken of the earlier translations, some of which are referred to in them. Among our Anglo Saxon forefathers, partial translations existed. They took the form of paraphrases, summaries of doctrine, and lessons in rhyme. The earliest production of this kind is that of Credmon, who lived in the seventh century at Whutby. Aldhelm, of Sherborne, and Guthlac the hermit of Crowland, and Bede, must be noticed in this gowly company. The most remarkable translator of these early times is Alfred the Great, who in one of his writings expresses the noble desire that "all the free born youth of his people, who possess the means, may persevere in learning so long as they have no other affairs to prosecute until they can perfectly read the English Scriptures." At the head of his "Dooms" or Body of Laws he places the ten commandments, and it is noticeable that in the fourth commandment he uses the words "In six days Christ wrought the heaven and the earth." In Exodus, xxi. 2, he substitutes "a Christian" for "a Hebrew."

It is impossible in this brief outline to give any description of such early versions as that of the Durham Book of the Four Gospels, or Ormyn's Paraphrase, or the "Salus Animi," or the "Rushworth Gloss," or the "Psalter of William de Schorham," but reference must at once be made to our great translations. First among them stands the version of Wycliffe, which was the first complete translation of the Holy Scripture. It was not finished at once, but was published gradually, and is understood to have been completed in 1380. It was first printed in 1850, having existed in MS. only, until that time when it was issued from the university press at Oxford. The version printed by Bagster in the Hexapla (1841), was not the early version of Wycliffe but one prepared by his followers. He did not translate from the original Hebrew and Greek, but from the Latin version. Dr. Eadie, speaking of this version says, "one is surprised to see how, when modernized in spelling, it so closely resembles subsequent translations in its general aspect," "in the flow and position of the words, in the distinctive terms and connecting particles, in the rhythm of its clauses, and mould of its sentences." "Several of its phrases must have passed early into the language . . . such as 'straight gate' and 'narrow way' 'beam,' and 'mote,' and being adopted by Tyndale have kept their place to the present time." As this translation was made prior to the invention of printing it could be multiplied only in MS., and it is surprising how rapidly copies were produced. The effect on the people was extraordinary, and the Scriptures were studied with great diligence. Men went through the whole country preaching the result of their own study, and as Godwin in his life of Chaucer tells us, "Men came to mock them, but went away struck to the heart, overawed, humbled and converted." Knighton, his inveterate foe, writes that "it filled the land with its fruit . . . and if you met two men on the road one was sure to be a Wycliffite." Notwithstanding the persecution he sustained, and the prophecy of his papal enemies that some "horrible judgment" would fall on him, he died peacefully at Lutterworth, having well earned the title of the "Morning Star of the Reformation." But he could not be permitted to rest even in death, for next century the Council of Constance ordered his remains to be dug up, burnt, and cast into the Swift. "Thus" says Fuller, "the brook conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean, and thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblems of his doctrine which is now dispersed all the world over." Upwards of a century elapsed between the publication of Wycliffe's version and our next great translation, that of William Tyndale. This illustrious man, was born in Gloucestershire about the year 1484, and was educated at Oxford. We find him as a tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, at Sodbury, and read of him as being of quiet and retired habits, devoted to study. He early began to question and criticise the papal doctrines, and was soon suspected of heresy. We hear of his being brought before the bishop's commissary and there saying, "I am content that you bring me into any county in England, giving me ten pounds a year to live with, so you bind me to do nothing but to teach children and preach." And on another occasion after the idea of his great life-work had entered into his mind, when one of his ecclesiastical opponents had said, "We were better be without God's law than the Pope's," he