

THE STANDARD SERIES.

THE
POPULAR HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES
INTO THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

WITH SPECIMENS OF THE OLD ENGLISH VERSIONS.

BY

MRS. H. C. CONANT,

AUTHOR OF TRANSLATIONS OF NEANDER'S PRACTICAL COMMENTARIES.

REVISED EDITION,

CONTINUING THE HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

By REV. THOMAS J. CONANT, D.D.

No other Christian people can show a vernacular Bible with such a history as ours; so consecrated by high purpose and noble sacrifice, so baptized in the tears and blood of faithful souls, so linked with the inmost life and history of the people.—*Preface to the first edition.*

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE following history of the English Bible was first published in the year 1856. It was received with general favor, and was republished without change in 1859. It was popular in its spirit and form; and for the first time it brought before the reader, in moderate compass, the whole subject of English Bible translation. Its materials were drawn from all that had been written directly on the subject, and from every other source from which light could be obtained. A list of the authorities consulted, in the preparation of the work, is added at the end of the author's preface.

In preparing this revised edition, the history has been compared throughout with works bearing on the subject that have appeared since its first publication; and such changes have been made as were found necessary to conform it to the present state of knowledge. The editor is specially indebted to the new and accurate researches of Mr. Westcott, in his *History of the English Bible*, and to Dr. Philip Schaff's Introduction to the American reprint of the *Treatises of Trench, Lightfoot, and Ellicott*, and to the Revision of the English version of the New Testament.

A closing chapter is added by the editor, bringing the history down to the present time; showing the steps by which the way has been gradually prepared for renewing the work of revision, under circumstances more favorable, and with materials far more ample, than at any former period in English history.

While these lines are going to the press, the Anglo-American revision of the English New Testament is made public, and received here with general interest, and with a sale of the book unprecedented in the publication of any other work, so far as is known to the writer. That such is the case augurs well for the interest felt in the Divine Word, and in all that may contribute to the purity of its text, and render its teachings more clear and intelligible.

T. J. C.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS volume was undertaken from the wish to meet a widely extended and increasing desire for information, in a popular form and within moderate limits, respecting the history of our English Bible. How came we by this Bible? What were its antecedents? In what religious, social, political condition of England had it its birth? What influences determined its primitive character and form? To what modifying agencies has it been subjected in the progress of its history? These and similar questions are now, in the present awakened state of public interest on the subject of Bible translation, asked by multitudes of intelligent and thoughtful persons, who have neither the time nor the means for searching out the answers for themselves. The valuable works on the subject, already before the public, are not adapted to the wants of general readers, being chiefly useful as works of reference for bibliographical students. That of Anderson (*Annals of the English Bible*), though rich in valuable and interesting information for certain portions of the history, is deficient in others; and it is, moreover, too voluminous, as well as too immethodical, to attract such as do not enjoy a superfluity of leisure and of patience. It has been my object in this volume simply to furnish such an account of the early English versions and revisions as may give a clear idea of their origin and leading characteristics, and of the general influence of each in moulding the religious history of the English race. This design admitted of greater conciseness, without abridging those historical and personal details which best exhibit the subject in its connection with actual human life.*

Brief as the work is, however, the labor bestowed on its preparation has not been trifling. Indeed its very brevity is the result of no little labor. The length of time embraced in the history, and the variety of subjects and of characters necessarily introduced for its illustration, required not only much diligent investigation for the collection of materials, but much labor in sifting them, in order to keep the work within limits suited to common readers. But the task, though

* From these remarks it will be seen that a critical description of editions and copies does not come within the design of this volume.

toilsome, has been full of pleasantness ; and I shall count myself happy if it shall become the means of communicating to other minds a more lively and more intelligent interest in the subject of which it treats. No other Christian people can show a vernacular Bible with such a history as ours ; so consecrated by high purpose and noble sacrifice, so baptized in the tears and blood of faithful souls, so linked with the inmost life and history of the people. At what cost the Divine Word has been placed in the possession of the English race, and what it has done for that race, are matters which every Christian and every lover of his country has an interest in knowing. Without such knowledge, we can neither rightly estimate its value nor labor intelligently for the perpetuation of its influence.

The principal works consulted in the preparation of this volume are the following :

LIFE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN DE WYCLIFFE ; by Robert Vaughan, D.D. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1828.

JOHN DE WYCLIFFE, A MONOGRAPH ; by Robert Vaughan, D.D. 1853.

The first of these works is not superseded by the second, which omits many interesting details of the earlier memoir. To the two I am chiefly indebted for the facts of Wickliffe's history, and for the extracts from his writings.

THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND SUFFERINGS OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED JOHN WICLIFFE, D.D. By John Lewis. London, 1720.

PREFACE TO WICLIFFE'S BIBLE ; edited by Forshall & Madden, Oxford, 1850.

HENRY'S HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN ; 4th ed. London, 1805.

Of this writer the Halle Encyclopædia (Erach u. Grubar's) says : " The affairs of the church, the inner history of the people, government, manners, commerce, the arts and sciences, engaged his attention to a greater degree than they did that of Hume ; and all these he combines in a series of graphic and instructive delineations, the result of his own careful and impartial researches." For the character of the Romish priesthood, and the condition of England under their sway, this author has been chiefly relied on in the present work.

HENR. KNYGHTON, CHRONICA ANGLIÆ, (in Twysden's *Scriptores decem*, Vol. II.).

HALLAM'S MIDDLE AGES.

ANNALS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE ; by Christopher Anderson. 8vo. London, 1845. 2 vols.

The materials for the personal history of Tyndale have been chiefly furnished by this work.

MEMOIR OF WILLIAM TYNDALE, by George Ofor (prefixed to Bagster's reprint of Tyndale's New Testament, London, 1836).

INTRODUCTION TO BAGSTER'S HEXAPLAR NEW TESTAMENT.

WRITINGS OF TYNDALE AND FRITH. (Works of the Eng. Reformers, ed. by Thomas Russel, London, 1831.)

RUDHART'S THOMAS MORUS, aus den Quellen bearbeitet ; 2te Ausg. Augsburg, 1852.

FOXE'S ACTS AND MONUMENTS ; folio, London, 1641.

BURNET'S HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION ; 2 vols., 4to, London, 1850.

THE WORKS OF SIR THOMAS MORE, KNYGHTE, sometime Lorde Chancellour of England, wrytten by him in the Englysh tonge ; 4to, pp. 1458. London, 1557.

The only edition of his English writings. It was published by Rastell in the last year of Queen Mary's reign ; and was dedicated to her majesty, as an important aid to her efforts for the re-establishment of Romanism.

ARCHBISHOP PARKER, DE ANTIQUIT. BRIT. ECCLESIAE ; London, 1729.

MEMORIALS OF MILES COVERDALE ; London, Samuel Bagster, 1838.

MEMOIR OF MILES COVERDALE ; prefixed to Bagster's reprint of Coverdale's translation of the Bible.

LEWIS' HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE INTO ENGLISH ; London, 1818.

PREFACE TO THE GENEVAN NEW TESTAMENT, 1557 ; Bagster's fac-simile reprint, London.

PREFACE TO THE GENEVAN BIBLE, AND DEDICATION TO QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1560 (from the Edition of 1583).

STRYPE'S MEMORIALS OF ARCHBISHOP CRANMER ; 2 vols., 8vo. Oxford, 1840.

STRYPE'S LIFE AND ACTS OF ARCHBISHOP PARKER, 1 vol. fol. London, 1740.

STRYPE'S HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND ACTS OF ARCHBISHOP GRINDAL ; 1 vol. fol. London, 1710.

STRYPE'S LIFE AND ACTS OF ARCHBISHOP WHITGIFT ; 1 vol. fol. London, 1718.

These Memoirs of the English Protestant Primates in the sixteenth century were written by their ardent admirer and apologist, himself a zealous High-Churchman. From his representations of the growth of Puritanism in the English Church, and the measures used for its suppression, has been drawn the account given of them in this volume.

FULLER'S CHURCH HISTORY ; 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1842.

STRYPE'S ANNALS OF THE REFORMATION ; Oxford, 1824.

ARCHBISHOP PARKER'S PREFACE TO THE BISHOPS' BIBLE.

HEFELE, DER CARDINAL XIMENES ; Tübingen, 1851.

BISHOP BARLOW'S ACCOUNT OF THE HAMPTON COURT CONFERENCE ; London, 1604.

WILKINS, CONCILIA MAGNÆ BRIT. ET HIB. London, 1737.

GELL'S ESSAY TOWARDS THE AMENDMENT OF THE LAST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE ; 1 vol. fol. 1659.

FULKE'S DEFENCE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE (ed. for the Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843).

WHITELOCKE'S MEMORIALS OF THE ENGLISH AFFAIRS ; London, 1732.

JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, published by order of the House.

TISCHENDORF'S REISE IN DEN ORIENT ; Leipzig, 1846.

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE TO KING JAMES' REVISION (Field's Edition, 2 vols. fol. London, 1659), and DEDICATION TO THE KING.

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