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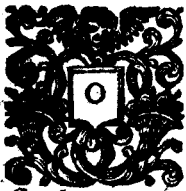
# Historical ACCOUNT

Of the Several

*English Translations*

OF THE

# B I B L E.



NE Thing censur'd by the Church of *Rome* in our Reformation, is, The committing so much Heavenly Treasure to such rotten Vessels, the trusting so much excellent Wine, to such musty Bottles; I mean, the Version of the Scriptures into the usual Languages of the common People, and the promiscuous Liberty indulg'd them therein. This they charge as an Innovation of a dangerous Consequence. But the constant Current of Antiquity does affirm the contrary, which plainly shews,

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that the Church did neither innovate in this Act of Her's, nor deviate therein from the Word of God, or from the Usage of the best and happiest Times of the Church of Christ.

The Word of God, no doubt, was committed unto Writing, that it might be read by all that were to be directed and guided by it. The Scriptures of the *Old Testament* were first written in *Hebrew*, the Vulgar Language of the *Jews*, and read unto them publickly in their Synagogues every *Sabbath Day*, *Acts* xiii. 27. and xv. 21. The *New Testament* was writ in *Greek*, the most known and studied Language of the Eastern World, for the same Reason; and written for this End and Purpose, that Men might believe that *Jesus* is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have Life in his Name, *John* xx. 31. But being that all the Faithful did not understand these Languages, and that the Light of Holy Scripture might not be likened to a Candle hid under a Bushel, it was thought good by many godly Men in the Primitive Times, to translate the same into the Languages of the Countries in which they lived, or of which they had been Natives: Concerning which *Theodoret* (who lived in the Beginning of the fifth Century) *ad Græc. Infid. Serm. 5.* thus speaks; *We Christians are enabled to shew the Power of Apostolick and Prophetick Doctrines, which have*

have fill'd all Countries under Heaven. For that which was formerly uttered in Hebrew, is not only translated into the Language of the Græcians, but also of the Romans, the Indians, Persians, Armenians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Egyptians, and, in a Word, into all the Languages that are used by any Nation. For the Sacred Writ being the Foundation of the Christian Religion, upon which they built the whole System of their Morality and Doctrine, and which the Christians were obliged to read both in Publick and Private; the several Churches of the World could not be long without such Translations as might be understood by every Body.

Not to mention other Places, this was done here in *England*, by *Adelm* or *Aldhelm* the first Bishop of *Sherborn*, who translated the Pfalter into the *Saxon* Tongue, about the Year 706. This *Adelm*, in his *Book de Virginitate*, praises the Nuns to whom he writ, that studying the Holy Scriptures, they had manifested their Industry and Towardliness in the daily reading of them. And *Bede*, l. 3. c. 5. ad Anno 634. tells us how *Aidan* (a Scotch Bishop, who promoted Christianity in the Kingdom of *Northumberland*, in the Reign of King *Oswald*, and fixed his See in *Holy Island*) took Care that all those that travelled with him, whether Clergy or Laity, should spend

spend a considerable Part of their Time in reading the Holy Scriptures: And the *Saxon Homilies* exhort the People with great Earnestness, to the frequent Perusal of the Scriptures; and inforce the Advice from the great Benefit of that Exercise. At this Time of Day the Bible was not accounted a dangerous Book; it was not lock'd up in an unknown Tongue, or kept under Restraint, or granted with Faculties and Dispensations. In those Days there was a Translation of the Scriptures extant in the Vulgar Language, otherwise it had been impossible for the Women to have studied them, when the Knowledge of the *Latin* Tongue was so rare in those Days, that few of the Clergy understood it; and this *Adelm* was the first of our *English* Nation who wrote in *Latin*; having been educated at *Rome* and in *France*. He wrote a Letter to *Egbert* (whom they also called *Ebfrid*, *Eadfrid*, and *Eckfrid*) Bishop of *Landisfern*, extant in *Wharton's Auctarium Hist. Dogmat. Usserij*, p. 351; in which he exhorts him, that for the common Benefit and Use of all People, the Scriptures might be put into the Vulgar Language, which *Butler* in his Book against the Vulgar Translation, says he did. And Archbishop *Usher*, in his *Historia Dogmatica*, c. 5. tells us, that the *Saxon* Translation of the Evangelists done by *Egbert*, without Distinction of Chapters,

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