

**THE TRANSLATORS REVIVED: A
BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF THE
AUTHORS OF THE ENGLISH
VERSION OF THE HOLY BIBLE.
[NEW YORK-1853]**

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The Translators Revived: A Biographical Memoir of the Authors of the English Version of the Holy Bible. [New York-1853] by A. W. McClure

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A. W. MCCLURE

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BY A. W. McCLURE.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THIS little volume has been long in preparation. It is more than twenty years since the Author's attention was directed to the inquiry, What were the personal qualifications for their work possessed by King James's Translators of the Bible? He expected to satisfy himself without difficulty, but found himself sorely disappointed. There was abundance of general testimony to their learning and piety; but nowhere any particular account of the men themselves. Copious histories of the origin, character, and results of their work have been drawn up with elaborate research; but of the Translators personally, little more was told than a meagre catalogue of their names, with brief notices of such offices as a few of them held.

The only resource was to take these names in detail, and search for any information relative to each individual. For a long time, but little came to hand illustrative of their characters and acquirements, except in relation to some of the more prominent men included in the royal commission. The Author quite despaired of ever being able to identify the greater part of them, by any thing more than their bare surnames. But devoting much of his time to searching in public libraries, he

by degrees recovered from oblivion one by one of these worthies, till only two of them, Fairclough and Sanderson, remain without some certain testimonial of their fitness for the most responsible undertaking in the religious literature of the English world. In regard to some of them, who for a long time eluded his search, the revived information at last seemed almost like a resurrection. As the result of his researches, which he has carried, as he believes, to the utmost extent to which it can be done with the means accessible on this side of the Atlantic, he offers to all who are interested to know in regard to the general sufficiency and reliability of the Common Version, these biographical sketches of its authors. He feels assured that they will afford historical demonstration of a fact which much astonished him when it began to dawn upon his convictions,—that the first half of the seventeenth century, when the Translation was completed, was the GOLDEN AGE of biblical and oriental learning in England. Never before, nor since, have these studies been pursued by scholars whose vernacular tongue is the English, with such zeal, and industry, and success. This remarkable fact is such a token of God's providential care of his word, as deserves most devout acknowledgment.

That the true character of their employment, at the precise stage where those good men took it up, may be properly understood by such as have not given particular attention to the subject, a condensed "Introductory Narrative" is given. In its outlines, this follows the crowded octavos of the late Christopher Anderson. He has gleaned out the very corners of the field so carefully, as to leave little for any who may follow him. To his work, or rather to the skilful abridgment of it, in a



single octavo volume, by Rev. Dr. Prime, all who desire more minute information on that part of the subject are respectfully referred.

The writers to whom the author of this book is most indebted for his biographical materials are Thomas Fuller and Anthony a-Wood. The former, the wittiest and one of the most delightful of the old English writers,—and the latter one of the most crabbed and cynical. What has been obtained from them was gathered wherever it was sprinkled, in scattered morsels, over their numerous and bulky volumes. Beside what was furnished from these sources, numerous fragments have been collected from a wide range of reading, including every thing that seemed to promise any additional matter of information.

The work is, doubtless, quite imperfect, because after the lapse of more than two centuries, during which no person appears to have thought of the thing, the means of information have been growing more scanty, and the difficulty of recovering it has been constantly increased. Critical inquisitors may be able to detect some inaccuracies in pages prepared under such disadvantages; but it will require no great stretch of generosity to make due allowance for them.

The general result, to which the Author particularly solicits the attention of any who may honor these pages with their perusal, is the ample proof afforded of the surpassing qualifications of those venerable Translators, taken as a body, for their high and holy work. We have here presumptive evidence of the strongest kind, that their work is deserving of entire confidence. It ought to be received as a “final settlement” of the translation of the Scriptures for popular use,—at least,

till the time when a body of men equally qualified can be brought together to re-adjust the work,—a time which most certainly has not yet arrived! If that time shall ever come, may there be found among their successors the vast learning, wisdom, and piety of the old Translators happily revived!

## CONTENTS.

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|                                             | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| Introductory Narrative . . . . .            | 11   |
| Venerable Bede . . . . .                    | 12   |
| John Wiclif . . . . .                       | 13   |
| Knyghton . . . . .                          | 15   |
| John de Trevisa . . . . .                   | 17   |
| William Tyndale . . . . .                   | 19   |
| John Rogers . . . . .                       | 33   |
| Miles Coverdale . . . . .                   | 34   |
| Cranmer's Bibles . . . . .                  | 39   |
| Edward VI. . . . .                          | 43   |
| Marian Persecutions . . . . .               | 44   |
| Geneva Bible . . . . .                      | 47   |
| William Whittingham . . . . .               | 48   |
| Anthony Gilby . . . . .                     | 51   |
| Thomas Sampson, D.D. . . . .                | 52   |
| Queen Elizabeth . . . . .                   | 54   |
| Parker's or the Bishops' Bible . . . . .    | 55   |
| Hampton Court Conference . . . . .          | 57   |
| King James's Version Printed . . . . .      | 59   |
| Made in Good Time . . . . .                 | 61   |
| Competency of the Translators . . . . .     | 62   |
| Their Mode of Procedure and Rules . . . . . | 67   |