

## The Bibles and Related Books in the B.M.S. Library:

WHAT master-printer gazed with pride at its stout pages, what panting apprentice lugged the huge volume up the cobbled streets or peeped inside to find it "all Greek" to him; what eager scholar left his meal untouched to compare in his new New Testament the Syriac in Hebrew text with the better-known Greek, Latin and Hebrew? These are matters beyond our information to guess, but this we know, that this, our oldest volume in the four mentioned tongues, was published by Henry Stephens in the year 1569, and dedicated to Elizabeth, most serene Queen of England, Ireland and France. How has it been so well preserved; has it lain on shelf of College Library or in private hands? These we can only surmise, but whoever has cared for the book, it has come down to us safe, even from the ravages of savage men.

A 1611 Bible proves to be one of the last editions of a pre-authorised version, the general title-page is missing, and the book has undoubtedly been re-bound: the New Testament title-page bears the inscription "Englished by T. Thomson".

Nor know we much more of the early history of this Pentateuch that Henry Ainsworth issued with annotations in 1618-9, founding his text on a pre-James version he "confers the holy Scriptures" by comparing the Greek and Chaldee versions with testimonies of Hebrew writers, such as form the Apocrypha and Josephus, Philo and the like.

We are on surer ground in this, our fourth volume, a complete Bible of 1630, in which Thos. Snolgrove of "Hackbury" has written his name with even more sense of possession than later John Ashlin in 1821 carefully inscribed his in a new copy of that date. The title-page of the former book is missing, but the work proves to be a copy of the authorised version in old lettering with the Apocrypha, issued by the University of Cambridge, and including the Book of the Psalms with tunes in "English meeter" by Sternhold, Hopkins and others, a Concordance in which "with no small labour" but "in little roome" John Downname commends himself to the Gentle Reader as "Thine in all Christian service", but Clement Cotton "with the assistance of a constable or other officer may make search in any house, shop or warehouse where they shall suspect any infringing concordance or printing presse to be, and may deface the same"! The volume concludes with a description of Canaan and the bordering countries with a curious map.

The year 1642 has given us a *Novum Testamentum Jesu Christi, Domini Nostri*, as produced by Theodore Beza, by comparison of several interpretations, and to this he added annotations together with further work by Joachim Camerarius.

The latter half of the 17th century has passed on to us (a) a *Clavis Bibliorum* or "Key of the Bible unlocking the richest Treasury of the Holy Scriptures", issued by Francis Roberts at Wrington: is this the little Somerset village from whose kindly peace such a volume could most fitly steal? (b) a *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque*, Vol. IV. and last, the work of Matthew Polus, a Londoner, and issued at the sign of the Angel near Fleet Street. (c) a *Biblia Sacra* of 1669, containing the Old Testament as translated by Immanuel Tremellius and Francis Junius, and the New from the Greek, but unlike the copy cited in Darlow-Moule, ours includes the Apocrypha. (d) and (e) two polyglots, one of 1669 of Joshua to Esther, and Esdras to Maccabees in Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac with the Samaritan, Æthiopic and Arabic conjoined, and Persian separate, with grammar by Edmund Castell; unfortunately, vol. III of the four is missing. An odd volume is II of a Polyglot Bible in Hebrew, Latin Vulgate, Targum Jonathan, Chaldean and Greek, with Syriac and Arabic, each with a Latin interpretation, and the century finishes with (f) a *Theoretico-Practico Theologia*, tomus primus, by Peter van Maestricht in 1699.

In increasing number the 18th century has left us:—

- 1701 The Compleat Works of that eminent minister of God's Word, Mr. Isaac Ambrose, dedicated to the Worshipful, the Mayor, the Aldermen, and other Inhabitants of the town of Preston in Amounderness; I like Mr. Ambrose's signature, "Yours to be commanded in all Christian service".
- 1720 A Cambridge Concordance to the Holy Scriptures and Apocrypha with various readings "very accurately corrected".
- 1724 *S.S. Patrum qui in temporibus Apostolicis floruerunt*, Barnabus, Polycarp, Hermas, Ignatius, Clement; with their true and attributed works, Vol. I & II, which first saw the light at Amsterdam.
- 1733 gives us Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John by Sir Isaac Newton.
- 1735 followed two years later by a monumental work of fourteen parts in nine huge volumes in *Latynsche Taale* on the Nature Knowledge of the Old Testament, with splendid full-page illustrations, also coming to us from Amsterdam.
- 1750 The middle of the century leaves us two Roman Catholic

works : (a) four volumes of the revised Douai Old Testament with Apocrypha, and (b) the revised Rheims New Testament as translated by the English College at Rheims in 1582, newly revised and corrected according to the Clementin Edition of the Scriptures with the approbation of nine learned doctors and professors.

1753 a Hebrew Concordance adapted to the English Bible by John Taylor of Norwich, two volumes.

1762 Eight years later a new step is taken in a Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament.

1772 gives us two works, an Oxford Bible, and the eighth edition of Matthew Henry's Exposition of Old and New Testaments. The end of the eighteenth century gave us :—(a) a *Biblia Sacra, vulgata editionis*, blessed by Sixtus V and Clement VIII, and printed at the Colonia Agrippina, and another Holy Bible in the English tongue.

Of the nineteenth century books a mere list must suffice :—

1804 Holy Bible with Apocrypha, an "argument" to each book and notes "theological, practical, critical and explanatory" : published at Kidderminster and not listed by Darlow-Moule.

1806 the third edition, two volumes of *The Self-interpreting Bible* of Haddington, and a copy of the sixth edition, two volumes, of the same work (1815), followed by an illustrated edition with numerous coloured pictures "in oil".

1810 gave us Scott's Bible containing Old and New Testaments with explanatory notes and marginal references in five volumes, followed seventeen years later by a *Comprehensive Bible* with parallel passages from Scott, Comies, Brown's self-interpreting, Clarke's Commentary, and the English Version of Bagster's Polyglot.

As the culmination of this trend we may take the

1843 Bible with 20,000 emendations, compiled from over 300 authorities of many tongues, but the modest anonymous compiler denies that all the credit of this task is due to him. The emendations are often quite inconspicuous, a word or so making the sense clearer. Much of the literature part of the Old Testament is arranged in poetic form, and the book could be used as a pulpit Bible without the jarring effect which modern forms have on many of the lovers of the "authorised" version : the verses are grouped in paragraphs, and the unfortunate chapter divisions are obscured ; "charity" becomes "love", and "we see through a glass obscurely" ; the book is the work of thirty years.

Bibles of 1813, 21, 23, 56, and 1869.

Pictorial Bibles of 1855 and one with splendid reproductions of Dore's illustrations and a Paragraph Bible of 1845 call for no special comment.

The American versions are one issued at Philadelphia in 1842 which contains the English (Authorised) version "carefully revised and amended by seven Biblical scholars" (of no stated standard), and a three-version edition of parts of the Bible with Authorised, Greek, and a revised in parallel columns, issued at New York in 1858.

This brings us to the Revised New Testament of 1881, and a Scotch version of 1882, with the Metrical Psalms.

In the more recent editions we are singularly deficient, and it remains for our generation to maintain the succession with copies of, at least, Moffatt, Weymouth and the Basic English; we have been promised a gift of Welsh Bibles. So shall this splendid series of treasured versions of the Book at the centre of all our purpose be maintained with a continuity which is surpassed rarely in any of our small libraries.

E. H. SELWOOD.