

A Century of Bibles.

INTRODUCTORY.



HE story of the English Bible has been many times written, up to a certain point. Lewis and Newcome and Strype, in the

last century, Horne and Cotton and Tregelles in our own, have treated of it with more or less completeness within the scope of their respective designs: while Anderson and Westcott have each in his department lest little more to be recorded. But all these writers have stopped short when their narrative reached the completion of the version of 1611. Archdeacon Cotton, it is true, mentions a few editions here and there which were printed after that date,

but his list only professes to notice those which were remarkable for some special reason. The catalogue of his own collection privately printed for Mr. Lea Wilson contains but few examples of the last version in comparison with his extensive list of the older Bibles. An American gentleman, Mr. Lenox, has printed some remarks on the early editions in his library; but Mr. Fry is the first who has collated any large number of copies of King James's Bible. This indefatigable bibliographer has fucceeded in establishing the distinctness of the first folios of 1611 and their successors up to 1640. After a long feries of patient refearches he has provided us with at least a ground-work from which any future historian may continue to build, but in confining his observations to the folios he is obliged to leave untold the more interesting half of the story. It must by no means be supposed that, because all our bibliographers have thus, left a large part of the narrative untouched, or have at most only stepped across the boundary line previously fixed at 1611, nothing of interest remains be-

yond. On the contrary, whether we regard the further history of the Authorised Version from a purely bibliographical point of view, or choose a more general and historical aspect in which to examine it, we shall find much of importance and more that is rather amufing than actually weighty: and in tracing the various changes and chances by which the modern Bible has been made to differ from the original we shall find that it by no means partakes of the felicity of the nation whose history is a blank. Many a battle has been fought, many a defeat fustained; many a victory has been gained for the truth. Injuries have been inflicted by partial friends; wounds have been received from unscrupulous enemies. Although it remains substantially the same as when it left the hands of the translators, yet Puritans and Calvinists, Churchmen and Methodists, Hebraists and Græcists have all left their marks upon it. It would be too much to fay that the gulf which separates the last edition of Bagster from the first of Barker, equals that by which the Authorised Version differs from

the tentative efforts of Tyndale and Coverdale, but it is no exaggeration to affert that our modern Bible is altered throughout from its original, for the better in some places, for the worse in some; and that while the general correctness of the printing is greater as a rule in our day, the spelling and punctuation might yet with advantage follow the earlier model. These things appear at first sight of trisling moment, yet it is with such trisless that revisers have to deal: and it is by a number of such small matters that the authority of the whole is most often tested.

Mr. Westcott has detailed the external and internal history of King James's translation, up to the moment at which it was launched into the world, with all its imperfections on its head. Unfortunately, as we shall see, they were many; but at this point Mr. Westcott breaks off. Yet the very first dip into the new volume brings up something worth noting. The first title is an engraving—and a very fine one,—but the New Testament title is within a woodcut border: and it has a peculiarity

which at once attracts attention, a peculiarity which it shares with the first title of later issues, also in woodcut. There is no line " Appointed to be read in Churches." does this important feature occur anywhere in the first octavo, the first Testament, the first quarto Testament, the second quarto Bible, the first Roman letter folio or a great many other editions, being, in fact, for the first year or fo confined to the engraved titles of two Bibles. This fact is an additional and valuable proof, although apparently unknown to Mr. Westcott, that he is right in saying the present version was never in reality separately fanctioned by council, convocation or parliament. In the strict sense of the word the only version ever authorised was the Great Bible referred to specially in a proclamation of Henry VIII., dated in 1538. And the authority of the Bishops' Bible depended mainly on its being regarded as merely a revision of the Great Bible. The authority of King James's version in like manner may be held to depend on its assumption of the place previously occupied by the Bishops'. That in truth this was the intention of those in power is proved by the fact that no edition of the Bishops' Bible was afterwards issued: and further that the very type, head-pieces, and even woodcuts of the Elizabethan version were employed on the new edition. Thus the figure of Neptune, which in the largest of the Bishops' was made frequently available, now headed the gospel of St. Matthew: and similar economy of material may be traced in other places, as in the initials of the Psalms where we still see the crest and the arms of Walsingham and of Cecil. The same arrangements are traceable in the smaller editions. The popular Bible during the Elizabethan era had been the Genevan: many editions of it were published both before and after the appearance of King James's: it was almost always in a quarto fize and the more the new version could be made to refemble the older one in its external features, the fooner it was likely to obtain with private readers. So we find the earliest quartos were affimilated as much as poffible

to the later Genevans. The Breeches Bible of 1611 is exactly, in fize, form, and type, the same as the Authorised Edition of 1613. The title page, in particular, of 1613, is printed with the border already so often used for the Genevan. In 1612 a handsome copperplate, a reduction from the engraved title of the folio, had been used, but only for the one issue. All but one of Barker's quartos-most of them in black letter-were issued under the Genevan title-page woodcut, with arms of the twelve tribes and figures of the apostles and evangelists: and at length it got so worn and battered that in the last copies, printed before the Rebellion, its minor features are barely distinguishable. It is the same, too, with the octavo editions and the Testaments. A block, which was in vogue under Elizabeth for prayer books, was now used for Bibles, the queen's arms being sometimes cut out at the top and the king's **fubstituted**

The new version was thus speedily disfeminated in all sizes. There was no delay to prepare fresh plant. Everything already in use was made available and though the Genevan was occasionally reprinted even as late as 1644, the Bishops' Testament only occasionally reappears, and the complete Bible never, the new translation in folio representing the one, and in quarto the other. Above fifty different editions were printed by Barker and his fuccessors before 1638: besides ten at Cambridge and two at Edinburgh. No Bibles feem to have been produced at Oxford before 1673, although the patent for printing at the univerfity press dates from 1632. But of Oxford Bibles we shall have occasion to speak again presently.

Before going further let us endeavour to answer distinctly the question how far are we justified in calling this the "Authorised Version." Are we right or wrong in using the term? Mr. Lea Wilson cautiously refers to King James's as the "Royal Version," but if we accept it, on the grounds already stated, as the legitimate descendant and successor of the "Great Bible," which undoubtedly was authorised, we shall be content to use the ordinary

We have other facts in our favour in so doing. When at the Prayer Book revision of 1662 the Epistles and Gospels and the sentences in the morning and evening fervices were taken from the Bible of King James, and when the revised prayer book was annexed to the Act of Uniformity, a certain fanction was given to it: a fanction which placed it on an equal footing with the Great Bible, from which the Psalms and certain other parts of the fervice are still taken. The note in the margin of the corrected Book of Common Prayer runs thus:—" The Epl & Gospels are all to be corrected after the last translation," and so strictly is this injunction carried out that wherever the first editions were in error the error is perpetuated: and to this day we read in the Epistle for the first Sunday after Easter, 1 John v. 12, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life;" although two important words are thus omitted; words which have fince been restored to our Bibles but not to our prayer books. The same is to be said regarding the use of the word

"fometime" in the sense of "once;" the 1611 Bibles giving it as "sometimes" and the Book of Common Prayer, together with all later Bibles, so far as our knowledge extends, except one by Hayes, 1673, perpetuate an error, which did not occur in the Genevan or the Bishops' Versions.

Strange to fay we have little or no contemporary evidence as to the reception accorded to the new Bible, or as to the history of the early editions. Much however may be indirectly gathered from the editions themselves, their number, their comparative rarity, and the other points on which the labours of modern bibliographers have been bestowed. These labours have refulted in the discovery of many particulars long hidden within the volumes themselves. Mr. Lea Wilson probably died in the belief that one folio only was printed in 1611. Mr. Fry has demonstrated that two at least were issued and perhaps part of a third. His conclusions were at one time questioned, but without sufficient reason: he seems to have clearly distinguished between these early issues and to have identified the first of them. The question is really of importance. It is very defirable that, even now, we should know what was the actual defign of the translators in the fmaller as well as in the greater particulars: for although the Pharisees were reproved for straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel, it by no means follows that the gnat should be left. To go no further than this very text (St. Matt. xxiii. 24) it is high time that the old reading should be restored. "Strain out" occurs in the Bishops' and Genevan versions: "Strain at," an evident typographical error, has, with one exception, been printed in all the Royal Bibles.

The Barker family, to whom the printing of the new version was from the first committed, had long held the office of Royal Printers, by patent from Queen Elizabeth. Full details of their connection with the work will be found in Anderson's Annals of the English Bible, vol. ii., passim. During the civil war we find "a companie of Stationers" using their type and woodcut borders, and producing in 1648 and

1649, Bibles closely resembling theirs. An interesting paper in Notes and Queries, (4 S. viii.) informs us that Barker received in King James's time 61. 13s.4d. only as his annual falary, but the profits of his office must have been very large, and he had a grant from the king of the manor of Upton in the neighbourhood of Windsor. The favour of Cecil and Walsingham was acknowledged in many ways by the Barkers. Their shop in Paternoster Row bore the sign of the "Tyger's head," Walfingham's creft, which, with the arms of Cecil, occurs in feveral places in the woodcut initials of the Bible. In 1616 Robert Barker's son, another Robert, obtained the extension to himself of his father's patent: and in 1627 had leave to transfer or lease his interest in it to Bonham Norton and John Bill. In 1635 Charles and Matthew Barker were included in the patent. In 1645 Robert the elder died, in the King's Bench. Owing to his difficulties and the many difturbing causes of the Rebellion a number of other names now begin to appear on the titlepages of Bibles, but Oliver Cromwell, having had frequent reason to complain of the carelessness of the Bible printers, granted a patent to one of the most careless, John Field printer to the University of Cambridge. Besides the Bibles of this period printed in England, a large number were imported from Holland, and many of the foreigners were worthy to rank with Field in bad paper, bad type and general incorrectness.

The Universities had early claimed the right of printing on their own account, and Bibles were issued from the Cambridge press in 1629; a New Testament, possibly, the year before. These early productions of Cambridge bear the names of Thomas and John Buck, printers to the University; and are chiefly remarkable for a misprint in 1 Timothy iv. 16, which originated with them, and which was continued in all, or nearly all their Bibles, and was imitated by other printers until the beginning of this century, examples occurring as late as 1803. Another and still more serious error also takes its rife in the Cambridge Bibles. In 1638 the corrupt state of the text as to the use of italics, the spelling and the punctuation, having attracted universal attention, Dr. Ward, and Dr. Goad, with other divines, superintended the publication of a folio edition in which undoubtedly they made many corrections, but also allowed the misreading in 1 Timothy iv. 16, and added a reading, in Acts vi. 3, which was afterwards used by the Independents against the episcopal party; so much so, indeed, that the corruption itself is often attributed to them. It is undoubted that this reading was in favour with the Puritans, and we find it in almost all their Bibles: it confifted in the alteration of a fingle letter, by which the apostles are made to commit the ordination of deacons to the congregation: "Look ye out among you feven men of honest report . . . whom ye may appoint over this bufiness." The pronoun should have been "we." This folio of 1638, bears the names of Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel, printers to the University. Soon after, John Field appears in the same capacity, and his Bibles are issued also, in accordance with the Protector's patent, from a London press.

At the Restoration his further operations were confined to Cambridge where he continued to hold his office until 1670, after which date the name of John Hayes is substituted.

But Scotland was at least as early in the field as Cambridge. In 1628 the "heirs of Andrew Hart," who had printed Genevan Bibles eighteen years before, issued a New Testament, and in 1633 a Bible in special celebration, it is faid, of the coronation of Charles at Scone. Be this as it may, confiderable stir was created by the illustrations introduced, some faid by Laud, into the new Bible, and many were the epithets heaped upon the "Popish pictures" by the successors of Knox. In 1670 a New Testament was printed at Glafgow, and not until 1675 was the first Oxford Bible issued. The colophon of this Bible is dated two years earlier but the New Testament does not seem to have been published alone. A large number of the productions of the Oxford press followed in the ensuing years. They all bear the imprint, "at the Theater" and were usually commissioned by London

booksellers. Among these appear most often the names of Ann Leake, a widow, carrying on business in Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, and Thomas Guy of Lombard Street, who afterwards became the munificent founder of the Hospital which bears his name. Meanwhile the production of Bibles at Cambridge had waned, and the London printers, although their patent continued until the first years of the eighteenth century, were by no means as prolific as the Oxford "Theater." Most of the London Bibles of this period bear the names fuccessively of John Bill and Christopher Barker, or of their affigns; of Bill, Newcomb and Hills; and of Charles Bill and the executrix of Thomas Newcomb: but many with notes were also printed by other firms; the notes being fometimes only inferted to evade the patent, and being printed low down at the foot of the page to be cut off by the binder. The most common of these productions was published by Pasham in 1776 and is somewhat fcarce in an unmutilated form: but as this edition dates later than the period to which

our list relates it will not be necessary to pursue the subject.

During the whole of this period a furreptitious importation had come from Holland. The competition was fometimes very fierce and as the foreign editions were generally remarkable for errors and omissions a practice fprung up of dating them as if they were the production of the London firms, nor was this fraud unknown within the kingdom. Several examples have been accidentally recognized in Scottish Bibles and are distinguished by bibliographers. But the most remarkable foreign examples are two duodecimos; one of them dated 1638, but in reality printed at Amsterdam many years later, full of abfurd misprints, fuch as, "fons of Belial" for "fons of Bilhah," "shamefulness" for "shamefacedness" and many more: and the other, dated 1684, which is betrayed by the misspelling of a word on the title-page, "the Assings" of Bill and Barker. Other Dutch Bibles again were published anonymously, some with a view of London on the title-page, and others, and these generally with Genevan notes, with the initials of John Canne or some other Amsterdam printer. A large number were produced by Steven Swart, in the same city, and subsequently by his widow. It is also usual to attribute to the foreign press an Edinburgh blackletter Testament dated in 1694, which may be confidered on the whole entitled to the difgraceful distinction of having distanced all competitors in careless and erroneous typography. It may fafely be afferted that a mistake occurs in every column; hardly a verse is without one at least, and Dr. Lee estimates the whole number at 2,000. Thus in S. Mark vii. 35, we read of the deaf mute "and straightway his eyes were opened . . . and he spake plain;" and in S. Luke, ii. 36 that Anna "had lived with an husband seventy years." A Glasgow Testament of 1691 is nearly as bad.

Whilst we are on the subject we may here enumerate the other editions remarkable for misprints, or, as in some cases for general incorrectness. At the head of these stands Barker's octavo of 1631. It abounds in gross errors,

of which one example will suffice. In the commandments as given at Exodus xx, the important word "not" is omitted in the fourteenth verse, which therefore reads, "Thou shalt commit adultery." It has often been afferted that Barker "and Lucas" the King's printers were fummoned before the Star Chamber and fined 3,000l. for this carelessness: but no one of the name of Lucas is known to have held any fuch office and the fum paid by Barker dwindles on investigation to 300l.; and even this again is compounded for by the prefentation of a fet of Greek types to one of the Universities. Mistakes of slighter importance will be frequently found in the enfuing lift. Among these are such examples as "fonne" for "name," S. Matt. i. 25; "the queen of the South shall up in the Judgment with this generation," S. Matt. xii. 42, both in a Cambridge quarto of 1637. The Translators are called the "Trancelators" in a black-letter quarto of 1619-20, and 11 Corinthians is called II Coainthians. This epistle is singularly unfortunate in the annals of errata, for in the fecond folio, issued in 1611, in which the mistakes committed in the first were supposed to be corrected, we find First and Second Corinthians substituted in the List of Books for First and Second Chronicles. The same volume contains an even more serious error: in Matt. xxvi. 36, we read, "Then commeth Judas with them unto a place called Gethsemane;" while in many copies the right name, printed on a flip is pasted over. The first folio itself had many errors but never aught like this: the most important being a repetition of three lines in Exodus xiv. 10, and the number "eleven thousand" for "thirteen hundred thousand" in the heading of 11 Samuel xxiv. The folio of 1613 is extremely incorrect, but the period of the Commonwealth was most remarkable as we have seen for the corruption of the printed text, although very few examples are worth quoting, the faults being more of general carelessness than of actual misprinting. Some cases, however, are notorious. Thus, in one or more of Field's Bibles, 1658, 24mo. "As the chief is ashamed when he is found,"

should be "As the thief is ashamed:" and in a Cambridge 8vo. of 1657 a large part of the 4th verse of Psalm exliii is omitted. Kilburne mentions ninety-one faults in another of Field's, 12mo. 1655: and the quarto with notes printed in 1649 has many misprints, one or two of them very important. The general incorrectness of Bible printing is by no means confined to those times of disturbance. The Errata of Field's little volumes are emulated in Blayney's folio of 1769, (Oxford, Wright and Gill,) which abounds in omiffions and misprints: yet this is still considered a standard edition. Many of Bagster's Bibles contain serious errors, and even the Bible Society has not been exempt from the failings of which we complain. An octavo printed at Cambridge in 1831 reads Pfalm cxix. 93, "I will never forgive thy precepts," and I John iii. II. "love another," for "love one another." An Oxford 8vo. of 1792 names St. Philip instead of St. Peter in St. Luke xxii. 34. Baskett's fine folio of 1717 is known as the vinegar Bible from the misprint in the heading of the parable of the

vineyard in the fame chapter: and an 8vo. of 1711 omits the "not" in the last clause of Isaiah lvii. 12. Dr. Lee gives many examples in his Memorial. Thus in an Edinburgh quarto of 1791, he found, "Make me not to go in the way of thy commandments" Psalm cxix. 33: in a New Testament, 1816, "let all tongues be done decently;" in two quartos, 1811 and 1814, "the blast of the terrible ones is as a stone against the wall:" whilst he says "it might disturb the gravity even of well disposed persons to hear," at 1 Kings xxii. 38, "the dogs liked his blood" in another Scottish Bible of 1791. The number of examples in Dr. Lee is very great, and leave an unpleasant impression of the Edinburgh Editions, but we have no cause to congratulate ourselves on any immunity in the Southern part of our island. In a Cambridge 12mo. of 1828, Mr. Curtis found these among other errors:—S. Matt. xxii. 28, whose wife shall she be, for whose wife: and Heb. xiii. 2, bet not, for be not: and in an 18mo., by Reeves, "his own wife also, for his own life. This word, wife, is particularly unfortunate for in one of the Bibles 12mo, 1638, described in our list, the heathen are spoken of as vexing the Israelites with their "wives," (for "wiles") in Numbers xxv. 18.

Besides such aberrations as these there is a large class of various readings which will require notice more at length. Some of them, owing to the prefent endeavour to amend the text, are of special interest. Others, of smaller moment in themselves are remarkable as examples of the mischief which may be occafioned by a fingle careless compositor, while many, into the merits of which we will not enter here, are concerned with the use of italics, the spelling of proper names, the punctuation, and what may be confidered to belong to the more purely critical departments of Biblical research.

Printers and correctors of the press have at all times taken upon themselves without any special authority to amend the text in minor matters, such as spelling. The spelling of no two editions during the first century will be found exactly alike. Even in the same verse

the same word is spelled in different ways, fometimes, as in the first verse of Deut. xxix, in three: and sometimes a Bible will be met with in which, as in Field's 12mo, of 1657, the fpelling approximates nearly to that of our modern editions; while, years later, the old fpelling will be found in another edition. We ftill have fuch words as plow, aftonied, throughly, pransings, sope; although the authority by which they are retained has no more existence in reality than that by which fuch words as shamefastness or unpossible were altered. Two or three examples of modern alterations and insertions are worth noticing. They are selected as they come to hand:—

In the first folio and in all later editions until 1630, at least, we read in Romans xii. 2, "that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God." It would be difficult to find a reason for the change now universal, of the second that into and.

In the first folio and most subsequent editions until the present century we read in St. Matt. xii. 23, "Is this the Son of David?" Dr.

Blayney inserted a "not," in 1769. The change is an improvement, but what was his authority for making it? The old reading occurs last in a 4to., Cambridge 1837.

In the first folio we read, I John v. 12, "He that hath not the Son hath not life." In 1638 this was altered to our present reading which inserts "of God" after son: but the old reading remains, as we have already seen, in our prayer books.

Again, we have two erroneous readings retained neither of which occurs in the previous verfions. In Ephefians, ii. 13, and other places we have already feen that "fometimes" is printed for "fometime," a word of wholly different meaning. Again, as we have mentioned above, the Genevan Bibles had in S. Matt. xxiii. 24, " strain out a gnat," but this reading which is very probably right never occurs in any edition of the Authorised Version, before 1754: nor ever fince, so far as we are aware. The same printer who in 1769 changed "world" into "earth" at 1 Cor. iv. 13, and inferted the important word "Godly" before "edifying"

in I Tim. i. 4, might surely have given a corrected reading of these passages.

But a still more curious field for investigation is presented by the vicissitudes of head lines, and headings. These have been altered and restored over and over again. The tender susceptibilities of the Puritan were often as much wounded by the high church headings as those of the followers of Laud by the Genevan notes. Some of the Bibles of the commonwealth omit the headings: in others their meaning is modified to fuit the times. The most important example is presented by the contents of Psalm exlix. "The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his love to the church, and for that power which he hath given to the church to rule the consciences of men." So we have it in the first folio and in all other editions before 1649. But in a quarto of that year, printed by a company of Stationers and furnished with the Genevan notes, we have this heading thus: - " The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his love to the church, and for that power which he hath given to the church, for the conversion of sinners." And in the larger number of subsequent Bibles the heading breaks off cautiously at the first use of the word church." "The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his love to the Church." In 1660 we find the older reading restored in Field's 4to (the preaching Bible:) and it underwent yet another change a little later: for in 1769 (Blayney,) we find " and for that power which he hath given to his faints." Nor is this the end: for in modern Bibles, the repetition of the word "Church" is restored, although the debateable matter at the end of the original headings is omitted. In Bagster's Polyglots such questions are avoided by the total omission of all headings.

Further we need not go in this place. The questions, and they are many and difficult, which relate to the use of italics will be found well treated of by Dr. Turton, in The Text of the English Bible, considered. (Second Edition, Oxford, 1833). Almost all the critical questions will be found briefly stated by Mr. Girdlestone of the Bible Society, in a paper by him in the

Christian Advocate, April 1870, whilst the differences by which the present authorised version is distinguished from its predecessors will be seen at considerable length in Mr. Westcott's History of the English Bible. Many other works might be named, such as Mr. Blunt's Plain Account, and Archdeacon Cotton's Editions of the Bible in which much information will be found, but none of these, and indeed, no work with which we are acquainted gives the history of our present version beyond the date at which it was published.

It is perhaps too much to hope that a future volume may be devoted to the editions published since 1711. Had it been possible a list of the editions of the Psalms and of parts of the Bible should have been included: but in these particulars Dr. Cotton's work is very full, and a new list would have only been a rechausse from his, without fresh sacts, and perhaps without any additions. Dr. Lee's Memorial for the Bible Societies in Scotland, with two Appendices, 1824-6, has been largely drawn upon. The lists of Scottish Bibles will be found very

deficient, as no materials exist from which any detailed account may be derived.

The Bibles and Testaments enumerated below have as far as possible been personally examined. The larger part are to be found in the British Museum. Where that noble collection failed to show an edition, Mr. Francis Fry of Bristol, Mr. Euing of Glasgow, and Mr. T. M. Ward of Maida Hill have afforded the kindest and most necessary information. Of the other collections which have been ranfacked perhaps the most important is that of the Venerable B. Harrison, Archdeacon of Maidstone, which is at present deposited in the Cathedral Library at Canterbury; it contains what is probably a unique series of the Oxford Bibles published by Thomas Guy. Many examples which are named in Sale Catalogues are not to be found. In fuch cases the catalogue in which the missing volume is named will be mentioned, unless good reasons exist for sufpecting that a mistake has been made. It will also be seen that in several places Mr. Lea Wilson's estimate of the fize has been departed

The Bibles of the Authorised Version enumerated in the British Museum Catalogue will be found in a separate list, the sizes being given as they are there written: and the Bibles and Testaments in Mr. Lea Wilson's Catalogue are also briefly tabulated, with one or two other short lists which may be found useful.