

“The Story of Our Bible”

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by W. S. Sadler

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Sources for “The Story of Our Bible” in the order in which they appear

- (1) Rev. Charles **Leach**, D.D., *Our Bible: Where Did We Get It?* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, copyrighted 1898, by the Fleming H. Revell Company)

Note: The second part of the book was “Ten Reasons Why I Believe the Bible Is the Word of God,” by R. A. Torrey.

- (2) J. Paterson **Smyth**, B.D., LL.D., *How We Got Our Bible, New Edition* (New York: James Pott & Co., 1899)

Note: The first edition was published in 1886.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.

- (f) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

SOURCE

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IS MY BIBLE TRUE?

Where did we get it? (Leach 9)

PREFACE (Smyth 5)

“ ... By what right do men, 1800 years after the time of Our Lord, venture to meddle with the words of His revelation?” ... (S 5).

I: SOURCES OF OUR BIBLE. (Smyth 9)

The reader will keep in mind that the Old Testament books were originally written in Hebrew,

those of the New Testament in Greek (S 9).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE. No. I.

1:0.1 Where did we get the English Bible?

How do we come to have so many versions?

What right have men to revise the Bible?

1:0.2 These and other similar questions are often asked. It is the purpose of these articles to briefly trace the history of the sacred writings from the time they were written in the original tongues, down through the ages to the time when our King James version was made, in A. D. 1611.

I. THE SCRIPTURES IN THE ORIGINAL TONGUES.

1:1.1 The Old Testament scriptures were written in Hebrew,

while the New Testament was written in Greek.

SOURCE

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

[T]hese writings were of course all manuscript, *i.e.*, written by the hand, and ... copies when needed had each to be written out, letter by letter,

at a great expense of time and trouble,

and unfortunately, I must add, very often too at some expense of the original correctness....

... [E]rrors might creep into the copy of [the scribe's] manuscript. These errors would be repeated by the man that afterward copied from this, who would also sometimes add other errors of his own. So that it is evident, as copies increased, the errors would be likely to increase with them ... (S 10-11).

Even in printed Bibles, whose proofs have been carefully examined and reexamined, these mistakes creep in.

To take two examples out of many:

An edition published in 1653, reads 1 Cor. vi. 9,

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God;”

and the “Printer’s Bible,” much sought by book collectors,

From the sacred writings in these two original tongues numerous translations and many versions have been made from time to time.

The art of printing being unknown,

all copies of the Bible were produced by hand,

thus making the sacred book very expensive.

As the result of frequent copying, errors crept into these copied manuscripts,

and some of these were even handed down and appeared in the early printed Bibles.

For instance,

I Corinthians 6:9, in one translation was made to read:

“The unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

And in the “Printers’ Bible,” now much sought by book collectors,

SOURCE

puts the strange anachronism in King David's mouth, "Printers have persecuted me without a cause" (Ps. cxix. 161) (S 12).

THE EARLIER ANY MANUSCRIPT, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS TO BE CORRECT. (S 11)

§ 1. LET us begin then by imagining before us the record chest of one of the early Christian churches,—say Jerusalem, or Rome, or Ephesus, about 120 A. D. ... (S 9).

[?]

In any one church, perhaps, we should not find very much, but if we collect together the documents of some of the leading churches we should have before us something of this sort:

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

Psalms 119:161 was made to read, "Printers have persecuted me without cause."

It was from this error that this edition of the Bible came to be called the "Printers' Bible."

1:1.2 It must be evident to all that

the oldest copies of the Bible must be the most correct

and most free from the errors and oversights of copyists.

II. THE ANCIENT CHURCH CHESTS.

1:2.1 In the early days of the Christian era, if one should have visited the Christian churches at Ephesus, Corinth, or Thessalonica, he would have observed in the church a large, strongly built chest, in which the sacred writings belonging to that church were kept

under lock and key.

Had you examined the contents of those "Bible chests,"

in most instances you would have found the following manuscripts:

SOURCE

I. Some manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament books (S 9).

II. A good many more of the Old Testament books translated for general use in the churches, Greek being the language most widely known at the time.

This translation is called the Septuagint, or "Version of the *Seventy*," from an old tradition of its having been prepared by seventy learned Jews of Alexandria. It was made at different times, beginning somewhere around 280 B.C.,

and was the version commonly used by the Evangelists and Apostles.

This accounts for the slight difference we sometimes notice between the Old Testament and their quotations from it,

our Old Testament being translated direct from the Hebrew (S 9-10).

IV. Either the originals or direct copies of the Gospels and the Acts, the Epistles of SS. Paul and Peter and John, and the Book of the Revelation (S 10).

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

(1) The Old Testament manuscripts in the Hebrew tongue;

(2) the Old Testament scriptures translated into the Greek language,

being a translation made about 280 B. C. at Alexandria, Egypt, and called the Septuagint.

It was this translation of the Old Testament scriptures into the Greek that was used by Christ and His apostles,

and this accounts for the slight difference in the wording of some Old Testament passages quoted in the New Testament from the same passages as found in our English Old Testament,

as well as explains why the prophet is called "Isaiah" in the Old Testament and "Esaias" in the New Testament.

Our English Old Testament was translated direct from the Hebrew manuscripts,

while the Old Testament passages quoted in the New Testament were translated from a Greek translation of the original Hebrew.

(3) These Bible chests also contained

the originals or copies of the New Testament books, epistles, etc.

SOURCE

III. A few rolls of the Apocryphal Books,

written by holy men in the Church, and valued for the practical teaching they contained (S 10).

[repeated from 1:1.1] [T]hese writings were of course all manuscript,

i.e., written by the hand,

and that copies when needed had each to be written out, letter by letter ... (S 10).

Jerome tells us of ... the endeavors of two presbyters to restore the manuscripts [of a library in Caesarea] by copying them on parchment (S 13, fn.).

Some of them, written on the common writing material of the day,—the papyrus paper referred to in 2 John, ver. 12,—very soon got worn out from use ... (S 13).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

For instance, in the early days of the church at Ephesus one would be able to see the original letter written by Paul to the Ephesians, bearing his signature in his own handwriting.

(4) These chests also contained copies of other writings not regarded as sacred or inspired,

but which possessed some historical or other value and were called “Apocryphal.”

III. HOW EARLY COPIES OF THE BIBLE WERE PRODUCED.

1:3.1 The ancient copies of the scripture were produced from the original manuscripts

or copies such as were contained in the ancient church chests.

They were written out by hand,

letter by letter,

on expensive parchment,

or the perishable papyrus paper,

and owing to the expense of producing them and the great labor required, but few persons were fortunate enough to possess a copy of the whole scriptures.

IV. SOURCES FROM WHICH THE EARLY TRANSLATORS PRODUCED THEIR EARLY VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

In the absence of ... original manuscripts, what sources of information are open to Bible revisers? (S 13)

[contd] § 4. For answer let us ... imagine beneath some oaken library roof a vast mass of manuscripts ... thousands of old Scripture writings reaching back for 1500 years....

In these piles we shall find three different classes of writings. Here at the end those faded parchments, with the crowded square lettering, are copies in the original languages of the different Scriptures contained in the old record chest. These are known as Biblical “MANUSCRIPTS,” for though all those early Scriptures are of course written by the hand, the name *manuscripts* has been by common content of scholars appropriated to the *copies in the original tongue* (S 14).

[contd] But those farther on are evidently different in language ... That open manuscript on the top, written all over in running lines and loops, is a **Syriac** translation, the two next are Coptic and **Latin**, and all these are **ANCIENT VERSIONS**, i.e., translations of the Bible into the languages of early Christendom, some of them representing the Scriptures of about fifty years after the apostles (S 14-15).

1:4.1 **Early** English translators of the Bible had three sources from which to produce their versions:

1:4.2 1. **Manuscripts in the original tongues.**

1:4.3 2. **Ancient versions**, such as the Septuagint, **Latin**, **Syriac**, etc.

SOURCE

[contd] The contents of the third pile, though a good deal resembling the Biblical manuscripts in appearance, are not even books of the Scriptures at all, but WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS from the second to the fifth century (S 15).

[The sources of information, then, open to revisers may be briefly summed up as—

I. Manuscripts. II. Versions. III. Quotations (S 16).]

V: THE ANCIENT FATHERS OF THE CHURCH. (Leach 35)

[contd] MANY years ago, says Thomas Cooper, a party of scholarly men met at a dinner-party. During the conversation, some one in the party put a question which no one present was able to answer. The question was this:—

Suppose that the New Testament had been destroyed, and every copy of it lost by the end of the third century,

could it have been collected together again from the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries? (L 35)

[contd] The question startled the company; but all were silent. Two months afterwards

one of the company called upon Sir David Dalrymple, who had been present at the dinner. Pointing to a table covered with books, Sir David said:

“Look at those books.

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

1:4.4 3. Quotations from the scriptures in early religious writings.

1:4.5 The question was once asked at a gathering of scholarly linguists,

in the old country,

if the New Testament should be destroyed,

would it be possible to reproduce it from quotations found in other writings?

Two months afterward

Sir David Dalrymple, pointing to a table covered with books, said:

“Look at those books.

SOURCE

You remember the question about the New Testament and the Fathers?

That question roused my curiosity,

and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search,

and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except *eleven verses* (L 35-36).

[?]

[The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, or of parts of it, thus far discovered is large. It has been estimated that there must be somewhat **more than two thousand** documents of this kind scattered among the **great libraries** of Christendom (Rev. George E. Merrill, *The Story of the Manuscripts* [1881], 38).]

II. ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS. (**Smyth** 19)

If we remember that ten or twelve manuscripts, and these generally modern, are all we have for ascertaining the text of most classical authors,

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

You remember the question about the New Testament?

That question aroused my curiosity.

I commenced to search,

and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament except eleven verses.”

V. THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE.

1:5.1 Of these manuscripts in the original tongue there are at the present time about three thousand of the Old Testament scriptures in the various **great public libraries** of earth,

and in the same places may be found **more than two thousand** manuscripts of the New Testament.¹

Now this is an important showing, in view of the fact that

of many of the great classics whose authenticity is quite unquestioned, there are in existence only ten or twenty old manuscript copies;

SOURCE

it will help us to understand what an enormous mass of evidence there is available for the purpose of Scripture revision (S 33).

[See 1:2.1, above.]

[*Note:* Leach asserts, on p. 82, that “by the middle of the second century both Old and New Testaments were translated into Latin.” Smyth, on p. 36, indicates that “the old Syriac Scriptures” were “probably in use fifty years after the New Testament was written.” (See 3:1.1.)]

[*Note:* Leach speculates, on p. 64, that the Old Latin version of the NT used in the African churches “was written before the last quarter of the second century began.” He says, on p. 62, that the Syriac version of the NT was completed in the second century. However, the current consensus among scholars is that it appeared in the fifth century. See Wikipedia article “Peshitta”.]

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

while of the Old and New Testament scriptures together there are more than five thousand manuscript copies in existence in the original tongues.

VI. THE ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

1:6.1 1. The Old Testament Versions.

The Septuagint manuscript, mentioned before, which was translated about 280 B. C., is the oldest version of the Old Testament. It was this version that was in common use in the days of Christ and His apostles, the one from which they taught and preached.

In the second century after Christ the Old Testament was translated into both the Latin and the Syriac tongues.

1:6.2 2. New Testament. The New Testament was written in Greek,

and in about the second century after Christ was translated also into both Latin and Syriac.

(To be continued.)

THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE. No. 2.

VII. THE THREE OLDEST BIBLES IN THE WORLD.

IV: THE THREE OLDEST BIBLES IN THE WORLD.—Continued. (Leach 27)

THESE MSS. INACCESSIBLE TO KING JAMES TRANSLATORS. (Leach 30)

II: ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS. (Smyth 19)

The question of determining the age of a manuscript is an intricate one ... (S 19).

The form of the letters is the chief guide.

The oldest and therefore most valuable are written in capital letters, and without any division between the words,

as if we should write

NOWHENJSWASBORNINBETH-LEHEMOFJ (S 19).

III: THE THREE OLDEST BIBLES IN THE WORLD. (Leach 19)

THE AGE OF THESE OLD MANUSCRIPTS (Leach 20)

[The oldest Greek manuscripts] will be written thus, only in Greek characters:—

2:1.1 Before attempting a brief description of the three oldest Bibles in the world, it is well to **again** call the reader's attention to the fact that

neither of these three ancient manuscripts was accessible to the translators of the King James version.

2:1.2 The age of these ancient versions is determined by

the style of writing,

the oldest being written entirely in capitals, without any spaces between the words,

something like the following:

SOURCE

GODSOLOVEDTHEWORLDTHATHE
GAVEHISONLYBEGOTTENSON

THATWHOSOEVERBELIEVETHINH
IMSHOULDNOTPERISH (L 20).

[contd] The documents written in this way are called *uncial manuscripts*, and are always ancient. Those which are modern are written in a running or flowing hand,

and are called *cursive* (L 20-21).

II: ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS. (Smyth 19)

§ 1. THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPT.

[[T]he VATICAN (*Codex B*) is in the Vatican Library at Rome ... (S 21).]

The most ancient, it is generally agreed, is the Vatican Manuscript,

which has lain at least four or five hundred years in the Vatican Library at Rome (S 21).

[M]ost persons capable of examining it a right have been refused access to it (S 21).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

GODSOLOVEDTHEWORLDTHATHE
SENTHISONLYBEGOTTENSON

INTOTHEWORLD

THATWHOSOEVERBELIEVETHINH
IMSHOULDNOTPERISH

BUTHAVEEVERLASTINGLIFE Jno. 3:16.)

2:1.3 The more modern copies of the scriptures were written in a running hand

similar to that in use to-day,

and called *Cursive* manuscripts;

while the more ancient, or those written in capital letters, are termed the *Uncial manuscripts*.

We will now take a brief look at the three oldest Bible manuscripts in the world.

2:1.4 1. *The Vatican Manuscript,*

or *Codex B.*

This is probably the oldest Bible in the world.

It has lain for about five hundred years in the Vatican library at Rome.

No one was permitted to examine this precious manuscript,

SOURCE

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

However, it has of late years become easily accessible through the excellent fac-similes made by order of Pope Pius IX.,

and it was not accessible until by order of Pope Pius IX photograph facsimiles were made

which may be seen in our chief public libraries (S 22).

and distributed to a number of the larger libraries.

[contd] The manuscript consists of about 700 leaves of the finest vellum, about a foot square, bound together in book form (S 22).

This manuscript consists of seven hundred leaves of fine vellum.

Each page contains three columns,

It is written three columns to the page

and the writing is in capital letters, without any division between the words (S 22-23).

in the Uncial style

and contains the whole Bible with the exception that

[contd from five rows above] It is not quite perfect, having lost Gen. i.-xlvi., as well as Psalms cv.-cxxxvii.,

there is missing Genesis 1-46, Psalms 105-137,

and all after Heb. ix. 14 of the New Testament.

and the remainder of the New Testament after the ninth chapter of Hebrews.

The original writing must have been beautifully delicate and finely formed. There are only a few words left here and there by which to judge of this; for from one end to the other, the whole manuscript has been travelled over by the pen of some meddlesome scribe of about the tenth century.

About the tenth century this whole manuscript was traced over again by some apprehensive scribe,

Probably he was afraid of the precious writing fading out if it were not thus inked over;

who was probably afraid it would eventually fade out.

SOURCE

but if so his fears were quite groundless, for here are some of the words which he passed over (considering them incorrect) remaining still perfectly clear and legible after the lapse of 1500 years (S 22).

To [save as much space as possible], words are written smaller and more crowded as they approach the **end of a line**, and for the same reason was adopted the plan of **contracted words**, which has often been the cause of manuscript errors.

First, they cut off the final M's and N's at the end of a word,

marking the omission by a line across the top, as if we should write LONDō for London;

then they proceeded to the dropping of final syllables, and from that to the shortening of frequently recurring words, like the name Jesus or God. We might fairly represent these peculiarities ... by writing thus in English (Titus ii. 11,12):
FORTHEGRACEOF**GD**BRINGING
SALVATION... (S 23).

I: SOURCES OF OUR BIBLE. (Smyth 9)

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

In this manuscript, as in other ancient copies,

many of the **words are contracted** at the end of the line,

letters left off,

and final m's and n's dropped,

and the omission indicated by a dash over the last letter.

For instance, the word "GOD" would be contracted so as to be **GD**.

These and other irregularities in copying would have made great difficulty for the translators had there not been a comparatively large number of copies of the sacred writings in existence,

SOURCE

[I]t is evident that if a number of copies are made of the same original, even should each of the copyists have erred, no two are likely to make exactly the same error, therefore a false reading in any one can often be corrected by comparison with the others (S 15-16).

III: THE THREE OLDEST BIBLES IN THE WORLD. (Leach 19)

THE OLDEST BIBLE KNOWN. (Leach 23)

It carries us back probably to the beginning of the fourth century (L 23).

II: ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS. (Smyth 19)

§ 2. THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT.

[[T]he SINAITIC (*Codex Aleph*) ... (S 21)]

There is no need of describing this celebrated manuscript, which on the whole very much resembles the other [i.e., the Vatican Manuscript] ... (S 24).

It is called the Sinaitic Manuscript from the place where it was found by the great German scholar, Dr. Tischendorf (S 24).

[I]t was quite unexpectedly in St. Catharine's Convent, at the foot of Mount Sinai, that he discovered this the "pearl of all his researches," as he calls it.

In visiting the library of the convent in the month of May, 1844,

he perceived in the middle of the great hall a basket full of old parchments,

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

which could be compared, and thus irregularities rectified.

This, the oldest Bible in the world, is a copy made probably between the years 300 and 500 A. D.²

2:1.5 2. *The Sinaitic Manuscript;*

Codex Aleph.

These ancient manuscripts are alike in many respects,

and a description of this ancient copy will therefore not be necessary.

It receives its name from the fact that it was found on Mount Sinai by Dr. Tischendorf.

In a convent at the foot of Mount Sinai, in the year 1844,

he discovered a basketful of old parchments,

SOURCE

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

and the librarian told him that two heaps of similar old documents had already been used for the fires.

What was his surprise to find in the basket

a number of sheets of a copy of the Septuagint (Greek) Old Testament, the most ancient-looking manuscript that he had ever seen.

The authorities of the convent allowed him to take away about forty sheets, as they were only intended for the fire; but

he displayed so much satisfaction with his gift that the suspicion of the monks was aroused as to the value of the manuscript, and they refused to give him any more (S 24-25).

[contd] He returned to Germany, and with his precious sheets

made a great sensation in the literary world.

But he took very good care not to tell how he had got them, as he still had hopes of securing the remainder; and he soon had reason to congratulate himself on his caution, for the English Government at once sent out a scholar to buy up any valuable Greek manuscripts he could lay hands on ... You may judge of [Dr. Tischendorf's] relief when he saw the Englishman's report [of his failure] (S 25).

which were soon to be burnt,

two similar basketfuls having already been given to the flames.

Imagine his surprise when he discovered

some of the most ancient copies of the scriptures he had ever looked upon.

However,

the monks detected his joy and refused to allow him to take more than a few pages away with him.

He returned to Germany with these few pages,

which were sufficient to

attract considerable attention.

SOURCE

He tried next, by means of an influential friend at the court of Egypt, to procure the rest of the manuscript,

but without success (S 25).

To shorten the story, I must pass over fifteen years,

during which time he had enlisted the sympathy of the Emperor of Russia, and in 1859 we find him again at the convent with a commission from the Emperor himself.

The very evening before he was to leave

he was walking in the grounds with the steward of the convent, and as they returned the monk asked him into his cell to take some refreshment. Scarcely had they entered the cell, when,

resuming his former conversation, the monk said: "I too have read a copy of that Septuagint." And so saying he took down a bulky bundle, wrapped in red cloth,

and laid it on the table. Tischendorf opened the parcel,

and to his great surprise found not only those very fragments that he had seen fifteen years before, but also other parts of the Old Testament, the New Testament complete, and some of the Apocryphal Books (S 26).

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

He tried to get the rest of the manuscript through the influence of the court of Egypt,

as also did the English government,

but both efforts were failures.

2:1.6 After fifteen years,

in 1859, the Emperor of Russia sent a commission with Dr. Tischendorff in another effort to gain possession of this valuable treasure.

The doctor was about to leave the convent,

when, while taking refreshment

the steward volunteered to haul down a large package, tied up in a red cloth,

saying to the doctor, "I, too, have read a copy of that Septuagint."

As the bundle was opened

the doctor recognized his long-sought treasure.

SOURCE

[contd] Full of joy, which this time he had the self-command to conceal,

he asked in a careless way for permission to look over it in his bedroom.

“And there by myself,” he says, “I gave way to my transports of joy. I knew that I held in my hand one of the most precious Biblical treasures in existence ...” (S 26-27).

[contd] At length, through the Emperor’s influence,

he succeeded in obtaining the precious manuscript,

which is now stored up in the Library of St. Petersburg, the greatest treasure which the Eastern Church possesses (S 27).

§ 3. THE ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT (Codex A). (S 28)

It was presented to Charles I. by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, A. D. 1628,

and therefore arrived in England seventeen years too late to be of use in preparing our Authorized Version (S 28).

Only ten leaves are missing from the Old Testament part,

but the New Testament is much more defective, having lost twenty-five leaves from the beginning of St. Matthew, two from St. John, and three from Corinthians (S 29).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

But this time he was wise enough to conceal his delight and surprise,

and was permitted to look the manuscript over in his bedroom;

and at last, through royal influence,

this ancient Bible was secured by the Russian government,

and to-day may be seen in the library of St. Petersburg.

2:1.7 3. *The Alexandrian Manuscript*, or Codex A.

This ancient Bible was presented to Charles I by the Patriarch of Constantinople in A. D. 1628,

just seventeen years too late to be used in preparing our authorized King James version.

Only ten leaves of the Old Testament are missing,

but there is considerable of the New Testament wanting.

SOURCE

[contd from three rows above] The Arabic inscription on the first sheet, states that it was written “by the hand of Thekla the Martyr” (S 28).

§ 4. Here is a Codex of Ephraem, a very curious manuscript, all stained and soiled, and seemingly of little value, as it is written in quite a modern hand (S 29).

[It is] an ancient and valuable copy of the Scriptures [which] was in the twelfth century

coolly scrubbed out to make room for some theological discourses of St. Ephraem, an old Syrian Father (S 29-30).

[contd] The old writing, however, had not been so thoroughly rubbed but that some dim traces remained, which drew attention to the manuscript about 200 years since.

It was very difficult to decipher the old hand till some chemical preparation applied in 1834

revived a good part of it, though it very much stained and defaced the vellum (S 30).

It was brought into France by Queen Catherine de Medici of evil memory and is now preserved in the Royal Library at Paris (S 30).

[[The Codex of Ephraem] is what is called a Palimpsest or **Rescript Manuscript**, *i.e.*, one that had its original contents rubbed out to make room for some other writing (S 29).]

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

On the first sheet appears this statement: “By the hand of Thekla the Martyr.”

VIII. CODEX EPHRAEM.

2:2.1 This is a very curious manuscript,

whose history is as follows:

Some time about the twelfth century, an old Bible manuscript was

scrubbed out to make it possible for a certain Syrian Father Ephraem to write his discourses upon.

Later, this fact was discovered

and in 1834 chemicals were applied

and the ancient manuscript was restored

and may now be seen in the public library of Paris.

SOURCE

[This kind of manuscript is called a Palimpsest, which means written twice. There are many documents of this kind (Leach 32).]

§ 6. All that we have examined up to this date are of uncial type, which, as we have seen, is a mark of their antiquity. Of these Uncials we have altogether about a hundred (S 32).

II: ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS. (Smyth 19)

§ 7. The Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament need occupy little time, the earliest we possess dating no earlier than about the tenth century (S 33).

The existing Hebrew manuscripts ... are of great authority, and all the more so owing to the reverence of Jewish scribes for the Word of God, and the consequent carefulness of their transcription.... [The scribes'] exactness ... very much lessened the danger of erroneous copying ... (S 34).

["It is well known that after the Jews returned from the captivity of Babylon, ... the readings from the books of Moses, in the synagogues of Palestine, were explained to them in the Chaldaic tongue, in Targums or paraphrases ..."] (Rev. J. Comper Gray, *Bible Lore* [1870], 24-25).]

[Of these Targums there are at present ten in existence.

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

There are a number of such re-script manuscripts, as they are called, in existence to-day,

about one hundred of which are of the Uncial type, thus indicating their great age.³

THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE. No. 3.

IX. HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS AND TARGUMS.

3:0.1 It is doubtful if there are any Hebrew manuscripts in existence written earlier than the tenth century.

The ancient Hebrews were very accurate and careful in making their copies of the sacred writings.

3:0.2 The Targums⁴ are a sort of paraphrase of the Bible.

There are about ten in existence

SOURCE

(1) Of these, the most ancient is the Targum on the Pentateuch, called the *Targum of Onkelos*. This Onkelos is supposed to have lived ... at the very beginning of the Christian era; certainly no critics place him lower than the second century (Gray 41).]

III: ANCIENT VERSIONS AND QUOTATIONS. (Smyth 36)

§ 1. ... There are the old Syriac Scriptures,

which were probably in use about fifty years after the New Testament was written,

a Version representing very nearly the language of the people among whom our Lord moved.

Those discolored parchments beside them are Egyptian, Ethiopic, and Armenian Versions,

which would be more useful if our scholars understood these languages better;

and the beautiful silver-lettered book, with its leaves of purple parchment, is the Version of Ulfilas, bishop of the fierce Gothic tribes

about A. D. 350 (S 36-37).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

that are supposed to have been written in the **fourth** century,⁵

and one written possibly in the first century after Christ.

X. EARLY VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

3:1.1 1. *The Syriac Version,*

one of which is supposed to have been made about fifty years after the completion of the New Testament.

3:1.2 2. *The Ethiopic, Egyptian and Armenian Versions.*

These languages, being little understood, they have not been of great value to the translator.

3:1.3 3. *The Version of Ulfilas, the Gothic bishop,*

made about A. D. 350,

peculiar in that

SOURCE

Gibbon says: “He prudently suppressed the four books of Kings, as they might tend to irritate the fierce spirit of the barbarians” (S 37, fn.)

§ 2. It is a version which just now should possess very special interest for English readers—St. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate, the great “Revised Version of the ancient Western Church (S 37).

His revision of the New Testament was completed in 385,

and the Old Testament he afterward translated direct from the original Hebrew, a task which probably no other scholar of the time would have been capable of (S 37-38).

[The Vulgate] is the Bible followed by the Roman Catholics in all their translation work. What is called the Douay Bible, with the Rhemish New Testament, was made from the Vulgate (Leach 85).]

[Note: Neither Smyth nor Leach says Jerome was persecuted, although Smyth notes that the Vulgate was considered by some to be heretical. Jerome later founded a monastery in Bethlehem, where he wrote voluminously until he died in his seventies.]

It is instructive to us to see how completely the tide had turned at the time of the Council of Trent, a thousand years later (S 39).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

it omitted the books of Chronicles and Kings.

3:1.4 4. *Jerome’s Latin Vulgate*, or the Revised Bible.

This translation by Jerome was made about the fourth century.

Jerome revised the New Testament,

and translated anew the Old Testament.

It is from this, the first revised version of the Bible, or Jerome’s Latin Vulgate, that the Douay, or the Catholic Bible, was translated.

Jerome was terribly persecuted, because he had dared to attempt to purge the Latin scriptures of the many errors of the copyists and the mistranslations which had gradually crept in.

It was one thousand years subsequent to this that the Council of Trent adopted it as a standard version.

3:1.5 Thus it appears that at a very early date the New Testament had been extensively translated into a number of different languages, and in the course of Jerome's translation, as it will be seen in the case of almost every other new version, at first great prejudice existed against it.

XI. EARLY ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

3:2.1 Having now given brief attention to the Bible from the time it was written in the original tongues, down through the early translations into Latin, Syriac, Greek, etc., to the time when the great scholar Jerome undertook to revise the Latin Vulgate, and to translate anew the Old Testament scriptures, let us turn our attention now to a time when the Holy Scriptures first made their appearance in the English tongue, and briefly trace down the early history of our English Bible.

3:2.2 The history of the Bible is indeed more remarkable than that of any nation or people. It has withstood the war of the ages, which has been waged against it. It has survived the determined efforts that have been put forth to exterminate it, and to-day it stands as the Book of Books, more copies of which have been circulated than of any other book in existence, and thus has triumphed gloriously over all its enemies.

IV: EARLY ENGLISH VERSIONS. (Smyth 47)

§ 1. Though England had no complete Bible before Wycliffe's days,

3:2.3 1. Although Wycliffe was the first to give us the whole Bible in English,

SOURCE

attempts were made from very early times to present the Scriptures in the language of the people,

and the story of these ancient translations from the Latin manuscripts before us,

forms certainly one of the most interesting though not most important portions of the history of the English Bible (S 49).

[contd] It is now 1200 years since, on a winter night, a poor Saxon cowherd lay asleep in a stable of the famous Abbey of Whitby.

Grieved and dispirited, he had come in from the feast

where his masters, and some even of his companions, during the amusements of the night, had engaged in the easy, alliterative rhyming of those simple early days.

But Cædmon could make no song, and his soul was very sad.

Suddenly, as he lay, it seemed to him that a heavenly glory lighted up his stable, and in the midst of the glory One appeared who had been cradled in a manger six hundred years before (S 49-50).

[contd] "Sing, Cædmon," He said, "sing some song to me."

"I cannot sing," was the sorrowful reply,

"for this cause it is that I came hither."

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

before his day, portions of the scriptures were accessible to the Anglo-Saxon people.

These were translations made from the Latin Vulgate.

It was about 600 A. D. that a poor Saxon cowboy slept in the stable of the famous Abbey of Whitby.

That evening he had attended a commonplace social gathering,

at which his friends had indulged in rhyme-making.

But Caedmon composed no poetry,

but the story has it that in the night time,

one of brilliant glory appeared unto him

and said, "Sing, Caedmon."

He replied: "I can not sing."

SOURCE

“Yet,” said He who stood before him,
“yet shalt thou sing to me.”

“What shall I sing?”

“The beginning of created things” (S
50).

Hilda the abbess heard the wondrous
tale,

and from one of those Latin manuscripts
she translated to him a story of the
Scriptures.

Next day it was reproduced in a beautiful
poem, followed by another and another as
the spirit of the poet grew powerful
within him (S 50).

[The abbess and the brethren] bade him
lay aside his secular habit and enter the
monastic life, and from that day forward
the Whitby cowherd devoted himself **with
enthusiasm** to the task that had been set
for him (S 51).

Though his work has of course no
right to rank among Bible translations,

being merely an attempt to sing for the
ignorant people the substance of the
inspired story,

yet we venture to give a brief extract ... (S
51).

§ 2. About the time of Cædmon’s
death, early in the eighth century,

the learned **Eadhelm**, bishop of
Sherborne, was working in Glastonbury
Abbey translating the **Psalms** of David
into Anglo-Saxon,

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

The reply was, “Yet thou shalt sing to
me.”

“But what shall I sing?” he asked.

The answer was,

“The beginning of created things.”

3:2.4 It was Hilda, who, hearing the
remarkable experience of this youth,

translated portions of the Latin scriptures

which Cædmon quickly transformed into
the most beautiful poems,

which he sang **with enthusiasm** to the
people;

and while this was not a translation of the
Bible,

it was the first effort made in English to
bring the Bible teaching to the common
people.

3:2.5 2. About the eighth century

the **Psalms**,

SOURCE

and at his request, it is said, Egbert, bishop of Holy Island, completed about the same time a version of the Gospels,

of which a copy is still preserved in the British Museum (S 53-54).

§ 3. But the names of Eadhelm and Egbert are overshadowed by that of a contemporary far greater than either (S 54).

[Bede] was deeply versed in the literature of Greece and Rome—he had written on medicine, and astronomy, and rhetoric, and most of the other known sciences of the time—

his “Ecclesiastical History” is still the chief source of our knowledge of ancient England ... (S 54).

Even then as he lay on his deathbed [in the spring of 735] he was feebly dictating to his scribe a translation of St. John’s Gospel (S 55).

“He began then to suffer much in his breath, and a swelling came in his feet, but he went on dictating to his scribe.

‘Go on quickly,’ he said,

‘I know not how long I shall hold out,

or how soon my Master will call me hence’ (S 55).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

the Gospels

(a copy of which is now preserved in the British museum),

were translated by Eadhelm and Egbert.

3:2.6 3. The most prominent of the early efforts to translate the Bible into English were those of Bede,

who was a writer on astronomy, medicine and rhetoric,

and who finished his translations in the year 735.

It was he who wrote the still famous ecclesiastical history.

He was stricken down as he was finishing the translation of the Gospel of John.

As he dictated to the scribe

he said, “Go on quickly;

I know not how long I shall hold out.

SOURCE

[contd] “All night long he lay awake in thanksgiving, and when the Ascension Day dawned, he commanded us to write with all speed what he had begun” (S 55).

[contd] Thus the letter goes on affectionately, describing the working and resting right through the day till the evening came, and then, with the setting sun gilding the windows of his cell, the old man lay feebly dictating the closing words (S 55).

[contd] “There remains but one chapter, master,” said the anxious scribe,

“but it seems very hard for you to speak” (S 55-56).

[contd] “Nay, it is easy,” Bede replied; “take up thy pen and write quickly” (S 56).

[contd] Amid blinding tears the young scribe wrote on.

“And now, father,” said he, as he eagerly caught the last words from his quivering lips, “only one sentence remains.”

Bede dictated it (S 56).

[contd] “It is finished, master!” cried the youth,

raising his head as the last word was written (S 56).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

Write with all speed.”

As the sun was setting,

he was told by the anxious scribe, “There remains but one chapter, master.”

He commanded,

“Take up thy pen, write quickly.”

The young scribe wrote with haste;

and “Now,” said he,

“only one sentence remains.”

The famous translator dictated that sentence.

He heard the words of the scribe,

“It is finished, master.”

Raising his hand as the last word was written,

SOURCE

[contd] “Ay, it is finished!” echoed the dying saint;

“lift me up, place me at that window of my cell where I have so often prayed to God. Now glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!” and with these words the beautiful spirit passed to the presence of the Eternal Trinity (S 56).

[Note: The Bede Memorial Cross in Roker Cliff Park, Sunderland, was unveiled by the Archbishop of York on 11th October, 1904.]

§ 4. Our next translator is no less a person than King Alfred the Great,

[Here is the Lord’s Prayer of King Alfred’s time ...

Uren Fader dhic art in heofnas,
Sic gehalged dhin noma.
To cymedh dhin ric, etc. (S 57-58)]

whose patriotic wish has been so often quoted,

“that all the freeborn youth of his kingdom should employ themselves on nothing

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

“Yes, it is finished,” spoke the dying translator,

who after offering a prayer passed away.

It was indeed remarkable that the measure of his life should have been just sufficient to complete his sacred task.

A memorial cross in memory of the venerable Bede has recently been erected in the north of England, near the scene of his labors.

3:2.7 4. King Alfred the Great was the next person to undertake the work of translating the scriptures into English.

English, in those days, was quite different from our modern type, as may be seen from the following portion of

the Lord’s Prayer, as it appeared in King Alfred’s time:

Uren Fader dhic art in heofnas, Sic gehalged
(Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be)
dhin noma. To cymedh dhin ric, etc.
(thy name. Come thy kingdom, etc.).

3:2.8 Alfred the Great decreed that

“no freeborn English youth shall employ himself at anything

SOURCE

till they could first read well the English Scripture” (S 56).

§ 5. Archbishop Ælfric, and a few other translators,

appear about the close of the tenth century, but there is no need of describing their works in detail (S 58).

V:WYCLIFFE’S VERSION. (Smyth 61)

§ 1. After the early Anglo-Saxon versions comes a long pause in the history of Bible translation.

Amid the disturbance resulting from the Danish invasion there was little time for thinking of translations and manuscripts;

and before the land had fully regained its quiet the fatal battle of Hastings had been fought, and England lay helpless at the feet of the Normans (S 61).

The future language of the nation was being formed; the Saxon and Norman French were struggling side by side ... and with the fusion of the two races a language grew up which was the language of united England (S 62).

§ 2. Passing, then, from the quiet deathbeds of Alfred and Bede, we transfer ourselves to the great hall of the Blackfriars’ Monastery, London, on a dull, warm May day in 1378,

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

until he can first read well the English scriptures.”

3:2.9 5. There are a few other translations of the scriptures

of minor importance, at about the close of the tenth century,

but from the days of King Alfred’s Bible, there came a long pause in the history of English Bible translation,

resulting from the Danish invasion

and other disturbances within the borders of England.

But as a result of all these,

the language passing through various changing conditions, became more settled, and formed the foundation of the English language.

XII. WYCLIFFE’S VERSION.

3:3.1 It was in May, 1378, in the city of London,

SOURCE

... amid monks and abbots, and bishops and doctors of the Church, assembled for the trial of John Wycliffe, the parish priest of Lutterworth (S 62-63).

[[Wycliffe's crime was to] attack the corruptions of the Church ... he had indignantly denounced Pardons and Indulgences and Masses for the soul as part of a system of gigantic fraud; and worst of all, he had filled the cup of his iniquity by translating the Scriptures into the English tongue ... (S 64).]

A strange rumbling sound fills the air,

and the walls of the judgment-hall are trembling to their base—the monastery and the city of London are being shaken by an earthquake!

Friar and prelate grow pale with superstitious awe.

Twice already has the arraignment of Wycliffe been strangely interrupted (S 63-64).

The result of the Blackfriars' Synod was, that after three days' deliberation Wycliffe's teaching was condemned, and at a subsequent meeting he himself was excommunicated.

He returned to his quiet parsonage at Lutterworth ... and there, with his pile of old Latin manuscripts and commentaries, he labored on at the great work of his life, till the whole Bible was translated into the "modir tonge" ... (S 67).

But forty years after, by a decree of the Council of Constance,

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

that John Wycliffe was placed on trial

for the heinous crime of having translated the Holy Scriptures into the common language of the people.

But, hark!

what is that rumbling noise?

The earth shakes beneath this **royal court**.

Both judges and accusers grow pale.

Twice before they have sought to condemn Wycliffe, and twice they have failed.

And now an earthquake shakes the **palace** from center to circumference,

but Wycliffe was excommunicated.

He returned home and finished his translation.

Forty years afterward

SOURCE

the old Reformer's bones were dug up and burned, and the ashes flung into the little river Swift, which "runneth hard by his church at Lutterworth."

And so, in the oft-quoted words of old Fuller, "as the Swift bare them into the Severn, and the Severn into the narrow seas, and they again into the ocean,

thus the ashes of Wycliffe is an emblem of his doctrine,

which is now dispersed over all the world" (S 69).

It will be seen that this specimen [*i.e.*, Matt. III. 1-6] is not divided into verses. Verse division belongs to a much later period ... (S 73).

Like all the earlier English versions, Wycliffe's Bible was based on the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome; and this is the great defect in his work, as compared with the versions that followed (S 71).

It was the close of the Old Year, the last Sunday of 1384,

and his little flock at Lutterworth were kneeling in hushed reverence before the altar, when suddenly, at the time of the elevation of the Sacrament,

he fell to the ground in a violet fit of palsy,

and never spoke again until his death on the last day of the year (S 68).

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

his bones were burned and cast into the river Swift,

and borne to the world,

emblematic of how the Bible which he had translated into the common language of the people

would be carried by the river of Time to the shores of every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

Wycliffe's version of the Bible had no division into verses.

His translation was based on the Latin Vulgate.

3:3.2 No sooner was his task done, than like Bede, he laid down his life, for

in 1384,

while administering the sacrament,

he was stricken down,

never speaking again, his death following shortly.

SOURCE

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

3:3.3 But still the Bible was an expensive book in those days.

A considerable sum was paid for even a few sheets of the manuscript,

Large sums were paid for even a few sheets

a load of hay was given for permission to read it for a certain period one hour a day

and a load of hay was given for permission to read it one hour a day.

and those who could not afford even such expenses adopted what means they could (S 75).

The readers, as might be expected, often surreptitiously copying portions of special interest.

While books were thus being read sometimes copies were made of them,

and out of this grew numerous litigations.

One is reminded of the story in ancient Irish history of a curious decision arising out of an incident of this kind nearly a thousand years before, which seems to have influenced the history of Christianity in Britain (S 75, fn).

One very amusing decision was once rendered in a case of this kind, which came up in Ireland.

It was as follows:

“To every book,” said [Diarmid the king at Tara, to St. Columba, who had copied the whole Psalter belonging to St. Finian],

3:3.4 “To every book,” said the judge,

“belongs its son-book (copy), *as to every cow belongs her calf.*”

“belongs his son book (copy), as to every cow belongs her calf.”

Columb complained of the decision as unjust,

The man who made the copy regarded the decision as unjust,

and the dispute is said to have been one of the causes of his leaving Ireland for Iona ... (S 75, fn).

and it is said he left Ireland for that reason.

THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE, No. 4.

XIII. TYNDAL^L'S VERSION.

VI: TYNDALE'S VERSION (Smyth 80)

§ 1. AFTER Wycliffe there is an interval of a hundred years before we come to the next great version of the Bible ... (S 80).

Up to this time ... men and women sat in the silence of their cells slowly copying out letter by letter the pages of the Scripture manuscripts ... But with Wycliffe's days this toilsome manuscript period closes forever (S 80).

[contd] About twenty years after the death of Wycliffe

there was living in the old German town of Mentz a boy bearing the not very attractive name of Johann Gensfleisch, which means, put into plain English, John Gooseflesh.

One morning—so runs the story—

he had been cutting the letters of his name out of the bark of a tree,

4:1.1 Tyndall's English version came about one hundred years after that of Wycliffe.

Wycliffe's Bible closed the manuscript epoch of the Holy Scriptures,

and Tyndall's Bible was the product of the then primitive printer's art.

4:1.2 It was about twenty years after the death of Wycliffe that

the German boy, Johann Gensfleisch, living in the town of Mentz,

made the accidental discovery that led to the evolution of the printing process.

4:1.3 It came about in this way:

One day

this German boy was cutting out of the bark of a tree the letters which composed his name.

SOURCE

and having been left alone in the house soon after, amused himself by spreading out the letters on a board so as to form again the words, Johann Gensfleisch.

A pot of purple dye was beside the fire, and by some awkward turn one of his letters dropped into it.

Quickly, without stopping to think, he snatched it out of the boiling liquid,

and as quickly let it drop again, this time on a white dressed skin which lay on a bench near by,

the result being a beautiful purple h on a deep yellowish white ground (S 80-81).

[T]hirty years afterward, when all Germany was ringing with the name of Johann Gutenberg and his magical art of printing, the good people of Mentz recognized in the inventor their young townsman Gensfleisch, who had meantime taken his maternal name.

Whatever truth there may be in the legend, certain it is that Gutenberg's printing press was working in Mentz about the year 1450, and the first completed book that issued from that press is said to have been the Latin Bible (S 81-82).

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

While playing with these letters on the floor,

one of them accidentally dropped into a boiling pot of dye

which his mother was preparing.

The lad quickly seized the letter, and in extracting it from the dye,

it fell by chance on a piece of new white skin lying near by;

and as one would readily imagine,

left the purple outlines of the letter H,

which letter it was.

This was the beginning of type, and the subsequent art of printing;

and it was this same boy who thirty years afterward was known as Johann Gutenberg, who had come to be the famous printer;

and in 1450 his press turned out its first book, a Latin Bible.

SOURCE

[T]he Bible which took Wycliffe's copyists ten months to prepare

can now be produced by a single London firm at the rate of 120 per hour,

that is, two copies every minute ... (S 82).

XVI. WILLIAM TYNDALE (Leach 95)

[I]t is estimated that in the fourteenth century a copy of the English Bible, as translated by Wycliffe, was worth a sum quite equal to \$200 of American money.

In our days a complete Bible can be had for twenty-five cents or less (L 96).

VI. TYNDALE'S VERSION (Smyth 80)

§ 2. Another event of the same period of very great importance in our Bible history

was the revival of Greek learning in Europe (S 82).

§ 3. ... In 1483, the year after the birth of Luther,

and a hundred years after the death of Wycliffe,

William Tyndale was born.

He grew up a thoughtful, studious youth, and at an early age won for himself in Oxford a distinguished position for scholarship. Soon afterward he moved to Cambridge, where he met with Erasmus, the greatest Greek scholar of the day,

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

4:1.4 What a revolution has taken place in the process of Bible-making!

It took Wycliffe ten months to copy the Bible;

now we can print 240 in an hour,

or four in a minute!

Then, the cheapest Bible cost two hundred dollars:

now we can buy the whole Bible, neatly bound in cloth, for twenty cents.

4:1.5 Co-existent with this accidental, or, more truly, Providential discovery which led to the art of printing,

there was a revival throughout Europe of Greek learning;

and about one year after the birth of Martin Luther,

and one hundred years after the death of Wycliffe,

William Tyndall was born.

This man, while under the instruction of the great Greek teacher Erasmus,

SOURCE

who had just completed his Greek Testament from a comparison of some ancient manuscripts. Tyndale quickly made himself familiar with this wonderful new book (S 83).

[H]e read again and again with ever deepening interest the wondrous revelation of the love of God to man, till his spirit was stirred to its depths (S 84).

He had already translated some portions from the original Greek and ... applied confidently to Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, for permission to carry on his work in the episcopal palace under his lordship's patronage. But translation of classical authors was a very different thing from translation of the Scriptures, and the bishop chillingly replied that there was no room in the palace for carrying on such a work.

However, he was kindly received by Humphrey Monmouth, a London merchant,

and in his house for nearly a year he assiduously, though very quietly, prosecuted his task (S 84).

[contd] But that year of contact with the ecclesiastics of the city plainly showed him that no mercy would be extended to any movement which disturbed their quiet...

... So in 1524 he left his native land, never to see it again;

and at Hamburg, in poverty and distress, and amid constant danger, the brave-hearted exile worked at his translation,

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

became acquainted with the Greek New Testament.

Tyndall became a diligent student of the Greek scriptures.

4:1.6 The reigning bishop rejected his proposal to translate the Scriptures into the current English tongue;

but a London merchant, Humphrey Monmouth, became interested in Tyndall

and assisted him in his work.

4:1.7 Tyndall found it necessary to leave England,

and fled to Germany.

As an exile in Hamburg he labored for a season,

SOURCE

and so diligently that the following year we find him at Cologne with the sheets of his quarto New Testament already in the printer's hands (S 85-86).

[contd] But a sad disappointment was in store for him (S 86).

[J]ust as his hopes were highest, one day there came to him a hurried message at his lodgings,

and half distracted he rushed to the printer's house, seized all the sheets he could lay his hands on,

and fled from the town (S 86).

With his precious sheets he escaped to Worms,

where the enthusiasm for Luther and the Reformation was then at its height,

and there at length he accomplished his design,

producing for the first time a complete printed New Testament in English (S 87).

In cases, in barrels, in bales of cloth, in sacks of flour, every secret way that could be devised, the books were sent;

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

but disappointment awaited him.

He received friendly warning

just in time to enable him to

rush to the printers', seize his sheets,

and make a hurried flight to Cologne.

4:1.8 At Worms,

the enthusiasm for Luther was at its height,

and here Tyndall resolved to go, hoping to be able to finish his translation of the sacred book.

And here at last, he was able to realize his long-cherished purpose,

and for the first time there appeared a complete printed New Testament in the English language.

4:1.9 Tyndall's Bible was shipped to England in barrels of flour, and in various ways,

SOURCE

[In spite of the care of the enemies of the Word of God, many hundreds of copies were thus introduced into England, and circulated far and wide among the people (Leach 100).]

and in spite of the utmost vigilance in watching the ports, many of them arrived and were scattered far and wide through the country (S 87).

It was quite clear that [the hostile clergy] could not hinder the entrance of the book into England. And then a brilliant thought occurred to the Bishop of London.

He sought out Augustine Pakington, a merchant trading to Antwerp,

and asked his opinion about the buying up of all the copies across the water (S 88-89).

[contd] “My lord,” replied Pakington, who was a secret friend of Tyndale, “if it be your pleasure I could do in this matter probably more than any merchant in England ...” (S 89).

“Gentle Master Pakington,” said the bishop, ... “do your diligence and get them for me,

and I will gladly give you whatever they may cost, for the books are naughty,

and I intend surely to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul’s Cross” (S 89).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

and was eagerly sought by the people,

and attained a rapid and extensive circulation.

4:1.10 The Bishop of London

decreed the suppression and destruction of Tyndall’s Bible.

He consulted the English trader, Pakington

(who was the secret friend of Tyndall),

asking for his co-operation in the work of purchasing and burning up of all of Tyndall’s Bibles.

He gave instructions to Pakington to buy them all up,

agreeing to pay whatever it cost,

and stating that he would burn them all at Paul’s Cross.

SOURCE

[contd] A few weeks later Pakington sought the translator, whose funds he knew were at a low ebb (S 89).

[contd] “Master Tyndale,” he said, “I have found you a good purchaser for your books.”

“Who is he?” asked Tyndale.
“My lord of London” (S 89).

[contd] “But

if the bishop wants the books it must be only to burn them” (S 89).

[contd] “Well,” was the reply, “what of that?”

The bishop will burn them anyhow, and it is best that you should have the money for the enabling you to imprint others instead” (S 89).

[contd] And so the bargain was made.

“The bishop had the books, Pakington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money.”

“I am the gladder,” quoth Tyndale, “for these two benefits shall come thereof. I shall get money to bring myself out of debt,

and the whole world will cry out against the burning of God’s Word ...” (S 90).

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

4:1.11 Pakington approached Tyndall,

telling him that he had a purchaser for his books,

and that the purchaser was the Bishop of London.

“But,”

said Tyndall,

“if the Bishop wants the books it must be only to burn them.”

“Well,” replied Pakington, “what of that?”

The Bishop will burn them anyhow, and it is best that you should have the money for enabling of you to imprint others instead.”

So the bargain was made.

Tyndall paid up all his debts,

and the Bishop of London burned the books,

SOURCE

The Chronicle which relates the story goes on to tell that—“After this Tyndale corrected the same Testaments again, and caused them to be newly imprinted, so that they came thick and threefold into England ...” (S 90).

In 1529 Latimer had preached at Cambridge his celebrated sermons “On the Card,” which attracted a good deal of attention, arguing in favor of the translation and universal reading of Holy Scripture. The friars were enraged, and the more so as his reasoning was so difficult to answer. At length they selected a champion, Friar Buckingham ... A Sunday was fixed on which he was to demolish the arguments of Latimer, and on the appointed day the people assembled,

and a sermon against Bible translation was preached which to us now must read more like jest than sober argument.

“Thus,” asked the preacher with a triumphant smile, “where Scripture saith no man that layeth his hand to the plough and looketh back

is fit for the kingdom of God,

will not the ploughman when he readeth these words be apt forthwith to cease from his plough,

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

and Tyndall proceeded to get out a new edition.

4:1.12 There was great opposition to the scriptures about this time. It was the contention of the friars and others that the Bible was not intended to be read by the common people.

It was in 1529 that the remarkable discussion occurred between Latimer and Friar Buckingham.

To prove that the Scriptures were unfit for general circulation,

Buckingham cited the passage where the Scripture speaks of a man having put his hand to the plow and looking back,

as being unfit for the kingdom of God.

Said the friar:

“When the plowman reads these words, he will forthwith cease to plow,

SOURCE

and then where will be the sowing and the harvest?

Likewise also whereas the baker readeth, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,'

will he not be forthwith too sparing in the use of leaven, to the great injury of our health.

And so also when the simple man reads the words, 'If thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee,'

incontinent he will pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be full of blind men,

to the great decay of the nation and the manifest loss of the King's grace (S 93-94).

The next Sunday St. Edward's Church was crowded to suffocation, for the report had gone abroad that Latimer was to reply to the Grey Friar's sermon.

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

and we shall have no more harvest, and no reaping, no grain."

4:1.13 The friar also referred to the Scripture,

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," arguing that the bakers would read this,

and be so stingy with their yeast that the health of the people would suffer from the hard bread.

4:1.14 He yet again referred to the passage,

"If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee,"

arguing that with such teaching

all England would soon become filled with blind men who had pulled their eyes out.

And so Buckingham sought to twist and confuse the interpretation of the Scriptures, endeavoring to prove that the book was not fit to be read by the common people.

4:1.15 The following week Latimer advertised that he would reply to the friar's attack on the Bible.

SOURCE

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

Perhaps the most telling argument which Latimer employed to show how the friar had sought to **confound figurative and literal language** was as follows:

Said Latimer to the people,

“Only children and fools,” he said, “**fail to distinguish between the figurative and the real meanings of language**—between the image which is used and the thing which that image is intended to represent. “For example,” he continued, with a withering glance at his opponent, who sat before the pulpit, “if we paint a fox preaching in a friar’s hood,

nobody imagines that a fox is meant,

but that craft and hypocrisy are described, which so often are found disguised in that garb” (S 94).

In spite of all opposition the book was being everywhere talked about and read (S 94-95).

[A] treacherous villain named Phillips, a clergyman of very plausible manners, contrived to win the confidence of [Tyndale] ... At length, ... Tyndale was enticed some distance from his house, seized by Phillips’ lurking assistants, and hurried to the dungeons of the Castle of Vilvorden.

“If I paint a fox preaching in a friar’s hood

nobody will imagine that I mean to teach that foxes wear hoods,

but rather that friars are foxy, crafty, etc.”

This one illustration was enough to overthrow all the effort that had been made to confuse the people by Buckingham and his associates; and the Bible came more and more to be the companion of the people.

Its circulation increased tremendously.

4:1.16 But Tyndall was finally captured by deception,

SOURCE

It is pitiful to read of the poor prisoner there, in his cold and misery and rags ... (S 96).

On Friday the 6th October, 1536, he was strangled at the stake and then burned to ashes,

ferently praying with his last words, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes,” a prayer which was nearer to its answer than the heroic martyr deemed (S 96).

Tyndale for the first time goes back to the original Hebrew and Greek, though the manuscripts accessible in his time were not of much authority as compared with those used by our revisers now (S 98).

VII: THE BIBLE AFTER TYNDALE’S DAYS. (Smyth 103)

§ 1. THREE YEARS AFTER. (Smyth 103)

[contd] In every parish church [in 1539] stands an English Bible, whose frontispiece is [designed by Holbein]

This was the so-called “GREAT BIBLE” of 1539, the first English “Authorized Version” (S 103, 105).

[?]

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

suffered a horrible imprisonment,

and while burning at the stake,

he prayed, “Lord, open the king of England’s [Note: Henry VIII’s] eyes.”

And had Tyndall lived in a later day, he would have seen his prayer literally answered—the king of England [Note: James I] not only with his eyes opened, as to the value of the Bible, but actually promoting its translation, and appointing it to be read in all the churches.

4:1.17 Tyndall’s translation was from original Greek and Hebrew,

and when in 1539 the “Great Bible” was published,

Tyndall’s prayers were literally answered.

SOURCE

§ 3. FIFTY YEARS MORE [Note: Since the accession of Elizabeth I, and almost seventy years since 1539]. (Smyth 113)

[contd] How Tyndale's heart would have swelled at the sight! A king of England himself is directing an English Bible translation! (S 113)

[contd] In January, 1604, a conference of bishops and clergy had been held in the drawing-rooms of Hampton Court Palace, under the presidency of King James himself ... [which led to the king's decision to sponsor a new translation] (S 113).

Fifty-four learned men were selected impartially from High Churchmen and Puritans, as well as from those who ... represented scholarship totally unconnected with any party [to carry out the work] (S 118).

[T]he result was the production of this splendid Authorized Version of which Englishmen to-day are so proud (S 120).

XVIII: THE REVISED VERSION.
(Leach 108)

[T]hree ancient manuscripts are among the most valuable in the world; but they were not accessible to the men who worked to produce the Bible which has held sway in England for so long (L 109).

It is thus seen that

"THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE"

4:1.18 Fifty years following this

the king of England [Note: James I] himself ordered a Bible translation.

This decision was reached in 1604, at a session of the Puritan Council,

and fifty-four eminent scholars were selected to do the work.

The result of this work was the King James' Version, known to-day as the Authorized Version of the Bible,

and in almost every household throughout the land.

XIV. THE REVISED BIBLE.

4:2.1 Many of the most ancient manuscripts now in existence were not accessible to the translators of the King James Version.

It must be apparent that

SOURCE

greatly improved knowledge of ancient languages, as well as the possession of more correct texts of the original Scriptures, have aided the men of these days in their great and important work (L 109).

[I]f we think of the many and great changes which have gone on in our English language during the past two hundred and fifty years,

we shall see that it was desirable to change many forms of expression in our version of the Scripture ... (L 109).

On June 22, 1870, the New Testament Company held its first meeting; and on June 30, the Old Testament Company first assembled (L 111).

In addition to [the English] assembly, a committee of scholars was formed in America who should co-operate with the revisers in England (L 110-11).

NOTE:—When the work of revision was completed in 1885 ... [the American committee] decided ... to continue their organization and work in anticipation of a possible demand for a revision which should incorporate readings and renderings proposed by them and which the English revisers printed in an appendix, when not adopted in the text (L 113, fn).

[After fourteen years, the] American edition [was issued] in the year 1901 (L 113, fn).⁶

“THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE”

the translators of the Revised Version had therefore much more to aid them in the translation of difficult passages than had the translators of previous versions.

4:2.2 The English language has undergone considerable change in the last few hundred years,

and in June, 1870, the work of producing the Revised Version of the Bible was begun.

There was both an English and an American committee selected to do this work.

The end of their work was the Revised Version of the Bible, as it is found in circulation to-day.

4:2.3 There were many suggestions of the American committee omitted from this Revised Bible,

and subsequently their recommendations were embodied in a book known as the “American Standard Revised Version,” which is now on the market.

1. Smyth writes:

Of the Greek [manuscripts] there is quite a large number—more than 1500—before us ... (S 19).

2. Smyth says of the three oldest manuscripts:

[W]e shall not be far from the truth if we say roundly that they range from about 300 to 450 A. D. (S 21).

3. Sadler confuses all ancient manuscripts with rescript manuscripts. Leach continues: "It is stated that in the *uncial* style there are 127 [ancient manuscripts] and in the *cursive* style 1,463 (L 33).

4. Smyth mentions Targums here:

[T]he chief grounds for undertaking Old Testament revision are the increased knowledge of Hebrew and of textual criticism, together with the changes through natural growth of the English language itself. We may add also, for their united evidence is very important, the more thorough study in late years of Septuagint and the **Targums**, together with the Vulgate and other ancient versions ... (S 35).

5. As for the other nine Targums, Gray dates one as "towards the close of the third century after Christ." He says another one "could not have been written earlier than the seventh century." He dates a third one from the seventh or eighth century. He then says that the "remaining six Targums scarcely demand specific mention." I have found no text that matches Sadler's estimates. The Wikipedia article on Targums says that the oldest Palestinian Targums are from "around the seventh century."

6. This footnote, from 1901 or later, was appended to the 1898 edition.