

Old Bibles

John Read Dore

OLD BIBLES.

OLD BIBLES:

An Account of the Early Versions of the English Bible.

BY

J. R. DORE.

Second Edition,

WITH THE PREFACE TO THE VERSION OF 1611 ADDED
AT THE REQUEST OF THE LATE
RIGHT REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.,

Lord Bishop of Lincoln.



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We are grateful to Google for making this old text, which is out of copyright, available. The manipulation of old texts into readable texts results in some imperfections. We ask the reader to disregard the stray marks, spacing discrepancies and font irregularities. We are printing this book because our publishing centers around the King James Bible and because most readers still enjoy holding a book in their hands to dog-ear, mark, and read a book in a comfortable chair.

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COMMENT BY THE PUBLISHER

Please note that in some places throughout this work, old English script is different. For example, an “s” is like an “f,” a “u” like a “v,” a “z” is used for an “s,” and other character and spelling changes such as double consonants or extra vowels are often used. For instance, “assert” is “affert,” “dictated” is “dyted,” etc. HDW.

Here is an example:

“The whole Scripture is dyted [dictated] by Gods Spirit...to instruct and rule the whole Church militant to the end of the world: It is composed of two parts, the Olde and New Testament: The ground of the former is the Lawe, which sheweth our sinne, and containeth iustice: the ground of the other is Christ, who pardoning sinne containeth grace.” (King James wrote these words to his son, Prince Henry. Adam Nicolson, *God’s Secretaries, The Making of the King James Bible* (Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, p. 78.)

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DEDICATED

(BY PERMISSION)

TO

HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

b



Preface.



THAT pearl of great price, the English Bible of 1611, remained so long without alteration, that many of us had forgotten that it was only one of a series of versions.

English folk being (*Laus Deo*) slow to make changes, it is probable that another generation will pass away before any other version of Holy Scripture will fully take the place of the translation that has been in use so many years.

About forty years elapsed before King James's revision superseded the Bishops' and Genevan versions.

Copies of early versions of the Bible, in a more or less imperfect condition, are in the possession of many families, but their owners, for want of knowing how to identify the books, frequently place an exaggerated value on comparatively worthless copies, while rare ones are

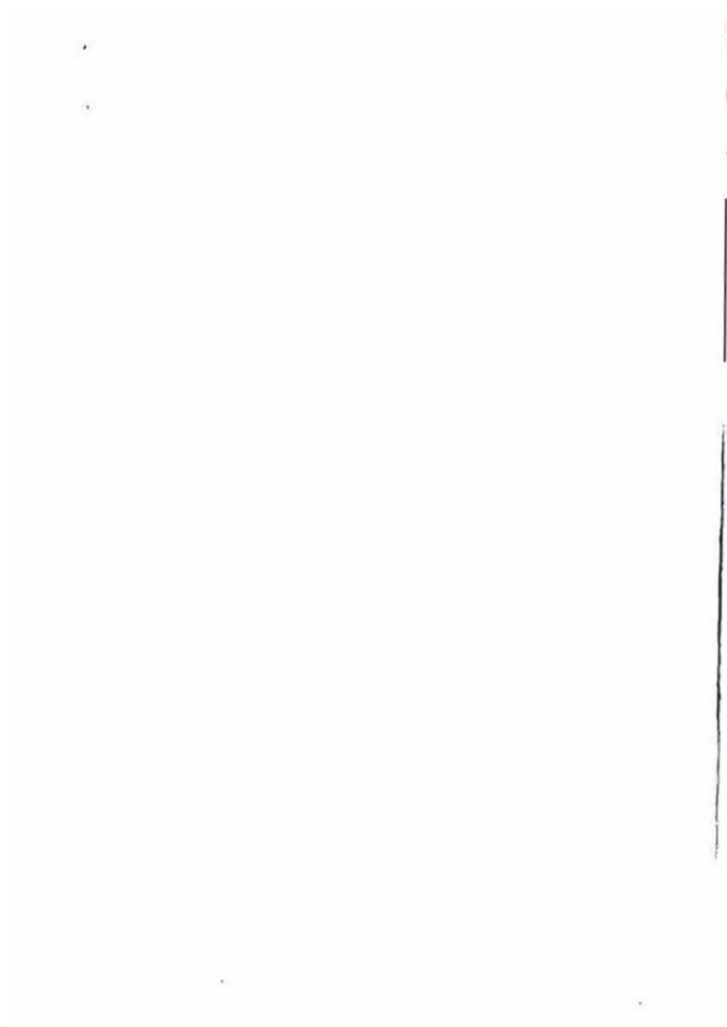
insufficiently estimated; I have, therefore, endeavoured to place within the reach of all, easy directions by which to ascertain, from internal evidence, to what edition any copy belongs; the title page being often missing, and not always trustworthy when it exists, owing to titles being sometimes bound up with books to which they do not belong.

All the statements I have made are based on most careful investigation of original copies of the books to which they refer, and I have spared no efforts to insure the utmost accuracy.

The original spelling has been preserved in all quotations from the texts and notes of early versions: for to modernise the orthography, is to destroy one of the charms of these old Bibles, and seems to me to be in as bad taste as attempting to improve their quaint diction.

Most gratefully I acknowledge the kind assistance I have received during past years from Mr. Francis Fry, Mr. Bradshaw, and Mr. H. Stevens, all of whom have recently been taken from us; also from Mr. Geo. Bullen, of the British Museum, the Rev. N. Pocock, M.A., of Clifton, Colonel Thomas Brooke, the Rev. W. E. Smith, M.A., W. T. Lynn, M.A., and other men of eminent learning, who have

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<p><i>ever been ready to afford help in bibliographical difficulties.</i></p> <p><i>I also thank the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury for his kind permission to avail myself of the consent of the late Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Lincoln to have his name placed on the title page.</i></p> <p><i>This year being the tercentenary of the publication of the first Bible in the Welsh language, perhaps it is not inappropriate to add as an Appendix a few notes on Welsh Bibles, which have been read and approved by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of S. David's.</i></p> <p><i>The first edition of this book was received with greater favour than I now think it deserved, as ten more years devoted to the study of early printed Bibles have shown me how many faults it contained, of which I was then unconscious. I hope this edition is made more worthy the acceptance of those who value the English Bible.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>J. R. DORE.</i></p> <p><i>Huddersfield, 1888.</i></p>	



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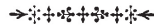
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OLD BIBLES,

By J. R. Dore.

Introduction.

IT is very difficult to say at what time the Bible was first translated into the English language.

It is certain that there is no English Bible known to be in existence of earlier date than the fourteenth century.

On one hand, we have the evidence of Sir Thomas More, "as for olde translacions, before Wycliffes time, they remain lawful and be in some folkes handes.

"Myself have seen, and can show you, Bybles fair and olde, in Englyshe, which haue been known and seen by the Byshoppe of the Diocese, and left in laymanes handes and womenes."

Again, in his "Dyalogues," p. 138, ed. 1530, Sir Thomas says, "The hole byble was long before Wycliffe's days by vertuous and well learned men, translated into the English tong;

Sir Thomas More says he could show English Bibles earlier than Wycliffe's.

2	Old Bibles.
<p>Cranmer's evidence.</p> <p>The Bible translated in the second century.</p>	<p>and by good and godly people with devotion, and soberness, wel and reverently red."</p> <p>This evidence is corroborated by Archbishop Cranmer, who, in his prologue to the second edition of the Great Bible, says,</p> <p>"If the matter shoulde be tried by custome, wee might also alledge custome for the reading of the scripture in the vulgar tongue, and prescribe the more auncient custome. For it is not much aboue one hundred yeare ago, since scripture hath not bene accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue within this realme, and many hundred yeares before that, it was translated and read in the Saxons tongue, whiche at that tyme was our mother tongue, where of there remayne yet diuerse copies found lately in olde Abbeyes, of such antique maner of wryting and speaking, that fewe men nowe be able to read and vnderstande them. And when this language waxed olde and out of common vsage, bycause folke should not lacke the fruit of reading, it was again translated into the newer language, where of yet also many copies remayne, and be dayly founde."</p> <p>Another reason in favour of there having been an early English Bible is, that it was the custom of the Church in primitive days to translate the Bible into the language best understood by her children.</p> <p>The Vulgate itself is a proof of this fact. It was translated into Latin for the use of the Latin speaking Church of North Africa.</p>

Introduction.	3
<p>S. Jerome, speaking of the veneration in which the writings of S. Ephrem the Syrian were held, says they were read in the Churches immediately after the usual lesson from Holy Scripture.</p> <p>From a very early period in the history of the Church the reading of the Gospel and Epistle formed a portion of the liturgy. In Colossians, chapter iv., verse 16, we have, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."</p> <p>The rubric prefixed to an early English translation of S. Matthew, chapter i., is, "This Gospel is to be read on midwinters mass even."</p> <p>On the other hand it is strange that if the whole Bible had been translated into early English, all traces of it should have been lost.</p> <p>As the Latin tongue had become the universal ecclesiastical language, and all who could read were familiar with Latin, there was at that time little need of an English Bible.</p> <p>That the Psalter and other portions of the Old and New Testament were translated from the Latin into English at various times from the 7th century to the 14th there can be no doubt.</p> <p>A paraphrase or metrical translation was made by Cædmon, a Whitby monk, in the 7th century. Bede tells us that Cædmon sang of the creation of the world, the origin of</p>	<p>The writings of S. Ephrem read in the early Church after the usual lessons.</p> <p>The Gospel and Epistle a part of the liturgy.</p> <p>No trace of an English Bible earlier than the 14th century.</p> <p>Cædmon's paraphrase.</p>

Guthlac's
English
Psalter.

S. Aldhelm's
Psalter.

The Vener-
able Bede.

King Alfred.

man, and made many verses on the departure of the Children of Israel from Egypt; and their entering into the land of promise, and other histories from Holy Writ; the incarnation, passion, resurrection of our Lord, and His ascension into Heaven.

About the close of the 7th century the Psalter was translated by Guthlac, a Saxon anchoret, at Crowland, near Peterborough.

S. Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards Bishop of Sherborne, made another version of the Psalter in the year 706; the first fifty Psalms of this translation are in prose and the remainder in verse.

The Venerable Bede, who is one of the brightest gems in the crown of the Church of England, left, as a precious legacy to the Church he loved, a translation of the Gospel of S. John; and a touching memorial of his last labours has been given us by a monk named Cuthbert, in a letter to his fellow reader Cuthwin.

The historian to whom we owe so much, William of Malmesbury, tells us that King Alfred, at the end of the 9th century, had his memory stored not only with the Psalms and the New Testament, but with the Old Testament also, and had learned that the laws of God are the best basis and models for human legislation; and that at the time of his death he was engaged in making a new version of the Psalter for the use of his people.

Introduction.

5

Next we have the Lindisfarne MS., an early English interlinear translation of the Latin text written by Aldred, a priest, early in the 10th century, on a copy of the Gospels in Latin formerly belonging to Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne.

Lindisfarne
Gospels.

This gloss was copied by Farman, a priest at Harewood, in Yorkshire, and a monk called Owun, between the lines of a Latin MS. written by Macregol, and is known as the Rushworth gloss.

The Rush-
worth
Gospels.

In the latter part of the 10th century Ælfric collected various early translations of portions of the Bible, and clothed them in the language of his day. His work consisted of the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Esther, Job, part of Kings, Judith, and Maccabees.

Ælfric.

In the 13th century some portions of the Bible were translated into Anglo-Norman, indicating that a desire for Bible reading existed amongst the upper class of that day.

Anglo-
Norman
translation.

The Psalter has always been an especial favourite with English people, its melodies have ever vibrated in their hearts, and it has often been translated both into prose and verse. Three versions dating from soon after 1300 still exist, and bear witness to this fact; one of these was by the Yorkshire hermit, Richard Rolle, of Hampole, a learned man who lived at a hermitage near Doncaster. He thus spoke of his own translation: "In this worke I seke no straunge Ynglys, bot lightest and communest, and swilk that is most like vnto the Latyne, so

The Psalter
highly
valued by
Englishmen.

Early re-
vision of the
Psalms.

Richard
Rolle,
Hermit of
the Order of
S. Augustine.

Quotation
from Rich-
ard Rolle,
14th century.

6	Old Bibles.
Wycliffe's Bible.	<p>y^e thai that knawes noght y^e Latyne be the Ynglys may com to many latyne wordis. In y^e Translacione I felogh the letter als-mekille as I may, and thor I fyne no proper Ynglys I felogh y^e wit of the wordis, so that thai that shall rede it them thar not drede errynge. In the expownyng I felough holi Doctors. For it may comen into sum envious mannes honde that knowys not what he suld saye that will saye that I wist not what I sayd, and so do harme tille hym and tylle other."</p> <p>At the end of this ancient Yorkshire translation and gloss of the Psalms were several canticles or hymns to be sung in English during Divine service. His translation of the New Testament included the Epistle to the Laodiceans, mentioned in Colossians iv. 16.</p> <p>Hampole died in the year 1349.</p> <p>Probably the first entire Bible in English was the work of Nicholas de Hereford and John Wycliffe, about the year 1380.</p> <p>Wycliffe was born near Richmond, Yorkshire, early in the 14th century.</p> <p>He was educated at the University of Oxford, and held office in three colleges; he was ultimately presented to the Rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire.</p> <p>Wycliffe held views which if carried into practice would have been totally subversive of morality and good order, but he never separated himself from the Church of England.</p> <p>He died on S. Silvester's day (Dec. 31) 1384, having been struck with paralysis on S. Thomas</p>

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<p>à Becket's day (Dec. 29) while assisting at Mass at Lutterworth Church.</p> <p>Wycliffe had many powerful patrons, and was allowed to disseminate his views with little molestation.</p> <p>Nicholas de Hereford was tried, and found guilty of heresy, but recanted his errors, and died in communion with the English Church.</p> <p>A revision of Wycliffe's Bible was made by some of the leaders of the Lollards, the chief of whom was John Purvey.</p> <p>Purvey removed many of the glosses introduced by Hereford and Wycliffe, some of which were restored in Matthew's Bible of 1537.</p> <p>There must have been a great many copies made both of the earlier and the latter edition of this Bible, for in spite of the large number that must have been destroyed by the various enemies of books during the four centuries that have passed since they were written, even at the present day a large number survive.</p> <p>The following is Psalm 66 from a 14th century MS. Bible, and its translation by Wycliffe, Purvey, and the Douai College in 1610:—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Liber Soliloquiorū.</p> <p>❧ In finem in ymnis psalmus cāctici Dauid. lxxvj.</p> <p>Deus misereatur nostri et bñdicat nobis : illumlet vultū suum sup nos : et misereat nři. Ut cognoscam⁹ in terra viā tuā : in omib⁹ gentibus salutare tuū. Confiteant tibi ppli de⁹ : confiteant tibi ppli oēs. Letent et exultet gētes : qm iudicas pplōs in equitate : et gētes</p>	<p>Purvey's Bible.</p> <p>Wycliffe's Bible extensively circulated.</p> <p>Vulgate version of the 66th Psalm.</p>

in terra dirigis. Confiteant tibi ppli deus
 cōfiteant tibi ppli oēs terra dedit fructum
 suum. Bñdicat nos deus de⁹ noster bñdicat
 nos deus : et metuāt cū oēs fines terre.

WYCLIFFE.

*In to the ende ; in 'ympnes, the salm of the song to
 Dauid.*

Wycliffe's
 version of the
 66th Psalm.

God haue merci of vs, and blisse to vs, ligte
 to his chere vpon vs ; and haue mercy of vs.
 That wee knowe in the erthe thi weie ; in alle
 Jentilis thi helthe giuere.

Knouleche to thee pupilis, God ; knouleche
 to thee alle pupilis.

Gladen and ful out ioze Jentilis, for thou
 demest pupilis in equite ; and Jentilis in the
 erthe thou dressist. Knouleche to thee pupilis,
 God, knouleche to thee all pupilis ; the erthe
 gaf his frut. Blesse vs God, oure God, blesse
 vs God ; and drede hym alle the coostus of
 erthe.

PURVEY.

*The titil of the sixe and sixtith salm. \ In Elreu
 thus, To the victorie in organs, the salm of the
 song. In Jerome \ thus, To the ouercomer in
 salmes, the song of writing of a delitable thing
 with metre.*

Purvey's
 version of the
 66th Psalm.

God haue merci on vs, and blesse vs ; ligzne
 he his cheer on vs, and haue merci on vs.
 That we knowe thi weie on erthe ; thin heelthe
 in alle folkis. God, pupilis knowleche to thee ;
 alle pupilis knowleche to thee. Hethen men
 be glad, and make fulli ioeye, for thou demest

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<p>puplis in equite; and dressist hethene men in erthe. God, puplis knowleche to thee, alle puplis knowleche to thee, the erthe 3af his fruyt. God, oure God blesse vs, God blesse vs; and alle the coostis of erthe drede hym.</p> <p>The Douai version of this Psalm is, Psalme LXVI.</p> <p><i>The prophet prayeth for (and withal foreshoweth) the propagation of the Church of Christ.</i></p> <p>1. Vnto the end, in hymes, a Psalme (a) of Canticle to Dauid.</p> <p>(a) This Psalme beginning to be songue by voices, instruments were annoynd.</p> <p>2. God (b) haue mercie vpon vs, and (c) blesse vs: (d) illuminate his countenance vpon vs, and (e) haue mercie on vs.</p> <p>(b) God first remitte our sinnes: (c) then giue vs thy manifold graces. (d) grant faith and repentance. (e) and so forgiuenes of sinnes.</p> <p>3. That we may know thy way vpon earth: in al nations thy saluation.</p> <p>4. Let peoples o God confesse to thee: (f) let al peoples confesse to thee.</p> <p>(f) Al nations shal be conuerted.</p> <p>5. Let nations be glad & reioice: because thou iudget peoples in equitie, and the nations in earth thou doest direct.</p> <p>6. Let peoples o God confesse to thee: let al peoples confesse to thee:</p> <p>7. the earth hath yelded her fruite.</p> <p>8. (g) God, (h) our God blesse vs, (i) God blesse vs: and let al the endes of the earth feare him.</p> <p>(g) God the Fater, (h) God the sonne, (i) God the Holie Ghost, saue the peoples of al nations, by Euangelical preaching of thee, the most Blessed Trinitie.</p>	