

Eastern Church. The present system of verses first appears in the edition printed by Robert Stephens in the year 1551.

The titles and subscriptions of the New Testament books are another point on which a succession of changes has taken place. The oldest MSS. have much shorter titles than those which the English version adopted from the later Greek text; and the subscriptions, with their would-be historical information, are not only late, but worthless. Those appended to the epistles of St Paul are attributed to Euthalius.

More important than these external matters are the variations which in course of time crept into the text itself. Many of these variations are mere slips of eye, ear, memory, or judgment on the part of a copyist, who had no intention to do otherwise than follow what lay before him. But transcribers, and especially early transcribers, by no means aimed at that minute accuracy which is expected of a modern critical editor. Corrections were made in the interests of grammar or of style, slight changes were adopted in order to remove difficulties, additions came in, especially from parallel narratives in the gospels, citations from the Old Testament were made more exact or more complete. That all this was done in perfect good faith, and simply because no strict conception of the duty of a copyist existed, is especially clear from the almost entire absence of deliberate falsification of the text in the interests of doctrinal controversy. To detail all the sources of various readings would be out of place; it may suffice to mention, in addition to what has been already said, that *glosses*, or notes originally written on the margin, very often ended by being taken into the text, and that the custom of reading the Scriptures in public worship naturally brought in liturgical additions, such as the doxology of the Lord's Prayer; while the commencement of an ecclesiastical lesson torn from its proper context had often to be supplemented by a few explanatory words, which soon came to be regarded as part of the original.

Up to a certain point the various readings due to so many different causes constantly became more and more numerous; but the number of independent readings which could arise and be perpetuated was limited by various circumstances. A general similarity necessarily prevailed in associated groups of copies, which were either derived from the same archetype, or written by the same copyist, or corrected by comparison with a single celebrated MS. Causes such as these, combined with local peculiarities of style and taste, and with the fact that the New Testament, like Christianity itself, was sent forth from central mother churches to newly-formed communities all around, gave a decided local colouring to the text current in certain regions; so that we are still able to speak in a general way of an Alexandrian, a Western, a Byzantine, and perhaps also (with Tischendorf) of an Asiatic text. But of course no ancient local text remained uninfluenced by copies from other regions. The comparison of copies became more and more extended in range as the church grew and consolidated into a homogeneous form; and though old readings, which had obtained a firm hold in certain communities, were not easily eradicated, it at length became almost impossible for any important new error to escape detection. Most variations of any consequence which are found in existing MSS. are known to be as old as the 4th century, and other readings existed then which no MS. is known to contain.

The variations of early copies were most completely smoothed into uniformity in the later Byzantine MSS., after the Mahometan conquest had overthrown Greek learning in Syria and Egypt. The scribes of Constantinople spent great pains on the text in accordance with their own notions of what was proper, and gave it a form which is certainly smoother, correcter, and more uniform than that of older MSS. But precisely these peculiarities show that this late recension is remote from the original shape of the New Testament writings, and compel us to seek the true text by study of early MSS., especially of the still existing uncial copies.

The manuscripts are of six classes, containing respectively the gospels, the Acts with the catholic epistles, the Pauline epistles, the Apocalypse, the ecclesiastical lessons from the gospels, the lessons from the Acts and epistles. Copies belonging to the last two classes are called lectionaries, and lectionaries of the gospels are called evangelistaria. Each MS. is referred to by critics by a special mark. Uncial MSS. are denoted by a capital letter, A standing for the Codex Alexandrinus, B for the Vaticanus, and so on. Cursive and lectionaries are denoted by Arabic numerals. It is to be observed that the same letter in a different part of the New Testament does not necessarily refer to the same MS. Thus Cod. D of the gospels and Acts is the Codex Bezae, but D of the Pauline epistles is the Claromontanus. If we reckon fragments, the number of uncial MSS. is 56 of the gospels, 14 of the Acts, 6 of the catholic epistles, 15 of the Pauline epistles, 5 of the Apocalypse. But many of these are extremely short fragments. The number of cursives and lectionaries is enormous, so that altogether there are nearly a thousand MSS. for the gospels, and as many more for the rest of the New Testament. Not nearly all the cursive copies have been thoroughly examined, and most of them have small value, though some comparatively recent MSS. are important from the

fact that they represent an ancient text. Lectionaries, even when uncial, are little esteemed by most critics. Græco-Latin codices which have the Greek and Latin in parallel columns were formerly suspected of correcting the Greek text by the Latin, but their value is now generally recognized.

The oldest copies of the Greek Testament are the Codex Sinaiticus (Σ) and the Codex Vaticanus (B), both of the 4th century. Next in age come the Alexandrian manuscript (A) and the Codex Ephraemi (C), both of which are referred to the 5th century. All of these copies were originally complete Bibles, with the Old as well as the New Testament. Σ is still complete as regards the New Testament; A and B have lacunæ; C is very imperfect, and barely legible, the ancient writing having been almost removed by a mediæval scribe to make way for the writings of Ephraem Syrus. Σ, A, B, C, are the four great first-rate uncials, and will be found more fully described in separate articles. Besides these there are one or two fragments as old as the 5th century (I, P, T).

A quite peculiar place is held by the Græco-Latin Codex Bezae at Cambridge (D), which dates from the 6th century, but presents a text full of the most singular interpolations. The other uncials of the gospels are less important, either from their fragmentary state or from the character of their text. The later uncials are hardly more valuable than good cursives.

The most important MS. of the Acts, in addition to those already mentioned, is E, the Codex Laudianus, Græco-Latin of the 6th century, in the Bodleian at Oxford. For the Pauline epistles we may mention D, or Codex Claromontanus, at Paris, also Græco-Latin of the 6th century, and H, or Codex Coislinianus, of the same century, of which there are 12 leaves at Paris and 2 at St Petersburg. Uncial authority is most scanty for the Apocalypse, for which the Vaticanus is defective. B of the Apocalypse is an uncial of the 8th century.

2. THE CHRISTIAN VERSIONS.—We have seen that the early church adopted the LXX., not so much in the character of a version, as in that of an authoritative original. Although several attempts were made in the 2d century of our era to produce a better Greek rendering of the Old Testament, not one of these seems to have had its origin in the Catholic Church. Aquila was a Jew, whose closely verbal rendering was designed to serve the subtleties of Rabbinic exegesis. Symmachus and Theodotion were probably Ebionites. The former was an excellent master of Greek, who happily corrected many clumsy renderings of the LXX., but inclined too much to paraphrase, and to the obliteration of characteristic figures and bold expressions. Theodotion made less extensive changes, and aimed only at necessary corrections. His rendering of Daniel was so manifest an improvement that it entirely displaced the old version, and is still regularly printed as part of the LXX.

In the Christian Church the importance of these new versions, and the unsatisfactory condition of the LXX.—which, apart from its original defects, had been much corrupted in successive transcriptions—were first clearly set forth by Origen in his Hexaplar edition of the Old Testament. This great work takes its name from the six columns in which it was arranged, containing respectively the Hebrew in the proper character, the same in Greek letters, the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and a text of the LXX., partly corrected by comparison of MSS., partly emended by recourse to the Hebrew. The variations of several less important versions were also noted. The complete Hexapla was too huge a work to be transcribed and circulated as a whole. It lay in the library at Caesarea, and was only occasionally consulted by scholars; but the column containing Origen's emended text of the LXX. was published in separate transcripts by Eusebius and Pamphilus, and attained so great a circulation that in the Palestinian churches, as we learn from Jerome, it quite displaced the older text. In composing his Hexaplar text, Origen was careful to distinguish his own improvements from the original LXX. by the use of asterisks and other marks. In later copies these marks were unfortunately often omitted. The Hexaplar text became mixed up with the true LXX., and the modern critic is sometimes tempted to forget how much the Eastern Church owed to this first attempt to go back to the Hebrew Old Testament, in his impatience at the obliteration by the adoption of Hexaplar corrections of important divergences of the LXX. from the Massoretic text. Our knowledge of the other columns of Origen's great edition is fragmentary, and is derived partly from citations in ancient authors, partly from notes in MSS. of the Hexaplar LXX., or of the Syriac translation of it composed by Paul of Tela (616 A.D.). The best collection of these fragments is that edited by Field (*Origenis Hexaplorum quæ supersunt*, Oxford, 1867-1875).

The first origin of translations of the Christian Scriptures into the vernacular of non-Hellenic churches is involved in much obscurity. Apart from the probable existence of early Aramaic tongues, there is no sure trace of a Christian literature in any other tongue than Greek till late in the 2d century. Even in the churches of Gaul, Greek was the recognized language of Christian authorship. In Rome the literary use of Greek extended into the 3d century; and in the earliest days of the Roman Church, Greek was the language of public worship. Even in remoter districts the demand

for a vernacular Bible can hardly have come from the educated and reading classes, but arose rather from the custom of reading lessons from Scripture in the congregation. The earliest Christian translations are the Peshito or "Simple" version in Syria, and the Old Latin in Africa, monuments of the early vigour of two great churches on the eastern and western outskirts of Hellenic culture.

It is scarcely probable that either of these versions is older than the middle of the 2d century. The Syriac, which claims to be first considered, was already an old version, containing obsolete expressions, in the time of S. Ephraem, who died 373 A.D. Internal marks of antiquity are found in the relation of the Old Testament to a very early Jewish exegesis, and especially in the omission from the New Testament of 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. On the other hand, there is no certain reference to this version by authors earlier than Ephraem; and the data afforded by the history of the canon, and by a comparison of the earliest remains of Syriac literature—the hymns of Bardesanes, who died about 225—are not sufficient to supply the lack of direct information. Some critics still date the version from the beginning of the 2d century, while others would bring it down into the 3d. Even the close of the 3d century has been named; but this view rests on the unlikely supposition that the omission of five New Testament books was due to later theological influences, and was not an original peculiarity of the version. The translation is, on the whole, excellent. The Old Testament is taken from the Hebrew, and, though sometimes dependent on Jewish exegesis, and in other parts strongly influenced by the LXX., is decidedly superior to the Targums. The Peshito was the received version in all branches of the much-divided Syrian churches. But it did not stand alone. The Hexaplar version of Paul of Tela, and the slavishly literal Philoxenian (508 A.D.—revised a century later by Theodosius of Hharke), were presumably designed in the service of Biblical criticism. More obscure is the origin and purpose of the fragmentary version of the gospels published by Cureton in 1858, and by him supposed to be older than the Peshito.

In the history of the Old Latin version almost nothing is certain, save that it originated in Africa, before the time of Tertullian, and that it assumed such Protean shapes in the hands of transcribers that it is to this day uncertain whether several distinct versions are not included in the general name of the Old Latin. Jerome, indeed, speaks only of great variations between copy and copy; but Augustine tells us that the "Itala" is to be preferred to the other Latin interpretations. Hence MSS. of the Old Latin are often called copies of the Itala; but in truth no one knows what the Itala is, for it is mentioned only by Augustine, and by him only once.

A version which at best was a rude and over-literal rendering of the Greek Bible, in an unpolished provincial dialect, and which had not even that fixed form which is so necessary in a Bible for ecclesiastical use, could not continue to serve the needs of the great Latin Church; and towards the close of the 4th century a work of revision was undertaken at the instance of Damasus, bishop of Rome, by Jerome, the most learned of the Western doctors. Jerome began by correcting the New Testament, making only such changes as seemed absolutely imperative. In the Old Testament he first revised the Psalter after the LXX., producing the version known as the Roman Psalter from its adoption in the Roman liturgy. A second revision, based on the Hexaplar text, forms the Gallican Psalter, long used in Gaul and other churches beyond the Alps. Then Jerome proceeded to revise other books on the basis of the Hexaplar Greek; but, finding this half-measure unsatisfactory, he finally rendered the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew. The work was completed 405 A.D., and though often dependent on Aquila, and especially on Symmachus, it bears high witness to the scholarship of the author, and is perhaps the best of the ancient versions. In spite of its merits the new version was much attacked, and made way in public estimation by very slow degrees. It was not till the 9th century that the Old Latin was entirely superseded in the Roman Church, and the circulation of the old and new versions side by side was long a fertile source of corruptions in the text of both. At length the complete supremacy of Jerome's Latin was marked by the transference to it of the name of the *Vulgate Version*, which in older times was given to the LXX.

The Egyptian versions (Memphitic in the dialect of lower Egypt, Thebaic or Sahidic for upper Egypt) supplied the needs of the only great Christian population of the early church which was not able to use the Greek, the Latin, or the Syriac. The most recent inquirers are disposed to believe that Egypt received the Bible in the vernacular almost as soon as Syria. The version was taken from the Greek, which was also the source of various later translations—the Ethiopic, the Armenian (5th century), the Georgian (6th century), the Slavonic (9th century)—fruits of the gradual diffusion of Christianity in the remotest regions of the ancient world. The Gothic version of Ulfilas—the earliest written monument of the Teutonic languages—is of the 4th century, and was also from the Greek. Only fragments of this translation remain to us, mainly in the famous silver-lettered MS. of the 5th or 6th century (*Codex Argenteus*) in the library of Upsal.

Thus far the history of the versions records the triumphs of Christianity. The Arabic versions, on the contrary, owe their origin to the spread of Islam, when the language of the conquering Saracens displaced the ancient dialects of Syria and Egypt. This change did not diminish the authority of the old ecclesiastical versions, or displace them from their position in the services of the church. The edification of the unlearned was secured by reading the lessons in the vulgar tongue, as well as in Syriac or Coptic; and, accordingly, the numerous Christian Arabic versions are mainly taken not from the original tongues, but from the versions whose use they were designed to supplement. In like manner the rise of the New Persian language and literature produced a Persian version of the Syriac New Testament. Of parts of the Old Testament there are Arabic and Persian translations directly from the Hebrew, but these are the work of Jewish scholars. The Arabic versions of the Pentateuch and Isaiah, by R. Saadias Gaon, in the 10th century, are among the most important monuments of ancient Jewish learning.

In the West as in the East the disintegration of the Roman empire was associated with the rise of new national dialects, and Latin ceased to be understood by the laity. But the Roman Church was too intent on the preservation of her homogeneous organization, her visible unity of worship, to allow the vulgar tongues to supplant the old liturgical language, or even to introduce a bilingual service. The use of the Bible in a form intelligible to the illiterate was shifted from the sphere of public worship to that of private edification and instruction; and for the latter purpose the necessities of a barbarous age seemed to demand explanatory paraphrases, Bible narratives in metre, and the like, rather than literal renderings of the whole Scriptures. Thus, in the Anglo-Saxon Church, Caedmon's poetical version of the Bible history dates from 664 A.D., while the earliest prose translations of parts of the Latin Bible (gospels, psalms, &c.) do not seem to be older than the 8th century. In Germany, in like manner, metrical versions of the gospel are among the earliest attempts to convey the Bible to the people. Otfrid's harmony of the gospels in High German, and the poem called *Ulliland* (Saviour), in Old Saxon, date from the 9th century; and the prose translation of the so-called Gospel Harmony of Tatian—from the Latin of Victor of Capua—belongs to the same age. A complete and literal translation of the Vulgate existed in Germany perhaps as early as the beginning of the 14th century. Among nations whose speech was descended from the vulgar Latin, the work of translation naturally began later. The earliest remains of Romance versions are thought to be as old as the 11th century; but the work of translation assumed important dimensions mainly in connection with the spirit of revolt against the Church of Rome which rose in the 12th and 13th centuries. The study of the Bible in the vulgar tongue was a characteristic of the Cathari and Waldenses, and the whole weight of the church's authority was turned against the use of the Scriptures by the laity. The prohibition of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, put forth at the Council of Toulouse in 1229, was repeated by other councils in various parts of the church, but failed to quell the rising interest in the Scriptures. In England and in Bohemia the Bible was translated by the reforming parties of Wyclif and Huss; and the early presses of the 15th century sent forth Bibles, not only in Latin, but in French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Dutch.

The Printed Text.

Though the Latin Bible was the first book printed, the original text was for some time neglected. The Jews of Italy led the way with several editions of parts of the Old Testament, commencing with the Psalter of 1475. The beautiful edition of Soncino (1488) was the first complete Hebrew Bible, and was soon followed by the edition of Brescia, used by Luther (1494). At length Christians interested themselves in the work. The Antwerp printer, Daniel Bomberg, established a Hebrew press in Venice, from which he sent forth a series of Bibles and other books. The famous Rabbinical Bible of 1517, edited by Felix Pratensis, a converted Jew, is known as the first Bomberg Bible, and is especially valuable for the text of the Targums, which it prints in parallel columns with the Hebrew. The second Rabbinical Bible of Bomberg was edited by R. Jacob Chayim (who also became a Christian), and contains the first printed edition of the Massora, with a text carefully corrected in accordance with Massoretic precepts. This edition at once attained a great reputation. It was several times reprinted, and most subsequent editions are directly or indirectly dependent on it. The only early edition which rivals its fame is the Complutensian Polyglott, published at Alcalá in 1517, at the expense of Cardinal Ximenes. The Hebrew of this polyglott exhibits a peculiar text, independent of the Italian editions. Later editions of the Hebrew Bible present little or no advance on the early prints; and most recent editions are decidedly inferior. Of Hebrew Bibles, with various readings from MS. authority, the best known are Kennicott's (Oxford, 1776, 1780) and De Rossi's (Parma, 1784-1798). The latter collection is by far the best, but neither has done much for the improvement of the text. In fact the differences between really good MSS. are

generally very minute; and where the current text is corrupt it is not from MSS., but from the versions, or from conjecture, that help must be sought. On the other hand, a more accurate edition of the Massoretic text is certainly wanted. But such an edition must pay special regard to vowel points and accents, which Kennicott and De Rossi neglect, and must consult MSS. of the Massora as well as of the text. The most valuable edition which notes variations not affecting the consonantal text is the Mantuan Bible of 1742, 1744, with the notes of Norzi (R. Jedidiah Solomon of Norcia). The best recent texts are S. Baer's Leipzig editions of Genesis (1869), Psalms (1861), and Isaiah (1872). Among easily accessible editions of the whole Old Testament, those of Jablonsky (Berlin, 1699) and J. H. Michaelis (Halle, 1720) have the best reputation.

The Greek New Testament was first printed in the Complutensian Polyglott (1514), but a delay in the publication enabled Froben of Basel to preoccupy the market with an edition hastily prepared by Erasmus from very recent codices. In subsequent editions a good many changes were made, partly after the Complutensian text, and in the third edition (1522) the spurious passage, 1 John v. 7, appeared for the first time. But it was still a recent and therefore an unsatisfactory text that was represented, and this radical defect was not corrected by the editors who followed Erasmus, though some of them, and notably Th. Beza, possessed, and to some extent used, better MSS. than Erasmus consulted. Their beauty and convenience, rather than the merit of their text, procured a great currency for the editions of Robert Stephens (*O mirificam* editions, 1546, 1549; royal edition, 1550), and his text of 1550, or the Elzevir text of 1624, which, though mainly based on Beza, is very nearly identical with the other, came to be regarded as the "received text," which subsequent editors were long afraid to change. But materials for a better text were gradually accumulated by Walton in the London Polyglott (1657), Curcellæus (1658), Fell (1675), and above all by John Mill in his great edition of 1707. These labours were viewed with much jealousy by the hyper-orthodox; and even as late as 1751, Wetstein, after long and most valuable studies, could find a publisher only on consideration that his amendments on the received editions should not stand in the text. Some important steps, however, were taken in the interval between Mill and Wetstein. Bentley sketched in 1720 the plan of an edition which should restore the text of the 4th century; and Bengel in 1734 actually published an amended text, though readings which had not been given in any previous edition were admitted only in the Apocalypse. Bengel was the first who classed MSS. under families, as Asiatic and African respectively. The next great critical editor after Bengel and Wetstein was J. J. Griesbach, whose chief edition appeared 1796, 1806. Griesbach gave an exaggerated importance to the doctrine of families of MSS.; and his edition was constructed on the principle of adhering to the received text, unless the reasons to the contrary were irresistible; but his industry and critical skill give him a very high place among editors. Griesbach was followed by the Roman Catholic Scholz, whose labours were more pretentious than valuable; and at length the great critic Lachmann (1842, 1850) threw aside all traditional respect for the received text, and sought to restore the text of the 4th century by the aid of a very small number of select MSS., together with the Latin versions as given in the oldest copies, and the citations of the earliest fathers. The idea was fruitful, though the material employed was too scanty. Since Lachmann published his edition our knowledge of the most ancient authorities has been greatly increased. New MSS. have been added, notably Tischendorf's *Σ*; and the MSS. formerly known have been edited or collated with much greater accuracy. The most distinguished labourers in this work were Tischendorf and Tregelles. In addition to numerous editions and collations of ancient copies, Tischendorf put forth a series of critical editions, of which the eighth (Leipzig, 1865-1872) contains the completest critical commentary yet published. The great edition of Tregelles (1857-72) rests exclusively on the most ancient authority, resembling Lachmann's work in conception, though using much more copious materials. This edition, as well as Tischendorf's VIII., lacks the *protogomena*, both editors having been struck down by paralysis before their work was complete.

The recent versions, subsequent to the invention of printing and the revived study of the original tongues, demand a word in conclusion. New Latin versions naturally accompanied many of the early editions of the original text. Thus Erasmus gave many corrections of the Vulgate in his Greek Testament, the Complutensian gives an interlinear version of the LXX., the Genoa Polyglott Psalter of 1516 gives renderings both of the Hebrew and of the Chaldee. Even such works as these, designed as they were for scholars, gave offence from their appearance of undermining the authority of the Vulgate; and it was the Reformation, in its revolt against mere human authority, that first demanded open circulation of vernacular versions from the original tongues. From the time of Luther's version (New Testament, 1522; complete Bible, 1534) we may distinguish four classes of versions.

1st, Versions adopted by Protestant countries or churches. Such

are Luther's Bible in Germany; the Dutch Bible of the Commission of the Synod of Dort, 1637; the English Authorized Version of 1611; the Geneva French Bible, formed by successive revisions of Olivetan's version of 1535; the Danish of 1550, based on Luther, revised in 1607, 1647; the Swedish, 1541. Most of these national Bibles were preceded by earlier Protestant versions, which they supersede. See especially ENGLISH BIBLE. Revisions of the national versions have of late years been undertaken in Norway, Holland, and Germany, as well as in England.

2d, Versions which never held any other place than that of private contributions to Biblical exegesis. Such are—among older works—the Latin Old Testament of Junius and Tremellius, and the New Testament of Beza. These versions belong to the history of exegesis.

3d, Missionary versions.

4th, Roman Catholic versions. The Council of Trent declared the Vulgate version authentic, and forbade interpretations of Scripture not in conformity with the consent of the fathers. Vernacular versions subject to these restrictions were published as the antidote to Protestant Bibles. Such are the Rhemish and Douay versions in English. Other Roman Catholic versions owe their origin to evangelical tendencies within the church. Jansenism, in particular, produced the French version of De Sacy (Mons, 1667), and otherwise stimulated the study of Scripture.

Literature.—Full discussion of some of the topics glanced at in this article must be sought in treatises on individual books or critical problems of the Old and New Testaments. But on most points it will be sufficient to refer to works on Biblical Introduction. The history of this branch of theology with lists of the principal older books—some of which, including the writings of R. Simon, Carpov, and Eichhorn, are still of value—is given in most recent works on the subject. Of these it may be sufficient to mention for the Old Testament—De Wette's *Einleitung*, rewritten by Schrader (Berlin, 1869), full of condensed information; Bleek's posthumous *Einleitung* (3d edition, 1870), less complete in detail and now rather behind date, but very clear and instructive; Keil's *Einleitung* (3d edition, 1873), which is strictly conservative. The two last are translated. Kuenen's *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek*, of which there is a French translation, is very full, but the author has considerably changed his views in the *History of the Religion of Israel* (Haarlem, 1869-70) of which there is an English translation. Ewald's *History of Israel* is important, and is also accessible to the English reader; with it must be taken his books on the *Prophecy and Poets of the Old Covenant*. Recent English literature on the Old Testament is not very remarkable, but Dr S. Davidson's *Introduction* gives a full account of foreign investigations. The history of the Old Testament in the Christian church has been written by L. Diestel (*Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, u.s.w., Jena, 1869). For the New Testament, De Wette, Bleek, and Davidson may again be consulted. A very instructive book is Reuss's *Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments* (5th edition, Brunswick, 1874). The most recent general work proceeding from the Tübingen school is Hilgenfeld's *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig, 1873). On the canon there are several important works by Credner in German, and an English *History of the Canon of the New Testament*, by Dr Westcott (4th edition, 1875). On the text of the New Testament the English reader may consult Tregelles's volume, contributed to Horne's *Introduction* (1856), and Scrivener's *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (2d edition, 1874). Le Long's *Bibliotheca Sacra*, continued by Masch (Halle, 1778-1790), gives a full account of editions of the original text and versions, which may be supplemented by reference to De Rossi's *Annales Hébræo-typographici* (XV. Cent., Parma, 1795; MDI. to MDXL., Parma, 1799), and Reuss's *Bibliotheca Novi Testamenti Græci* (Brunswick, 1872). Detailed references to other recent books will be found in the works already cited. (w. E. S.)

BIBLE SOCIETIES, associations for extending the circulation of the Holy Scriptures. For a long period this object has been pursued to a considerable extent by several religious institutions, such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, formed by the Rev. Thomas Gouge, one of the two thousand ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity in 1662; the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698; the Society for sending Missionaries to India, established in the year 1705 by Frederick IV., King of Denmark, and which numbered among its agents the celebrated missionary, Christian Frederick Schwartz; the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, formed in Edinburgh in 1709; the Moravian Missionary Society, founded in 1732, the Book Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, which was formed in London in 1750, and numbered among its earliest friends Dr Doddridge and the Rev. James Hervey; and the Religious Tract Society, founded in 1779. But the first British association which had in view the single purpose of disseminating the Scriptures was the NAVAL AND MILITARY BIBLE SOCIETY, established in the year 1780, which has done immense service to the army and navy of Great Britain. The sphere of its operations, however, was comparatively limited, and in 1804 the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, the greatest agency ever devised for the diffusion of the Word of God, was founded. The proposal to institute this association originated with the Rev. Mr Charles of Bala, whose philanthropic labours in Wales were greatly impeded by the scarcity of the Scriptures in the principality, and it was largely fostered at the outset by members of the committee of the Religious Tract Society. The exclusive object of the British and Foreign Bible Society is to promote the circulation of the Scriptures, both at home and abroad, and its constitution admits the co-operation of all persons disposed to concur in its support. The committee of management consists of 36 laymen, 6 of them being foreigners resident in or near the metropolis, and of the remaining 30, one-half are members of the Church of England, and the other half members of other Christian denominations.

The proceedings of this society gave rise to several controversies, one of which related to the fundamental law of the society to circulate the Bible alone without notes or comments. On this ground it was vehemently attacked by Bishop Marsh and other divines of the Church of England, who insisted that the Prayer-Book ought to be given along with the Bible. Another controversy, in which the late Dr Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh took a prominent part, related to the circulation on the Continent, chiefly by affiliated societies, of the Apocrypha along with the canonical books of Scripture. In 1826 it was resolved by the committee that the fundamental law of the society be fully and distinctly recognized as excluding the circulation of the Apocrypha. This step, however, failed to satisfy all the supporters of the society in Scotland, who proceeded to form themselves into independent associations. A third serious controversy by which the society has been agitated, was occasioned by the alleged inaccuracy of some of the translations issued under its authority; and a fourth referred to the admissibility of non-Trinitarians to the privilege of co-operation. The refusal of the society in 1831 to alter its constitution so as formally to exclude such persons, led to the formation of the Trinitarian Bible Society. This has, however, been exceedingly limited in its operations, and the original society stands unrivalled.

By a law of the British and Foreign Bible Society, no translations are adopted or circulated in the languages of the United Kingdom except the Authorized Version. For other countries the best ancient

or received versions are printed; and in the case of new translations, every effort is made to ascertain their strict fidelity and general literary merit. Most of the versions for countries not yet enlightened by Christianity are made by resident missionaries; and these the society prints at the instance of the missionary societies for whose use they are chiefly intended. These versions are made, wherever practicable, from the original Hebrew or Greek text. The society has had a share, direct or indirect, in the translation, printing, or distribution of Scriptures in 210 languages or dialects, the number of versions thus printed being 269. Altogether the society has put into circulation nearly 74 million Bibles, Testaments, and Portions (*i.e.*, single books of the Bible); and its expenditure for this purpose has amounted to £7,750,000.

In the course of 1874 there were issued from the society's depôts, at home and abroad, no fewer than 2,619,427 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions. The free income for 1874-5 amounted to £119,093, 7s. 7d.; adding the contributions for special objects, and the proceeds by sale of Scriptures, a total is reached of £222,191, 5s. 6d. The payments for translating, printing, and circulating the Scriptures were only £691 in the first year of the society's existence; while in 1874-75 they were £217,390, 13s. 1d.

Immediately after the foundation of the society an extensive correspondence was opened with ministers and laymen in all parts of the world.

Auxiliary and Branch Societies were gradually formed in every district of the United Kingdom and in the colonies. These became centres whence the Scriptures might be obtained at cost price, and in cases of special need at even less. There are at present in the United Kingdom 4496 auxiliaries and branches, besides 1208 in the British colonies. Many of these are managed by ladies. Juvenile associations have also been organized in many localities.

Agents have been appointed both at home and abroad to investigate local requirements, to supply information for the guidance of the committee, and to suggest the best means of carrying out the great purpose of the society.

Depôts for the sale of Scriptures have likewise been opened in almost every town of England, and in many places abroad.

Colportage is employed to some extent in England, and largely on the Continent and in India.

Grants to Societies are made on various conditions. When applied for by missionary societies and philanthropic institutions, copies of the Scriptures are supplied very freely; while grants of money and paper are made to other societies in aid of the translation and printing of the Scriptures, when good reasons are seen for the expenditure.

It may be added that the society does not encourage the gratuitous distribution of Bibles and Testaments, except under peculiar circumstances.

The first English New Testament printed by the society was issued in September 1805. Stereotype printing had just been introduced; and this invention, coupled with the society's plan of selling the Scriptures at a very low price, brought about a speedy and general reduction in the price of English Bibles. Besides this indirect benefit which has thus been secured to English readers, the investigations and exertions of the society first revealed, and then relieved, the great scarcity of Bibles which had previously existed. To show what the deficiency was, it may be mentioned that in 1812 inquiry was made into the case of 17,000 families in the metropolis, when it was discovered that half of them did not possess a Bible at all.

The efforts of the society in India are organized upon a scale and with a completeness scarcely rivalled elsewhere. Bible circulation in India owes its origin mainly to the zeal of the Serampore missionaries, especially of Carey, Marshman, and Ward, whose labours had begun shortly before the Bible Society was formed. It was stimulated by the exertions of Dr Claudius Buchanan, and by the establishment of the college at Fort William. Gradually auxiliary societies were formed at important centres—such as Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, &c. One of these auxiliaries alone—that at Madras—circulated in 1874-75 over 120,000 copies, and employed 55 native colporteurs. The assistance afforded by the society to India and Ceylon in grants of money, paper, and books—including £27,230 supplied to Dr Carey and his associates—amounts to no less a sum than £361,193.

When the society began to inquire into the state of the Continent, the dearth of Scriptures was found to be greater, if possible, than at home. Thus, in Lithuania, among 18,000 Germans, 7800 Polish, and 7000 Lithuanian families, not a Bible was to be found. One half of the population of Holland appeared to be without the Scriptures. In Poland a Bible could hardly be obtained at any price. In the district of Dorpat (Esthonia), containing 106,000 inhabitants, not 200 Testaments were to be found, and there were Christian pastors who did not possess the Scriptures in the dialect in which they preached. Into Iceland, with a population of 50,000, of whom almost all could read, not above 40 or 50 copies had penetrated; while in Sweden a single auxiliary found 13,900 families totally unprovided.