

## THE FIELD BIBLE

Most students know of Wesley's reference to the fact that the little Bible he carried around with him was a *genuine* Field Bible, and of the tests by which this could be distinguished from a *spurious* one. It will probably be useful to have a clearer picture of what is entailed by these statements. For this we must turn to the *Historical Catalogue of the printed editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, compiled by T. H. Darlow, M.A. and H. F. Moule, M.A., London . . . 1903. From this we learn that there is no simple description of either the genuine or spurious Field Bibles. John Field, of course, printed many editions of the Bible, of which 35 are listed in the *Historical Catalogue*. The small 24mo volumes printed, like Wesley's, in 1653 are numbered 496-500. Field also printed editions in 12mo, 8vo, 4to, and folio. Other 24mo editions were issued in 1658, and again there were disputes as to which were the genuine, and which the spurious (Nos. 520-3.)

Of the 1653 24mo genuine edition, of which Wesley's is a copy, there are several varieties, but the following bibliographical features are common to them all: the text of the volume ends on page Dd 11 *recto*, with a colophon; the Apocrypha is not included; the first four Psalms fill one page. (Aa 8 *recto*); a full column contains 62 lines.

As Mr. Bridgen points out, (*Proc.* xiii; 122). this tiny Bible, containing the text of the A.V., was printed so incorrectly that Field got into serious trouble. A few years later (1659), W. Kilburne published his *Dangerous Errors in Several late printed Bibles*. In this he said:

In a Pearl Bible printed by John Field at London in 1653, ni volume 24o. (very small to carry in pockets) whereof there have been neer 20000 dispersed, are these egregious faults, viz:—All the Dedications and Titles of *David's* Psalms are wholly left out, being part of the original Text in *Hebrew*, and intimating the cause, and occasion of the writing and composing those Psalms, whereby the matter may be better illustrated. *John* 9.21. *Or who hath opened his eyes we know not.* These words are wholly omitted. *Rom.* 6.13. *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of righteousness unto sin, for unrighteousness,* 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God? for Shall not inherit.* This is the foundation of a damnable Doctrine for it hath been averred by a reverend Doctor of Divinity to several worthy persons, that many Libertines and licentious people

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did produce, and urge this Text from the authority of this corrupt Bible against his mild Reproofs, in Justification of their vicious and inordinate Conversations.

Leaving aside the matter of the headings to the Psalms, for which there was some excuse in a pocket-Bible, we have here three typographical mistakes. A later authority (Lea Wilson, 1845), mentions three other misprints: Matt. vi. 24, *Ye cannot serve and Mammon* (God being omitted); John ii. 10, *when they have* for *when men have*; and John iii. 21, *might be manifest* for *may be made manifest*.

Wesley, strangely enough, does not mention any of Kilburne's finds, and has added two of which Lea Wilson did not know in 1845. He notes the Matt. vi. 24. misprint (though quoting from memory once he got the text mixed up). He also records as tests of a genuine Field Bible the fact that Isaiah 34 is printed 39 (i.e. XXXIX for XXXIV), and that I Kings xviii: 13 omits *slew*. These misprints—and almost certainly there are many more! - were apparently not known to the compilers of the *Historical Catalogue*.

The *Historical Catalogue* adds to its description the very necessary warning: "Varieties occur, differing in the engraved title, the number of errors, and other details. Many copies, probably, were corrected by cancel-leaves." Three main varieties are listed:

A. (496) has all the errors noted, the title-page reading "... y<sup>e</sup>: Old and New Testaments".

B. (497) has Rom. vi. 13 corrected, and the title-page reads "... the Old ...", whilst there is the signature "WV" at the foot of the engraving.

C. (498) has John ix. 21, Rom. vi. 13, and I Corr v. 9 corrected, "WV" and other slight varieties on the title-page.

Wesley's copy is apparently the number 496 noted above, the title-page also bearing the misprint "Contaning". The writer possesses a copy of 498. In the Rylands Library is what appears to be a combination of 496 and 498, for the title-page is the same as Wesley's, but three of the misprints are corrected, as in 498. It is possible that Wesley's copy is the same at this—detailed examination would soon settle the matter.

The sizes in millimetres of the printed area in each of these varieties are given as 110 x 53 (496), 108 x 52 (497), and 111 x 53 (498), but one feels that these can only be approximate measurements because of the uncertain factor of

paper shrinkage. It seems probable that the sheets would not be completely reset, but only those in which errors had been discovered, so that in general the printed area would reach the same, about 110 x 52. (The writer's copy of 498 measures 108 x 51 mm.).

The *Historical Catalogue* lists two "spurious" editions. The first, numbered 499, is

similar to, but quite distinct from, the preceding Bible. It is far less incorrect, and is printed on thicker paper. Some conjecture that it was produced abroad, and call it the 'spurious' edition of 1653. Engraved title as in No. 497. Text ends on Zz 12 b. No Apocrypha. The first three Psalms are printed on Y 10 a. A full column contains 66 lines in the O.T., and 65 lines in the N.T. This has only one of the six errors mentioned above, viz., that in John iii. 21. 113 x 62 mm.

The second, 500, is described thus ;

Marked by Fry as a variety of the edition immediately preceding (No. 499) ; but it is quite a different book. The B.M. Catalogue calls it a 'spurious edition, not printed by Field.' The engraved title is signed in the left hand bottom corner : *L. Lucas fecit.* and has a list of books on verso. The N.T. title is undated ; it bears the words *Appointed . . . .*, and designates Field *one of His Highness's Printers.* . . The text ends on Ddd 7 a. No Apocrypha. Only two verses of Ps. i are printed on Aa 4a, the first page of the Psalter. A full column contains 67 lines. John iii. 21 is correct. 121 x 61 mm.

A copy of this second "spurious" edition is in the Rylands Library, and is noticeably bulkier than the genuine edition. There is no colophon. The Rylands Catalogue records that it is "attributed to a press in the Netherlands, but the evidence on this point does not seem conclusive." All the eight misprints noted in the genuine editions are here corrected.

It is interesting to note the reference to Field as "one of His Highness's Printers" on the N.T. title-page, although the general title-page contains the usual "John Field, Printer to the Parliament." Oliver Cromwell was installed as Protector on Dec. 16th, 1653, and this Bible, issued at a crucial period, bore on the title-page the arms of the Commonwealth, and announced Field as a Parliament man—it became known to many as the "Parliamentary Bible." One cannot but recognise a Royalist touch in the half-concealed description of Field as "One of His Highness's Printers." The fact that the 1653 Field Bible had such interesting relations with the Civil War would enhance its value in the eyes of Wesley, whose interest in the history of the period is well known.

Mr. Telford, describing the title-page of Wesley's Field Bible, says "A round shield bears the lilies and their text, and '*Luke I, 63 His name is John*' is possibly an ingenious play upon the printer's name." The way in which this is put suggests that Mr. Telford had overlooked the important fact that the first text, Matt. vi. 28, is "Consider the lilies of the field". The two texts taken together are most certainly a play on "John Field". It should be remembered that this was an age of conspiracy; secret signs, codes, hidden meanings had become almost second nature to the people.

FRANK BAKER.

For other notes on the Field Bible see *Proceedings XII*, 121 and XXIV., 13.

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## EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF MRS. SARAH HALL, BRISTOL, 1817-1856.

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### Part 3

1832. August 16th, Thursday. Meeting for Intercession instead of a sermon. Scores have been removed to their long home the last fortnight. Many of the great and good have died this month in the cholera, but many by other diseases. Robert James about the 20th, Mrs. Cook 25th, Dr. [Adam] Clarke 26th, cholera, Mrs. Perry, 29th.

September 3rd, Monday evening. The fair put off for this year and it is delightful to see the Chapel well-filled while Mr. Turner, [Rev. Philip C.] preached the necessity of following Christ. This is a week of much anxiety. I am about to part with my Dear Jane and left without a daughter . . . . *But my Saviour lives.*

September 9th, Sunday. Mr. Robert Smith preached 3rd Hebrews, 1st v. My spirits much depressed at the consideration that after this day I shall never see Jane *occupy that corner*, or Dr. Clarke speak again from that pulpit, or Mrs. Cook or Mrs. Perry sit before me, or Mr. Wood whose death I have just heard of, neither of them will ever see or hear me till the morning of the Resurrection. The hymn and the sermon so affected me I was silent, could not sing, added to the above my beloved friend Mr. John Shum is very ill.