



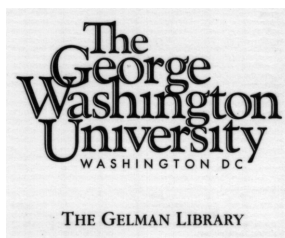
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THE GELMAN
LIBRARY SYSTEM

**The Gelman Library
The Special Collections Department**

**THE HALPERIN COLLECTION
OF AMERICAN BIBLES**

Dr. Samuel Halperin donated several hundred pre-20th century Bibles to the Special Collections Department of the George Washington University in 1986. Mostly published in the Americas, they provide the researcher with a fine set of examples from major 19th century U.S. publishers and printers. In fact, most of the well-known publishers of this period are represented in the material dating from 1808 to 1899. Among the publishers are: William Harding, and Jesper Harding and Sons of Philadelphia; Peck and Wood of Brattleboro, Vermont; H. and E. Phinney of Cooperstown, New York; A.J. Holman of Philadelphia; Mathew Carey of Philadelphia; and Luther Robey of Concord, New Hampshire.



INTRODUCTION

During the 19th century Bibles and almanacs were the main income producers for many publishers. Indeed, some publishers marketed Bibles exclusively and had title lists numbering over one thousand Bibles. Because family Bible reading, a popular pastime, required Bible ownership, sales were strong. In affluent families each member would have their own copy. In addition to being read, Bibles were often used to record the births and deaths of family members, a practice that led most publishers to include pages for this purpose after the 1820's. To mark the beginning of the new family that a marriage symbolized, Bibles were often presented to couples at their weddings.

In addition to presenting a sampling of Bibles from major publishers, the Halperin collection illustrates the standardization of the King James text that occurred in the 19th century. In the first half of the century, almost all publishers printed the Apocrypha at the end of the New Testament along with maps, indexes, glossaries, commentaries and the Psalms of David, or they placed the Apocrypha between the two testaments. As the American Bible Society grew more powerful in the second half of the century, it took upon itself the standardization of the text. In 1873, the Society decreed that the Apocrypha should not be included in the King James version and that the Psalms of David should be placed in the position in which we now find them.

Finally, the Halperin collection is of interest for providing examples of 19th century printing. Depending on the costliness of the individual Bible, numerous materials were added to the text: wood or steel engravings illustrating dramatic scenes such as the sacrifice of Isaac; historical indices; glossaries; and maps of the Holy Land. Similarities in the illustrations may seem surprising, however at this time there were very few publishers, and the number of stereotype plates from which all the publishers were printing was even fewer. The finest Bibles in the collection have gilt edges, tooled leather bindings, and wood or steel engravings. Some also close with gold clasps.

SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE COLLECTION

The condition of the Bibles in this collection varies. Some particularly interesting Bibles in the collection, which are also in good condition include:

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments Together with the Apocrypha.
Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1811. 2 vols. Signatures; family record filled in; bound in full calf over boards.

Call Number: BS 185 1811 .P5

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments. Brattleboro, V.T.: Peck and Wood, 1833. Two pages for family records; bound in full calf over board; black leather; gold stamped on spine.

Call Number: BS 185 1833 .B7

The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate; Diligently Compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and Other Editions. . . . New York: Edward Dunigan and Brother, 1856. Bound in half black leather with brown cloth over boards; spine stamped in gold and ruled in blind; marbled endpapers.

Call Number: BS 180 1856 f

New Devotional and Practical Pictorial Family Bible. Philadelphia: National Publishing Co., c.1870. Superfine edition. Together with a carefully abridged edition of Dr William Smith's Complete Dictionary of the Bible. Bound in black morocco over boards; spine and cover stamped in gold; front cover stamped in gold: "Presented to Mrs. Chester Miller by her mother."

Call Number: BS 185 1870 .P5 f

Self-Interpreting Bible. New York: American Publishing Co., 1873. Six-hundred illustrations and maps. Standard of the American Bible Society. Deep tooling and clasps.

Call Number: BS 185 1873 .N4

The Holy Bible According to the Douay and Rheimish Versions. New York: T. Kelly, [1877?]. Bound in full brown leather over boards; spine stamped in gold; covers framed and stamped in gold and stamped in blind; metal clasps.

Call Number: BS 180 1877 f

The Pronouncing Edition of the Holy Bible. Boston, M.A.: Joyce Bros., [1892]. At head of title: "1892 the jubilee year, in commemoration of the discovery of America 1492." Bound in full leather over boards; spine and covers stamped in gold; metal clasps.

Call Number: BS 185 1892 .B6 f

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments Philadelphia: A.J. Holman and Co., 1879. Includes illustrations, concordance, history and maps. Bound in full brown morocco over board; spine stamped in gold and blind; marbled endpapers.

Call Number: BS 185 1879 .P5 f

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Additionally important for research purposes, but needing restoration on their bindings are:

The Columbian Family and Pulpit Bible Boston: Joseph Teal, 1822. Extra large 34 cm. folio, claimed to be the largest Bible ever printed. Bound in brown leather over board; spine ruled in gold; marbled endpapers.

Call Number: BS 185 1822 .B6 f

The Pictorial Bible. New York: Robert Sears, 1857. Contains 1,000 engravings. Covers framed in blind; end papers marbled.

Call Number: BS 185 1857 .N4 f

RELATED MATERIALS

Dr. Halperin's donation to George Washington University also includes notable European Bibles outside the scope of this study;

The Bible in Englyshe of the Largest and Greatest Volume. Rouen, 1566. Sometimes called Cranmer's version and/or the "Treacle Bible."

Call Number: BS 167 1566 f

H e Palaia diath ek e kata tous Hevdom ekonta Lvtetiae Parisiorvm: Apud Clavdivm Sonnivm. . ., 1628. Parallel Greek and Roman texts.

Call Number: BS 741 1628 f

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments: Appointed to Be Read in Churches. . .. Cambridge, U.K.: Printed by J. Archdeacon, Printer to the University, and sold by J. Beecroft, J. Rivington, B. White, and E. Dilly, in London, and T. & J. Merrill in Cambridge, 1769.

Call Number: BS 185 1769 .C3

The Holy Bible. . .. Oxford: Clarendon Press (W. Jackson and A Hamilton), 1789. Brown leather spine; covers missing.

Call Number: BS 185 1789 .O9

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments Translated Out of the Original Tongues. . .. Edinburgh: Mark and Charles Kerr, 1795.

Call Number: BS 185 1795 .E2

FURTHER INFORMATION

Hills, Margaret Thorndike. The English Bible in America: A Bibliography of Editions of the Bible and the New Testament Published in America, 1777-1957. New York: American Bible Society, 1961.

Call Number: Z 7771 .A5 H5

Wright, John. Historic Bibles in America. New York: T. Whittaker, c.1905.

Call Number: BS 125 .W75 1905

THE DONOR

Samuel Halperin received his doctorate in political science from Washington University, St. Louis in 1956. In the 1960's he held a variety of positions, including Congressional Fellow of the American Political Science Association, Director of the U.S. Office of Education's Office of Congressional Relations, Assistant U.S. Commissioner of Education for Legislation, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Health, Education and Welfare. From 1969 to 1981 he headed leadership training programs at the George Washington University, including the nationwide Institute for Educational Leadership. The author, co-author, or editor of a dozen books on the political process and on educational policy issues, he taught at Wayne State, American, and Duke Universities and Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dr. Halperin's interest in Holy Land maps and prints led him to collect Bibles for their illustrations. In addition to the Bible collection described here, he donated a large number of Holy Land maps and prints to GW, most of which are housed in the Special Collections Department of The Gelman Library.