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SOME MANUSCRIPTS OF THE VULGATE NEW TESTAMENT.

By THE REV. J. M. HARDEN, D.D., LL.D., Chaplain and
Head Master of the King's Hospital, Dublin, and late Vice-
Principal, London College of Divinity.

OWING to the greater importance of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, considerations of space cause the manuscripts of the Vulgate to be passed over somewhat hastily in works which deal with the textual criticism of the New Testament. My purpose in this paper has been to gather together from various sources those facts which seemed to be of particular interest about some of the most important of these Vulgate MSS. It was natural to select those which form the basis of the revised text which Dr. White has given us in the smaller Oxford edition published in 1911, which is, or ought to be, in the hands of every one interested in Vulgate Latin. These, apart from two MSS. which contain the Gospels only, are seven in number, and have been chosen by the editor as being the best representatives of certain well-recognized types of text found in MSS. of the Vulgate. Of these, the first five are what might be called geographical varieties, two connected with Italy, the others with Spain, Ireland and southern Gaul. These five types of text grew up, so to speak, unconsciously in the course of time; the last two are representatives of the text resulting from two attempts, made about the year 800, to rectify the manifold divergencies found in the Bibles of the time. These revisions are connected with names of Theodulf, bishop of Orleans, and Alcuin, the English scholar who acted as a kind of minister of education for Charlemagne. Naturally it would be quite impossible to give here a full account of the characteristics of these various texts. Some of the more obvious points will arise in the discussion of the MSS. For a fuller account reference may be made to Berger's exhaustive work, which has done much to render less true the words with which it commences, "*L'histoire de la Vulgate est encore presque inconnue.*"

I

First in interest as in importance must always come the famous *Codex Amiatinus* (A), which has been described as "perhaps the finest book in the world" (H. J. White, *Studia Biblica*, ii. p. 273). It is now one of the treasures of the Laurentian Library at Florence. Its very size is sufficiently striking, for it is an enormous manuscript of over 1,000 vellum leaves ($19\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{8} \times 7$ in.). These dimensions will convey little to the reader unless by actual measurement he compares them with those of the largest volume which he happens to be acquainted with. The MS. contains the whole Bible still complete, a thing comparatively rare in ancient MSS.

The Codex takes its name from the fact that it belonged at one time to the monastery of Monte Amiata (modern, Delle Fiore) founded about the year 750, at first Benedictine, later Cistercian. It was removed to Florence for safe-keeping when the Cistercian order was suppressed. In the sixteenth century it had been brought to Rome to be used for the Sixtine edition of the Latin Bible. To the Amiatine monastery it had been presented about the year 900 by Peter, the abbot of a Lombard monastery, who, in doing so, coolly altered by the insertion of his own name some dedicatory verses inscribed on its first page. This alteration was afterwards the cause of much perplexity as to the date of the MS.

Fifty years ago the Codex was confidently assigned to the sixth century; Lagarde, writing in 1882, brought its date down to the ninth. It is now known with certainty to come from about the year 700. The various steps in this discovery are full of interest.

Mention has been already made of the Dedication found on the first page. It consists of three elegiac couplets, the first two of which run as follows:

*Cenobium ad eximii merito venerabile Salvatoris,
Quem caput ecclesie dedicat alta fides,
Petrus Langobardorum extremis de finibus abbas
Devoti affectus pignora mitto mei.*

This being interpreted, as it now stands, means that Peter, an abbot from the remote regions of the Lombards, sent the volume as a pledge of affection to the monastery of the Saviour.

Peter the Lombard had no ear for rhythm. The lines as he left them will not scan. The changes which he made are denoted by italics above. To discover the date of the MS. it was obviously

necessary to find out the words which Peter had erased. The first step was made at the end of the eighteenth century, when Bandini published a catalogue of the MSS. of the Laurentian Library. In his description of the *Codex Amiatinus* he endeavoured to restore the original of the four altered words. He saw clearly by the second line that the book had been sent originally to Rome (*caput ecclesie*). He therefore read the first line thus :

Culmen ad eximii merito venerabile Petri.

Here he was on sure ground, as was afterwards proved, but his attempt to restore the third line was not so happy. It had been noticed that at the beginning of Leviticus the name Servandus was written in Greek letters as that of the scribe of some portion of the MS. Bandini accordingly suggested to read in the third line *Servandus Latii*, identifying Servandus with an abbot who was known to have lived in the sixth century. This was ingenious, but not convincing. Latium could hardly be called "remote" from Rome. The writing also was not that of the sixth century, and besides this, the words *Servandus Latii* did not well suit the space of the erasure. The next step was made in 1886 when de Rossi put forward an emendation which has been called "one of the most brilliant perhaps that ever have been made in the history of palæography" (H. J. White, *Studia Biblica*, ii. p. 282). De Rossi had observed that Bede has told us that Ceolfrid, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, set out for Rome in 716 taking with him, amongst other gifts, a Bible (*Pandectes*) according to the translation of St. Jerome. He therefore proposed to read in the third line :

Ceolfridus Britonum extremis de finibus abbas.

This was at once generally accepted, and was made a certainty by the final step, when Dr. Hort showed that in the *Anonymous Life of Ceolfrid*, the very lines of the dedication occur, except that instead of *Britonum* the reading is *Anglorum*, a change which had been suggested before Dr. Hort's article appeared.

It was made quite plain then that the *Codex Amiatinus* was one of three Bibles which Ceolfrid had caused to be written either at Jarrow or Wearmouth. Its date will be about the beginning of the eighth century. Though written in England the text is of

the type current in the south of Italy. The Bible from which it was copied may have been brought from Italy " by Ceolfrid himself or his master, Benedict Biscop, or, perhaps more probably by Theodore of Tarsus when he came to England to be Archbishop of Canterbury in 669 " (Kenyon, *Text. Crit. of the N.T.* p. 225).

The *Codex Amiatinus* may be said to be, on the whole, the best authority for the text of the Latin N.T. The Oxford editors follow it for the most part, particularly in the Gospels. For example in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.) there are (apart from mere varieties of spelling) only six places in which their reading differs. This is but a small number if we remember that the Oxford edition differs, in these chapters, from the Clementine in nearly sixty places. It is not suggested that the Oxford edition reproduces the Amiatine text. It does not; but a comparison of any chapter in it with the Clementine text of the same will give a fair idea of how far the latter text has departed from the early text of the Vulgate witnessed to by the Amiatine Bible.

II

As the *Codex Amiatinus* was written in England but has now its resting-place in Italy, so the *Codex Cavensis* (C) is no longer to be found in the country whence it originally came. It is one, perhaps the best, of the manuscripts of the great Spanish family. Its famous sister the *Codex Toletanus* is still in Spain, now in Madrid, formerly one of the treasures of the Chapter Library at Toledo. *Codex Cavensis* has its name from the monastery of La Cava, near Naples, where it is now preserved. Of its history nothing is known, but there seems to be no doubt that it was written in Spain. Apart from the fact of the connexion of its text with that of manuscripts which are certainly Spanish, there are other considerations also to connect it with Spain. Indeed M. Berger goes so far as to say (*Histoire*, p. 14) that it is difficult to understand how the place of its origin has ever been had in doubt. The writing is of the Visigothic type used in Spain. Again, the name of the scribe is found in the inscription "*Danila scriptor*" found between the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. This name is quite Visigothic in form. Bishop Wordsworth has shown that the same name is found amongst the signatures of those who attended a council of Toledo in 693. This would not be the signature of the same individual, for the

MS. belongs to about the year 800, but the name connects it with the same country.

Even more important evidence to show the place of its origin is the fact that it contains before the Pauline Epistles the Preface of Peregrinus and the Canons of Priscillian. Priscillian had drawn up an Epitome of the theology of St. Paul in 90 "Canons" or statements. As he was afterwards judged a heretic, these were edited and revised later by an author who has chosen to call himself Peregrinus. His real name is unknown, unless the conjecture that he was Bachiarius be correct. The important thing for our purpose to note is that it is in Spanish MSS. and in those connected with Spain that his Preface and the accompanying Canons are found. *Codex Cavensis* contains the whole Bible. As to its New Testament, two facts of interest may be mentioned. It is the earliest biblical MS. which has interpolated the text of the three heavenly witnesses in 1 John v. 7. This would also connect it with Spain. Again, it contains between Colossians and 1 Thessalonians the spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans. It is remarkable also as containing two Psalters. In the ordinary course of the Old Testament the version of the Psalter is the Gallican, that is, St. Jerome's revision from the LXX which afterwards found its way into the Vulgate. After the Apocalypse occurs the so-called "Hebrew" Psalter, that is, St. Jerome's translation from the Hebrew text. This Hebrew Psalter in our codex is unfortunately incomplete owing to the loss of the concluding leaves.

Codex Cavensis is a much smaller volume than the great Florentine MS. It consists of 303 leaves ($12\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ in.). It is written three columns to the page; Amiatinus has only two.

III

Spain and Ireland were separated from the rest of the Latin world in early times, the former by the Arab invasion, the latter by old traditions of religious independence (cf. Berger, *Histoire*, p. vii). The result in each case was the rise of a special type of biblical text. The manuscript which Dr. White has chosen as the best representative of the Irish type is the famous Book of Armagh (D), now in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. This volume is not, like the two just described, a Bible. It is not even wholly biblical. The main part of the Book is a complete New

Testament (the only one which comes to us from the ancient Church of Ireland), but this is preceded by various documents,¹ some in Irish, but most in Latin, relating to St. Patrick, and is followed by others connected with St. Martin of Tours.

The Book of Armagh was edited in 1913 by Dr. J. Gwynn in a sumptuous volume which reproduces the MS. page by page and line by line, and discusses fully all the problems connected with its text and history. At one time the Book was thought to have been written by St. Patrick himself. This is of course out of the question, since the *Lives* which it contains were not written for generations after the saint's death, but in consequence of this belief the name of the real scribe was erased in several places. On two pages, however, enough was left to enable Dr. Graves to discover not only the century but even the year in which the MS. was written. From one of these pages the name of the scribe was seen to have been Ferdornach. There are but two scribes of this name mentioned in the *Annals*, one of whom died in 727, the other in 845. The problem was to which of these the work was to be attributed. At the end of St. Matthew's Gospel there is a Latin note written in curious Greek characters which runs thus:

. . . ach hunc (*librum*) dictante . . . bach herede patricii scripsit.

The first letters here are the last syllable of Ferdornach's name. Accordingly Dr. Graves read the inscription as meaning that Ferdornach wrote the Book at the direction of an "heir" of St. Patrick (i.e. a Primate of Armagh) whose name ended in "—bach." The only Primate with any such name contemporary with either Ferdornach was Torbach, and he occupied the position for but one year, 807. Hence the MS. could be dated with precision.

The history of the Book of Armagh is better known than that of most other manuscripts. It was written at Armagh, where it long remained, being known as the Canoin Phadraig (or, Patrick's testament). In it King Brian Boromhe, when he visited Armagh in 1004, had an entry made confirming "to Armagh the ecclesiastical supremacy in Ireland." In the next century we know from St. Bernard's *Life of Malachy* that Niall, the Primate, when he fled from Armagh took the Book with him as one of the insignia of the

¹ The chief of these are the two *Lives* of the Saint by Muirchu and Tirechan respectively, and the *Confessions* of St. Patrick himself.

see. We know also from various allusions in the *Annals* that oaths administered upon this Book were considered as specially binding, and that the members of a particular family were appointed as its custodians and took their name of MacMoyre from this circumstance. This family seem to have been quite ready to permit outsiders to have access to the Book, for we know that both Archbishop Ussher and Sir James Ware made use of it in the seventeenth century.

The last of these hereditary keepers of the Book of Armagh was the infamous Florence MacMoyre, one of the false witnesses who brought about the execution of Oliver Plunket, titular Archbishop of Armagh in 1681. Florence MacMoyre put the Book in pledge for the sum of five pounds, and after some time it came into the possession of the Brownlow family (1707) with whom it remained until in 1846 it was sent to the Library of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. It was one of the exhibits at the Dublin Exhibition of 1853 and was there marked for sale. Purchased by Dr. Reeves in that year, it was in 1854 sold by him to Lord John George Beresford, who presented it to Trinity College, Dublin.

The text of the New Testament contained in the Book of Armagh is not a pure Vulgate text. It contains, as do the other Irish MSS., many readings which have been carried over from the Old Latin version. In some passages conflated readings occur, i.e. readings formed by a union of two distinct renderings, as e.g. in Revelation xxii. 19, *de libro vitæ et de ligno vitæ*. Many of the peculiar readings of Irish MSS. are instances of interpolation. Two of these may here be mentioned—(1) in Matthew xxvii. 49 the words which tell of the piercing of our Lord's side are inserted from St. John's Gospel; (2) in John xix. 30 there is an insertion relating the rending of the Temple veil at the time of our Lord's death.

IV

The *Codex Fuldensis* (F) takes its name from Fulda in Germany, "where it has been preserved, perhaps, from the time of Boniface" (Nestle, *Introduction*, p. 122). It is the oldest of all the manuscripts of the New Testament cited by Dr. White in his smaller edition. It comes from the sixth century and its text is of the early Italian type. Written by the direction of Victor, bishop of Capua, who died in 554, it contains in its margin notes made by that bishop's

hand. Evidently he corrected it with considerable care, for there are at the end of the Acts and of the Apocalypse notes to say that he read it through twice, once in 546 and again in 547. It comes to us, then, from the first half of the sixth century. If a conjecture of Nestle's is correct, the MS. was later in the hands of a much more famous man than Victor, namely St. Boniface. Nestle's ground for this conjecture is that in 1 Peter v. 8 the *Codex Fuldensis* reads, *sobrii estote et vigilate et excitamini*, the very form in which the verse is quoted in one of the letters of St. Boniface.

The MS. contains the whole New Testament, including the spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans which, in it, follows Colossians. The book of the Acts is preceded by a preface which professes to give an account of the places of burial of the Apostles. It is strange that though the text of 1 John is free from the interpolation of the "three heavenly witnesses," the MS. contains the preface to the Catholic Epistles purporting to be the work of Jerome, which accuses the Latin translators of having omitted the words in question. One of the most interesting of the glosses which Victor has written in the margin is that in which he gives the interpretation of the number of the Beast as Teitan.

By far the most interesting fact, however, about this MS. is the form in which the Gospels appear in it. They do not occur separately but are given in the form of a harmony. Victor himself supposed, not without some hesitation, that the single composite gospel which he followed was identical with Tatian's *Diatessaron*. It has been only in comparatively recent times that this conjecture of Victor's has been proved true.

With respect to the *Diatessaron*, many questions are still unsolved and are perhaps insoluble, but its general form may be said to be fairly well ascertained. We do not know whether Tatian composed it in Syriac, or whether his Syriac was a translation of a Greek original. The name seems to suggest the latter, but, in any case, the influence of this great Harmony, in a Syriac or Greek form, was felt in the West; and it is not to be doubted but that Victor's harmony in the *Codex Fuldensis*, or rather the Old Latin harmony for which Victor substituted the corresponding passages of the Vulgate, was a translation of Tatian's work. The substantial agreement of both in the order of their sections has been proved. Besides this "there are other remarkable coincidences. For

instance, it would scarcely have occurred to two independent harmonists to make the journey through Samaria (John iv. 4), one from Galilee to Judæa instead of from Judæa to Galilee . . . to place the conversation with Nicodemus after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, or to insert Herod's threats (Luke xiii. 31) between the Transfiguration and the healing of the demoniac" (*Dict. of Chr. Biog.* iv, 1,125).

The text of the *Codex Fuldensis* is best in the Gospels, where it is very closely allied to that of the Amiatine Bible, but throughout the New Testament it is one of our chief authorities. The Oxford editors rarely reject readings wherein the two codices Amiatinus and Fuldensis agree (cf. Wordsworth-White, *Praefatio in Actus*, p. xiv). The MS. was edited, with facsimiles, by E. Ranke in 1868. The harmony is given in Migne's *Patrol. Latina* lxxviii. 255.

V

Next in order comes the manuscript known by the Oxford editors as G. It is now in the National Library at Paris, but is called *San-Germanensis*, as it originally was in the library of St. Germain des Prés. The MS. is the second volume of a Bible, the first volume of which is now lost, though R. Stephens knew it and made use of it in the first half of the sixteenth century. The second volume begins with various canticles, the Song of Moses, the Prayer of Habakkuk, etc., apparently inserted as an appendix to the Psalter, since the words *Explicit Psalterium* occur at the end of the last of them—the Song of the Three Children. Then follow the remaining books of the Hagiographa, or rather, these once followed, for some are now wanting owing to mutilation of the MS., viz.—Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Proverbs, Wisdom and 1 Maccabees. The New Testament is complete. At the end of its last book, in this MS. the Epistle to the Hebrews, came once the Shepherd of Hermas, now represented by a small fragment.

Not much is known of the history of this MS. It has been inferred from two monograms found at the end of the Gospels that the name of its scribe was Rathbold or Rathbod. The scribe, whoever he was, has left an interesting note at the end of the Book of Esther, in which he tells us that his work is the result of considerable study

of various texts found in different MSS. His words are: *Summo studio summaque cura per diversos codices oberrans editiones perquisivi. In unum collexi corpus et scribens transfudi fecique Pandecten.* Bishop Wordsworth thinks that the use of this word *Pandectes* for a complete Bible suggests the time of Alcuin.

The MS. has often been used since the sixteenth century. It was used by Stephens as one of the authorities for his Latin Bible in 1838, by Martianay at the end of the following century, and also by Sabatier when he was publishing his famous edition of the Old Latin Bible. The English scholar Bentley knew of it and had it collated for his proposed edition in 1720.

The chief peculiarity of the *Codex San-Germanensis* is that the Gospel of St. Matthew is not given in it according to the Vulgate text, which the rest of the New Testament follows. The Gospel of St. Matthew is Old Latin, chiefly of the European type. The text of Acts is exceptionally good in this MS. In that book it agrees more nearly than does any other MS. with the text of the Oxford edition (cf. W-W, *Praef. in Actus*, p. vi).

In the smaller Oxford edition it is cited by Dr. White as the best representative of the text of the Vulgate current in Southern Gaul. Berger (*Histoire*, p. 72) supposes that the MS. was written near Lyons.

Two curious, though for critical purposes unimportant, facts may here be mentioned. The first is that here and there are found glosses written in the margin in a kind of shorthand (*notæ tironianæ*). Unfortunately no one has succeeded in deciphering these. It is possible that they are quite worthless, but Berger thinks that the longhand words which accompany them show that they would be of interest. The second fact is that in the margin of the Gospel of St. John are written certain formulæ of divination of the kind known as *sortes sanctorum*. Some of these are also found in the margin of *Codex Bezae* written in Greek in a tenth-century hand. These latter are discussed by Dr. J. R. Harris in his *Study of Codex Bezae* (pp. 7ff.). In connexion with them he has made the suggestion that "a sort of wheel full of numbers" which is found in the *Codex San-Germanensis* before the New Testament, and which Dr. Wordsworth supposed to be connected with the Eusebian Canons was intended rather for use in connexion with these numbered formulæ of divination in St. John's Gospel.

VI

The following is a translation of the description of his sixth MS. given by Dr. White in the *Præfatio ad Lectorem* of his smaller edition: "H = The Hubertian MS. of the Bible, now Add. 24142 of the British Museum (9th or 10th century); its text is good and ancient and agrees for the most part with the Amiatine: but the 'corrector' has frequently written in the margin the readings of the *Theodulfian* recension." The reason for its inclusion, then, by Dr. White seems to be that it gives evidence of Theodulf's work. He was bishop of Orleans at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century (788-821 according to Dr. White), and was by race a Visigoth. His method of biblical correction may be seen in the famous Bible which bears his name. The Bible of Theodulf is in the National Library of Paris. The text found in it is peculiar. Berger describes it as "a mixed Bible, as a MS. should be which was copied on the frontier between the north and south (of France) by a prelate born in Septimania."

The text is fundamentally Spanish, or rather Visigothic, but in places it is allied (especially in the Gospels) with the Irish texts used in the north of France. Theodulf's own work is to be seen in corrections and variants written in the margin, or between the lines, suggesting the addition of some words, the omission of others, and so on. It is to these notes that Dr. White refers in the words above quoted. This Bible of Theodulf is an indirect ancestor of the *Codex Hubertianus*. The latter was copied, that is to say, not from the Bible of Theodulf, but from some other unknown MS. which had incorporated in its text some of the corrections made by that bishop. This is the opinion of Berger. Dr. White, on the other hand, seems to limit the connexion of G with the Theodulfian recension to the marginal notes.

The Codex takes its name from having belonged at one time to the monastery of St. Hubert in the Ardennes. It is written in a fine minuscule hand, three columns to the page.

Like almost all the early Latin Bibles, especially those connected with Spain, these two great MSS. connected with Theodulf's recension follow in the Psalter not the Gallican Version, but St. Jerome's translation from the Hebrew.

The Codex is unfortunately incomplete in the New Testament

part. Acts and Apocalypse are entirely wanting, and in the Catholic Epistles, the MS. does not go beyond 1 Peter iv. 3.

VII

In the previous section, in speaking of the St. Hubert Bible, we have seen that Theodulf at the end of the eighth century made a serious effort to effect a revision of the Vulgate text. In the course of time innumerable corruptions had crept into the text from various causes, with the result that the Bible was read differently in different places, nor was there any certainty that all the Bibles in one and the same place would have the same text. The "infinite variety" of which St. Augustine wrote in pre-Vulgate days had arisen again. Theodulf attempted to remedy this, but his efforts seem to have had little effect, however useful the records of it are to us now. It was very different in the case of another revision which we have now to consider, the effects of which, as Berger points out (*Histoire*, p. 146), have lasted down to the present time. This revision was inspired in the same century by Charlemagne. Indeed, if we were to take literally some of the writers of the ninth century, we should have to believe that Charlemagne himself took an active part in such revision. This can hardly have been the case, but the tradition is a proof of the interest which the Emperor took in biblical matters. The real agent of the revision was Alcuin, the English scholar whom Charlemagne summoned to help him in this and similar matters. It is clear from Alcuin's own letters that the revision of the Bible-text was one of his chief tasks. This was begun some time before the year 800, and on Christmas Day, 801, Alcuin was able to send to the Emperor the result of his labours. The last of the seven MSS. which are the subject of this paper is a copy, in part at least, of the manuscript which Alcuin then sent to Charlemagne.

This is the *Codex Vallicellianus* or *Vallicellanus* (V), now in the Biblioteca Vittorio-Emmanuele in Rome, which takes its name from the Oratory of S. Maria in Vallicella, where it formerly was. This manuscript belonged at one time to a Portuguese named Staius, and was known sometimes as the *Codex Staiianus*. Staius bequeathed it to the Oratory of S. Maria.

It is a beautiful MS., written with three columns to the page, as are the La Cava and the St. Hubert Bibles. The place where

it was written was probably in or near Tours, for its text in the Gospels is very closely allied with that of the Gospels of St. Martin, a MS. which was written in that city in the ninth century by an Irish scribe. It joins company with another MS., also emanating from the school of Tours, the Bible of Grandval, now in the British Museum, more generally known as the *Codex Carolinus*. Some of the readings in the Gospels connect it with the Amiatine Bible and the Lindisfarne Gospels, both of which were written in Northumbria. Alcuin was from York, and we know that when engaged on his work of revision he asked for, and received, help from his old school. Outside the Gospels the *Codex Vallicellianus* follows the lead of the Fulda MS. rather than that of the Amiatine.

Two of its readings in Acts, mentioned by Berger, are curious enough to deserve notice. One of these (not found in any other MS.) is *inparcenti gregi* for *non parcentes gregi*, in c. 20, 29; the other is in c. 28, 15, *cum audissent fratres Appii occurrerunt nobis usque ad forum et tribus tabernis*. Here the word *Appii*, which should come after *forum*, has been inserted in the wrong place, with a strange result.

Such are the seven MSS. of the New Testament on which the text of the smaller Oxford edition is based. Two others are used for the Gospels, both of the Italian family, viz.—M, the Milan MS. of the Gospels (cent. vi) in the Ambrosian Library; and Z, a MS. of the Gospels belonging to the Harley collection in the British Museum (cent. vii).

It is hoped that the above brief sketches may not be without interest. The Vulgate is being studied now probably more than ever it has been since Latin became a dead language. It is well, then, that those who study it should know something of the old Bibles and Testaments, which are the best authorities for its text. Unfortunately the Clementine Edition is based on very poor MSS. Yet so far we have nothing better for the Old Testament. In the New Testament we have something much better, owing to the labours of Wordsworth and White, something which will in all probability keep its place of pre-eminence even when the revision of the Latin Bible promised by the Church of Rome sees the light of publication.