

**LECTURES ON
PORTIONS OF THE
BOOK OF GENESIS**

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Lectures on Portions of the Book of Genesis by Henrietta Sullivan

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HENRIETTA SULLIVAN

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BY
HENRIETTA SULLIVAN.

These Lectures were written for and read to a class of young ladies, in the winter of 1878-80. It was intended to continue them, but this was prevented by falling health.



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I.

INTRODUCTION.

ON THE METHODS OF TRANSMISSION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT AND CONTEMPORARY
WRITINGS.

OUR English Bible comes to us in a version made in King James's reign by a commission of forty-seven learned men. A larger number was appointed, which from different causes was reduced. It was begun in the spring of 1607 and published in 1611, two hundred and sixty-eight years since. It had long been ardently desired by the nation. An English commission, assisted by American scholars, is now at work upon a revision, which it is hoped will shortly be published. The Psalms, the Gospels, and some other Scriptures had previously been translated into Saxon. The first complete English translation was made by Wiclif about 1380; this

was before the era of printing. Tindale's New Testament was the first printed edition. He was strangled in 1536. Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, translated the Bible, which in 1610, in Henry VIII.'s reign, was ordered to be placed in every parish church, and chained to the desk, that the people might go in to read it. The Douay version was made for the Roman Church in 1609.

The Septuagint version of the Old Testament was made by seventy learned men, nearly three hundred years before Christ, into the Greek language, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. This has been questioned. It had a very wide circulation, even among the Jews. We find that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes from it, showing it was more familiar to his readers than the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, which at that time were in a dead language for the Jews.

The books of Moses were written about 1400 years before Christ. Malachi, the last of the prophets, wrote about 400 B. C., so

that the Old Testament books cover a period of nearly one thousand years.

The Jews were so careful of their Scriptures that they denounced him guilty of inextinguishable sin who presumed to change a point or iota of them. They have never dared to annex any book since the death of Malachi, clearly recognizing the distinctive inspiration of the sacred canon. The historic period was from Moses to Ezra and Nehemiah, who returned from the Babylonish captivity with Malachi; and from that time date great changes in the Hebrew language.

The Apocryphal books were recognized as such by the Jews. It was only in A. D. 1550 that the Roman Council of Trent presumed to add them to the sacred volume.

The writers of the Old Testament were of various callings. Moses was an Egyptian priest; Samuel a priest; David and Solomon kings; Amos a herdsman. The majority were either kings or priests, and hence were learned men for their time (though not altogether so).

The manuscripts of the Old Testament were written on parchment, either of gazelle or sheep skins. At various times, efforts were made by enemies to destroy all the copies; at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the temple was burnt, and the ark which contained the original copy of the law was destroyed with it. Antiochus Epiphanes ordered that whoever was found with a copy of the law should be put to death. Jezebel endeavored to destroy it, as well as the schools of the prophets, and had nearly succeeded, when an authentic copy was found in the temple by King Josiah. Some of the manuscripts are now in the British Museum, the Vatican, and elsewhere, and perhaps some more valuable remain to be discovered. One of the oldest (500 years B. C.), the Samaritan Septuagint, is kept with great veneration at Nablous, by the remnant of the ancient Samaritan people.

Moses must have been familiar with the papyri of the Egyptians, also with their stone inscriptions on the monuments. But