

21 N
 TEAGASG CRIOSDUIGHÉ:
 ár cóir
 OONUILE DHUINE
 DFOGHLUIGH,
 Sgí
 CUIRFIGH THER
 FALÁIM
 EASBUIGH
 é.

21 na cur a ccló,
 A Luñdṛn a ttiḡ Robert Eberingam, an
 bliadain dóir an Tigiḡna,
 1680.

Pl. 1. Title page of *An Teagasg Criosduighe*, London, 1680 (British Museum). Evidently the first work to be printed from Moxon's Irish type.

ROBERT BOYLE AND THE IRISH BIBLE ¹

BY R. E. W. MADDISON, B.Sc., PH.D.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I in the thirteenth year of her reign (1570-1) paid a sum of money to the treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, to provide the necessary equipment to print the *Catechism* in the Irish language. From this first known fount of Irish type various works were printed, including in 1602 the *New Testament*, the translation of which had been completed by William Daniel (or O'Donnell), Archbishop of Tuam. It was not till many years later that any attempt was made to complete the translation of the *Bible* by adding the *Old Testament*. William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, about 1630, when he was well past middle age, decided to supply this need: he learned the Irish language, and with the assistance of other scholars completed the task by 1640. Bedell's intention to print this work at his own expense was frustrated by the troublesome times of the Irish Rebellion, and by his death in 1642.²

There was no further progress to make the Scriptures available in Irish till the 1670s, by which time the *New Testament* of 1602 was out of print and quite unobtainable, when we find that Robert Boyle, who was most zealous in his efforts to propagate knowledge of the Scriptures, was actively engaged "to acquaint the native Irish with the divine oracles." A document³ dated

¹ I have to thank the Officers of the Royal Society for facilities to consult manuscript material in their possession and for permission to quote therefrom; and the Trustees of the British Museum and the Governors of the John Rylands Library for permission to reproduce the title pages used as illustrations.

² Bruce Dickins, "The Irish Broadside of 1571 and Queen Elizabeth's Types", *Trans. Camb. Bibl. Soc.*, i (1949), 48; Talbot Baines Reed, *A History of the Old English Letter Founders* (rev. edn. by A. F. Johnson, London, 1952), sections devoted to Irish type, and Moxon; E. W. Lynam, "The Irish Character in Print, 1571-1923", *The Library* [iv] vol. iv. (1924), 286; *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle: To which is prefixed The Life of the Author*, ed. Thomas Birch (6 vols., London, 1772, subsequently cited as *Works*), I. clxxxii, letter from Dopping to [Huntington], 14 December 1685.

³ What part, if any, was played by Robert Boyle in drawing up this document is not evident. That it is amongst the Boyle Papers, and is written in the hand of Robin Bacon, Boyle's amanuensis, show at least Boyle's interest in the matter.

August 1675, which gives details of things that “are fit to be done in the Kingdom of Ireland . . . in nine years next ensuing . . . out of his Majesty’s growing revenue”, includes as the fourth item: “That the Bible and Common Prayerbook be translated into Irish and printed in the vulgar character and that fit Persons be salaried to preach catechise and officiate in Irish, in every part of that kingdom weekly.”¹ At a later date we find that Boyle is in correspondence with Andrew Sall² on this subject. In his letter of 17 December 1678 the latter reveals that he has been asked by Boyle to give his opinion on the proposed reprinting of the *New Testament* in Irish. To this proposal he offers his “obediential concurrence to the utmost of my power”, because of the scarcity of religious books in the vulgar tongue. With regard to the translation he points out that it may be achieved in two ways, “the one, of getting the credit of skill in the primitive ancient Irish, the other, of benefitting common readers by expressions now in use”. He advocates the latter method. He also offers the suggestion that the Irish text be printed with a Latin or English version in double columns in order to facilitate the learning of one or the other languages.³ He reported to Boyle information that he had obtained from the Archbishop of Cashel⁴ concerning parts of the *Bible* known to be printed or translated into Irish.⁵

In May 1680 Dr. Sall was in Dublin exerting himself on behalf of Boyle to secure the support of influential persons in Ireland for this project. Dr. Sall’s letter of the 20th of that month says: “I conferred with my lord lieutenant,⁶ my lord

¹ *Royal Society Boyle Papers*, vol. xl. It may be recalled that in the 1640s a scheme for salaried preachers in Scotland had been introduced by the Long Parliament, and that in the 1650s a similar scheme to establish a preaching ministry in Wales was proposed by the Fifth Monarchy leader Thomas Harrison. The failure to implement the latter scheme was in part responsible for the fall of the Barebones parliament. The provision of a Godly preaching ministry was a constantly recurring theme in Oliver Cromwell’s speeches.

² (1612-82). Irish Jesuit educated at St. Omer. Converted to Church of England in 1674. D.D., of Trinity College, Dublin, and Oxford.

³ *Works*, vi. 591. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 17 December 1678.

⁴ Thomas Price (1599-1685).

⁵ *Works*, vi 593. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 5 April 1679.

⁶ James Butler, Duke of Ormonde (1610-88).

bishop of Meath,¹ and with the provost of the college² upon the subject, and I found all three very willing to countenance and further the matter. I doubt not to find the same inclination in my lord primate³ and other worthy persons. All do accordingly honour and commend your piety in reprinting the Irish testament, and do rejoice at the notice I gave them of the forwardness that work is in already by your means. I find both my lord bishop of Meath and the provost willing to contrive the reading of it, and of Irish prayers in the college. . . . I pray be pleased to let me know, how forward that business is now in print. . . . I pray let me know, whether you may think fit to trust me with the help of other better judgments here to compile the preface to this edition, and what things you may think fit to add in it, to what I judge necessary to express of the authors and advancers of that work both now and in the first edition.”⁴ The letter further discloses that a certain Mr. Rely (or Reilly) has been entrusted with the task of preparing the copy and seeing it through the press: the letter closes with a request for a specimen of the subscription form used on the occasion of printing the Welsh Bible.⁵

The project had now become so far advanced that arrangements could be made for printing, as the following memorandum of agreement shows: ⁶

Memorandum, that it is agreed this third day of June 1680 between y^e Hon^{ble} Robert Boyle Esq. & Robert Everingham Printer, y^t y^e s^d Robert Everingham shall print five hundred books of y^e new Testament in Irish att twenty seven shill. per sheet, about y^e size of y^e Testament formerly printed in y^t language. Jtem, y^t y^e s^d Everingham shall print eight sheets thereof for y^e first month, commencing y^e seventh instant, & for every month afterwards ten sheets per month,

¹ Henry Jones (1605-82).

² Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713). D.D., Oxford. Orientalist; lord justice of Ireland; Archbishop of Cashel, translated to Armagh.

³ Michael Boyle (1609?-1702). D.D., Oxford. Privy councillor in Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh.

⁴ *Works*, vi 594. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 20 May 1680.

⁵ Copies of these forms were sent by Boyle to the Bishop of Meath about February 1681, but went astray (*Works*, i. p. clxxiii, letter from Boyle to Jones, [8 April 1681]; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxiv, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 May 1681; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxviii, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 September 1681; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxix, letter from Boyle to Jones, [27 September 1681]; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxx, letter from Jones to Boyle, 5 November 1681).

⁶ *Royal Society Boyle Papers*, iv, fol. 102.

untill y^e whole book be printed. And in case of failure through any default on his side, then he shall forfeit ten shill. for each week he failes of y^e time aforesaid. In witness whereof both partyes interchangeably have hereunto put their hands, y^e day & year first above written.

Rob^t Everingham.

At some stage in making these arrangements it must have been realized that there was a total absence of Irish printing type in this country. Furthermore, all the punches, matrices and characters associated with the Queen Elizabeth type used to print the 1602 edition of the *New Testament* had completely disappeared. The last use of this type in any book printed at Dublin was in 1656, though some few Irish words in the same type appeared in certain books printed at London in 1656-8.¹ The disappearance of these characters was explained thus by the Bishop of Meath to Robert Boyle: "they had passed from hand to hand of many of his Majesty's printers in Dublin successively, until by covetousness of one, into whose hands they fell unhappily, they were by the Jesuits gotten away, and are now at Doway,² for Irish prints."³ This story, however, is certainly groundless, since no works of continental origin in which this type has been used are known.⁴ In the circumstances it became necessary to prepare a fresh fount of type. Robert Boyle himself refers to this as "the letters I caused to be cast";⁵ "and all the designe I had in having them cut off was, that they might be in a readiness to print useful books in Irish";⁶ whilst the preface to the new edition of the *New Testament* says that he "caused a new set of fair Irish characters to be cast in London, by a skilful artisan".⁷ The founding of this new type was evidently entrusted to Joseph

¹ Bruce Dickins, *op. cit.*, i. 48; Talbot Baines Reed, *op. cit.*, sections devoted to Irish type, and Moxon.

² The Jesuits had established a college at Douai in 1568, which had become the continental centre for Jesuit missions to the British Isles.

³ *Works*, i. p. clxxii. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 4 August 1680.

⁴ Talbot Baines Reed, *op. cit.*, sections devoted to Irish type, and Moxon; E. W. Lynam, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., 286.

⁵ *Works*, i. p. clxxix. Letter from Boyle to Jones [27 September 1681].

⁶ Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *The Life of William Bedell* (London, 1843), p. 300. Letter from Boyle to Marsh, 17 January 1681/2.

⁷ *Works*, i. p. clxxxiii. Preface to the Irish New Testament.

Moxon,¹ who produced a set of characters of Small Pica Irish, which remained the sole fount of Irish type in this country until the beginning of the nineteenth century.² Some larger characters were made for use as initials and for title pages. Documentary evidence of Boyle's dealings with Moxon does not seem to be forthcoming. It has been suggested that Dr. Sall, who, as an Irishman and former Jesuit from Douai, would have been familiar with Irish works printed on the continent, provided Moxon with a design for the Irish character, using as a basis what is known as the "Louvain type A", which had been used for a number of years by the exiled Irish Franciscans at the press established by them in the Spanish Netherlands. The design of this particular type was based on Irish manuscript style, and because of its slope resembles italic. Moxon's design sets the characters upright; they are of uniform size, and well spaced.³ Some of the original punches of Moxon's Irish type still exist and are in the possession of Messrs Stephenson Blake & Co., Ltd., Sheffield.⁴

The Bishop of Meath in his letter of 4 August 1680 to Boyle suggests that the *Old Testament* as well as the *Psalms* in metre should be printed in Irish. To this end he offered Bedell's translation of the *Old Testament*, since he was in possession of the sheets and manuscript thereof, which had come into his hands after the death of that prelate. "This compleating the bible in Irish, and added to what is already printed, would be a work greatly to God's glory." He mentions, too, that in the past he had found in political circles considerable opposition to such a scheme, and indeed a desire to suppress the Irish language completely.⁵ Dr. Sall confirms this in one of his letters: "But beside the private opposition of the Romish clergy, who would have themselves to be the only teachers, we have a more public and bolder opposition by some of our own apparent but

¹ (1627—not later than 1692.) Mathematical instrument maker. Hydrographer to the king. Writer on scientific and mathematical subjects. Type-founder. F.R.S.

² Talbot Baines Reed, *op. cit.*, sections devoted to Irish type, and Moxon.

³ E. W. Lynam, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., 286.

⁴ Private communications dated 15 August and 26 August 1955 from H. W. Stephenson and J. B. Blake, respectively.

⁵ *Works*, i. p. clxxii. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 4 August 1680.

false brethren, who are not ashamed to profess a dislike of our endeavours to convert the natives of this country, upon maxims like those of the American planters, in hindering the conversion of their slaves to the Christian religion. . . . Our good archbishop has continual battles with them upon this subject.”¹ Dr. Marsh subsequently recorded: “I have gotten a great deal of ill will from some great men in this kingdom for what I have done in promoting this good and charitable work, which has been no small discouragement to me.” The lord lieutenant “was surprised to hear what I related of the discouragements (and indeed threats) that I have had on this account. The unwelcome-ness of this undertaking to many in this country, I believe, was the reason, why the bishop of Meath² flew off from prosecuting what he designed and promised, and has ever since been wholly unconcerned, and sat neuter.”³

Dr. Sall’s letter of 26 October 1680⁴ discloses that Boyle and his sister Katherine, Viscountess Ranelagh, had expressed a wish for a catechism in Irish, and that he had been working on this, using as a basis two earlier works printed in Irish. One of these⁵ contained “Brief and plain Rules for the reading of the Irish Tongue”, which Dr. Sall suggested could with advantage be included in the *New Testament* then in course of preparation. The suggestion was not adopted. However, the catechism (*An Teagasg Criosduighe*), which is a small fourteen page pamphlet containing in addition the elements of the Irish language, was printed by Robert Everingham in 1680, this, no doubt, being the first work to use Moxon’s type.

¹ *Works*, vi. 595. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 26 October 1680. See p. 100 on the objections to printing the *Bible* in Irish for the Scottish highlands. Such objections were still sufficiently strong to warrant serious consideration even in 1830 (H. J. M. Mason, *Reasons and Authorities, and Facts afforded by the History of the Irish Society, respecting the duty of Employing the Irish Language as a more general Medium for conveying Scriptural Instruction to the Native Peasantry of Ireland*, Edinburgh, 1830).

² Anthony Dopping, successor to Henry Jones.

³ *Works*, vi. 609. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 22 March 1685/6.

⁴ The printed version in *Works* gives this date as 16. Examination of the original shows that this is most probably 26, which I consider is supported by the postmark “OC—30”.

⁵ *The Christian Doctrine, or the Foundation of Christian Religion. Gathered into Six Principles*. Translated into Irish by Godfrey Daniel. Dublin, 1652.

The printing of the Irish *New Testament* evidently did not progress according to plan. Boyle in April 1681 tells the Bishop of Meath, "the press, that was to print it, having, as well as others here, been so taken up with pamphlets¹ of several sizes and kinds, that till of late our work was almost quite laid aside; but now, for want of other employment, I hope the printer will resume it, and vigorously pursue it, partly because he has promised to do so, and partly because he is so far advanced, that he says, there is but five or six sheets remaining to be printed off".² In September he says: "I lately expostulated with Mr. Reily about the shameful tardiness of the edition of the 'New Testament; for which he much excuses himself, laying the whole blame upon the printer . . . it is not fit all the exemplars of the New Testament should stay for the preface (whatever that be) and accordingly I caused copies to be bound the ordinary way, besides [blank] much more handsomely bound, for the present use of the members of the college, and some other persons that your lordship or Dr. Marsh shall think fit to send any to."³ About fifty copies of the book bound, and about 350 copies in sheets were sent overland via Chester instead of by the cheaper long sea route so as to ensure a speedier arrival in Dublin. They were safely received and acknowledged by the Bishop of Meath on 5 November 1681:

As to those books sent over bound, 40, according to your directions, are left with the provost for the present use of the college.

Some also of the books of the better sort of binding, were presented as from yourself to those great persons in yours named. Only I presumed to present one of them to the lord lieutenant the duke of Ormonde, as from yourself (although not mentioned) and found it well accepted by his lordship. I conceived this necessary, for having his lordship's countenance in that great business when occasion should require, there being many adversaries.

That which gives greatest hopes of success in this, is our good provost's care and zeal in training up the present youth in the college in reading the Irish, which by the books from you now in their hands is much forwarded.⁴

An unexpected revelation is made in Dr. Sall's letter of October 1680, when he says: "I fully approve of your motion to

¹ Presumably in connection with the controversy over the Exclusion Bill.

² *Works*, i. p. clxxiii, letter from Boyle to Jones [8 April 1681]; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxvi, letter from Jones to Marsh, 1 August 1681.

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. clxxix. Letter from Boyle to Jones [27 September 1681].

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. p. clxxx. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 5 November 1681.

apply in the preface what yourself and those other worthies shall think fit of that used by the Jansenists in their French version, and am not a little joyed to hear so great an advance to right in the Romish church, as to suffer the word of God to come unto vulgar tongues. My only intention for intervening in the preface was to secure, that the memory of the first and present patron of that work may not be concealed from grateful posterity.”¹ The Jansenists, of whom Calamy wrote that they appeared to him “to have as good notions of many points in religion, and to be as sober in their lives and conversations, as any of the Protestants”,² and who were regarded in some non-Roman Catholic circles as “the better sort of Romanists”,³ had published in 1667 a French translation of the *New Testament*,⁴ as a practical expression of their belief that every Christian should have free access to the Scriptures. This belief conformed exactly to Boyle’s own, and he, who had seen the preface to the French *New Testament*, but had not, as he himself later admitted,⁵ read it with close attention, thought that it could be suitably used to the same purpose in the Irish translation sponsored by him. He was not alone in his view. Boyle’s letter to the Bishop of Meath discloses that “the most intelligent divine I have advised with here about it is earnest to have the preface, that the Jansenists have premised to their translation of the new testament; which being a piece of great learning and piety, and much esteemed by the better sort of the Romanists themselves, it is judged, that if it be published in English with no more alterations and additions, than the exigency of our design requires, it may very much recommend the introduction of the Irish testament to the better sort of Papists themselves, for whose benefit it was chiefly made”.⁶ The Bishop of Meath, obviously influenced by Boyle’s remarks,

¹ *Works*, vi. 595. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 26 October 1680.

² Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of my own Life*, ed. J. T. Rutt (London, 1829), i. 171.

³ *Works*, i, p. clxxiii, letter from Boyle to Jones [8 April 1681]; *ibid.*, i. p. clxxiv, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 May 1681.

⁴ Known as the Port Royal version; and also as the *Nouveau Testament de Mons*, since it bore the imprint “A Mons”, although printed by Daniel Elzevier at Amsterdam.

⁵ *Works*, i, p. clxxix. Letter from Boyle to Jones [27 September 1681].

⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxiii. Letter from Boyle to Jones [8 April 1681].

TIOMNA NRC MURCÓH

ar

o t i g h e a r n a

sluair

sl a n u i g h e o r a

Iōra Cnīora

ar na tairneis go fínead ar gceis go góideis.

re

h u i l l i a a n o d o a n h n u i l l



ar l u n n o u i n,

ar na cur a gclo ré Robert Esheingtam, an bliádam dóir an
tígeana, 1681

Pl. 2. Title page of *Tiomna Nuadh*, London, 1681 (British Museum). The second edition of the *New Testament* in Irish.

LEABHUIR

Ἡ Ἀ

Seintiomna

Ἡ Ἡ Ἀ

Ἐκδομένη ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιμελείας καὶ ἐπιβλέψεως τοῦ Δοκτοῦ

WILLIAM BEDEL,

Ἐπισκόπου τοῦ Ἐπαρχίου Ἰρλανδίας καὶ Νότιου,

Ἐπισκόπου τοῦ Ἐπαρχίου Ἰρλανδίας καὶ Ἐπισκόπου τοῦ Ἐπαρχίου Ἰρλανδίας.

The BOOKS of the
OLD TESTAMENT

Translated into IRISH by the Care and Diligence of

Doctor WILLIAM BEDEL,

Late Bishop of *Kilmore* in IRELAND,

AND,

For the publick good of that Nation,

Printed at *London*, Anno Dom. MDC LXXXV.

Pl. 3. Title page of *Leabhuir na Seintiomna*, London, 1685 (The John Rylands Library). The first edition of the *Old Testament* in Irish.

A N
B I O B L A
N A O M H T H A,
I O N A B H F U I L

Leabhair na Seintiomna

Ar na ttarruing as an EABHRA go Coisdheisg
tré chúram agus dhúthrachd an Doctuir,

VILLIAM BEDEL,

Roimhe so Easbug Chille móire a Néirinn:

A G U S

Na Tiomna Nuaidhe,

Ar na ttabhairt

Go sírinneach as GREIGIS go Coisdheisg, re

VILLIAM O DOMHNVILL.

Noch atá anois chum maithreas coitcheann
na nGaoidheail Albanach, áthruighte go haireach as
an litir Eireandha chum na mion-litre shoi-léighidh
Romhanta ; Maille re Suim agus brigh na Ccaí-
bidleach ós a ccionn, a nTiodaluibh aithghearr ;
Re claraibh fós, ag míniughadh na mFocal budh
deacraigh ré na ttuigfin, le **R. K. M. A.**

A LUNNDUIN,

Ar na chur a gcló re *R. Ebberingtham*, ag na feachd
réultaibh sa tsráid da ngoirthear, Ave-Maria, abhfo-
chair Luid-gheata, an bhliá. daóis an Tigh. 1690.

Pl. 4. Title page of *An Biobla Naomhtha*, London, 1690 (British Museum). An edition of the Irish Bible produced for the Highlands of Scotland with a transliteration from Irish to Roman characters.

TIOMNA NUADH
A R
DTIGHEARNA

Agus Ar

SLANUIGHEORA
IOSACRIOSD,

Ar na tharruing go sírinneach as GREIGIS
go GAOIDHEILG.

R E
VILLIAMO DOMHNVILL.

Noch atá anois ar mhaithe choitchinn
Ghaóidhealtacht Albann, áthruigte go haireach as
an litir Éireandha, go mion-litre shoi-léighidh
Romhanta; Maille re Suim agus brigh na Ccai-
bidfeachí ós a cónn, a nTiodaluibh aithghearr;
le R. R. R. R. E, M. A.

A LÚNNDUÍN,

Ar na chur a gcló re R. *Ebberingtham*, ag na seachd
réultaibh sa tíráid da ngoirthear, Ave-Maria, abhfogus do Luidgheara; an bhísa. daóis an Tigh. 1690.

Pl. 5. Title page of *Tiomna Nuadh*, London, 1690 (British Museum). Title page of the *New Testament* contained in *An Biobla Naomhtha*.

replied : “ yet can I not but well approve of your thoughts for translating, printing, and affixing that to our Irish new testament also.”¹

Robert Boyle had promised to send a translation of the preface for perusal by the Bishop of Meath and Dr. Sall,² but before he could do so, the Bishop had, through Dr. Sall, secured a copy of the French *New Testament*, and caused the preface to be translated. After he had read it, the Bishop was not so happy about the desirability of using this Jansenist preface as it stood, because of, amongst other things, the “ harsh reflections on some of the more eminent and leading protestant reformers ”. He wrote, therefore to Dr. Marsh to ask his advice on the wisdom of rewriting the preface, omitting the offending passages. In view of the great need for the *New Testament* in Irish, he was not in favour of delaying its publication any further solely on account of a preface, which he suggested might equally well find a place with the projected Irish version of the *Old Testament* or the *Common Prayer Book*.³ Dr. Marsh replied that the preface, although well suited to the purpose of the French translators, would not be entirely acceptable to protestants ; and he gave the following five reasons :⁴

1. There are some reflections in it a little too severe on protestant translators, which cannot well be countenanced by us.
2. There is a sentence or two, which I observed in the original, to savour too much of popery to pass a protestant press.
3. Part of the preface is spent in shewing the imperfections of the old French translation of the New Testament, and why a new French translation thereof is requisite ; which would be besides the purpose, should this preface be printed with any other translation.
4. Many paragraphs are written to shew, what rules were observed in this French translation ; some whereof cannot, and I believe others do not agree to any other translation ; and therefore that also would be besides the purpose.
5. The authors of that preface have bestowed not a little pains to shew, how difficult (if not impossible) a thing it is to make an exact translation of the Bible ; which though true, yet whether it be adviseable, that it should be known to the commonalty of this kingdom (who are already but too much addicted to the vulgar, which they esteem as authentic) is worth while to consider.⁵

¹ *Works*, i, p. clxxiv. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 May 1681.

² *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxiii. Letter from Boyle to Jones [8 April 1681].

³ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxvi. Letter from Jones to Marsh, 1 August 1681.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi, 601. Letter from Marsh to Jones, 27 August 1681.

⁵ It is interesting to note Dr. Marsh's understanding of the prejudices of the native. At a much later date we are informed that “ Irish Testaments have

These views were communicated to Robert Boyle, with the information that "Dr. Sall speaks of preparing a preface, he hopes, fit for our purpose ; which, when perused and allowed by you, shall be after translated into Irish".¹ Boyle replied :

As to the version of the Jansenists preface, I must ingenuously confess to your lordship, that the book itself, to which it is prefixed, having been got from me, by a person of quality, before I had read more than here and there some passages of the preface, I did, in recommending it, rely less upon my own judgment, than that of a very learned and famous divine, and some other persons of eminent parts. And though I was aware of some of the objections, that I find in the two judicious papers, and had with Mr. Reily taken order to have them obviated in his translation into Irish, yet I meet with some weighty ones that I did not (and indeed could not) well know of ; and therefore, as your lordship may remember, that in proposing this preface, I was ready to submit to the better judgment of your lordship and your learned friends upon the place, so now, upon fresh accounts, I fully refer to you the prefixing what preface shall be thought most suitable to the design of the publication, and the particular circumstances of it and the versions : in which work I am very glad your lordship will have so good an assistant as Dr. Sall, who is so able a man, that I doubt not but he will skilfully accommodate his discourse to them. Only, perhaps, it may be thought fit to make use of some passages of the Jansenists preface, not as it is a preface, but as it contains the public avowed sense, and eloquently exhibits the reasons of famous and eminent divines of the Roman church for the translating and studying the New Testament in vulgar tongues.²

So Dr. Sall came to be entrusted with the composition of the preface to the Irish testament. In his letter of 8 November 1681 to Boyle he says :

I have finished the preface . . . and when a copy is drawn of it, I will send to you speedily the original. I have seen the Jansenian preface, and made of it the very use you mentioned in your letter to my lord bishop of Meath, both for my readiness to obey you, and the reasonableness of your command herein. . . . His grace would

reconciled the people to those of the English version. . . . The peasant is assiduously instructed to consider the Protestant Bible to be an heretical book, but nothing will persuade him that heresy can be uttered in his native tongue, and he imagines that Satan is dumb in it—an opinion that has been industriously encouraged ; when, therefore, the peasant is possessed of the Scriptures in that language, curiosity and other motives induce him to institute a comparison of them with the supposed book of Satan. He finds them to agree ; and, becoming at once emancipated from some part of his former delusions, he ardently desires to possess, to examine the English Bible, were it only that it might serve as 'the construer,' as some of them have called it, to certain passages of the Irish. This result has occurred wherever the experiment has been fairly tried" (H. J. M. Mason, *Reasons and Authorities* . . ., Edinburgh, 1830, p. 11).

¹ *Works*, i, p. clxxviii. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 September 1681.

² *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxix. Letter from Boyle to Jones [27 September 1681].

be glad to see my preface in English, to understand better the drift and profit of this undertaking; for which cause our learned friends do think it convenient, it should be prefixed in both languages to this new edition; and I think no person fitter to translate it than Mr. Rely, nor any printer fitter than the same formerly employed.¹

On 19 November 1681 Dr. Sall sent his preface to Robert Boyle:

My lord bishop of Meath, the provost, and our other learned friends, who saw it, do think it apposite and suitable to the genius of the people here, for inducing them to the reading of that book. . . . I have added, in compliance with your direction, to let the people know the sentiment and practice of learned men in the Roman church, about turning the holy scripture into vulgar languages. Our friends now mentioned do think convenient, that this preface should be prefixed to the book both in English and in Irish, that such as cannot read or understand the latter, may, by the former, perceive the profit of this undertaking. . . . But I am to beg earnestly of you not to abridge any thing of the very dry and spare mention made in the preface of your holy zeal, in providing for the good of souls in this country, that it may be an encouragement to others to follow your example, and a confusion to such, as will not do it. The fear of offending your severe modesty stopt my pen from writing much more, which my judgement and inclination would prompt to me; but once again I beg of you not to hinder any thing of the very little that is said.²

The preface, addressed “to the Christian people of Ireland”, opens in a delightful vein: “Here you have, dear countrymen, the new testament of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ presented unto you, in your country garment, translated unto the Irish tongue; and therein the most noble, the most important, and, to well disposed minds, the most pleasant reading, that possibly can be offered to their view.”³ It was approved by Boyle before 29 November 1681,⁴ and printed off within the next four months, since Dr. Sall in his letter to Boyle on 7 February 1681/2 asks him, “how you will have the three hundred and fifty testaments, now to be bound with the preface, to be disposed;”⁵ and Dr. Marsh on 8 April 1682 writes: “I have newly received the prefaces to the Irish testaments, which as soon as bound, shall be distributed so as may best answer the end of your printing them.”⁶ The binding was completed by about

¹ *Works*, vi, 596. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 8 November 1681.

² *Ibid.*, vi, 597. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 19 November 1681.

³ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxxiii. Preface to the Irish New Testament.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi, 597. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 13 December 1681.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vi, 598. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 7 February 1681/2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vi, 603. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 8 April 1682.

the end of June 1682,¹ and copies were subsequently distributed, 100 going to Cashell in October.² Copies of this *New Testament*³ without the preface, which occasionally appear on the market, are the early bound copies sent by Boyle for presentation to important persons and Trinity College, Dublin. Although Boyle contracted for 500 copies, at least another 180 were printed (see below). In view of the delay that occurred in printing this work, one would like to know whether or not the penalty clause in the agreement with the printer Robert Everingham was ever invoked.

These testaments in the Irish language were joyfully received. Paul Higgin⁴ reveals that it is the only book they have in that language except Geoffrey Keating's work on the history of Ireland.⁵ Dr. Marsh says, "that the whole design of teaching Irish must of necessity have fallen to the ground in a very little time, had not you seasonably assisted and encouraged the undertaking by your books, as well as otherwise".⁶

As the work of preparation of the Irish *New Testament* progressed, suggestions for the printing of other works in that language were made by interested parties. We have seen that Boyle and his sister proposed a catechism, which was duly printed. The Bishop of Meath suggested the publication of the *Old Testament* together with the *Psalms* in metre.⁷ He proposed in addition the reprinting of the *Common Prayer Book*.⁸ Dr. Marsh proposed a compendious Irish grammar,⁹ for which

¹ *Works*, vi. 603. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 23 June 1682.

² *Ibid.*, vi. 605. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 30 September 1682.

³ *Tiomna Nuadh*, London, 1681.

⁴ Lecturer and preacher in Irish at Trinity College, Dublin. Like Dr. Sall he was a convert from Roman Catholicism; both complained that they had not received expected advancement in the Churches of England or Ireland. One feels that some of these converts were persuaded to become proselytes by the prospect of preferment in the Church. See also the case of Mr. Mullan, *infra*.

⁵ *Royal Society Boyle Letters*. Letter from Higgin to Boyle, 26 November 1681.

⁶ *Works*, vi. 602. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 27 December 1681.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxii. Letter from Jones to Boyle, 4 August 1680.

⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxiv, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 May 1681; i, p. clxxvi, letter from Jones to Marsh, 1 August 1681; i, p. clxxviii, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 September 1681.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vi. 602, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 27 December 1681; vi. 603, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 8 April 1682; vi. 607, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 17 February 1683/4; vi. 607, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 24 August 1685.

Boyle laid by some money.¹ Dr. Huntington² wanted extra copies of the *Psalms* to be printed, so that they could be appended at a suitable moment to the *Common Prayer Book*.³ With all these different wishes expressed, it was natural that at times there was some conflict of opinion as to what should be given preference. The printing of the *New Testament* having been completed, attention was next devoted to the *Old Testament*, towards the expenses of which Boyle, as early as April 1681, had already provided fifty pounds.⁴

The manuscript of William Bedell's Irish version of the *Old Testament* came eventually after his death into the possession of Henry Jones, Bishop of Meath,⁵ who sent it⁶ to Dr. Sall—

a confused heap, pitifully defaced and broken. It was a work of very great labour, to bring it into some order. I sent for a bookbinder to bind up what I could gather, of which and another uncouth bulk, sent to me from the college, I hope to make up a complete testament, by the help of God, and of Mr. Higgin the Irish lecturer, if he be encouraged by our prelates, wherein I wish they may be more zealous than accustomed to be. It will be a work of great labour, and no little time, to draw up a clear copy of the whole, purged from errors and foolish additions or alterations, interlaced by some unlucky corrector, pretending to criticism in Irish.⁷

On 7 February 1681/2 Dr. Sall informed Boyle that he had found an able person to write Irish and that eight chapters of Genesis had already been transcribed. As the copying proceeded it became evident that some revision of the Irish text would be necessary.⁸ On this Boyle commented, "I see no necessity that the work should be thereby retarded",⁹ and extracted

Mason, *The Life of William Bedell*, p. 300, letter from Boyle to Marsh, 17 January 1681/2.

¹ *Works*, vi. 43. Letter from Boyle to [Marsh], after 8 April 1682.

² Robert Huntington (1637-1701). Orientalist. Succeeded Narcissus Marsh as Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. Afterwards Bishop of Raphoe.

³ *Works*, vi. 617. Letter from Huntington to Boyle, 24 March 1684/5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxiii, letter from Boyle to Jones [8 April 1681]; i, p. clxxiv, letter from Boyle to Champanty, 9 April 1681; i, p. clxxiv, letter from Jones to Boyle, 3 May 1681.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxii, letter from Jones to Boyle, 4 August 1680; i, p. clxxxii, letter from Dopping to [Huntington], 14 December 1685.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxx, letter from Jones to Boyle, 5 November 1681; vi. 596, letter from Sall to Boyle, 8 November 1681.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vi. 597. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 13 December 1681.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vi. 598. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 7 February 1681/2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxix. Letter from Boyle to Jones [27 September 1681].

a promise from Mr. Reily, who had had charge of the printing arrangements for the *New Testament*, that there would be no delay with the printing of the *Old Testament*.

On 5 April 1682 Dr. Sall died, and the bad news was conveyed to Boyle by Dr. Marsh. "The design of printing the Old Testament in the same language has received a great (though I hope not a fatal) stroke by the death of Dr. Sall . . . I intend, that the revising of that old translation of the Old Testament, and its transcription shall nevertheless go on with the help of Mr. Higgins and some other Irishmen, whom I will call in to assist."¹ In June 1682 Dr. Marsh says, "I have taken upon me the care to see the Irish Bible transcribed and fitted for the press. The work goes on successfully, there being above a hundred and forty sheets transcribed already. All our care at present is, how to get the charges of transcribing and printing it to be defrayed, which must be done by subscriptions."² This matter of securing subscriptions recurs often in the correspondence; it seems that the subscription scheme was a failure,³ and that Boyle defrayed most if not all of the charges.⁴ The work went steadily if slowly forward; a demand for funds with which to pay the transcriber and give encouragement to the printer was met by Boyle;⁵ troubles with inaccuracies, which appeared in the transcription in spite of the diligence of Dr. Sall and Mr. Higgin, were overcome;⁶ decisions about marginal renderings were made, as well as upon emendations to the translation suggested by Mr. Reily.⁷ The first eight chapters of Genesis had been copied out by the first week of February 1682;⁸ the scribe had nearly

¹ *Works*, vi. 603. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 8 April 1682.

² *Ibid.*, vi. 603. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 23 June 1682.

³ *Ibid.*, vi. 603, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 8 April 1682; vi. 603, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 23 June 1682; vi. 604, letter from Boyle to Marsh, 1 August 1682; i, p. clxxxi, letter from Dopping to Boyle, 3 August 1682; vi. 607, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 17 February 1682/3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi. 43. Letter from Boyle to [Marsh], after 8 April 1682.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vi. 604. Letter from Boyle to Marsh, 1 August 1682.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vi. 605, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 30 September 1682; vi. 607, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 17 February 1682/3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vi. 605, letter from Marsh to Boyle, 30 September 1682; vi. 616, letter from Huntington to Boyle, 12 January 1683/4; vi. 617, letter from Huntington to Boyle, 21 February 1684/5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vi. 598. Letter from Sall to Boyle, 7 February 1681/2.

completed the Pentateuch by the end of September ;¹ he had got to the end of Jeremiah by the middle of February 1683 ;² the Apocrypha was nearly all transcribed by the end of August 1685 ;³ and in December consideration was being given to the composition of the preface.⁴ The first sheet of Genesis was printed off in April 1682,⁵ and the Psalms were being printed in March 1685.⁶ The remainder of the sheets, with the exception of the Apocrypha, which Boyle declined to print,⁷ were run off before the end of 1685, which is the imprint date of the *Old Testament*.⁸

Dr. Marsh (he was now Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin), when rendering his account of the disbursement of the sum of fifty pounds provided by Boyle towards the expenses of the *Old Testament*, thought that the charges of transcription were unduly high. His account was :

| | £ | s | d |
|---|-------|----|---|
| Paid for transcribing 719½ sheets | 35 | 19 | 6 |
| For pens, ink, and paper (whereof 18 quires were 8d. per quire, the rest 6d.) | | 18 | 0 |
| For translating 17 psalms, that were wanting | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| To Mr. Mullan, for revising the transcript | 4 | 10 | 0 |
| At the Custom-house for the Irish Testament | | 9 | 2 |
| | <hr/> | | |
| | 44 | 16 | 8 |
| | <hr/> | | |

After deducting £7 17s. as the estimated cost of transcribing 157 sheets of the *Apocrypha*, which was not printed, the cost of transcription was £28 2s. 6d.⁹ Although these charges exceeded what the bishop and Boyle expected, it does seem that the drudges who carried out the transcription and revision of the text were not treated as generously as they might have been. The bishop tells us :

¹ *Works*, vi. 605. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 30 September 1682.

² *Ibid.*, vi. 607. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 17 February 1682/3.

³ *Ibid.*, vi. 607. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 24 August 1685.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. clxxxii. Letter from Dopping to [Huntington], 14 December 1685.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vi. 43. Letter from Boyle to [Marsh], after 8 April 1682.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vi. 617. Letter from Huntington to Boyle, 24 March 1684/5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vi. 607. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 24 August 1685.

⁸ *Leabhuir na Seintoma*, London, 1685.

⁹ *Works*, vi. 607. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 24 August 1685.

Dr. Sall, in his life time, agreed for transcribing the whole Irish Bible, at twelve pence per sheet ; which was not very dear, considering how difficult a thing it was to read the copy ; it being in many places not legible, and in others several words together quite effaced, either through age or ill usage, or both ; the book also having taken wet, whereupon he was forced to translate passages here and there anew. The scribe moreover had the advantage of his diet at Dr. Sall's, and of writing in his house ; neither of which I could grant him in the college ; and therefore he was earnest to have an allowance made for that, beyond his twelpence per sheet ; which not being part of his bargain, I did not think it reasonable to yield thereunto ; though some advantage he did make in another respect, by writing in smaller paper than he at first begun upon, because no larger was then to be gotten in town.¹

Mr. Mullan, who had received £4 10s. for revising the transcript, did not think he had been adequately paid, for he refused to hand over the *Apocrypha*. “ He refuses to deliver it . . . unless I will pay him twenty pounds for his labour of reading it over, which I think is very unreasonable, and that he has had enough already.”² “ I attribute this manner of acting to have proceeded from Mr. Mullan's miserable poverty ; who, though a divine, a convert, and reasonably well learned, has not yet been so fortunate, as to get any preferment, nor [have] I been able to bestow any upon him, as I have long designed.”³ However, Boyle authorized the bestowal of some money on Mr. Mullan in order to redeem the transcript. “ Accordingly, by the advice of Dr. Huntington, our worthy provost, I gave him ten plate cobs,⁴ in your [sc. R. Boyle] name, and redeemed the copy, which I lodged with Dr. Huntington, to be sent to you, when there shall be an opportunity, as you shall require.”⁵

Fifty advance copies of the *Old Testament* without title page or preface⁶ were received in March 1686 by Dr. Huntington from Boyle to be distributed as gifts. These copies were sent over in sheets in order to avoid custom-house charges, and were bound in calf at fifteen pence apiece. Dr. Huntington's comment on receiving them was : “ We are not under such circumstances

¹ *Works*, vi. 608. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 24 August 1685. ² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, vi. 609. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 22 March 1685/6.

⁴ Spanish dollar. Robert Boyle was debited £2 7s. 6d. for this disbursement.

⁵ *Works*, vi. 609. Letter from Marsh to Boyle, 22 March 1685/6.

⁶ These were still not available in May 1686, when William Hussey, a merchant, of Mark Lane, London, was enquiring about them on behalf of Dr. Huntington. (*Works*, vi. 615, letter from Hussey to Boyle, 8 May [1686]).

as may encourage me to believe the Irish will be very fond of this translation : however, it must be known you have done more for them than all their priests ever did ; and the reason is plain, because your design and theirs is mighty different, you intending nothing else but to make them knowing and wise unto salvation.”¹ A title page for the *Old Testament* was eventually produced, but the preface seems not to have materialized.

It is regrettable that so many of Boyle's letters dealing with the Irish Bible are not available. A batch of twenty of them on this subject written to Dr. Marsh was in the possession of Monck Mason about 1828. One of these contained the estimate of the printer “for the expense of the work ;² which, including the paper, amounted to £333 ”.³ According to Burnet, Boyle incurred charges of about £700 in the production of both testaments.⁴

James Kirkwood,⁵ soon after he had made the acquaintance of Boyle, discussed with him “the sad state of religion in the Highlands of Scotland, where they had neither bibles nor catechisms in their own language ”.⁶ It was news to Boyle that the Irish language was still used in a great part of the north of Scotland,⁷ and he said that he would not have dispersed all his copies of the *New Testament* in Irish if he had been aware of this, because it was his purpose to distribute them gratis, where the most good was likely to result. However, he still had some copies of the *Old Testament* in Irish, since its distribution in Ireland had not succeeded so well as expected, because “divers of the reverend Protestant clergy in Ireland, besides some worthy prelates”, who intended its promotion, “by various occurrences were hindered from accomplishing their good desires”. Of these remaining copies he offered thirty-one

¹ *Works*, vi. 618. Letter from Huntington to Boyle, 20 March 1685/6.

² This must refer to the *Old Testament*.

³ Mason, *The Life of William Bedell*, p. 299, footnote.

⁴ Gilbert Burnet, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, (London, 1692), p. 26.

⁵ (1650 ?—after 1709). M.A., Edinburgh. Rector of Astwick, Bedfordshire.

⁶ *Works*, i, p. clxxxviii. Letter from Kirkwood to Dr. Wm. Wotton, 22 June 1702.

⁷ At this time Irish was the literary language both of Ireland and Gaelic Scotland. After the seventeenth century the literary history of the two countries developed differently.

(bound) for use by the ministers of the diocese of the Bishop of Ross,¹ together “with one with a gilt back, to be presented to the right reverend bishop of Ross . . . as an acknowledgment of my just sense of his pious forwardness to promote the good work I aimed at. I shall also send an hundred² more unbound.”³ Later, on making further enquiries, he was informed, “that a bookseller, having with my leave printed a somewhat greater number of New Testaments than I had contracted for, he has yet in his hands about fifty Old Testaments, and about one hundred and fifty New ones. He can afford each whole Bible for a mark, provided the whole fifty be taken off his hands; and for the supernumerary hundred, or thereabouts, of New Testaments, he can part with them at three shillings a piece in quires.”⁴ Over a year later, in July 1689, it appeared that Everingham the printer had about thirty New Testaments in sheets, which James Kirkwood asked Boyle to bestow on the parishes.⁵

Boyle’s generosity towards the Scottish Highlanders extended further to the printing at his own expense of 6000 catechisms and prayer-books in Irish. “The catechism and prayers were composed by Mr. Charteris,⁶ and were translated into Irish by Sir Hugh Campbell, of Caddel, and afterwards revised and corrected by Mr. Kirk. There were added to the catechism some passages of scripture, containing the principal heads of the Christian religion, to serve as a short and plain tract of devotion and Christian morality.”⁷ The price quoted for printing 3000 catechisms was a little under five pounds.⁸

¹ James Ramsay (1624?-96).

² Kirkwood always talks of 200 copies; making one for each parish.

³ *Works*, i, p. cxcii, letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 5 November 1687; i, p. cxcv, letter from Kirkwood to Bishop of Ross, 15 December 1687 (printed version gives date as 14, but original is undoubtedly 15); i, p. cxciv, letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 15 December 1687; i, p. cxcvi, letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 27 December 1687; i, p. cxcvii, letter from Boyle to Kirkwood, 5 March 1687/8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. cxcvii. Letter from Boyle to Kirkwood, 5 March 1687/8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. cc. Letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 13 July 1689.

⁶ Lawrence Charteris (1625-1700). M.A., Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh.

⁷ *Works*, i, p. clxxxviii, letter from Kirkwood to Wotton, 22 June 1702; i, p. cxcix, letter from the Presbytery of Ross to Kirkwood, 15 October 1688; i, p. ccii, letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 30 October 1690.

⁸ *Royal Society Boyle Papers*, iv, fol. 103. Everingham’s quotation for printing Bibles, etc., c. 1689.

The dispatch and distribution of these various items took place extremely slowly, no doubt because of the troublesome times, as well as the difficulties of transport to remote places. It was not till 16 June 1688 that Kirkwood could give instructions to the carrier Carwhin : “ Receive at last the Bibles & Catechisms w^{ch} are designed for the use of the parishes of the Highlands . . . Bailie Charteris will take care that no Customs be paid for them, they not being books to be sold, but only a Gift for the use of the Highlands from the excellent M^r Boyle.” Even so, only at the beginning of July 1688 were the 207 Bibles (seven with gilt bindings for the Bishops) and 3,000 Catechisms packed for dispatch by the binder Andrew Oswald of Air Street, Piccadilly : they were sent, evidently by sea-route to Leith, and thence to Edinburgh, where they were delivered later in the same month. The freight and other charges amounted to £19 7s.

Robert Kirk¹ supplied Carwhin the carrier with the following draft inscription to be written on the verso of the title-page of the Bibles, and not on the end-paper. “ The Donation of the honourable, pious & learned Ro. Boyl Esquire, son to the Earl of Cork &c. in Ireland, a principal member of the Royal Society, Bestowed on the Church of . . . to continue there as a Church Bible for the present Reverend Minister his use, & for the behoof of all the ministers who shall succeed him in that parish.”²

By 15 May 1690 only sixty-six of these quarto Old Testaments had been delivered. This delay undoubtedly prompted Spalding's letter of 28 June 1690 to Boyle,³ which brought forth Kirkwood's suggestion for the reply that Boyle should make to spur on the distribution.⁴ As late as 1698 Kirkwood was still pressing for the distribution to be completed. He wrote : “ The regard that is due to the memory of that excellent person (Mr. Boyl) seems to require that somewhat be done to testify

¹ (1641 ?-92). Gaelic scholar ; M.A., Edinburgh ; minister of Aberfoyle, Monteith.

² George P. Johnson, “ Notices of a Collection of MSS. relating to the Circulation of the Irish Bibles of 1685 and 1690 in the Highlands and the Association of the Rev. James Kirkwood therewith ”, *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* 1901-4 (Edinburgh, 1906), p. 1.

³ *Works*, i, p. cc. Letter from Spalding to Boyle, 28 June 1690.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. ccii. Letter from Kirkwood to Boyle, 30 October 1690.

that his generous charity is not altogether slighted by this Church and Kingdom." In spite of this it seems that no more than ninety-one copies had been distributed by August 1699.¹

A strong plea was made by certain ministers in Scotland "to have a new impression of the bible in the Latin character, in a small volume, for the use of such persons in the Highland parishes, as had been taught to read English, though they did not understand it, and for the advantage of such children, as should be sent to school, especially those of the poorer sort, who could not purchase books for themselves. To answer the pious desires of such persons, endeavours were used in Scotland to procure another impression ; but in this attempt we met not with success. The first encouragement that was given me [sc. James Kirkwood] to go with it in this kingdom, was by the worthy Mr. Boyle, who told me, he would subscribe for printing one hundred bibles. This example disposed others, whom I acquainted with the design, to subscribe very freely and largely." ²

The transliteration into Latin character and the supervision of this version of the Irish *Old Testament* through the press were entrusted to Robert Kirk ; the printing was carried out by Robert Everingham. Three thousand copies were quoted at 1s. 10d. each for paper and printing, and 8d. per copy for binding, making a total cost of £375, towards which Boyle contributed £8 6s. 8d.³ to print 100 copies.⁴

Opposition was raised to the distribution in the highlands of Scotland of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, and this called forth a lengthy refutation of the arguments put forward.⁵

¹ Johnston, op. cit.

² Ibid., i, p. clxxxviii. Letter from Kirkwood to Wotton, 22 June 1702.

³ Evidently based on another (earlier ?) estimate of the printer. Amongst the Boyle Papers is a rough note which reads : " The printer Mr. Everingham at the 7 starrs in Ave Mary Lane offers to print 2,000 Bibles in Irish of the Latin letter for 20 pence a Bible or 3,000 Bibles for 18d a Bible unbound. The Letter is to be the same wth that wherein the French Bible is printed. He says he can do it in 5 months " (*Royal Society Boyle Papers*, iv). R. Bentley, R. Everingham and J. Hindmarch had published a French Bible, 12mo, London, 1686-7.

⁴ *Works*, i, p. cxc, account of the design to print Bibles for the use of the Highlanders.

⁵ Ibid., i, p. cxci ; *An answer to the objection against printing the bible in Irish*. A facsimile of the original and probably only surviving copy of this broadside is given in *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society 1901-1904* (Edinburgh, 1906), p. 1.

Concerning this impression of the Bible¹ in Latin character, Kirkwood was able to write to Carwhin the carrier on 1 April 1690: "At last the Bibles are printed, Blessed Be God." Arrangements for distributing these Bibles were left in the hands of the General Assembly, Edinburgh, which passed on 11 November 1690 an "Act approving Overtures anent the Irish Bibles, &c." Yet Kirkwood's letter of 18 June 1692 to the carrier shows that they had not left London on that date. As late as 1698 the distribution had extended to no more than 1,770 Bibles, 420 Testaments and 540 Catechisms; and it was not till 1705-6 that the final parcel was sent.²

This work of piety directed to the dissemination of the Scriptures in the Scottish highlands took place over the years 1686 to 1690, and brought forth the customary letters of thanks from those who had this work at heart.³

After Boyle's death at the end of 1691, encouragement of the use of the Irish language as well as the circulation of the Scriptures in that language again entered a period of neglect: it was not till 1710 that another revival of interest in this work occurred.⁴

¹ *An Biobla Naomhtha*, London, 1690; *Tiomna Nuadh*. London, 1690. Both 12mo. At the end of the O.T., are 3 pages of explanations, forbidden degrees of marriage, etc. At the end of the N.T., are 5½ pages devoted to a Gaelic-English vocabulary.

² Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³ *Works*, i, p. cxcix, letter from the Presbytery of Ross to Kirkwood, 15 October 1688; i, p. cc, letter from Spalding to Boyle, 28 June 1690; i, p. cciii, letter from the Bishop of Ross to Kirkwood [n.d.]; *Royal Society Boyle Letters*, vi, fol. 89, letter from Scottish ministers to Boyle [n.d.].

⁴ Mason, *Reasons and Authorities* . . . (Edinburgh, 1830).