

Erasmus discusses the type in *Copia*, Veltkirchius adds, "quales sunt Solomonis vel Catonis sententiae."⁸ One could find no better *sententiae* than those from the Bible.

This was the material upon which the boys were especially drilled. But they, of course, were also taught other sections of the Bible. Gabriel Harvey in 1581 gives the typical readings of the boys in grammar school as follows,

legunt Christi Euangelium: Praxes Apostolorum: Apocalypsin Ioannis: Parabolas, & Ecclesiastin Solomonis: Genesin, Exodum, Deuteronomium, Mosis: Paralipomena: Prophetas: Psalmos.⁹

Thus Harvey omits the apochryphal books, but includes the universal Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

Fortunately, Mr. Noble has now made a sufficient study of Shakspeare's Biblical knowledge to enable us to be certain at least of its main trends. In the Old Testament, Shakspeare knew his Genesis thoroughly.

We may leave out of account the *Psalms*—his knowledge of the Psalms, according to the Prayer Book version, will be proved in due course, with something to spare. He displays such a familiarity with *Job*, *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*, and in later years with *Isaiah*, as can only have been acquired by reading. *Job* and *Ecclesiasticus* especially seem to have attracted his attention.¹⁰

Whether or not one agrees to all the details of proof, yet it is clear, at least, that Shakspeare was better acquainted with these sections of the Old Testament than with others.

I believe, therefore, it is clear that Shakspeare's schoolmaster followed the advice of the authorized grammar, as made specific in 1548, and began in the first year of Shakspeare's grammar school work to have him turn "an englishe booke, as the Psalter, or Salomons Prouerbes, or Ecclesiasticus" from English into Latin. Here are, no doubt, Shakspeare's "vulgars." The Psalter would, of course, also have been much reenforced by its constant use in the church service. So Shakspeare knew it unusually well—well enough to attempt to correct a supposed error of another, as Mr. Noble has shown.

We thus have left of Old Testament books Genesis, Job, and Isaiah as possible indications of Shakspeare's unforced choice. It may be well to remember here that with possible exception of Job these alleged "favorites" of Shakspeare are also included in Gabriel Harvey's list

⁸ Erasmus, *Copia* (1566), p. 367.

⁹ Cf. above, p. 436.

¹⁰ Noble, *Biblical Knowledge*, p. 43.