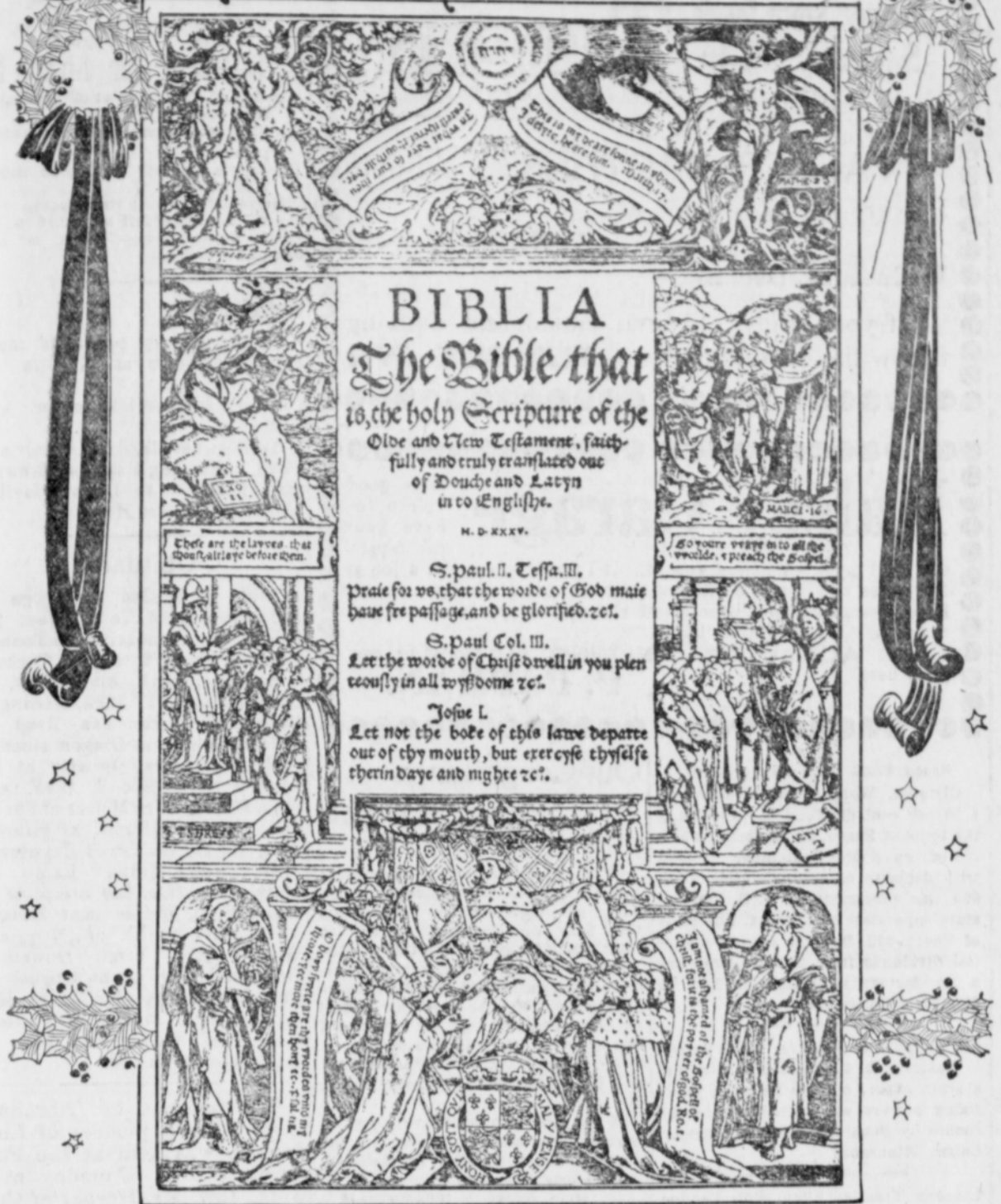


Christmas and Bible



Title Page of First Complete English Bible, 1535

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

GOES in part the story in the King James Bible (1611) of the birth of Christ and the adoration of the "Three Kings of the Orient"—Magi, wise men—as told by St. Matthew. The Bible is "The Book" for every day in the year, as shown by the fact that it is incomparably the world's "best seller." But it is especially "The Christmas Book," for it is the very fount of the Christmas inspiration and of the Christmas spirit. Christianity is the driving power of the world. Skeptics may point to the World War as evidence that Christianity has failed. Churches and sects may quarrel among themselves. Fundamentalists and modernists may fiercely dispute about the authority of the Bible. The Reds may predict the decline and fall of Christianity. Nevertheless, Christianity, after nineteen centuries still remains the driving power of the world. And the central fact of Christianity is Jesus Christ—His life, His person, His teachings. So the Bible is the Christian Book. The four verses from St. Matthew's account of the birth of Christ are given exactly as found in the modern printing of the King James Bible, which is still the accepted text with many churches, notwithstanding the many versions which the centuries have brought. It is often called the "Authorized Bible," for the reason that it had the sanction of both the English king and of English scholars. The King James translation had inception in 1604 at a conference at Hampton court. It was then determined that a translation should be made which could be accepted as fundamentally correct. Forty-seven translators were named from the foremost scholars of England. The first draft was completed in 1609. Two years were devoted to revision. It was printed in London in 1611 by Robert Barker. That this translation was an impor-

tant undertaking is shown by the address to King James of the translators, of which the beginning and fourth paragraph are as follows: To the Most High and Mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. the Translators of the Bible wish Grace, Mercy and Peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. There are infinite arguments of this right Christian and religious affection in Your Majesty, but none is more forcible to declare it to others than the vehement and perpetuated desire of accomplishing and publishing of this work, which now with all humility we present unto Your Majesty. For when Your Highness had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue, Your Majesty did never desist to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require.

This James (1566-1625) was the son of Lord Darnley and Mary Queen of Scots. In 1567 he became James VI of Scotland and in 1603 succeeded Queen Elizabeth as James I, king of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was said by his contemporaries to be the "wisest fool in Europe." The King James version is by no means the first English Bible. That honor probably belongs to a manuscript translation of about 1380 by John Wycliffe, the famous preacher, from the Latin Vulgate. Incidentally, it is of interest to note that in his preface Wycliffe wrote, "The Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people"—which is suggestively similar to Lincoln's famous utterance in his Gettysburg Address. How many manuscript copies of Wycliffe's translation were made is not known; eight of his time are still in existence. It is known, however, that these manuscript copies were in semi-secret circulation in England down to the end of the Fifteenth century.

Now we come to the first complete English Bible, the title page of which is herewith reproduced. Its date is MDXXXV—1535—as the fac simile shows. It was not a translation from original Greek and Hebrew texts, from the "Douche and Latyn," as the title page sets forth. The names of translator and printer are not set forth. But they are known. The translator was Miles Coverdale (1488-1568), and the printing was done in Switzerland, probably in Zurich. It is

considered a scholarly version. No perfect copy is known to be extant. Much of the lettering of the illustrations can be read. The upside-down scroll in connection with Adam and Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden reads: "In what daye so ever thou eatest thereof thou shalt dye." Note the "v" which is used for "w," which is not followed in the center lettering. In old English v and u were practically interchangeable; hence w was literally double-u. The seventeenth verse of the second chapter of Genesis in the King James version reads: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

A significant piece of decoration on this title page is that at the bottom between the two scrolls. It quite evidently represents King Henry VIII, to whom the translation was dedicated by Miles Coverdale, presenting this first complete English Bible to church and civil dignitaries. Henry VIII (1491-1547)—Bluff King Hal—the king of many wives—procured in 1534 the passage of the Act of Supremacy which severed the connection of the English church with Rome and appointed the king and his successors the protector and only supreme head of the church and clergy of England. So it was quite in order for him to bring out a new version of the Bible.

An odd bit of decoration for the title page of a Bible is the suggestion of the Order of the Garter, with its famous motto. This is the highest order of knighthood in Great Britain, and its membership is about 50, including the sovereign, the Prince of Wales and 24 knights companions. It was established by Edward III (1312-77) about 1345. The legend of it is that at a state ball the Countess of Salisbury lost her garter, which Edward picked up and placed on his own knee. His courtiers thereupon sneaked, whereupon the king exclaimed (as we now write it) "Honi soit qui mal y pense." This literally means: "Shamed be he who thinks evil of it." We now translate it: "Evil to him who evil thinks." Suppose we put the king's utterance conversely thus: "Good to him who good thinks." That is not so very far from "Peace on earth to men of good will," as the Roman Catholic Douay version of the Bible translates the Christmas message.

urban council, says the London Daily News. The police appealed for volunteers to rescue the sheep imprisoned on a ledge 200 feet down. Among the volunteers was Thomas Williams, a farmer. Lowered on ropes after three hours' labor in the blazing sun Williams succeeded in rescuing one lamb. The other fell from the ledge over the precipice-like slope. Williams' act was a risky one, as the descent is rocky and dangerous.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. H. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.) (©, 1925, Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for December 20 CHRISTMAS LESSON

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 2:1-15. GOLDEN TEXT—"For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:11. PRIMARY TOPIC—Wise Men Visit the Baby Jesus. JUNIOR TOPIC—Wise Men Follow the Star. INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Christmas Spirit. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Prince of Peace.

Note: For this Sunday's lesson the lesson committee has given us an option of a Christmas lesson or a summary of Paul's life. It is presumed that most teachers will prefer the Christmas lesson since Paul has been the central figure for six months.

1. The Wise Men Seeking Jesus (vv. 1-2). These wise men who sought Jesus were either Arabian or Persian astrologers, students of the stars. The appearance of an unusual star attracted their attention. Perhaps they were acquainted with the famous prophecy of Balaam (Num. 24:17). Doubtless through the influence of the Jews who remained in Chaldea, or the direct influence of Daniel extending to this time, they had become acquainted with the hope of a Messiah. The light they had was dim, but they lived up to the best they had. We learn from them:

1. That All True Wisdom Leads to the Savior, for He Is the Fullness of Wisdom. 2. That God's Word Shall Not Return Unto Him Void (Isa. 55:11). The seed cast upon the Eastern waters brought forth fruit after many days. This ought to bring confidence to many ministers and Sunday school teachers who have not as yet seen the fruit of their labors. 3. The Grace of God Calls Men From Unexpected Quarters. Some who have the least opportunities give the greatest honor to Christ, while others, blessed with the richest opportunities, shut Him out.

II. Herod Seeking to Kill Jesus (vv. 3-8).

The news brought by the wise men struck terror to Herod's heart. He was not alone in this for all Jerusalem was troubled with him. A glimpse at the social customs in and about Jerusalem in that day will enable us to understand why this news brought uneasiness to the people. They were living in the greatest luxury. Beautiful apparel, sumptuous feasts, palatial houses, etc., led to gross immorality. We can thus readily see why Herod and all Jerusalem should be troubled. They did not want a Savior who would save them from their sins; they wanted to continue in them. Herod demanded of the priests and scribes information as to where Christ should be born. They were soon able to tell him. These people had a technical knowledge of the Scriptures, but had no heart for the Savior as set forth therein. Conditions much like these prevail today. This reception of the Savior shows that perverseness of heart is the cause of so many being indifferent to Christ, and of their opposition to Him when His claims are presented. It is true today that the luxuries of wealth, the frivolities of the fashion-lovers, and the gross immoralities to which these lead, make Jesus Christ unwelcome in many quarters.

III. Jesus Found (vv. 9-12).

The wise men, having obtained the desired information, started immediately to find Jesus. As soon as they left the city the star which had guided them from the East appeared again to lead them on—not that it had disappeared from the sky, but no doubt the city buildings shut out its light. The star guided them to the place where Jesus was. When they found Him they worshipped Him. In this they displayed true faith. They did not see any miracle, only a babe, yet they worshipped Him as king. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29). Note God's overruling providence in all this. Many hundred years before the prophet had said that Christ should come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). God so ordered affairs that Mary should be brought to that city to give birth to Christ. Let us be assured that nothing can thwart the divine purpose. God so ordered that these men should depart another way, thereby defeating Herod's wicked purpose. Through these wise men the Lord gave gifts into the hands of Joseph and Mary before their going to Egypt. Doubtless this served a good purpose in meeting their expenses during their stay there. Truly all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28).

Life

Life is but a day, and the hours flee. Soon it is high noon, then afternoon, evening, night, when all service ceases.—R. P. Anderson.

Simplicity and Purity

"Simplicity and purity are the two wings by which a man is lifted up above all earthly things."

A Wrong Deed

A wrong deed should be immediately repented of and confessed.



A RADIO OF THE FIELD

Timely tale from the Ladies' Home Journal: A little stalk of goldenrod was just about dry enough to blow away. "As a broadcaster," he chuckled, "I claim to rank with the most powerful stations in the country. Wonder how many are tuned in?" A scattering volley of sneezes told that a number of people were already getting him.—Boston Transcript.

Not That Way at All

Mr. Bell—I hear your husband had an accident. Was he hurt? Mrs. Wise—Yes. His face is all cut, his arm in a sling and he broke his leg. Mr. Bell—How did he do it—on his motor cycle? Mrs. Wise—Oh, no. If he could have stayed on the motor cycle he'd have been all right.

All It Would Bear

"You say the trout weighed ten pounds?" "Yes, sir! It was the biggest trout I ever saw." "And it got away from you?" "Yes." "Will you make an oath to that?" "I'll make no more oaths; I swore enough when it got away."

HARD-BOILED, NO DOUBT



"His wife says he's hard-boiled." "She ought to know—she keeps him in hot water all the time."

Counting the Cost

It would afford the human race of happiness a better chance if every war that might take place had to be paid for in advance.

Absolutely Safe

"You'll have to dive off that tall cliff and rescue the heroine," pronounced the movie director. "What!" ejaculated the star. "Why, there's not two feet of water below!" "Certainly not," returned the director comfortingly, "you can't possibly drown."

Curses

"How did you like the sample of my marrow jam I sent you?" "Was that marrow jam? Oh, my dear, I'm sorry; my husband is using it for sticking stamps in his album."

Suggestion

"I don't hear George any malice, but I hope he'll be thoroughly unhappy!" "Make sure of it, my dear, and marry him."

JUST THE THING



First Fish—What's Mrs. Sea Cow doing now? Second Fish—Running a dairy!

Wrong Number

I pleaded with her for an answer, My brain was all in a whirl; But I pleaded in vain for an answer—For she was the telephone girl.

Glad It

She (complainingly)—You are not like my first husband. He—No, thank goodness! I'm alive.

Going Up

Customer—Another boost in prices? How come? Barber—When we made our last raise our customers pulled such long faces it was worth more than we got to shave 'em."

Might Be Partly True

"They say your husband squeezes his employees." "Well, I don't know, but I have my suspicions about the blond stenographer."

PE-RU-NA FOR STOMACH CATARRH

Few, if any, remedies can equal the value of Pe-ru-na for catarrh of the stomach. At this season it is estimated that every third person is more or less troubled with this form of catarrh.

BE READY



Cured

"If a feller has a hobby that is likely to kill him he can get rid of it if he tries hard enough," in the crossroads store stated Gap Johnson of Rumpus Ridge. "D'ye reckon?" retorted the proprietor of the emporium. "I just nacherly d—n' know it! When I was a young feller they used to say that I had a reg'lar fad for hard work, but by fighting it 'pears like I got plumb over it long ago."—Kansas City Star.

Pleasure that isn't shared with another loses half its power to please.

Pimples



What can I do?

"Oh, why can't I have a skin like other girls? Why do I have to have these ugly pimples, blotches and blackheads? "If I could only find something that would clear up my skin and give me back my soft, rosy complexion, I know I would be the happiest girl in the world! What can I do?" Is that you talking? If it is, you don't have to worry a minute! Just build up the rich, red blood in your body. Then your skin will be as clear and soft as anybody's. That's what S. S. S. has been doing for generations—helping Nature build rich, red blood! You can build red-blood-cells so fast that the impurities that cause breaking out on the skin hardly get into the system before the pure blood annihilates them—kills them right out—stops them from breaking out through the skin. And then this rich, red, pure blood feeds and nourishes the tissues of the skin and keeps it looking healthy. That's all there is to it. Healthy, vigorous, red blood such as S. S. S. helps Nature build. It makes you healthy all over. It beautifies your skin—drives away pimples, blackheads, blotches, rash, boils and eczema—gives you back your appetite—builds firm, plump flesh and fills you full of new life and energy. All drug stores sell S. S. S. Get the larger bottle. It's more economical.

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Tradition of a Plant

The little wild cranesbill known as Herb Robert, and which flowers in the hedges and ditches of the Old land from April 20 onward, was of considerable consequence to our simple-minded ancestors. It cured rash, ulcers, scrofula, gout, and repelled lice. It figures in the most ancient herbals under the name Sadroc. It is supposed to have come into existence through Mohammed spreading his shirt to dry

Risks Life to Save Lamb

Holiday-makers at Barmouth were spectators of a thrilling attempted rescue recently of two lambs which had been stranded on the dangerous slope of a local quarry belonging to the