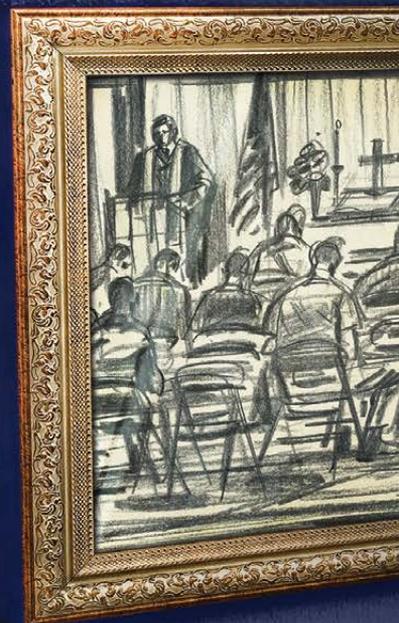
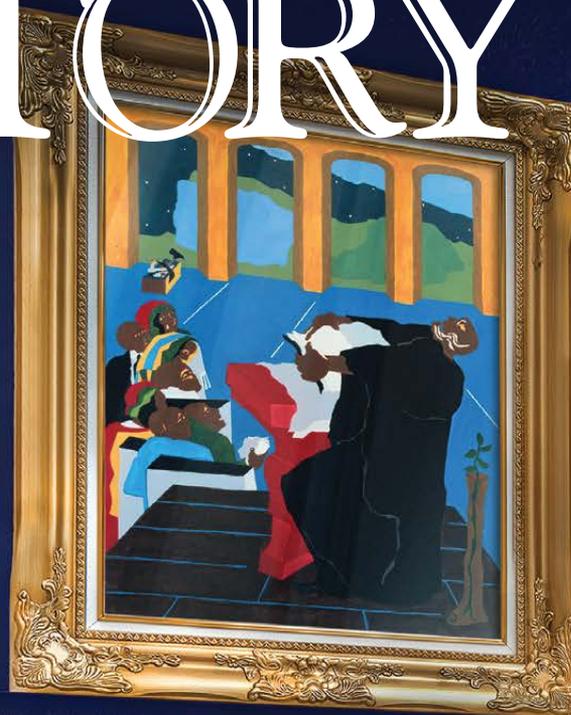
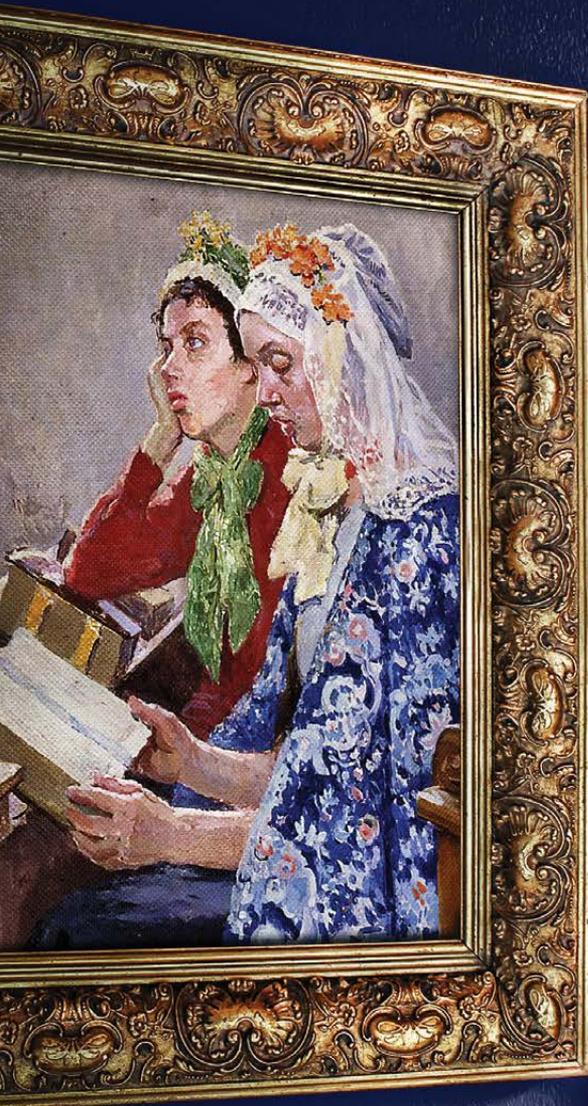


CHRISTIAN HISTORY

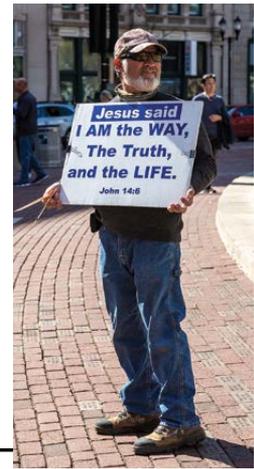
Issue 143



America's Book

How the Bible helped shape the church

Part 2 of the Bible in America



Did you know?

HOW THE BIBLE HAS FORMED THE AMERICAN CHURCH

BY THE NUMBERS

According to the yearly State of the Bible research by Barna Group and the American Bible Society, in 2021:

- 50 percent of Americans are “Bible users,” who “read, listen to, or pray with the Bible on their own at least three or four times a year outside of a church service or church event.”
- 71 percent consider the Bible the Word of God.
- 34 percent read the Bible once a week or more.
- 59 percent prefer a paper version, though the number of people who access the Bible electronically is growing (see p. 40). Online users prefer an app.
- Congregants who attend churches with both online and in-person options, and who use both, strongly agree (44 percent) that their church experience increases their desire to read the Bible and strongly agree (50 percent) that their church experience helps them understand the Bible better.

SING A NEW SONG

The website Hymnary.org collected a database of over 3,000

“HIS WORD HAS GONE OUT” John Eliot’s translation of the Bible into Natick/ Massachusetts (*below*) was the first in a long line of translations into indigenous languages (a 20th-c. Bible translated into Mohawk is at *right*).



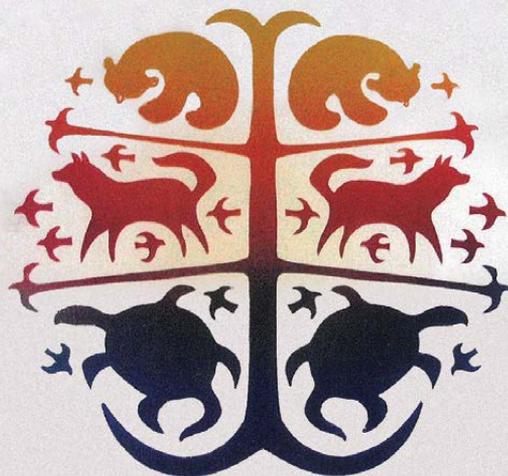
SHARING GOD Americans have evangelized creatively with the Bible—from Salvation Mountain in California (*above left*) to this Indiana street preacher (*above*).

modern worship songs inspired by biblical texts—famous ones such as “As the Deer Pants for the Water” by Martin Nystrom (Psalm 42) and also those as varied and obscure as “Ghosts Are Walking!” by Ruth Duck (Luke 24:35), “Do Not Be Vexed” by John Bell (Psalm 37:11), and “Joshua Generation” by Ron Kenoly (Joshua 6). Hymnary also lists thousands of traditional hymns inspired by every book of the Bible.

WORSHIP THE LORD

One way people encounter Scripture in worship today is through a “lectionary” that appoints certain texts to be read on certain days. This practice was part of Jewish worship in the Second Temple period; the first clear reference to a

Tiotsawáhkwen Genesis



LEONARD KNIGHT, SALVATION MOUNTAIN, SLAB CITY, CA—TAYI ORANDAYUMI / ICC BY 2.0/ WIKIMEDIA
STREET EVANGELIST, MONUMENT CIRCLE, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, USA—TAMI RUBLE (ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)
THE ELIOT INDIAN BIBLE, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., 1663 TO 1661. A 663M—ROSENBACH MUSEUM & LIBRARY / ICC BY 2.0/ WIKIMEDIA
MOHAWK GENESIS COVER—© BIBLE_WIKI / FLICKR

Executive editor's note

In 2022 *Christian History* magazine celebrates an important milestone—our fortieth anniversary! The story of this magazine's founding begins with the story of Gateway Films, which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. My father, Ken Curtis, started Gateway Films in 1972 to distribute *The Cross and Switchblade* on 35mm film. Nine years later in 1981, he founded Vision Video as a way to distribute the latest technology known as VHS tapes.

In 1981 Gateway Films released a film on the life of John Hus, one of the forerunners of the Reformation. This project ignited my dad's lifelong passion for Christian history; so much so that what started out as a simple study guide for the John Hus film led to a vision to start a periodic magazine distributed by our newly formed nonprofit ministry, Christian History Institute.

We were warned that a magazine focusing on Christian history would never work, no matter how well intentioned. Nonetheless *Christian History* magazine's inaugural edition on Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians (a story also told in the film *First Fruits*) rolled off the presses in early 1982. We have come a long way: the issue you are reading now is the 143rd.

KEEP US ON YOUR COFFEE TABLE

In celebration of our fortieth anniversary, our next issue will be a quadruple-size edition telling the history of Christianity in images. You can look forward to a visually rich publication, using some of the best art and images from around the world to share many of the most important events in global Christianity's 2,000-year history.

Instead of our usual in-depth articles accompanied by images, we will feature large images accompanied by shorter descriptions of events. We hope the beauty

of the picture-book format will persuade you to keep this special edition on your coffee table for years to come.

Over the past 50 years, our ministry has grown and adapted in many ways. Christian History Institute changed from a nonprofit "sister" ministry of Vision Video to the banner nonprofit under which all of our ministries operate. We migrated from film reels to VHS tapes to DVD discs, and while Vision Video continues to offer DVDs, we have also launched Redeem TV as a free digital streaming service.

Through all the changes, we endeavor to hold to the values that my dad taught us in both word and deed: honesty, fairness, creativity, stewardship, and a tenacious faith in what God has called us to do.

Despite enormous changes in the Christian print and media landscapes, God has blessed us to remain in his service for the past five decades. Our hope and prayer is to remain faithful to him and his calling for us—and you can help us reach that goal.

Our magazine is available for free because we are donor supported. If you are able, please consider making a donation. Please share the magazine with your friends, and let them know that they can receive a free subscription. We appreciate your faithful support of our ministry!

For 40 years God has faithfully sustained this magazine that many said didn't stand a chance, and we have full confidence he will continue to lead and sustain this work in the years to come. We are humbled to tell the remarkable stories of God's work in the church throughout Christian history! **CH**



Bill Curtis
Executive editor

bill@christianhistoryinstitute.org



Managing editor's note

This is the second issue in our two-part series on the Bible in America. The first one (#138), released in 2021, focused on the Bible in American civic life—the ways the Bible has shaped American politics, literature, moral reform, responses to national crises, and even media and the movies. At the time we said that our second issue would turn inward rather than outward, looking at “the Bible for the church” as the first one had studied “the Bible for the nation.” What I didn’t expect was how hard it would be to turn inward.

QUIZZING, RIOTS, AND CYBERSPACE

As a nation, it turns out, we’re very good at turning outward. We’re skilled at using the Bible to motivate social reform, to encourage better morals, to spur on political activism, and to inspire great literature. Search the internet for quotes and speeches about the Bible—as I did several times in the preparation of this issue (see pp. 1 and 14), and you’ll find many quotes about its importance to our national history and reflections about its place in our national life.

Dig a little deeper, and you’ll find reflections about our cherished national emphasis on individuals reading the Bible for themselves—an emphasis we talked about at length in issue #138. But to find the story of how the Bible formed the church, you have to look deeper still.

And so we have. In this issue you’ll read not only about how the Great Awakenings transformed

American society, but about how evangelists used the Bible to seek converts. You’ll learn not only about Sunday schools bringing literacy and moral reform, but about how students studied and memorized the Word and joined in Bible Quizzing. You’ll take a fresh look at hymns and songs based on Scripture texts, at theological debates (and even riots) over biblical interpretation, at new and old Bible translations, and even at Bible study in cyberspace.

Of course history is always complex. People who used the Bible to motivate social and moral reform in “the world” were usually at the same time experiencing the Bible in church—read, preached on, memorized, sung, and debated. They had political and social opinions, but they also had theological ones. Both kinds of opinions influenced each other.

We hope this issue will serve as a companion to 138 in fruitful ways. As you read issue #143, ask yourself, “What was going on in the nation as these events happened in the church?” As you read issue #138, ask yourself, “What was going on in the church as these events happened in the nation?” Together, we hope the two issues bring you better clarity regarding the ways Americans have valued, experienced, and defended the B-I-B-L-E. **CH**



Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor

Find *Christian History* on Facebook as ChristianHistoryMagazine, or visit www.christianhistorymagazine.org. Read daily stories at www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/today. For Twitter, use @christiaHistory, and for Instagram, @christianhistorymagazine.

Don’t miss our next issue, a keepsake fortieth-anniversary edition telling the story of church history through images. We’ll follow that up this fall with a look at famed Reformation-era scholar, humanist, and reformer Erasmus of Rotterdam.

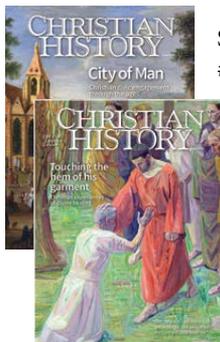
We thank the many readers who support this ministry, making it possible for us to provide *Christian History* in print. Please visit www.ChristianHistoryMagazine.org to renew or begin a subscription to *Christian History*.

Letters to the editor

Readers respond to *Christian History*

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY

When I saw the cover line [of #141], I was reminded of Stephen Schwartz's song "Beautiful City," which has the line "not a city of angels, but a city of man."—*David Neff, Baltimore, MD*



So much wonderful art has been compiled [in #141]. Glad to see you have included the "graffito blasfemo" which I believe to be the earliest piece of work to depict Jesus's crucifixion and proof that He was crucified on a cross, not a stake.—*Shane Rouse, Sagamore Beach, MA*

FORTY-YEAR JOURNEY

Congratulations on the fortieth anniversary of this excellent resource for the study of the Christian church. I received the first issue in 1982, and every issue since; passing on each one for others to enjoy and benefit from . . . May God continue to bless this ministry until the day of the Lord Jesus's return.—*Glenn Swygart, Winchester, TN*

HAVE MERCY ON US

On p. 39 of #141, I was puzzled that the picture caption identified "Have Mercy Nestor." My wife and I spent five minutes trying to figure out how Agnes Nestor's name changed from one page to another. I posited that "Agnes" derives from "Agnus" (Have Mercy) and that some automated translation inserted the caption. Then my wife pointed out the captions were introduced with small cap type. So we give credit to an innovative caption writer doing a play on names, Agnes / Agnus. Does this count as an "Easter egg" in *CH*? That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.—*Dave Searcey, San Antonio, TX*

Believe it or not, this pun was unintentional on our part!

I am a high school teacher (world history) [who uses the magazine in class]. . . . About a month ago I received in my mailbox at school . . . prints of nine hand drawn maps with a lovely letter from an artist: "I saw your letter to the editor while reading issue 134 of my favorite magazine, *Christian History*. Please accept some of my hand drawn map prints, a gift from a fellow lover of history and education. Kind regards, Jesse Kennedy."—*Gregory Yankey, Owasso, OK*

Wow! We are glad *Christian History* brings lovers of *Christian history* together. See the maps framed in Yankey's classroom at left.



HEALING IN HUMILITY
Your last issue of *CH*,

though beautifully put together and appreciated for the hard work expended for its publication, was troubling to me . . . the uneasiness I feel that the editors mainly assent to the doctrines propounded by the articles. . . . I firmly believe in divine healing, but it must be cemented in humble service and not for shameful profit.—*Michael Carlascio, Sault Ste Marie, ON*

Bill Curtis responds: "When I was first introduced to those who actively sought out and expected healing, I was very critical as well. Clearly abuses have happened, and we tried to edit the issue to condemn them and provide guidance for distinguishing true healing in humble service to Jesus from the lies of those seeking their own profit. Jesus said we would be known by our fruit, and I have found much good fruit in the healing ministries I have discovered over the past few years. That has been one of the key reasons I wanted to dig deeper into this subject and its history within the church."

In response to a question we've been asked, the Bible verse on #142's cover was taken from the NIV (2011).

Meet the intern: KELLIE MITCHELL

What is your role at *CHI* as an intern?

I help proofread and am also learning about marketing through social media and blog writing.

Why did you want to join *CHI* for an internship?

My parents are subscribers, and I remember seeing *CH* magazines when I was growing up. I am interested in journalism as a career, and this is a wonderful opportunity to gain insight into what the magazine industry is like. Also, I appreciate historical research and am thoroughly enjoying the content.



What are you studying and where?

I am studying anthropology at Wheaton College.

What are your plans for the future?

My dream career would be to become a foreign correspondent. I love finding and telling stories that involve individuals, communities, and their contexts and shaping those stories to be compelling to a wider audience.

Any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy watercoloring, swing dancing, volleyball, reading mystery novels, and long walks with friends. **CH**

CHRISTIAN HISTORY



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Christian History is published by Christian History Institute, P.O. Box 540, Worcester, PA, 19490 and is indexed in *Christian Periodical Index*, ISSN 0891-9666. Subscriptions are available on a donation basis. Letters to the editor may be sent to editor@ChristianHistoryInstitute.org and permissions requests to info@ChristianHistoryInstitute.org. Credits: We make every effort to obtain proper permission to reproduce images. If you have information about an image source that is not credited, please let us know.

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Whose Bible?

AS AMERICAN CHRISTIANS HAVE PRAYED, WORSHIPED WITH, AND STUDIED THE BIBLE, THEY HAVE OFTEN WRESTLED OVER HOW TO INTERPRET IT

Jason A. Hentschel

Imagine a Bible—in fact, imagine your Bible. Maybe it's an “old-fashioned” family Bible, black hardback with a faux-leather spine and gold gilt around the trim, a thin red ribbon marking a passage near the middle. Or perhaps you think of your church’s Bible as your Bible—a large Bible for worship, too large to pick up with one hand, lying open on a pulpit or lectern or displayed in a large gold stand on an altar.

Maybe you think of a paperback with no verse numbers, presented in a modern paraphrase, aimed at reaching the unchurched. Maybe when you reach for your Bible you open an app launched from a phone, on the home screen right next to Facebook and Instagram, with 40 different downloaded translations. And, for the last two years at any rate, your Bible could be a PowerPoint shared in a Zoom church gathering.

All of these Bibles have at least one thing in common—we all interpret them through our own particular lens. Just look at the land in which we live. It is peppered

QUIET TIME Worshipers—one studying a Bible—wait for a service at a Nevada church in 1979.

not only with millions of different copies of the same book but also with hundreds of different denominations and innumerable independent churches totaling upward of 250 million different readers (see “Did you know?,” inside front cover). And then there are the dozens of different translations we have to choose from!

AS THOUGH NO ONE HAD READ THEM

While interpreting the Bible for oneself is not uniquely American, it is particularly American. (For more on this, see our first issue in this series on the Bible in America, CH 138). Liberated by the new nation’s emphasis on the separation of church and state and empowered by a belief in the competency of the everyday citizen, the early nineteenth century saw a splintering of the religious landscape as Americans began to read and interpret



“AWAKE, O SLEEPER” In a 20th-c. bas-relief (*above*), early Puritans preach; in a 19th-c. painting (*right*), congregants listen—and doze off.



PURE VS. WICKED Frederick Douglass, whose Bible is at *right*, wondered if slaveholders were reading the same book he was.

the Bible for themselves apart from traditional authoritative structures. With no state church to rule on the nation’s official theology, they multiplied as many different interpretations of how to pray, study, worship, and apply the lessons of Scripture as there were churches—or even people.

Summarizing that common ideal, Alexander Campbell (1788–1866), one of the founders of what would become the Disciples of Christ, confessed in 1826 to reading “the Scriptures as though no one had read them before me.” Indeed for Campbell that sometimes meant ignoring even the interpretation he gave only the week before! (Read more about Campbell in *CH* 106.)

Historian Nathan Hatch once described this peculiar cultural phenomenon as “the democratization of American Christianity.” Within a few decades of the nation’s founding, Americans had become their own private interpreters, the Bible in their hands a unique Word to each of them.

As many strands make up this story of the Bible in America as there are readers of the book. Yet two strands stand out as representative—the rise of liberationist interpretation in the nineteenth century and the proliferation of new Bible translations in the twentieth.

A WAR OF WORDS

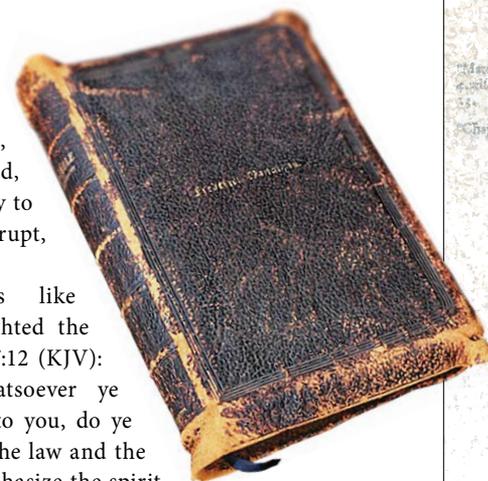
Nowhere else did the democratization of biblical interpretation in America take on more vivid display than in the antebellum debate over slavery. “Between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of

Christ,” Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) wrote in 1845, “I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked.”

Abolitionist arguments like Douglass’s regularly highlighted the “Golden Rule” of Matthew 7:12 (KJV): “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” and tended to emphasize the spirit of the Bible’s overarching story of exodus and salvation over its more literal letter.

These interpretations ran up against a wall of pro-slavery arguments, which often employed the exact same biblical texts. Gaining an audience before the governor of South Carolina late in 1822, Baptist Richard Furman (1755–1825), a slaveholder himself and one who had recently helped put down Denmark Vesey’s revolt of the enslaved, practically huffed at the need to explain that his right to enslave people “is clearly established by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example.”

To Furman anyone who contested slavery was contesting Scripture. Even the Golden Rule must suffer some restrictions: “The Christian golden rule, of doing to others, as we would they should do to us, has been urged as an unanswerable argument against holding slaves,” he said, but nobody would dare presume that a father give in to his child’s every whim, much less a slaveholder to those he enslaved.



BIG RALLY

WHEN — Thursday, Jan. 29th - - Friday, Jan. 30th and Saturday, Jan. 31st.

WHERE — FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, West 16th Avenue and South 17th Street.

WHY — To oppose the New Standard Revised Version of the Bible and to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the Saints. There will be an able speaker each night—

DR. HOMER RICHIE, of Fort Worth
Thursday, 7:30 P. M.

DR. RILEY COPELAND, of Waco
Friday, 7:30 P. M.

DR. DORMAN, of Jacksonville
Saturday, 7:30 P. M.

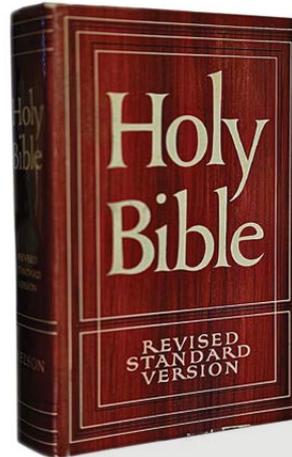
There Will Be Other Speakers Each Night Also.

Let everyone that believes in the Old Time King James Bible and that it is still good enough for men and women today, come and back us up in this fight against modernism.

— **EVERYONE . WELCOME** —

OBIE F. BARTON, Pastor.

WOMAN OR VIRGIN? Texas Baptist pastors rallied in 1953 (*left*) against the Revised Standard Version (*below*). The furor was evoked by a change in Isaiah 7:14.



Some English Bible translations and paraphrases read by US Christians

King James Version (KJV) 1611

Douay-Rheims Bible (DRB) *originally published in 1582 and 1609–1610, revised 1749–1752*

American Standard Version (ASV) 1901, *an American publication of the British Revised Version from 1885*

Revised Standard Version (RSV) 1952

New American Bible (NAB) 1970

New English Bible (NEB) 1970

New American Standard Version (NASB) 1971, *revision of ASV*

Living Bible (TLB) 1971

Good News Bible (GNT) 1976

New International Version (NIV) 1978

New King James Version (NKJV) 1982, *revision of KJV*

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) 1985

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) 1989, *revision of RSV*

Contemporary English Version (CEV) 1995

New Living Translation (NLT) 1996, *revision of Living Bible*

The Message (MSG) 2002

English Standard Version (ESV) 2001

Holman Christian Standard (HCSB) 2004

Today's New International Version (TNIV) 2005, *revision of NIV*

Common English Bible (CEB) 2011

New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE) 2011, *revision of NAB*

Surely Jesus didn't intend anarchy! Hence the purpose of Christian benevolence according to proslavery advocates like Furman was not to overturn the divine order of things—America's system of enslavement included—but rather to direct actions within it. Whose Bible, then, was the real one? Was it Furman's or Douglass's? Whose interpretation would ultimately win out? The nation, of course, would decide through a bloody civil war.

PRINCES SHALL COME OUT OF EGYPT

Even among readers of Scripture committed to expanding freedom, shades of opinion still existed. The historian Albert Raboteau (1943–2021), in his study of nineteenth-century African American Christianity, noted three different interpretations of a single verse, Psalm 68:31, “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.”

Was the psalmist referring to the inherent dignity of the “African race” or to the future salvation of the African people? Might this verse instead be an indicator that one day Black Christians would prove “the leaven of true Christian civilization”? Even accounting for similar cultures, contexts, and situations, the plurality of biblical interpretations runs deep.

Consider the interaction of America's White settlers and their Native American neighbors. Each read the biblical story of the Exodus and identified with the plight and promise of ancient Israel. Yet while the former saw themselves as manifestly destined to conquer a new Promised Land (the West), having already escaped through their own Red Sea (the Atlantic), the Native peoples they displaced identified with the Hebrew slaves still stuck in Egypt. “We regarded ourselves,” William Apess (1798–1839), a Pequot Methodist minister, once explained, “as a tribe of Israelites suffering

OBIE F. BARTON, BIG RALLY POSTER, C. 1952. COURTESY OF BAPTISTSEARCH.BLOGSPOT.COM
THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION WITH RED COVER, 1952—XRAY GUY 1969 / CC BY-SA 4.0/WIKIMEDIA

THREE PEOPLE, THREE BIBLES A woman kneels reading in private devotion in 1902, a young boy stands with a family Bible in 1890, and a librarian at the Library of Congress displays a historic KJV c. 1950 (clockwise, l-r).

under the rod of despotic pharaohs; for thus far, our cries and remonstrances had been of no avail.”

As with Frederick Douglass, Native Americans found hope and the promise of their deliverance in the same Bible so often used to oppress them. At the same time, missionaries were beginning translations into many Native languages, as Alfred and Harriet Wright began working on a Choctaw translation (see p. 32).

Nineteenth-century America also witnessed a concerted push for women’s suffrage and other liberties, with the Bible again rising to the top as a contested centerpiece. Sojourner Truth’s (c. 1797–1883) famous 1851 speech, “Ain’t I a Woman?,” made explicit use of Scripture to link what she believed to be the twin issues of racial and gender equality. Calling out every preacher who dared suggest that because Jesus was male women are somehow inferior, she argued, “Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.” If the first woman God created could turn the world upside down, Truth insisted, her eye on Genesis 3, then surely women today could turn it right side up.

Later generations of women’s rights activists followed Truth’s lead, including Anna Julia Cooper (1858–1964), Sarah Grimké (1792–1873), Lucretia Mott (1793–1880), Mary S. Parker (1802–1841), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), and Frances Willard (1839–1898). Often lumped together under the category of “first-wave feminists,” these women pushed against patriarchal interpretations of Scripture—arguing, for instance, that the “Curse of Eve” in Genesis 3:16 was less a divine command than a sad prediction of precisely the kind of destructive inequality women faced every day.

Stanton’s *The Woman’s Bible* (1895) sent biblical interpretation as a discipline into new territory. Not content to offer competing egalitarian scriptural interpretations, this collection of essays highlights how Stanton and her 26 contributors thought that the Bible elided women’s experiences, silenced their perspectives, and contributed to inequality (see pp. 19–21). The shock waves caused by such criticism of the Bible *itself* (not simply criticisms of our interpretations) would echo for generations and influence later Christian feminists such as Phyllis Trible and her *Texts of Terror* (1984).

By the late twentieth century, then, Americans were not only asking “Whose Bible?” of each other but “Whose



Bible?” of the various voices found within the biblical text.

ONE WORD TO RULE THEM ALL

If the nineteenth century told the story of competing interpretations of Scripture, Americans at least agreed on a common translation from which to interpret, the King James Version (see pp. 29–31). The twentieth century changed that.

What began with the Revised Version in 1885 as a relatively innocuous attempt by British scholars to update the KJV’s archaic language and incorporate the discovery of more accurate biblical manuscripts quickly became a battleground over whose Bible translation should be considered real and authoritative.

This contention was evident even in the titles of the translations themselves. When the Revised Version crossed the Atlantic in 1901, it officially became the American Standard Version. That “standard” translation set the bar. As the translation movement kicked into high gear toward the midway point of the century, each new version worked to better its predecessors, beginning with the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and continuing on with the New American Standard (1971), the New Revised Standard (1989), the English Standard (2001), the Holman Christian Standard (2004), and many more. Even the New International Version (1978), which escaped this “standard” nomenclature, began as a theologically conservative response to the RSV. Rarely did a new translation come out in the latter half of the twentieth century that did not compete ideologically with earlier versions.

CHARLES DANA GIBSON, WORSHIPPERS, 1902, DRAWING—CABINET OF AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
 ANONYMOUS, PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN WITH HIS BIBLE, C. 1890, AMERICAN, OIL ON CANVAS, COURTESY OF 1STDBS.COM
 WORSHIP AS WAR PROPAGANDA—LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



HIGHER, HIGHER Modern calligrapher Donald Jackson illuminated The Saint John's Bible (Genesis 28–29 is at left.)

burn the Bible,” he winked. “I said I would burn a fraud.”

Thirty-odd years later, the RSV’s successor would suffer a similar fate, this time for incorporating inclusive language in its translation. Commenting on the New Revised Standard Version and similar gender-inclusive translations, Wayne Grudem, then president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, warned:

If evangelical translators and publishers give in to the principle of sacrificing accuracy because certain expressions are thought to be offensive to the dominant culture, this altering of the text of Scripture will never end. *And then readers will never know at any verse whether what they have is the Bible or the translator’s own ideas.*

Grudem feared the Bible itself was becoming increasingly lost in a sea of interpretation, and if this continued unchecked, we might never know whose Bible we hold in our hands or even if it is worth calling a Bible at all. By the end of the twentieth century, not only had the preponderance of translations furthered the democratization of the Bible, it had become a source of conflict in a growing culture war.

WHICH INTERPRETATION?

Many more stories abound about biblical interpretation in America as Christians have interacted among themselves as well as with

Muslims and Jews. As historian Jonathan Sarna noted, “Jewish biblical exegesis, by its very existence, complicated American Christian ideas of following the ‘Bible alone.’ If, after all, there were multiple texts and interpretations of the Bible, how could all of them be true?”

Jews, of course, do not regard the Christian New Testament as part of their Bible, but even Catholics, Protestants, and the Orthodox disagree on what exactly makes up the contents of Holy Scripture. If my Bible includes different books than your Bible, are they even the same Bible? Whose Bible do we hold? The story of biblical interpretation in America is the story of the Bible’s readers—every last one of them—which means it’s the story of us all. **CH**

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Giving sinners no rest

PREACHING FROM THE WORD DURING AMERICAN AWAKENINGS

Keith J. Hardman and Jennifer Woodruff Tait

If a Man have Money, he may purchase Land or Cattle or Corn, but he cannot purchase Pardon, but the blood of Christ will procure the Pardon of Sin. Eph. 1.7. In whom we have Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. Rev. 5.9. Thou hast Redeemed us to God by thy blood.

Before Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) played his part in the Great Awakening, a popular Puritan minister from Northampton, Massachusetts, sparked revival with these words. This pastor also happened to be Edwards's grandfather. Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729), like most other colonial New England ministers, served in only one church—from 1669 until his death, a total of 60 years! Northampton, on the Connecticut River, was located on what was at the time the western frontier. Stoddard urged the need for spiritual awakening upon fellow ministers, but received only a lukewarm response. However, that did not stop him:

Men are in a Deep Sleep and flatter themselves as if there were no Hell, or at least that God will not deal so harshly with them as to Damn them. Psalm 36:2. Ministers must give them no Rest in such a Condition. They must pull them as Brands out of the Burnings [Zec 3:2].

Stoddard followed his own advice completely. In response Northampton experienced five awakenings during his six decades as pastor. He set a template for evangelistic preaching in the American tradition—focused on moving sinners toward conversion through vivid application of the biblical text.

AN ANGRY GOD?

When Stoddard died in 1729 at 86 years, Edwards, who had been his assistant for two years, became pastor. His congregation could not have guessed that one day their tall, mild new minister would be called one of the best minds America has ever produced. In 1734 Edwards began to stress evangelism from his Northampton pulpit. Other pastors promoted the awakening, and it spread through western Massachusetts and Connecticut.



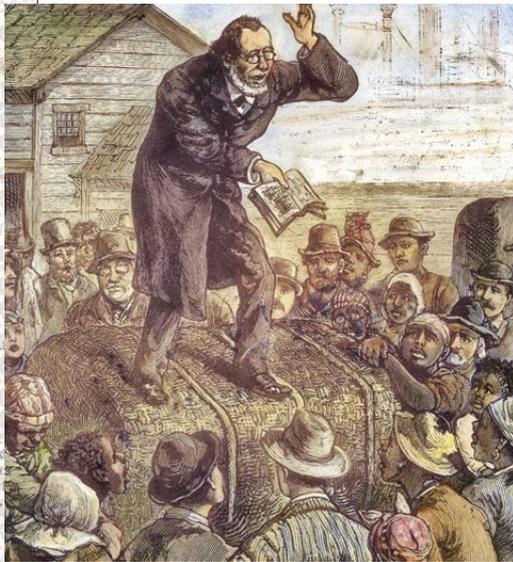
SALVATION PROCLAIMED George Whitefield is preaching in Bolton, England, in this 1750 painting, but similar scenes attended his American revival tours.

Edwards began traveling outside his parish to preach and in 1741 delivered his famous sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” in Enfield. It was this sermon that marked Edwards as a hell-fire and brimstone preacher; however, though Edwards wrote over 1,000 sermons, less than a dozen carried this tone.

Rather than gleefully picturing the doom of sinners, Edwards would shudder to think that any of his hearers might not heed his warnings about eternal damnation:

The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: “Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed.” [Genesis 19:17] Edwards was by all accounts never a spellbinding speaker. All of his sermons were delivered in the same calm fashion—but with penetrating force.

Among those spreading revival was George Whitefield (1714–1770), who made his second visit to the



colonies in 1740–1741. Whitefield would make five more voyages to America, preaching extensively, biblically, and dramatically wherever he went (for an excerpt, see p. 14). His famed “The Conversion of Zacchaeus” begins “Salvation, every where through the whole Scripture, is said to be the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” and, after a verse-by-verse explanation of Luke 19, he concludes by urging his hearers:

Do not therefore any longer crucify the Lord of glory. Bring those rebels, your sins, which will not have him to reign over them, bring them out to him: though you cannot slay them yourselves, yet he will slay them for you.

MANY HAVE NEVER HEARD

By 1800 nearly a million people had made their way west. In 1803 the crowning achievement of Thomas Jefferson’s first administration came: the Louisiana Purchase. It doubled the country’s area and gave an enormous new impulse to western migration. How, believers wondered, could the church possibly keep ahead of this vast movement? One Episcopal preacher wrote of the Carolinas:

How many thousands . . . never saw, much less read, or ever heard a Chapter of the Bible! How many Ten thousands who never were baptized or heard a Sermon!

Here the Second Great Awakening began with James McGready (1763–1817). A stirring preacher, McGready saw an extensive awakening spread over north central North Carolina. McGready spoke of heaven and its glories, thundered about hell and its torments, and questioned his hearers about their salvation: “God declares that we must be converted, or be forever damned; that we must be born again, or never enter the kingdom of Heaven” [John 3:3].

McGready’s revival in late July 1800 at the Gasper River—as many as 8,000 may have shown up—was the

DOGMA AND DRAMA These two engravings—one from 1882 (*left*) and one from 1837 (*above*)—testify to the popularity of 19th-c. revival preaching. How would you compare the two?

first true camp meeting. Barton W. Stone (1772–1844), a Presbyterian pastor near Lexington, Kentucky, traveled to Logan County to observe McGready’s work and returned home to plan a similar meeting for 1801 at Cane Ridge (for more on Stone, see *CH* 106).

Better publicized than McGready’s meeting, Cane Ridge attracted between 10,000 and 25,000 participants. (Lexington, then the largest town in Kentucky, had fewer than 1,800 citizens!) It delighted Stone that Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists were united around the biblical message: “The salvation of sinners was the one object. We all engaged in singing the same songs, all united in prayer, all preached the same things.” Indeed, camp meetings would often have multiple preaching stations operating concurrently.

The work of McGready, Stone, and others increasingly emphasized that God invites people to cooperate with him by praying and preaching for revival. The stage was set for a shift, not in message, but in methods. Onto that stage stepped Charles G. Finney (1792–1875).

Finney was tall and handsome, with eyes one observer described as “large and blue, at times mild as an April sky, and at others, cold and penetrating as polished steel.” He possessed a majestic voice immensely persuasive with crowds. In addition he had studied to be an attorney, and he turned his courtroom skills to the use of the pulpit.

As he plunged into evangelistic work in the backwoods of upper New York State in 1824, he offended some who said he destroyed the dignity of the pulpit with his direct, personal style. But Finney’s preaching had a rapid-fire impact.

HOLDING UP THE WORD Charles Finney, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Billy Sunday (clockwise from left) were famous for dramatic, Bible-rich sermons.

When Finney opened evangelistic meetings in upstate New York in 1825, he began seven years of the most intense evangelistic activity that the United States has seen. The revival spread all over the region (called the “burned-over district”) and the nation. As Finney’s fame grew, critics arose to condemn some of his innovative practices. Yet for everyone who found fault, Finney had supporters who praised his aggressive evangelism, as he described it in *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*:

If when a sinner is under conviction, you pour in the truth, put in the probe, break up the old foundations, and sweep away his refuges of lies, and use the Word of God, like fire and like a hammer, you will find that they will come out with clear views, and strong faith, and firm principles, not doubting, halting, irresolute Christians, but such as follow the Lord wholly.

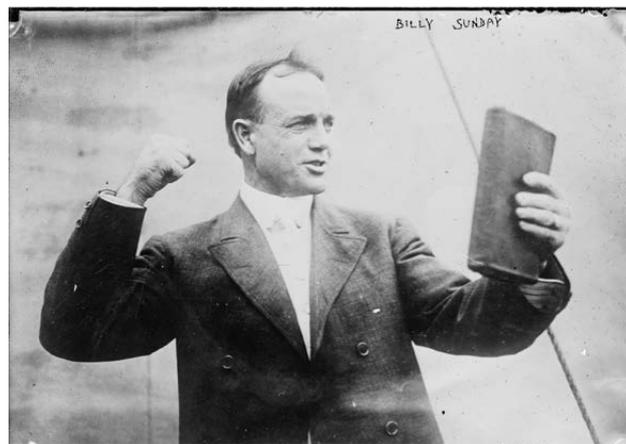
PRAYING AND PREACHING

Other nineteenth-century revivals might seem an exception to this line of dramatic sermons, as they arose at first from lay prayer meetings. Weekly meetings by Sarah Worrall Lankford (1806–1896) and Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807–1874) launched the Holiness movement in the late 1830s. Later, during the 1857 financial panic, Jeremiah Lanphier (1809–1898) inspired 10,000 people to gather daily for prayer throughout New York and eventually all over the nation in what was called the “Businessmen’s Revival.”

Yet this focus on prayer was paired with an emphasis on revivalist preaching leaning heavily on Scripture to explain the demands of the gospel and ask for a decision. Palmer and her husband, Walter, traveled and preached through the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, with remarkable response—as did their Holiness colleague Amanda Berry Smith (1837–1915), the country’s most famous Black evangelist. While we have few records of Palmer’s or Berry’s sermons, their writings frequently reference and apply biblical tests, as in Palmer’s *The Way of Holiness*:

As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world [Revelation 13:8], Christ laid himself upon the altar; “tasted death for every man” [Hebrews 2:9], and “bore the sins of the whole world in his own body.” [1 Peter 2:24]

Educator, Bible teacher, and minister D. L. Moody (1837–1899, see pp. 36–39), also specialized in vivid



preaching with frequent biblical references. Moody reminded his hearers, “If you will read your Bible in light of Calvary, you will find there is no other way of coming to heaven but by the blood.”

In the twentieth century, preachers as diverse as these passed the mantle of revival to new generations—including ex-baseball player Billy Sunday (1862–1935), Foursquare Church founder Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), and the man many called “America’s pastor”—Billy Graham (1918–2018; see CH 111).

They spoke in huge auditoriums and eventually to radio and television audiences; by the time Graham died, his sermons were viewed on the internet. Yet they would have recognized the biblically framed mission Stoddard had put forth almost 400 years previous: “Ministers must give [sinners] no Rest in such a Condition. They must pull them as Brands out of the Burnings.” **CH**

Keith J. Hardman (1931–2017) was professor of religion and philosophy at Ursinus College and author of Seasons of Refreshing and The Spiritual Awakeners. This article is adapted from CH #23—he wrote the entire issue. Jennifer Woodruff Tait is managing editor of Christian History.

UNKNOWN, CHARLES FINNEY, 19TH C.—COURTESY CHURCH HISTORY REVIEW / LEXLOIZ.WORDPRESS.COM
 AIMEE MCPHERSON, C. 1920—BAIN NEWS SERVICE / PUBLISHER / PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA
 BILLY SUNDAY (POSED AS IF PREACHING), C. 1920—BAIN NEWS SERVICE, PUBLISHER / PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA

Evangelists preaching from the Word

USING THE BIBLE TO CONVERT AND EDIFY



PONDERING THE WORD Billy Graham spends a moment in prayer with his Bible at a 1965 crusade in Houston, Texas.

The Gospel is not only proper to work Faith, but also to work every other Grace. The Gospel doth not only work the heart to believe, but it draws the heart to other gracious Exercises; when Men see the love of God in the Gospel, that draws forth love. *1 Joh. 4.19. We love him, because he loved us first.* The knowledge of the Gospel makes Men fear God.—*Solomon Stoddard, "That the Gospel Is the Means of Conversion," 1717*

Believers keep up and maintain their walk with God by reading of his holy word. "Search the scriptures," says our blessed Lord, "for these are they that testify of me." And the royal Psalmist tells us "that God's word was a light unto his feet, and a lantern unto his paths;" and he makes it one property of a good man, "that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that he exercises himself therein day and night." "Give thyself to reading," (says Paul to Timothy); "And this book of the law, (says God to Joshua) shall not go out of thy mouth."—*George Whitefield, "Walking with God," 1751*

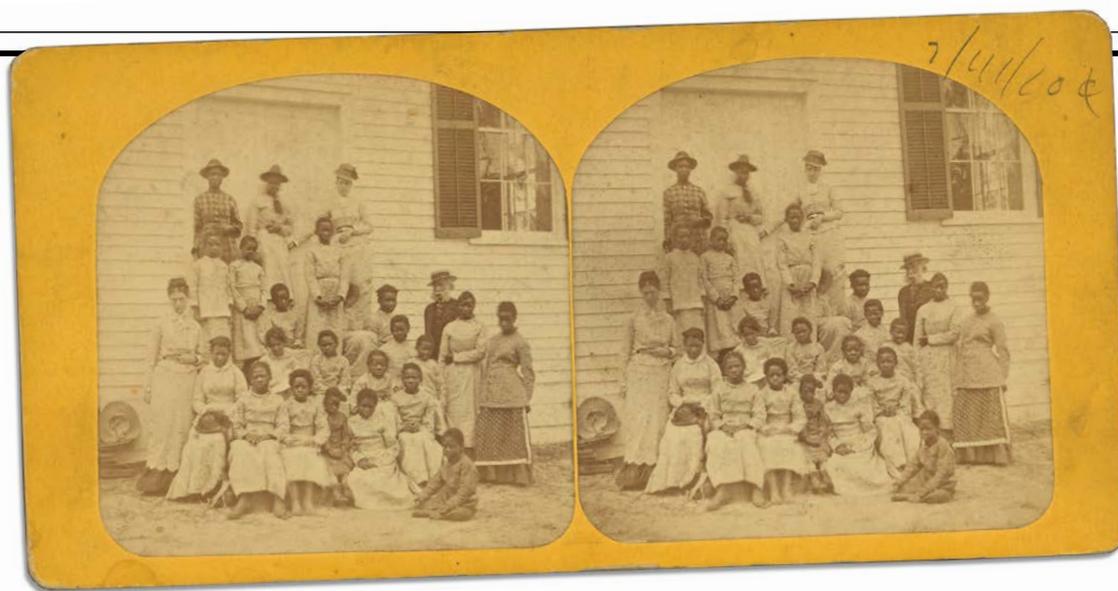
To keep yourself away from under the motives of the gospel, by neglecting church, and neglecting your Bible, will prove fatal to your soul. . . . And now, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you at this time render your body and soul, a living sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service." Let the truth take hold upon your conscience—throw down your rebellious weapons—give up your refuges of lies—fix your mind steadfastly upon the world of considerations that should instantly decide you to close in with the offer of reconciliation while it now lies before you. Another moment's delay, and it may be too late forever. The Spirit of God may depart from you—the offer of life may be made no more, and this one more slighted offer of mercy may close up your account, and seal you over to all the horrors of eternal death. Hear, then, O sinner, I beseech you, and obey the word of the Lord—"Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?"—*Charles Finney, "Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts," 1836*

If it weren't for the atoning blood you might as well rip the roofs off the churches and burn them down. They aren't worth anything. But as long as the blood is on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:14), the sinner can return, and by no other way. There is nothing else. It stands for the redemption. You are not redeemed by silver or gold, but by the blood of Jesus Christ. Though a man says to read good books, do good deeds, live a good life and you'll be saved, you'll be damned.

That's what you will. All the books in the world won't keep you out of hell without the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It's Jesus Christ or nothing for every sinner on God's earth.—*Billy Sunday, "Atonement," c. 1914*

Behind all these beautiful clothes, behind these good times, in the midst of your lovely buildings and shops and pleasures, there is another life. There is something on the other side. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" With all your getting and playing and good times, do not forget you have a Lord. Take Him into your hearts.—*Aimee Semple MacPherson, impromptu "speech in a speakeasy," 1927*

If you should ask a man the direction to New York City and he said, "Oh, just take any road you wish, they all lead there," you would question either his sanity or his truthfulness. Somehow, we have gotten it into our minds that "all roads lead to heaven." . . . But Jesus Christ, who journeyed from heaven to earth and back to heaven again—who knew the way better than any man who ever lived—said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13,14).—*Billy Graham, "The Sin of Tolerance," 1959*



Young “Bible theologians”

HOW NINETEENTH-CENTURY SUNDAY SCHOOLS EMPHASIZED THE BIBLE

Elise Leal

If you ever attended an AWANA club or memorized Scripture in Sunday school as a child, at least one Bible verse probably stuck with you: John 3:16 (see p. 1). For your memorization efforts, perhaps you received badges, ribbons, and even trophies. Even critics of memorization-based programs recognize the value of knowing Scripture by heart. Still the question remains: Does Bible memorization *change* your heart?

Americans in the 1800s sought to answer this question during a transformational moment in American religious history as Protestant reformers across denominations united to create institutions and ministries exclusively for young people. They designed these institutions as, first and foremost, Bible-saturated cultures.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL

In the 1820s Sunday schools taught literacy and catered almost exclusively to childhood and adolescent religious formation. They spread rapidly after the formation of the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) in 1824. A non-sectarian association, the ASSU promoted a “Bible alone” approach to saving souls and cultivating a virtuous citizenry, aspiring to place religious education “within the reach of every individual in our country.” The society established over 70,000 new Sunday schools over the nineteenth century.

By 1832 over 10 percent of White American children attended an ASSU Sunday school; by the 1850s a church without a Sunday school was considered an anomaly. African American Sunday schools also existed, but White cultural resistance to Black education worked against thorough recordkeeping. ASSU workers in the

NEW FREEDOM Black students in Florida attend Sunday school, c. 1870–1890.

South before the Civil War often hesitated to use the word “school,” preferring the more ambiguous term “catechesis” to avoid the implication that they taught African Americans to read. Nevertheless Sunday schools for Black children proliferated, particularly in southern states where Blacks were a majority.

Some Sunday schools, affiliated with White Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations and with the ASSU, were founded by White missionaries; the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion also led efforts. Richard Allen’s Mother Bethel Church in Philadelphia opened its first Sunday school by 1827. The AME spread Sunday schools as far west as Ohio by 1829 and by 1842 had established them as far south as Louisiana and Georgia.

For both Black and White pupils, Scripture permeated Sunday school. Literature told Bible stories and concepts in imaginative, child-friendly language. Song books and prayer books provided a weekly diet of Scripture-laden exhortations and reflections. The Sunday school sermon by the superintendent or a local pastor was the centerpiece of the weekly routine.

Sunday school teachers initially emphasized memorization as the key to inculcating scriptural values and awakening faith in pupils’ hearts. This echoed standard educational philosophy at the time and also reflected popular romantic conceptions of children’s minds as empty receptacles that need filling.



MY LIGHT While this young girl (*above*), famously photographed in 1899, is Canadian, the image speaks to the prominence of the Bible to all North American children.

Sunday schools kept careful records of students' memorized Scriptures and boasted of them in annual reports. The Philadelphia Sunday School Union reported with pride that many pupils regularly recalled entire books of the Bible, considered a sign of "great love for and delight in the holy Scriptures."

Teachers considered memorization so key to children's spiritual development that they developed a rewards system. Students earned prizes based on the number of verses recited per week—Bibles, ornate picture cards displaying Scripture passages, or decorative gift books containing biblically inspired stories.

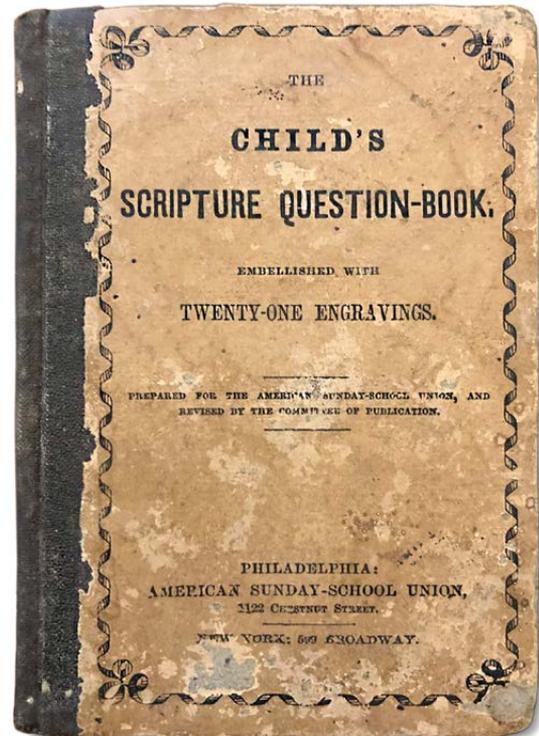
A COLLAR TRIMMED WITH LACE

African American pupils in northern states read the Bible themselves and selected passages to commit to memory, but enslaved Black children in southern states were usually barred from reading. Sunday school teachers had to work around antiliteracy laws—restricting activities to singing, prayer, and oral recitations.

Some teachers attempted to incorporate literacy in defiance of the law. Over a thousand Black students attending Episcopal Sunday schools in South Carolina in the 1850s received access to religious pamphlets, ASSU hymnals, and the *Child's Scripture Question-Book*. Southerners accused teachers of being secret abolitionists with increasing frequency before the Civil War.

Children often expressed pride in their memorization skills and the prizes they earned. Ten-year-old Caroline Clarke of New York made memorization of seven Bible

REMEMBER AND DIGEST Scripture Question books (*below and on p. 17*) represented a step forward in Sunday school curriculum.



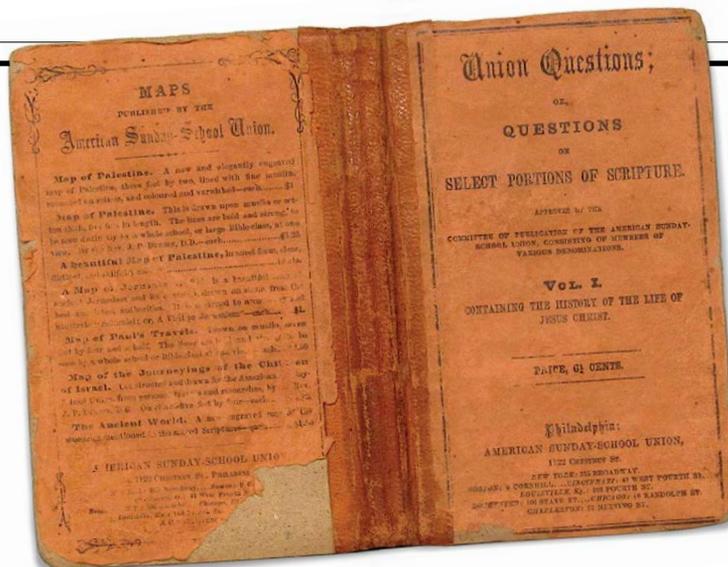
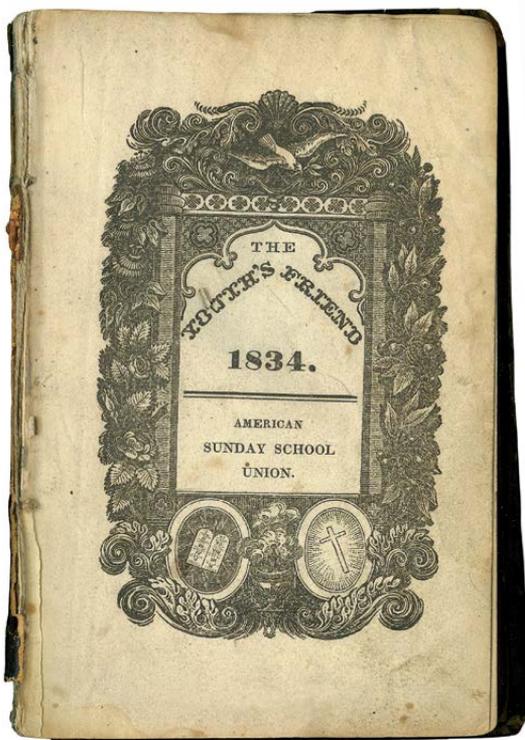
verses to recite at Sunday school a standard part of her weekly religious ritual, noting in her diary when she delivered them flawlessly. At a school in Delaware, Mary Aikin, daughter of a blacksmith, racked up numerous prizes over a multiyear period, including tracts, a psalmbook, a thread case, and a "collar trimmed with Nun's lace." Her brother, James, on the other hand, forfeited a premium at least once a year for various minor offenses. Finally he managed to win a storybook, aptly titled *The Prodigal Son*.

James Aikin may present a more accurate picture of the rate at which students earned premiums, not simply because children are prone to misbehave but because attendance often fluctuated. By midcentury many educational theorists claimed memorization was a faulty pedagogical tool that did little to shape a child's intellect.

Sunday school teachers fretted that premiums motivated pupils to focus on memorization only to earn rewards without understanding the gospel message. The ASSU complained as early as 1827 "that many pupils of Sunday schools are ignorant of the meaning of those passages of Scripture which they commit to memory." Merely dispensing Scripture via memorization did not sufficiently shape children's hearts. Minds must also be engaged to ensure lasting change.

The ASSU began emphasizing a new curricular mode, the *Union Questions*. Designed for small groups, these contained sequenced sets of 10 to 20 Bible verses to memorize

FRIENDLY PERSUASION The American Sunday School Union also published a magazine for students (*below*).



FUN AND GAMES Sunday school teachers picnic in the late 19th c. (*above*).

during the week. Teachers quizzed pupils on the meanings of the verses following recitation. To train students in biblical reflection and application, the *Union Questions* did not contain prepared answers, requiring teachers and pupils to achieve mastery of scriptural content to move on.

NEVER TOO OLD

Sunday school workers were particularly interested in programming for youth, a flexible term encompassing ages 10 to 25. Workers struggled to retain pupils in adolescence. A Boston Sunday school society commented in 1822 that “a mistaken notion prevailed among some of the children, that when they arrive at the age of thirteen or fourteen they are too old to go to a Sabbath school.”

The ASSU created a specialized version of the *Union Questions* for students 13 and above. Called Bible classes, they featured extended and complicated weekly lessons, along with basic pedagogy training. As a result, the ASSU hoped, Sunday schools could enable adolescents to develop a distinct sense of belonging—even superiority—and also motivate them to take ownership of their scriptural knowledge.

Bible classes encouraged youth to become teachers of younger classes once they had completed the curriculum. This gave them the dual roles of student and teacher of the Bible and provided them with a public outlet for spiritual formation. Twenty-two-year-old Elizabeth Prentiss wrote to her brother how “at Sabbath-school

this morning, while talking with my scholars about the Lord Jesus, my heart, which is often so cold and so stupid, seemed to melt within me, with a view of His wonderful, wonderful love for sinners...” Michael Floy of New York believed that his work as a Bible instructor kept him from becoming a “backslider,” noting in his diary how he instead developed the virtues of punctuality, seriousness, and morality.

ASSU president Archibald Alexander (1772–1851) boasted that, as a result of such work, “many of our intelligent young people are actually becoming accurate Bible theologians.” Many of these young people were women. Perhaps in part because they were denied the opportunity in church or academy, young women eagerly filled this role in Sunday schools, and female teachers almost always outnumbered male teachers. Whether male or female, through Bible classes young people claimed a role traditionally reserved for parents and pastors—religious education of children—as their own. **CA**

Elise Leal is assistant professor of history at Whitworth University. This article is adapted from an essay in Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present and is used with the permission of InterVarsity Press.

YOUTH'S FRIEND (BOSTON, MASS.); AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION, 1823; PRINT—UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH; AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION (UNION QUESTIONS) C.1835; PHILADELPHIA—USED BY PERMISSION OF YOUTHLITTLE DICKENS / ETSY.COM; W. E. BOWMAN, YOUNG LADY SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, 1865 TO 1900; STEREO SCOPIC IMAGE; NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY / [PUBLIC DOMAIN] WIKIMEDIA

Quiz the Bible: a new way to study

Jonathan Den Hartog



BEEP! Assemblies of God students in the late 1970s compete at quizzing.

to answer questions, early versions of quizzing required students to jump above the visual line of a level three-by-five card to be recognized.

Later, electronic pads on seats measured who jumped first. Other groups used hand paddles to “buzz in.” Questions could require small details, a long list, or a direct quotation (either a “quotation question” or a “quotation completion question”). Competitions ranged from statewide to regional and often ended with the crowning of a national champion.

Though quizzers demonstrated near-perfect recall, they themselves were not. Sometimes the desire to win overwhelmed the goal of sanctification, and individuals could get lost in the process, a fact documented in the warm yet honest documentary *Bible Quiz* (2013).

Still the experience of quizzing helped multiple generations of students study and memorize Scripture. One former quizzer reflected that quizzing was the first experience that gave him a sense of the architecture and logical flow of a book, moving him away from proof texts.

Quiz coaches observed that no other method has proven such long-term effectiveness in deeply teaching youth the contours of Scripture. And the experience of Bible Quizzing prepared quizzers to engage with the Scriptures in their adult lives—in academia, law (contesting questionable rulings will do that), and other professions. Across years and miles, Bible quizzers have “jumped” at the chance to study the Scriptures.—Jonathan Den Hartog, professor of history and chair of the history department at Samford University and a former Bible Quizzing participant

Question: *What is a method used by youth organizations to get students to memorize Scripture?*

Answer: *Bible Quizzing!*

In the years after World War II, American youth ministries were eager to encourage young people to study and learn the Bible. The pioneering organization Youth for Christ—founded by Jack Wyrzten (1913–1996) and led by Bob Cook (1912–1991)—tried innovative strategies for outreach. In the 1950s Bible Quizzing proved most useful in driving attendance at youth events as well as inculcating the Scriptures. Students would study a book of the Bible and then compete against other teams to answer questions for points.

The approach capitalized on the popularity of quiz shows such as *Twenty-One* and *The \$64,000 Question*, as well as the quiz tournament College Bowl. Youth for Christ Bible Quiz tournaments remained popular into the 1960s, but soon the initiative passed to denominations, which started their own quizzing programs and have continued hosting Bible Quizzes down to the present. Quizzing

could be found across the spectrum of broadly neo-evangelical churches: Nazarene, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Free, and Assemblies of God.

Preparation for Bible Quizzing—which usually lasted across the school year—started with intensive study and memorization of the Scriptures. Although some competitions like the Bible Bowl took the whole Bible as their source book, most quiz competitions came to focus on one or several New Testament books—for example, the Gospel of Luke one year, Romans and James the next. The idea was to understand the text deeply and be able to recall it quickly.

The program encouraged extensive memorization, and many quizzers developed the ability to quote long passages of chapters and even books from memory. In-depth study created incredible familiarity with the Bible, and curriculum—such as guides written for the Assemblies of God by George Edgerly (1939–2016)—helped explain the material.

After hours of study, the competitions provided exciting demonstrations of learning. In the race

“Your daughters shall prophesy”

WOMEN INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

Marion Ann Taylor

Can you imagine a woman being put on trial for daring to host Bible studies in her home that included men and questioned the pastor’s sermons? Not only did Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) endure this trial, she was found guilty. The Massachusetts Bay Colony ruled Hutchinson’s unorthodox practices “prejudicial to the state” and damaging to “honest” and “simple souls.” She argued that she was following “a clear rule in Titus 2:3–5, that the elder women should instruct the younger.” However, the court judged her “a woman not fit for our society” and banished her in 1638.

Quaker minister and missionary Elizabeth Webb (1663–1726) faced challenges too. Sensing herself called by God to share God’s universal love, Webb left her husband and nine children in England to sail to America in 1697. Two years later the Webb family moved to Philadelphia where Webb became the spiritual leader of the Concord Monthly Meeting.

Webb knew the Scriptures well and believed that women are neither spiritually weaker nor inferior to men. Her experiences as a wife, mother, minister, and missionary influenced her reading. Her verse-by-verse commentary on the book of Revelation circulated in manuscript form, the earliest known commentary by a woman in America. Although it was approved for publication, the Quaker press refused to fund it.

Colonial society gave frequent pushback against women who publicly interpreted Scripture. But as time went on, more American women used Scripture to preach and advocate for social reform and justice—and did not shy away from publishing their views.

“A FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES”

African American preacher Jarena Lee (1783–1864) infused her autobiography with biblical language. She opened her *Religious Experience and Journal* (1849) with an epigraph from Joel 2:28 (italics are hers): “And it shall come to pass, . . . that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy.” She also defended her right to preach with the example of Mary Magdalene:

Did not Mary first preach the risen Saviour, and is not the doctrine of the resurrection the very climax of Christianity—hangs not all our hope on this, as argued by St. Paul? Then did not Mary, a woman, preach the gospel?

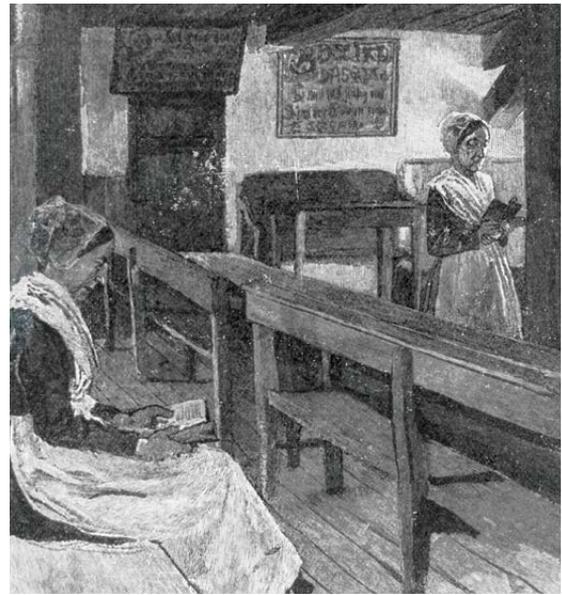
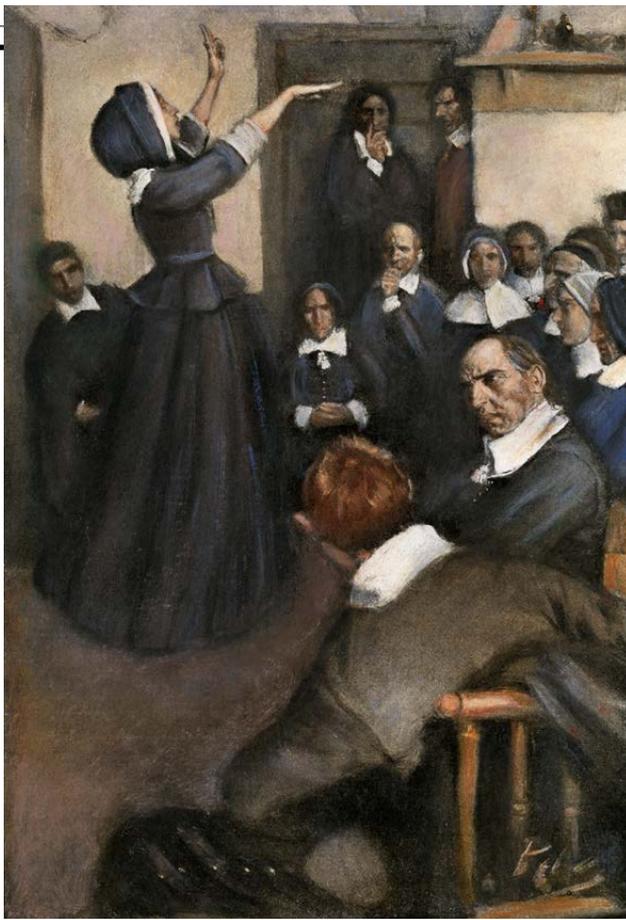
Lee described her call to preach as “a fire shut up in my bones,” a phrase she drew from Jeremiah 20:9.



THE INNER LIGHT While we do not know exactly what Elizabeth Webb looked like, she probably resembled this 17th-c. Quaker woman speaking.

At age 19 Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) confessed, “I was made for a preacher—indeed, I can scarcely keep my letters from turning into sermons.” She preached with her pen throughout her life. Though best known for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), her most explicit work of biblical commentary is *Woman in Sacred History* (1873), which blends insights from traditional male scholarship—including that of her husband, Old Testament scholar Calvin Stowe (1802–1886)—with what she called “the gospel of womanhood.”

For example, her reading of Deborah’s ancient Hebrew poem in Judges 5:2–31 defended Deborah’s naming of the murderer Jael as the “most blessed of women” because Jael had “snared the tiger” Sisera and prevented the rape of many Israelite women (Judges 5:31). In *The Minister’s Wooing* (1859), Stowe had an illiterate slave demonstrate a woman’s scripturally based approach to pastoral care as more effective than a learned theologian’s:



ACROSS THE YEARS Artists often represented Anne Hutchinson. Famed 19th-c. illustrator Howard Pyle imagined her leading Bible studies in the 17th c. (left) and also sketched Dunker women of his own era studying the Bible (above).

I knows our Doctor's a mighty good man. . . . But honey . . . sick folks [musn't have] strong meat. . . . Look right at Jesus. . . . Don't ye' [remember] how He looked on His mother, when she stood faintin' an' tremblin' under de cross, jes' like you.

In 1860 renowned abolitionist and women's rights activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) interpreted the Ten Commandments in a powerful political speech intended to rouse New Yorkers to act on behalf of slaves:

How can the beautiful daughter of a southern master honor the father who with cold indifference could expose her on the auction block to the coarse gaze of licentious bidders; or the ignoble slave mother, who could consent to curse her with such a life of agony and shame? Or, do you tell us, Sinai's thunders were never meant for Afric's ears?

DEGRADING WOMEN?

But over time Stanton came to view the Bible as an enemy rather than a friend of women. She envisioned a biblical commentary treating texts on women *and* texts excluding women. None of the women who agreed to be part of the project had theological training. When Stanton republished the resulting *The Woman's Bible* in 1898, she added the essay “Bible and Church Degrade Woman.” Though many have praised her for contributions to “first wave” feminism, today Stanton also receives criticism for her elitism, racism, and tactics.

While privileged women like Stowe had access to biblical and theological resources through family members or supportive clergy, many others wanted a theological education for themselves to prepare for preaching and teaching. Antoinette Brown, later Blackwell (1825–1921), graduated from the Ladies' Literature Course at Oberlin Collegiate Institute in Ohio in 1847 and petitioned for admission to Oberlin's theological program. Granted only semi-official status, she challenged Oberlin's sex-based standards for admission and its practice of not letting women speak in class.

Brown's studies of the “master's tools” of Greek, exegesis, church history, and theology equipped her to challenge traditional teachings limiting women's roles based on Scripture. In an exegetical study of the Greek words *lalein* (to speak) and *sigatōsan* (let them be silent) from 1 Corinthians 14:34 in the *Oberlin Quarterly Review* in 1849, she concluded that Paul was not silencing all women for all time, but rather restraining the “kind of talking which was not profitable to the church.”

Brown completed theological studies in 1850 but was not granted a degree. Ordained in 1853 in the Congregational Church, she became a well-known author, speaker, abolitionist, and women's rights activist. Eventually she turned Unitarian. Oberlin gave her an honorary master of arts degree in 1878—28 years after she completed her studies—and a doctor of divinity degree in 1908.

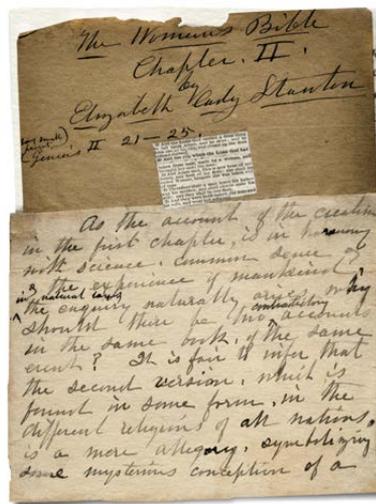
Mary Redington Ely (1887–1975) was one of few women before the mid-twentieth century to complete advanced studies in Bible and among the first to teach Bible at a college and seminary. Her journey through a



“MADE FOR A PREACHER” Harriet Beecher Stowe (above), Antoinette Brown Blackwell (above right), and Jarena Lee (above far right) all sought in various ways to preach and teach the Bible.



NO FEAR Elizabeth Cady Stanton (below, with the manuscript of her *Woman's Bible*) sparked conflict in the suffrage movement with her Bible's publication.



male-dominated profession brought countless challenges. At her graduation from Union Seminary in 1919, she received a prestigious scholarship for graduate study at Cambridge, but was forced to sit with faculty wives in the balcony instead of with her male peers. Her Cambridge professors would not provide official transcripts showing that a woman had been in their theology classes.

TRAILBLAZER

While teaching religion at Vassar College, Ely completed her doctorate in New Testament at the University of Chicago *magna cum laude* in 1924. In 1926 she married her former professor, William Lyman. This opened up the possibility for her to teach part-time at a theological school, but when her husband retired, she said, “Union took it for granted that I would retire too.”

Instead, Ely served as dean and professor of religion at Sweet Briar College for women until a full-time position at Union opened up. This required her 1949 ordination in the Congregational Church, and she became the first woman to hold a full professorship and an endowed chair at Union. Union's President Henry Pitney Van Dusen (1945–1963) eulogized her as “one of the ablest teachers of the English Bible in the United States, a distinguished New Testament scholar, and a leader in all matters connected with the life and work of women in the church.”

In the 1970s more colleges and seminaries began to train women for ordination and ministry and to allow

them to teach subjects other than Christian education and biblical languages. Phyllis Trible (b. 1932), Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (b. 1938), and other biblical scholars developed feminist approaches to reading Scripture—though they were later criticized by scholars including African Americans Renita Weems (b. 1954) and Clarice Martin (b. 1952) for failing to acknowledge that issues of race, class, and disability combine with gender to influence how we read Scripture.

Today the debate about women's roles in interpreting and teaching Scripture remains a very live one (see p. 39). Despite this conflict women interpreters continue to call for revision and refinement in the writing of church history and theology. **GI**

Marion Ann Taylor is professor of Old Testament and graduate director at Wycliffe College. She is the author of Ruth, Esther in the Story of God Bible Commentary series and of Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters and coauthor of Voices Long Silenced.

HOW *American Christians* HAVE INTERPRETED, SUNG FROM, STUDIED, TAUGHT, *and* SOMETIMES FOUGHT OVER THE *Bible*

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- **1839** Catholic priest François Blanchet publishes a “ladder” to explain the Bible and church history to the Nimiipuu; by 1845 Henry and Eliza Hart Spalding publish a Protestant response.
- **1840s** Colporteurs begin to sell Bibles door to door.
- **1844** The Bible Riots occur in Philadelphia over the use of the KJV in public schools.
- **1845** Frederick Douglass publishes *Life of an American Slave*.
- **1847** Horace Bushnell publishes *Discourses on Christian Nurture*.
- **1849** Jarena Lee publishes *Religious Experience and Journal*.
- **1851** Sojourner Truth gives her speech “Ain’t I a Woman?”
- **1853** Antoinette Brown Blackwell is ordained.
- **1857** Phoebe and Walter Palmer’s preaching and Jeremiah Lanphier’s prayer meetings begin a third great period of revival.
- **1858** Lowell Mason publishes *The Sabbath Hymnbook*.

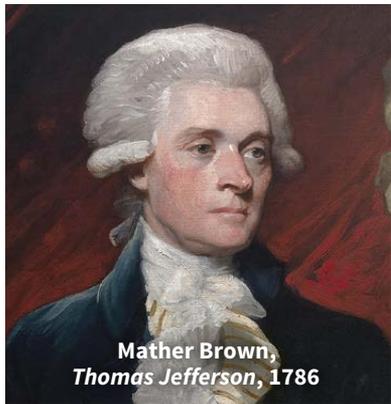
- **1878** Julius Wellhausen puts forth the documentary hypothesis that the Pentateuch is based on four sources edited together.



Rembrandt Peale, Charles Hodge, 19th c.

- **1885** The Revised Version is published in England and will become the basis for the American Standard Version.
- **1890** In the Edgerton Bible Case, courts rule in favor of Catholics and against mandatory public school KJV reading.
- **1892** Lyman Abbott publishes *The Evolution of Christianity*. William Rainey Harper founds the University of Chicago.

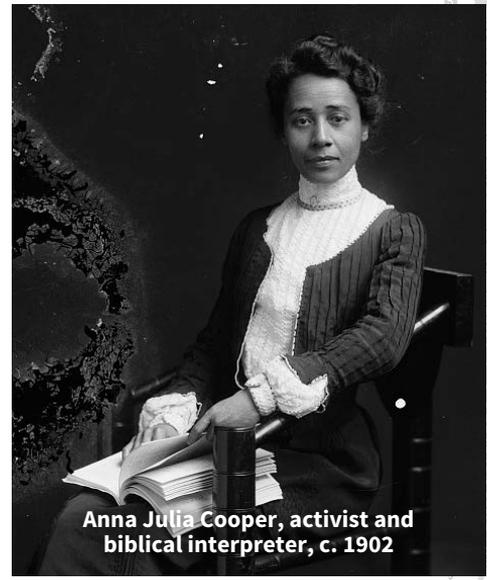
- **1895–1898** Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes the *Woman’s Bible*.
- **1896** Billy Sunday begins his evangelistic ministry. After his death in 1935, his wife, Nell Thompson Sunday, begins her own preaching ministry.
- **1917** Joseph McCabe publishes *The Bankruptcy of Religion*.
- **1901** The American Standard Version is published.
- **1909** Cyrus Scofield publishes the Scofield Reference Bible, which popularizes John Nelson Darby’s dispensationalism to Americans.
- **1910** *The Fundamentals* are published to reemphasize scriptural authority.
- **1913** Aimee Semple McPherson begins her evangelistic ministry.
- **1934** William Cameron Townsend starts Camp Wycliffe, which becomes Wycliffe Bible Translators.



Mather Brown, Thomas Jefferson, 1786

- **1873** Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Woman in Sacred History*. Charles Hodge publishes *Systematic Theology*. Emma Dryer organizes Bible work for D. L. Moody’s church.

- **1947** Carl F. H. Henry publishes *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Billy Graham begins his crusades.
- **1950** New Testament scholar Mary Redington Ely Lyman becomes first woman full professor at Union Seminary.
- **1950s** Bible Quizzing begins and quickly gains popularity.
- **1952** The Revised Standard Version is published. Martin Luther Hux famously sets a page on fire.
- **1964** The Bible Bowl is founded.
- **1969** Roman Catholics introduce a new three-year lectionary.
- **1977** Rollen Stewart begins holding up John 3:16 signs at sporting events.
- **1978** The New International Version is published.
- **1992** The Revised Common Lectionary is published and adopted by many mainline Protestant denominations.
- **1993** Bible Gateway, one of the oldest and largest Bible internet sites, begins.
- **1994** Beth Moore begins publishing Bible studies for a national audience.



Anna Julia Cooper, activist and biblical interpreter, c. 1902

MATHER BROWN, THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1786. OIL ON CANVAS—NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY / PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
REMBRANDT PEALE, CHARLES HODGE, 19TH C. OIL ON CANVAS—SOTHEBY’S / (PUBLIC DOMAIN) WIKIMEDIA
C. M. BELL, ANNA JULIA COOPER, 1901. PHOTOGRAPH, GLASS NEGATIVES—(LIBRARY OF CONGRESS / (PUBLIC DOMAIN) WIKIMEDIA

“Sing and make melody in your heart”

SINGING SCRIPTURE THROUGH HYMNS

Mark A. Noll



“O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES”
Churchgoers process into worship while singing (left) in 1740, during the First Great Awakening.

Hee in the folds of tender-grasse,
doth cause mee downe to lie.

But no one should doubt how much it kept Scripture central as Puritans sang in church or used the book for family worship and private reading.

This clunky hymn book would soon have competition. American hymnody evolved significantly in the eighteenth century primarily because of the popularity of English hymn writer Isaac Watts (1674–1748). Before Watts, English, Scottish, and colonial Protestants restricted their singing to biblical paraphrases, such as the *Bay Psalm Book*, for fear that substituting unreliable human invention for the pure Word of God would contaminate their public worship.

nate their public worship.

Watts, an English Congregationalist, dared to loosen up. The title of his most widely reprinted collection explained what he hoped to accomplish: the *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and apply'd to the Christian State and Worship*. Early American editions of Watts's *Psalms of David* included a text from Luke 24:44 to justify a kind of paraphrasing combined with original writing that many at the time regarded as dangerously radical: “All things must be fulfilled which were written in . . . the Psalms concerning me.”

OUR ETERNAL HOME

Watts deferred to tradition in the first paraphrase he prepared for Psalm 90. Its rendering was freer than what the *Bay Psalm Book* authors attempted, but not by much:

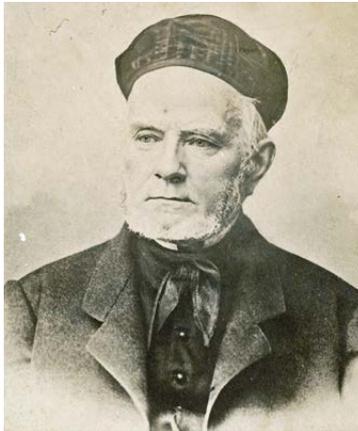
Through every Age, Eternal God,
Thou art our Rest, our safe Abode;
High was thy Throne e'er Heaven was made,
Or Earth thy humble Foot-stool laid.

Wherever the Christian faith has taken root, the history of the Bible and the history of hymnody have grown up together. This synergy existed from the beginning in America. A printing press in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the North American colonies' first such enterprise, published the *Bay Psalm Book* as its very first work. This metrical paraphrase of the Psalms appeared in 1640 and was then reprinted over 30 times during the next century and a half.

The *Bay Psalm Book's* popularity meant that when New England Puritans ventured beyond their primary focus on the Bible itself, their public singing—and often personal reading—was still Scripture in another form. The *Bay Psalm Book's* paraphrased translation, made directly from the Hebrew, was the work of three university-educated ministers, including John Eliot, who would later labor to translate the Bible into Algonquian (see pp. 32, 36).

The *Bay Psalm Book* has often been criticized for its clunky style, as in its rendering of Psalm 23:

The Lord to mee a shepherd is,
want therefore shall not I.



CLOUD OF VOCAL WITNESSES
Isaac Watts, Richard Allen,
Fanny J. Crosby, and Lowell
Mason (clockwise from left)
all mined the riches of Scrip-

Yet when his second treatment of the same psalm moved further from the literal, he gave English speakers a hymn that remains iconic to this day:

Our God, our Help in Ages past,
Our Hope for Years to come,
Our Shelter from the stormy Blast,
And our eternal Home.

Other hymns in the same collection drew out Christian meanings from psalms even more explicitly. Psalm 96 as rendered by the KJV begins, “O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.” For Watts it became:

Joy to the world, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her king:
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav’n and nature sing.

Many of Watts’s American contemporaries agreed that this move beyond strict biblical paraphrase actually made hymns more effective for driving home the central message of the Bible. As a pastor in Northampton, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) spoke for those in agreement.

Edwards (see pp. 11–13) was an early supporter of reforms transforming the soundscape of New England churches from the 1720s on—moving from “usual” singing (psalms lined out and sung haphazardly) to “regular” singing (psalms sung in harmony, sometimes with instrumental accompaniment). In just a few more years, Edwards’s congregation not only embraced the newer way of singing psalms, they included the newer hymns as well. In 1742 he authorized replacing one of the three psalms normally sung in the Sunday service with a hymn by Watts because he “saw in the people a very general inclination to it”—in fact, so much of an inclination that his congregation would

ture to write and publish hymns and songs sung in the American church.

have been willing to shift over entirely to the new hymns. Edwards’s response was to mix the new with the old, which produced a blended worship that, as he saw it, gave “universal satisfaction.”

Two years later Edwards published a defense of the new hymns—specifically how their use could vivify the Bible’s most important message. Edwards argued that Scripture nowhere prohibits hymns of ordinary human creation any more than it prohibits prayers of ordinary human creation. Positively considered, Edwards said that it was “really needful that we should have some other songs besides the Psalms of David,” especially to express “the greatest and most glorious things of the Gospel, that are infinitely the great subjects of [the church’s] praise.”

Rather than singing always “under a veil” where “the name of our glorious Redeemer” was never mentioned directly (i.e., the Psalms), Edwards understood the hymns of Watts as strengthening core biblical teaching about salvation in Christ.

LIBERATED HYMNODY

Throughout the rest of the British Empire, others were moving farther and faster in following the same logic. It was the era when Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), John Cennick (1718–1755), Anne Steele (1717–1778), John Newton (1725–1807), William Cowper (1731–1800), Augustus Toplady (1740–1778), and especially Charles

ANONYMOUS, ISAAC WATTS, BEFORE 1699, OIL ON CANVAS—NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY / [PUBLIC DOMAIN] WIKIMEDIA
 PORTRAIT OF RICHARD ALLEN, SHOWN WITH HIS WIFE, WITH REVEREND FATHER JOHN WATTS, 1830, OIL ON CANVAS—MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF BOSTON / [PUBLIC DOMAIN] WIKIMEDIA
 OLIVER DITSON, LOWELL MASON (1867 TO 1900), PRINTED PORTRAIT ON CARDBOARD, OLIVER DITSON & CO., BOSTON / [PUBLIC DOMAIN] WIKIMEDIA
 PORTRAIT FROM FANNY CROSBY’S LIFE STORY, BY HERSELF, 1893—[PUBLIC DOMAIN] HYMNODOLOGY ARCHIVE

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Singing from Scripture: some examples

From the *Bay Psalm Book*

Psalm 1. O Blessed man, that in the advice
of wicked doeth not walk:
nor stand in sinners way, nor sit
in chair of scornful folk.
But in the law of Jehovah
is his longing delight:
and in his law doth meditate,
by day and eke by night.

Psalm 100. Make ye a joyful sounding noise
unto Jehovah, all the earth:
Serve ye Jehovah with gladness:
before his presence come with mirth.

From Isaac Watts's *Psalms of David*

Psalm 23

The Lord my Shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied;
Since he is mine and I am his,
What can I want beside?
He leads me to the place
Where heav'nly pasture grows,
Where living waters gently pass,
And full salvation flows.
If e'er I go astray,
He doth my Soul reclaim;
And guides me in his own right way,
For his most holy name.
While he affords his aid
I cannot yield to fear;
Though I should walk through death's dark shade,
My Shepherd's with me there.
In sight of all my foes,
Thou dost my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows,
And joy exalts my head.
The bounties of thy love
Shall crown my following days;
Nor from thy house will I remove,
Nor cease to speak thy praise.

Some twentieth-century songs drawn directly from Scripture

"As the deer panteth for the water" (Psalm 42:1–2)
"Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33)
"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever" (Psalm 89:1)
"The Lord bless you and keep you" (Numbers 6:24–26)
"Our God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7)
—Collected by Mark A. Noll and the editors



Wesley (1707–1788) made the expansion of popular hymnody coterminous with the spread of evangelical religion. A hymnody liberated from strict biblical paraphrase, but still fully dependent on the Scriptures, resulted.

To be sure this liberation led to some hymns from which biblical content faded almost entirely away. But three landmark American collections show how hymnody that depends on Scripture but is liberated from strict paraphrase made biblical truth come alive for congregations as they sang and for individuals reading or recalling music with lyrics sealed in their hearts.

COMPANION FOR THE PIOUS

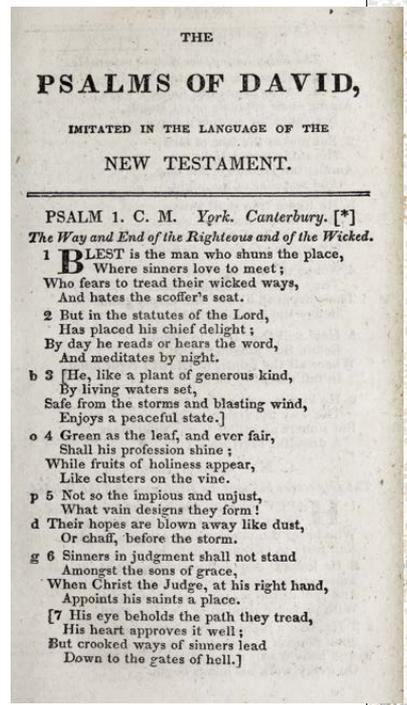
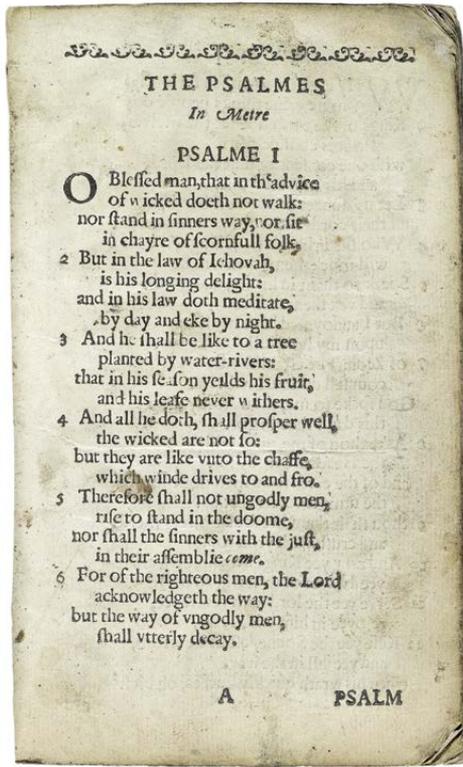
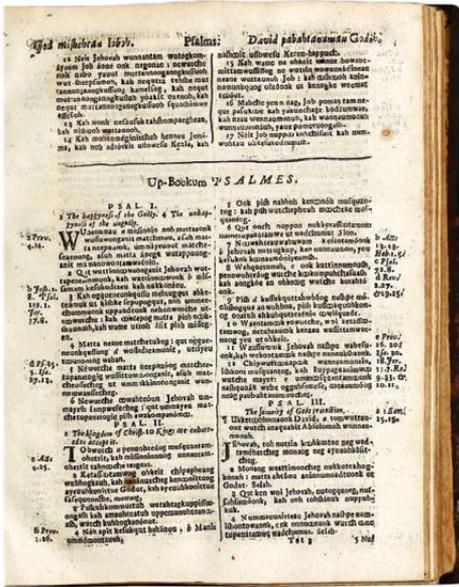
The first of these collections is the *Pocket Hymn-Book: Designed as a Constant Companion for the Pious Collected from Various Authors*. The United States' early history witnessed one of the most dramatic expansions of Christian churches in the modern era, an expansion driven especially by Methodists. Historian David Hempton observed that "the most distinctive, characteristic, and ubiquitous feature of the Methodist message, indeed of the entire Methodist revival, was its transmission by means of hymns and hymn singing."

These Methodist hymns feature the Bible from first to last. Methodists published a plethora of worship aids, but none as widely used as the *Pocket Hymn-Book*. Expanding slightly from year to year (285 hymns in 1790, 320 in 1817), it was priced to sell (50 cents in 1800, around \$11 today) and may have touched more American homes in that era than any book except the Bible itself.

The collection opens with a selection by Charles Wesley, whom historian Frank Baker once described as a kind of walking concordance: "His verse is an enormous sponge filled to saturation with Bible words, Bible similes, Bible metaphors, Bible stories, Bible ideas." This opening hymn, originally 18 stanzas, appears as an abridgement that many others would also reprint and begins memorably:

O for a thousand tongues to sing [Ps. 119:172],
My dear Redeemer's praise!

"INFANT VOICES SHALL PROCLAIM" Even children sang hymns, as this engraving (*above*) in *Hymns for Sunday Schools* (1828) shows.



The glories of my God and King [Ps. 145:1],
The triumphs of his grace!

Each of the later verses carries on with more Scripture in song:

He breaks the power of cancell'd sin,
He sets the prisoner free [Is. 61:1];
His blood can make the foulest clean [Is. 1:18],
His blood avail'd for me [Gal. 2:20, loosely].

As Methodists sang these hymns, soon followed by Protestants of all sorts (and from the mid-twentieth century by Catholics as well), scriptural phrases, scriptural allusions, and (most important) scriptural teaching filled the consciousness of those who sang.

MORE SPIRITUAL SONGS

Two other nineteenth-century hymnbooks, which differ in almost every other way, illustrate the same biblical grounding and a similar capacity to inculcate biblical teaching. Richard Allen (1760–1831), founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, published two editions of *A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1801). Its 64 hymns appear without introduction, indexes, or users' helps of any kind.

Just as different is the *Sabbath Hymnbook* of 1858, edited by the nation's premier composer of church music, Lowell Mason (1792–1872); with the president and leading professor of Andover Seminary, Austin Phelps (1820–1890); and Edwards Amasa Park (1808–1900).

This large and sophisticated book contains 1,290 hymns plus another 24 doxologies along with chants for 57 psalms, as well as an extensive introduction and seven indexes spread over 131 tightly printed pages. It came to the public by seven different publishers from five cities and was accompanied by a tune book and a hymnal with text and tunes.

One of the book's indexes, however, reveals the *Sabbath Hymnbook's* close kinship with Richard Allen's humble effort—a 17-page “Index of Passages of the Scriptures,”

FIRST IN PROSE AND FIRST IN VERSE John Eliot was responsible for translating both the Algonquian Bible (left) and the *Bay Psalm Book* (above).

“GREEN AS THE LEAF, AND EVER FAIR” Looking at the changes from Psalm 1 in the *Bay Psalm Book* to Isaac Watts's *Psalms of David* (right), we can see the transition from paraphrase to Bible-inspired poetry.

with thousands of references specifying direct biblical sources for the hymns. The editors wrote self-consciously about their dependence on Scripture, so much so, they said, that “at one time, [they were] somewhat inclined to arrange the hymns of this volume according to the Biblical sources whence they were derived.”

Richard Allen offered no explanation for his selection of hymns, but his reliance on the Bible was every bit as thorough as the *Sabbath Hymnbook*. One hymn, written by an enslaved author, directly addresses an individual who sings,

O that I had a bosom friend
To tell my secrets to...
How do I wander up and down,
And no one pities me.

In answer the hymn offers an extended versification of John 15:13–14—“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” To the friendless soul, the hymn addresses these words:

Did Christ expire upon the cross
And is he not thy friend? ...
The Saviour is thy real friend,
Constant and true and good.



“OUR HOPE FOR YEARS TO COME” Congregations and choirs have continued to sing Scripture in song through the years—as seen in a 2016 Sacred Harp singing convention (left) and this 1922 recording of Watts’s hymn on Psalm 90 (below).

before that dreadful day” (Matt. 24:6); the harvest “in danger of wasting away” (Luke 10:2); “the Lord in clouds descending” (Rev. 1:7). In a fashion foreign to the strict apoliticism of White Methodists of the era, this hymn also contains social references calling “the land” and “the nation” to:

Turn and find salvation
While now he offers you free grace.



AIDING IN THE CLOSET

For its part the *Sabbath Hymnbook*—from its opening three hymns, which paraphrase the Lord’s Prayer, to the final section of psalms marked for chanting—offered extended meditations on the biblical themes prominent in British evangelicalism and most American denominations.

Whether canonical authors of eighteenth-century English evangelicalism or contemporary voices from Scotland and the United States, the book’s authors were unified in constant, creative, and meditative engagement with Scripture.

The editors hoped their collection would be used first for Sunday worship, but also, in keeping with how such books had long functioned, “to aid in the more private social devotions, in the conference room, the family, and the closet.” In their hymns, like those of Richard Allen, they wrote that “we have aimed to furnish a book of real life.”

And so it has continued. Anchorage in Scripture is not always as obvious in hymn lyrics from the last century and a half, though the recent boom in worship songs includes many examples that bring congregational singing back at least partially to the paraphrases of the *Bay Psalm Book*.

As believers sing from Lamentations 3:22 (“Great is thy faithfulness”) to hearten souls under pressure, from Luke 23:42 (“Jesus, remember me”) to seek God’s mercy, or from Isaiah 55:12 (“The trees of the field will clap their hands”) to express their joy in the Lord, the written Word of God comes freshly alive. Hymn writers harvest the Scriptures for spiritual encouragement, and, as believers are nourished by the hymns, they are sent back to the Bible. **GH**

Mark A. Noll is research professor of history at Regent College, professor emeritus of history at the University of Notre Dame, and author of In the Beginning Was the Word, America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln and America’s Book: The Rise and Decline of a Bible Civilization.

Allen wrote a decidedly Methodist book, but with several features explicitly directing it for the sons and daughters of Africa. With an eye to this main audience, hymns include references to the Exodus that freed Israel from enslavement in Egypt. Two elaborate on Jesus’s story of the rich man who scorns Lazarus, the beggar at his gate.

Most revealing is a hymn that Allen probably wrote himself. This 14-stanza composition begins with scriptural phrases making a standard Methodist appeal:

See! how the nations rage together!
Seeking of each others blood;
See how the Scriptures are fulfilling!
Sinners awake and turn to God.

Then Allen riffed on a profusion of biblical material: “the fig-tree budding” (Matt. 24:32–35), “wars...to come

SACRED HARP SINGERS—IMAGE ©JAMES GURNEY, BOSP, 2016. ISAAC WATTS, TRINITY MALE CHOIR, “OH GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST,” 1922. VICTOR, VINYL RECORD—LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Old book in a new world

THE STORY OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS IN AMERICA CENTERS AROUND THE KJV

Chris R. Armstrong

In 1630 Massachusetts founding governor John Winthrop (1588–1649)—of “city on a hill” sermon fame (see *CH* #138)—brought his own personal copy of the King James Version ashore: the first known KJV on American soil. But this was something of an aberration; a solid majority of the earliest colonists preferred their Puritan-friendly Geneva Bible. In fact, given the popularity of that version at the time, Winthrop’s KJV seemed destined to remain a mere curiosity.

Within two decades, however, the KJV was well on its way to becoming The Bible of the New World. As the Geneva ceased publication in 1644, British-printed KJVs flowed into American churches, homes, and libraries. And when, in the late 1700s, KJVs began issuing from American presses, the floodgates opened.

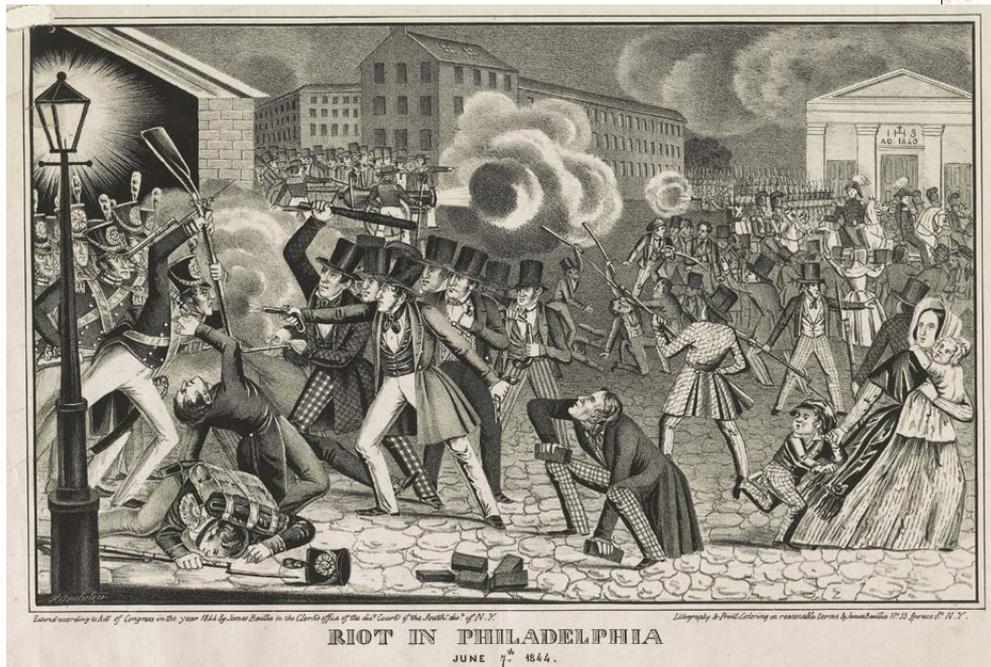
By the 1800s American editions numbered in the millions, and the KJV was singing its cadences through the greatest American novels, shaping the solemn phrases of presidential speeches, and changing the American language itself with hundreds of new idiomatic phrases.

Beloved above all in the churches, the KJV became so dominant by the 1900s that in 1936, a scholar complained that many Americans “seemed to think that the King James Version is the original Bible which God handed down out of heaven, all done up in English by the Lord himself.”

1777 saw the first publication of the KJV on American soil, a New Testament printed by Robert Aitken (1734–1802) of Philadelphia during the Revolution. Four years later he released his full Bible after petitioning Congress for support in his enterprise (they granted it). Aitken printed 10,000 copies. But the Aitken Bible struggled against better-printed, cheaper editions shipped from England—in fact, he took a significant financial hit on the project, losing over £3,000.

REVIVALS AND BIBLES

American Bible publishing broke wide open with the dawning of the 1790s, when came the first stirring of

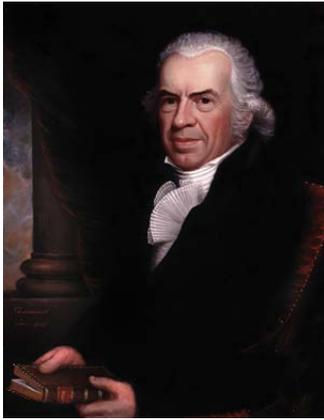


NOT KEEPING THE PEACE This 1844 engraving shows Philadelphians rioting over the use (or not) of the KJV in public schools (see p. 30).

renewed revivalism since the Great Awakening of the 1740s. These would quickly build into a veritable evangelistic tidal wave (see pp. 11–13).

First came emotional frontier camp meetings in places like Cane Ridge, Kentucky; then the aggressive revivalism of Charles Finney (1792–1875) in the “burned-over district” of upstate New York; a sudden eruption in the late 1850s of noontime prayer-and-testimony meetings in major East Coast cities; and the genteel but power-packed midcentury parlor meetings and camp meetings of Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874) and her Wesleyan Holiness colleagues. Eventually the movement culminated in the late-century mass evangelism and Bible conferences of D. L. Moody (1837–1899). Countless conversions and a boom in church growth created a nationwide thirst for more Bibles.

By 1800 Americans could acquire 70 different printings from the presses in 11 different towns; by 1840 more than a thousand printings. One who capitalized early on the Bible-publishing boom was craftsman-scholar Isaiah Thomas (1749–1831). This self-educated



printer, one of Paul Revere's group of riders, made himself the leading publisher and bookseller after the Revolution. He printed magazines, an almanac, the first dictionary in America, and what he hoped would be the first "completely correct" KJV—with and without the Apocrypha according to taste. (It is a myth that Protestant Bibles did not include the apocryphal books, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century.)

Thomas's most remarkable innovation, though, was his unique payment arrangement. Seven dollars, the price of his Bible, was a lot of money in those days. So Thomas agreed to take up to half of that payment in "Wheat, Rye, Indian Corn, Butter, or Pork."

Despite Thomas's valiant attempts at precision, it was the 1791 Bible of Delaware Quaker Isaac Collins (1746–1817) that became the standard for accuracy. It

"COMPLETELY CORRECT" Isaiah Thomas (*left*) hoped that the KJV he printed in 1791 would be free of errors in printing.

included a longer concordance, frequent marginal notes and, between the two testaments, a detailed account of the basic argument of each book in the Bible. It also deleted the standard dedication to King James and put in its place an address to the reader by John Witherspoon (1723–1794), president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University) who served for six years as a congressman. Nearly a dozen other Bibles or New Testaments were produced in America during the years 1791 and 1792.

A BIBLE FOR EVERY AMERICAN

By the early 1800s, multiple versions of the KJV inundated the market. Mason Weems (1759–1825), famous for making up the story about George Washington and the cherry tree, sometimes earned his living as a traveling Bible salesman. Shortly after 1800 Weems wrote from Virginia to his publisher in Philadelphia about

Rioting over the Bible

DEEP SORROW Bishop Francis Kenrick of Philadelphia published a call to repentance after the May riot.

St. Augustine's during May and July of 1844. Firemen, under orders from the anti-immigrant "Know Nothing" Party, let the buildings burn.

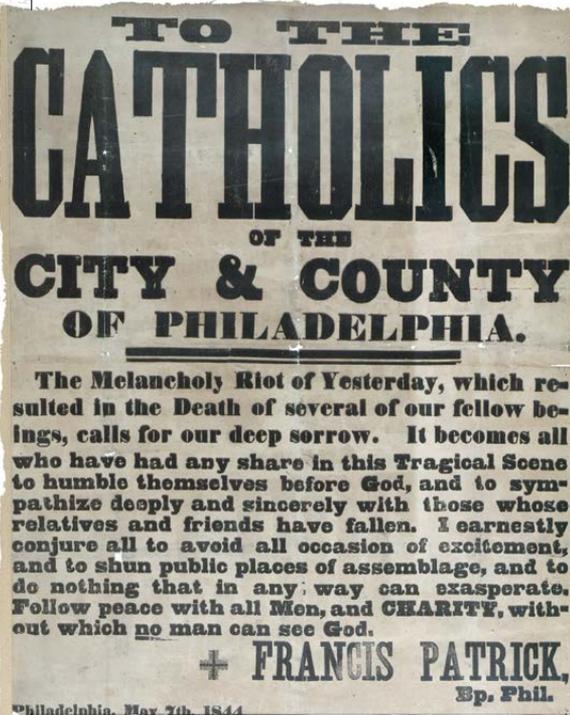
This was not the first act of terror against Catholics; in 1834 an angry Boston mob had burned down a convent because of Catholic protests against required readings from the Protestant KJV in public schools. Earlier in 1844 Roman Catholics in New York had objected to the reading of the KJV in their schools, which inflamed the Know Nothings in a crusade against Irish Catholics in Philadelphia, and a rumor spread that Catholics wanted the KJV removed from public schools.

Francis Patrick Kenrick, Catholic bishop of Philadelphia, defended his flock: "Catholics have not asked that the Bible be excluded from public

schools. They have merely desired for their children the liberty of using the Catholic version...." But tensions remained high, and riots soon erupted.

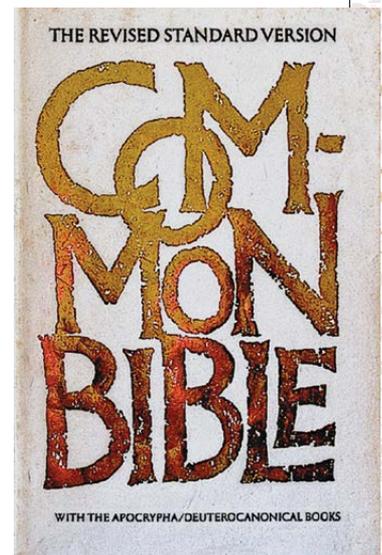
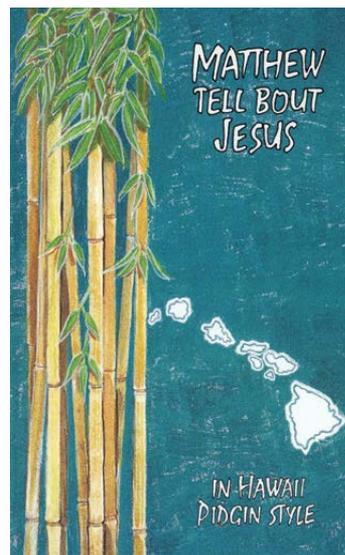
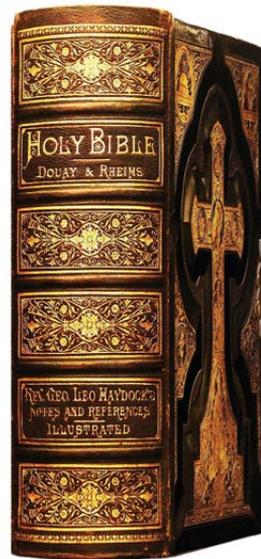
These "Bible Wars" did not end in the 1840s. In 1886 Catholic parents in Edgerton, Wisconsin, petitioned their local school board to stop daily readings from the KJV. After failing to convince the board, the parents took the case to court; the circuit court decided that the readings were not sectarian because the KJV and Catholic translations were of the same work.

The parents appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In the famous action known as the Edgerton Bible Case in 1890, the judges overruled the circuit court as illegally uniting the functions of church and state and forbade local school boards to mandate readings from the KJV.—*Ann T. Snyder, adapted from a longer article in CH #100*



On a spring night in 1844, the men and boys of St. Patrick's parish in Philadelphia manned the roof of their church, rifles in hand, waiting for an anticipated attack that never came. St. Patrick's was spared, but other churches were not: Flames of hatred engulfed St. Michael's and

THE WORD IN MANY WORDS
Some other translations used in the United States have included (clockwise from top left) the Douay-Rheims (the main Catholic translation), Hawaiian Pidgin, the Revised Standard Version (see p. 1), the New International Version, and a Cree translation.



the various KJV editions he was retailing:

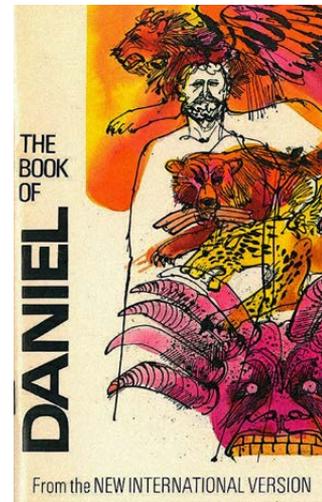
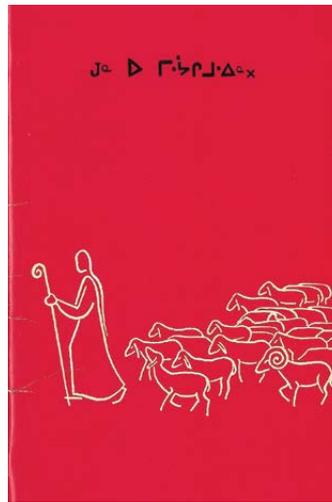
I tell you this is the very season and age of the Bible. Bible Dictionaries, Bible tales, Bible stories—Bibles plain or paraphrased, Carey’s Bibles, Collins’ Bibles, Clarke’s Bibles, Kimptor’s Bibles, no matter what or whose, all, all, will go down—so wide is the crater of public appetite at this time.

Crucial to this mushrooming growth of Bible sales were new Bible societies founded in America in the 1800s, along with associated Sunday school and tract societies. Many such societies were local groups of citizens who bought Bibles at cost for resale to their neighbors. Their goal: to put a Bible in the hands of every American.

When in 1816, 34 of these societies joined to form the American Bible Society, they launched into achieving this goal with a will. The ABS printed the King James Version in almost 60 different forms by 1850. Its output in 1829 alone was an astounding 360,000 Bibles—at a time when first editions of books usually topped out at around 2,000! In 1845 that number increased to over 417,000; in each year of the 1860s, the ABS printed over a million Bibles.

Such powerhouses were Bible publishers in America during the 1800s that they drove technical innovations in their industry: paper quality improved, stereotypes replaced costly standing type, power presses multiplied output, and in-house binding reduced costs.

Of course someone had to sell all these Bibles, and the 1840s saw the innovation of the “colporteur”—the door-to-door Bible salesman. The ABS soon employed a national network of these hardy folks, and other publishers followed suit. What version poured from America’s presses during those heady days? Almost exclusively the KJV. Of the more than a thousand different editions of the English Bible (or New Testament) published from 1840 to 1900, only a handful were not KJVs—and most of those were Catholic Douay-Rheims editions or editions directly from the Vulgate.



LEGACY OF A VERSION

From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, it seems that the age of the KJV is finally passing in America. Of course many of the reasons the KJV was a blessing to the church also apply to the cornucopia of new translations: It is always good to have Bibles that speak to the people in a language they can both understand and relate to (see sidebar, p. 9).

But along with this benefit comes the confusion of such a multitude of tongues claiming to best speak the language of Scripture. Will any Bible translation again have the cultural and moral influence in America that the KJV once had? Perhaps because “for everything there is a season” (Ecclesiastes 3:10, KJV), a new translation will arise for this new season. **GI**

Chris R. Armstrong is senior editor of Christian History and a program fellow at the Kern Family Foundation. He is the author of Medieval Wisdom for Modern Christians and Patron Saints for Postmoderns. This article is adapted from a longer one in issue #100.

• 1884 ANTIQUE FAMILY CATHOLIC BIBLE LEO HAYDOCK DOUAY & RHEIMS. 22 KT GOLD.—© MYRICOSI / FLICKR
• HAWAIIAN PIDGIN MATTHEW.—© BIBLE_WIKI / FLICKR • RSV COMMON BIBLE.—© BIBLE_WIKI / FLICKR
• COASTAL CREE JOHN COVER.—© BIBLE_WIKI / FLICKR • NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, DANIEL.—© BIBLE_WIKI / FLICKR

Attackers and defenders

HOW “HIGHER CRITICISM” DEVELOPED, CAME TO AMERICA, AND PROVOKED A RESPONSE

James C. Ungureanu

By the early twentieth century, it seemed the Bible was in trouble. Civil history, geology, paleontology, biblical criticism, evolutionary biology, and anthropology offered powerful alternative explanations of the world and humanity’s place in it. Three possible responses arose—to abandon the Bible altogether as an authoritative source for knowledge about the world, to attempt to reconcile science and scholarship with the Bible, or to reject anything that seems to compromise the Bible’s authority.

INNER TRUTH

These trends touched America, but they had begun much earlier with English deists of the seventeenth century such as Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648), and Conyers Middleton (1683–1750). They vehemently protested the established church, condemning revealed religion in general and Christianity in particular. German thinkers built on these foundations.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) declared his age “an age of criticism” and called readers to reject the authority of the church and the Bible. Kant embodied the spirit of the Enlightenment in Germany. At first many philosophers still proclaimed orthodoxy while exalting reason, rather than church authority or tradition, as the final arbiter of truth.

But soon this dependence on reason reached beyond orthodoxy. German dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) believed the “true Christian” remains safe by depending on “inner truth” rather than “written traditions” and was deeply troubled by the idea that transcendent revelation could cross the “ugly broad ditch” of history into human experience. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the father of liberal Protestant theology, redefined religion as an immediate feeling of absolute dependence on God.

This continuing separation of faith from reason allowed nineteenth-century German “neologians” to favor philological and historical readings of the Bible—arguing radical positions such as that the Pentateuch has no genuine historical material at all.

By the early 1830s, the Tübingen School arose. These thinkers were influenced largely by theologian



BURNING IT DOWN This cartoon imagines influential skeptics Joseph Priestley and Thomas Paine plotting radical attacks under satanic influence.

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), who had adopted the philosophy of Georg Hegel (1770–1831) that history is a struggle between opposing forces, inexorably generating the *Geist*, or spirit of reason. Baur and his colleagues interpreted each biblical text separately as a product of its particular time and place. Their approach became known as “historical” or “higher” criticism. It would transform academic study of the Scriptures and also provoke considerable controversy.

One of higher criticism’s most controversial developments came when Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) divided the purported literary origins of the Pentateuch into four sources—the J (Yahweh), E (Elohim), D (Deuteronomic), and P (Priestly). This reduced the entire Pentateuch from a unified record of divine revelation to a product of historical change.

Liberal Protestant assumptions about what counted as authentic religion lurked behind Wellhausen’s work. He contrasted the “religion of the letter”—the allegedly dead, ritualistic, and legalistic faith of postexilic Judaism—with the “religion of the spirit”—the fresh and vital belief of the prophets. His deeper (and anti-Semitic)



NEW IDEAS? Archaeological discoveries (above left, hieroglyphs found in 1762) and the ideas of people like Gotthold Lessing and Immanuel Kant (above, l-r) challenged some views of Scripture.

CUT UP Thomas Jefferson is infamously remembered for cutting and pasting his own New Testament (left).

agenda pitted Protestant orthodoxy's seemingly lifeless ritual of creed and ceremony against the vibrant and simple faith of Jesus and the early church.

A more balanced position would emerge in the work of the Cambridge trio J. B. Lightfoot (1828–1889), B. F. Westcott (1825–1901), and F. J. A. Hort (1828–1892). All three devoted themselves to producing a revised Greek New Testament, which became the basis of the Revised Version. These Cambridge scholars remained thoroughly orthodox in their theology and promoted what they called “honest criticism” confirming the truths of Christian faith and the supremacy of Scripture. They influenced American pushback against higher criticism.

LIKE OTHER BOOKS

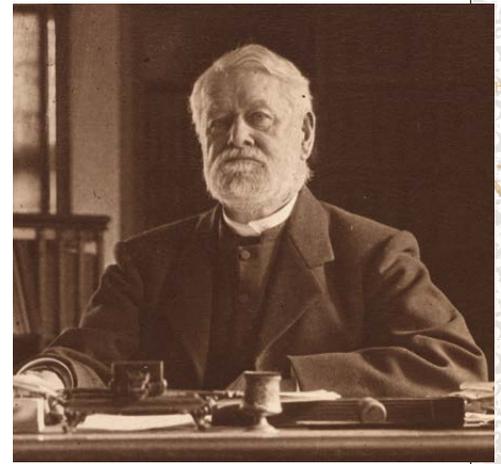
It took some time for higher criticism to reach the United States. Puritan ministers had thoroughly studied Scripture and guided parishioners through it with works such as Cotton Mather's (1663–1728) *Biblia Americana*—6,000 manuscript pages of textual commentary, Jewish antiquities, harmonization of contradictions, and specifications of fulfilled prophecy, all

citing eighteenth-century European scholarship. Yet there had always been protests as well; deists like Ethan Allen (1738–1889) and Thomas Paine (1737–1809) lampooned the Bible and the church in the eighteenth century, and President Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) embraced similar critical views.

In the nineteenth century, an increasing number of Americans crossed the Atlantic to take up advanced study of Scripture in England, France, and especially Germany. Views traveled back. Congregationalist ministers took the lead in popularizing higher criticism. Horace Bushnell (1802–1876) criticized orthodox doctrines and demanded parents discontinue teaching their children Scripture history in his *Discourses of Christian Nurture* (1847). In *Nature and the Supernatural* (1858), Bushnell called readers to reconcile science and religion by adapting religion to the “sturdy facts of science.”

In the early 1880s, Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887) attacked—from the pulpit—the idea that every part of the Bible is divinely inspired. Shortly afterward Lyman Abbott (1835–1922), his successor, asserted in *The Evolution of Christianity* (1892) that historical progress demands that Christians reject traditional doctrines of inspiration.

Despite these developments most Americans' views of the Bible remained largely conservative—most importantly under the influence of Princetonians Charles



Hodge (1797–1878), Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–1886), and B. B. Warfield (1851–1921).

In his *Systematic Theology* (1873), Charles Hodge argued that the Scriptures are “the Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore infallible”—which extended to “statements of facts, whether scientific, historical, or geographical” and in fact to “everything which any sacred writer asserts to be true.” Warfield articulated the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, which became the theological mainstay for the early fundamentalist movement.

Nevertheless German theology continued to make inroads, even among more conservative thinkers such as Swiss-born theologian and church historian Philip Schaff (1819–1893), who helped professionalize the US academic field of biblical studies. While Schaff remained cautious regarding higher criticism, he adopted a Hegelian faith in historical progress and development, which he tried to combine with his Christian beliefs.

One of Schaff’s younger colleagues, Charles Briggs (1841–1913), studied in Berlin and observed that the German critics, though “too much influenced by rationalism” had “thought more deeply and candidly . . . and seen the difficulties and tried to grapple with them, whereas we have overlooked them or passed them by without examination.” Briggs’s ideas led to a heresy trial in his home Presbyterian denomination. After being defrocked, he joined the Episcopal Church.

A SCIENTIFIC METHOD

In 1892 William Rainey Harper (1856–1906), a noted Hebrew scholar, founded the new University of Chicago. Next to Briggs, Harper was the most prominent advocate for higher criticism in the country, arguing that the new university should be free from “ideas that have been dead for decades” just as the church should be liberated from “dogmas of which the real meaning has been forgotten.” The Chicago approach centered on a so-called scientific method, looking at Scripture from philological, exegetical, historical, and sociological perspectives.

CRITIQUING CRITICS Charles Hodge (*left*) and his son A. A. Hodge (*above*) held the conservative position; Charles Briggs (*right*) staked out a middle ground.

By the twentieth century, the new criticism had shifted to naturalistic principles and completely excluded supernatural events such as miracles and prophecy. Skeptical thinkers now concluded that the mediating positions of liberal theologians were nothing more than a loss of nerve. Joseph McCabe (1867–1955), ex-Catholic priest turned atheist, argued in *The Bankruptcy of Religion* (1917) that higher criticism had wrongheadedly tried to preserve religion and theology against the unstoppable march of science; for him the Old Testament was childlike and demonstrably wrong, with “numerous palpable blunders and inconsistencies” and Christ was “a human and fallible person.”

Fundamentalists pushed back. This movement took its name from the pamphlet series *The Fundamentals*, 90 essays published from 1910 to 1915 to defend traditional Christianity against higher criticism, evolution, and liberal theology. In 1910 conservative Presbyterians identified five fundamentals that guided the movement: inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, Christ’s bodily Resurrection, and the historicity of miracles. In the tradition of both Hodges and Warfield, J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937) attacked higher criticism and its relationship to liberal theology in the influential *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). He left Princeton in 1929 to help found the conservative Westminster Theological Seminary

Today those who read the Bible remain divided between these three positions—abandoning the Bible altogether, attempting to reconcile science and scholarship with the Bible, or rejecting anything that compromises its authority. The battle is still fierce, and the stakes remain eternal. **GH**

James C. Ungureanu is adjunct lecturer at Braniff Graduate School of Liberal Arts at the University of Dallas, and the author of Science, Religion, and the Protestant Tradition: Retracing the Origins of Conflict.

Preaching the gospel remedy

TEACHERS, TRANSLATORS, AND THEOLOGIANS WHOSE IDEAS
ECHO INTO THE PRESENT

Jennifer A. Boardman



WILLIAM BRADFORD (c. 1590–1657)

Born in Yorkshire, England, Bradford was orphaned young and developed a love for the Bible from an early age. As a teenager he joined the Separatists, who sought to return to the way of the early Christians and unburden themselves from what they viewed as the ritual trappings of the Church of England. They escaped persecution from King James I, living in the Netherlands for more than 10 years.

Eventually the king granted a group of Separatists permission to settle in the Americas. Bradford and his wife, Dorothy, traveled aboard the *Mayflower* in 1620, landing near Cape Cod. Bradford was one of 41 men who signed the “Mayflower Compact,” the first governing document of their new settlement, Plymouth Colony. Half of the *Mayflower* passengers died that first winter, including Dorothy.

ON GUARD This statue of Bradford stands in Plymouth today; he contributed politically to early colonization and also helped frame the experience theologically.

Bradford became first elected governor of the colony in 1621 and went on to serve (off and on) for more than 35 years.

As he governed Bradford also took to his pen to record the early years of the colony, including the *Mayflower* journey. *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the result, is a detailed journal account of settlement life from 1620 to 1646 (see *CH* issue #138). Bradford echoed the Israelites’ adversities in his account of those faced by the Pilgrims, looking to the Bible for both understanding and comfort:

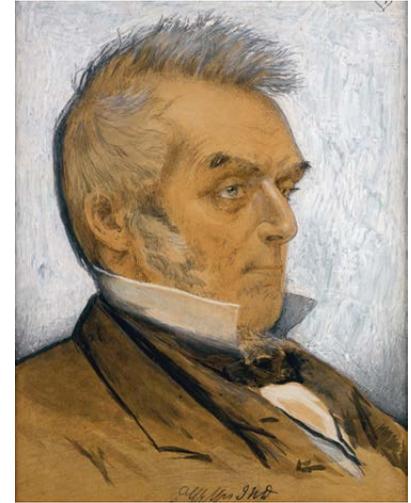
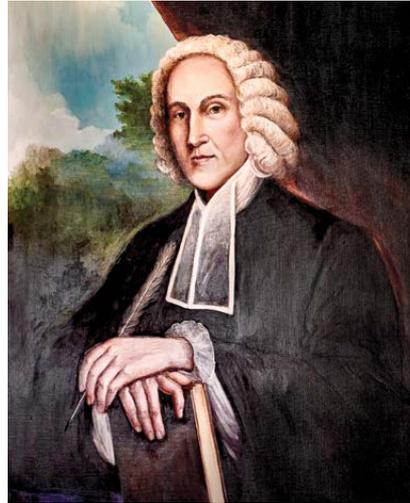
Ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: “Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto ye Lord, and He heard their voyce, and looked on their adversitie.” Let them therefore praise ye Lord, because He is good, and His mercies endure for ever.

JOHN ELIOT (c. 1604–1690)

John Eliot (see p. 32) was born to a wealthy family in England, graduated from Cambridge in 1622, and fled to Massachusetts in 1631 to escape persecution for his Puritan faith. He became the pastor of First Church in Roxbury and married Hanna Mumford the following year. Eliot’s 1640 *Bay Psalm Book*—an edition of the Psalms written in metrical verse—has the distinction of being the first book published in America.

Eliot had a heart for indigenous American peoples, wishing to evangelize them in their native language. English settlers had captured a Montaukett man named Cockenoe in 1637 during the Pequot War, and he became a servant of a local fur trader. Cockenoe helped Eliot translate the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and other passages of the Bible into the Wampanoag language.

Eliot continued to learn Wampanoag and began preaching in the language in 1647. He also began to translate sermons into Wampanoag, functionally helping to create a written alphabet for a people who mostly used oral and pictographic language. In 1663 Eliot published the *Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God*, called in English the *Algonquian Bible*. It was both the first translation of the Bible into an indigenous American language and the first Bible published in the Americas.



THREE JOHNS AND REVELATION John Eliot, Jonathan Edwards, and John Nelson Darby (*above, l-r*) all influenced American biblical engagement—Eliot through translations, Edwards through sermons and writings, and Darby through the popularization of his theology by Cyrus Scofield.

Eliot's ministry was not perfect: the "praying Indians" often had to leave behind their culture and conform to English ways to be baptized. But Eliot, the "Apostle to the Indians," continued to minister to and love the indigenous people until his death in 1690.

JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703–1758)

The only son in a family of 11 children, Jonathan Edwards was born in Connecticut in 1703. He started at Yale at age 12 and there developed his love for nature and natural philosophy. While gaining in scientific knowledge pushed some in his era away from traditional Christianity, Edwards found in nature God's glorious design for the world.

In 1727 Edwards was ordained as the minister of the church in Northampton, Massachusetts. Later that same year, Edwards married Sarah Pierpont (1710–1758), and the couple had 11 children. He began preaching on the need for individual faith, which started a storm of conversions leading to a revival in 1734. Though many who had not met him assumed Edwards was a demonstrative preacher, a witness recalled,

He scarcely gestured or even moved, and he made no attempt by the elegance of his style . . . [instead he persuaded people] with overwhelming weight of argument and with such intenseness of feeling.

Though Edwards preached quietly, attendees often swooned and clamored, which conservative Congregationalist ministers openly criticized. News of Edwards's preaching reached England; English preacher George Whitefield (1714–1770) soon addressed congregations throughout Massachusetts, including Edwards's own church. The revival quickened.

Edwards believed that only individuals who had made personal professions of faith could take Communion, a stance his church rejected. So in 1751 he became pastor of a church in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, while also ministering to local Native Americans. He died in 1758 as a result of a smallpox inoculation.

JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800–1882)

John Nelson Darby was born in London to a well-known landowning Anglo-Irish family. At both Westminster School and Trinity College, Darby grew in his Christian faith, and after practicing law for four years, he switched courses to become a priest in the Church of Ireland. He loved ministering to his parishioners, though he quickly became jaded with the state church. He later wrote,

It is positively stated that the church would fail and become as bad as heathenism. The Christian is directed to turn away from evil and turn to the Scriptures, and Christ is revealed as judging the state of the churches.

Several years after becoming a priest, Darby quit to unite with other disenchanted Christians in a group simply called "Brethren" (later the Plymouth Brethren). They had no minister, desired to abide by the Holy Spirit, and rejected denominationalism. In 1828 he wrote *The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ*, and he spread his form of anti-denominationalism throughout churches in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

In addition to Darby's view of ecclesiology, his followers were attracted to his understanding of history, especially the end of history. He believed that in history, God revealed his plan progressively, resulting in seven different "dispensations": Paradise, Noah, Abraham, Israel, Gentiles, the Spirit, and the Millennium. In his literal biblical interpretation, Darby asserted that Christ would take up believers in the rapture, and Christ would return with all his saints in his Second Coming. Darby's dispensationalism became widely known in North America through Cyrus Scofield's Scofield Reference Bible (first released in 1909), and it remains a



READ THE WORD Emma Dryer (*left*) and William Cameron Townsend (*below*) had a heart for bringing the Bible to people—Dryer as a Bible teacher and Townsend as a translator.

training 17 people as ministers of the gospel for her Bible Work of Chicago organization.

In 1888 Dryer's Bible Work joined the Chicago Evangelization Society (its creation was a group effort that included Moody and other local Christian leaders). Within a year, however, Dryer decided to separate her organization from Moody's over differences of opinion. Despite the break Moody said that Dryer was "the best teacher of the Word of God in the United States." Dryer's encouragement, persistence, and organizational skills had helped create the Chicago Evangelization Society, which eventually became the Moody Bible Institute after she left it.

The Chicago Bible Society's Annual Report of 1901 showed the vast dedication Dryer had to the gospel and the people of Chicago. That year Dryer and her 13 coworkers had made more than 13,000 home visits to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and sick. After retiring in 1903, Dryer supported the China Inland Mission and was elected superintendent emeritus of the Bible Workers' Home.

WILLIAM CAMERON TOWNSEND (1896–1982)

Born in Southern California, William Cameron Townsend felt the call early in his life to share the Bible with the people of South America, writing: "The greater need is where the greatest darkness is." In 1917 through the Los Angeles Bible House, Townsend traveled to Guatemala to sell Bibles in Spanish to the local people. He soon discovered, however, that many of the locals did not speak Spanish but instead had their own indigenous languages.

Their Spanish-speaking compatriots considered the indigenous Cakchiquel people ignorant. Townsend, however, was impressed with the people when they put to him a question: is the God of the Bible only God to people who speak English and Spanish?

Townsend believed God had sent him on a new mission. For a decade he dedicated his time to learning, creating an alphabet for, and translating the New Testament into the Cakchiquel language. He also set up a school, a medical clinic, and an agricultural supply store. Townsend believed that only addressing the spiritual needs of the people is insufficient; he wanted to help meet their physical needs as well.

Although Townsend cherished his work with the Cakchiquel people, he knew thousands of other language groups were without the Bible. In 1934 he started Camp Wycliffe to train people to translate the Bible into these languages. Camp Wycliffe quickly grew and is today Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Townsend once said, "The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is



popular view of the end times among conservative evangelicals today. (For more on Darby, see CH 128.)

EMMA DRYER (1835–1925)

Born in Massachusetts and orphaned young, Emma Dryer grew up with her aunt, who made sure Dryer had a thorough biblical education. She went on to graduate from a women's college in New York, after which she taught astronomy and math for two years, became the principal at a women's college in Illinois, and later taught grammar and drawing at what is now Illinois State University in Bloomington, Illinois.

In 1870 Dryer moved to Chicago and became actively involved in charity and mission work. She ministered to inmates in local jails, became the superintendent of the YWCA, and helped spread the gospel through her church connections. D. L. Moody (1837–1891) heard of Dryer's ministry work and was in awe of her learning and Bible knowledge. They mutually encouraged one another in their evangelistic and ministry training work. By 1878 Dryer was

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER, EMMA DRYER, c. 1873, USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
CAMERON TOWNSEND WITH BIBLE—© WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

TEACH THE WORD Carl Henry (left) and Beth Moore (below) became famous for explaining biblical faith to everyday Christians.

never considered a foreigner.” Thanks to his 60 years of service in Latin America, the Bible is accessible to indigenous communities in Guatemala, Peru, Mexico, and Colombia. His two translating organizations continue their work today: 550 languages have the whole Bible, 1,300 have the New Testament, and 1,800 still require a Bible translation.

CARL F. H. HENRY (1913–2003)

The son of German immigrants, Carl F. H. Henry grew up in New York and as a young man pursued a career in journalism. Within a few years of his quick and successful ascent in the newspaper world, however, Henry became a Christian and started attending Wheaton College in Illinois. He went on to get a ThD at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and a PhD at Boston University.

Ordained as a Baptist minister, he served as a professor, helped launch the National Association of Evangelicals, and was cofounder and first acting dean of Fuller Theological Seminary. He also became the first editor-in-chief of the influential *Christianity Today* magazine created by Billy Graham.

As a critic of American fundamentalism, Henry wrote *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1947 as a clarion call to Christians of the time. While he rejected liberal Christianity and held to the truth of the Scriptures, Henry also considered the lack of civil engagement among fundamentalists to be anti-Christian. He believed that to be a Christian is to engage in the conversations society is having, always ready to be a witness for Jesus and intellectually curious about how the gospel interacts with the world.

Henry’s impact on evangelical Christianity was solidified with his six-volume *God, Revelation, and Authority*. Completed in 1983, the series is concerned with biblical revelation and epistemology. Founding dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School Kenneth Kantzer called Henry “the dean of evangelical theologians.” Henry died in 2003 at the age of 90. (For more on Henry, see CH 141.)

BETH MOORE (b. 1957)

Beth Moore was raised in Arkansas in a family dedicated to their Southern Baptist congregation. As a young woman teaching Sunday school, Moore wanted a more thorough biblical education, so she started attending a doctrine class. As she continued her biblical education,



she began to share her own devotionals during the exercise class she taught at her church, First Baptist in Houston. She continued teaching the Bible in a church class, soon bringing in 2,000 women each week. By the 1990s she was teaching at churches throughout South Texas.

In 1994 Lifeway Christian Resources began publishing Moore’s Bible studies, and soon she was holding conferences throughout the United States. The same year she launched Living Proof Ministries, whose motto is “dedicated to encouraging people to come to know and love Jesus Christ through the study of Scripture.” Her studies have been translated into more than 20 languages, she continues to host live conferences, and she teaches the Bible on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

As a child she suffered from sexual abuse and later recalled, “My local church, growing up, saved my life. So many times, my home was my unsafe place. My church was my safe place.” Many were surprised, therefore, when in 2021 Moore declared she was no longer a Southern Baptist. Though Moore expects her conferences to be smaller following her departure from the denomination, she says she remains ready to teach the Bible with gusto: “I am going to serve whoever God puts in front of me.” **CH**

Jennifer A. Boardman is a freelance writer and editor. She holds a master of theological studies from Bethel Seminary with a concentration in Christian history.



The virtual Word in the real world

The Word of God is living and active today (Hebrews 4:12) in a number of places as never before—thanks to the internet. Here are some popular websites dedicated to making free Bible texts and resources available.

American Bible Society: Most of the ABS website is devoted to its Bible distribution mission, but you can also sign up for daily Bible readings by email.

Bible Gateway: Calvin College student Nick Hengeveld founded this website in 1993; according to BG, he “had a visionary passion to make the Bible digitally accessible to everyone through the very new technology at the time called the internet.” Today it belongs to HarperCollins and features more than 200 translations in 70 languages, plus commentary and devotional resources.

Bible Hub: This site features “topical, Greek and Hebrew study tools, plus concordances, commentaries, dictionaries, sermons, and devotionals.” It includes public domain resources and is a sister site to the [Online Parallel Bible](#), which began in 2004 and focuses on presenting translations in parallel for comparison.

Bible.org/NET Bible: This site features Bible study tools and the NET Bible, a complete online Bible in the original languages and a few popular translations. (This should not

be confused with the New English Translation of the Bible, also abbreviated NET.)

Biblica: Sponsored by the International Bible Society (IBS), this features 40 translations as well as daily devotionals.

Blue Letter Bible: This is another site bringing public domain translations together and pairing them with modern and historic commentary. It has a sophisticated search function and an app.

Faith Comes By Hearing: This site provides downloadable audio Bibles in over 1,300 languages.

Global Bible: Sponsored by the ABS, this site links to hundreds of modern Bible translations.

Greek Orthodox Bible: While incomplete, this site contains approved New Testament texts in Greek as used in the Greek Orthodox Church.

OCA Scriptures: This site contains daily readings and worship resources for the Orthodox Church in America.

Oremus Bible Browser: Part of a larger ministry by Steve Benner and Simon Kershaw that has focused on posting the Anglican Daily Office since 1993, this site contains the Bible text in several versions plus worship resources from the Anglican tradition.

THAT ALL MAY HEAR At Global Bible (above left), you can read the Bible in over 1,000 languages.

Revised Common Lectionary: For churches that use the lectionary in daily and weekly worship, this site by Vanderbilt Divinity School’s library contains the text of all RCL Scripture passages with accompanying art and worship resources.

StudyBible: This is yet another site that brings together public domain resources and allows parallel text comparisons.

The Text This Week: Another popular lectionary webpage, this comprehensive site contains theological, exegetical, worship, and devotional resources for all the Sunday readings from the RCL and several other frequently used lectionaries.

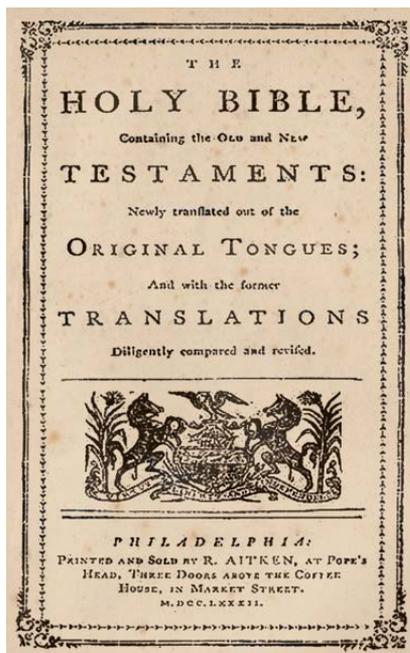
USCCB: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has placed the entire New American Bible translation with the Apocrypha, the one approved for Roman Catholic worship, online with commentary.

Youversion (Bible.com): Most often used in its app format, the Bible App, this site contains a number of English translations and is widely known for its daily Bible reading plans.

—Jennifer Woodruff Tait, managing editor of Christian History

The Bible for the church

Christians have used the Bible in many ways to aid in worship, prayer, preaching, Christian education, and evangelism. Use these questions on your own or in a group to reflect on how the Bible has formed you and your church.



HOME SOIL This Bible printed by Robert Aitken was the first full King James Version printed in America rather than imported from Britain.

1. Recall our lead article's suggestion (pp. 6–10) to think of your own Bible and the Bibles others use. What kinds of Bibles have you used in church and in personal devotion? Print or electronic? Which translations? How have all of these different experiences of the Bible formed you? How do you most prefer to encounter the Bible?

2. What messages did many American evangelists derive from the Bible (pp. 11–14)? What were some different ways they applied the Bible for their hearers? Where do you hear similar messages today?

3. How was the Bible used in Sunday school in the nineteenth century (pp. 15–17)? How does it compare to the way it is used in Sunday school at your church today?

4. Have you ever done Bible Quizzing or other games for Bible memorization (p. 18)? What was the experience like? What tools or techniques do you usually use to memorize the Bible?

5. How did women Bible teachers in the American church differ from men Bible teachers (pp. 19–21)? How were they similar? What themes did they emphasize, and why? Where do you see the continuation of these different emphases today?

6. What is your favorite hymn or worship song (pp. 24–28)? Where do you see the influence of the Bible on its text? What other hymns and songs can you name that are inspired by biblical texts?

7. The KJV was the most influential Bible translation in America up through the mid-twentieth century. Have you ever used or experienced the KJV in personal prayer or worship (pp. 29–31)? How has your experience of the KJV impacted your perception of Scripture?

8. What is the role of Bible translation in evangelism (p. 32)? If you can read the Bible in another language besides your “heart language,” how has the experience formed you?

9. Why did many thinkers believe the Bible was under attack (pp. 33–35)? How did they defend it? Where do you see these debates continuing today?

10. Who is your favorite figure from the Gallery (pp. 36–39)? Why?

11. Do you use any of the websites mentioned in our survey of internet Bible sites (p. 40) for study or devotion? How have they aided your understanding of the Bible?

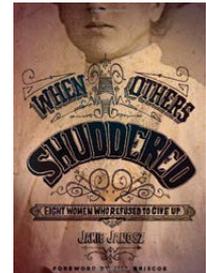
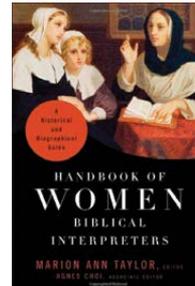
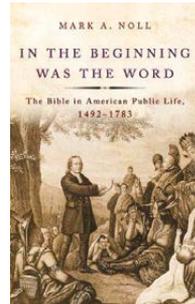
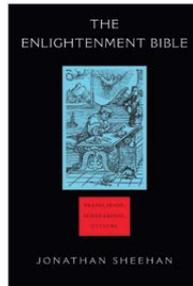
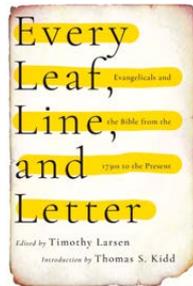
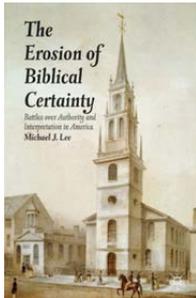
12. What's one thing you learned from this issue that surprised you? What's one thing that confirmed something you already thought?

13. With which of the figures mentioned in this issue do you most identify?

14. If you could ask a historical figure from this issue one question about the Bible, what would it be and whom would you ask?

Recommended resources

READ MORE ABOUT HOW THE BIBLE HAS SHAPED THE AMERICAN CHURCH IN THESE RESOURCES RECOMMENDED BY OUR AUTHORS AND CH STAFF.



BOOKS

We named many resources for understanding the story of the Bible in America in issue #138. While a few are repeated below, please check out that issue as well.

Some books to help you think about the **Bible in America in general** include Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989); Mark Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word* (2015) and *America's Book* (2022); Seth Perry, *Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States* (2018); and Timothy Larsen, ed., *Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present* (2021).

To read more about **evangelism**, look at Charles White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (1986); Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson* (1993); Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism* (1996); Adrienne Israel, *Amanda Berry Smith* (1998); D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone* (2000); George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards* (2003); Lyle Dorsett, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* (2004); E. Brooks Holifield, *God's Ambassadors* (2007); John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (2009); Kevin Belmonte, *D. L. Moody* (2014); Thomas Kidd, *George Whitefield* (2014); David Barshinger and Douglas Sweeney, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture* (2018); and Grant Wacker, *One Soul at a Time: The Story of Billy Graham* (2019).

Understand **Christian education** by reading Anne Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790–1880* (1988); Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (1999); and the three-volume

Encyclopedia of Christian Education edited by George Thomas Kurian and Mark Lamport (2015).

For more on **women interpreters**, look at Elizabeth Caden, *Antoinette Brown Blackwell* (1983); Eve LaPlante, *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman who Defied the Puritans* (2004); Marion Taylor, ed., *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters* (2012) and, with Joy Schroeder, *Voices Long Silenced* (2022); Nancy Koester, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (2014); Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism* (2015); Rachel Cope and Zachary McLeod Hutchins, eds., *The Writings of Elizabeth Webb* (2019); and Arlin Migliazzo, *Mother of Modern Evangelicalism: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Mears* (2020).

Read about **hymnody** in Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Hymnody* (1992); Richard Mouw and Mark Noll, *Wonderful Words of Life* (2004); Edith Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby* (2005); Larry Eskridge, *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (2013); and the reference dictionary *The Bible in Music* (2015) by Siobhán Dowling Long and John Sawyer.

To find out more about Bible **translations**, look at Bruce Metzger, Robert Dentan, and Walter Harrelson, *The Making of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (1991); Peter Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures* (1999); Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611–2011* (2010); Leland Ryken, *The Legacy of the King James Bible* (2011); and Steven Green, *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution* (2012). (You can find a number of books on the KJV in CH #100.)

Bible **publication** is covered in Peter Wosh, *Spreading the Word* (1994); Paul Gutjahr, *American Bible* (1999); Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World* (2004); and John Fea, *The Bible Cause* (2016).

Works from differing perspectives on **higher criticism** include Harold Lindsell, *Battle for the Bible* (1976); Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible* (2007); Christopher Hays and Christopher Ansberry, eds., *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism* (2013); Michael Lee, *The Erosion of Biblical Certainty* (2013); and the forthcoming *A History of the Quests for the Historical Jesus* (2022) by Colin Brown and Craig Evans.

Finally, further readings on some people featured in our **gallery** include James and Marti Hefley, *Uncle Sam* (1974); Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More* (1992); William Lawrence Svellmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1917–1945* (2008); Kathryn Gray, *John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay* (2013); Gregory Thornbury, *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism: Applying the Wisdom and Vision of Carl F. H. Henry* (2013); Jamie Janosz, *When Others Shuddered: Eight Women Who Refused to Give Up* (2014); and Donald Akenson, *Exporting the Rapture* (2018).

CHRISTIAN HISTORY ISSUES



Read these past issues on our website—some are still available for purchase:

- 3: *Wycliffe and Bible Translation*
- 8 and 77: *Jonathan Edwards*
- 16: *William Tyndale*
- 23: *Spiritual Awakenings*
- 25: *Dwight L. Moody*
- 38: *George Whitefield*
- 43: *How We Got Our Bible*
- 82: *Phoebe Palmer*
- 100: *King James Bible*
- 102: *People of Faith*
- 106: *Stone-Campbell Movement*
- 128: *George Müller and the Brethren*
- 138: *America's Book*



VIDEOS FROM VISION VIDEO

Videos on this issue's topic include *Authorized*; *God's Outlaw: The Story of William Tyndale*; *A History of Christian Worship*; *John Wycliffe*; *KJB: Book that Changed the World*; and *KJV: The Making of the King James Bible*.



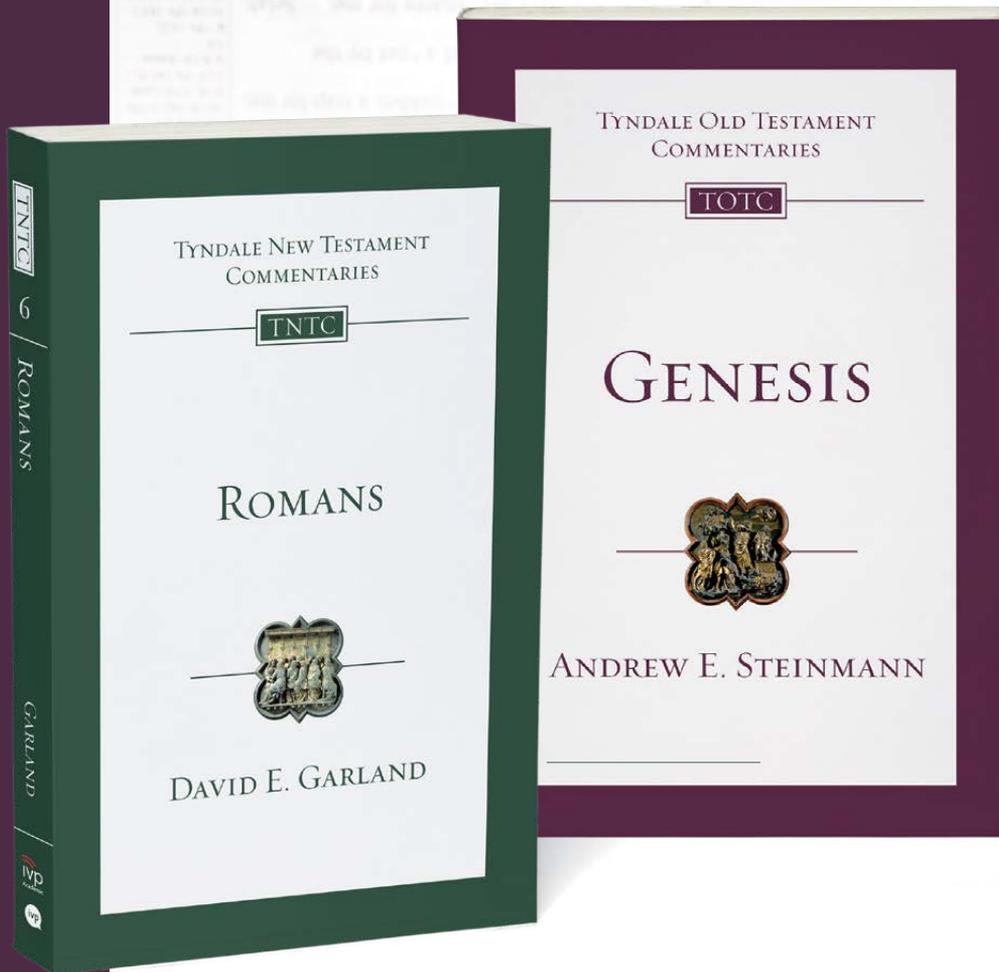
WEBSITES

Thousands of sites are devoted to the Bible and Bible study online. Some are mentioned on p. 41. Others include [Internet Bible Catalog](#), which presents basic bibliographical information and cover images for thousands of translations; [Hymnary.org](#), which besides its strictly musical resources also has a wealth of information connecting hymns and worship songs to the Bible; and [Common Texts](#), which has information about and resources connected to the Revised Common Lectionary. Most Bible translations currently in print have their own websites as well.

You can read sermons and writings from preachers and authors in this issue at Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Documenting the American South, Evans Early American Imprints, GospelTruth.net, the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale, the Internet Archive, and Sermon Index. There is a surprising amount about the Bible and nineteenth-century American Christianity at the Uncle Tom's Cabin website at the University of Virginia.

Finally, you may enjoy the website of The Saint John's Bible, a modern project to create a hand-calligraphed edition of the entire Bible. [CH](#)

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Brilliant Wisdom on Marriage & Family by G. K. Chesterton

“The disintegration of rational society started in the drift from the hearth and the family”, wrote G.K. Chesterton in 1933. “The solution must be a drift back.”

In a world that has lost touch with normality, it takes a pioneer to rediscover the wonders of the normal. This masterful compilation of texts from the prolific G.K. Chesterton, edited by GKC expert Dale Ahlquist, illustrates the glory of the family—the heritage of romance, love, marriage, parenthood, and home. It is a hymn in praise of the saucepan, the kettle, the hairbrush, the umbrella stand, what Chesterton calls “the brave old bones of life”. With piercing wit, the English writer pits all these venerable truths against the fashions of divorce, contraception, and abortion, along with the troubling philosophies that have afflicted education and the workplace since the early 20th century.

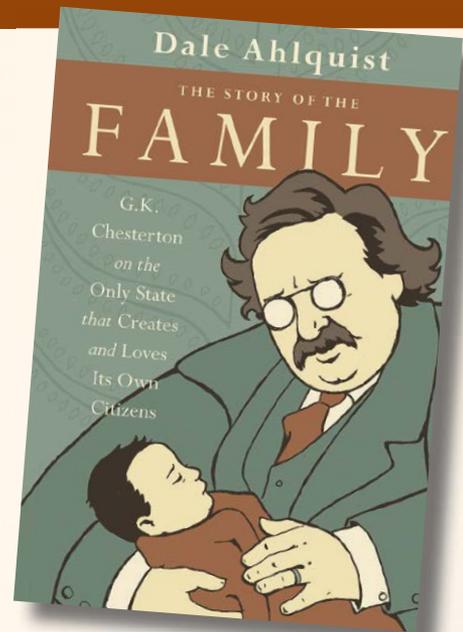
Society is built on the family, and Chesterton helps readers to see this reality with fresh eyes. He writes: “The first things must be the very fountains of life, love and birth and babyhood; and these are always covered fountains, flowing in the quiet courts of the home.”

“Chesterton was not only a great defender of the faith but a great defender of the family. This excellent collection of the best of Chesterton’s writing on the family is more needed today than it was in Chesterton’s own day.”

—Joseph Pearce, Author, *Wisdom and Innocence: A Life of G. K. Chesterton*

“Mankind’s future depends on whether we embrace or reject the wisdom of this book. Read this book before doing so becomes a criminal act.”

—Christopher Check
President, Catholic Answers

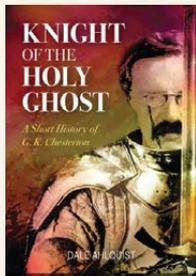


The Story of the Family

SFP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95

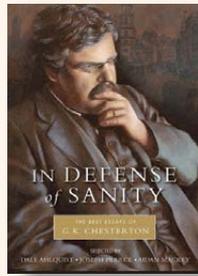
“Brilliantly assembled by Ahlquist, this Chesterton chrestomathy does with rapier wit and robust humor what so few could do—make laughingstocks of those sappers who so earnestly undermine the family in the name of freedom. The Woke should fear this book. Everyone else should buy it.”

—Robert Reilly, Author, *America on Trial*



◆ KNIGHT OF THE HOLY GHOST

In a rollicking adventure quite Chestertonian in flavor, Ahlquist captains an expedition of discovery into who this GKC fellow is. He deftly and cleverly explores Chesterton as a man, as a writer, and as a potential saint. KHGP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$16.95

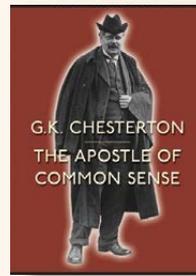


◆ IN DEFENSE OF SANITY

Three leading authorities on Chesterton — Dale Ahlquist, Joseph Pearce, Aidan Mackey — have joined together to select the “best” Chesterton essays, a collection that will be appreciated by all readers of this great man of letters.

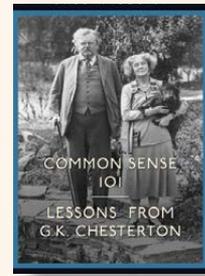
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Also on Chesterton



◆ THE APOSTLE OF COMMON SENSE

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