

Aristobulus, sons of the Hasmonaean Mariamne. They were strangled in prison. Herod finally had another son Antipater, put to death only five days before he himself died, because he suspected him of trying to poison him.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the news of the birth of one who was "born king of the Jews" should have aroused Herod's worst suspicions. Herod was very well aware of the Messianic hopes of the Jews and the danger to his throne that these constituted (Mt. ii, 4). The danger lay of course not in the character and mission of Christ who stated quite clearly that His kingdom was not of this world (Jn. xviii, 36), but in the false ideas that the Jews had, about the Messianic king, whom they expected to overthrow the Romans, cast out Herod and set up an earthly kingdom. Drastic measures would clearly need to be used to eliminate the danger. The subsequent massacre shows that the fears of "all Jerusalem" were not without foundation. It probably took place after the murder of Alexander and Aristobulus and of course before that of Antipater.

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What is the reason for the different renderings of Gen. iii, 15 in Protestant and Catholic Bibles, especially the feminine pronouns in the Catholic Bible?

What is chiefly needed is to determine the correct Hebrew text; and fortunately this is not difficult. It translates as follows: "I shall put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel." The verb translated "bruise" is the same in both cases, but the translation is not very satisfactory, because a serpent does not "bruise." Nor is the exact meaning of the Hebrew word easy to fix, as it occurs elsewhere only in Job ix, 17 ("crush") and Psalm cxxviii, 11 ("cover"), in which latter place it is so puzzling that emendations are proposed. The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) has "lie in wait for" (or something similar) in both cases; but a man does not lie in wait for the head of a serpent. So the Douay Version, following the Vulgate, has "crush" first, and then "lie in wait," which neglects the identity of the Hebrew word, which I should be inclined to translate "attack" in both cases.

So much for the verb. The Hebrew certainly requires "her seed" to be understood where I have rendered "it" and "its." The "it" might of itself indicate either the seed or the woman, as the pronoun in the Pentateuch does not change for gender, so far as the letters are concerned. The vowel-points were inserted by the Jewish rabbis after St. Jerome had written the Vulgate, but we may notice that they read the masculine (agreeing with "seed"); if they had understood the feminine, they would have put the vowel-points indicating the later

form of the feminine, as they always do in such cases, as the later form of the feminine was always read, and they always pointed for what they wanted read. The Hebrew pronoun here used for "it" really settles nothing, being of itself indifferent to gender.

What does show that the Hebrew text must be understood of the seed and not of the woman is (1) the verb for "shall bruise," the first letter of which would be different if the subject were feminine; and (2) the suffix to the verb "shalt bruise," the last letter of which would be different if the feminine form were used. In Hebrew the pronominal object of a verb is usually a suffix attached to it, so that the literal translation would be to "bruise-it in the heel."

Why then does the Catholic Bible give the feminine? It was an old rendering, going back beyond Jerome and his Vulgate. He seems to have been aware that the masculine (i.e., for the seed: there is no neuter in Hebrew) was more correct (see the *apparatus criticus* in the Benedictine edition of the Vulgate, etc.), but may have shrunk from changing it, though the masculine was also found in some earlier Latin translations, and for that matter found its way even into some Vulgate manuscripts. Where possibly Messianic passages were in question, St. Jerome made rather free with them, after the manner of his masters, the rabbis, in their "targums," the Aramaic paraphrases read after the Hebrew text in the synagogues (Hebrew had become more or less a dead language in New Testament times, much like our modern biblical and liturgical and scholastic Latin). "The woman" being put first, there may also have been a tendency to think that she must be meant, as receiving more emphasis.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Kingdom of Promise. By R. A. Dyson and A. Jones. (B.O.W.). 1947.
Scripture Text Books for Schools, Vol. V.

This volume is written for the fifteen-sixteen-year-olds and for its purpose it is both adequate and attractive. From the teacher's point of view, the manner in which the Scriptures are set against their historical background is particularly welcome. The very first chapter on "The Kingdom and the Redemptive Plan" is so well done that it would immediately interest the average student. The battle is half won when that is achieved.

In aiming to cover so vast a field in such a limited space, the authors are attempting an almost impossible task. Vast generalizations must be made, yet, without some detail, these general statements are likely to be unintelligible. The idea of relegating "Job," "Tobias," "Wisdom,"