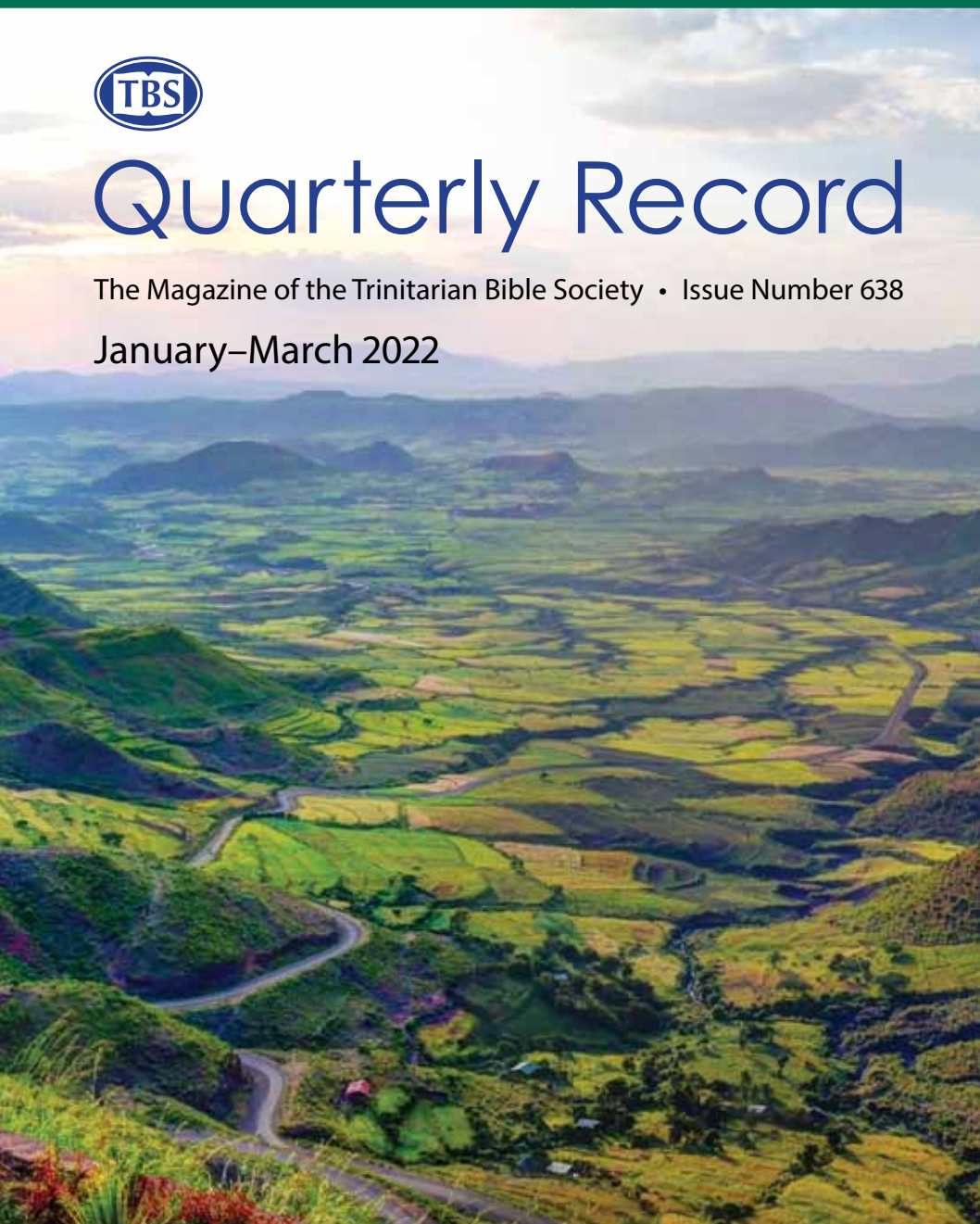




Quarterly Record

The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society • Issue Number 638

January–March 2022



THE WORD OF GOD AMONG ALL NATIONS



Trinitarian Bible Society

Founded in 1831 for the circulation of
Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God

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**January to
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Lead Editor: Miss N. Christie

Editor: Miss E. Tichelaar

Senior Editorial Consultant (Projects): Mr P. J. D. Hopkins

Editorial Consultant: Dr D. E. Anderson

Graphic Designers: Mr P. Hughes, Mr S. Talas

Circulation: Mr J. M. Wilson

TBS

Open

DAY



Saturday 12 March 2022

GOD WILLING at the Society's Headquarters

William Tyndale House, 29 Deer Park Road, London SW19 3NN

The Society is again opening the doors of our London Headquarters for a time of information about the Society and fellowship with like-minded believers. But this year we are planning a **NEW FORMAT** for the Open Day.

THERE WILL BE TWO SESSIONS,
MORNING between **10.00 & 12.00**
AFTERNOON between **13.30 & 15.30.**

Those wishing to attend are invited to select one.

Open Day is free of charge as always, but booking is essential; 100 tickets will be available for each session, obtainable online at

tbsbibles.org/event/openday2022
or by contacting the Society.

Please book for only one session in order that others will have opportunity to attend.

Please mark your diaries for 12 March and make plans to attend. We look forward to seeing you then.

During the first hour of each session attendees will have opportunity for fellowship and refreshments, and will be able to explore various displays and activities. Short tours will be available for those new to William Tyndale House and the work of the Society. The second hour will include an introduction and presentations on the Society's principles, our work of translating God's Word, and the impact of our distribution of the Scriptures.

God willing, the following presentations will take place:

TBS Principles: Graham Chewter

Swahili Bible Translation: Nelson Were

Romanian Scripture Distribution: Dinu Moga

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG ALL NATIONS



THE **191ST**
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ADVANCE NOTICE

GOD WILLING ON

Saturday 17 September 2022

location to be confirmed

After the Business Meeting,
at **2.00 p.m.**
there will be a worship service.

**All are invited to attend. Please see our website
for more up-to-date details.**

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG ALL NATIONS



Introduction

from the Chairman

A new General Secretary for the Trinitarian Bible Society

Members and supporters will be aware that following the completion of Stage One of the Strategic Review, the Society has been actively recruiting for the post of General Secretary to formally replace Mr Paul Rowland, who retired from that role over two years ago after many years of faithful service.

It is with deep thankfulness to the Lord that we can announce that this recruitment process has been completed. The process was conducted by the General Committee with rigour and prayer, and we are grateful to those who applied.

The final interview and selection stage took place over two intensive days at William Tyndale House in November 2021. The General Committee clearly felt the hand of the Lord upon them as they deliberated between the applicants, who underwent several interviews during this time, gave presentations, and submitted written work, in addition to meeting with the Committee less formally on the first evening. Throughout these two days, and before, the

Committee's desire was that the one whom the Lord had appointed would be clearly manifested as such.

It is thus with pleasure and quiet confidence that the mind of the Lord has been made known, that we can announce that Jonathan Arnold, our present Editorial



Director, has been offered the position of General Secretary, with the unanimous support of the General Committee, and he has graciously indicated his willingness to accept. Mr Arnold is also the leading ministerial elder at Westminster Baptist Church, London, and a member of the TBS Greater London Auxiliary. We commend him to your prayers as he takes up this challenging position as the leader of the Trinitarian Bible Society across the world.

We would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the gracious and competent leadership of the Society in the interim period, which the Senior Management Team, led by Mr David Broome, the Resources Director, has been able to provide under God these past two and a half years. We are also grateful for the part played by the Branch General Secretaries during this time. No doubt all of these men will continue to work closely with the new General Secretary in pressing forward with the Society's work.

As the Society enters this new chapter, our members and readers can be assured

that there is no dilution whatever of any of the distinctive aims which have lain at the foundation of its work since its inception, and its continuing stand for the inspired Scriptures. By God's grace, we continue to stand with the founders of this Society, who in 1831 so ably set forth in the Society's Constitution the principles by which our work should be carried out.

The present challenges in an anti-Christian world are great, and we can only expect opposition as we seek to translate and distribute God's Word. May the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans be for our encouragement as the Society steps forward, depending on the God of all grace, into this new chapter. 'If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?' (Romans 8.31).

'Brethren, pray for us.'

On behalf of the General Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society

Gerald D Buss (Chairman)





The General Secretary's Desk

Jonathan D. Arnold

It has been my great joy to work in the Society for the last six years and prior to that supporting the Society since my early teenage years. The Society means so much to many people in its unique stand for faithful translations of the Word of God including the publication of the Authorised (King James) Version in English. It is no small task to stand against our many opponents who would want us to water down the Word or embrace critical approaches that undermine God's Word kept pure in all ages. Therefore, I take up this role of General Secretary in dependence upon Almighty God, and it is my sincere prayer the Lord would continue blessing the Society in its stand for the providentially preserved Word of God in the years to come. The Society also has many gifted and faithful people who work for us and with us; by God's grace, through these brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord will enable the work to be maintained and continue.

Undoubtedly when taking up such a position I will be asked by many people what my vision for the future is. I hope that will be apparent in the following paragraphs. However, it must be noted that the Society's strength has been its historic theological anchor of upholding the doctrine of Scripture and our subsequent stand for the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts as providentially preserved. Anyone who seeks to break the Society from these key foundations takes a foolish approach that would lead us into the malaise that many Christian societies in the past have fallen into, resulting in subsequent compromise. I trust that the General Committee and the Society's members will hold us to account on these matters as they expect and support the Society's God-honouring stand for the truth and for the infallible, inspired, and preserved Word of God that we seek to publish and distribute.



The Society's unique stand

My great desire and prayer is that the work of the Society continues to be blessed by the Lord and prospers to the glory of God. Translating, publishing, distributing, promoting, and upholding the faithful Word of God based on the Divinely preserved texts puts the Society in a distinct group of just a few organisations. In days when post-truth, post-modern pragmatism marks many broader Christian organisations, the work of the Society is even more important. As 2 Timothy 3.16 and 2 Peter 1.19–21 reveal, it is the written Scripture itself that is God-breathed, not just the doctrines or general teachings that flow from the written Word. The principles of the Society are therefore paramount in Scripture translation and distribution.

The Society's work has been dear to my heart ever since I first encountered the whole question of translation and text in my mid-teens while attending an evangelical conference in the United Kingdom. I was confronted during a meeting by one of the leaders who noticed I was reading an Authorised (King James) Version Bible. So shocked was he that he came up and told me in no uncertain terms that I should not be using that version—and proceeded to close my Bible and hand me the New International Version (the latest version at that time, the 1984 edition). It shook me. The AV was the Bible my parents used. I had heard many godly men who preached from it. What was the big issue here? In further conversations at the time I was told to trust the experts: more authentic manuscripts had been discovered and therefore the AV was just not reliable textually, and improvements in our knowledge of the original languages showed it was not a good translation. I was also told I would understand this newer translation more easily. This is a story repeated in many other circumstances. The

experts say we have new and improved data; in the case of Bible versions, the appeal is made to better manuscripts and more up-to-date linguistic knowledge, with the result that the person in the pew and the preacher in the pulpit swallow the new translations wholesale.

The incident I experienced caused me to have a concern about the whole topic and to realise how important it is to know the text upon which my translation is based and why it is based on that text. The first instruction I had to counter the hostility of the conference leader was what I had heard at a TBS deputation meeting and the articles printed by TBS. This exhibits the need to press on in this work to underline that our stand is not mere tradition but out of doctrinal necessity, and is needed if translated Scriptures are to be reliable and accurate.

The Society must continue to build up and equip congregants and preachers to stand for the old paths founded in the inspired Word of God. For much of the world there is no awareness of the Textus Receptus position or even a consideration of the doctrine of preserved Scriptures. Sadly, lazy and flawed Scripture translation work and the resultant publications have led to many foolish doctrines and false teachings. TBS is uniquely placed to give future generations Scriptures that have been faithfully translated, untainted by modernism and consistent with the providentially preserved Word of God.

Given the numbers in the English-speaking world and across the globe swept away with the ungodly, modernistic and critical view of the Scriptures, it is my earnest burden to labour as the Lord enables us to uphold the preserved Word of God, promote faithful Bible translation, and make faithful editions available when there is such a great need.

The vision expressed in the Strategic Plan of the Society that the General Committee have been prayerfully considering over a number of months sets out a five-year approach: taking into account the means the Lord has provided; the various projects we hope to conclude in that time (Lord willing); ensuring our priority is on our founding aim to distribute Scriptures to all nations (and the various ways this is carried out and can be achieved); and how we might continue to uphold the doctrine of Scripture and assist those who stand with us. Parts of this plan will be made public in the forthcoming months. The enduring aim to promote ‘the Glory of God and the increase of His Kingdom through the circulation of accurate and faithful versions of the Word of God’ (and the similar but more expansive terms found in the Society’s Constitutional Aim) sets the clear direction for the Society and the leadership of the Society must continue on this charted course.

Please pray for us as, under God, we strive to build understanding of the issues, increase support for our position, strengthen the membership base, and seek to place in the hands of earnest Christians across the globe a faithful copy of the Holy Scriptures in their mother tongue.

TBS Conference in September 2022

In September 2022, Lord willing, the Trinitarian Bible Society intends to hold a day conference examining these vital issues. We hope to look at how the Christian should respond to the academics and, sadly, some in the visible church who prefer paraphrase translations and an ever changing Greek and Hebrew Text. There are two key elements that make up the reliability of the Bible you use: the approach taken to translation and the underlying

Greek and Hebrew text on which it is based.

We are living in days where there is a movement away from absolute or certain truth which is chipping away at the edges of the theology of the true Church and the Bible. Battles are being fought for key Gospel doctrines and Biblical living, but there has been a lack of attention to the foundation of our doctrine and practice: the Holy Bible. Therefore, diligent consideration of the underlying text and the approach to translation is greatly needed at this time.

The Society has been involved for many years in seeking to uphold the doctrine of Scripture. We have thus emphasised the provisionally preserved Word of God recognised for centuries as the authentic text of the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts.¹ These are the same texts as those historically used in Reformation-era Bibles and referenced in the confessions that followed, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), London Baptist Confession of Faith (1677/1689), and the Savoy Declaration (1658). Furthermore, the Society has sought to carefully apply principles of translation that recognise we are handling the very Word of God.² Emphasising every single word in the Biblical text is important and should be reflected in the languages into which it is translated.

This is because the Word’s enduring quality is derived from its Divine origin, as is its resultant truth. It is truth of a special nature, truth applicable to men in all ages. God has given His Word to fallen sinners and thus revealed that He is merciful and gracious, able to save sinners to the uttermost. Scripture itself informs us how perfection of communication was achieved: ‘All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3.16). The Holy Spirit so operated on the minds of the Biblical writers that they wrote exactly what God

intended. Inspiration extended to every word, so that 'the Word of the Lord' meant a communication in which every word was from the Lord. Therefore, the Society stands for the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

The result of different approaches to text and translation can be seen by comparing different Bible versions. For example, depending on what Greek text is used, the Gospel according to Mark could end in chapter sixteen at verse eight, rather than its historic ending at verse twenty; the shorter ending omits an important post-resurrection appearance of the risen Lord. Likewise, depending on the translation you use John 3.16 reads, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ...'³ or 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son ...'⁴ Or depending on translation approach, words added in the receptor language which are not in the underlying Biblical language may be marked by italics or not indicated in any way.

The issues boil down to matters of the authenticity of the text and the accuracy of translation. For the sincere Christian there should be nothing more important than having a Bible that is both authentic and accurate. It is the Word of God after all that is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (cf. Psalm 119.105).

These foundational roots of an authentic text and accurate translation were the bedrock of the Reformation. One example is where the pre-Reformation translation of Matthew 3.2 read 'do penance' in the Latin Vulgate. This was rightly changed in Protestant translations to 'repent' to better reflect the Greek. Even with these historic warnings, since the beginning of the nineteenth century and most especially from the latter part of that century, many have been swept away by a so-called better approach advocated by modern textual

critics and translators. At the forthcoming Text and Translation Conference the Society intends to highlight the importance of these issues in order to supply the Christian today with reasons why we must remain with the preserved Greek and Hebrew texts used by our forefathers in the Reformation, recognising a providentially preserved text and the vital application of literal translation principles.

Text

This conference will highlight that a providentially preserved text of the Bible is crucial to its authenticity and reliability. In most systematic theology books, the doctrine of Scripture is placed in the first chapter. The whole substance and shape of the Christian faith depends on the words of the Bible. Turretin states: 'As the Word of God is the sole principle of theology, so the question concerning its necessity deservedly comes before all things.'⁵ If we are basing belief on the premise that the Holy Scriptures are true, we must be concerned about their authenticity.

During the Reformation there was an explosion of Bible translation activity in Europe based upon published editions of the Greek Received Text (by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and others) rather than the Latin Vulgate. The name *Textus Receptus*⁶ was coined by the Elzevirs in the preface to their printed Greek New Testament in 1633, as it was the 'text which is now received by all.'⁷

The name Byzantine Text is often applied to the Received Text because it is the text-type found in the family of New Testament Greek manuscripts that were used, transmitted, and preserved by the eastern Greek-speaking church. Because it was handed down and preserved by the church, it is also referred to as the 'traditional text' or 'ecclesiastical text', or more recently

‘confessional text’. This text was in continuous use in the Greek church from at least the fourth century until the time of the Reformation when Erasmus made this text the basis for the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament. ⁸

In 1881, Westcott and Hort published their Critical Greek Text to replace the Received Text and it was then adopted for Bible translation by others.⁹ Since then, the Society has continued to stand for the Greek Received Text and the Hebrew Masoretic Text as the providentially preserved Word of God, translating from those texts as set out in the Principles of the Society.

Far from being

a novel approach, the Society’s textual and translational position was largely the approach in the field of Bible translation until the 1880s. To revert to a newly discovered allegedly corrected text destroys any notion that the Scriptures are kept pure in all ages.

The main group that argues against the Received Text hold to the Critical Text. This group developed the eclectic approach which applies certain presumptions when looking at Greek manuscripts. For instance, they believe that the shorter reading is preferred, and the more difficult reading is preferred. These presumptions are applied by a committee who then vote for the final preferred reading on a variant-by-

variant basis. An adaption of

this approach is being incorporated into a computer program that, with some academic oversight, will determine the next edition of the Greek text used by other Bible societies and the latest stream of Bible translations.

The editors have indicated they will now refrain from judgment on which reading is original, leaving the Christian to assemble their own

Greek text according to their preference. This is symptomatic of an approach that regards the Scriptures used by the Reformers and other faithful believers

before the end of the nineteenth century as corrupted and filled with emendations, an approach predicated on the assumption that the text of Scripture is uncertain and ever-changing thereby nullifying the Biblical doctrines of inspiration and preservation.



The last page from Erasmus's New Testament

The Reformers and Protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not aware of the full statistics we have today, for example some manuscripts were discovered later. But such statistics were not of chief importance to them. Why? Because they believed they had the authentic texts, as God's Word endures for ever and is kept pure in all ages (cf. Isaiah 40.8; 1 Peter 1.24–25). We do well to stand with them.

Therefore, the Christian today is faced with a stark difference between opposing approaches. We hope this conference will highlight, in laymen's terms, the serious deficiencies of modern textual criticism and reinforce the need to stand for the authentic and inspired Word of God, found in the Greek Received and Hebrew Masoretic texts.

Translation

Translation methodology or philosophy is an oft neglected subject when considering the Bible translation used. By what criteria does the average Christian judge an English Bible version? Some may give answers such as: 'I like it'; 'I understand it better'; 'it has a good layout'. However, such considerations ignore the most important criterion that a Christian should employ in relation to a translation of the Bible: accuracy. Is the translation a true representation of what God has inspired? The style of language, the format, and success in communication have a place, but if the words of the Bible are the Words of God the child of God needs to know that the words—and all the words—are actually found in the Biblical text. He must have the assurance that they have been expressed correctly in the words which are employed in the translation.

At the start of the twentieth century alongside the rise of the Critical Greek Text came the rise of a view that the Bible must 'speak to the reader' in the same way the

New Testament writer spoke to the first century Christian. This idea was used as a cover for a departure from the literal or more formal equivalence approach (that was the default till the early twentieth century) to a dynamic thought-for-thought approach.

The main proponent of this approach was Eugene Nida, who managed to persuade much of the Bible translating world that dynamic equivalence (or functional equivalence as it is now known) was both 'reader friendly' and allegedly more 'scientific'.¹⁰ Nida's views were accepted wholesale in the 1960s and 1970s and dominated the translations available through the remainder of the twentieth century.

In contrast, TBS has stated our principles as laid down in the publication 'An Introduction to the Society's Principles'. It highlights the following:

Modern man does not have the thoughts of the writers of Scripture; we do, however, have their words, and must faithfully render those words into the languages of the peoples of the world. The Society, believing in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, that the very words of the Bible and not merely the thoughts or ideas are inspired and inerrant, uses the principle of translation known as 'formal equivalence'. This means that, whenever possible, the grammar, form, vocabulary and syntax of the Greek and Hebrew are followed. The Society seeks to follow the principle 'as literal as possible, as free as necessary', so that every word of the text is taken into account in translation. These are the normal, traditional principles of translation, the principles used in the translation of Scripture and of the great works of literature throughout the ages.

The practical outworking of this is the Society's aim to apply the principle 'as literal as possible, as free as necessary' to all its translations. To do this we must ensure every word in the Greek and Hebrew text is taken into account in the translation. Likewise the Authorised (King James) Version translators applied a similar approach to the work to which God had called them. Because they were translating the very Word of God they translated as scrupulously as possible—often word-for-word—producing a literal rendition of the Greek and Hebrew which they described as 'two golden pipes . . . where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold'.¹¹ In so doing we seek to reverence the Word of God, translating as much as possible word-for-word, producing a literal translation of the Biblical languages that is understandable.

We are living in perilous times as described in 2 Timothy 3, where men are 'lovers of their own selves' (v2) and 'ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth' (v7). As Paul exhorted Timothy in his stand against 'evil men' (v13), he is to remember the Scriptures he learnt from his youth (v15) and the fact they are the inspired Word of God (v16). May we be encouraged to stand on the unshakable ground of the Word of God and reject those who seek to change it or water it down.

We trust that at the forthcoming Text and Translation Conference, through direct examples from those involved in translating the Scriptures, we might assist fellow-Christians in being well-informed as to what accuracy in translation means, its consistency with a high view of Scripture, and why the Authorised Version continues to stand as a splendid example of a reliable and trustworthy translation.

The inspired Scriptures in the original languages and faithful translations of the same stand with Divine Authority in contrast to false teachers; the Word of God sets before us the truth; it points to Christ, an anchor for the soul in perilous times; and is the sword of the Spirit to fight against the errors of the age. We hope you can join us at the conference and hear the clarion call to stand with us on the providentially preserved Word of God and the literal translation of Scripture, as we seek by the grace of God to defend the Word of God.

I commend the contents of this *Quarterly Record* to you and hope we can convey a measure of the work we are engaged in and how you might be involved in Bible distribution too.

Endnotes:

1. Set out in the TBS *Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture*.
2. Set out in the TBS *Introduction to the Society's Principles*.
3. Authorised Version, TBS Westminster Edition.
4. English Standard Version, 2016.
5. F. Turretin, "Institutes of Elenctic Theology", in *Thy Word is still truth*, edited by P. A. Lillback and R. B. Gaffin Jr. (New Jersey, USA: P and R Publishing, 2013).
6. Or Received Text.
7. Literally '*Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum . . .*' - the text you have here is the text which is now received by all.
8. M. Watts, *The Lord Gave the Word* (London, England: TBS, 1998).
9. Published by Westcott and Hort in 1881.
10. Translation theory in modern days has now moved to view Nida's approach as unscientific and heavily interpretive.
11. *Translators to the reader*, Authorised (King James) Version. 1611. Referring to Zechariah 4.12.

Gerrit (*Gary*) den Boer

9 March 1936–13 October 2021

Many in the TBS family have fond memories of Mr Gary den Boer, our former Canadian General Secretary.

Gary was born in the Netherlands on 9 March 1936. He immigrated to Canada in 1952 along with his parents and siblings. His son, Bill, wrote that, ‘the Lord began to work in Dad while he was a child; he loved to be with God’s people and hear them speak of the wondrous works of God. The life of grace oftentimes is revealed slowly and by their fruits ye shall know them. Our family life was blessed by having a godly father who delighted in the precious doctrines of the Scripture.’



Gary joined the Fraser Valley Auxiliary of TBS (Canada) when it was established in 1988 and served as the Branch’s General Secretary from 1996 to 2010. During his years in that position he travelled across Canada numerous times on behalf of the Society. In his inimitable manner he connected with individual supporters, auxiliaries, and supporting churches. He was well remembered across the country; at TBS meetings I was often asked, ‘And how is Gary?’

The Lord enabled Gary to rebuild TBS (Canada) after its time of difficulties, and the Society is greatly indebted to him for those years of diligent and dedicated service. After he retired as General Secretary of TBS (Canada) in 2010, the General Committee made him a Vice-President of the wider TBS. Although Gary’s health had been failing in more recent years, he continued to visit the office in Chilliwack nearly every month and retained his keen interest in the work and personnel of the Society. I greatly profited from the help he gave me during the first months after I succeeded him as General Secretary of TBS (Canada).

Gary passed away in his eighty-fifth year on 13 October 2021. He will be greatly missed by Anneke, his wife of sixty-four years, along with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. May the Lord comfort them as only He can.

At the funeral on 21 October 2021, Gary’s son, Bill, included the following in his eulogy. ‘It was God’s grace that led Dad through this life and now he has received his heart’s desire and may say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (2 Timothy 4.7–8).’ God grant that such a testimony may also apply to us at the end of our lives.

A. Stoutjesdyk
General Secretary
TBS (Canada)

THE WORD OF GOD



'... So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.'

..... Isaiah 55.11

by Pastor M. Harley
a Vice-President of the Society

The Scriptures declare the Lord's ways and embody God's thoughts nowhere more pertinently than when abundantly pardoning.

'So': His ways take into perfect consideration every detail totally beyond our own thoughts. His thoughts are not ours; indeed they are as far

beyond our natural way of reasoning as the heavens are above the earth. Therefore His thoughts must be revealed to us.

'So': the Scriptures as the revelation of the Word of God bring spiritual germination and growth, even as the rain moistens the earth for our food to grow.

‘So shall my word be’: the Word of God operates totally within the parameters of our heavenly Father’s will.

Whatever portion of Scripture we consider, it will not return unto God void—that is, it will not have failed in its purpose. In nature the rain typically does not return to the heavens by evaporation until it has done good, such as causing seeds to germinate and plants to grow.

Every Scripture will achieve its end. It is a marvellous thing that from the very beginning, our Father has predetermined the varying situations to which a given passage may be devoted. If it were John 3.16 for example—‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’—every occasion in any generation where it will be used to bring the elect to eternal salvation or direct their paths in preparation for their salvation, has been planned beforehand by the Lord.

If it were Ephesians 2.10—‘For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them’—that Scripture will achieve its end in the life of every believer of all time. And so it is with all texts, though some may refer to matters more obscure to us than others.

The Word of God can go where no man can go. It can melt the innermost places of a person’s heart. It can preach the Gospel to men’s hearts when and where we cannot travel. Though Paul was in bonds in prison he could yet declare, ‘the word of God is not bound’ (2 Timothy 2.9). And even Jeremiah in his prison could command Baruch to read the Word in the temple (Jeremiah 36.5–6). The Word depends on no one person nor indeed, if it so pleased the Lord, on any person at all. It is not restrained however we may view the circumstances.

However, this is not an excuse for us to do nothing. The passage is prefaced with, ‘Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon’ (Isaiah 55.6–7).

The Word of God shall accomplish whatever the Lord designs at whatever time.

Whatever God’s specific intention is, it will prosper. Prosperity speaks of abundance as well as success, and what follows in our passage in Isaiah 55 is a description of the restitution and replenishment of Israel’s circumstances as the Scripture foretells.

We may have absolute confidence in the Scriptures which are in our possession.

As a Society, all our work in preparing, publishing, distributing, and upholding the Scriptures is worthwhile. Not only may we know that our work is valuable in the Lord, but that all faithful translations, including the Authorised (King James) Version, and the originals thereby represented—will actually achieve and fulfil the Saviour’s saving intentions throughout time.

When the packing department sends copies of the Bible into the unknown, the Word of God will not be bound. It will reach into many countries and to individuals and situations within those lands known only to God. All praise to His name!



Ethiopia and the Amharic Bible Project

By Natalie Christie, Lead Editor

It was with great joy and thanksgiving that the Amharic New Testament and Psalms was sent to print towards the end of 2021. This project is greatly needed by the people of Ethiopia, where Amharic is the main working language. Globally there are around 26 million Amharic speakers, of whom over 21.6 million live in Ethiopia; the

remainder live in such countries as Eritrea, Egypt, Israel, and the USA. Amharic is the second most spoken Semitic language in the world after Arabic.

Ethiopia will be a familiar name to many Bible readers.



Ethiopia and Ethiopians are mentioned many times in the Bible, for example the wife of Moses in Numbers, Ebed-melech in the time of Jeremiah, and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts. There has been a form of Christianity in the land for centuries; Ethiopia was one of the first countries to make Christianity its state religion. So why is a new Bible needed? And why has it taken so many years? This article will explain why, by looking at the history and political situation of Ethiopia and its connections with Christianity.

Where is Ethiopia?

Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the horn of Africa. With over 118 million inhabitants it is the most populous landlocked country in the world. It is also the twelfth most populated country in the world, and second most in Africa.¹

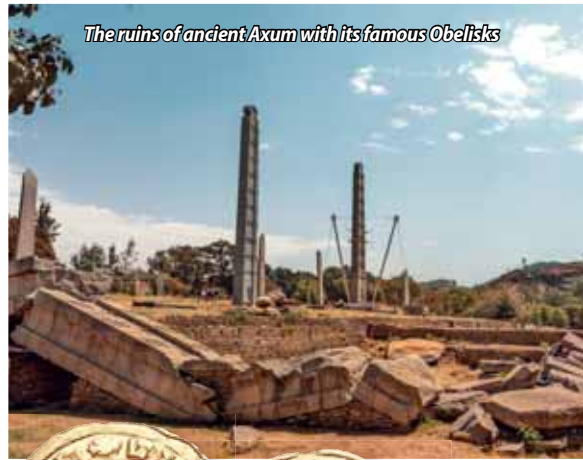
With an area of over a million square kilometres Ethiopia is around five times the size of the United Kingdom. The landscape is varied, with deserts, forests, and mountains, but no coastline. It shares borders with countries such as Eritrea and Djibouti in the north, Somalia in the east, Kenya to the south, and Sudan and South Sudan in the west.

The capital city is Addis Ababa, several kilometres from the East African Rift which splits the country into tectonic plates.

A brief history of Ethiopia

The Axumite Empire c. AD 100–940

There was once a mighty empire based in Ethiopia—the Kingdom of Axum (or Aksum). Although relatively little known today, at its greatest it was considered comparable to the Persian, Chinese, and



The ruins of ancient Axum with its famous Obelisks



Gold coins from the King Ezana period

Roman empires. In the second century AD the kingdom became a regional naval and trading power facilitated by being on a major trade route between Rome and India. The capital was based at the city of Axum in the area which is now known as the Tigray region. During the height of the empire Axum controlled areas of northern Ethiopia, Eritrea, eastern Sudan, southern Egypt, Djibouti, Yemen, and southern Saudi Arabia.

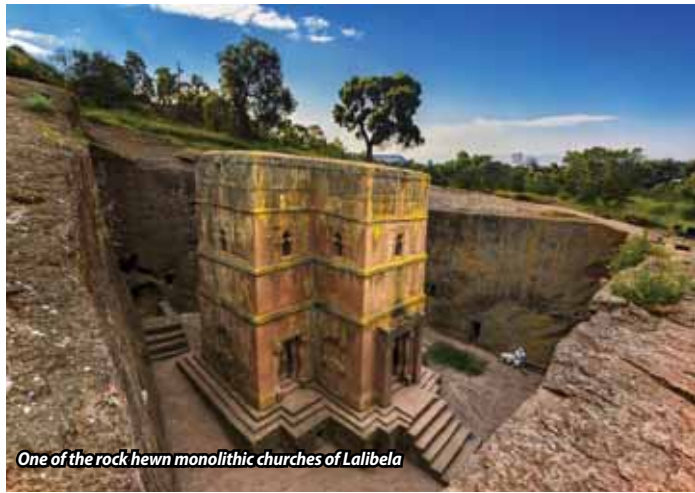
Exports from Axum included ivory, animal skins, rhino horn, and frankincense. Axum also minted its own coins, the first to be produced in sub-Saharan Africa. These coins have been excavated in locations as far afield as Caesarea and southern India. Some think the Axum had an advanced civilisation which surpassed the development of ancient Europe, with an extensive knowledge of mathematics and astronomy.

In around AD 342 the Ethiopian King Ezana II was converted to Christianity. According to traditional accounts a shipwrecked traveller called Frumentius was the instrument in this. He became employed as teacher to the royal children, one of whom was Ezana. When Ezana became king, Frumentius had a great influence over him and the kingdom became Christian. Frumentius was made Bishop of Ethiopia by Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria. This was the foundation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, more of which will be covered later in this article.

Christian Axum flourished for a while, but by the seventh century the kingdom declined. The Axumites lost section after section of their realm and were forced to move further into the highlands for protection, abandoning Axum as capital. They lost control of most of the coast and the spread of Islam meant that they were cut off from trade routes connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the India Ocean.

The Zagwe Dynasty c. AD 960–1270

In the tenth century the Axum empire was overthrown and replaced by the Zagwe Dynasty. It is thought that a Jewish queen named Todit (Judith) defeated the empire and burnt its churches and literature. One of the most famous of the Zagwe kings was Lalibela (reigning c. 1185–1225), whose life is surrounded in myth. According to legend he was commanded to build ten monolithic churches, and numerous sites in the city of Lalibela were given Biblical names to recreate Jerusalem.

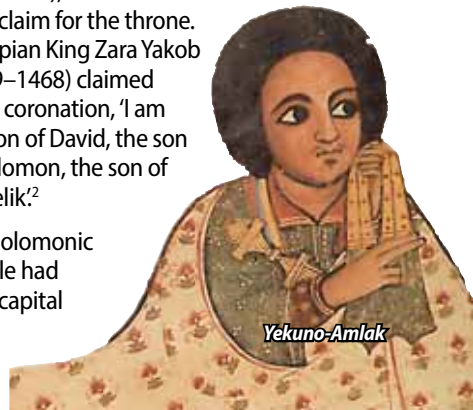


One of the rock hewn monolithic churches of Lalibela

The Solomonic Era c. AD 1270–1974

In around 1270 Yekuno-Amlak killed the last Zagwe king and founded the Solomonic dynasty. Yekuno sought to trace his ancestry and right to rule from the last emperor of Axum and thus from Solomon—the Solomonics claimed direct descent from the Israelite King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. This legend, which has no substance in fact, claims that Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had a son together, called Menelik, who then visited Jerusalem and came back to Axum with the Ark of the Covenant. While there is no evidence for this account, the Ethiopian kings believed it (or at least publicly claimed to), in order to back their claim for the throne. Ethiopian King Zara Yakob (1399–1468) claimed at his coronation, 'I am the son of David, the son of Solomon, the son of Menelik.'²

The Solomonic people had their capital



Yekuno-Amlak

at Amhara, near the current day capital Addis Ababa. Their empire is often called the 'Kingdom of Abyssinia'. They expanded their kingdom within Ethiopia to make an empire spanning from Shewa in the south to the lands north of Lake Tana. The Solomonic sent a steady stream of pilgrims to Jerusalem but did not get involved in the crusades of the time. However, some European Christians (particularly the Portuguese) believed that the legend of Prester John, a mythical Christian king who ruled a kingdom in the middle of the Muslim world, referred to the king of Ethiopia who would come and rescue the Holy Land.

Indeed, Ethiopia was an island surrounded by Muslim countries. Between 1529–1543 the Muslim leader Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi conquered much of Ethiopia, with Ottoman support, until his defeat in 1543. Between 1769–1855 Ethiopia was ruled by various leaders in the 'Age of Princes', an era of feudal anarchy where power shifted from the central court to regional princes. This was ended by Kassa Hailu (1818–1868), who built up an army, defeated the rulers, and consolidated the separate states. Kassa was then crowned Emperor Tewodros II in 1855. In 1869 the Suez Canal opened; this increased the strategic importance of the country. For a while Italy controlled Ethiopia, until they were defeated by a Solomonic ruler called Menelik II in the nineteenth century.

Ethiopia under Haile Selassie 1930–1974

In 1930 Haile Selassie was crowned emperor—the 225th successor to the Solomonic throne. Perhaps the most well-

known of the Ethiopian kings his name means 'Power of the Trinity' in Amharic, and he also styled himself as the 'King of Kings' and the 'Lion of Judah'.

Today Haile Selassie's name is linked to that of the Rastafarians. The term 'Rastafari' derives from 'Ras Tafari Makonnen', the pre-regnal title of Haile Selassie—'Ras' means 'head' or 'chief', and 'Tafari Makonnen' was his personal name. Rastafarianism is a religion which developed in Jamaica in the 1930s. Many of the believers see Haile Selassie as the Second Coming of Christ,

and Africa as Zion: they believe that black people are the chosen of God and wish to repatriate them to their homeland, Africa. Although Haile Selassie died in 1975, Rastafarians believe that he is still alive. The lion represents Haile; thus Rastafarian dreadlocks represent the lion's mane.



Haile Selassie's Imperial Standard

In 1936 the Italian army conquered Ethiopia; the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III was declared Emperor of Ethiopia and Haile Selassie fled to England. He was restored to the throne in 1941 by the Ethiopian and British armies.

Haile Selassie attempted to move the nation into the twentieth century, and became increasingly involved in foreign affairs—he played a leading role in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. He also instructed

*Haile Selassie
1892-1975*



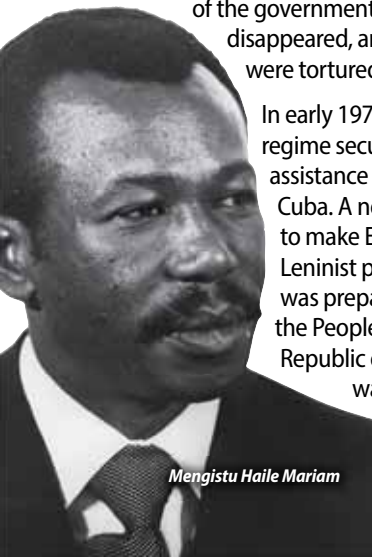
a new Amharic Bible to be translated.

However there were internal problems within Ethiopia and on its borders: the Somalia Republic, and the Sudanese and Eritrean independence movements. There were also urgent domestic problems, inequalities of wealth, rural under-development, government corruption, inflation, unemployment, and severe drought. These factors all combined to generate a great deal of unrest.

Socialist Ethiopia 1974–1991

On the 12 September 1974 Haile Selassie was pushed out and an administrative council, the Derg, was established to run the country with Mengistu Haile Mariam eventually as chairman. In 1975 all agricultural land was nationalised, the monarchy abolished, and Ethiopia declared a republic. The government unleashed the 'Red Terror' campaign to root out the enemies of the revolution—between 1977–1978 an estimated 100,000 enemies of the government were killed or disappeared, and many thousands were tortured.

In early 1978 the Mengistu regime secured military assistance from the USSR and Cuba. A new constitution to make Ethiopia a Marxist-Leninist people's republic was prepared and in 1987 the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) was proclaimed.



Mengistu Haile Mariam



Display inside the 'Red Terror' Martyrs' Memorial Museum, Addis Ababa

The decline of Communism

A famine from 1983–1985 affected some eight million people, with around one million losing their lives. This led to rebellions, particularly in the northern regions of Eritrea and Tigray. By the late 1980s Ethiopia had also lost support from the Soviet Union as that regime declined. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had formed in the 1970s as a small militia group, fighting against the dictatorship. Although the Tigrayans are a small ethnic group the TPLF became the most powerful rebel force in the country. They combined with other ethnically based movements to form the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF advanced on Addis Ababa in May 1991; Mengistu Haile Mariam fled the country and was given refuge in Zimbabwe.

In 1993 Eritrea declared independence from Ethiopia, and in 1995 Ethiopia was renamed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The first multiparty election took place in 1995 and was won by the EPRDF, and criminal proceedings commenced against members and supporters of Mengistu's regime. In 2006 Mengistu was convicted in absentia of

genocide at the end of a twelve-year trial and sentenced to death.

Meles Zenawi led Ethiopia from 1991 until his death in 2012, a period in which the country became more stable and had significant economic growth. However, not all was positive at this time, and Protestantism was treated as a second-class religion, while Muslims and Orthodox Christians were given preference in many areas of life.

Ethiopia 2016–Today

In 2016 anti-government protests erupted and a state of emergency was declared. Eventually this led to a new prime minister: Abiy Ahmed. Mr Abiy set up a new political party—the ‘Prosperity Party’. He also ended the longstanding dispute over the Eritrean



Abiy Ahmed receiving his Nobel Prize

border, for which he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.

However, some ethnic groups were not happy with reforms, which came to a head when the August 2020 elections were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Conflict, caused by the delayed elections and historic difficulties, resulted in tensions between different groups. These tensions have calmed, but the conflict has led to many deaths, displaced many people, and caused great suffering and distress.

Religion in Ethiopia

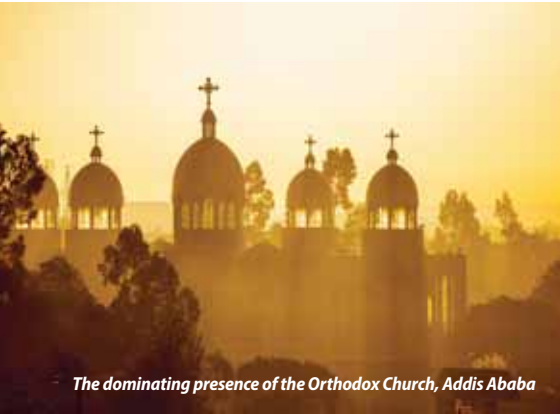
While Christianity is the dominant religion in Ethiopia, around one-third of the Ethiopian population (mainly in the Eastern Lowlands and outlying areas) are Muslim. However, the perception of Ethiopia as ‘an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam’ still persists, particularly among the highland Ethiopians and foreigners. A small proportion of the population are animists, worshipping a range of African deities and more recently there has been a revival of paganism in all tribal groups with a return to cultural animistic rituals. There is also a very small Rastafarian population.

Ethiopian Jews

A Jewish community developed in Ethiopia. Referred to as ‘Beta Israel’ they claim either to be descendants from Menelik—the legendary son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba mentioned earlier—or a portion of the tribe of Dan. For centuries these Jews were completely isolated from Jewish communities in other parts of the world, yet adhered to Biblical Judaism. In 1977 Israeli officials decided that the ‘Law of Return’—allowing Jews worldwide to immigrate to Israel—applied to Beta Israel, and the land was thus opened to Ethiopian Jews. Initially these Jews had to immigrate secretly with the help of Israeli security services, but with the end of Mengistu’s regime it became much easier. By the end



A village synagogue



The dominating presence of the Orthodox Church, Addis Ababa

of the 1990s around 90,000 Ethiopian Jews had arrived in Israel.³

Ethiopian Christianity

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is the dominant form of Christianity within Ethiopia; over forty percent of the population are members, and it predominates in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara.⁴ As the Ethiopian church grew it adapted to form its own indigenous form of Christianity, with Judaic overtones including such dietary rules as the prohibition on eating pork. Adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church believe that the Ark of the Covenant is hidden in one of its churches, and only one priest is ever allowed access to it. Orthodox

churches are not considered churches until they have at least one ‘tabot’, a replica of the tablets in the original Ark of the Covenant.

The early influence of Egypt and Alexandria meant that the church is Monophysite—they believe that Christ had one single divine-human nature. This view was deemed heretical at the Council of Chalcedon

in AD 451 which taught that Christ had two distinct natures. The church is often referred to as

‘Tewahedo’, which is a Ge’ez word meaning ‘united as one’ referring to their belief in the united nature of Christ.

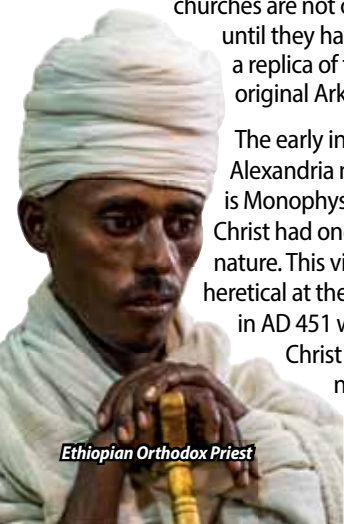
The Ethiopian Orthodox church venerates Mary. It also has its own saints, including the Nine Saints—these were Monophysite believers who had fled from various parts of the East Roman Empire after the Council of Chalcedon.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has historically held great influence in Ethiopia and has a special relationship with the government. Other denominations, especially evangelicals and Pentecostals, have been persecuted by the state and the Orthodox Church, and their churches can be restricted from holding religious gatherings. Christians who leave the Orthodox Church face family and community pressure, and are reported to the authorities from whom they may face significant mistreatment. Christians also encounter persecution from Islamic extremists, particularly if they are converts from Islam.⁵

Protestants

Protestant missions entered Ethiopia in the nineteenth century, resulting in the formation of Protestant churches. The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) began work in the south of Ethiopia in the 1920s, but there were not many converts by the time the invading Italians drove them out in 1938. However, when the mission returned five years later they discovered a flourishing church of over a hundred congregations and around 20,000 members. The Kale Heywat (Word of Life Church), which grew out of the SIM churches, has continued to flourish.⁶

Other missions, such as those from the United Presbyterian Church of North America, also sent missionaries. After the Second World War there were attempts



Ethiopian Orthodox Priest

to bring together the evangelical groups within the country and in 1959 the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus was inaugurated—initially this consisted of four synods of Lutheran background, but later the churches which resulted from the Presbyterian missions also joined along with others. There have also been Mennonite, Charismatic, and Pentecostal missions.

Today approximately nineteen percent of the population are Protestants of some form to the extent that Orthodox Christians often use the term ‘Pentes’ (Pentecostal) to refer to all Protestants, even though not all are Pentecostal.

The Amharic Language

In total there are around ninety different languages in Ethiopia, but Amharic is the working language. It is spoken as the first language by the Amharas and serves as a lingua franca for many other people. Amharic is an Ethiopian Semitic language, and is related to languages such as Arabic and Hebrew.

Amharic is written left to right using a system that grew out of the Ge’ez script, and there is no way of transliterating



The name of the language in Amharic

the script into the Latin alphabet. Each symbol represents a syllable consisting of a consonant plus a vowel. Ge’ez remains the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The Amharic Bible

It would appear that the Old Testament was translated in Ge’ez in the fourth century, and then completed with the New Testament in the seventh century. Earliest texts of this Bible date from the thirteenth century; since then it has only been used as a liturgical text. This ancient Ge’ez version seems to have been based on many sources, including the Samaritan translation, the Greek Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate.

The Ethiopian Orthodox canon contains fifty-two Old Testament books and thirty-eight New Testament books, with the first printed editions dating to 1513. One of the books in the canon is Jubilees, known as *Kufale* in Ethiopia. The New Testament includes books such as the Shepherd of Hermas and 1 and 2 Clement. These deuterocanonical books have been part of the Bible used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for centuries, although they were rightly rejected by the early church as non-canonical.

The British and Foreign Bible Society published a Ge’ez edition between 1826 and 1830, to which there were various revisions in the nineteenth century.⁷ The Abu Rumi Bible published in 1886 became the standard Amharic Bible for over fifty years. This Bible is good in many respects and is close to the Authorised (King James) Version but its use of terms such as ‘Saturday’ instead of ‘Sabbath’ has been used by the Seventh Day Adventists to persuade people that the Sabbath is Saturday. ‘Synagogue’ was also translated as ‘mosque’ and there are other such problems such as usage of very old words.

Gradually the Amharic language, which evolved from Ge’ez (the language still used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church), grew

Trinitarian Bible Society – *Quarterly Record*

to become predominant in Ethiopia, and Haile Selassie ordered a new translation of the Bible which was finally published in 1962. This included the sixty-six books of the canonical Protestant Bible, with the deuterocanonical books published separately. Haile Selassie made the following remarks in a speech.

In former ages Ge'ez was the language of the country and so, even without an interpreter, the people had no difficulty in examining and understanding the books; but just as one age succeeds another, so Amharic, which sprang from Ge'ez, gradually grew until it became the common speech of the people, taking the place of Ge'ez. At that time Ge'ez was understood by the learned people of the church but was not readily understood by the ordinary people. Arising from this, the scholars in their preaching and work have for centuries been forced in their teaching to interpret from Ge'ez into Amharic. And these conditions prevailed until our own times, since the time when, by God's goodness, we were chosen to ascend the Throne of Ethiopia and while we have been leading our people to progress in learning and knowledge ... realizing that the first necessity was to have the Scriptures translated into Amharic and printed in

bulk ... we chose from amongst the scholars some to translate the Scriptures and to produce the translation alongside the Ge'ez. After this, too, at our private expense we had a printing machine brought from Europe, established a printing press, and began to have books printed ... We arranged for a word-for-word translation into Amharic of the books of the Old and New Testaments. Our scholars completed the translation and presented it to us in 1931 ... however, enemy aggression in 1935 halted the work. Even so, when in exile in London, we gave permission for this same Bible to be printed by photo-offset, and it was duly issued. By this Book, our Ethiopian subjects in exile in many countries held fast to their faith and presented their petitions to Almighty God as they awaited the restoration of Ethiopia.

When, all honour and praise be to God, we had brought about the liberation of Ethiopia and had entered our Empire, realizing that there ought to be a revision from the original Hebrew and Greek of the existing translation of the Bible, we chose scholars qualified for the work of Biblical training and on March 6th 1947 set up a Bible Committee in

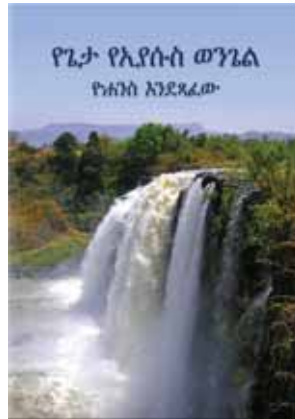


our Palace. The Committee worked with diligence for some five years, and on April 19th 1952 presented the translation to us. We give heartfelt thanks to all who helped us in this work.⁸

Besides the 1886 Abu Rumi Bible there are seven other versions currently in use but all of them, including the 1962 Haile Selassie Bible, use the Critical Greek Text and have many deletions and omissions. For example, 1 John 5.7 is missing, and 'God' is missing from 1 Timothy 3.16. One newer version is a direct translation of the NIV, another is a Jehovah's Witness version, and another is an Orthodox Church translation from the Septuagint containing the Apocryphal books within the canon. The people of Ethiopia currently do not have a good reliable version of the Bible, free from error, and translated from the Greek Textus Receptus and Hebrew Masoretic Text.

TBS and the Amharic Bible

In 2012 the Society started a new project to translate the Bible into Amharic. In 2015 the Amharic Gospel according to John was published and nearly 100,000 copies shipped to Ethiopia. It was with great joy that the New Testament and Psalms was completed and sent to print in 2021; the translator, a native Amharic speaker from Ethiopia, is working on translating the rest of the Old Testament.



TBS Amharic Gospel according to John

God willing, the printed New Testament and Psalms will shortly be shipped to Ethiopia where thanksgiving services

will be held. It is hoped that a future *Quarterly Record* magazine will give a report on the distribution of these Scriptures, along with the Society's plans for registering a TBS office in Ethiopia,



TBS Amharic New Testament and Psalms

Trinitarian Bible Society – Quarterly Record

allowing us to operate in the country as a Foreign Based Religious Organisation.

We would encourage your prayers for the translator and those who are distributing the Scriptures. May God be pleased to bring many Amharic speakers to Himself.

‘Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God’ (Psalm 68.31).

ENDNOTES:

1. ‘Ethiopia Population (Live)’, *Worldometer*, www.worldometers.info/world-population/ethiopia-population/, accessed 05 November 2021.
2. M. Cartwright ‘Kingdom of Abyssinia’, *World History Encyclopaedia*, www.worldhistory.org/Kingdom_of_Abyssinia/, published 09 April 2019.
3. ‘The plight of Ethiopian Jews in Israel’ *BBC News*, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32813056, accessed 27 October 2021.
4. ‘Religion of Ethiopia’, *Britannica*, www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia/Religion, accessed 27 October 2021.
5. ‘Ethiopia’ *Open Doors UK*, www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/ethiopia/, accessed 11 January 2022.
6. C.P. Hallihan, ‘Ethiopia Part Two’ *Quarterly Record* 584, July-September 2008, p. 9.
7. T. Barlow and H. Moule, *Historical Catalogue of the printed editions of Holy Scripture*, 3 volumes (London, England: The Bible House, 1911).
8. H. Selassie ‘Statement on the Revised Amharic Bible’ *Wikipedia*, en.wikisource.org/wiki/Statement_on_the_Revised_Amharic_Bible, accessed 27 October 2021.



Editorial Report

by *Jonathan D. Arnold*



In 1 Corinthians 4.2 we are reminded ‘Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful’. Of course, that has particular application to pastors, ministers, and preachers but it is also an important reminder to translators and those who check their work of the burden of being ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’ (1 Corinthians 4.1). This principle of faithfulness as a steward carries through to all the work of the Society, which has the privilege to be involved in especially publishing the Word of God.

We have advertised for a new Editorial Director, and would request your prayers for the recruitment process, that the Lord would provide someone who is suitably qualified and has a burden for the work. It is a demanding but richly rewarding role that has been a privilege to labour in over recent years.

In the coming years, as we conclude some major projects and begin new translations ‘there is still very much land to be possessed’ (cf. Joshua 13.1), and we continue to recognise ‘our sufficiency is of God’ (2 Corinthians 3.5). Therefore

please pray for all our staff, translators, and consultants as the Society strives to ensure the highest level of accuracy in Scripture translations and publications.

Bible distribution and translation

It is one of the great privileges of the Society to publish the Bible, the Word of God, and we earnestly seek your prayers as we endeavour to translate and distribute it. I shall never forget meeting a brother in a poorer country who had never had the means to purchase a whole Bible; he was reliant on the verses he heard at a church where only a few had Bibles. When he was offered a free Bible he was overjoyed and said he would cherish it and read it for the rest of his life. Humanly speaking, someone may have thought we had just given him millions in gold, but in reality we gave him something far more precious: the Word of Life. This is a scenario repeated in many places, from tribes we have assisted in India to have the Scriptures in their mother tongue to those in the backwaters of the Amazon rainforest to those in rural Africa who through the means of boats, planes,

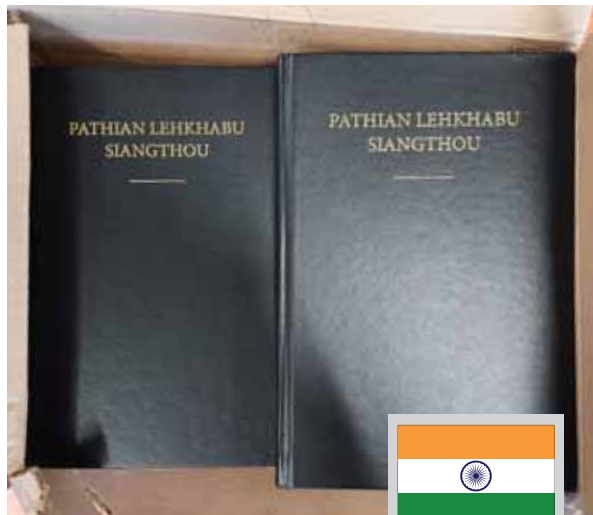


Jonathan Arnold (left) with members of the Spanish Revision team including William Greendyk, General Secretary (USA) (centre)

and automobiles are given copies of the Scripture. Please pray that these doors may continue to be opened by the Lord in 2022 in order to get Bibles to those who need them, and to translate the Bible for those who don't yet have one in their language. May the Lord be pleased to bring a hunger for the Scriptures in the United Kingdom and other countries that have easy access to the Scriptures but ambivalence to the Word of God.

For the Editorial Department and various translators, the past six months have been a period of proofreading, checking, and typesetting. Over the last twelve months we have sent to print the Simte Bible, the Amharic New Testament and Psalms, and the Bemba Gospel according to John. We are also typesetting and/or checking the Vaiphei Bible, Zou Bible, Kom New Testament, Kalenjini New Testament,

Chinese New Testament, French New Testament, and the Dan-Gio New Testament. Please pray for diligence in the



Arrival of Simte Bible copies in the TBS warehouse

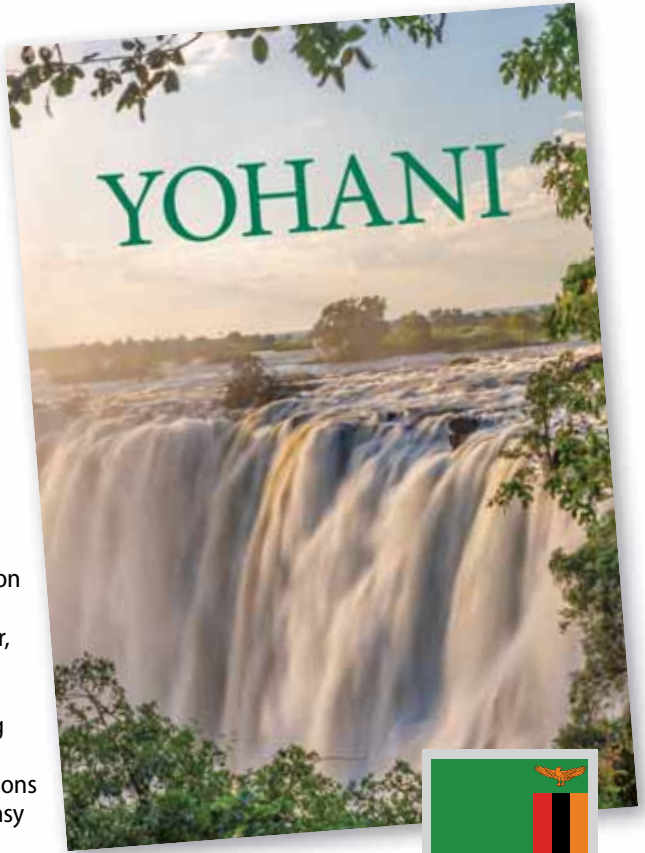


work and for the Lord's blessing on those who eventually receive the Scriptures.

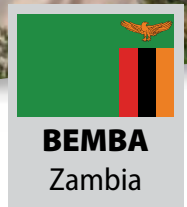
New and ongoing translations

The Society is often asked why we are revising or producing new translations in languages that already have a Bible. The simple answer in most cases is that there is not a faithful translation based on formal equivalence principles from the Greek Textus Receptus and the Hebrew Masoretic Text. Most of the Reformation-era translations have this strong underpinning of text and translation that accords with the high view of the inspired Word of God. However, there are many languages that do not have such a translation or abandoned such a translation long ago. In these languages we are privileged to prepare new translations or revisions. However, this is not easy work: each language has its own particular complexities and difficulties to be considered in the course of Scripture translation.

In the Lord's goodness, suitable individuals have been brought to us in more recent years to assist in languages such as Swahili and Hindi—both being languages spoken by many people—as well as smaller language groups such as Hmar. We are also most grateful to the Lord for those translators with whom we worked for many years, but who have passed away in the previous year. These include a brother who worked on the first edition of the Simte Bible; our Bulgarian reviser Spassimir Stantchev (whose obituary is included in this *Quarterly Record*); and Dr Greg Fox, an



Bemba Gospel according to John



editorial consultant whose obituary we hope to include in a future edition of the magazine.

May the Lord be pleased to send others this year where there is a need and sustain those who across the world are labouring with the Society to produce faithful translations of the Word of God. For those languages we now print or shortly will be in 2022 we would say with the Apostle Paul '**Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified**' (2 Thessalonians 3.1).

Spassimir Stantchev



30 June 1974–2 April 2021

In *Quarterly Record* (AR190/QR636) we informed supporters of the sad news that Spassimir Stantchev, our Bulgarian Bible reviser, had passed away on Friday 2 April 2021 at the age of 46. In this edition we wish to pay tribute to his work, share a little of his background, and most of all seek to give glory to God for his life.

Spassimir was born in Bulgaria in 1974

at a time when it was part of the Soviet bloc and—for those in the West—behind the Iron Curtain. Many years later, when Spassimir gave his Christian testimony he spoke rather tersely of his formative years; ‘I am Bulgarian. [I] grew up in an ungodly country, which was for most of my growing up years under the Communist Leadership. I grew up in an ungodly family, not knowing God nor ever being interested in religion’. Spassimir looked back with sorrow to his years in Bulgaria as a time of degeneracy and thus had little to say about them, but after his conversion he was very burdened to provide the people of Bulgaria with a faithful edition of God’s Word.

In the providence of God, in the early part of the twentieth-first century Spassimir emigrated to the Republic of Ireland, seeking work. During his early years in



Ireland several individuals spoke to him about the love of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, as he wrote, ‘I did not want to have anything to do with God. Because of my continuous rejection of God and love of sin, my life was quickly going downhill and I was drowning deeper and deeper in sin. And yet, I could sum it up all by simply saying that I was separated from God and under the bondage of Satan through sin. Yet all

this was about to change and did change when I went to a worship service for the first time’.

In August 2005 Spassimir promised a friend that he would go to his church but did not actually attend a service until October of that year. Spassimir subsequently testified, ‘when I left the church that evening my life was no longer the same. I had hatred towards sin; I hated all the things I used to love which are an offence to God and a trespass of His holy law. Old things passed away; behold, all things became new [cf. 2 Corinthians 5.17]. I had desire to know the Lord Jesus Christ, to be pleasing to God. I had desire and love for the Word of God, and that has been my testimony ever since’.

In April 2012 Spassimir first contacted the Society about the Bulgarian Bible, deeply

concerned that there wasn't a Bulgarian translation like the English Authorised (King James) Version, and asking if the Society could perhaps publish the Bulgarian Synodal Bible without the Apocrypha. Spassimir's email was passed to me to answer. It could not have been foreseen that my response would initiate almost nine years of close collaboration between Spassimir and the Society on the Bulgarian Scriptures.

In the event, the Bulgarian Synodal Bible was found not to be as accurate as first thought and so attention moved to the First Bulgarian Protestant Bible, widely known as the 'Constantinople' or 'Slaveikov' Bible, which was first published in 1871 in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). This Bible was found to be largely based on the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts, but the available edition contained many Russian words. In addition, words that should have been in italics were either removed or placed in normal type, some verses which are not in the Critical Greek Text were placed in brackets, and there were typographical mistakes.

In view of the deficiencies of both the Bulgarian Synodal Bible and the 1871 Bulgarian Protestant Bible, Spassimir was persuaded to embark on revising the 1871 Bible, bringing it into closer conformity to the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts and updating the language where necessary. Thus, in 2014 he began to revise the Gospel according to John. An online edition of the revised Gospel was soon made available and in early 2019 a print edition was published.

Thereafter Spassimir worked, in his limited spare time, on revising the synoptic Gospels. By the time of his death Spassimir had revised (in addition to John) both Matthew and Mark, but in the Lord's mysterious providence that was as far as he

would get. The last two years of Spassimir's life were marked by increasingly poor health as he battled liver disease, and he was taken to be with the Lord on Friday 2 April 2021.

During the final eighteen months of his life it was clear that Spassimir was being prepared for Glory. However, whilst his friends sought to encourage him in the face of increasing pain and suffering, he in turn encouraged us. Frequently unable to sleep or awakened by pain in the night, he would turn to prayer; sometimes on such occasions he would send a message which we would find in the morning, expressing his prayerful desires for us.

Spassimir regularly attended the Society's London Annual General Meeting and visited TBS Headquarters on several occasions. His warm lively personality and beaming smile will long be remembered by those who met him during those visits to London. We also remember his fervent desire for the Bulgarian people to have a faithful edition of God's Word. He would remind English speakers of how privileged they were to have the Authorised Version available to them, and encourage us to pray for this privilege to be extended to other languages.

One of the verses that Spassimir particularly loved was Psalm 34.3, 'O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together'. Most of all Spassimir would want us to remember him as a sinner saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for the Lord's name to be magnified. Without doubt he was a man whose life was transformed by the undeserved and unmerited favour of the Lord. To God be the glory!

Philip Hopkins

Senior Editorial Consultant (Projects)



PLATINUM JUBILEE

Royal Ruby Text Bible

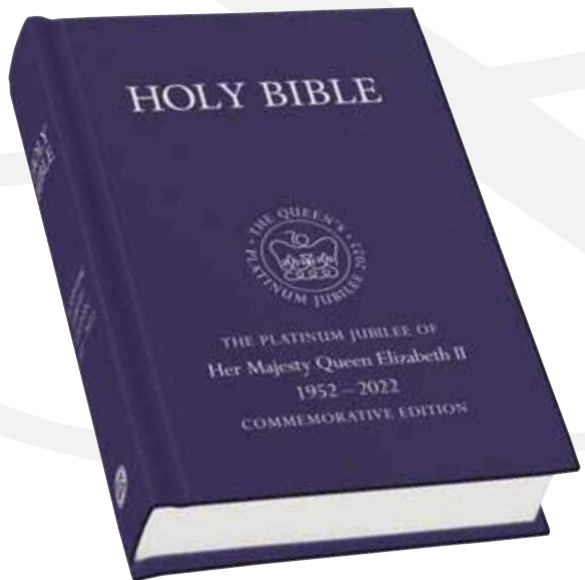
HARDBACK

Product code: 31CB/APR

Colour: Purple with silver foil detail on cover.

Pricing: UK: £7.25,
AUS: \$14.80, CAN: \$11.00,
NZ: \$14.00, USA: \$8.00

On 6 February 2022, God willing, Her Majesty The Queen will become the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee for seventy years of service, having acceded to the throne on 6 February 1952 at the age of twenty-five. Throughout the year Her Majesty and members of the Royal Family plan to travel around the



United Kingdom to undertake engagements to mark this historic occasion, culminating with the Platinum Jubilee Weekend in June 2022.

The Society has published a limited-edition commemorative Bible to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Ideal for free distribution, this special Royal Ruby Text Bible will feature a platinum-coloured foil stamp on a purple cover bearing the official emblem of the Platinum Jubilee.

This copy of the
HOLY BIBLE

PLATINUM JUBILEE EDITION

was presented to

by

date

THE HOLY BIBLE
Platinum Jubilee Edition
1952–2022

*This edition of the Holy Scriptures has been issued by the
Trinitarian Bible Society to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee
of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*

At her coronation in 1953, the Queen was presented with an Authorised (King James) Version Bible to these accompanying words:

Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.

The presentation of the Bible to Her Majesty with these words reminds us of the importance of Holy Scripture, for it is the Word of God. The Bible states, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2 Timothy 3.16-17). As the translators of the 1611 Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible wrote in *The Translators to the Reader*, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when He setteth His Word before us, to read it; when He stretcheth out His hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I; here we are to do thy will, O God'.

We give thanks to Almighty God for preserving Her Majesty throughout the seventy years of her reign thus far and pray that she may continue to be upheld in the discharge of her many duties on behalf of her subjects. As the people of her realm, we pray earnestly that Her Majesty may be blessed of God with a true saving knowledge of the Divine Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and may thereby experience in her own soul the abundant riches of the grace of God toward sinners.

Furthermore, we pray that in the Lord's infinite goodness Her Majesty may derive much personal profit and comfort from reading the Holy Bible, and most especially that, adhering to the doctrine and practice of God's Word, Her Majesty may be enabled to uphold and defend the true worship of God throughout her dominion.

God save the Queen!

'Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.'
Psalm 33.12

We invite all supporters in the UK and also in Commonwealth countries to consider how you might be able to take the opportunity presented by this event to distribute Bibles to children, family members, and neighbours (see page 34 for suggestions).



Operations Report

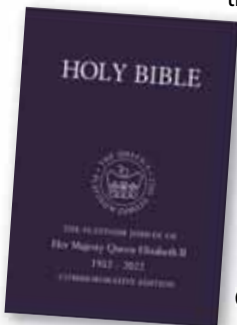
by Philip A. Blows
Operations Director

Church distribution of Platinum Jubilee Bibles

The previous Operations Report contained an announcement regarding the commemorative Bible which the Society is publishing for Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. I am pleased to report that, at the time of writing, these Bibles are being printed and we are expecting them to be received into stock in the early part of 2022. Please see pages 32–33 for more information about this Bible.

We anticipate a significant opportunity to distribute Platinum Jubilee Bibles in schools, mainly in the United Kingdom and in Commonwealth countries. Our UK auxiliaries will be contacting schools in their regions to offer these Bibles free of charge to their pupils and students, and we encourage all supporters who have a TBS auxiliary in their area to prayerfully consider supporting their auxiliary in this Scripture distribution effort.

Churches and individuals



may also wish to offer free Jubilee Bibles to local schools or other institutions. Should you wish to do this, we commend to you the following process:

- 1.** Check if you are in an area covered by a TBS auxiliary. If you are, liaise with the auxiliary officers to agree who will contact which schools; it is best that schools do not receive similar offers from multiple sources.
- 2.** Discuss the possibility of distributing free Bibles to local schools with your minister, elders, and/or other church leadership and commit the matter to the Lord in prayer.
- 3.** Establish, if proceeding, which schools to contact and how many Bibles you can afford to give away.
- 4.** Identify the schools in your area and note down the names and contact details of the headteachers/principals.
- 5.** Compose the emails/letters that you will send. See opposite for a suggested template.
- 6.** Send the emails/letters, then follow up by phone.
- 7.** Order the Bibles from TBS for those who accept the offer. You may want to deliver them yourself; alternatively, order the Bibles from TBS and give the school's address as the shipping address.
- 8.** Finally, maintain appropriate records of the project:

- a. Who was contacted.
- b. Their full contact details.
- c. What their response was.
- d. Number of Bibles distributed.
- e. Possible opportunities for the following year, e.g., to school leavers.

f. Any other notes which will help the next person who contacts the school.

Here is a template that you may wish to use or adapt for your own use when contacting the schools. Ideally the email will be sent from a church email address or the letter printed on a church letterhead.



Subject: Free Platinum Jubilee Bibles for Pupils/Students

Dear [*Correct salutation*],

On 6 February 2022 Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will commemorate her ascension to the throne seventy years ago. At her coronation the Queen was presented with a copy of the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible and vowed to be a defender of the Christian faith.

The Trinitarian Bible Society are marking the occasion by publishing a special Platinum Jubilee Authorised (King James) Version Bible. This commemorative edition will feature a purple cover bearing the official Platinum Jubilee logo and will contain special presentation and introductory pages.

This timeless translation, the most popular book of all time, also serves a literary purpose, having been translated during what many see as the high point of the English language.

Knowing that many pupils and students appreciate keepsakes for special occasions, we would like to offer all of your pupils/all of your Y6 leavers/all of your Y13 leavers [*delete or amend as applicable*] a free copy of this commemorative Platinum Jubilee Bible. (Stocks are limited, so whilst we cannot guarantee to fully meet every request, we will strive to do so.)

If I may, I will call you next week to follow up on this letter. In the meantime, if you wish to contact us, our details are below.

Yours sincerely,

[*Your name*]

[*Your position*]

If you would like any further advice or suggestions regarding this special opportunity to distribute the Scriptures, please contact your local TBS office. Let us all pray 'that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you' (2 Thessalonians 3.1).

Answered Prayer in Romania

A few months ago we received a most encouraging report from a brother in Romania who had just received a parcel of thirty TBS Romanian Bibles:



Dear TBS,

Today I received the Romanian Bibles that you sent to me. Thank you very much for them! An amazing thing happened when I went to take the box with the Bibles!!

I had to go to a special Post-Office called Customs Service, because the box came from the UK, which is not in the EU anymore. The customs workers (a man and a lady) asked me what I received in the box and I told them that it's probably some Bibles. They asked me to open the box and to show them precisely what is inside, so I opened the box and a package inside the box. I showed them the Bibles and after a short hesitation, the lady, with shyness, asked me if I could give her a Bible, because she didn't have one at home and she even thought about buying one! I gave her a Bible with joy, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

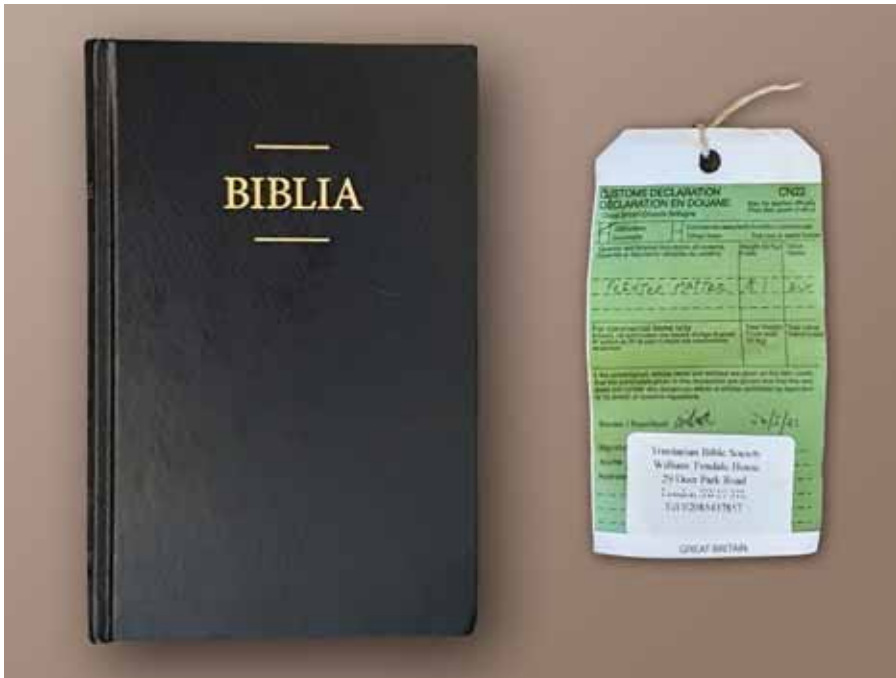
In that office were 4 workers, two ladies and two men. I asked the other lady if she also wants a Bible and with happiness she said: yes, please! The first man asked me if he could also have one

Bible and I said: yes, of course! And I gave him one. The same thing with the other man from the office. Then I asked all of them if they want another Bible for someone in their family and they asked me with shyness that they want for their mothers, brothers and sisters.

I was so amazed and happy to see with my eyes that all four customer workers wanted so much to have Bibles for them and for some relatives!! I talked a little bit with them about the importance of the Bible, but because they were in the middle of their schedule with people, I couldn't talk too much, even if I wanted to. I told them that if I receive another package from the UK, I will come again to talk with them, because a lady and a man had some questions about faith and the Bible.

When I came back home, I told my wife what happened in the customs office and she was so touched in her heart because God answered her prayers!! I asked her how, in what sense? She told me that after she read from the Bible in the morning, she knelt down and the first words before God were: 'O Lord, please show Thy mercy to someone who searches for Thee this day. There are people who search for Thee, but nobody is there for them. Please bring Thy joy in someone's life'.

When I heard my precious wife's prayer I was so overwhelmed by God's love, grace and care for anyone who's looking for Him! How He managed all the pieces together: my brother in Christ had called me and told me that you have some Romanian Bibles and you can send them to me; when the Bibles arrived I went to pick them up; while I was going to the office, without knowing where I was going,



One of the Romanian Bibles received in Romania along with the UK customs declaration tag.

my wife prayed that God would listen to the needs of somebody's heart and it wasn't one person, but four persons plus another four relatives!!

This shows God's work, how faithful is He, how worthy of our praises, of our daily worship! Please pray for those people who received the Bibles, that the Holy Spirit will touch their hearts, minds, souls, in such a way that their lives will be changed and won for eternity, by God's grace!

Please pray for me and my family to have more and more love, faith, boldness, to proclaim the Gospel, with all our hearts, because there are people all around us who seek for God and need the good news of the Lord Jesus!

Many warm greetings to all the brothers and sisters from Trinitarian Bible Society

and may the Lord reward any sacrifice you do in His Name!

May the Lord likewise give us all this prayerful desire to speak of Him with those whom we meet each day, without fear or embarrassment. 'But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear' (1 Peter 3.15).

Endnote

Although certain phrases and expressions used in the letters in this article may not be doctrinally correct or in correct English, we reproduce the letters essentially as received, knowing that the Lord is using His Word to the glory of His Name and the furtherance of His Kingdom as the Scriptures are distributed among the nations of the world.



SPECIAL OVERPRINT Words of Life Calendars for 2023

We offer churches and other organisations the opportunity to have their contact details printed onto each page of their calendars. It is our hope that this overprint facility will prove useful to the furtherance of the Gospel in various localities.

Please note that this year all orders must be placed online at www.tbsbibles.org/overprintform

Advance notice

To enable the timely delivery of overprinted calendars it is necessary for initial design and print preparation work to commence many months in advance. All orders must therefore be placed by Wednesday 1 June so that we can ensure delivery by the end of October 2022, God willing.



Prices

Calendars cost £0.42 each (excluding VAT). Minimum order quantity for each edition is 500. UK shipping is free. All other shipping charged at cost. Discounts cannot be applied to orders for overprinted calendars.

Please visit our website www.tbsbibles.org/overprintform to order online and enter the information you would like on your calendar. What you enter on the form will be what appears on the calendar, including capitalisation, so we advise that you ask another person to check what will be entered on the form.

We accept overprint orders in the following languages: English, Albanian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, French, Hungarian, Maori, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Serbian, Ukrainian, and Welsh.

Sample



THE WORD OF LIFE

THE SERMON PREACHED BY THE
REV. DAFYDD MORRIS AT THE
190TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
18 SEPTEMBER 2021

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1.1–3

The **Word of Life** is John's subject here, and we are drawn to it. It is like a magnet amongst the inspired writings. Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, as he cried out, was asked by Evangelist, 'Wherefore dost thou cry? He answered, Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second!' With his fingers in his ears he began to run, crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!'² And if we have been similarly wrought upon and exercised, death being within us and all about us, life is going to be irresistibly attractive to us!



And death has been all about us: some hundred and thirty-four thousand losing their lives during the pandemic in the United Kingdom so far, and millions around the world. Businesses have ground to a halt, but not the undertakers; chapels empty, but not the mortuaries. What a solemn time in the history of the whole world. We should be suitably solemnised and humbled, although I doubt that we are sufficiently so.



But pandemic or not, as men and women generally we seem bent on death; and what can the great love affair with sin lead to except death? Death is chosen rather than life. You remember the Lord remonstrating in Jeremiah 27.13 with those who were mad enough to make this suicidal choice of death rather than life. He remonstrates with them, 'Why will ye die ...?'

The society of men and women in the world seems to have made an agreement with death and Hell. There is disagreement on all manner of issues, but in taking counsel against the Lord and His anointed there seems to be a fatal unanimity. So when I see here in this Bible 'the Word of life', my pulse quickens.

In John's day there were antichrists gone out into the world, just as there are in our

day. They were peddling death-dealing heresies, damnable falsehoods concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gnostics believed in salvation through illumination and knowledge but not the blood. The Docetists denied the reality of the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying that He only seemed to be human. A heretic by the name of Cerinthus taught that the Christ descended upon the Lord Jesus after His baptism and departed before His death; he denied that Jesus is the Christ, come in the flesh.

Now who could deny that those denials and perversions were the work of the one who is a murderer from the beginning?

The answer to death-dealing lies and falsehoods of all sorts is the Word of Life. This is a term used by John as well as the apostle Paul, for example Philippians 2.16 where he exhorts the church to be 'holding forth the Word of

life' like an Olympic torch in a dark and dying world. There was false doctrine to contend with there in Philippi; there were the dogs, the legalists who would maul poor believing souls to death if they could. There was the occult as seen in the maid spoken of in Acts 16: devil-inspired and devil-captured. The Word of Life was so desperately needed there in the city of Philippi. There was also death in Ephesus, where men were dead in sins and trespasses. But we know that this is a universal condition: the world is one vast valley of dry bones.

Some think when Adam fell it seemed tantamount to breaking his little finger, that a slight problem arose in the Fall. But it was more as if he had broken his neck! The result is that we are not in the clinic or in the infirmary; we are in the mortuary,

spiritually speaking; we are in the grave, entombed where Lazarus was. All of us who are Christian know by our own experience,

‘Lord, I was dead; I could not stir
My lifeless soul to come to Thee.’³

How needful then is the Word of Life! Our work as a Society is desperately needed as we seek to produce uncorrupted versions of the Scriptures. Corruption is death! We must have uncorrupted versions of the Scriptures to hold forth as the Word of Life. May the Lord help us and may He bless us further in this work which is so much needed in our day.

But here in these verses of our text we find that the Word of Life is not so much the message of life in the Gospel, which was inscripturated, as the incarnate Word. There is great correspondence between the inscripturated Word and the Word Who was incarnate. Both testify to each other, and there is no tension between them. Joseph Hart was surely right when he said,

‘The Scriptures and the Lord
Bear one tremendous Name;
The written and the incarnate Word
In all things are the same.’⁴

In our text we find the Word of Life in three spheres: the eternal, the temporal, and the experimental. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Word who was from the beginning. So we are going back into the eternal realm here. You will have noticed that as far as the writings of John are concerned he never

begins at Bethlehem. That would be too recent a starting point. He roves back over the horizon of time, into the mysterious unknown of eternity where the Word was with God and the Word was God (John 1.1). The Deity of the Lord Jesus is clearly established and His eternity firmly stated.

As the Word the Lord Jesus Christ is the expression and the manifestation of the being and life of God. Just as our words make known our thoughts, so the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word expresses—

makes known, manifests, and evidences—the subsistence, the character, and the perfections of God. They are spoken out by the Word,

‘Thou art the everlasting
Word,
The Father’s only Son;
God manifestly seen and
heard,
And heaven’s Beloved
One.’⁵

He was seen and heard
when humanity was

added to His deity. So it is now that John comes to Bethlehem. Thereafter there were witnesses aplenty to the reality and the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; and of course this is absolutely fundamental and vital if we are to be saved. If He had not been truly human we would have been unrepresented at the Cross, with no hope of redemption. What is laid down for us here in Scripture as far as the real humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely fundamental and vital.

But do we not struggle sometimes to realise the present reality of our Saviour? The disciples thought He was a phantom when He came to them over the waves. Unreality and remoteness are what we do not want. An insubstantial Christ will not satisfy.

The Scriptures and the Lord bear one tremendous Name; the written and the incarnate Word in all things are the same.

'O Jesus, make Thyself to me,
A living bright reality:
More present to faith's vision keen,
Than any outward object seen:
More dear, more intimately rich,
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.⁶

But where do we begin with realising the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ, experiencing Him as a living, bright reality? We begin with the objective, historical reality of the manifestation of the Word of Life.

Evidences of the Word of Life according to Apostolic Witness

First of all we must turn our thoughts to the evidences of the Word of Life according to apostolic witness. 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard' (1 John 1.1): faith cometh by hearing so the faculty of hearing is mentioned first.

What did those witnesses hear? They **heard** the wonderful Words of Life! John heard our Lord say, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14.6). In Adam the way was shut up, the truth denied, and the life lost. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of life as well as being the truth in Person, the new and living way to the Father and to glory. But they heard Him saying that He was the life.

John **heard** our Lord saying that this was the very purpose of His coming, that His sheep might have life and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10.10). This was not the bare subsistence sort of life, certainly not a name to live only: we were never meant to live a life like that, spiritually speaking. This is abundant life. We can picture it in terms of sheep, what it would mean for sheep to have an abundant life. They would have a loving, self-sacrificing shepherd whose whole

purpose was to tend them and care for them. He would carry the lambs in His bosom, lead them into abundant green pastures, and beside still waters. His flock would be protected and supplied with all things pertaining to life and godliness. That is the life that the Lord Jesus Christ said that He came to give.

John **heard** our Lord saying that He was the Bread of life (John 6.35): necessary, life-sustaining, satisfying. Hungering and thirsting we are bidden to dine on the achievements of His broken body and His shed blood. As the Lord's people we are meant to appropriate Him as Redeemer, as the One who has reconciled us to God, having pacified and propitiated the Father. We appropriate these achievements as if we were eating, making them ours and living upon them so that they become life and health to us. John heard and believed what he heard of the Word of Life and recorded it for us under the Holy Spirit's inspiration. 'These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ ... and that believing ye might have life through his name' (John 20.31).

John and the Apostles not only heard the Word of Life; they **saw** Him. How stupendous! They **saw** God in the flesh. That 'which we have seen ...' (1 John 1.1, 3): not in our imagination, not in our wishful thinking, certainly not a hallucination, but with our eyes, with the marvellous faculty of sight.

John recalled that Philip reported to Nathanael, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write' (John 1.45). Nathanael was sceptical but Philip's invitation to him was, 'Come and see' (v. 46). Come and confirm with your eyes our Lord's identity as the Messiah, verify it for yourself, to your own satisfaction!

The Apostles **saw** the visible celestial

light radiating from Him on the Mount of Transfiguration; His raiment white as no fuller on earth could white them (Mark 9.3). Peter noted the impossibility of it all being cunningly devised fables, since they had been eyewitnesses of His majesty, for Jesus received from God the Father honour and glory (2 Peter 1.16-17). The Lord Jesus was about to be diminished, dishonoured and degraded by men but what was happening there on the Mount was that God the Father was demonstrating His Son's majesty. His greatness would be diminished by men, but the Father would make much of Him: His greatness, His majesty, His honour, His glory. Peter, James, and John saw these things, and our Lord's identity was confirmed to them as the beloved Son. It was confirmed and ratified, and we have it here in Scripture on the best authority.

But the most sacred view of all—the most eloquent, the most blessed—was what John **saw** when one of the soldiers pierced the dead Saviour's side. Forthwith there came out blood and water; and I trust that we have a vested interest in that flow.

'Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.'⁷

He that saw it bare record and his record is true (John 19.35). What John **failed to see** when he looked into the empty tomb was an unspeakable further blessing. Never did a void convey such good news; never did the absence of the Saviour herald such hope. 'He is not here: for he is risen' (Matthew 28.6).

You may have stood at the graveside of a beloved friend knowing that this

will be true of the believing dead, that one day they will vacate the grave; and it will be true of you too, if you are a Christian. But John saw our Lord risen. Out of the seven disciples he was the first to recognise the Lord Jesus Christ on the shores of Galilee. His identity was confirmed beyond all speculation and uncertainty: 'It is the Lord' (John 21.7).

John adds, 'That ... which we have looked upon' (1 John 1.1). A different verb is used here which intends a visual, careful, considered observation; a more intense looking; a scrutiny; an examination with a purpose. When John the Baptist cried, 'Behold' (John 1.29, 1.36) he meant **look** and **hold** what you are looking at in your vision. This was required in considering the Lamb of God: He should be scrutinised and carefully watched, as the Passover lamb of old had to be watched and scrutinised for defects or possible disease. The Lamb of God, our dear Saviour, was scrutinised too.

We bless the Lord for this scrutiny. He was kept under the gaze, not only of His own, not only of the disciples, but of angels and devils, and of God the Father. The verdict was that He was spotless. He knew no sin; there was no sin in Him. Thus He was perfectly qualified to deal with the sins of His people, and to take them away. 'Behold



the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1.29). He atoned for them and dismissed them; He removed them and they are cast behind God's back. Our blessed Scapegoat took them so that they would be remembered no more. Even if they were sought for, they would never be found.

In another **beholding** John, on behalf of his fellow-believers, beheld our Lord's spiritual glory. On the mount it was visible, celestial light glory: 'and we beheld his glory' (John 1.14); he was writing about the Lord's spiritual glory, His manifested excellence, marking Him out as the only begotten of the Father. The disciples **beheld** the manifested excellence of the eternally-generated Son of God.

The very last **beholding** of the Word of Life during His career on earth was whilst He was taken up and the cloud received Him out of their sight while they looked steadfastly. They **were looking upon Him**, scrutinising Him, watching Him very, very carefully as He went up. Having finished His work He went up in triumph, to take by right the highest place that Heaven affords. They closely watched Him as He went and then heard the angels saying that He would come in like manner. And thank God, He will!

There is one more recollection: which we have heard, seen, looked upon, and **'our hands have handled, of the Word of life'** (1 John 1.1). Men do not handle a phantom. It was no phantom or token human being that Simeon took up in his arms in the temple. The old man would have felt the holy Child's weight and His warmth as he cradled Him, and as he said, 'mine eyes have seen thy salvation' (Luke 2.30). The angel of the covenant, our Lord in theophany, let Himself be **handled** by Jacob when he hung on for the blessing (Genesis 32). We might anticipate that then being fully incarnate, the Lord would let Himself be

handled, and it was so. Once fully incarnate He would grant that amazing favour again.

John himself **handled** the Word of Life, had that intimate contact that the action implies, when he leant on our Saviour's breast. What a wonderful picture that is: of union and communion, and a graphic portrayal of faith. The Puritans used to use the term 'recumbency' because it is the posture of faith: leaning upon the Lord Jesus Christ. What an experience that would have been for John, to feel the solidity, the firm foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ under him, that the One on whom he reclined was a real person: flesh and blood, a substantial, tangible person.

I read this a while ago: 'I love an objective religion the more, the older I grow.'⁸ The Word of Life was from the beginning, but manifest in time. The two natures are now forever joined: true God and true man. He was **heard**; He was **seen**; He was **looked upon** and even **handled**. It is not a matter then of conjecture or theory. Christianity is not a philosophy; it is not based on your ideas or mine or anybody else's. It is a matter of revelation and history, and is therefore irreversible. There is something so glorious about that objective religion.

Faith, then, is built squarely on the Lord Jesus Christ, His Person, His work, His blood, His righteousness: this is the foundation that has been laid. It is history; you can't reverse it. You have the Apostles' witness to that foundation which was in turn inscripturated. So that is why we can sing,

'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!'⁹

John is concerned in this epistle that believers might know that they have eternal life. For that assurance there must be a stable foundation. The actual Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is

immovable; it never changes. The apostolic witness never changes.

Do I want a Bible that leaves open the vital question of Who was manifest in the flesh? Do I want a Bible with missing verses, a Bible with holes in it? I cannot stand on that; I must have a reliable version of the Scriptures. Thank God we seek to provide reliable versions of the Scriptures. When Satan comes and hurls his atheistic fiery darts at me and says, 'You dreamt all this up! This salvation and everything to do with it; it's all inside your head; it's a wild fancy of your brain!' Then I am able to say to him, 'It is written!' (Matthew 4.4, etc.). Here is this objective, unshifting, unchanging truth. When heretics threaten I need to be able to say, 'we have a final court of appeal, here, It is written!' 'To the law and to the testimony' (Isaiah 8.20). When the Lord Jesus Christ seems ethereal, insubstantial, I need to begin with the sacred record that's been rendered by faithful men. This is what I need to be acquainted with this real Man who bled and died and now is risen.

The experience of the church of the Word of Life

After considering the evidences of the Word of Life according to apostolic witness, we come to the experience of the church of the Word of Life. John uses here the plural pronoun 'we'. Although he could be using it editorially and then collectively on behalf of the Apostles, we cannot legitimately limit his use of the plural as only referring to himself and to the other Apostles—certainly not in the first verse of 1 John 1 with its repetition of 'we'.

If we go on into the chapter we hear him saying, 'But if we walk in the light ...' (1 John 1.7). This can only refer to the whole company of Christians of all time. 'If

we walk in the light ...'; 'If we say that we have no sin ...' (v. 8) 'If we confess our sins ...' (v. 9): we understand that the whole church is meant in these instances—all who are born of the Spirit and washed in the blood share in this hearing, this seeing, this looking upon, this handling of the Word of Life.

Christ speaks, and His sheep hear His voice (John 10.27). Mary recognised the Saviour's voice. The living God may similarly speak to us in tones that are powerful, full of authority, heavenly, often sweet and unforgettable. But there are also speakings that are of the still, small voice sort. If you underline in your Bible some of the Scriptures that the Lord Himself has made precious to you, it is as if He had spoken them to you personally.

We recently buried a man whose Bible was full of underlinings and with little notes in the margin. He had taken his hymn book with him into hospital along with his Bible, and he had a number of the hymns where the Lord had drawn near and spoken to him. He had the numbers on the cover of the hymn book. Some of the nurses thought they were lottery numbers, but they weren't. The Lord had spoken!

There is a magazine I love to read, and I read it from the back to the front because I like reading the obituaries first: the references to the way that the Lord has spoken to those that have departed are fascinating. But the sum of it always is life! He speaks life to us; the Living Christ speaks the words of eternal life.

Not only will He speak to His people's hearing, He will be seen by them as well. The Galatians had never seen the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, but we are told that before their eyes He was evidently set forth crucified among them (Galatians 3.1). With the eyes of faith they saw and believed unto life. I trust that you are looking out for Him. Is that how you come

on Lord's Day mornings and evenings into the meeting place? We would see Jesus.

The eunuch saw the Lord Jesus Christ when his eyes were opened, when Philip preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8). The eye of faith: what a sight! He saw the Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings in Isaiah 53 and understood as the Holy Spirit applied the Lord Jesus in His substitution. The eunuch saw Him.

Howell Harris, the first of the Calvinistic Methodist fathers in Wales, was a man of a lively temperament. He had been very forward in all sorts of sin and worldliness until he came under conviction of sin. He became very concerned that he was not fit to come to the Lord's table and therefore, according to the vicar of Talgarth, not fit to live nor fit to die. This convicted delinquent began trying to repair the ruins of his own soul in the usual ways: doing good, fasting, praying, reading his Bible, being fastidious in trying to confess all his sins. But he had no relief, no light. Then at Easter 1735 as he records, he was in Talgarth church at the table. 'Christ bleeding on the Cross was kept constantly before my eyes, and I was given strength to believe that I received pardon on account of that.'¹⁰ That seeing of the Saviour not only changed him, it changed the little nation of Wales. It was a view that transformed a whole nation and altered the course of its history. The Lord grant us saving views of the Lord Jesus Christ!

'Where is the blessedness I knew
when first I saw the Lord?'¹¹

But these are the preliminary views, for if we have seen Him by faith here below surely we are to see Him above and to see Him as He is. We will not see the Christ of sinful imagination nor the Christ of the heretics. But we will see Christ as He is.

January 6, 1850 was a snowy, icy Lord's Day. The wind, blowing in from the North

Sea, was biting, and the north wind of Holy Spirit conviction had already killed all confidence in the flesh in the case of a sixteen-year-old Essex lad by the name of Charles Spurgeon. There he sat in Artillery Street Primitive Methodist Chapel in Colchester, miserable; conscious of the serpent's bite and venom. The preacher's text was 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth' (Isaiah 45.22).

'Jesus, thus, for sinners smitten,
Wounded, bruised, serpent-bitten,
To His cross directs their faith.
Why should I, then, poison cherish?
Why despair of cure, and perish?
Look, my soul, though stung to death.

...

See the Lord of glory dying!
See Him gasping! Hear Him crying!
See His burdened bosom heave!
Look, ye sinners, ye that hung Him;
Look how deep your sins have stung
Him;
Dying sinners, look and live!¹²

Spurgeon looked: that intense, Spirit-directed looking upon for life, and here is his simple, beautiful testimony: 'Oh! I looked, until I could have almost looked my eyes away!'¹³ The vision of the dying Saviour had commandeered his spiritual eyes.

There is a piece of lovely poetry, entitled 'Leaning on Christ'. It refers to John 21.20: John leaning upon our Lord's breast. Only a believer, or perhaps somebody on the way to faith, would ever want to lean on the Saviour. And only a believer, feeling his weakness and subject to temptation and in need of assurance, love, and supplies of grace and strength, and upholding and knowing that danger is at hand desires to lean upon the Saviour's breast.

'Jesus, let me lean on Thee,
When my grief and woe are sore,
Let me prove Thy sympathy,
Tender love and mighty power,

In the days that adverse be,
Jesus, let me lean on Thee.

Jesus, let me lean on Thee,
When fond hopes below are lost;
Let me feel Thou guidest me,
When loved plans are hourly crossed.
In the days that puzzling be,
Jesus, let me lean on Thee.¹⁴

Do we long for that nearness, for that intimate communion, and for all the blessings granted to those who lean?

I am sure that we all feel our poverty as far as experience goes, but may we be led further into blessed hearing and seeing and looking upon and handling of the Word of Life, unworthy though we be.

The end to which the evidences and experiences lead

I come lastly to the end to which the evidences and the experience lead. All this has been leading to fellowship, and this, of course, was what was lost in the Adam fall.

Fellowship with God was lost. Our first parents heard and hearkened unto the serpent. The woman saw that the tree was good for fruit, and pleasant to the eyes.

They looked upon it and coveted it and handled it to eat. And of all that Adam forfeited, the bliss of that happy walk with the Lord in unstained Eden was the most bitter. It was so fatal a loss, an utter disaster.

The coming of the Word of Life into the world and His manifestation—so real that men heard Him, saw Him, looked upon

Him, handled Him—was in order to repair the breach. That ruined relationship was made whole and made good on the Cross of Calvary. I love to dwell on the fact of how thoroughly our Lord repaired the breach. ‘For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might’—what? that He might give us a chance? that He might give us a head start? No!—‘that he might bring us to God’ (1 Peter 3.18). That’s what was done on Calvary’s Cross; nothing short of that. We are granted to hear and see and look upon and handle the Word of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brought into fellowship with Him, and by Him into fellowship with the Father. We are brought into fellowship with the Apostles as well.

The result of John’s leaning was fellowship. It brought him into fellowship with the Lord, and such fruitful fellowship in his case. Think of him there: leaning, reclining, near enough to the Saviour’s shoulder to realise that the government was upon it. That surely explains to us why later John was not cowering, and why

he was not collapsing in the most harrowing of circumstances as he looks up there at his Saviour bleeding and dying and suffering on Calvary’s Cross. The sacred record tells us that he was not cowering, he was not collapsing. He was standing. It was the stance of victory.

John knew that the Cross was our Lord’s throne, and that in spite of all appearances to the contrary this was the hour of His glory! He had heard the Lord Jesus Christ saying that and so he knew that the government is upon His shoulder.

John was close enough to the Saviour’s

When we are so aware of being loved by the Lord we love in return.

heart to feel His love so he loved in turn. When we are so aware of being loved by the Lord we love in return. And we love the brethren—you can see this with John, because both he and Peter were still together on Resurrection morning. Wonderful fruit came out from this fellowship that he had had with the Lord Jesus Christ. He stuck with his erring brother Peter. He didn't disdain him; he is still with him, still in fellowship, still having company with Peter and loving him. It all arose out of intimate communion with Christ.

A few years ago, a lecture on William Gadsby was given in a north London church and the lecturer sought to say something about Gadsby's life and times and his labours in the Lord's vineyard. He felt it appropriate at the end to quote William Gadsby's best known, best loved hymn, 'Immortal honours'. Then the lecturer closed the meeting, thinking nothing more of it. But a few years afterwards, at the end of another service, the lecturer was approached by a young lady who had been present when the lecture was given. She referred to the last verse:

'O that my soul could love and praise
Him more,
His beauties trace, His majesty adore;
Live near His heart, upon His bosom
lean;
Obey His voice, and all His will esteem.'¹⁵

She repeated that line, 'Live near His heart, upon His bosom lean' and modestly and quietly said, 'I felt I could'. 'I felt I could'.

Can you lean for fellowship with the Word of Life in anticipation of that uninterrupted

and unbroken fellowship and communion with Him, which will be our happy portion above? Amen.

Endnotes:

1. J. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (London, England: Ingram, Cooke, and Co., 1853) p.41.
2. J. Bunyan, p.42.
3. W. Matson, 'Lord, I was blind', *Trinity Hymnal* no. 555, slideplayer.com/slide/10096476
4. J. Hart, 'Say, Christian, would'st thou thrive', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 878.
5. J. Condor, 'Thou art the everlasting Word', hymnary.org/text/thou_art_the_everlasting_word
6. C. Elliott, 'O Jesus, make Thyself to me' www.stempublishing.com/hymns/biographies/elliott.html
7. A. Toplady, 'Rock of Ages', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 143.
8. J. K. Popham in *The Gospel Standard*, July 2015, p. 197.
9. K., 'How firm a foundation', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 329.
10. R. Bennett, *Howell Harris and the Dawn of Revival* (Wales: Bryntirion Press, 1987), pp. 20–26.
11. W. Cowper, 'O for a closer walk with God', *Gadby's Hymns* no. 958.
12. J. Hart, 'When the chosen tribes debated', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 876.
13. C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL, USA: Fleming H. Revell, 1898) p.105–108.
14. Anon. 'Jesus, let me lean on Thee', *Gospel Hymns*, no. 647
15. W. Gadsby, 'Immortal honours', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 667.



The Treasury

From *David J. Broome*
Resources Director

'Not only does the Word of God administer sweet comfort and help, not only is it a Word that reaches as a cordial the sorrows and sins of our hearts, but it is also a Word to give us a wound and anxiety, and to bring us to a sober consideration ...' So said a faithful minister of the Gospel as he opened a sermon at Leatherhead, England, in 1954.

This dual principle was aptly presented recently while gardening. Having disturbed a nest of worker bees residing, unbeknown, in my compost heap, the inevitable happened (cf. Psalm 118.12) and the effects of several stings were felt for days afterwards. Yet from these amazing little creatures—God's wondrous handiwork—also comes such sweetness, as Samson set forth in his riddle (Judges 14.8–14).

The analogy of the sting (or bite) as a consequence of sin is well understood from Scripture (Numbers 21.6, 1 Corinthians 15.55–56, Revelation 9.10), but perhaps we less often consider that the Word of God also delivers a painful sting when it comes powerfully in a way of conviction of sin (2 Samuel 12.7, 1 Kings 19.9, Acts 9.5). It could be argued that this is stretching the analogy too far because the pure Word of God is incapable of

administering venom or poison, yet our Lord Jesus Christ saw fit to use this picture when setting forth Himself as the great Healer and Saviour of sin-bitten souls under the type of the brazen serpent in the wilderness (cf. John 3.14–15 and Numbers 21.8–9). Down the ages of the church the Lord has used His Word, through the application of His Holy Spirit, to wound and 'kill' (Deuteronomy 32.39, 2 Samuel 12.7, Romans 7.9) those to whom He has determined to later administer the sweet honey of Gospel grace and mercy.

It is very instructive to study the subject of honey in the Scriptures. It is mentioned some fifty-six times, almost always as something sweet and desirable and often in conjunction with other food, most often milk but also butter, oil, grain and flour, meat and cheese. But in Psalm 119.103, the psalmist takes us to the deeper heart level, describing the Word of God as sweeter to his soul than even honey was to his natural taste. The prophet takes up a similar theme, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart' (Jeremiah 15.16).

We find King Solomon encouraging his son to eat honey (Proverbs 24.13), yet also advising against eating too much (Proverbs 25.16,27).

But the soul that has tasted the sweetness of the Word of God, particularly as it sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ and His great love to sinners, need never fear overindulging; rather their desire will be to banquet with Christ the more often (Song of Solomon 2.4, 4.11, 5.1) and to draw sweetness from the Strong (cf. Judges 14.14 and Jeremiah 50.34).

It is this powerful Word that the Society seeks to send forth amongst the nations of the earth. Through the Lord's great mercy we have experienced something of the sweetness of the Lord's gracious hand of providence recently. It is two and a half years since Mr Paul Rowland (now President of the Society) had to lay aside the work of General Secretary due to ill health, and we would record with deep gratitude the Lord's gracious faithfulness, provision, and strengthening as the three Directors have sought to lead the work together over this period (1 Samuel 7.12). We also continue to bear up Mr Rowland in prayer, that the Lord might yet recover him to a greater degree of health and strength.

But we can now rejoice that, in His perfect timing, the Lord has seen fit to raise up Mr Jonathan Arnold (currently Editorial Director) to fill the role of General Secretary from 1 January 2022. We pray that our brother will be granted the Lord's richest blessing and enabling as he takes up this heavy responsibility, one which the Lord has evidently laid upon him and to whom He has given a willingness to carry with His gracious aid (Psalm 68.28). This means that the Society is now in need of an Editorial Director to replace Mr Arnold.

We are also very thankful to report that the Lord continued to provide for the Society's financial needs in 2021. In addition to legacy income received already in 2021, we now have a healthy legacy pipeline which will provide one-off income to support the Society's one-off costs (particularly General Fund Scripture granting) for some time to come. This is a

source of much gratitude, as the Society's ability to make Scripture Grants from its General Fund has been very suppressed in recent years. However, the General Committee and Senior Management still need much wisdom as they strive to reach a 'balanced budget' over the next 3–4 years to ensure that the Society's ongoing annual costs are funded entirely from ongoing income (i.e. excluding legacies). We seek your continued prayers in this respect, and that, if it is the Lord's will, we might see an increase in the Society's underlying General Fund donations and sales.

We are also thankful to report that the Society's new financial system, Xledger, has 'gone live' in our Australian, Canadian, and USA Branches with effect from 1 October 2021, having been implemented in the UK a year before. We still have work to do, but the Society is moving much closer to achieving the significant efficiency and informational benefits that this investment is intended to deliver, if the Lord will.

As we close this article, we are acutely aware that the Society is inevitably a target of Satan because of what we do and what we stand for. We have proved over many years that 'safety is of the LORD' (Proverbs 21.31), and we would return thanks, but we must remain watchful and prayerful. We seek your supplications to the Lord that He would continue to protect the Society's staff and volunteers, peace and unity, reputation, financial resources, computer systems, office/warehouse, particularly from attacks of the Devil and his agents. May we still be found under the protection so beautifully set forth in Psalm 91.

We remain deeply thankful to all the Society's members and supporters who uphold us in prayer and give practically to the work (Hebrews 6.10).

'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you' (2 Thessalonians 3.1).



The Word of God Among All Nations



Although certain phrases and expressions used in these letters may not be doctrinally accurate or in correct English, we reproduce the letters essentially as received, knowing that the Lord is using His Word to the glory of His Name and the furtherance of His Kingdom as the Scriptures are distributed among the nations of the world.



Europe



From England

I trust all is well with you and your work.

This railway poster was spotted while travelling in England.



Poster at railway station

From England

A preacher recently gave the following exhortation to a congregation to continue in Scripture calendar distribution work:

‘There is a gentleman living in the vicinity of his Gospel Hall who has been receiving calendars from them for fourteen years. And just recently this man thought that he’d better go and see the church that had been delivering the calendars. So, after fourteen years of receiving a calendar, he ventured through the doors. So, brothers and sisters, don’t give up, don’t give up.’

From England

A five-year old girl recently coloured in one of the TBS online colouring pages, and her father sent the TBS the finished result.





From Germany

Thank you again for your kind support! The Bibles reached us on 26.11.2021. They are already being given, among others, in the flooded areas and to truck drivers (among them many from Eastern Europe). The situation for truck drivers in Germany has worsened a lot due to the existing situation, so they have to face long waiting times and a lot of unfriendliness. The interest in God's Word is understandably great, especially at this time. May the Lord work through His Word!

for new stock of grant for next year. May God bless you all at TBS and your generous donors. We are praying for you.

From Nigeria

I received a message from Nigeria with two photographs of the English Words of Life Calendars which were sent by the TBS and have arrived very recently. Everyone who has received them is very grateful.



Africa



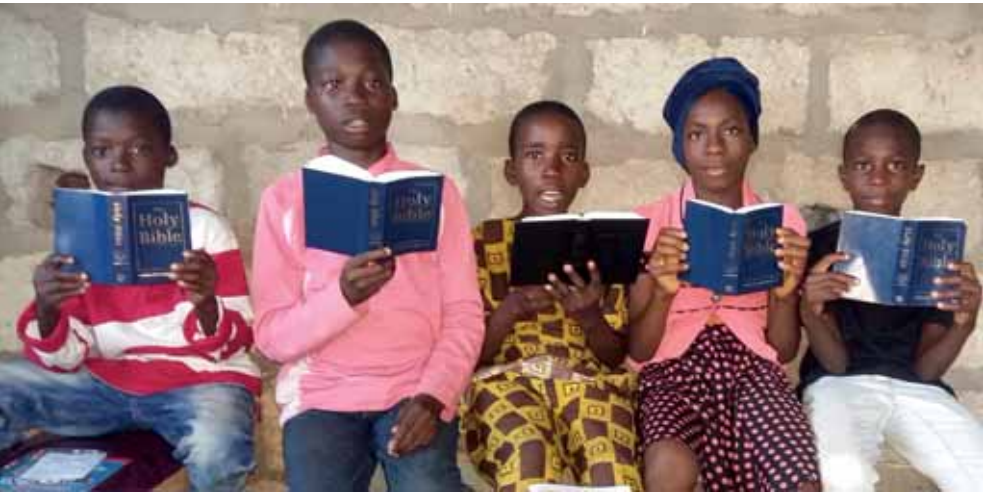
From Nigeria

Today Primary Health Care Management Board personnel received TBS Bibles. They were overjoyed and send greetings to our friends in London who donated the Bibles for free distribution. We would like to make request



Medics receiving Bibles and New Testaments

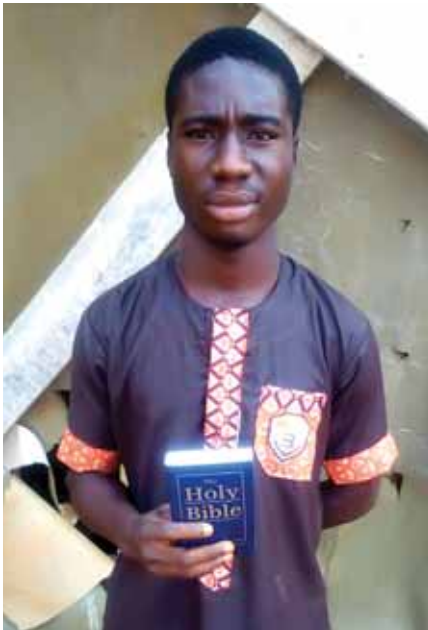




Nigerian children with Bibles

From Nigeria

Thanks so much for your assistance in sending me the Holy Bibles. Here are some photos of the free distributions.





From Malawi

It was a gracious day yesterday. I went to my home area to launch a leadership training program.

I was puzzled to see my blood relatives, old youth friends and many people of my home listening attentively to our lectures. These people have been inviting me to visit them for training for over two years. I was very touched to see a big turn up. We distributed books, commentaries and Bibles. All these books except English Bibles were translated into Chichewa/Chinyanja language. About 150 people attended the one-day conference. Your prayers and support will help us reach the less privileged leaders in the rural Africa and beyond.



From South Sudan

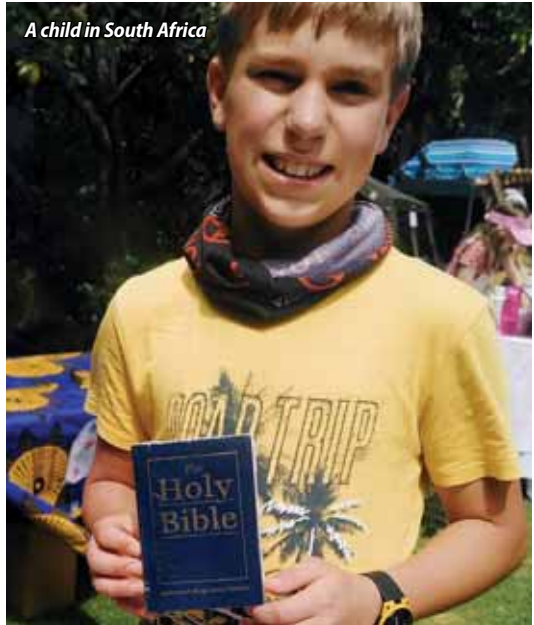
This photo shows the distribution of Bibles in South Sudan.

Bible distribution in South Sudan



From South Africa

Our Home Education Fair, held here in October 2021, presented another opportunity to display on our free literature table the beautiful Bibles we received from your ministry. Thank you for your ongoing support.



A child in South Africa



The Americas



From the USA

Please note that the requested Portuguese Bibles were received at the immigrant processing center and were distributed as soon as they were received to eager recipients. The Portuguese Bibles containing both the Old and New Testaments were the first complete Bibles that they received. The immigrants have been using these Bibles in their personal Bible study, group Bible studies, and in church services. When they leave the facility, oftentimes they take the Bibles with them. I am curious if you might be able to send any additional Portuguese Bibles as additional immigrants come in and others leave the facility causing a need for more Bibles.

From the USA

I am very glad to support with membership and purchase Bibles for gifts and donation from TBS. The commitment to the AV and the translation works based on the Masoretic and Received Texts is also a reason that I often refer others to TBS for your articles and other information. May God continue to bless and use TBS in the spread of the Gospel and growth in Christian life for many years to come.



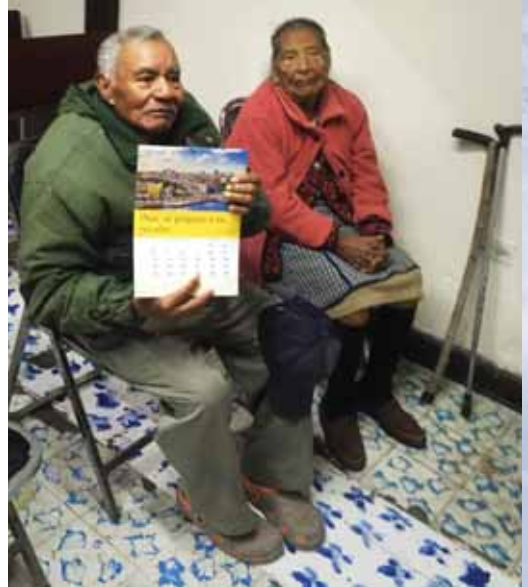
From Mexico

This fellow is a member of a local church evangelising in the mountain region of the province of Hidalgo in Mexico. He is holding the Spanish translation of the TBS article on the Greek New Testament text. He distributes

these and the Scriptures throughout the area.

From Mexico

Scripture items were distributed among families of a church located at Hidalgo, Mexico.



 **From Dominican Republic**

We were glad to be able to distribute the Spanish New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs in the Dominican Republic.



Distribution of Spanish New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs in the Dominican Republic



Spanish New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs in the Dominican Republic



From Ecuador

Spanish Words of Life Calendars have been distributed to congregations in Ecuador.



Calendar distribution in Ecuador



Trinitarian Bible Society

International Headquarters

Trinitarian Bible Society
William Tyndale House
29 Deer Park Road
London
SW19 3NN
England

Telephone: (020) 8543 7857

website: www.tbsbibles.org

email: contact@tbsbibles.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tbsbibles

Office Hours:

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Registered Charity No.:

233082 (England) SC038379 (Scotland)

V.A.T. Registration No.: GB 215 9219 67

Auditors:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London EC1M 7AD

Solicitors:

Bates, Wells & Braithwaite
10 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1BE

Bankers:

Arbuthnot Latham & Co Ltd
Arbuthnot House
7 Wilson St
London EC2M 2SN

Account Name: Trinitarian Bible Society

Sterling Account No.: 71529601

Sort Code: 30-13-93

Swift ID Code/BIC: ARBUGB2L

Euro Account No.: 31529601

IBAN for Euro Account:

GB35 ARBU 3013 9331 5296 01

International Branches

Australian Branch

National Secretary: Mr A. Brown, B.E.

Trinitarian Bible Society (Australia)
P.O.Box 1381, Grafton NSW 2460, Australia

Tel.: +61 2 6642 8880 **Fax:** +61 2 6642 8881

email: aus@tbsbibles.org

Brazilian Branch

President: The Rev. Dr T. L. Gilmer

Executive Secretary: Pr H. R. Gilmer, M.A.

Sociedade Bíblica Trinitariana do Brasil
Rua Julio de Castilhos, 108/120
Belenzinho, 03059-000 São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Tel.: (11) 2693-5663 **Fax:** (11) 2695-3635

email: sbttb@biblias.com.br

Canadian Branch

General Secretary: Mr A. Stoutjesdyk, B.Ed., M.Ed.

Trinitarian Bible Society (Canada)
9136 Young Road
Chilliwack, B.C., V2P 4R4, Canada

Tel.: (604) 793-2232 **Fax:** (604) 793-2262

Toll free: 1-855-793-2232

email: office@tbscanada.org

New Zealand Branch

Chairman: Mr B. de Boer

Trinitarian Bible Society (New Zealand)
PO Box 137025
Parnell, Auckland 1151, New Zealand

Tel.: 09 263 5919

email: sales@tbs.org.nz

USA Branch

General Secretary: Mr W. Greendyk, B.A.

Trinitarian Bible Society (USA)
927 Alpine Commerce Park, Suite 100,
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49544, USA

Tel.: (616) 735-3695 **Fax:** (616) 785-7237

email: usa@tbsbibles.org

The aims of the Society

To publish and distribute the Holy Scriptures throughout the world in many languages.

To promote Bible translations which are accurate and trustworthy, conforming to the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, and the Greek Textus Receptus of the New Testament, upon which texts the English Authorised Version is based.

To be instrumental in bringing light and life, through the Gospel of Christ, to those who are lost in sin and in the darkness of false religion and unbelief.

To uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity, bearing witness to the equal and eternal deity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in three Persons.

To uphold the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

For the Glory of God and the Increase of His Kingdom through the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.



Trinitarian Bible Society

William Tyndale House, 29 Deer Park Road
London SW19 3NN, England

email: contact@tbsbibles.org

www.tbsbibles.org

Simien Mountains, Ethiopia



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