

TBS Quarterly Record

The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society No. 567 April–June 2004



Miles Coverdale

1488–1569:

*Bible Editor,
Bishop and Beggar*



Trinitarian Bible Society

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

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Trinitarian Bible Society

173rd

Annual General Meeting

will be held, God willing,
at 2.30pm on

Saturday, 19th June 2004

at

Westminster Chapel, London

Pastor Roy Mohon

Pastor of Presbyterian Reformed Church, Stockton-on-Tees
and Hon. Treasurer of the Society
is expected to preach

*All friends of the Society are most welcome
Refreshments will be served*

WE HAVE NO DOUBT that members and supporters are continuing to pray for the recovery and return of our General Secretary, Paul Rowland. Many have expressed their concern and written or telephoned to pass on their prayerful best wishes, for which Paul, his family, and the Society are most grateful. At the time of writing, Paul is continuing medical treatment and is laid off work until at least 5th April. Whilst we all long and pray for his full recovery and return to lead the work here at Tyndale House, we recognise that in the providence of God it may take some weeks or months yet for that prayerful longing to be fulfilled.

In the meantime, I wish to put on record how graciously and wonderfully the Lord has undertaken for us since Paul was laid off in early November last year. Despite many difficulties, the work has continued and with the wholehearted support and encouragement of the General Committee and the unflagging efforts of all the staff, we have been enabled to make progress. One aspect of that progress is the outcome of many months of deliberation within the General Committee upon the recommendations of the Report of the Investigating Committee. By the time that you receive this issue of the *Quarterly Record*, a letter will have been despatched to all our members, God willing, highlighting some of the encouragements of recent months and providing the conclusions of the General Committee upon the various recommendations. A copy of this letter will be supplied to any supporter of the Society who would like to receive one, upon written application to Tyndale House.

Just before this edition of the *Quarterly Record* went to print, we heard news of the passing into Glory of the Rev. W. H. (Hillis) Fleming, on 13 February, after a long illness. An appreciation and obituary will appear in the July issue, God willing, but in the meantime our heartfelt condolences and prayerful best wishes are sent to his family and friends, and to all who knew him.

In the continuing absence of our General Secretary, I am again grateful to our Chairman, who has submitted the following piece on an aspect of the Biblical text, for inclusion in the *Quarterly Record*.

Brief notes

on 2 Samuel 15.7, 2 Kings 8.26 and 2 Chronicles 22.2

by the Rev. M. H. Watts
Chairman of the Committee

2 Samuel 15.7:

‘And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.’

‘After forty years’: according to this verse, Absalom asked David for permission to go to Hebron to keep a vow. This vow, probably made during Absalom’s exile, may have been that if God would restore him to Jerusalem he would go to Hebron, his birthplace, and offer there a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The problem is with the ‘forty years’. It is clear that the reference

cannot be to the age of Absalom or to the reign of David. Absalom was born in Hebron *after David had begun to reign* (2 Samuel 3.3), and David only reigned forty and a half years (5.4) – and this incident evidently occurred *several years before the end of his reign*. Some scholars therefore conclude that we have here a copyist's error, particularly as the reading 'four years' is to be found in some Septuagint manuscripts, the Syriac and Arabic versions, and Josephus (*Antiquities* 7.9.1). The reading 'four', however, is not supported by any Hebrew manuscript.

The fact is, we are not told from what point of time the forty years are reckoned. Even if we allow that, in Hebrew usage, the number 'forty' can sometimes bear an approximate sense (for example, to indicate the maturity of someone's age [Exodus 2.11; cf. Acts 7.23] or a whole generation [Numbers 14.33; Judges 3.11]), it would need to be very approximate indeed to refer either to David's reign (up to this point of time) or to Absalom's age (who was born several years after David began to reign).

A solution to the problem is that the period dates from the time of David's anointing to be king of Israel (1 Samuel 16.13). It is estimated that there were indeed forty years from the anointing to the rebellion. This was the view of several ancient Jewish scholars (e.g., R. Levi ben Gershon, 1288–1345) and it was also the view of such men as Dr. E.W. Bullinger, Dr. Henry Cooke, and Dr. Arthur Pink.

Dr. Cooke wrote, 'The ordinary solution of the difficulty is therefore the supposed error of some transcriber. This is a usual, but *a most violent, gratuitous, and dangerous proceeding*.'¹¹

2 Kings 8.26:

'Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.'

2 Chronicles 22.2:

'Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri.'

Again, a number of scholars attribute the apparent discrepancy to a copyist's error. We are unwilling to do this, particularly as this discrepancy can be reconciled. The Hebrew Masoretic Text has 'forty-two' in 2 Chronicles 22.2; and while only the original manuscript was 'inspired', God has, in His special providence, preserved the Holy Scriptures so that we do now possess faithful and authoritative copies.

We must admit, of course, that there is a problem in reconciling these two Scriptures. In 2 Kings 8.17, we are told that Jehoram (Ahaziah's father) was thirty-two when he became king, and that he died eight years later, *apparently* at the age of forty. Now if Jehoram was eighteen

years old when he became a father, this would mean that Ahaziah would have been twenty-two years old when he succeeded his father on the throne of Judah. And that is what the inspired historian says in 2 Kings 8.26. But 2 Chronicles 22.2 states that Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king. If Jehoram died at forty and Ahaziah became king at forty-two, then Ahaziah appears to have been two years older than his father!

There have been various explanations, but we will confine ourselves to just one of these. According to 2 Kings 8.17, Jehoram (the father) was thirty-two when he began to reign. This appears to have been as co-regent with Jehoshaphat, for note the wording of 8.16, 'Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign'. If Jehoram, at thirty-two, was co-regent with Jehoshaphat for twenty years, and then sole monarch for another eight years – and Scripture says that 'he reigned eight years in Jerusalem' (8.17) – this would mean that he died at the age of sixty (and *not* forty).

Now this brings us to Ahaziah. Let us suppose that he was admitted to co-regency when he was twenty-two years old (as in 2 Kings 8.26) and that he continued in his office as co-regent for twenty years, he would then have begun to reign *alone* in his father's sixtieth year, when he himself was forty-two years old – exactly as we have it stated in 2 Chronicles 22.2.

Co-regency was a common practice in Israel ever since the time of David, who used it to ensure the succession of Solomon (1 Kings 1.29ff). If we take it into account here, we are able satisfactorily to harmonize 2 Kings 8.26 and 2 Chronicles 22.2.

The explanation given above upholds the Masoretic Text and is perfectly reasonable. The believer in verbal inspiration always takes the position of faith: that is, he always tries to find an answer to a problem posed by the text of Holy Scripture. The believer does not immediately – or indeed after study – jump to the conclusion that there is an error in the text. Instead, he believes there is an answer to all these problems, even if he does not know the answer at that particular time. 'The scripture cannot be broken' (John 10.35).

Endnote

¹H. Cooke, *Brown's Self Interpreting Bible* (London: Blackie and Son, n.d.), 1.355.

The Treasury

We warmly thank the donors of the following anonymous gifts which have been received since the January *Quarterly Record* went to press. Cheshire £3,000, £20; Mitcham £3,000; Coventry £5; Liverpool £1,000; Dartford £1,000; Edinburgh two of £100; Broadstairs £500; Inverness £105.16; Bath £45; Stornoway £100; Anniesland £10; Give as you Earn £116, £94.80, £32; United Kingdom Evangelization Trust three of £100, £15; Charities Aid Foundation £128.21; Church Donation three of £50; South West Charitable Giving three of £37.19; by hand two of £100; direct into the bank £30, three of £25; via Speakers £66, £10, £8, £6. Total £10,327.74.

The Sacrifice of Love

by the Rev. G. Hamstra
a Vice-President of the Society

And being found in fashion as a man,
he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross.

(*Philippians 2.8*)

The youthful Joseph received – by divine revelation – blessed promises for the future. The Lord had great things in store for him. In God's favour he would come to a prominent position. The way to his exaltation, however, was by and large one of humiliation. Although he enjoyed many a token of the Lord's special grace, he nevertheless went through deep waters. As so often with God's people, the cross was the way to the crown. When Joseph reached the crown, he was well aware of the fact that his afflictions had yielded precious fruit, for himself and for the entire house of Jacob. Without the cross, Joseph would never have reached the crown.

The same is true concerning the One whose name is above every other name, even Jesus. God highly exalted Him. At the Father's right hand all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth. The highest conceivable glory was afforded to Jesus, the Father's delight. His wondrous exaltation is most beneficial to His people. They have a share in His unsearchable riches. The blessings flowing from the exalted Jesus to His needy flock are invaluable. His exaltation is the guarantee to theirs.

We must always remember, however, that the exaltation of our precious Saviour was likewise rooted in humiliation, even in the deepest humiliation ever experienced.

When we meditate on Christ's humiliation, we must consider both His *incarnation* and His *atoning death*. We cannot comprehend the glory and bliss He enjoyed prior to His incarnation. From all eternity He was truly one with the Father. He was in the bosom of the Father. He was equal with the Father in glory and majesty. The wonder of all wonders is, in infinite love He laid His glory aside. He became man and was named Emmanuel: God with us. He never ceased to be

God; however, His divine glory was veiled by His human nature. Moreover, He did not assume our nature as it was in the state of man's innocence, but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, in all points like unto us. Sin was the only exception.

His incarnation, however, was only the beginning of His humiliation. As Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, as the suffering Servant of the Lord, He condescended to yet a lower state. He became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. Salvation could not be accomplished in any other way. Christ was ever aware of this. His delight was to do the will of His Father, to ransom His guilty people. He loved them to the end. Even when the sufferings of Gethsemane and Calvary were upon Him, He persevered with the readiness of perfect love and submission. Twelve legions of angels were at His disposal. However, the bitter cup could not be removed in harmony with His Father's will. He completely resigned Himself to this will and paid the ransom price for the salvation of guilty sinners. He loved them more than His own life. In all His sufferings, He revealed that His sacrifice was the sacrifice of love.

He humbled Himself. All along Christ was humbled. The Pharisees tried to ensnare Him with their so-called unanswerable questions. They hoped He would stumble so that they could accuse Him of teaching false doctrine. When they finally plotted to kill Him, they acted quite deceitfully. These hardened religious adversaries did not rest until Jesus was crucified by their enemies, the Romans. Their injustice was grave!

Pilate's dealings were likewise unjust. He was fully convinced of Jesus' innocence. He declared this several times openly. Yet, the Roman governor preferred his own honour and office. So he denied justice and truth. Pilate's injustice was deeply humbling to Christ.

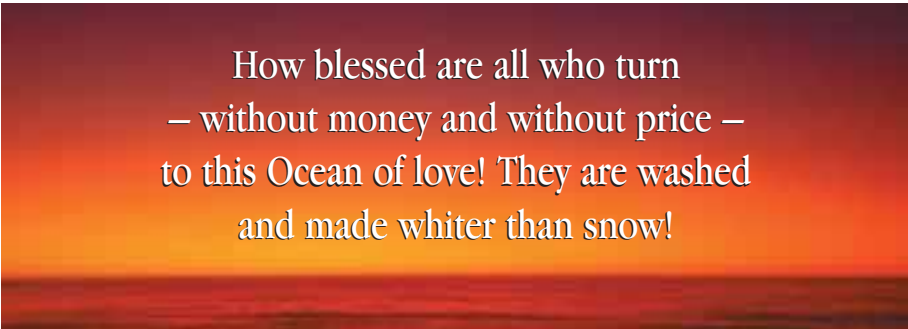
Even His own acquaintances humbled the Saviour. His disciples were with Him on the night when He was arrested. One of them, Judas, betrayed Him. All the others made promises never to forsake Him. However, at the time of Christ's trial, in the hour of His need, none of the eleven stood with Him; they all fled. One of them had even sworn with an oath that whatever others might do, he would never deny his Saviour. Christ warned Peter, 'before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice' (Mark 14.30). Still Peter asserted with great confidence that he would be faithful. If needs be he would give his life. Not long after that, Christ stood before the high priest. Peter trembled and faithlessly denied his Master.

Thus Christ was humbled by His enemies and by His friends. Judas humbled Him. Peter put Him to shame. So did all His other disciples. However, in all His sorrows the deepest humiliation experienced by our precious Saviour was this: the Father humbled the Son. The Father laid His eternal sword upon Him. The great Shepherd was smitten, not only by men in enmity, but also by the Father in justice, in love for the people of His eternal good pleasure. What was *most* humbling to Christ was not that His enemies crucified Him, not even that His friends forsook Him, but that His Father hid His face from Him. At noonday the sun refused to give her light. During the three hours of darkness all nature was wrapped in sorrow. The Son was under the Father's wrath. The cry of His heart was, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mark 15.34).

He was humbled. However, our text does not say, He was humbled. It goes beyond that: *'be humbled himself'*. This expression, indicating that Christ was active in His humiliation, has a deep significance. It means that all the sorrows that came upon Him, all the mischief that was done to Him, all the dishonour by His enemies and even by His friends, all the wrath that came upon Him by the Father, He experienced *willingly*. It was by His own will, voluntarily – in love – that He suffered all the pain, the shame and the disgrace. They spit upon Him, they buffeted Him, they despised Him, they mocked Him, they crucified Him; however, they could not have done anything against Him without His will.

He humbled Himself. As a Lamb He voluntarily went to the slaughter. He took every step out of love to the Father's holiness, justice, mercy and truth. From the beginning to the end, He suffered willingly for helpless, guilty and lost sinners. He knew the plight of the sinner; none could be saved without the sacrifice of His eternal love.

'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' He restored holiness to the law, and satisfaction to justice. He restored honour to God, and thus life, blessedness and immortality to man. His sacrifice of love is the only foundation of the sinner's pardon and acceptance in the sight of a holy God. What a sure foundation is thus laid for the full salvation of guilty sinners! Here is the most precious, divine comfort, pardoning love, revealed in all its perfect fulness. Poor and needy sinners are invited to come to this Fountain of mercy. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters' (Isaiah 55.1). They are guaranteed a gracious acceptance; 'him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6.37). How blessed are all who turn – without money and without price – to this Ocean of love! They are washed and made whiter than snow!



How blessed are all who turn
– without money and without price –
to this Ocean of love! They are washed
and made whiter than snow!

English Golden Thoughts Calendar erratum

Owing to a typesetting error, the 30th of April was omitted from our English Golden Thoughts Calendars for 2004. We and the company doing the typesetting humbly apologise for this. The omitted verse is Zechariah 3.4, 'I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee'.

DAILY LIGHT

The 19th century is often thought of as being a period of spiritual decline. However, from it came a Bible-based work which has stood the test of time from its inception until now: the esteemed *Daily Light*.

This little daily devotional book provides morning and evening Scripture readings, focusing upon various themes, for each day of the year. Its production was not a hurried or haphazard event, but a labour of love and devotion that grew out of the daily corporate worship of the Bagster family. According to one introduction to the *Daily Light*,

The practice of corporate daily worship had always been followed in the family, and it was the daily text that Jonathan Bagster selected that the family, joined together in prayer, were asked to illustrate by further applicable texts. The resultant Scripture quotations were then carefully considered, discussed and arranged by common consent of all those present, after which the manuscript would be laid aside for prayer and meditation to see if there would be any guidance for its further improvement... Each day for over two years the readings were compiled, corrected and improved in this way until the whole book was ready for publication...

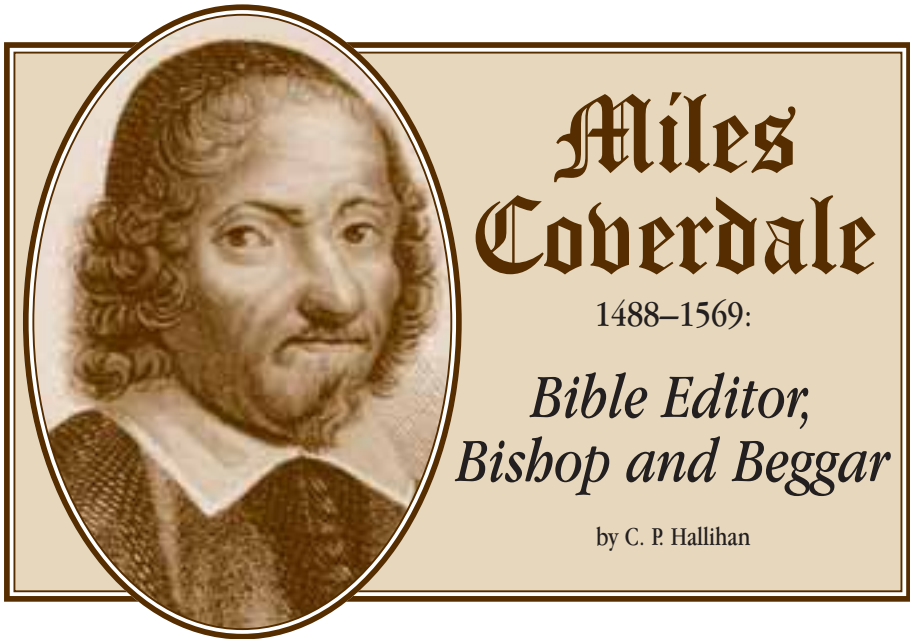
Many years later, Robert Bagster wrote,

'Few are able to appreciate the heart-searching care with which every text was selected, the days, nay the weeks, of changes, alterations and improvements, until at last each page was passed to the printer. It has been said that each page was prayed over. This is true enough, but far less than the fact that portions were left over for weeks to see if any further guidance came. So this book stands to-day quite unrivalled.'

To this last we can say a hearty 'Amen'!

The Society has long been pleased to be able to produce an edition of this timeless book, and would encourage anyone looking for a daily devotional that focuses upon Scripture to consider the *Daily Light*. We believe that, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the Word, you will find that it more than abundantly lives up to its name.

*The Society has been able for some years to offer a fine quality imitation leather edition of the *Daily Light*. Over the last twelve months, it has come to our attention that the publishers of this edition are not planning to continue its publication in the Authorised Version. The Society is very reluctant to see the demise of this edition; we are, therefore, in the course of acquiring the films of the text at considerable expense to enable us to print our own edition in the future. Please pray that we might have guidance and wisdom to gauge the appropriate number of copies to produce, and indeed that the demand for this book, which would make a splendid gift, will increase.*



Prelude – The Bible and the Reformation

One hundred years before Miles Coverdale was born, the Lollard Bible began to be distributed in manuscript form.¹ The effect of this English Bible and the ministry of the Lollard preachers over those hundred years worked like leaven. There was a slow growing acceptance of the need for the Bible in the 'common tongue' amongst many 'common folk'. There was also a deadly hostility to any such idea among the royal, political, and ecclesiastical authorities. The discovery of the use of moveable type to print multiple copies of pages, and therefore books, brought Gutenberg's Latin Bible to print in 1453/6. The production and distribution of the Scriptures on a scale never before contemplated was now possible. In the sovereign providence of God, the last thirty years of the 15th century saw the birth of Luther, Zwingli, Latimer, Coverdale, Cranmer, Tyndale and Melancthon. In yet one more Divine demonstration of the significance of 'the fulness of times', the Reformation was about to begin. *'Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD'* (Psalm 107.43). These men were gripped by the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ toward sinners. These men were captivated by the simple, sure and certain testimony of the Scriptures directly to Jesus Christ. The Scriptures, then, had to be made known in the common tongues of men and sinners, and the dangers and penalties of doing this had to be accepted. In England, even while Tyndale and Coverdale were learning discipleship of Christ, beginning their labours of Bible translation and editing, men and women were being tormented and destroyed for possession of a Wycliffe Bible.

Coverdale Beginnings – ‘In Christ before them all’

The first complete printed Bible in English was the result of the enthusiastic and diligent editorial labours of Miles Coverdale. Born in Yorkshire, and ‘from his childhood given to learning’ according to John Hooker,² Coverdale became an Augustinian monk. He was ordained a priest in 1514, and continued in the Austin monastery at Cambridge. Erasmus was at Cambridge from 1511–1514, so Coverdale may just have experienced at first hand Erasmus’ startling appeal to the authority of the text of Scripture rather than to ecclesiastical tradition.

Reformation teaching was certainly affecting Cambridge, and in the 1520s Lutheran-minded people gathered for fellowship and sermons at an inn called the White Horse (thus nicknamed ‘Germany’). The group would have included Bilney, Latimer, Frith, Barnes, Tyndale, Cranmer and Ridley. Coverdale and Barnes were among the very first to respond to the Gospel – much later Grindal was to say of the aged Coverdale that ‘he was in Christ before them all’. In 1528 there is record of Miles Coverdale openly declaring against the mass, worship of images, and private confession.

Around that time, after Cuthbert Barnes’ first trial, Coverdale came under the influence of Thomas Cromwell, having met him in Thomas Moore’s house. He wrote to him asking for assistance to buy books. Miles seems to have been dedicated to Bible work from the beginning, assisting Tyndale in his Biblical labours on the continent in Hamburg 1529, and in Antwerp 1529–35. After Tyndale’s imprisonment, Coverdale went on with the work, eventually supervising the production of our first complete Bible printed in English.



The Coverdale Bible, October 1535

‘Biblia: The Bible: that is the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated into English.’

So reads the title page of this work, published either in Cologne or Marburg and reprinted in 1537. Nowhere does Coverdale ever claim to have worked from the Biblical languages, but rather from ‘sundry interpreters’ and ‘sondry translacions’. He used William Tyndale’s work, Pagnini’s ‘new’ Latin, Luther’s German, the Zurich Bible of 1530, and the common Latin – the Vulgate. From these five he produced a noble English text, a splendid bridge between Tyndale and the Authorised Version.³ It was

Historical Background

1450s

GUTENBERG BIBLE

1469–1536

Desiderius Erasmus

1483–1546

Martin Luther

1484–1531

Ulrich Zwingli

1485–1555

Hugh Latimer

1485–1509

Henry VII

1488

Printed HEBREW BIBLE, Soncino

1488–1569

Miles Coverdale

1489–1556

Thomas Cranmer

1492

Columbus discovers America

1494–1536

William Tyndale

1497–1560

Philip Melancthon

1498

Erasmus in England

1505

Luther an Augustinian monk in Erfurt

1509–1547

Henry VIII

1509–1564

John Calvin

1513–72

John Knox

1516

Erasmus' GREEK/LATIN NT

1517

Luther's Ninety-five Theses

1518

Aldus' complete GREEK BIBLE

1519

Leonardo da Vinci died

1522

Luther's GERMAN NT

1523

Lefebvre's FRENCH NT

1524

Erasmus' *The Freedom of the Will*

TYNDALE'S *Cologne Fragment*

1525

Tyndale's Scripture translation

1526

TYNDALE'S NT burned.

Liesveldt's DUTCH BIBLE.

SWEDISH NT

Coverdale who gathered and separated the books of the Apocrypha from the Old Testament and placed them together between the Testaments. His was also the first English Bible to indicate chapter headings, but did it all together at the beginning of every book. Coverdale gave us '*the pride of life*', '*the world passeth away*', '*lovingkindness*' and '*tender mercy*', and also is the origin of some quaint renderings: '*so yt thou shalt not nede to be afrayed for eny bugges by night*' at Psalm 91.5 and '*there is no more Triacle at Galaad*' at Jeremiah 8.22

Miles' Prologue to the 1535 Bible is a gem in its own right, a standing plea that you should always read an author or editor's preface, and especially those that deal with spiritual matters, for there you will see the heart revealed. Insisting on the plainest and simplest handling of the text, he offers this direction:

Now will I exhort thee, whosoever thou art that readest scripture, if thou find ought therein that thou understandest not, or that appeareth to be repugnant, give no temerarious nor basty judgment thereof; but ascribe it to thine own ignorance, not to the scriptures. Think that thou understandest it not, or that it hath some other meaning, or that it is haply overseen of the interpreters, or wrong printed. Again it shall greatly help thee to understand scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and unto whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.⁴

A concordance of the New Testament based on Tyndale's Testament was published in London in 1535. There is strong evidence that it, too, was Coverdale's work.

Matthew's Bible and the failed Paris Bible

Another complete Bible printed in English indicates the way of the English Bible for the next generation, combining in various measures (and with varying competence!) the work of Tyndale and

Coverdale. The Matthew's Bible of 1537 is the first English Bible distributed under 'royal licence', albeit printed in Antwerp. Thomas Matthew, mentioned on the title page as 'translator', is a pseudonym. John Rogers, a close associate of Tyndale and who also became a martyr for the cause of the vernacular Scriptures, was probably the 'editor'. It is to him, then, that we owe the survival of Tyndale's translations of Joshua to Chronicles. Though he himself had no direct involvement, Coverdale's work was used from Ezra onward.

Coverdale began the preparation of another edition of the English Scriptures in Paris around 1538. Most of that edition was seized and burned by the French authorities, only a very few being sold. The metal type and skilled workmen were brought to London to be used in yet another Bible labour. This illustrates a further feature of 16th century vernacular Bible work: the phoenix-like quality of these early Bible editions. They were burned, suppressed, bought up, impounded, and yet provided the basis from which even more vigorous editions were provided. Add to this the death rate and toll of suffering associated with the preparation, publication, distribution and use of the vernacular Scriptures – a trail that goes back to Wycliffe's time – and treasure your Bible.



TYNDALE

Historical Background

1527

ZURICH BIBLE

1533

CRANMER Archbishop

1534

LUTHER BIBLE

1535

COVERDALE'S ENGLISH BIBLE

Olivetian's FRENCH BIBLE

1536

1st edition *Calvin's Institutes*

1537

MATTHEW'S BIBLE

1539

GREAT BIBLE, 'Cromwell's';
TAVERNER'S BIBLE

1540

GREAT BIBLE, 2nd ed. 'Cranmer's'

1545–1563

Council of Trent

1546

Luther died

1547–1553

EDWARD VI

1550

STEPHENS' GREEK NT 3rd. ed.,
the archetype of TR, DANISH BIBLE

1553–1558

MARY Queen; Servetus killed

1556

Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, burned

1557

WHITTINGHAM'S NT – Geneva

1558–1603

ELIZABETH I

1560

GENEVA BIBLE, FRENCH GENEVA

1562

Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter
Heidelberg Confession

1564

Calvin died

1567

WELSH NT

1568

BISHOPS' BIBLE. Coverdale died

1569

Reina SPANISH BIBLE

1570

Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* published

1572

Huguenot St. Bartholomew massacre

The Great Bible and the Latin Diglot

The Great Bible appeared in 1539, with the benefit of the type and printers from Paris. Coverdale's renewed editorial labours were helped by Thomas Cromwell's political protection. It was Thomas Cromwell, Royal Secretary and vice-regent in church affairs, who ordered the English clergy to allow a large, legible edition of the English Bible to be provided in a convenient place where people could 'most commodiously resort to the same and read it'. This 14" x 9" 'Great Bible' of 1539 was Coverdale's revision of Matthew's version, taking into account Sebastian Münster's Latin Old Testament, later editions of Erasmus' Greek New Testament and the Complutensian Polyglot. The work was completed in April of 1539.

In a strange anticipation of the 1611 Authorised Version, there is nothing in the Great Bible itself telling of its royal authorisation! This came only in the second edition of 1540, which includes both Cranmer's preface and the statement, 'the Byble apoynted to the use of churches'.

Liberty to read an English Bible was briefly revoked at the end of King Henry's reign, but restored under King Edward VI. Miles Coverdale also prepared a diglot of the Vulgate Latin text and a revised English translation. He seems to have shared with Erasmus, who had published a two-Latin one-Greek text triglot, a desire to maintain and demonstrate continuity of the textual tradition. The Reformers were often diligent to show that they were not plunging off into a wilderness, but truly seeking to reform that which was there. Richard Grafton was the publisher of the Diglot and both Great Bible editions, sometimes called 'Cromwell's' and 'Cranmer's', and was styled the King's Printer.⁵



ERASMUS

Bishop Coverdale and Edward VI

Coverdale had spent a lot of time outside of England; King Henry's favour towards Bible editors was no certain thing! At some time before 1540 he had married a Scots wife, Elizabeth Macheson, whose brother-in-law was John Macalpine, professor of Divinity at Copenhagen. During one continental stay, Coverdale is known to have met Calvin in Strasbourg. He actually became for a time a schoolmaster in Bergzabern and official assistant to the Lutheran pastor there.



CALVIN

The widowed Queen, Catherine Parr, was sympathetic to the Reformation, and returning to England a year after the death of Henry VIII, Miles Coverdale was her Almoner. Because of this relationship he helped with the translation of Erasmus' paraphrase of the Gospels, a project which was advanced under the influence of the Queen. Coverdale preached at her funeral in 1548. By that time he was Chaplain to the Boy King, Edward VI.



HENRY VIII

An Act of Uniformity was passed on January 25, 1549, enjoining the use of the Edward VI Prayer Book⁶ (Cranmer's Prayers and Coverdale's Scriptures) in



CATHERINE PARR

every parish of the King's dominions 'throughout England, Wales, Calais and the marches of the same'. There was resistance to this, and the city of Exeter came under siege from an estimated 10,000 men, 'mostly mechanics and deluded peasants', demanding the restitution of the old service books and a recognition of the mass. The siege and ensuing revenge were horrific. In the midst of it all Coverdale received licence from the King to preach the Word of God to the people there. It was a hazardous task, and a contemporary said that 'none of the clergy were hasty to take it in hand, but



Thos. CROMWELL

only old Father Coverdale'. Coverdale was appointed to be Bishop of Exeter in August 1551, but was so poor that he had to plead for special arrangements to cover the required expenses lawfully. For the space of two years he laboured diligently in the Word, prayer and hospitality, promoting the reformed religion.

Coverdale, Queen Mary and Geneva



MARY STUART

After Mary's accession to the throne in 1553 Coverdale was deprived and imprisoned. Mary suggested that he owed the Crown more than £2,000,⁷ but really it was his religion that she objected to. It seemed possible that he would be put to death – that was certainly the intention of the new Queen's administration. In anticipation of death Coverdale wrote,

Pray for us, for, God willing, we shall not leave you, we will go before you. You shall see in us that we preached no lies, nor tales of tubs, but even the true word of God, for which we, by God's grace, and help of your prayers, will willingly and joyfully give our blood to be shed for confirmation of the same... Like God's children let us go forward apace; the wind is on our back. Hoist up the sails, lift up your hearts and hands unto God in prayer; and keep your anchor of faith to cast in time on the rock of God's word, and on his mercy in Christ.

By his marriage, you will recall, Coverdale was related to John Macalpine, who was now chaplain to the King of Denmark. The Danish King intervened with Mary on Coverdale's behalf. With grudging bad grace on Mary's part he was eventually released and by a proper Act of Council was permitted to go to Denmark. Being loosed, Miles joined the growing company of English exiles on the Continent, and it is during this time that he translated into English Calvin's treatise on the Eucharist.



CRANMER

At first he was in Denmark with his wife's family, then he was chaplain to a group in Wesel. This group inclined to the Swiss rather than the German form of 'Reformed' and was asked by the magistrates to move on. In August 1557 Coverdale was in Aarau, with his wife and two children, and then from Autumn 1558 to August 1559 he was in Geneva, serving as an elder of the English Church

with John Knox. There he preached and taught, and was soon caught up in Bible work once more.

With fellow labourers including Calvin's son-in-law, William Whittingham, he became involved briefly with that rugged version of the English Scriptures, the Geneva Bible. The first edition of the Geneva New Testament was the first English version to have verse numbers. This, together with the explanatory notes, was a provision to earnest Bible searching, and it became the Bible of the Puritans. More than thirty editions were printed in Elizabeth's reign.

Coverdale, Queen Elizabeth and England

When Elizabeth came to the throne, Coverdale returned to England. In common with many returning 'Mary-Exiles' he was now anxious for a much more thorough work of reformation than was pleasing to the English establishment. Within the terminology of that time he was counted as a nonconformist, and neither return to the Bishopric of Exeter nor any other advancement was open to him. No friend of Geneva, follower of Calvin, fellow-elder of Knox was going to be countenanced by Elizabeth I!



Although ageing, in his seventies, he still preached at Paul's Cross, and it was at this time that Grindal's affectionate recollection of Coverdale as 'in Christ before them all' led him to secure for 'Old Miles' the living of St. Magnus Martyr, London Bridge. Dr. Grindal, as Bishop of London, appointed him in 1564, but he was too poor to pay the 'first-fruits' of £601.16s.10d. Once more Coverdale's poverty meant that special allowances had to be made before he could accept the living, and at length Queen Elizabeth was induced to forgive him that debt. At this point he wrote some poignant letters to Parker and Cecil, seeking their 'interest', or, more bluntly, begging.

Edmund Grindal was involved with what is perhaps the least satisfactory of the major 16th century English versions, the Bishops' Bible of 1568. It was an 'establishment' attempt to counteract the popularity of the Geneva Bible. The success of the Geneva and the failure of the Bishops' Bible led to Puritan demands at the 1604 Hampton Court Conference for a better translation of the Scriptures, and the subsequent appearance of the Authorised Version.

Although Coverdale had undertaken to 'be quiet' in his rectory at St. Magnus, he never conformed to the degree required of him, and resigned the living. He carried on a ministry whilst refusing to wear the required priestly garments. His end was happy, we are told, and he died at the age of 81 soon after standing in at his old benefice of St. Magnus, where, records John Hooker, 'he was carried up into the pulpit where God did with his spirit so strengthen him that he made his last and the best and most godly sermon that ever he did in all his life'. Coverdale died, according to some authorities, on 19th February, 1568; others say 20th January, 1569; all agree that he was aged 81. He was buried in the chancel of St. Bartholomew's Church, and when that was demolished in 1840 his remains were removed to St. Magnus, London Bridge.

Miles Coverdale served the written and the Incarnate Word through four tumultuous reigns. He was acquainted with many of the foremost men of the European and the English Reformation, and commended himself to all in his piety and humble adorning of the doctrines he professed, showing himself to be no mere handler of the Word, but in very truth a living epistle in his own life. His relish and delight of the Scriptures is plain to see in his many works and much correspondence. Mozley⁸ lists thirty-eight distinct works of Coverdale – sermons, catechisms, translations from German and Latin authors as well as Bibles, concordance and diglot,⁹ and not including his letters. ‘Old Father Coverdale’ his friends affectionately called him¹⁰ in the fullness of his years and ripeness of Christian character. Hear his exhortation:-

**Go to now, most dear reader, and
sit thee down at the Lord's feet
and read his words.**

When we consider the trail of the early printed English text of the Bible we gain a partial insight into the astounding nature of textual preservation under the providences of Almighty God. This one thread (the printed English Text) appeared. It then appeared in almost simultaneous ‘rival’ editions. It appeared in noble style. It appeared in hurried and careless style. It appeared in editions which were wrought in concern for the glory of God and for the work of the Gospel. It appeared in editions which were pirated for filthy lucre. Very rarely did it appear as a ‘pure’ translation from the Biblical languages, but often showing the influence of Latin and German. In all of this we see the sovereign purposes of God, whereby all things truly work together beyond the limited perception or arrangements of men to accomplish the preservation and transmission of the Scripture of Truth. The very nature of the Bible demands an exercise of faith and discernment – we might almost say of it, ‘for there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you’ (1 Corinthians 11.19). Let us, however, never be so satisfied with our perception and choice of the printed text of Scripture, that we fall short of the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, which is the blessed voice of all the Scripture.

Isaiah 53.6–9 from the Bible of 1535

⁶As for vs, we go all astraye (like shepe), euery one turneth his owne waye. But thorow him, the LORDE pardoneth all or synnes. ⁷He shal be payned & troubled, ad shal not ope his mouth. He shalbe led as a shepe to be slayne, yet shal he be as still as a lambe before the shearer, & not open his mouth. ⁸He shal be had awaye, his cause not herde, & wtout eny iudgment: Whose generacion yet no man maye nombre, when he shalbe cut of fro the grounde of the lyvinge: Which punyshment shal go vpon him, for the transgression of my people. ⁹His graue shalbe geue him with the codemned, & his crucifienge with the theues, Where as he dyd neuer violence ner vnright, nether hath there bene eny disceatfulnesse in his mouth.

Endnotes

- ¹ See the article on Wycliffe in *Quarterly Record* no. 565, Oct.-Dec. 2003, pp. 8-29.
- ² Quoted in J.F. Mozley, *Coverdale and his Bibles* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 1.
- ³ How poignant that this Bible had a qualified support and approval of the King, and yet *one year later*, October 1536, William Tyndale was martyred at Vilvoorde.
- ⁴ Given this so early insistence on the fundamental rule of Bible interpretation, 'Context is King', how did so many go astray in the nearly five hundred succeeding years!
- ⁵ Not surprisingly he lost the title and was imprisoned under Queen Mary, but somehow was able to begin a second career as a Member of Parliament in 1554.
- ⁶ It is well worth comment that the Prayer Book lectionary for Morning and Evening Prayer provided for the complete reading of the Bible during the church year. Until 1611 the Prayer Book used the Great Bible version of 1539, a Coverdale edition. Even after 1611, the Prayer Book retained the Coverdale version in some of the most frequently read parts such as the 'Comfortable Words' and the Psalms.
- ⁷ Not far short of £500,000 at today's values!
- ⁸ Mozley, *op. cit.*, Appendix E, p. 324.
- ⁹ Pages from Coverdale Bibles can be viewed at www.smu.edu/bridwell/publications/ryrie_catalog/toc.htm (then go to chapter 8).
- ¹⁰ The next person that comes to mind as winning that affectionate general esteem and soubriquet is John Newton in the 18th century.



Trinitarian Bible Society

Registered Charity Number: 233082

OPEN DAY

at the Society's Premises

Tyndale House, Dorset Road, London, SW19 3NN *Tél.:* (020) 8543 7857

Saturday, 24th April 2004, 12 noon to 5pm, God willing

Light refreshments will be served throughout the afternoon

- Join a guided tour of the premises • Meet members of staff
- Enjoy a slide presentation • Learn about how Bibles are made
 - Hear about the many Grants requests which we receive
 - Learn a little about the fascinating process of translation and see our range of foreign language publications
- Tour the Library • View Society archive material • Visit the shop
 - Young people, produce your own graphic design

The Word of God among all nations



Taking the Scriptures to France

A report on an exhibition attended by John Cook, TBS Foreign Sales, at Lognes, near Paris, November 2003

France is a country of great contrasts, more so than Britain, and Paris is a city which some regard as romantic. But many parts of it are very dirty, polluted owing to non-stop traffic both day and night, and many vagrants wander its streets.

The vagrants appear to have a harder time than those in England. Near to the *Gare du Nord*, a young woman sat motionlessly on a corner, heavily grimed with dirt, possibly a drug addict; however, she was not begging, but looked as if she had been washed up by the tide of humanity. I have never seen in the UK such an appearance of utter hopelessness and despondency in one so young.

The TBS stand was set up at 7.00 a.m. on Monday morning. Whilst we were setting up, a young Jewish woman, whose testimony you will find included in the letters later in this *Quarterly Record* and who was helping to run the stand opposite us, came over and said how pleased she was to see TBS there. She recounted her story of how when she was in London and her mother was ill in hospital, somebody gave her mother a Bible published by TBS; but it was not until she herself was ill that she read that Bible, and she was saved.

Each day began with Bible study on Ruth taken by a minister from Bordeaux, preaching, of course, in French. He was good and reasonably easy for us to follow although his reading

of Ruth in French was not so pleasing on the British ear as it would have been in English.

There was a good amount of interest in our stand, with about eight hundred people present each day, and it was a very happy, friendly atmosphere. About fifty of our catalogues were given out, and a few English Bibles and calendars were sold, and some small orders taken. A long conversation was had with one French Pastor who wanted TBS to update our French Louis Second Bible into *français courant*.

Many customers of TBS were represented, such as CLC France, *Metanoia*, *Editeurs de Littérature*, and *La Maison de la Bible*, and I was pleased to be able to speak to them face-to-face for the first time. The exhibition lived up to the reputation of being 'the Fair' since all manner of associations were represented there.

In France today it appears to me that there are more people open to receiving the gospel than in Britain, as many are disenchanted with the Roman Catholic Church, with politics, and also with the growing tide of violence which is seen in many of her cities. But there are so many other things that can choke the good seed of the Word of God. The need for the gospel is desperate throughout every level of French society, as it is here, though the French people may not recognise it!



Linguistic Safari and the NIV

When the New International Version was published in 1978, a young Bible college student who appreciated translations saw an obvious problem in its New Testament. He went to an accomplished Bible teacher whom he respected and asked the reason for the translation. The teacher, after some thought, said, 'the answer is that the translators took literary licence with the text'. Since then the student has come to agree with the respected Bible teacher. However, what the teacher called 'literary licence', the student now terms a 'vocabulary' or 'linguistic safari'. Rather than strict translation, it is more like wandering around the translational 'rain forest' (the current politically correct word for 'jungle'), hunting for the supposedly correct word.

A good example of this hunt can be found in Colossians 3.12-14. The Authorised Version has (emphasis added):

12 **Put on** therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*.

14 And above all these things **put on** charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

The Greek text has the verbal command 'put on' as the first word in the paragraph, which indicates that the Apostle Paul intended that the command be emphasized. In Greek this emphasis is so strong that Paul does not need to repeat the command in verse 14. Although the words 'put on' are not in the Greek text, it is clearly understood that Paul intended it to be repeated before the word 'charity' (love); thus the AV rightly inserts it in italics. Other basically literal English versions of the Bible, such as the English Standard

Version¹ and the American Standard Version, also have ‘put on’ at the beginning of the paragraph.

Note that the NIV has:

12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues **put on** love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

After wandering through the Greek text hunting for the right word, the NIV translators use the words ‘clothe yourselves’ in verse 12 and ‘put on’ in verse 14. Other translations such as the New King James Version, which has been touted as the latest revision of the AV, have similar excursions into a linguistic jungle.

Paul’s use of ‘put on’ and ‘put off’

No doubt, in this context (from verse 10 onwards) the Greek word² means to ‘put on’ as one might a garment, and figuratively we are to ‘put on’ spiritual graces such as compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance. Furthermore, the elect, holy and beloved believer is to ‘put on love’. This garment is needful for the Colossian believers and, by application, for us today. This ‘put on’ is the antithesis of the command to ‘put off’ which is taught in verses 8–10. According to the AV the Colossians are to: 8 **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 ye have **put off** the old man with his deeds

10 And have **put on** the new *man*

12 **Put on**

14 **put on** charity (i.e., ‘love’)

This antithesis between ‘put on’ and ‘put off’ is obscured in the NIV. By the NIV’s use of two different English terms – ‘clothe’ and ‘put on’ – rather than using the same English terms in the same context, it is not clear that the same Greek word is in view. In the NIV, the Colossians are to:

8 **rid yourselves** of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

9 you have **taken off** your old self with its practices

10 **put on** the new self

12 **clothe yourselves**

14 **put on** love

These synonyms tend to mask the Apostle Paul’s repetitions of ‘put off/put on’ which are so important to the teaching in this passage. Although not a major problem by itself, it betrays the NIV’s tendency toward a lack of precision in the use of specific words. People who engage in word studies often complain that such studies are difficult in many places in the NIV because they cannot tell which English word is used for which Greek or Hebrew words, or even if the words in the original languages are actually represented by English words. Most people would not recognise a correlation between verses 8 and 9 in the NIV, since there is a change in the figure of speech from ‘put off’ to ‘rid yourselves’. There are even times in the NIV when there are English words supplied where no Greek word is present, with no indication that words are added (see Hebrews 11.11).³

Careful use of vocabulary

In this article it is not being argued that one English word should always be used every time a particular Greek or Hebrew word is used. This would in many instances produce a

dull, repetitive and boring translation. At times it would be just plainly wrong. A variety of vocabulary and synonyms can be useful. But when a translator sees the same Greek word used in one passage or context several times, great care should be used in translating this word. Since the NIV is not a word-for-word but a thought-for-thought translation, its translators tended to trample over the details in favour of pre-interpreted complete thoughts. Can a person really trust the NIV to give him all of the words which God inspired the Bible writers to use? The Society would say 'No'.

We do not need to go on a safari to wade through the deep grass and thick jungle which is the NIV. Instead, the Authorised Version can be trusted and used with greater profit owing to its faithfulness to the original language texts of Scripture. We can be thankful that God has

preserved the Scriptures in words which communicate His thoughts to man and that those words can be rendered as words rather than as mere thoughts. The Authorised Version remains the standard of English translation.

Endnotes

¹ Although not as accurate or beautiful as the AV, the ESV is a much better translation than the NIV because the ESV does not follow dynamic equivalence principles of translation as much as the NIV. The ESV does, however, use the unacceptable Critical Greek text. For further information please see our article on the ESV in *Quarterly Record* no. 563, April-June 2003.

² The Greek word is the imperative $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ which comes from $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\upsilon\omega$.

³ Please see the analysis of Hebrews 11.11 in *What Today's Christian Needs to Know about the NIV* (Article no. 114), available from the Society or online at www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org.





Trinitarian Bible Society

News from our Australian Branch

Assistant (Administrative) to the Board of TBS (Australia) needed

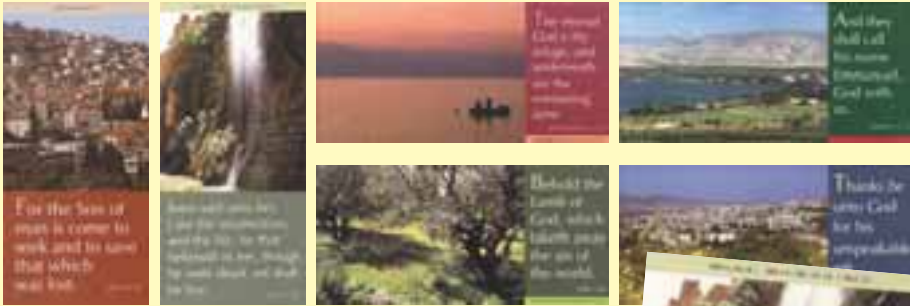
The Australian Branch of the Society is prayerfully seeking for someone to assist the Board of Directors in the management and oversight of the Branch's affairs. This will be a salaried position.

Please pray over this urgent and vital matter and, if interested, please contact the National Secretary, Mr. Christopher Tuck, on telephone number 1300-303-827, fax 1300-783-827, or e-mail TBS@trinitarianbiblesociety.org.au for further details.

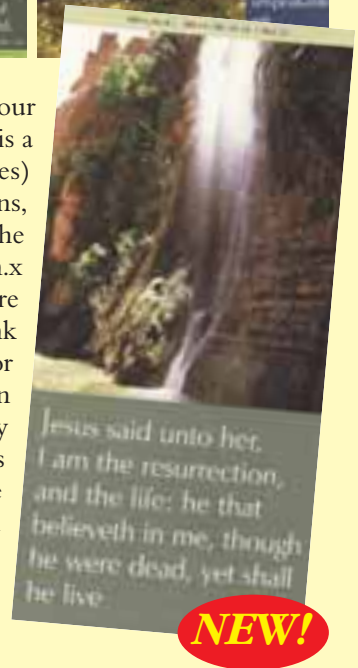
Anyone residing outside of Australia who is interested may contact Mr. Tuck direct or through Mr. David Larlham at our London Headquarters.

Tyndale House, Dorset Road, London, SW19 3NN, England
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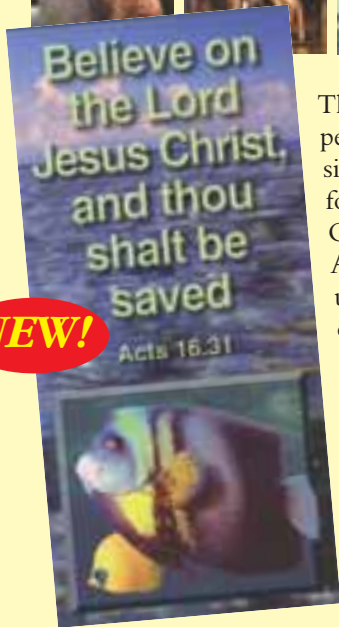
<i>Code:</i>	<i>Title:</i>	<i>Description:</i>	
CFDSET	Mixed set	pack of six mixed cards	
CF120	Nazareth	For the Son of man is come...	<i>Luke 19.10</i>
CF121	Engedi Waterfall	Jesus said... I am the resurrection...	<i>John 11.25</i>
CF122	Fishermen on Galilee	The eternal God...	<i>Deu. 33.27</i>
CF123	Sea of Galilee	And they shall call his name...	<i>Matt. 1.23</i>
CF124	Mount of Olives	Behold the Lamb of God...	<i>John 1.29</i>
CF125	Cana of Galilee	Thanks be unto God...	<i>2 Cor. 9.15</i>

These greetings cards are fully illustrated in our new 2004 catalogue. Please ask for your free copy.

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Code:	Title:	Description
CFESSET	Mixed set	pack of six mixed cards
CF126	Brown Bear	Seek ye first the kingdom of God... <i>Matt. 6.33</i>
CF127	A Deer	The Son of man is come to seek... <i>Luke 19.10</i>
CF128	Sea Shells	If we confess our sins, he is faithful... <i>1 John 1.9</i>
CF129	Vintage Car	Every good gift and every perfect gift... <i>James 1.17</i>
CF130	Combine Harvester	In every thing give thanks... <i>1 Thes. 5.18</i>
CF131	Tropical Fish	Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ... <i>Acts 16.31</i>

NEW Colouring Books



The Society has a new range of six colouring books. For parents and others looking for something more than just activity books for children and young people, these new colouring books are based on important Scriptural themes such as **The Fear of the LORD** (C13),

The Word of God (C14), **Seek the LORD** (C15),

God's Creatures (C16), **The Lord our God** (C17) and **I am the LORD** (C18).

Each book contains fourteen pages of Scripture Texts and illustrations with a Bible passage in the back for parents, teachers and others to read to the children. The colouring books are ideal for all, including those who are looking for or need something a little more demanding. The six titles are in the popular A5 size 210 x 148mm (8¼in. x 5⅞in.).

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The Society's London address as well as those of our national Branches are on the inside back cover of this *Quarterly Record*.

T H E

Word of God Among All Nations

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD • THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD

We have recently received many letters from those who distribute our Golden Thoughts and Words of Life Calendars, and would like to share some of them with you. Ed.

Europe

■ From Bucharest, Romania

First, let me thank you for the beautiful calendar with words from the Holy Book and pictures from England that I was offered at the beginning of each year by the small photo-shop close to my house. It brought a lot of joy in my soul and the happiness to feel much closer to Jesus. Unfortunately this year, I have not found any copy available – too late! – and I feel something important to me is missing. So I dare ask you to do me the big favour of sending a copy on my address. Thank you in advance, wholeheartedly. May God bless you.

[A problem in customs delayed delivery of the Romanian calendars. In early February we received the following:]

They have arrived! How and why I am not sure. The distribution starts today. Will be in touch later and let you know how things progress.

[We are thankful to God that these calendars are now being placed in the appropriate hands. Ed.]



Orphan receives a Words of Life Calendar in Hungarian

■ From Budapest, Hungary

We would like to say thank you for the calendars, which we gave to orphans living not far from my town. We go to the orphanage regularly to bring the Good News to them. I am happy that we could be servants in the same service. I enclose a photo of one of the boys with his calendar. Thank you again, God bless you!



Church members in Tolna rejoice in the Word of God

■ *From Tolna, Hungary*

We got the calendars, we were very happy because we could give one to every family. So about six hundred families got calendars. We are very thankful to God for you because you have helped us spread out the Gospel. In late last year we visited all our mission posts taking there presents and calendars, meanwhile sharing the Gospel with celebrating congregations. I am sending picture where you can see the people holding the calendars in their hands and they are very happy. I am particularly grateful for the Christmas service of the Tolna church where the building was packed with people. I was glad to see those who had left us a few years ago but now have come back. There were some new visitors as well. There are more and more children attending the little ones' Bible study group. My wife and my daughter take turns in teaching the children, who have a chance to tell the rest of the fellowship about what they learnt after the preaching every Sunday. Thank you very much.

■ *From Lognes, France*

(please see the article on page 19 regarding the Lognes exhibition)

I had been raised in the fear of God, but without any religious practice. When very small, I had known that God existed, but I did not know Him. When I returned to the nursing school, I stole from my mother a TBS Bible, that she had received thirty years prior and that she had not read, neither her, nor all the family. (My mother was Jewish and according to the customs it is forbidden to throw away any documents where the name of God is mentioned – so she had kept this Bible.) When I was alone in my student room, I had very simply said to God, 'O God, I know that You exist, but I do not know You. I will know You.' And then I read this Bible commencing at the beginning, that is to say Genesis. I had not frequented any place of worship, not being in contact with any person who would be able to speak with me of God (neither Rabbi, nor priest, nor pastor, nor any other person). And

God did not delay to respond to me as being the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and then I had received the law that all the Jews observe (but I had not known Him at that time). This lasted about eighteen months, during which time I had observed that which God had asked of me, continuing in all to read the Scriptures. God gave me His gift, namely the Messiah Joshua (Jesus) who died for me to redeem me from my sins. Now I give thanks to God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of Jesus the Messiah for that which He won for me. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever. It was about forty years ago that I had this experience. Now I rejoice with other Jews who also know the Messiah. May the Lord bless you, you and your families. Shalom.

[This letter has been translated from French and slightly altered for publication. Ed.]

■ *From Coulommiers, France*

Thank you for the Precious [Golden] Thoughts Calendars in French, Spanish, English and Russian. Some went for prisoners; two teams from our church use these for the comfort of persecuted and imprisoned Christians. The remainder of the Russian calendars are given to families of Russian origin for evangelism. They are distributed by a friend who is herself of Russian origin so she can easily converse with the families. The French calendars are given to three different churches in our region, for the people who are searching for or near approaching the Lord, to people in the area of the church, and old people's homes. There are already teams for visiting there. The calendars are distributed to known people rather than put through people's letter boxes. I give calendars to Christians when they request them of me but the priority for me has always been to give

them to non-Christians. When I share them with the other three churches, I insist that priority be placed upon evangelism. Thank you again.

■ *From Portugal via e-mail*

Yesterday we went to a local prison in a town near here. The prison governor received us graciously and asked if we wanted to see the foreign prisoners separately from the local Portuguese. He had never offered to do this before, but perhaps he misunderstood when we said we had foreign language calendars and literature. Whatever the reason, ten Russian and two Bulgarian men accepted calendars, Gospels, etc. They also listened carefully to a Gospel message which we gave and which one of the prisoners translated for the others. Even the prison guard was attentive and open. We then gave out calendars to over one hundred Portuguese men at the dinner table.

■ *From Vila Nova de Santo André, Portugal*

It has been a real blessing to receive your calendars. We are missionaries here in Portugal and part of our ministry is to be at different market places with a Christian bookstall. We gave hand-to-hand your calendars to people passing by and interested in the Word of God. Throughout the years, we have also made many contacts with the market traders, and the response is very positive especially among the Gipsies. They were all pleased to receive a calendar. So we would like to thank you very much for sending us these calendars and if you have any spare ones in Portuguese we would gladly accept them as we have given them all by some people who have been encouraged by them and would like some more to share with their friends. Also, in Portugal, there are many

Ukrainians who come to get a job here. Some attend our local church but are not very fluent in Portuguese. Do you have any calendars in Ukrainian? If you do, could it be possible for you to send us some in that language? We would appreciate it very much.

■ *From Co. Armagh, N.I.*



Distributing Scriptures amongst the people of Belarus

Last year we visited Belarus. We distributed your Russian Bibles to several pastors. One pastor received a number of your large- and medium-sized Bibles. Other people in houses received Bibles in all these regions. We also gave the staff at all the orphanages we visited Russian calendars. At one orphanage near the Belarus/Russian border members of staff asked us for five Bibles. They were delighted to receive them. Later we visited northwest Ukraine where we left thirty-five of your Ukrainian Bibles at a mission station, a lot of which were going to pastors in all the areas around there. We also left a lot of your calendars. Afterwards we visited a Bible institute where we left thirty-five of your Ukrainian Bibles and also many of your calendars. We gave out your calendars all over this area in orphanages, hospitals and to people on the streets. The demand for this literature in Ukraine was astonishing and amazing. I would like to thank you on behalf of all the people who received your Bibles and calendars all

over Belarus and Ukraine. I would also like to thank you myself very much for sending in all this literature with me both for Belarus and Ukraine. I can assure you that it is all in very good hands now.

South America

■ *From Essequibo River, Guyana*



People in Guyana eagerly await the Golden Thoughts Calendars each year

Enclosed please find a photo showing some of the people in the interior of Guyana receiving your 2004 Golden Thoughts Calendars. Trust you like it. Thanks again for sending the calendars. People here do value and appreciate them. They read the Scripture verses carefully and they always check the dates to plan their lives. May the Lord bless you real good.

■ *From Pastaza, Ecuador*

We wish the blessings of God for your life, that of your family and all those of the Trinitarian Bible Society. I am sending a photograph of people receiving the last year's calendars. People are asking me for calendars for this year. If you have any left in the Spanish language, please send them to me. Thank you for understanding us, for God would have us know all the truth.



Distributing Spanish calendars in Ecuador

Africa

■ *From Conakry, Guinea*

We thank you for sending us the calendars you send us. We like you to be sure that every year we are glad to have your calendars and also we are glad for the verses for Muslim people. The verses are for the greater part answers I give to Muslims when I talk with them about the Bible. For example, the verse of April where Jesus said that all things are accomplished, is the very answer to the conception of Muslims that Mohammed had to come after Jesus to accomplish what Jesus left. The verse of May is to show that the promised Comforter is not Mohammed but the Holy Spirit. When you saw that July and October talk about sacrifices, that is because of the fact that here in Guinea the whole life of Muslims is concentrated around sacrifices. So the calendar gives us sometimes opportunity to talk about God and His will. We pray that God will bless you all and your work in His kingdom.

■ *From Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

Thank you for your letter enquiring if we are interested to receive quantity of Bibles of the Authorised Version for distribution to

our students free of charge. We at the same time have noted that our students have been approaching you for their individual Bible copies. As our students know very well that we cannot afford to buy the English Bible and give them freely, we understand that they had to approach you individually. We would like to express our deepest gratitude for bringing to our attention the possibility of free grant of the English language Bibles for our students. We would also appreciate if you can afford some grants for our regular instructors who are not more than twenty. May God bless you.

■ *From Jimma, Ethiopia*

I am a Christian and freshman medical student. I think I am a good Christian; but since I have moved away from home for the first time I am making some adjustments and I like this adjustment to be with God. I would like you to help me in being a better Christian by sending me the English version of the Holy Bible and any tract that you think would help me in trying to be a better Christian.

West Indies

■ *From Cap-Haïtien, Haiti*

The calendars arrived in Port-au-Prince, even though they were addressed to Cap-Haïtien; we then must pay someone in the post office to go to Port-au-Prince to bring them to Cap-Haïtien. Such is life in Haiti! We had distributed nearly all of the calendars by the end of the year. All the other shipments have arrived safely; any problems have been internal problems. The calendars are much appreciated by Haitian people. They begin asking about them in October. We distribute them from our radio station, as well as through

trusted pastors in various areas. Some are also sent to Miami for distribution among Haitians there. We use the verse for each day in our radio broadcasts and station IDs, as well as for our own daily staff devotions. Is there any possibility of increasing the number of calendars received? Thank you so much for your provision of these calendars. We trust God to use His Word in hearts and lives, as He has promised.

■ *From Longdenville, Trinidad*

I live on the beautiful island of Trinidad. I am a Christian and I attend a church where I live. I enjoy working for the Lord and it brings great happiness and satisfaction to me in my being able to do so. I'm writing this letter to tell you that I received a calendar from

a friend for the year 2003; this calendar was printed by your Bible society. I must tell you that every morning being able to wake and read a verse from the Bible was just great. I have memorised every verse from that calendar. I have tried to obtain another one but my friend told me he also got it from a friend. I don't know if you have a local branch here, I have asked and found nothing so if there is one you can let me know. In the meantime the year has come to a close and I would really like another calendar for 2004. I have found this address on the calendar and I'm writing to you hoping that you can help me by sending me a calendar, it would really mean a lot to me. I'm looking forward to your response. I know that you are very busy at this time of the year, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for taking the time to read my letter and replying.

Although certain phrases and expressions used in these letters may not be doctrinally accurate or in the proper English form, 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.





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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.*
- *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.*

For introductory literature and catalogue please write to the Society at the address given.



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*“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, throughly furnished
unto all good works.”*

2 Timothy 3.16, 17