

THE WORD OF GOD
AMONG ALL THINGS



Quarterly Record



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Trinitarian Bible Society

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

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Calendars & Diary for 2006

Special News

Bestselling Calendars

With more than one-quarter of a million being sold in the UK alone, our **Words of Life** and **Golden Thoughts Calendars** are among the most popular Scripture calendars in the country. In the providence of the Lord, over half a million English TBS calendars will be printed this year and with such a large number we are able to reduce the printing cost of each calendar. The Society would like to share these savings with our supporters to make **2006 a very special year** for our calendars.

Increased Discounts for Free Distribution

We are increasing the discounts to make the calendars even more affordable for free distribution and thereby promoting the Word of God as they are given away in our communities. This is the tenth year we have held the pre-discounted price and therefore the further discounts are genuine reductions as the starting price is already very low, at less than the cost of a greetings card.

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An Order Form is enclosed with your *Quarterly Record* and we welcome your early orders.

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Week to View Diary with gilt page edging and marker ribbon, featuring Scripture Text per day, Bible Reading Scheme and a Weekly foot-note for interest and prayer. **Price:** UK £2.95 – USA \$4.75 – Canada \$7.05 – NZ \$8.85 – Australia \$6.82 – less quantity discounts.

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See inside back cover of our *Quarterly Record* for further address details for all our Branches.

From the

Assistant General Secretary

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. *Psalm 67.1,2.*

And the gospel must first be published among all nations. *Mark 13.10*

In 1974 two significant events coincided, which have both had interesting repercussions for the Society in recent days.

Firstly, that year saw the publication of our New Testament in Thadou, a language spoken by around 150,000 inhabitants of a region of North East India around Manipur. It is one of the Kuki-Chin languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, closely related to Tiddim (Tedim) Chin, and the largest of the New Kuki tongues. Having said that, we are told that there is strong resistance amongst older generation Thadou speakers to the redesignation of the language as ‘Kuki’.

Secondly, a groundbreaking piece of legislation called the Health and Safety at Work Act conferred upon many employers, for the first time, legal obligations in respect of the well-being of their employees, visitors, customers and contractors, and the safety of their premises.

The thoughts that follow are triggered by two visits to our doors on successive days a few weeks ago: a deputation of eight people keenly interested in our revising and republishing the Thadou New Testament, and the periodic Health and Safety inspection carried out by the enforcement officer from our local Council!

These events have much more in common, however, than the juxtaposition of dates. Health and Safety is an issue of ever growing importance in the workplace these days. As

Christian employers we need to demonstrate that we care about our staff and our members, our supporters and customers who visit our premises, so we do our best to comply with not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the legislation, too. Since much of the vast body of law spawned by the 1974 Act is not narrowly prescriptive anyway, but constructs a framework within which employers and employees work out the most effective way of complying with the principles, there is ample scope for us to devise a Christian approach, commensurate with good stewardship of the Society's funds.

But, when all is said and done, this Society is concerned not so much with the Health and Safety of bodies, minds and buildings, but of never dying souls. This is where the translation work fits into the picture. Hundreds of thousands of speakers of a language worldwide—sometimes millions—are looking to us to provide at least a portion of God's Word accurately translated into their own tongue. In the case of Thadou, the foundation work on the New Testament was completed over thirty years ago, but there are changes necessary to conform our edition more accurately to the Greek Textus Receptus and there are stylistic and orthographic changes necessary, too.

It is thrilling to realise that the Bible speaks of health and safety in this eternal sense, quite pointedly. The two verses quoted at the head of this article encompass the two main ways in which the **saving health** of God might be known amongst all nations. Firstly, we learn from the beginning of **Psalms 67** that God's way may be known upon the earth, and His **Salvation** can be seen (for such is the full and accurate implication and the more usual translation of the Hebrew word for 'saving health', derived from the root 'Jehovah saves' and giving us also Joshua/Jesus), by virtue of His mercy upon His people, and His favourable countenance towards them. Then, secondly, this 'so great salvation', **the Gospel**, is published or made known among all nations, by the dissemination of His Word written, and by 'the foolishness of preaching'. This, of course, is at the root of the watchword of the Society, 'The Word of God Among All Nations', and underpins all that we seek to do for Him.

Thinking of the concept of 'health' for a few moments, we read in **Proverbs 4.22** 'For they [i.e., 'my words' and 'my sayings' in verse 20] are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh'. Further on in his book of wisdom, Solomon is moved to write 'Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones' (**Proverbs 16.24**). Jeremiah castigates Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem thus: 'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *it is* to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city' (**Jeremiah 33.5**). But then, 'Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth' (v. 6).

So the Word of God is clearly linked with the conveyance of health to God's people; the expression 'saving health' in Psalm 67 is just one word, **yeshuah**, in the Hebrew, therefore **salvation** or **deliverance** are inseparable from the health that only the Lord can give. The same Hebrew expression is rendered 'salvation' in **Jonah 2.9**—'Salvation is of the LORD', and in **Isaiah 52.7**—'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' This last text is squared irrefutably with the Gospel when the Apostle Paul quotes it in **Romans 10.15**—'And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'

We therefore desire the health and safety of our workforce and all that visit the premises, but far more we desire that many thousands will hear and receive the Word of God written, published and preached, so as to know eternal health and safety for their souls. The Apostle John had the right priority and balance when he wrote to Gaius: 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth' (**3 John 2**).

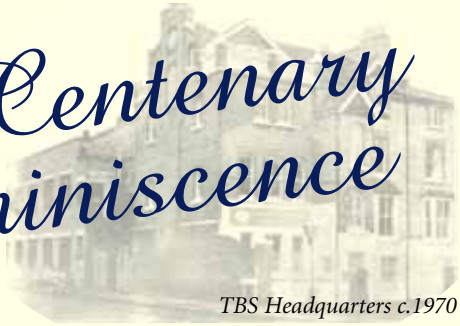
I am pleased to report that the Society received a clean bill of health from the Health and Safety Inspector. Oh, may it be the case that all our readers, and many of those to whom we send forth the blessed Holy Scriptures, will on that Great Day, under the intense and intimate scrutiny of the King of kings and Lord of lords, be fully absolved from all the filthy stain of sin, clad in the righteousness of Christ, and part of the church which 'Christ...gave himself for', 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word' (**Ephesians 5.25,26**). Amen.

THE TREASURY

We warmly thank the donors of the following anonymous gifts which have been received recently. London East £20; Taunton £45; Cheshire £3,000; Carrickfergus £30; Wales £31.85; Glasgow £50, £10; Edinburgh two of £100; anon. via Charities Aid Foundation £128.21; Give as you Earn £140.47, £111.14, £100.46, £49.80; United Kingdom Evangelization Trust £50; Church Donation three of £50; South West Charitable Giving three of £33.69; Direct into the Bank two of £50, £30, three of £25, two of £20; via Speakers £33; cash two of £10; other £137.56. **Total £4,653.56.**



A Centenary Reminiscence



TBS Headquarters c.1970

A reminiscence by one of our Vice-Presidents, Mr. F. Charles Farncombe, who, though now in his hundredth year, keeps prayerfully informed of all that is happening at the Society. It has been the Society's privilege to enjoy his association with our work for many years.

Members and friends of the Society will welcome the declaration in the *Quarterly Record* for April to June of the Society's Statement of Doctrine and the re-affirmation of the principles upon which the Society was founded. It may be necessary from time to time in order to comply with new regulations of the law to make alterations to the organisation, but the principles remain. This has caused me to reflect on the changes which have taken place over the years. The General Secretary in his introduction to the Statement refers to changes even over thirty years ago.

My mind goes back thirty-seven years to when I joined the Society to take charge of the accounts. How different then: all the records then were handwritten—no computers! What a change also in the presentation of the *Quarterly Record* and various leaflets, bookmarks and text cards. Back then it was just black and white. Now with the advance in technology and artwork how attractive they are! Of course, it is the Word of God, which has not changed, which is important; it needs the blessing of the Holy Spirit to make the Word effective.

It has been my privilege to be associated with the Croydon Auxiliary for some years. The Auxiliary was formed in 1897. The introductory leaflet of the Auxiliary states 'The committee express their concern at the publication of corrupt versions of the Holy Scriptures, and their concern that the Trinitarian Bible Society deserves support in their stand for pure versions of the Bible'. We wonder what that Committee would feel today about the proliferation of different versions, and the moral decay of the Nation. The Committee was formed with members from the various churches in the district. Sadly, over the years many of the churches have gone over to other versions. Attempts to interest them in the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society seem to have failed.

But amidst all these changes, we are encouraged in our belief that we have an unchanging God...



Another notable change is in the declension of the number of children attending Sabbath Schools. Parents used to send their children to Sabbath School even if they themselves did not attend a place of worship. The consequence of this decline is that the children now have no knowledge of the Word of God. Sadly, too, some Chapels in the district have closed. For a few years, 1970–80, we were able to have meetings followed by tea, and the Rev. T. H. Brown would give an illustrated talk from the slides from photos which he had taken. This was much appreciated, but no longer happens.

But amidst all these changes, we are encouraged in our belief that we have an unchanging God. This is our foundation, based on His excellent Word. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away' (Matthew ch24 v35). We read in Malachi ch3 v6, 'For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of

Jacob are not consumed'. The children of Israel had sinned, and their worship was not right. They deserved God's judgment. But God would not change His covenant with His people. God in His mercy gives the exhortation to repent and the gracious promise that He would 'open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing' (v10). What a precious word is in Isaiah ch30 v18: 'And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you!'

The precious promise will not change. Paul, in his letter to the church at Corinth, writes, 'For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us' (2 Corinthians ch1 v20). The glorious Gospel is unchangeable. The good news of salvation is still to be proclaimed. He still saves to the uttermost. Paul writes to the church at Galatia of those who pervert the Gospel, but there is no other gospel. The apostle has some solemn words concerning those who would try to proclaim another gospel: 'let him be accursed' (Galatians ch1 v8). The word of God in its purity will not change. "Every word of God

... This is our foundation, based on His excellent Word.



is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him’ (Proverbs ch30 v5).

We must ever remember that God’s Word concerning the wicked will also be unchanging. There is a solemn end proclaimed for those who would add to or take away from the Holy Scriptures. It is feared that there are those who have taken away some words from the Authorised Version in the new versions. May the Lord help us to hold fast to the Word of God!



The Lord does not change in His gracious promise to supply all our needs from that fulness that is with Him. This promise has been seen in the abundant provision for the Society’s financial needs. Another promise that is unchanging is that the Lord gives wisdom, and that liberally. May the Lord be pleased to grant this to the General Committee, the officers and staff as they conduct the affairs of the Society!

In conclusion the promise recorded in Isaiah ch55 v11 comes to mind: ‘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’.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Please continue to present our need for an experienced Personal Assistant before the Throne of Grace. In spite of our advertising within the *Quarterly Record* for two quarters, circulating our request to around thirty-five local congregations in London and the Southeast, and advertising more widely in the *English Churchman* and the *Evangelical Times*, the Lord has seen fit to make us wait thus far. As with Elijah and his servant (1 Kings 18.43), we would urge ‘Go again seven times’. We are confident that in His best time the Lord will meet this need.



By the Rev. G. Hamstra, a Vice-President of the Society

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake
in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son...

Hebrews 1.1,2

When presidents and prime ministers are genuine, concerned, and skilful communicators, they never lack an audience. Their speeches often make lasting impressions, even on future generations. President Abraham Lincoln's famous address, made in 1863 at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, is a notable example. Such compassionate speeches are remembered and become as it were immortal. However, far more valuable and significant are the Divine communications.

The very fact that God, the Creator, communicates with His creatures here on earth is an amazing reality. Every human being knows that God speaks, but not everyone pays heed to the Divine messages. God communicates to us in nature. The message of God's general revelation is very clear. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork' (Psalm 19.1). Everywhere in nature we can hear the rustlings of God's footsteps, if we are willing to listen.

God not only speaks in nature, but also in grace. God's Word is His most blessed and solemn revelation. God, the infinite Majesty, has spoken to us, His finite creatures, in a sacred, gracious, and condescending manner.

In a rather unique fashion, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews alludes to God's way of speaking. The author was a compassionate Christian leader of Hebrew origin. Likewise, he was a gifted theologian and a skilful linguist. Although he wrote to certain Christians with a Hebrew background, the Divinely-inspired epistle is intended for the Church of all ages. The spiritual condition of the first readers was far from wholesome. A firm and sympathetic correction was needed. By the grace of God, their initial response to the gospel message had been rather favourable. However, the continued pressure of persecution appears to have made them faint and weary. They had become dull of hearing and still desired milk instead of strong meat. Moreover, they were in danger of drifting away from the truth and even of being led astray by diverse and strange doctrines. These early Hebrew Christians desired a way of escape from a wearisome persecution. It appears as if they were contemplating to return from their newly-found Christian faith to their former Jewish convictions.

The concerned writer endeavours to lead his readers to a full awareness of the rich treasures that may be found in Christ, their compassionate High Priest. He warns against their half-hearted, hesitating attitude. The tried and tempted Hebrews are repeatedly encouraged to endure by looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith.

The opening verses of the Letter to the Hebrews contain a wealth of spiritual instruction. They express the marvellous and important truth that God has spoken. God spoke to the earlier generations of Hebrews, the people of Israel, in and by the prophets. To the present generation of Hebrews, He spoke in and by His Son.

God spoke at sundry times and in diverse manners. Each prophet represented God in his own particular time and way, and prophesied in part. When God spoke in His Son, He spoke in One who was much more than a prophet. No prophet was ever related to

God the Father as was Christ the Son. Although He possessed a human nature, He was equal with God the Father. God's revelation by the Son is not in part, but complete and final.

When God spoke in the Son, He revealed Himself in One Who knew Him in perfection. No one else could represent God the Father in the same glorious and complete manner like God the Son could do. In the Son we have God's final and ultimate revelation. We ought not to look for more and newer revelations. Every Old Testament promise has been fulfilled in the word and work of the incarnate Son of God. The only new revelation yet to come will be on the Judgment Day, when 'he cometh with clouds; and [when] every eye shall see him' (Revelation 1.7). God has spoken in His Son. This revelation is unsurpassed in grace and authority.

We need to respond in an appropriate manner. A believer does so in faith. 'Without faith *it is* impossible to please' God (Hebrews 11.6). A believer in Christ realizes his need of being taught by the Holy Spirit. He recognizes in his heart of hearts what the Word of God teaches regarding the most urgent need of his life. He does not dare or want to deny that as a fallen creature he has no more pressing need than salvation from sin and its consequences. At the same time he realizes that he may not go on in the way of rebellion against God. A believer finds no rest until he may embrace the great salvation wrought by Christ. The enjoyment of a saving interest in Christ is the strength of his heart. It causes him to delight himself in God and to live according to the revealed will of God.

A believer's faith is often tried. Like the Hebrew Christians, he may be discouraged when tempted. Nevertheless, he should ever seek, by grace Divine, to occupy his mind with the excellency and the beauty of the love of God in Christ. In so doing, he shall be strengthened in the day of trial. Those who have neglected the great salvation in God's beloved Son had better give heed. They should mourn on account of their ungrateful neglect. They ought to pray earnestly for the precious gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God alone convinces of the sin of unbelief and enables us to exercise a living faith. Plead with the Lord to give you the special grace of His Spirit. It is the Spirit's work to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto you (John 16.15).



New Classic REFERENCE BIBLE

O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.
2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

1 Ps. 66. 4; 149. 13, 15; Ps. 24. 7, 19 9; 144. 26. 2; 2 Ps. 100. 5; Ps. 105. 45. Isa. 35. 9; 29 Rev. 22. 14.	ACTUAL SIZE TEXT
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The Society is pleased to announce our new Classic Reference Bible. This replacement for our New Brevier Centre Reference Bible is a medium size reference Bible suitable for church use.

This Bible is expected to arrive soon from the printers.

Bible Features:

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- Easy-to-read reduced Concord typeface
- Semi-yapp cover to protect page edging*
- Bible paper with gilt or coloured edging*
- Head and tail bands*
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*Various features do not apply to the 4S, 4E or 4A.

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- The Epistle Dedicatory
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Page size: 175 x 120mm (7" x 4½")

Thickness: 31mm (1¼")



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Lithuania

part 2

by C. P. Hallihan

Part 1 of this article, in QR 572, gave a brief sketch of the history of Lithuania, its religion and the events of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. For part 2 a look at Lithuania's language, literature and Bible was promised. The usual sequence would be in the order just mentioned, but the story of the language and literature of Lithuania is so dependent upon the Bible that this must be our starting point.



The Bible

Early Translation Work

The work of the Reformation always gave special emphasis to the native tongue for the reading of Scripture and for church services. Wherever it began,¹ the need for the Bible in the common

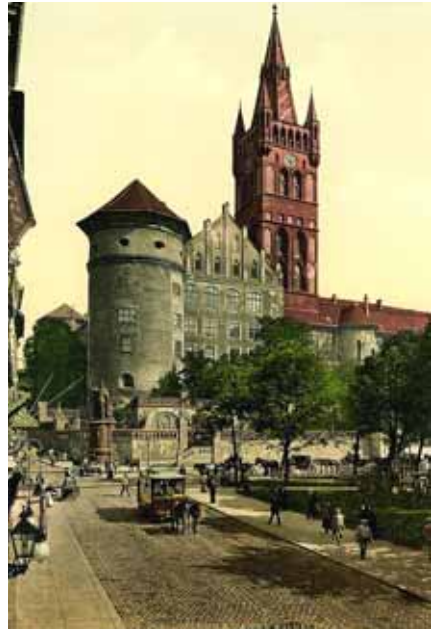


language was a first fruit, and God raised up His servants to grapple with the burden of translation. This mighty work which, like the rain, fell upon the just and the unjust,² always furthered literacy in the countries where it was

begun, a kind of cultural leavening. First for this work in Lithuanian were Stanislovas Rapalionis and Abraomas Kulva-Kulvietis in Königsberg,³ who dedicated their lives to translation of religious literature into Lithuanian. Rapalionis is believed to have completed a translation of the Old Testament, but the manuscript disappeared. Both men died in the same year, 1545, leaving much work unfinished, but for the next fifty years Königsberg was a centre of Lithuanian publishing and translating activities. Some of this early work came to be included in various later collections, notably the Mažvydas Catechism.

 **Martynas Mažvydas and Jonas Bretkūnas**

The Catechism, the first printed book in Lithuanian, was published in 1547 by Martynas Mažvydas, another Königsberg exile. It was primarily a translation of Luther's Catechism, the Ten Commandments, two Psalms, eleven hymns (with music notation), and extracts from the Gospels and Epistles, with items by several contributors. It included an alphabet and a primer, thus providing tools for literacy, an exceptional demonstration of the leavening aspect mentioned above.⁴ There were two prefaces: one was in Latin, as might be expected of that time, but the other was cast in rhyming Lithuanian! Mažvydas became pastor at Ragaine, totally committed to translation work throughout his life. His cousin, Baltramiejus Vilentas



The Königsberg Castle before World War I

(Willents) translated the Gospels and Epistles, publishing this work in 1579. It has been estimated that as many as thirty Lithuanian scholars were collaborating at Königsberg about that time on various Lithuanian translations of hymns and 'postilla'.⁵ The Mažvydas Catechism, then, was not only effectual in spreading the message of the Gospel among the Königsberg Lithuanians, but also began a tradition of 'outside the country' Lithuanian publishing which preserved the language. From that time Lithuanian was used in churches and schools and even in the publishing of royal and official papers.

The first whole Bible translation into Lithuanian was completed about 1590 in



Jonas Bretkūnas

Königsberg by Jonas Bretkūnas, pastor in Königsberg. Bretkūnas based his Bible translations on Latin texts as well as on the Luther version. This work, although having scholarly and royal

approval, ran into difficulties and remained unpublished. Bretkūnas, a giant among these early translators, also published a collection of hymns and a prayer book. In 1591 Bretkūnas published a famous *Postilla*, a two-volume commentary on the Gospels. This used a rich, flowing and lively language (adjectives often applied to the work of Luther and Tyndale) and introduced a level of Lithuanian writing that had not been achieved before.⁶ Although only a fraction of his works were ever published, they were available, along with his Bible, in manuscript form to later authors. Bretkūnas died in Königsberg in 1602.

These men from Mažvydas to Bretkūnas were pioneers, creating from scratch the first classical forms in literary Lithuanian, working from an oral tradition in a language that had no prior written forms or conventions to deal with abstract concepts and intellectual argument. Biblical-theological language, already established in much of Europe, had to be created.⁷ They laboured without dictionaries or grammars: the first Lithuanian grammar, *Grammatica*

Litvanica by Daniel Klein, was not published until 1653.⁸

 **Samuel Chylinski to Ludwig Rhesa**

Enthusiasm for Lithuanian Bible translation seemed to fade with Bretkūnas. There was, however, a valiant effort by Samuel Boguslav Chylinski. His work is of peculiar fascination, because although the translation was done on the sadly familiar expatriate basis of other Lithuanian Protestant endeavours, it was actually accomplished in London. Samuel lived there while his home country was ravaged by the post-Reformation conflicts. He, with at least two others, had some official ‘scholarship’ arrangement as the basis of this work in London from the National Synod of the Protestant Churches at Dantzig. Another intriguing aspect of Chylinski’s work is that recent research

The window of a traditional home in Rumsiskes, Lithuania



suggests that as well as Polish, Greek and Latin Bibles, the Dutch Statenvertaling was a major resource for his Biblical labours.⁹ In 1663 Chylinski was sidelined after doubts were raised about the quality of his work, and only Genesis to Psalms were printed, in London. An unusual historical footnote can be added—in 1933 a handwritten manuscript of the New Testament was auctioned in England, and proved to be Chylinski's Lithuanian translation. It seems likely then that Chylinski had completed the whole Bible, and that its non-appearance may well have been a political rather than a quality matter.¹⁰ He died in 1668.

Through the next fifty years several part-Bible works were published, including a new version of the New Testament prepared by Samuel Bythner. This was a partly bilingual edition, with Polish words bracketed in the Lithuanian text. A complete Bible finally appeared in 1727, published at Königsberg. This was a collaborative effort by numerous authors, based largely on the work of Bretkūnas and Chylinski; it used the Gothic alphabet, a feature of Prussian-Lithuanian publications. Within ten years it had sold out and was reprinted. By the turn of the century there was a real scarcity of Scriptures in Lithuania, and such copies as could be found were very expensive. A new edition was prepared by a Königsberg committee and appeared in 1816, under the editorship of Ludwig Rhesa.¹¹ In his German

preface Rhesa outlines Lithuanian Bible history and describes his own translation procedures, making use of Hebrew and Greek resources as well as the usual historic versions.

Rhesa's Bible, which went through numerous subsequent editions, remained the standard text for many generations to come, and is still referred to after the time of Lithuanian independence.



The Language

Language Overview

The Baltic languages do belong to the Indo-European group of languages, Lithuanian and Latvian having common form as recently as the 5th–7th centuries AD. Lithuanian, though, only existed in oral form—that is, only as a spoken language—until the 16th century. Indeed, the language had no settled or agreed consistent written forms until the end of the 19th century. Numbers of Lithuanian words are used by Belorussians and Poles, reflecting former Lithuanian influence, and Lithuanian names for rivers and lakes occur from the Vistula to the Kama and Moscow Rivers. Words of Lithuanian origin account for more than one percent of Finnish vocabulary. In Medieval times all written communication



The New University of Königsberg in 1862.

of the Lithuanian state with Western European countries was conducted in Latvian. Within the state 'Old Belorussian' served, a form of old Slavonic.

The language is a linguist's delight, having retained a wealth of ancient phonetic and morphological characteristics. Because of this it is taught as part of general linguistics course-work at universities in the USA, Italy, France, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Japan and other countries. Today the language is spoken beyond Lithuania by native ethnic Lithuanians living in Belarus, Latvia, Poland and Russia and by emigrant communities in

Martynas Mažvydas' Catechism



Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Ireland, Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay.

Language—the influence of Religion

When Christianity came in the 14th and 15th centuries the Lithuanian language and culture was in great danger of losing all identity to Polish. The Polish nobility and gentry tried in every way to impose the Polish language, alphabet and customs upon Lithuania. Lithuanian nobility and gentry played down their Lithuanian origin as unworthy, calling themselves *gente lituanus natione polonus* (people of Lithuanian stock, but Poles by nationality). The Roman Catholic Church was particularly zealous of Polish: very few priests spoke Lithuanian. The spread of the Protestant Reformation in Lithuania in the 16th century, with its defining preference of the vernacular language for Scripture and worship, initiated the appearance of the first Lithuanian book, in 1547 (see above). This book was not only a catechism but also, in the words of its title page, 'a teacher for reading and singing Christian songs printed in a new manner and meant for young people'. It contained, beside the spiritual material already mentioned, their alphabet, a primer, rudiments of reading in Lithuanian, samples of syllable-formation, and the first grammatical terms.



Postilla by Jonas Bretkūnas

To counteract this growing influence, the Roman Catholic Church was forced to use Lithuanian and to print religious books in Lithuanian. The first Vilnius-printed books in Lithuanian¹² were the 1595 Romanist Catechism and a Postilla of 1599, both

translated into Lithuanian by canon Mikalojus Dauksa. Somewhat late in the national-literary day, Dauksa used his 'Prefatory Word to the Gentle Reader' to explain the importance of the native tongue and to voice his grief over the fact that the mother tongue was despised in Lithuania. It is, for all that delay, a noble declamation, beginning—'Where could you find in the world a nation so dark and vile which does not possess three innate things of its own, viz., its own land, customs and language?... A nation lives not by the fertility of the soil, not by the diversity of garments, not by the pleasantness of the country, not by the strength of its towns and castles, but most of all by the preservation and usage of its own language which is the mainstay of a nation and enhances its qualities, its concord and brotherly love....'

Towards Modern Language

In 1629 there appeared a Lithuanian-Polish-Latin dictionary by Konstantinas Sirvydas. The first Lithuanian grammar

(mentioned above) was written in Latin by Daniel Klein, and printed in Königsberg in 1653. Many of the 17th-century books stressed the importance of the native tongue, showing concern for the spread of written Lithuanian. Unfortunately written Lithuanian became more and more burdened with Polish input, and the 18th century was a time of impoverishment and decline of literary Lithuanian. A growing awareness of Lithuanian national character did begin to bring about a gradual revival of the popular traditions of the Lithuanian language as the 19th century drew near, but by 1795 Czarist Russia was the ruling power in what was left under the name Lithuania. The whole of the 19th century for Lithuanians is the struggle against 'russification'. There were risings in 1831 and in 1863, followed by reprisals: hangings, whole villages burned, exile to Siberia, and men conscripted into the Russian army for twenty-five years.

As part of these repressive efforts, Russia forbade printing of Lithuanian texts in the Latin alphabet, 1864–1904, and publishers or distributors of Lithuanian books joined the number of those punished, imprisoned, or exiled to Siberia. From all this some escaped by fleeing, many to the US. Lithuanians continued to print books and newspapers outside Lithuania, now with financial help from the American expatriates. Book-runners smuggled books into the country, with whole families participating in local distribution.



Vilnius, view from the Gediminas Tower

Children were taught to read in secret from Bibles and prayer books.¹³

Up to the very end of the 19th century Lithuania still had no standard written language; some wrote in one dialect, others in different ones. Only at the very turn of that century was there a common form of the language in general literary use. Kazimieras Jaunius (1849–1908) wrote a Lithuanian grammar which helped standardize written Lithuanian. His pupil, Kazimieras Buga (1879–1924) was the originator of the dictionary of present-day Lithuanian, and Jonas Jablonskis (1860–1930) a prolific protagonist of written Lithuanian, is now styled the ‘Father of Lithuanian’. The official language of Lithuania has been Lithuanian only since 1918, and even then, during the Soviet times, was used alongside Russian in official affairs. Post-Soviet efforts to recover the language from the inevitable Slav influence over seventy years are

compounded by the appearance of loan words from the West, especially English, at every level, from popular reading to materials for science and technology.



The Churches

As outlined at the end of the previous article, the modern church situation is as mixed as in any other modern country! There certainly are Bible-believing, Christ-preaching churches, few in number but spreading, small in membership, but growing.¹⁴ The ‘old’ churches, Roman Catholic and reformed, scarred survivors of so much opposition, are becoming very conservative—in a nationalistic and cultural sense, not theologically! The Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania even refused to acknowledge Vatican Two! Lithuania remains very dominated by Rome to this day.

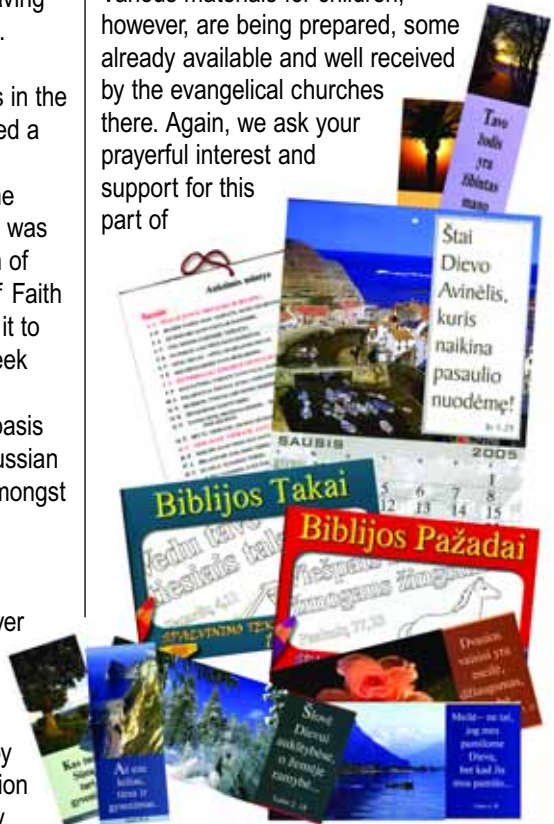
There is a cameo glimpse of ‘free’ church struggles through the 20th century in the life of Konstantinas ‘Kostas’ Burbulyš. Born in March 1902, he attended seminary in Germany and Latvia and became a Methodist minister in Latvia in 1932. He spent six months as a pastor in Taurage, Lithuania, then at Siauliai and Birzai, in the north of the country. Burbulyš just escaped deportation to a Siberian gulag when the Soviets came in 1939; then, because of his teaching abilities, he was spared by

the Nazis in 1941. With the return of Soviet troops in 1944 he was forced into slave labour for the front-line troops, but ended the war in a refugee camp in Germany where he worked as a pastor. Burbuly's, with his family, eventually settled in the Chicago area of the US. He continued to preach and teach, without pay, being employed full-time in a bakery before retiring in 1968. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Burbuly's reclaimed the house that he owned in Siauliai and donated it to the church there. He died in January 2002, having nearly reached one hundred years.

There is a further interest for us in the life of Kostas Burbuly's; he produced a Lithuanian New Testament and published a Lithuanian multi-volume Bible commentary. This Bible work was taken up as the basis of an edition of the New Testament by the Word of Faith Bible Centre in 1996, who declare it to be 'co-ordinated with the older Greek copies of the Textus Receptus Manuscript Group which was the basis for the King James Version and Russian Synodic Translation'. It is in use amongst evangelicals in Lithuania.

The Society has had direct and indirect involvement in Lithuania over a number of years, producing the Words of Life Calendar and, more recently, the Golden Thoughts Calendar in Lithuanian. There is, by our principles, no single Bible version in Lithuanian which can confidently, fully and consistently be used for our

work: a source of difficulty. In 2002 TBS took a step towards meeting this need with the publication of Mark's Gospel in Lithuanian. However, it is not envisaged at present that further extensive translation work in Lithuanian will be undertaken by the Society, as we are reliably advised that the Burbuly's New Testament (1996 edition of the Bible) mentioned above is sufficiently accurate to obviate our spending years of labour upon a revision when there are more pressing needs in other languages. Various materials for children, however, are being prepared, some already available and well received by the evangelical churches there. Again, we ask your prayerful interest and support for this part of



A selection of TBS publications in Lithuanian

the work, and for the Word of God, the Gospel and the churches in Lithuania, and Lithuanian communities elsewhere.



Epilogue

Gathering, digesting and presenting this information has brought mingled feelings of haunting sadness, and yet great gladness that still Christ is preached and the Scripture of Truth is known and used in that country. The question arises, humbly, 'Why did the Reformation not 'take' in Lithuania?' Look at the gifted men of God, their proximity to and familiarity with the European Reformation. Look at the unmistakable contribution of the Protestants to the language and literature of the country. Look at that woeful chain of Bibles completed, but never printed. I attempt no answers, but rather say, 'Why did the Reformation 'take' in Britain?' More deserving, more expectant, more faithful? Resoundingly, fearfully, the answer is 'No, never'. What have we that we have not received? And how well have we matched that which is expected of those to whom much was given? Taking the overall moral condition of the United Kingdom and of Lithuania, where (in both) the old Epicurean secularism is rampant, who could tell which nation had had four hundred years of Reformation, Puritanism, awakening, revival, giants in the pulpits and lecture halls, and the bright thread binding them all, the sure and certain Word of God, the Bible, freely available?

Endnotes

¹ Even going back to Wycliffe in England and Huss in Bohemia.

² Matthew 5.45

³ See Part 1 in QR572, p. 13.

⁴ There is in the TBS Library a vaguely similar work published in Dublin, 1881, using Scripture Selections as a primary Gaelic reader. Doubtless there are many others.

⁵ Latin *postil*, *postilla* (*post illa*, after this?): a marginal note on a text or passage of Scripture, or a series, a collection, of such comments. It is not now used in English except in an historical sense, but is always used of these Lithuanian books of homilies and extracts. Some very beautiful examples are in museums and galleries. Try *postilla* in a search engine.

⁶ Tyndale in English, Luther in German, Károli in Hungarian, these and others in translating the Scriptures, in some way defined or revived the language. The debt of entire cultures to the vernacular Scriptures should never be forgotten.

⁷ Much after the task of men like Carey and Judson: but at least those men were working from a known basis of well-trying spiritual vocabulary into another tongue.

⁸ There are suggestions of an earlier work in Latin, *Clavis linguæ lituanicæ*, but no copy is known.

⁹ A number of Dutch expressions appear in the Lithuanian Bible's footnotes. It is a good reminder for English speakers that this inestimable Dutch Version also had extended influence beyond the country and language of origin, not least in England if we recall Haak's translation of the 1618 *Dutch Annotations*, which are still available from our friends the Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting in The Netherlands.

¹⁰ In 1984 the Chylinski New Testament was at last published by Polish scholars.

¹¹ It would have appeared sooner, but the editor marched off to the Front for the climactic Napoleonic confrontations of 1812.

¹² As distinct from Königsberg and other expatriate publications.

¹³ It is very salutary to recall that at just this same time a similar, if perhaps not quite so brutally extreme, repression of the Welsh language was being attempted by the English.

¹⁴ A recent Lithuanian visitor, at that time not in Christ, told me that there were no Baptist churches in Lithuania! He was quite taken aback when we next met and I was able to give him, from the Internet, details of over twenty, four of them in his hometown!



Sunset over Aberystwyth

Report

on the Trinitarian Bible Society Stand in the Missionary Exhibition held between 8th–12th August 2005 at the Evangelical Movement of Wales English Conference, Aberystwyth, Wales, attended by Anne Newman, Grants Supervisor

The English Conference of the Evangelical Movement of Wales is held in Aberystwyth, Wales, on an annual basis, with the Welsh conference following the next week. A former staff member (a Welshman, of course!) suggested some years ago that we should apply to book a stand and we have never been sorry that we did—this was our eleventh year. We are

always well received and meet many there that love the Authorised Version of the English Scriptures.

Aberystwyth is on the edge of Mid-Wales, opposite the Republic of Ireland. It took me seven hours to get from London to Aberystwyth (two hours of which were needed to travel a mere twenty-three miles on the Saturday owing to road works!) and just over six on the return journey. Although a Welsh friend who hails from Aberystwyth claims that it is often raining there, the weather was superb all week!

The Missionary Exhibition was held in a Methodist Church building in the town at the bottom of a steep hill, which one has to climb for accommodation and meals as they are held on the

University of Aberystwyth Campus: a good way to keep fit or fit to drop! Placing of stands varies from year to year. We were allocated another good spot, and we were to be seen as soon as one entered the door. We set up the stands on Monday afternoon and all the staff there could not be more helpful; they helped unload cars and during the Exhibition provided free drinks and biscuits to help keep us going.

Many of the other organisations represented this year have been recipients of our Free Grants of Scriptures, and a number of the representatives have become friends over the years, which makes for an excellent atmosphere of oneness in the work of spreading the Gospel. I had opportunity of seeing some old friends

and meeting some new ones. Thirty missions were represented this year and we had a good time of fellowship. There is a 'Mission Guide' produced by the organisers in which each mission is listed with approximately one hundred words explaining their ministry. Some also submit videos which are shown during the afternoon at set times.

Although our main purpose for attending the conference is to host our stand at the Exhibition, I had ample opportunity to enjoy the ministry there as well. The main messages were on Romans 6, 7 and 8—all very clear and edifying. For next year a conference speaker from the United States has been invited—an Authorised Version man and a good speaker whom I look forward to hearing.

Anne Newman on the Trinitarian Bible Society Stand



The Missionary Exhibition is open every afternoon from 2.30 pm–5.00 pm except on Friday when it closes at 4.30 pm as we have to vacate the premises by 6.00 pm. Some 1,200 folk attended the conference this year, with more than two hundred of them young people. Before the Exhibition is open to the public, the missionary representatives meet for thirty minutes for a Bible Reading and time of open prayer. Business was brisk and almost overwhelming at times, since the Missionary Exhibition is well supported. The children who visit (and they are encouraged to do so) have a quiz to complete: they are given a question from each stand. It took one child about two hours to go around and enquire for the answers. At the end they are all given a 'goodie' bag, the items of which are donated from the missionary societies; TBS's donations were small items such as the Little Gold Books, Bookmarks and Scripture Text Sheets.

Our discounted Greeting Cards were very well received and some folk were interested in our new MP3 Audio Format of the Bible. One gentleman rather abruptly and in an unpleasant manner asked us when we were going to change to the English Standard Version! Although he admitted that he was brought up on the AV from which he had learned memory verses, he still felt that today's youth could do with an easier version! I handed him a few articles relating to why we support the Authorised Version and its underlying texts.



The Trinitarian Bible Society Stand

I met a few folk who had never heard of us before (which is one of the main reasons we go to the conference) and they were given the Quarterly Record magazine for information. Some wanted to be put on the mailing list for future copies, with one young lady wanting to know more of our work for considering whether she should support us or not. Many catalogues were also distributed and invitations to attend the Open Day were handed out. I had the pleasure of distributing eight complimentary pens marked with the Society's name and address and a verse of Scripture, which were well received! There was one welcome comment from a lady who loves the 'country/people articles' written by Peter Hallihan in the Quarterly Record.

There were, of course, suggestions for new products. These included different verses for our Posters, a diary in A5 hard back and a large print Bible in a small format—this is a constant request but impossible to accomplish.

One of the overseas visitors with his wife came from a tribe in northern India. They had a chat with me concerning the Bible which they had hoped the Bible Society was going to publish and print for them, but which has never materialised. I said we might be able to help but encouraged them to write to our Editorial Department in the first instance.

Tuesday was a particular blessing. After the evening service, at approximately 9.30 pm the young people gathered for their meeting and the missionary reps. were invited to join in their meeting so that those who attend are able to learn more of Mission. We split into groups and then explained what our particular Mission or Society is engaged in, at which time we are able to hand out relevant literature, in our case the

Quarterly Record magazine. In the past there has been time for prayer for the work in which we are involved but this year we wrote postcards to Missionaries for their encouragement. The evening with the youngsters ended about 11.20 pm but afterwards I stayed chatting with missionaries to Muslims serving the Lord in Marseille, France, concerning the Arabic/French Leaflets we are proposing to produce for such ministry. They were delighted and said it was an answer to prayer! That night I returned to my room around midnight!

It is so good to be privileged to represent the Society at this Conference, and equally good to know that folk are still interested in our work and to be able to introduce others to our work and ministry of worldwide Scripture distribution in faithful translations.

Sabbath School Learning Prize Fund

One thing the Trinitarian Bible Society is doing to encourage and enable children in the study of God's Word is the provision of the Sabbath School Learning Prize Fund. This Fund was commenced a number of years ago to encourage the memorising by children and young people of the Holy Scriptures from the Authorised Version of the Bible.

Under the scheme, suitably inscribed copies of the Bible are presented to those who have learned by heart selected passages of the Word of God. A gilt-edged text Bible in imitation leather is awarded to children aged under ten who have memorised the portions for their age group; a gilt-edged reference Bible in imitation leather is awarded to young people aged ten to fifteen who have memorised the portions for their age group. Young people aged ten or over who have already received an award Bible in the lower age group may receive the reference Bible on memorising the selected portions for the higher age group.

The Society would encourage all parents, office-bearers and others, who seek the spiritual well-being of the young, whether or not the children under their charge attend a Sabbath School, to request further details of the Sabbath School Learning Prize Fund from the Society.

“...from a child
thou hast
known
the holy
scriptures...”

2 Timothy 3.15



Upholding the Reformation Defending the Received Text

Reformation Today is a bi-monthly journal by Baptists for Baptists, applying the teachings of the Bible to the life of our churches to bring reformation and spiritual refreshment. The magazine is founded on the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, and links together those who are concerned to see reformation in our churches, and an appreciation of our reformed and puritan heritage.¹ It aims 'to biblically evaluate popular theological trends propagated by the press, radio and television broadcasting and prominent Internet sites.' It claims that one of its aims is '*Historical*. Sadly many modern Baptists have forgotten our noble roots, and neglect the heritage of the reformation and puritan age.¹ To all of these statements, we would say a hearty 'Amen!'

A prominent member of the organisation behind *Reformation Today* is Michael Drake. Mr. Drake is Director of Wycliffe Christian Schools, Principal of Carey College and an elder in the Tamaki Reformed Baptist Church in New Zealand. Mr. Drake is also known for his writings, which include articles in *Reformation Today* and an excellent discussion of the recent film *The Passion of the Christ*.²

Mr. Drake has occasionally written on text and translation matters. In issue 204 of *Reformation Today*³ he has an article entitled ‘The King James Bible’, taken from his book *The King’s Bible*. His thesis is somewhat difficult to ascertain at first, but it appears that his main argument is against those who hold, in his opinion, an unrealistic view of the Authorised Version and the Textus Receptus. Indeed, there are some whose views on these texts border on idolatry, and we with Mr. Drake would condemn this extremist view. However, in his comments Mr. Drake takes an equally indefensible view in the other direction: that the AV and TR are to be avoided.

Mr. Drake begins with a brief discussion of the history of the Authorised Version. He notes that King James I set out a number of specific rules for the translators (for an excellent overview of these rules, please see ‘Kings and Puritans, Bishops and Bibles’ in *Quarterly Record* No. 566, January to March 2004). In particular, Mr. Drake notes that the translators were to revise the Bishops’ Bible, retaining certain ‘old ecclesiastical words’ and omitting the type of marginal notes found in the Geneva Bible, which the king had found to be objectionable. Mr. Drake does not seem concerned about the last, only commenting upon it in passing, but has difficulty with the ecclesiastical words, particularly ‘church’, which he believes would have been better translated ‘congregation’.⁴

Following this, Mr. Drake writes briefly on ‘The Greek New Testament used for the King’s Bible’, focusing his comments on the number of existing manuscripts and reassuring his readers that there is nothing doctrinal jeopardised by the existence of variants between these manuscripts. He then goes on to talk about the Textus Receptus, stating that there is no one ‘Textus Receptus’ but that the TR is actually a group of printed texts. He mentions that certain extremists complain of the Roman Catholic influence in the modern critical editions of the Greek text while failing to recognise that Erasmus, the first to produce what later came to be known as the TR, was himself Roman Catholic.

Indeed, at the time of Erasmus, almost everyone else as well was Roman Catholic! However, it is well documented that Erasmus opposed the Roman Church in many ways, and was certainly not a devout and conventional adherent to all the traditions and teachings of that system. Whilst there is insufficient evidence that Erasmus ever came to know the Lord as his Saviour, and unlike Martin Luther he did not break free from Rome, there is clear evidence from his writings to demonstrate that he had a great love for God’s Word and a desire to publish it. This was certainly not true of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, or of the majority within that church! Mr. Drake discusses Erasmus’s work at some length, dwelling upon his inclusion of 1 John 5.7–8 in his later editions.

In his conclusion, Mr. Drake recognises that the TR was ‘the text used for English Bibles for nearly 400 years’, but warns that ‘neither evangelical superstition nor dogma can justify exalting this significant and useful but limited collection of incomplete texts to a position of cultic reverence’.⁵

Whilst we would agree with some of the things that Mr. Drake says in his article, at the same time we would have difficulty with others, and particularly wonder how *Reformation Today*, with its emphasis upon the historical church, can support his views. As quoted above, ‘Sadly many modern Baptists have forgotten our noble roots, and neglect the heritage of the reformation and puritan age’. However, has not Mr. Drake, in this article, abandoned those very roots and that heritage?

Perhaps those of a non-conformist bent in the 16th century would have preferred the word ‘congregation’ to ‘church’. However, ‘church’ is the word used for four centuries by those whose Bible (whether by choice or under duress from a monarch) was the AV. Indeed, ‘church’ was the word taken to the Americas by Christians whose Bible of choice was the Geneva, complete with notes and without the authorisation of the king.

The question which must be asked is, would Mr. Drake have us now abandon the use of this word? Perhaps the reason for ‘church’ over ‘congregation’ had to do with the desire of the king to replace the word ‘congregation’ used by Tyndale (itself chosen deliberately to avoid Romanist overtones in his day), with the more conventional word ‘church’—which by 1611 would have registered in the mind of the reader the established church (i.e., the Church of England) ahead of the non-conformist congregations. Be that as it may, the word has not led Christians astray; it has not deceived anyone; it has not proved problematic in dealing with the cults. What difference does it make now whether or not the AV translators should or should not have used this word as opposed to another?

Turning to the main thrust of Mr. Drake’s article, an attack upon the Received Text and its adherents, we strongly disagree. In refuting his comments we make no apology for appending an article published in the *Quarterly Record* over three years ago, which we believe provides a much more balanced and reliable view of the remarkable process by which the Lord has seen fit to preserve the most trustworthy copies of the original Greek New Testament and to ensure that they underlie the peerless Authorised Version, still by far the best, most accurate and most faithful translation in the English language.

We commend Mr. Drake for his desire for truth, and cannot but agree with a number of things he mentions regarding the history of the Authorised Version and

the Textus Receptus. Nevertheless, we find his article unbalanced and misleading and would urge him to rethink his desire so blithely to abandon the Scriptures of the Reformation.

Endnotes

¹ The three quotations in this paragraph have been taken from *Reformation Today*, <http://www.reformation-today.org/rtindex.htm>, 1 September 2005.

² Michael Drake, *Viewing the Passion of the Christ*, <http://www.careycollege.com/curriculum/documents/Viewing%20the%20Passion.pdf>, 1 September 2005.

³ *Reformation Today*, issue 204, March-April 2005, pp. 23-29.

⁴ Mr. Drake also rather vehemently claims that the translators were ‘so supportive of the king’s anti-evangelical thrust that they explained their motivation in making this new translation as, in part, to suppress Puritans and Baptists!’, and states that ‘This was no passing comment, but one of the stated aims given in their formal preface to the Bible’ (*RT*, p. 24). We have reread the ‘formal preface’, *The Translators to the Reader*, and find the Puritans mentioned only briefly and the Baptists not at all. Regarding the Puritans the preface gives a history of the AV’s beginnings as

for the very historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty’s coming to this crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints, when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was, as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift, yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this translation which is now presented unto thee. Thus much to satisfy our scrupulous brethren.

(*Translators to the Reader* [London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1998], p. 20)

and later states that

we have on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old Ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put *washing for Baptism*, and *Congregation* instead of *Church*: as also on the other side we have shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their *Azimes*, *Tunike*, *Rational*, *Holocausts*, *Propuce*, *Pasche*, and a number of such like. (p. 28)

If Mr. Drake’s source is other than the *Translators to the Reader*, he should state it.

⁵ *RT*, p. 28.

The Validity of the Received Text

MUCH is being said today in an attempt to denigrate the Textus Receptus, the Greek New Testament text upon which the English Authorised Version and other Reformation-era translations were based. Critics believe that there is no single text which can validly claim the title 'Received Text', that the text originated in the works of a Roman Catholic priest, that it was produced using only a few manuscripts—these things would all exclude its use as a valid source of translation, and thus any translations based upon something called the Textus Receptus would themselves be invalid.

It must be acknowledged from the outset that these critics' initial claims are true. There is no single Received Text; Erasmus was a Roman Catholic priest to the day of his death; Erasmus used a handful of manuscripts which were readily available to him. However, the matter is not so simple as these critics would have us believe.

First, what is the Textus Receptus? What has been called the Received Text since the middle of the 17th century is actually a group of printed texts produced beginning in 1516 with the first edition of the text of Erasmus. These texts, produced by Reformation and Renaissance scholars, bear their names: Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, Elzevir. The latest, and currently most used, edition of the Textus Receptus, is that produced by Scrivener in 1894, which is still published by the Society. These texts are based upon varying numbers of manuscripts which were available at the time, but all of these manuscripts have something in common: they were all of the Byzantine text-type. Thus, these texts are nearly consistent, not only with one another, but also with the vast majority of manuscripts of the Greek New Testament which were available to scholars of the Reformation and which are available to scholars today.

Considering our current century, those who advocate the use of the Critical Greek Text also speak in terms of there being one single text. However, there

have been twenty-seven editions of the Nestle text, and five (including the 3rd edition corrected) of the United Bible Societies' text. That does not include the texts of Tischendorf, Hort and Westcott in the 19th century. Each of these texts is also built on only a handful of manuscripts, a handful which do not represent the majority of available manuscripts but instead are the only representatives of a group of manuscripts which differ from the majority and amongst themselves. Therefore, regardless of which edition of the Textus Receptus one chooses, he is getting a New Testament which represents the majority of manuscripts available then and now. His Critical Greek Text does not.

Second, the characters of Erasmus and some of the other men who worked on editions of the Textus Receptus are derided, and this may not be without good reason. Erasmus was indeed a Roman Catholic, as well as being a humanist scholar who urged the young prince of his country to follow the teachings of Plato and Augustine. Others may well have had money as the primary goal of their work on the text. However, one thing must be borne in mind regarding the time during which these men worked on their editions of the Textus Receptus. Along with the craving for knowledge which brought about the production of the Textus Receptus in the first place came a resurgence in the desire to know the God presented in that New Testament. Men sought answers in science, but that science was based upon the Scriptures—Scriptures which men upheld as containing and teaching only truth.

This cannot be said of the period which saw the presumed abandonment of the Textus Receptus and the production of the Critical Greek Text. The 19th century was a time of scientific discovery, but the theories which derived from those discoveries were the result of the abandonment of belief in the truth of the Scriptures. In the minds of many, Darwin replaced God as the revealer of creative history. Study of the Scriptures could validly be divorced from a belief in the God of those Scriptures. Even some Christian scholars turned over the text of their Bible to men who believed it to be nothing more than another ancient book. Man became the source of knowledge and truth.

Third, critics complain that Erasmus used only a handful of manuscripts which were readily available. This is true—at least for his first edition. Erasmus

may well have been in a hurry to produce a Greek text to accompany his Latin, and may have been conscious of—and trying to beat—the imminent publication of the Complutensian Polyglott.

It should be noted in this regard that the manuscripts in Erasmus' handful were a valid representation of the majority of manuscripts available at the time. In addition, while he may have hurried in his first edition, this was not true of subsequent editions of his text, in which more manuscripts and much more care were used. Other scholars carrying on Erasmus' work also were able to access and spend the necessary time examining more and more manuscripts. In 1707 Mill published a New Testament, using the Textus Receptus as his basis and printing in the margin variants culled from research on hundreds of manuscripts. No doubt they spent as much time and energy as current scholars can claim to spend, and did not have many of the distractions which are common in today's fast-paced, politically correct world.

A question which must be asked of these critics is why they complain that Erasmus used only a handful of manuscripts but applaud the use by current scholars of only three or four manuscripts which, owing primarily to age, are considered to be of more value than the vast majority of manuscripts found throughout the Church of the type used by Erasmus and his scholarly descendants.

God in His mercy and grace has always seen to it that no doctrine is excluded from His Word; critics make an issue of this in attempting to support the Critical Greek Text. And it is true that every doctrine, even those found most strongly in passages omitted by the current Critical Greek Text, is found somewhere else in Scripture. But these other occasions are often truncated and do not express as succinctly the doctrine as does the omitted passage. Where else in Scripture is the Trinity so clearly delineated as in 1 John 5.7-8? And where else in Scripture do we see so simply the tenderness of our Saviour toward sinners as in John 7.53-8.11?

Perhaps using the Critical Greek Text makes scholars feel better, seeing that it is more in accordance with the scientific values of our modern age. But is it more glorifying to God? Argue as we might, that is the most important aspect of any Biblical study.

The Word of God Among All Nations



'The seed is the Word of God'

Europe

From Tirana, Albania

We really would like to thank you for the Albanian Word of Life Calendars 2005. We received them on 8th December and within only two weeks all calendars were distributed. The churches in Albania are very grateful for this tool to evangelize and for the possibility to distribute the Word of God in this way to the Albanian people. Many persons have been and will be blessed reading the verses during the year. Attached you will find a picture taken during distribution of the calendars. Thank you again for your precious support!

Albanians happy to receive Words of Life



From Bucharest, Romania

Warmest greetings to you and your members of staff at Trinitarian Bible Society in the Name of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We hope that your work for the kingdom of God is being greatly blessed by the Lord Jesus, the Head of His Church. We are a group of brethren who have the responsibility of representing nearly seven hundred assemblies throughout Romania to the government. Since the Revolution of December 1989 we have had the great joy of receiving very large numbers of TBS calendars in Romanian. They were printed to very good quality with very attractive colour photographs of different scenes, but even more important there was a clear Bible text for each month. These calendars were an excellent means of evangelism and were distributed by the believers to unsaved friends, relatives, work colleagues, etc. They were widely distributed and the Word of God was displayed in hospitals, factories, local authority offices, prisons, and many other places. This was a great blessing for us and was something that helped to break down some barriers in reaching unbelievers with the gospel in a country that is dominated by the Orthodox Church. Each year the believers looked

forward to receiving them and using the calendars as a form of evangelistic outreach. We eagerly look forward to hearing from you and may the Lord continue to help, strengthen and encourage you in your work for Him.

From Carcassonne, France

I am an evangelical Christian of the church in Carcassonne. This town is much affected by occultism but God is starting an awakening here. We need a large quantity of Bibles and tracts because the Christian bookshops are a long way away from here, one hundred kilometres away, and we are being asked for Bibles. We have a large number of refugees here from Angola, Zaire and other African countries. A lot of these need to read the Word of God. We would like to request one hundred Bibles, fifty St. Luke's Gospels and St. John's Gospels and tracts in French along with postcards containing verses. Thank you for your ministry. May the Eternal assist you so that He may be glorified by our zeal.

From Wembley, London, England

One hundred Urdu calendars were distributed in Wembley at the beginning of the year. Wembley Gospel Hall has the unique privilege of being situated in a shopping area where 15,000 people mainly of Asian origin visit each week from all over the country. Once Muslims saw their own language they quickly took copies and some women came back for more to give to their friends. One Muslim shop owner after reading the Bible verses aloud to his friends asked if he could have a Bible in Urdu so he could know more.



The stand at the Greek Festival in London

From Wood Green, London, England

We had the opportunity of having a stand at the Greek Festival in Alexandra Park. I wish to thank all of you who prayed for us and to inform you of some of the events so you can continue to pray for individuals who we met and gave Christian material to. As usual the Lord's Day was a busier day than Saturday. There were five of us who were on the stand. We had many good conversations and gave out many Greek New Testaments and the bilingual Greek/English New Testaments, CDs containing Bibles in many languages and other Christian material....

Please pray for an elderly man who took a Greek New Testament and Turkish Scriptures for a Turk he knows who became a Jehovah's Witness. Also pray for another elderly man, also a JW, with whom we had long conversations. He visited our stand in previous years and knows what we believe, yet he came again this year to talk to us. His wife is not a JW and this

causes friction in the family.... A young man said he had no money, so we gave him a lot of free material. He was shocked that we were not there just seeking to sell and make a profit. A pair of cousins took much material free and again were surprised that we wanted no money. A very argumentative man bought a NT from us for £1. Two young men asked deep questions about why the Orthodox church split from the Roman Catholics, and about kissing icons, kissing the priests' hands, etc....Others got NTs to give as gifts to others.... A man asked me to pray for his daughter who is very ill. He asked for prayers to make her well and for God to give her wisdom. He took a NT to give to her. These are just some of the people we met and who took material from us. Please pray for them.

From Combe Martin, Devon, England

Please accept our appreciation of your support for our witness at the Royal Cornwall Show. The event started with a very friendly meeting with nearby stallholders the day before the show officially opened and frequent visits from some of these folk throughout the show days. The tent was visited by more people this year and it seemed from the moment we opened until closing time someone was in the tent in deep conversation or choosing literature. By the end, several of our helpers found that their throats were sore as well as their legs. We supplied a number of Bibles, colouring books and Ten Commandment cards to children from Chernobyl who come to England every year for help with their recovery and for help learning English. One Roman Catholic lady engaged me in a

conversation with many searching questions and took away a Bible and other literature. Without question this was our most rewarding witness which now needs supporting in prayer that the words both spoken and given might bear fruit in God's time and be pleasing to Him. The booklets on the AV produced some very worthwhile conversations with those we spoke to being very open to our thoughts on the subject and what they read in the booklets. We look forward to next year if the Lord wills and give thanks to our great God for His blessing on this year's efforts in His Name.

Africa

From Lusaka, Zambia

I greet you in the sweetest name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God continually bless you. We of my household rejoiced when we received the parcels and it was a day when crusades had started in our district church and most of the material was taken there...but I reserved some calendars for my big brother. As I opened the boxes, my two living children (I had five and have lost three between 1997 and 2nd January 2005), my grandsons and their sisters plus my two stepsons and daughter jumped with joy to see the beautiful Bibles and the other literature. We are living twelve in our house—my husband passed away in 2000 and I am looking after the family plus the orphans left by my nephew, my daughter, my son and my husband. They each took a Bible for themselves and their teachers. The following day I was told that their teachers were very very happy to receive the Word of God from their pupils. That left me with about eight of them

which I also gave to the new converts and to my unsaved nephews whom I am praying for their salvation. I must frankly say that I love distributing the Word of God on calendars and Bibles.

From Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

We are happy to receive your Christian literature which is priceless to us. It will help us a lot to reach more and more people with the Gospel. As we are supporting the widows and orphans, visiting them in their affliction and showing them how deep God loves them, your precious books are wonderful tools to make our task easy. Here is a picture of our care team members in charge of dispatching the materials.

Burkina Faso team members with Scriptures



From N'Djamena, Chad

Greetings from Chad! Thank you very much for the Calendars 2005 which we received with much joy. We distributed the calendars in N'Djamena, Abeché, Kélo, Moundou, Sarh and Bongor in Chad; Kousseri and Maga in Cameroun; and Maiduguri in Nigeria. We distributed them through our network made of Pastors, national missionaries and lay workers. The calendars are much appreciated here. The Word of Life Calendars [WLC] hang proudly in many offices, shops and homes thus preaching the Bible throughout the year. The Golden Thoughts Calendars [GTC] are used by believers to daily read the Bible personally and in the families. For example the Pastor of the church in Abeché

challenged his members to use the GTC as part of their devotions. The result has been growth in the church. The WLC opened the way for many contacts with non-believers. Although a Chadian calendar similar to the WLC is produced here by some missionaries in Chadian Arabic, conservative Muslims prefer the TBS WLC being in classical Arabic. We would like to have more of the GTC French because over the years we created the need and in villages people have only them for their personal or family Bible reading. We wish as well to request for Bible and portions in French for distributions. We regret not to be able to contribute financially but pray that God will provide for you enough as to serve us. We are indeed grateful for this unique partnership for the gospel. Looking forward to receiving from you again seeds of God's precious Word to saturate Chad with the Words of Life giving hope to this hopeless country.

 **Asia**

From Kanayakumari District, India

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We received six parcels of English Bibles and four hundred Tamil Gospels sent by you. We have distributed the Scripture books with prayer. We have no more stock. Please immediately send more Bibles and John's Gospel parcels. We visited the houses in the villages and distributed freely the Tamil Gospel books. Besides that we visited the hospitals and distributed freely. The sick and their families said that God's Word was very consoling. Our church gospel team is doing village ministry and visiting hospitals for each week. We have distributed all the books. More than two hundred persons accepted Jesus and got saved after reading the Tamil John Gospel. Let Lord be

Indian believers with their new Bibles





Indian believers with their new Bibles

glorified! Then we gave sixty English Bibles freely for the newly converted people. We could take the photographs of only a few; we have sent the rest of the books for the secret Christians who knew English individually by post, so we couldn't take photographs. The photographs are of college students who have recently accepted Jesus.

From Nagapattinam, S. India

Greetings to you in His precious Name! Received your calendar request form for 2006; thank you for the same. On December 26th of 2004 we were affected by tsunami. In Tamil Nadu State our area (Nagapattinam District) was badly affected by tsunami. Especially our town Nagapattinam city lost 6,069 persons in the seashore areas; more than 5,000 members were missed by tsunami. Almost eight fishermen villages were badly affected. One of the very famous Roman Catholic worshipping centers name Velankanni was also affected. It is situated sixteen kilometres away southside of our town. On

that day 1,500 pilgrims died on the seashore. In my relations ten members including three children lost their lives. In this situation we worked very hard and helped them. Our house was also affected by tsunami. After tsunami we distribute Tamil Bibles and English Bibles and Christian booklets. I request you kindly pray for our ministry and those who lost their children and relatives during tsunami.

Central America

From San Salvador, El Salvador

Thank you for the donation that you have made to the evangelical association mission. We distributed the twenty Bibles to twenty Christians who due to their extreme poverty are unable to buy a Bible but due to your generous help they have received a Bible for free. The forty New Testaments were given to people who have recently accepted Jesus Christ as their only and sufficient Saviour as a result of our evangelistic and missionary work. We give thanks to God that His Word never returns empty. Today they are reading the Word of God. The one hundred copies of St. John's Gospel were distributed during evangelism to the students of the Catholic school in our town. Each time that they start classes the students read a chapter of St. John's Gospel. The five hundred Golden Thoughts Calendars were distributed during evangelism to government offices, private companies, prisons, hospitals and everywhere where we see an interest of people wanting to know more of the Word of God. We distributed the tracts during our evangelism work throughout the country.

From Yucatán, Mexico

I would like to thank you for all the materials you have sent me which all arrived in good condition. I have pleasure in distributing them. If possible, please send me some more Bible portions and if you have them a large-print Bible and New Testament even if you can only send us one copy. I have sent the majority of the calendars to Cuba where I have several contacts. When I visited the brethren in Cuba last year I was able to take some New Testaments to them. Please pray for the ministry there and I will pray for your ministry. I am preaching here and at the same time I am sending out Bible correspondence courses. The majority of the people receiving these live in Cuba. We also have people who do the courses living in Chile, Nicaragua, Honduras and some here in Mexico. Some people write to me requesting Bibles or New Testaments and some Bible portions. I also have a mission in Tabi, twenty kilometres away. I travel there by bicycle. I would like to thank you for the kindness you have shown me year after year in supplying me with calendars, Bible portions, New Testaments and Bibles, which are very important to me. I have received all the literature in good condition. Please pray for me and my family and for the work that we are undertaking for the glory of the Lord.



South America

From Malloa, Chile

Thank you for the consignment of literature you sent us which arrived in good condition. Each calendar was distributed

with care and prayer. The Bibles were given only to new believers who have never before read or owned a Bible. I evangelise in a general area. I walk thirty kilometres to arrive there and have to cross rivers on my journey. I will send you photographs later. I travel to small villages situated a long way from the cities with the message of the gospel. Please send me more Spanish Bibles that I can distribute to more new believers and their families for the Kingdom of God.

From Palmeiras, Brazil

Thank you for the consignment of Bibles you sent us to contribute to our work. I have already used some here in Palmeiras. I distributed them to people who do not yet have a Bible and are wanting to read the Bible. God willing, my wife and I are going to visit the neighbouring town of Tambar to make contacts there. It is probable that we will use some Bibles there if the opportunities are open to us. It is one of the most idolatrous towns in Brazil and it is difficult to preach the Gospel there. A priest lives there who claims to have performed miracles and he is misleading many. We would like to count on your prayers.

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.



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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, 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.

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

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