



# Quarterly Record



The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society

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2003





# Trinitarian Bible Society

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

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# Quarterly Record

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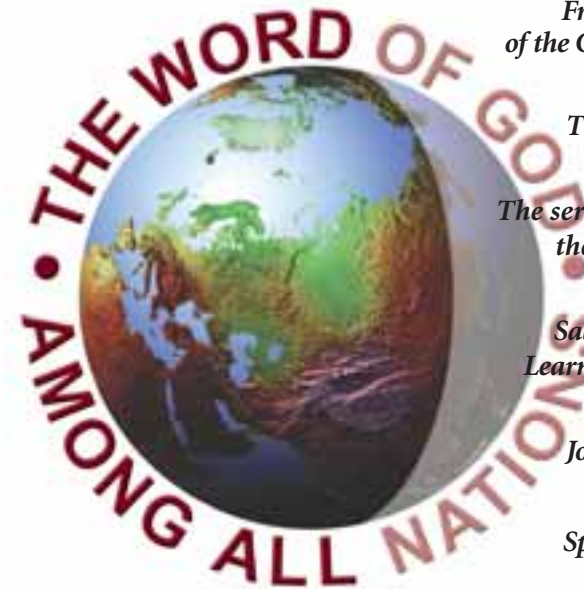
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# From the desk of the General Secretary

Many tens of thousands of copies of the Holy Scriptures in different languages have been distributed by the Society over the past few months. During the coming months, God willing, these copies of the precious Word of God will be placed in the hands of men, women and children in Russia, Israel, Brazil, Angola, The Philippines and various other parts of the world. May it be the prayer of all our supporters that the blessing of Almighty God may attend the circulation and reading of these copies of His inspired and inerrant Word! Indeed, may it be our “heart’s desire and prayer to God” (Romans 10.1) that through the circulation of these copies of His Word, the Lord will get glory to Himself, and that by the gracious and effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, many of our fellow sinners in different parts of the world might receive eternal, spiritual profit!

The object of the Society is not merely to circulate the Word of God. Certainly, that is part – and a very practical part – of its objective. But that is not the *whole* of its objective, as the wording of the Aim in the Society’s Constitution very succinctly, and yet most comprehensively, states:

The object of this Society is to promote the Glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

This was the original objective of the Society when it was formed in 1831, it is the objective of the Society today and, by God’s grace, it will be the continuing objective of the Society in the future. The Society exists primarily for the *Glory of God*. It was established with an unequivocal Christian basis. This must not be lost.

When the Constitution was prepared in 1831, its framers sought to ensure that the Society would be, and would continue to be, distinctively

“Religious and Christian”. And so it was that on 7th December 1831 at the public meeting in Exeter Hall, London, the Provisional Committee stated at the Society’s inauguration that it would “join with their Christian brethren in establishing a Bible Society, which, whilst it would be truly catholic in its spirit, might be strictly Scriptural in its principles, and decidedly religious in its constitution and operations”.

As the readers of the *Quarterly Record* are aware, the Society’s General Committee is reviewing the Recommendations of the Investigating Committee as mandated by the Resolution passed at the Society’s Annual Meeting this year. It is giving serious and prayerful consideration to each of the Recommendations made by the Investigating Committee. Nevertheless, the General Committee wishes to assure all the Society’s members and friends that should any changes to the Society’s Constitution itself be deemed necessary, it will not be recommending any changes of significance that will in any way affect the basic and fundamental nature of the Society’s work as presently enshrined in its foundational document.

The Constitution – with only minor modifications – has served the Society well over the greater part of its long history, and after 172 years of such good service it would be most unwise to tamper with it unless there were compelling reasons to do so. This does not mean that the Committee will not be recommending *any* changes to the Constitution – the Investigating Committee’s Recommendations are still being reviewed – *but the Committee does assure all the Society’s supporters that it will not be recommending any changes in the Constitution that will alter the Society’s basic Scriptural and principled basis.*

At one of the Society’s Annual Meetings early in the last century, a speaker made some important and pertinent observations when he addressed the members:

Seventy years ago a number of God-fearing men instituted the Trinitarian Bible Society, in order that they might have a Bible Society formed on strictly Scriptural principles. The need is not less urgent today, but it is a solemn question whether there be sufficient Protestant spirit to form it, had it been left till today, or to re-form it, if it were allowed to be broken up. We are justified in feeling that in these days of abounding worldliness in the churches, and of infidelity in the pulpit, it would not be possible to do this...

It is right therefore to ask our friends to thank God for the Trinitarian Bible Society, and for having preserved it on the old lines and in “the old paths” of Reformation truth for so many years. As faith in the *truth* of God’s Word decreases, faith in its *power* must decrease also; and as it was ever the *few* who valued the Word of God in its integrity, and believed in its divine inspiration, so we can look only among those for members and supporters of the Trinitarian Bible Society. This condition of things naturally and of necessity causes a continuous limitation in the number of those among whom sympathy and support may be hoped for...

The great principle that guides and governs the Trinitarian Bible Society may be summed up in this – that it is not influenced by carnal policy, but solely by the Word of God. In enforcing this principle, and in maintaining the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the many meetings held by the Society are not mere Society-meetings, but are veritable means of grace, where the Lord’s people are strengthened in their most holy Faith, and encouraged to circulate the Bible on the principles of the Bible.

It is with similar convictions to those evinced in this address that the members of the General Committee, as the trustees of the Society, proceed in their work. Their united desire is to maintain, and pass on to future generations, the Scriptural principles on which the Society was founded, inviolate. In 1831 the Rev. George Washington Phillips, the first Honorary Secretary of the Society, writing on behalf of the Provisional Committee, stated that Scriptural “principle is that through which we desire to uphold, by which we seek to regulate and from which alone we expect to secure the interests of the Bible Society”. As the members of that Committee earnestly contended “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) in their day and generation, so the members of the present General Committee seek grace to be likewise faithful in the perilous and solemn days in which our lot is cast.

Your Committee will endeavour to take all necessary steps to preserve the Society from becoming a “Christian” institution merely in name, having “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3.5). Rather, it will seek to ensure that the Society will be characterised as being truly Christian in every area of its activities, that, with the blessing of the Lord resting upon it, it may be used of God as a mighty instrument of righteousness in His hand for the furtherance of His Kingdom through “*the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God*” as was originally intended, for many years to come.



The members of the General Committee of the Society realise the considerable responsibility resting upon their shoulders and crave the prayers of all the Lord's people that they may humbly discharge their duties truly in the fear of God.

The prayers of the Society's friends are specifically sought for the Rev. W. H. Fleming and his wife. Mr Fleming has not enjoyed good health for a number of years and has again recently spent several weeks in hospital. He has now been allowed to return home but is still seriously ill and is paralysed from the waist down. We pray that the Lord may give Mr Fleming a sweet sense of His gracious presence, grant His blessing on the medication Mr Fleming is receiving to alleviate pain, and uphold Mrs Fleming as she cares for her husband.

## Can You Help?

For a number of years the Society has been seeking to obtain a copy of the French Bible published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). Although the Society has several different editions of the French Bible published by the SPCK in its library, there is one particular edition which it lacks and which it wishes to obtain. This particular edition is the two-column reference edition published in London by W. M'Dowall in 1849, most copies of which (we understand) were circulated by the SPCK in the Channel Islands and Canada.

Although copies of this Bible are to be found in the British Museum and in the Cambridge University Library, the Society would like to obtain its own copy (or have the loan of a copy) to enable a facsimile edition to be printed. The Society hopes that the production of a facsimile edition of this Bible will stimulate the support of suitably qualified French Christians in the completion of the revision work on the French Bible commenced by the Society several years ago.

The prayers of all the Society's supporters are asked that a copy of this Bible may soon be located and that the necessary work may be undertaken to provide (with the Lord's blessing) the French-speaking peoples of the world with a more accurate and faithful translation of the Holy Scriptures.



Part of a page from the 1849 edition of the French Bible sought by the Society

## The Treasury

We warmly thank the donors of the following anonymous gifts which have been received since the July *Quarterly Record* went to press. North Tolsta £20; Market Rasen £2,000; Inverness £100; Cheshire three of £20; Swindon £200; Keighley £100; Culkein Stoer £20; via Give as you Earn £33.00, £26.90, £21.40; via United Kingdom Evangelization Trust £1,000, two of £60; via Charities Aid Foundation £128.21; Church Donation three of £50; via South West Charitable Giving three of £37.19; direct into the bank £30, three of £25, £20; via Speakers £1,000, £25, £6.06; AGM £247.00; other £35. **Total £5,529.14.**

# The Word of God

The Sermon preached at the Annual General Meeting 14th June 2003

BY THE REV. J. THACKWAY

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)

Let us turn to 2 Timothy 3. Paul and Timothy enjoyed a very special bond. Their hearts were knit together when they met at Lystra during Paul's missionary travels. As the years went by, the spiritual union deepened and they were like father and son. Looking at the history of these things, it is clear that the Lord ordered this. *Timothy was meant for Paul.* Nurtured by a Jewish grandmother and mother he was ripe for converting grace when Paul first preached the Gospel at Lystra. By the time the Apostle was back in these parts two years later, Timothy was well reported of by the brethren. Paul, needing a replacement for John Mark, took Timothy as his understudy, and he was one of the Lord's best gifts to Paul. More than a son in the faith, he was like a human son.

*Paul was also meant for Timothy.* The young man, lacking a Godly father-figure at home, found in Paul that figure and the best influence to help him with his shy, timid and oversensitive nature. Paul entrusted his young delegate with a number of special missions and Timothy grew in experience. He was to carry on the work when Paul departed – a daunting thing for a man with Timothy's disposition, yet this was an excellent preparation for him.

These facts explain much of the content of 1 and 2 Timothy. In them we read Paul exhorting Timothy to be strong in the Lord, to remain unashamed and steadfast in the faith and to have full confidence in the Word of God. Here in 2 Timothy 3 we have examples of that, particularly in the well-known words of verses 16 and 17, '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'. Now, what is this Bible that Timothy would have had when Paul was no more? What is this Bible that we, as sup-

porters of the Trinitarian Bible Society, believe in and support, that we endeavour to circulate in this country and into all the world, this Authorised Version, with its preserved texts and the best translation into English? What is this Bible? I want us to answer that question from these two verses here, 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17.

Let's look first of all, dear friends, at the *origin* of this Bible: 'all scripture *is* given by inspiration of God'. Then we will look at the *benefit* of this Bible: 'and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness'. Thirdly we will examine the *consequence* of having this Bible: 'that the man of God may be perfect'.

## The Origin of the Bible

God *originated* the Bible: 'all scripture *is* given by **inspiration of God**'. It would be important for Timothy to be assured that what he trusts in for his own strength and what he declares to others really is the Word of God. Here we are told first of all, that the Bible originates in God; it was 'given by inspiration of God'. *Theopneustos*: one word in the Greek which literally means 'breathed out by God'. This one word declares that Scripture emanates from God. It is an extension of God. A man speaks, his words flow out on his breath; God has spoken, God has breathed out His complete Word. Now it was exactly like that, the Scripture tells us, when God made all things at the beginning. Psalm 33.6 says, 'By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth'.

Here is an important parallel. The same God who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning has created a Bible for us. As surely as 'by the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth', so also by the Word of the Lord was the Bible made and all the books of it by the breath of His mouth. This is saying that creation and Scripture have the same Author because both creation and Scripture are about revelation. In creation we have *general* revelation or *natural* revelation and in Scripture, *special* revelation. God has given us both, that by these we might know Him. In creation we have the impress of Almighty God everywhere, and in Scripture we have the spoken and then the recorded details, including the record of His dear Son. God originated the Bible. 'All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God'.

Now we can go further and say that God also wrote the Bible: all *scripture* or 'writing'. For this to have been literally so, God would have had to produce the Scriptures as He produced the Ten Commandments, written with the finger of God. Of course, we know He did not do that although He did it with the Decalogue. But God did something which came really to the same thing. God used selected men as scribes to produce what He would have written if He had been using the writing instrument Himself. These human authors were the penmen of God, and in that sense God wrote the Bible.

We use the word Inspiration to describe that process: the breath of God, God the Holy Spirit coming upon specially prepared and chosen men. In 2 Peter 1.21 it says He acted through these men to write His Word, not by the will of man: ‘but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost’. It should never cease to amaze us, the marvel and the miracle of the way that God the Holy Spirit worked through these men, causing them to write down the very words He wanted them to write just as surely as if their writing implements were in His own hand, ‘not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth’ (1 Corinthians 2.13). It was the Lord revealing and dictating His Truth and the men writing it down according to their individual writing styles.

This was not a mechanical thing, it was an organic thing. The Lord directed them to write exactly what He wanted them to write and yet they were free enough to express this God-given truth in their own particular and individual styles. We read, for instance, that ‘the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake’ (Acts 1.16), and yet David said the words. Thus you see that God was the writer in effect and yet David was the one who expressed it in his own form, different from the writing styles of the other authors of the Bible, and this produced Scripture. Such a marvellous, seamless interface between the Sovereign work of God and the very real work of His chosen penmen produced Scripture. It was not simply that the men were inspired, but their *writings* were inspired. Thus Scripture is Divine and Divinely-authoritative. So God wrote the Bible, the Scriptures.

Let’s see one further thing here. God gave the *entire* Bible: *all* Scripture. Now it could be argued that all this verse means is the entire Old Testament because, if you go back to verse 15, Paul reminds Timothy ‘that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus’. It is very likely that this refers to the Old Testament Scriptures that were part of Timothy’s nurturing. Therefore, some say Paul cannot be referring to the New Testament as well when he says ‘all scripture’.

An answer to this was pointed out by B. B. Warfield. It is not the *extent* of Scripture in verse 16 that is being referred to, but the *nature* of Scripture. We have seen that Scripture has God for its Originator and God for the One who instrumentally wrote it down. If the New Testament could be termed ‘Scripture’, then it would qualify to be included in this ‘all scripture... given by inspiration of God’. As a matter of fact, the New Testament *is* called Scripture in this sense. If you turn to 1 Timothy 5.18, you find Paul writing to his young friend concerning the material support of the elders in the churches; ‘for the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward’. Both these are called ‘Scripture’. The first, ‘thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn’, is from Deuteronomy 25.4. But when he goes on to say that ‘the labourer *is* worthy of his reward’, he is quoting our Lord’s words from Luke 10.7 in the New Testament. So, as far as Paul is concerned, the New Testament qualifies as being Scripture as surely as the Old Testament.

Another passage is 2 Peter 3.16. Here Peter refers to the Apostle Paul’s letters: ‘As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood,

which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction’. Peter sees Paul’s writings as ‘Scripture’ along with the Old Testament. It seems quite clear that when the Apostle writes ‘all scripture’, he is including the emerging New Testament in that term; in fact, most of the New Testament Scriptures were written by this time. So God gave the entire Bible.

Putting these things together, we have no reason to rationalise and try to explain how it was that God actually brought the Scriptures into being through human penmen. Neither do we have anything to do with *degrees* of inspiration, to suggest that the writers were inspired but the actual Scriptures they produced were not. ‘All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God’: we believe in the Bible’s own doctrine of inspiration: verbal, every word, plenary, full and complete. It is as Dean Burgon once said,

‘The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it is the direct utterance of the Most High... The Bible is none other than the Word of God. There is not some part of it that is more, some part of it less, inspired, but all are alike the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the throne: absolute, faultless, unerring, supreme.’

Thank God for the origin of this Bible! We trace it up to Him Who is in heaven, the God of Truth who has given the Word of Truth.

## The Benefit of **the Bible**

**L**et us look secondly at the Bible’s benefit: ‘and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness’. Now God has given us His Word to do us good. Here is the truth of the inspiration and authority of Scripture applied to us, and woe betide us if we only hold this as a doctrine. Woe betide us if we only support the Trinitarian Bible Society because it circulates our favourite Bible version and little more. God in giving us His Word intends that what we believe about this Word is applied to our hearts and applied to our lives, and that it transforms us by the renewing of our minds to prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12.2).

Let us see now something of the application. The Bible is ‘profitable for doctrine’. The essence of the Reformation, the essence of Protestantism, is teaching, and teaching from one source, the Scripture of Truth. Real religion is knowing and feeling the things that are in Holy Writ. Rabbi Duncan said that the Bible is the great medium through which we know God on earth. As we grow in grace as Christians we find that the teachings of the Bible, all the various doctrines in it, are almost like piecing together the parts of a jigsaw puzzle. We commence the Christian life and experience knowing a little, and as we grow, more pieces are fitted in and we have fuller, clearer views of truth. Before long the scheme of things becomes clearer and clear-



er, but even now, with many of us, those who are most elderly among us would say that we are still receiving more light and more truth from the Word, still fitting pieces into place, the whole picture becoming still clearer and clearer. As the blessed Spirit teaches us, so these precious truths are illumined and become more and more delightful to us: ‘profitable for doctrine’. If we bring a teachable spirit, a tender heart and a submissive will to this Book, we will be taught of the Lord. It informs our faith, it enriches our knowing God and it promotes our growth in grace.

Thank God if we can say here this afternoon that we belong to a church from whose pulpit goes forth the pure Word of God in its doctrine as we delight to hear it proclaimed to us. Sadly, not all Christians these days are so convinced about the need of belonging to a church and sitting under a godly ministry in order that they might receive the pure Word of God and nothing else. The story is told of a farmer who had a herd of very sleek and plump pigs and his success with rearing these pigs was renowned all over the place. He reckoned it was because he had the right feed in the trough, the best he could get. His practice was that, when feeding time came for the pigs, he would stand by the metal trough with a stick and crack, crack, crack on the side of the trough, and the pigs from all over the field would lift up their snouts and with squeals of delight would lumber over to the trough; in would go the snouts and they would eat greedily of this feed. So the pigs were so sleek and plump. Then some woodpeckers came to live in the dead trees in the field, making their rat-a-tat-tats on the wood. The outcome was that when the pigs heard the rat-a-tat of the woodpeckers, they thought it was the farmer’s crack, crack, crack on the feeding trough and so they made for the nearest dead tree only to find nothing there. They went to the next dead tree and there was nothing there and they spent all their time going from one dead tree to another so that they became lean and scrawny.

That is sadly the way with so many Christians. They go from one dead ministry to another; they don’t get the doctrine that builds them up and that feeds their souls and makes them strong in the Lord. They are impoverished; they are dealt with so unfaithfully and their trust is betrayed. Thank God if we can go to a church where we hear the man say to us, ‘I give you good doctrine’. If you do not go to such a church, make every effort to find one without delay because your soul needs the pure Word of God. It is profitable for doctrine; God has given it and entrusted it to the church and made it available to us. May we not despise this wonderful provision! I know that some people have to travel a long way to get to a place where there is a godly ministry and gracious, sound doctrine. It is worth the travelling. May God help us in these days and raise up many more preachers who will give good doctrine and not deprive the people of God!

Secondly, it is profitable for ‘reproof’. You notice the connection between the truth and the life; as Paul said in chapter 3.10, ‘But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life’. The Scriptures are there to tell us not only what we are to believe and come graciously to know in our hearts, but they are there to tell us where we are wrong in belief or behaviour. We have all had experience of the Bible coming to us in the form of reproof. By grace we have come to

learn that the Bible is our best friend, even when it reproves us. Thank God that the Bible is there to tell us where we are mistaken in what we believe, where we are wrong in our attitudes, where we are sinful in our words and actions. The Bible works effectually, convincing us of our mistakes.

Timothy was to preach the Word like that, as Paul says in chapter 4.2: ‘be instant in season, out of season; reprove’. When was the last time that you heard a sermon in which God unmistakably put His finger on an area of your life? You knew it was reproof and you felt convicted, and when you got home you got alone with the Lord and repented of that thing which you have come to see now as sin. It was reproved and cleansed from your life, and grace and virtue were strengthened and promoted in you instead. Even this negative aspect of the Word is important; it is as a friend when it reproves. We should by grace esteem it so and respond accordingly. Thank God that we are exercised, we are convicted, things are shown up, the very secrets of our hearts are exposed by the Word. We are not allowed to be wholly comfortable under a sound and pastoral ministry, otherwise we would be blissfully unaware of the things that are wrong. The Lord in His kindness does not leave us like that, but instead He speaks to us in reproof.

God can use His Word for the reproof of unbelievers as well. We have some very good friends down in the county of Hampshire. These dear friends display TBS Scripture Posters on the front and on the gable end of their Chapel. Some years ago there was a little farm produce shop that was operating opposite the Chapel. For many years it had not opened on the Lord’s Day. But the new owners decided to open it on the Lord’s Day. One of the Scripture Posters on the front of this Chapel facing this little shop read, ‘Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy’. A little while afterwards, the shop shut on the Lord’s Day. About that time, the pastor was giving a lift to the owner of this shop. They happened to be talking about general things and the pastor asked why the shop no longer opened on the Lord’s Day. The owner admitted that it was because of that poster on the front of the chapel.

We should thank God for such evidences of how that He still reproves unbelievers today through His powerful Word. May God bless the TBS posters at railway stations and wherever the Word of God is displayed! The Bible is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; it can restrain evil. It can also be, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, the means to reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. A single Scripture can be the Spirit’s Word to the unconverted; it has been the means of quickening that dead soul into life. It has benefit for reproof of Christians and non-Christians alike because it is the Word of Truth; it comes and deals with us in our need.

Thirdly, the Bible is for ‘correction’, to reform us, to restore us to uprightness, to put us right: a more positive side. The Word breaking over us will smooth our rough edges, will straighten out our perversity and will mould us into the likeness of Jesus. It will produce a beautiful array of gracious fruits that will make the world sit up as the doctrine is adorned in our lives. We will never go wrong when we are being corrected by the Word.



Fourthly, it is profitable for ‘instruction in righteousness’. The word ‘instruction’ here is the same word which is found in Hebrews 12.5 regarding the chastening of the Lord. This instruction in righteousness is the same as the chastening of the Lord, or child-rearing and training. The Bible is what our heavenly Father uses to teach us, to reprove us and to correct us as His children. In Psalm 94.12 we read, ‘blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD’. How does He chasten us? ‘and teachest him out of thy law’. He brings us up to maturity by giving us the instruction we need, by nurturing us, by rearing us and helping us to grow. It is a very lovely thing when we hear our Father’s Word to help us to become His children in a more honouring way.

Again, turning to Hebrews 12.6, we find that there is not only the chastening – ‘whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth’ – but he ‘scourgeth every son whom he receiveth’. That second term, ‘scourgeth’, is a lot stronger than the chastening and means the blows of an instrument, a whip. What we are told is that the chastening of the Father by the Word comes to His children; this chastening is meant to help us to grow up and come to maturity and keep us in right ways. However, if that gentler application of chastening through the Word is resisted, then there comes the scourging which is far more severe and can be in the form of affliction, of adversity, of trouble upon trouble – things that will cause us pain and sorrow and suffering. It is quite a challenging thought that if the Word will not make us what the Lord calls us to be as His children, the actual rod of affliction will be used; by one or the other, the Lord will have His way in our lives. He loves us too much to allow us to be wayward, backsliding, lukewarm. If he speaks to us in His Word and we shut our ears, He may come down upon us with His rod to waken us and bring us back.

This is His great faithfulness; this is God loving us enough to take all these measures to do us good. This Word is profitable for instruction in righteousness, to prevent us knowing far harder dealings from the Lord. It is a blessed thing. Oh, let us heed the gentle discipline of His Word! May God drop it into our minds, melt our hearts through it, and cause our wills to be in submission so that we are changed and sanctified by this means! Oh, the use of the Bible – to teach us doctrine, to tell us when we are wrong in reproof, to put us right in correction and to nurture and to rear us up as His children, instructing us in righteousness!

## The Consequence of Having **the Bible**

Let us see, lastly, the consequence of having the Bible. Verse 17 reads, ‘that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’. This does not mean sinless perfection, of course, but it means that the Word has a perfecting effect upon us and fully equips us for everything that the Lord requires. This Word was all that Timothy would ever need, even when his spiritual father and leader Paul had departed from the scene. All Scripture would remain and eventually would supersede all the Apostles. So it is for us:

all Scripture remains. The Word of God brings us to the God of the Word and it makes us Godly ourselves. Titus 1.1 calls this Word ‘the truth which is after godliness’.

We are having less and less of the Bible these days, and that is why we prize the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society that keeps to the Authorised Version, the traditional texts and the excellence of translation. What is happening today with this plethora of new English translations is that we are having less and less of the actual Bible. The text underlying modern New Testament translations gives us less of the New Testament by three per cent. The dynamic equivalence approach to translation means that the thoughts behind the words rather than the actual original words are considered, supposedly to make the meaning clearer; but thus we are one step away from a word-for-word translation from the original and man’s words are superimposed.

Less and less of the Bible seems to be being quoted because in the minds of the preacher or the teacher is the thought that ‘if I quote the Bible, I can’t be sure that I shall be quoting the very version that the hearer has got on her or his lap and is following’. So, perhaps for convenience sake, the Bible itself is not actually quoted and the listener is getting less and less of Bible quotation. It seems that preachers who use the NIV or other modern translations preach sermons which are not so filled with quotations of Scriptures. You do not get ‘Thus saith the Lord’.

That is a terrible loss; the Bible is being downplayed. We are losing quotations from Scripture. But when we keep to the Authorised Version, both preachers and hearers, there is that authentic ring which tells us it is the Bible that is being quoted. Thank God for the Authorised Version and for its circulation by the TBS because a reduced Bible will not produce men and women of God. Is it any wonder that the fall in Christian standards and the disappearance of real vital godliness from among us is commensurate with this upsurge and proliferation of these modern Bible translations? These things are taking away men and women of God from our midst. We need to have the Authorised Version maintained and restored and adhered to and preached and memorised and known and loved so that it goes into the warp and woof of our being and is lived out to the glory of God: our being perfected. This is much more than just a Bible versions issue; it has to do with godliness. It has much to do with a Bible that is verbally inspired and plenary in its inspiration, based upon the proper underlying texts and produced through true, exact equivalence translation.

The consequence then – ‘the man of God’ – who is made useful, perfect, ‘thoroughly furnished unto all good works’. Now that word ‘perfect’ and the phrase ‘thoroughly furnished’ come from the same root word which means limb or joint, and put together they mean fitted, complete, exactly right for the purpose. One of our elderly ladies in our congregation at Holywell thought she was going in for a replacement hip operation. She had fractured her femur high up, near the joint, while on holiday in Germany. She had to go to hospital there and the German surgeon put titanium pins in, making it right again. Eventually she came

home, but when she saw the specialist in North Wales he said it would not last, that the pins would have to be taken out and the hip replaced. For a year she waited for this replacement hip operation. The very morning of the operation, after she was gowned and ready for surgery, the surgeon came and sat on the side of her bed. He said, 'I am so very sorry, but these recent x-rays we have taken reveal that your fracture is knitted together and healed up completely, and you don't need a replacement hip operation'. This dear lady now is walking on that leg just like with the other one. The wonderful thing is that it is fitted, complete, exactly right for the purpose: the joint has become knitted together and healed and strong. The Word of God helps us to become like that, enabled to walk in God's ways and to be strong for whatever God calls us to do.

Scripture equips us to serve God and serve others. It is blessed to us concerning 'good works'; the Bible *identifies* these good works for us: 'kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*' (Colossians 3.12,13). It teaches us to use our homes for hospitality, our cars for giving lifts, some of our money for giving love gifts, our time for God's church, our heart and hands for God's saints and the dear friends who work for the Trinitarian Bible Society, that special calling, to help the work of the circulation of these precious Scriptures.

The Bible also *motivates* us to do these good works, teaching us that God's glory is the overriding thing in all that we do. It does not matter about us, it is the glory of God that is the only thing that really matters. It *strengthens* us for these good works by teaching us to rely upon grace. Without Him we can do nothing, but 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Philippians 4.13). It *comforts* us in these good works through the promises in the Bible in that 'God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister' (Hebrews 6.10). God will reward you, God will bless you, and on that day He will count everything that you have done unto others as done unto Christ. This will be your reward: 'Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant' (Matthew 25.21). When we go on our way wearily and are tempted perhaps to cease some of these works or do them in a mechanical way, in a perfunctory way, we are quickened by the thought that we are trusting in the promises and the good Word of God to keep us going because there is a blessed end to these things. God will give the reward and God will bless what we do. The Word *exemplifies* these good works as we think of our Saviour of whom we read in this Bible. He went about doing good and thus we pray, 'Lord, help me to do my good works like the Lord Jesus did all His good works. Then my life and my work will not be in vain.'

The Bible is a guide for the believer that will never lead him astray, one that is sufficient even for 2003. It is hard to be a Christian in our day. It is hard to be a Bible believing Christian in our day and it is hard to be an AV Bible believing Christian in our day. So much of the tide and current is against us, not only in the world but in the churches as well. But the Lord knew exactly how things would be in our generation. When the Holy Spirit originated the Bible

through His chosen penmen, He knew what conditions would be like today and He built into this Bible all that we need for our day. God has foreseen all that we would need. Here there is teaching, there are principles, there are promises; there are helps everywhere in this Bible to equip us sufficiently even for our day and for as long as this world lasts until our blessed Lord Jesus will come again.

This Bible will never fail us. We will never be left in the position whereby we say, 'Oh, if only the Lord had been pleased to include something that could apply to this particular pressing modern problem'. It is all here, it is a sufficient Bible 'that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works'. If this Bible needed to be supplemented in some way then we could not be men and women of God; it would not be perfect, we could not be perfected, we could not be 'throughly furnished unto all good works'. Everything we need is in the Bible. When we sit under an adequate Bible ministry we feel satisfied that it speaks to us in our situation and there is something in it for us all to help us through. As surely as these good works were 'before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2.10), so this Bible is ordained to help us to walk in these good works.

Let us contend for Scriptures' Divine *origin* and for their *benefit* and for this blessed *consequence*. May the Lord own His Word among us today and to His Name be the praise and the glory! Amen.

## 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 memorizing by children and young people of the Holy Scriptures from the Authorised (King James) 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, leatherette text Bible is awarded to children aged under ten who have memorized the portions for their age group; a gilt-edged leatherette reference Bible is awarded to young people aged ten to fifteen who have memorized 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 memorizing 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



“...in the end the truth will conquer”<sup>1</sup>

# John Wycliffe



## The English Church and the English Bible

by C. P. Hallihan

### Introduction

In 1324 Marco Polo, European visitor to Beijing and guest of Kublai Khan, died at home in Venice. The same year is one of the conventional estimates for the birth of John Wycliffe, though as much as four years either way can also be found. There is also a score of spellings of his name, and of suggestions for the location of his birthplace not a few! Wycliffe was wholly a child of the of the 14th century, probably born in Yorkshire, possibly on Teesside, and in all likelihood went to Oxford aged about 16. There is an obscurity about these beginnings, as with William Tyndale 170 years later, which brings Melchisedek to mind.

It is difficult to enter into the mind, manners, mores and motivation of 14th

century Western civilization, but the effort is well worth it. Here, in the sovereign providence of God, is the taproot of Protestantism formed, even though the shoot might not begin to show for another 200 years. The wondrous loop from England to Bohemia to Germany and again to England can be traced over those 200 years, from Lollardy<sup>2</sup> at Oxford to Lutheranism at Cambridge.

At the heart of this travel and travail lies the Bible in the common tongue: English, Czech, German, and English again. Between the Lollard Bible of the late 14th century and Tyndale’s work of the early 16th, the change from hand-written copies to printed copies has occurred, and the renewal of competence in the Biblical languages of inscription, Hebrew and Greek, has loosed the text of the Bible from the grave-clothes of the Latin Vulgate.<sup>3</sup> It is a delicious historical cameo that both Anne of Bohemia (wife of Richard II, d.1394) and Anne Boleyn (wife of Henry VIII, d.1536, same year as Tyndale!) are known to have possessed personal copies of the Wycliffe New Testament.

### Papal Europe

Fourteenth century England can only be seen in the setting of Papal Europe. The dominant and, to contemporaries, the only cohesive power in Europe was the Papacy. This was the bulwark against the encroaching Moors, raiser of Crusades;<sup>4</sup> this was the defence against the strange soul-threatening heresies of the Eastern church; this was a peculiar kind of ‘United Nations’ forum, where warring European powers could meet and negotiate, under the wily and acquisitive watchfulness of Vatican politics. Anything but disinterested! If salvation was only to be had in open and unquestioning adherence to the institutional Roman church,

### A Brief Wycliffe Timeline

- 1284 1st Prince of Wales, later Edward II
- 1302 *Unam Sanctam*: Boniface VIII proclaims universal jurisdiction of the Papacy  
**Edward II 1307-27**
- 1314 Bannockburn; Robert Bruce
- 1320/8 **JOHN WYCLIFFE BORN**  
**Edward III 1327-77**
- 1337 Beginning of the Hundred Years’ War
- 1340s **JOHN WYCLIFFE to OXFORD**
- 1340-1399 John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster
- 1345-1400 Geoffrey Chaucer
- 1346 Battle of Crécy
- 1347-1351 The Black Death  
*¼ of population of Europe died*
- 1350 Statute of Provisors
- 1353 Statute of Praemunire
- 1356 **JW (?)**: *Last Age of the Church*
- 1356 Battle of Poitiers
- 1361 **JW**: Master of Balliol College
- 1365 **JW**: Warden of Canterbury Hall
- 1367 William Langland: *Piers Plowman*
- 1372 **JW**: DD
- 1373-1415 John Huss
- 1374-6 **JW**: with Commission to Bruges
- 1373-99 Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*  
**Richard II 1377 (age 11) -99**
- 1377 **JW**: before Courtenay at St.Paul’s
- 1378 **JW**: before Sudbury at Lambeth  
**JW**: Oxford Lectures on Clerical Abuse  
**JW**: in LUTTERWORTH  
Pope Gregory XI died. Papal Schism  
**JW**: *On the Schism of the Popes*;  
*On the Truth of Sacred Scripture*
- 1379 **JW**: very ill, but revives
- 1381 The Peasants’ Revolt: Wat Tyler’s rebellion
- 1381 **JW**: *Against Transubstantiation*
- 1382 **WYCLIFFE BIBLE** completed
- 1382 **JW**: *Objections to Friars*
- 1384 **JOHN WYCLIFFE** died 31 December
- 1390 Purvey imprisoned
- 1394 Anne of Bohemia d. (wife of Richard II)  
**Henry IV 1399-1413**
- 1401 Purvey recanted, released, re-arrested in 1421



“...in the end the truth will conquer”

then the power of that institution over the politics, finances and morals of ‘Christian’ Europe was absolute.

The dissolute, cruel and ignorant nature of the medieval papacy and priesthood, their greed for wealth, especially the wealth of real estate, whether an entire nation or a tiny manor, are things of record. Pope Gregory IX established the Papal inquisition in 1232, and in 1302 Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the universal jurisdiction of the Papacy. In medieval Europe the significance and value of the individual was zero; you were a fodder producer, cannon fodder or canon-law fodder, bound to the church as much as to the land.

It was indeed ‘a world lit only by fire’,<sup>5</sup> scarcely changed technologically since the fall of Imperial Rome. Regression rather than progression was the situation, and more so in the north than in the south. No printing; no light beyond that of a flame; no power beyond that of muscle, wind or water. The mechanical clock was first constructed in 1280, spectacles assembled in 1290, but very few would know of these things, let alone see, use or own them. Learning, such as there was, was the prerogative of the church. True, Paris University was begun in 1155, Oxford in 1167, and Cambridge, by a body of Oxford dissidents, in 1329, but most scholars were, or became, churchmen of some level or other. Such total absorption of all of life within what can only be called an ideological monster is almost beyond our comprehension.

### Plantagenet England

England had come to terms with the Conquest of 1066. Distinctions between Norman and Saxon, victors and vanquished, were being eroded, so that

the ‘language curtain’ was coming down. The distinctive use of French as the polite language continued for a very long time, but the writings of William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer established English, or that Saxon dialect called ‘Middle English’, as a respectable, workable and robust medium of communication.

The Norman royal line had become the House of Anjou, supposedly nicknamed Plantagenets because of the sprig of broom (*planta genista*) affected as ornament by their great men. Struggles for territory in France rumbled on. Castles in Wales, a Spider in Scotland, Crusades in Outremer, Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, these were the exciting bits of history in schoolboy recollection, not always strictly accurate<sup>6</sup> in fact or chronology!

The insistent dirge permeating all of this was the need to resist the territorial and financial graspings of the Bishop of Rome. In this, England suffered much, but the grotesque humiliation of the nation in King John’s time was to become a mine under the edifice of the papacy. In 1213 King John resigned the power, claims and dominion of the English Crown to the Pope. In 1215 the English barons gathered at Runnymede and obliged John to sign the Magna Carta. This was a first small step towards redefining royal power, which in simplest terms said, ‘The nation, land and people, isn’t yours to give, nor the pope’s to take’. However, the annual payment of 1,000 marks to the papal coffers as a result of John’s pusillanimity continued. Resisting the political and territorial claims of the papacy led through the next three centuries to resisting the ecclesiastical and spiritual claims – led in effect to the English Reformation. Not without cost; and not without reason was it said that the chief enemy of all countries in medieval Europe was always the current Pope.

John Wycliffe lived almost entirely under the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. The unrelenting burden of these monarchs was to fend off papal attempts to maintain and reassert dominion in England. Money was being siphoned away in large amounts through strange ‘cover’ taxes imposed by and collected by the Roman church, a scam further helped by the appointment of non-resident foreign clergy to church posts in England under the labyrinthine rules of papal provisors. These were the issues addressed in England by the Statutes of Provisors (clergy posts) 1350 and Praemunire (money matters) 1353. The trouble was, at any time the papacy could excommunicate you: non-payment of taxes is a religious matter, endangering the soul! At any time the whole nation could be put under an Interdict, an enforced ‘withdrawal of co-operation’ on the part of the clergy: no proper marriages, baptisms, burials or confessions. How can we possibly enter into the paralysing fear, erosion of courage and suppression of dissent that such things induced in the superstitious minds and hearts of so many in that time? That was a time of monolithic European ecclesiastical power which pretended to have dominion over you, your family, your master, your monarch, your nation, for life, for death and for hell. What was needed was someone to say not just that the church is wrong about

### Oxford Today



this and that particular, but simply, starkly, ‘This church is wrong!’ Wrong because it is comprehensively, demonstrably un-Biblical – is in fact no church. There was need for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, to give again by the mirror of His Word the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

### John Wycliffe – Scholar

In the 1340s Wycliffe was at Oxford University, just towards the close of the career of Thomas Bradwardine (1290-1349). Bradwardine, then Chancellor of St. Paul’s, London, ‘confessor’ (personal chaplain) to Edward III, and briefly Archbishop of Canterbury in 1349, had been an outstanding alumnus of Oxford. More renowned as a mathematician than as a theologian, Bradwardine nonetheless wrote against the Pelagian teachings in the style of Athanasius and Augustine, insisting that God’s Grace is the ultimate necessity and cause in Salvation. This certainly found a ready place in the thinking of the young Wycliffe, and appeared in his own later tracts and theses as ‘The Dominion of Grace’.<sup>8</sup> Bradwardine’s solemn insistence that dependence upon outward forms should not be confused with true religion of the heart also grew from seed to fruit in Wycliffe.

The writings of Occam occupied Wycliffe much; his interest in natural science and mathematics was considerable. He won outstanding recognition in philosophy, but applied himself most diligently to the study of theology and of ecclesiastical law. In his approach to this John Wycliffe was a real ‘non-conformist’. At that time – as in some more recent times – it was not really considered necessary to master the Scriptures as a preparation for a church career! Indeed,

“...in the end the truth will conquer”

it was deemed such an elementary book to the proud Latinists of the day that it was almost beneath their dignity to handle it in exposition or teaching. Wycliffe though, became enamoured of the Scriptures, and in his growing practice of reading the Bible in public, and growing confidence in referring to the Scriptures as a sole authority, he earned the name ‘Gospel Doctor’.

By 1361 John Wycliffe was Master of Balliol College, and when that post had to be relinquished because of parish obligations elsewhere, he was appointed as Warden of Canterbury Hall in 1365. Around this same time his writings really begin to have the feel of ‘Reformation’ about them – opposing indulgences,<sup>9</sup> both in principle and especially in the peddling of them, and opposing masses for the dead, again available more easily to the rich than to the poor. Alongside this, the determination that the truth of the Scripture should be widely and soundly preached as well as read becomes apparent in Wycliffe’s practice. A little later Wycliffe distributed tracts denouncing the secularization of the church. All of this, inevitably, provoked the Pope.

### *John Wycliffe – Clerk, Commissioner and Rector of Lutterworth*

Towards the middle of the 14th century, at the prime of Edward III’s reign, England was in a relatively strong, secure and confident position. The naval victory at Sluis in 1340 had secured the Channel as English, and victories at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) had made her a power to be reckoned with on the Continent. From the fifth year of Edward III the annual papal levy incurred by King John had not been paid.

Then, 33 years on, Pope Urban V demanded, with menaces, the resumption of this transaction. Edward, and Edward’s England, were insulted. Parliament assembled in May 1366, and resolutely denounced and rejected the demand. In the ensuing paperwork, John Wycliffe appears as ‘the King’s Peculiar Clerk’, refuting the claims of the papacy to temporal jurisdiction, and summarising the parliamentary debates accepting Edward of England and rejecting Urban of Rome.

Soon after this, in 1372, Wycliffe became DD. In those days this was a true academic attainment and quite rare, which strengthened his influence and reputation. Both the learned and the common people heard him gladly as he settled more and more confidently on the Bible and its authority, denouncing the ecclesiastical world for effectively banishing the Scriptures and for making the church of Christ a world power.

The problem of the papal use of non-resident foreigners to pre-empt English clergy livings, benefices and appointments, was addressed by a Royal Commission in 1374. A hearing with the Roman authorities was to be held in Bruges, and second on the list of the English Commissioners was John Wycliffe. As a man of outstanding learning and obvious disenchantment towards the papacy, his political stock was high. Perhaps not many had yet seen the ecclesiastical and spiritual aspects and implications of Wycliffe’s course. From August 1374 to July 1376 Commissioner John Wycliffe was in Bruges, where he concluded that the faults and failings of the papacy, temporal and spiritual, were more abysmal than he had ever learned in England. He also made there a firm friendship with John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster, 3rd son of the King), and on his return to England was looked on with sufficient favour as to be given the living of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire.

### *Opposition Grows*

Hostility towards Wycliffe was inevitable, eagerly fomented by the ranking churchmen in England and encouraged in every way by the papal authorities in Europe. In February 1377 he was cited by the Bishop of London to appear at St. Paul’s to answer charges against his teachings. Wycliffe duly appeared before Bishop Courtenay, accompanied in close friendship and support by John of Gaunt and Lord Percy, the Earl Marshall of England. These two were not inclined to allow Wycliffe to be bullied by a court which had the ground of its authority not in England, but in Rome. Only Wycliffe remained calm in the uproar and violence that developed and lasted over into the next day. Although he was dismissed with warnings, no formal procedures were accomplished, and Wycliffe went about his business. His enemies made a selection of points from his lectures and letters plainly stating his opposition both to the Pope’s temporal powers and to the abuse of Spiritual

power. In May 1377 five separate Bulls<sup>10</sup> were dispatched to England, demanding that Bishops, University and King should apprehend John Wycliffe and detain him at the Pope’s pleasure.

For a little while nothing happened, because King Edward III died in June. His first son, Edward, the ‘Black Prince’, had died in 1376. The crown passed to the eleven-year-old Richard II, son of the Black Prince, grandson of Edward III. Richard’s mother was sympathetic to Wycliffe, along with John of Gaunt,<sup>11</sup> affording a continuance of protection. When eventually Archbishop Sudbury summoned Wycliffe again to appear, this time at Lambeth in April 1378, the dowager Queen forbade the bishops to pass censure on him. Again the defendant alone remained calm, and 150 years in anticipation of Luther’s justly famed confession (‘Here I stand – I can do no other’), John Wycliffe declared that he only followed the Scriptures, and if shown to be wrong by the Scriptures he would retract his teachings.



*Lutterworth Church, Leicestershire*



All of this directed attention towards Wycliffe's teaching in its wider implications – Scripture alone the fountain of truth and foundation of authority, and anything not framed by such a measure was not to be imposed nor obeyed, whether in things temporal or in things spiritual.<sup>12</sup> Wycliffe's career in the political limelight was over. John of Gaunt's influence was temporarily diminished, and he (Gaunt) was also becoming a little way of the more religious aspects of Wycliffe's teaching. Preaching, teaching, and translation work would occupy Wycliffe, living at Lutterworth, for the last seven years of his life.

 *'Ex Cathedra',  
or, How many Popes can  
sit on one Chair?*

In 1378 an event came to pass which stunned and horrified the Western World. When Gregory XI died, Clement VII was elected Pope. Rome's inhabitants demanded an Italian as the Bishop of Rome, and thus Pope, and the unthinkable was accomplished. French Clement was obliged to set up his 'court' as Pope in Avignon, whilst Italian Urban VI ruled as Pope in Rome. The infamous 'Papal Schism' had occurred. This beginning of the Great Schism came when Wycliffe was coming to maturity in his realisation of the wrongs of the Papacy, and when he had more time away from the political arena.

In 1378 Wycliffe issued a tract *On the schism of the Popes*; in 1381 he issued *Twelve theses against transubstantiation* and in 1382 *Objections to Friars*. In addressing these issues – the papacy, the mass and the monks – in their corruptions and in their lack of Biblical warrant or foundation, Wycliffe laid the axe to roots of

the tree. It was an axe which many subsequently would wield mightily, even at the hazard of their lives, and turn the world upside down once again, in the footsteps of the Apostles. To John Wycliffe, scholar, these doctrines, parading in the garb of Christian Truth, were relative novelties. Transubstantiation as the grossly externalised means of Communion with Christ, was proclaimed by Pope Innocent III in 1215, as was the procedure of confession of sins to a priest. The universal supremacy of the papacy was promulgated by Pope Boniface VIII in 1302.<sup>13</sup> As for the monks – the vileness and violence of so much involved with them was such that some respectable families declined to have their children educated formally, because it would expose them to the predatory appetites of their monk-teachers.

Having crossed this Rubicon, Wycliffe never let up in his march on Rome, and most of all opposed that grotesque view, according to which any priest was in a position to 'create' the body of Christ. He resolutely denounced, as contrary to Scripture, the teaching that after the consecration the bread and the wine are changed into Christ's body and blood.

Wycliffe's perception of the church was implicitly revolutionary and anticipatory of the sixteenth century Reformation. Driven by the calamitous failure of the medieval church in the political arena, he began to see the church as a spiritual institution and not a political one. He left as a magnificent heritage the principle that the visible church, in all its parts, powers and persons, is ever subject to evaluation in the light of Scripture only. Even if there should be a hundred popes, let alone two, they must come to the court of Scripture to be adjudged as to their right and worth.

## *The Truth of Scripture and The Lollard Bible*

The mainspring of Wycliffe's mature work was that the Scriptures are the foundation of all doctrine. This was the crux of the matter, the cardinal hinge. His 1378 work *De veritate Sacrae Scripturae (On the Truth of Sacred Scripture)* describes the Bible as being directly from God Himself, timeless, unchanging, free from error and contradictions, containing only truth, accepting no addition, suffering no subtraction. All must be taken equally, absolutely, without qualification.<sup>14</sup> Scripture is the law of Christ, the Truth, and must be placed above all human writings. Men ought to learn the law of Christ, because the faith rests in it alone. Without knowledge of the Bible there can be no peace, no real and abiding good; it contains all that is necessary for the salvation of men. It alone is infallible, and therefore is the one authority for the faith. As a true Christian will be one who finds his faith in the light of Scripture, so a true Shepherd of Christians will be one who feeds his flock on the Word of God. A hundred years before Luther or Tyndale was born, Wycliffe was comprehensively persuaded of the importance of Scripture.

For Wycliffe, as later for Luther and Tyndale, the next step was inevitable. The Bible must be available for the people in their mother tongue. Roman apologists are quick to point out that there were portions of Scripture in many of the European languages; but they were not generally accessible. Whilst the Council of Nicea in 325 had been of the opinion that no Christian should be without the Scriptures, the Council of Toulouse in 1229 was of a different mind. Trying to deal

### *Some English Scriptures Before Wycliffe*

- 7th c. Caedmon's Metrical Paraphrases
- 8th c. Aldhelm's Psalter  
Bede's Gospel of John
- 9th c. Alfred – Ten Commandments,  
Lord's Prayer and Psalter
- 10th c. Aldred's Gospels;  
Faerman's Matthew  
(the Rushworth Gloss)
- 11th c. Aelfric's paraphrases
- 12th c. The Ormulun: a Saxon outline of  
the Gospels and Acts
- 13th c. Rolle's 'Sowlehele': a metrical  
synopsis of Bible events.

with the 'problem' of the Albigenses, canon 14 of their deliberations reads:-

*We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; unless anyone from motive of devotion should wish to have the Psalter or the Breviary for divine offices or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books.*<sup>15</sup>

Such Scripture portions as did exist in the vernacular tongues were rather a 'private' resource for the 'religious' or 'spiritual' than the 'Word of God among all nations'. Wycliffe did not simply want circulation to the learned or spiritually experienced; he was of the same mind as Tyndale 150 years later, that the Scriptures should widely be published abroad, accessible, that men might know not only the Truth of the Gospel, but also the errors of the supposed guides to God. He set himself to the task.



“...in the end the truth will conquer”

*Luke 6:20-26 in an early printed Wycliffe New Testament*

20. And whanne his ygen weren cast up in to his discipulis : he seide, Blessid be ye pore men, for the Kyngdom of God is youre.

21. Blessid be ye that now hungren : for ye schun be fulfillid, Blessid be ye that now wepen : for ye schidin leige.

22. Blessid ye sculen be whanne men schuln hate you, departe you aweie, and putte schenschip to you; cast out youre name, as yuel for mannes sone.

23. Joye ye in that dai, and be ye glad for lo youre mede is myche in heuene, for aftir these thingis: the fadirs of hem diden to profetis.

24. Acetheles wo to you riche men : than ban youre comfort.

25. Wo to you that ben fulfillid ; for ye sculn hungre, wo to you that now leigen; for ye schuln moorne and wepe.

26. Wo to you whanne alle men schulen blesse you, aftir these thingis the fadris of hem diden to profetis.

Whilst scholars still struggle to define the exact part which he had in the translation, there is no doubt that it was the result of his initiative and leadership.<sup>16</sup> The first Wycliffe Bible, c.1382, comprises a translation of the New Testament deemed to be by Wycliffe himself, together with one of the Old Testament done by a friend, Nicholas of Hereford, who was to be the Lollard leader after Wycliffe's death (but who later recanted and ended his days as a Carthusian monk). This Old Testament is sometimes held up to ridicule because of an unfortunate adherence to the word order of the Latin Bible from which it was translated. It makes clumsy and sometimes contradictory reading in English.

Wycliffe's New Testament is more boldly and readably English, though still translated from Latin.

This work was revised in 1388 by a younger contemporary, John Purvey, after Wycliffe's own style. It is this smoother, truer version which is the Lollard Bible, widely diffused through the 15th century. Every copy was hand-written, and although the number of copies made was relatively large and continued over the next 150 years, it was never a 'mass-produced' book. Once again we are constrained to marvel at the unfolding, working together of the purposes of Almighty God, in that English as a language of literacy was coming into its own in the 14th century, just as the Lollard Bible began to circulate.

Books had always been a luxury in the Middle Ages, but the production of cheaper books on the new material, paper, meant that they became an 'affordable' luxury for poorer people, people with a hunger for 'the holy scriptures, which are able to make...wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3.15). Bear in mind, though, that the opposition was fierce and merciless. Possession of such a Bible, let alone reading it or revealing a sympathy with its teaching, was potentially a matter of death, and many died. Nevertheless, in England now the sure Word was heard in a familiar tongue, and men began to give heed as to a light that shineth in a dark place.

### Lollard Preachers

It was not to be expected that someone of John Wycliffe's conviction would neglect the due companion to the distribution of Scripture, which is the public reading and preaching of the same. In Lutterworth he gave himself to the care of souls, toiling as preacher and teacher to the

people. He wished to be done with the existing church hierarchy, for it had no warrant in Scripture, and to put in its place the sending of 'poor priests' who lived in poverty and preached the Gospel to the people.

These itinerant preachers published abroad among the people the teachings of Wycliffe, even 'Christe's Lore'. Like Jesus' disciples before them they went two by two. They went barefoot, wearing long red robes, and carrying a staff in symbolic reference to their shepherd calling. They passed from place to place opening the Scriptures, preaching Christ's Law, and the Scripture as the all sufficient source of it: and they suffered and they were killed. Well might we be tempted to say 'of whom the world was not worthy'.

Even up to 1520 followers of Wycliffe were being martyred as 'Lollards'. Soon after that the charge changed to 'Lutheran' or 'Protestant'. These dear souls carried the torch of the English Bible from the 14th to the 16th century, and when the printing presses were about to serve the Protestant Reformation, handed that torch on to Tyndale, Coverdale, the Geneva scholars, and so to the Translators of the Authorised Version. All of these later workers were aware of the Wycliffe Bible; they were reaping where he had sown.

The failure of Hereford and Purvey to provide leadership into the 15th century meant that Lollardy was always a 'grass roots' movement. It was diffuse, diverse, never an organisation or institution, reflecting, unconsciously perhaps, Wycliffe's perception of the spiritual rather than political nature of the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus there was a savour of salt through England, a taste for a readable Bible to be a guide to Christ and rule of conscience, and some who had ears to

hear. Alongside that there was a suspicion of all that smacked of priestcraft. Wycliffe, his Bible, his 'poor priests' and the Lollards, spread tinder through the land. (The trail also crossed to the Continent through Huss.) It was well dried by the heat of persecution. Then, after a brief 'night watch' of 100 years, the Lord was pleased to kindle that which He had so long prepared, and the Reformation was begun.

### John Wycliffe – Death, and Disinterment

During the last week of December 1384 Wycliffe was stricken with a paralysis whilst conducting the service of the Lord's Supper in Lutterworth Church. Carried by his friends to his own bed he died peacefully there on December 31st. Baulked of their desire to destroy Wycliffe in person, the church powers ensured that the opposition to the English Bible and Wycliffe's teachings did not diminish. An Oxford Convocation of 1408, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, declared thus,

*We therefore decree and ordain, that from henceforward no unauthorised person shall translate any part of the holy Scripture into English or any other language, under the form of book or treatise, neither shall any such book, treatise, or version, made either in Wickliffe's time or since, be read, whether in whole or part, publicly or privately, under the penalty of the greater excommunication.*<sup>17</sup>

A Papal Council of 1415, the one which deceitfully lured John Huss to a martyr's death, declared Wycliffe a heretic and demanded that his remains be exhumed and destroyed. In 1428 this was done, and

“...in the end the truth will conquer”

Wycliffe's bones were burned, the ashes cast into the River Swift which joins the Avon at Rugby, then on into the Severn at Tewkesbury and so to the open sea. Symbolically, unintentionally, the church authorities had enacted exactly what God had done with the ministry of Wycliffe and the English Bible, giving rise to a popular jingle, found in many forms and variations of wording – ‘Avon into Severn flows, and Severn to the sea, and wheresoe'er the ocean rolls, there Wycliffe's ashes be’.

There can scarcely be a better summary of all this than the inscription on Wycliffe's Memorial in Lutterworth:



River Swift, Lutterworth

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

## JOHN WICLIF

EARLIEST CHAMPION OF ECCLESIASTICAL REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

HE WAS BORN IN YORKSHIRE IN THE YEAR 1324.

IN THE YEAR 1375 HE WAS PRESENTED TO THE RECTORY OF LUTTERWORTH: WHERE HE DIED ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER 1384.

AT OXFORD HE ACQUIRED NOT ONLY THE RENOWN OF A CONSUMMATE SCHOOLMAN, BUT THE FAR MORE GLORIOUS TITLE OF THE EVANGELIC DOCTOR.

HIS WHOLE LIFE WAS ONE PERPETUAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CORRUPTIONS AND ENCROACHMENTS OF THE PAPAL COURT, AND THE IMPOSTURES OF ITS DEVOTED AUXILIARIES, THE MENDICANT FRATERNITIES.

HIS LABOURS IN THE CAUSE OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH WERE CROWNED BY ONE IMMORTAL ACHIEVEMENT, THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

THIS MIGHTY WORK DREW ON HIM, INDEED, THE BITTER HATRED OF ALL WHO WERE MAKING MERCHANDIZE OF THE POPULAR CREDULITY AND IGNORANCE: BUT HE FOUND AN ABUNDANT REWARD IN THE BLESSINGS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN OF EVERY RANK AND AGE, TO WHOM HE UNFOLDED THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

HIS MORTAL REMAINS WERE INTERRED NEAR THIS SPOT; BUT THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO REST IN PEACE. AFTER THE LAPSE OF MANY YEARS, HIS BONES WERE DRAGGED FROM THE GRAVE, AND CONSIGNED TO THE FLAMES: AND HIS ASHES WERE CAST INTO THE WATERS OF THE ADJOINING STREAM.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 'I believe that in the end the truth will conquer' – from a letter of Wycliffe to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (Bartlett, Familiar Quotations, p. 83a).

<sup>2</sup> The origin of the term 'Lollard' for the Wycliffites is obscure, and many opinions offered! Perhaps it was a pejorative label from a Dutch word 'lollaerd,' – a babler of nonsense. First recorded use in English is 1382. As so often happens with name calling, Wycliffe's disciples took to the term.

<sup>3</sup> We should never forget that in its prime the Latin Vulgate **was** a vernacular, and in its beginnings, in Jerome's 4th century work, an accurately revised version using Greek and Hebrew sources. It is the accretion of errors and changes over the centuries of hand copying, wilful or not, together with the shift from Latin as an imperial vernacular to an ecclesiastical argot, that makes the medieval Vulgate a 'closed book'.

<sup>4</sup> Even if they did sometimes sack Christian Constantinople instead of Saracen Jerusalem!

<sup>5</sup> William Manchester, A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance Portrait of an Age (Boston, MA, USA: Little Brown & Co. [Pap], 1993).

<sup>6</sup> It really is disappointing to see that whoever Robin Hood was, he probably didn't live in the times of Richard and John and that the longbow, Robin's weapon of choice and expertise, was probably invented in Wales after his death!

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians 4.6.

<sup>8</sup> I must confess to being abashed in making these simple statements, as if I had mastered the originals! These medieval writings are not easily found in English, even harder to read in Latin. Nothing makes more a sense of the gulf between the medieval World and the modern than these writings – more philosophical than spiritual in cast, and it is not just the vocabulary that is different; it is the thought structure, the examples, the syllogisms, the mind set. It is like looking at suits of armour in a museum, and wondering how men ever accomplished anything in them – but they did! The Reformers, 200 years on, are much nearer our mentality, and another 100 years on the Puritans, though demanding, are readable. We are still (just!) the children of Tyndale and Shakespeare, rather than of Wycliffe and Chaucer.

<sup>9</sup> 'An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive' (from 'Indulgences', New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia [<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm>, accessed 28 August 2003] – a surprisingly long, convoluted, and defensive examination of this Roman ordinance in which 'God alone knows what penalty remains to be paid and what its precise amount is in severity and duration') Far better the good news that the remission of sins is preached freely unto faith in Jesus Christ.)

<sup>10</sup> From Latin 'bulla', strictly a rounded object used as a seal, then a document so sealed. A Papal Bull is a written edict carrying the authority of the Pope.

<sup>11</sup> Although, ironically, it would be Lancaster's son, Bolingbroke, who would bring about Richard's departure from the throne in 1399, ultimately triggering the Wars of the Roses 50 years later.

<sup>12</sup> Or, to put it another and later way, 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation' (1562 Articles of Religion, Article VI). Well do we style our Wycliffe the Morning Star of the Reformation!

<sup>13</sup> Roman apologists insist that these were simply ratifications of things which had been slowly coming to be believed and practised within the church. To which one can only say – Exactly! Once Scripture is yoked to tradition, tradition becomes the lead horse, as many supposedly Protestant churches have demonstrated since the Reformation!

<sup>14</sup> De veritate Sacrae Scripturae, 1.1-2, 395, 399; 2.99, 181-84. I derive these references from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wyclif> but should warn you that the article is hostile towards Wycliffe.

<sup>15</sup> Most relevant Protestant histories quote this.

<sup>16</sup> For readable modern information on this and much else, please see the very helpful Introduction to Stephen P. Westcott, The Lollard New Testament – the Wycliffite Translation... (Fairfax, VA, USA: Xulon Press, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Westcott, op. cit., p.28



## Special Offers 2003

The Society is pleased to offer the following items on Special Offer whilst stocks last.

### Two for the price of one:

Product Catalogue Code page no.

**Postcards** (set of 32 cards, assorted Texts)  
PCSET p27

**Script Text Notelet Greetings Cards**  
(set of 10, assorted Texts, blank inside)  
CFSET p19

**Motto Frame Text Cards**  
(set of 12, assorted Texts)  
MTSET p27

**Memory Text Card Tracts** (115x70mm)  
Set of 20 mixed high gloss text cards on a Scripture theme. Also available in packs of 50 of any one title.  
MSET p24  
pack of 50 p24

**Children's Gummed Text Albums**  
Set of 5 albums each containing sheets of Scripture texts for insertion in correct place  
GSET p26

**Children's Hidden Text Albums**  
Set of 4 albums each containing 16 separate puzzles to find the 'Hidden' Scripture Texts  
HSET p26

### Children's Scripture Text Sheets

Set of perforated sheets of 96 texts with coloured drawings  
SCRSET p26  
**Tracts** (85x140mm)  
Set of five tracts of 50 (250) containing a selection of Scriptures on various themes  
SFSET p25

### Other Special Offers:

Product Code	Catalogue page no.	Normal Retail Price	Special Offer
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<b>Giant Print Bible</b> (4 Volume Double Pica) 70A	p14	£42.50	<b>£21.25</b>
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<b>Scripture Passage Posters</b> (500x750mm) Set of five colourful Scripture passage posters of good quality including The Ten Commandments. Ideally suited for inside wall displays. Can also be used outside places of worship. POSET	p20	£10.88	<b>£5.44</b>
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<b>Script Text Notelet Greetings Cards</b> (10 cards) Text: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' CF95	p19	£1.47	<b>£0.50</b>
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**Jubilee Bibles** Commemorating Her Majesty's 50 year reign. We have a few left in stock reduced from £7.95 to **£6.95** until stocks are exhausted.

Individual items within the above sets are also available on Special Offer whilst stocks last except the Ten Commandments Poster within the POSET.

The above offers are also available to our supporters overseas who should contact our International Headquarters or nearest Branch for details.

We would remind our supporters and Churches that if any wish to send a quantity of Scriptures, the Society is not only pleased to offer a generous **Free Distribution Discount** but with full details we can also send them directly to any overseas destination at a reasonable cost. Postage can be quoted on request and a telephone call is sufficient.

Please ask for a personal copy of our **2003 catalogue** in which all our publications are illustrated. This catalogue is free of charge.



# THE Word of God Among All Nations

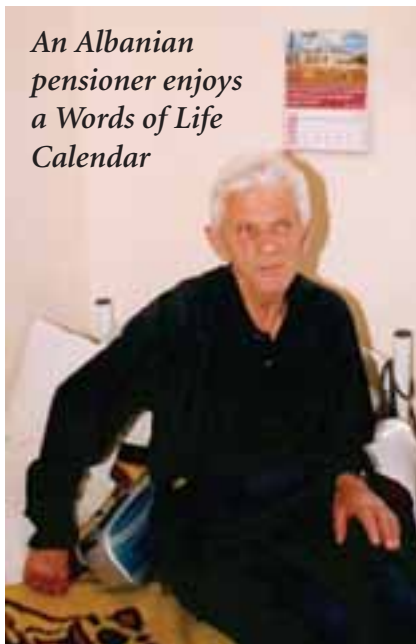
★THE FIELD IS THE WORLD★THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD★

## Europe

### ■ From Athens, Greece

Here I am back again. Temperatures are in the thirties, both in Albania and Greece. My visit was a time of physical and

### An Albanian pensioner enjoys a Words of Life Calendar



spiritual relaxation. I had such a wonderful sleep that first night, far from computers and telephone. During my time in Albania we visited the local Old People's Home. The church had been told to discontinue their visits, but the new director is very receptive. Back in Athens, I found a mound of correspondence waiting for me. Eighty people from the church spent the weekend at our camp for a youth conference where a young man was baptised. I stayed in Athens and went to the baptism of a young engaged couple from the church on the island of Salamina. It was very moving. I'll be in touch again soon regarding material.

### ■ From Cherkassy, Ukraine

I am very thankful for the Russian Bible you sent me. It was applied properly that it brought a blessing. I mean, I exchanged that Bible for larger print with my friend. That larger print Bible I gave to the lady that had been asking me to help to find a Bible for her and she has a poor sight. So it is a double thank you. God hears prayers! May He bless you!



■ **From Combe Martin, Devon, England**

Due to hospital appointments I missed the Royal Cornwall show but the show did go on and our stand was well staffed. I went down and set up the displays, etc. but had to return home immediately after doing this part of the work. The workers telephoned me each evening with a report of the day and were thrilled that both old and young people visited the stand and many conversations were considered very profitable. There is just one which I must relate which took place on the Saturday afternoon. A young lady, sixteen years old, was showing a keen interest and when approached by a worker disclosed that although she went to church occasionally did not possess a Bible. When asked if she would like one responded with an ‘Oh, yes.’ Asked if she had one would she read it replied, ‘Yes, I would’. On being offered a Bible she responded, ‘You don’t mean it, you wouldn’t give me that, would you?’ She took the Bible in her hands and stroked its cover with such warmth and affection that an onlooker could scarcely withhold her tears. This was not in Africa or some communist country but in Cornwall, England. The young lady left the tent as if she was walking on air; perhaps I might see her there next year, DV. I will not be able to have the operation which has been planned but will be having a course of radium which we trust will be successful and I shall endeavour to occupy till our Lord either comes or calls. Please find a donation for the Society, I will send a further report shortly.

■ **From Piraeus, Greece**

My friend goes to the open market every Sunday with Albanian evangelistic material. In the photo he is giving a Words of Life Calendar to another young man. Thanks to TBS for their part in this endeavour.

*Albanian Calendars are distributed in Greece*



*Romanian asylum seekers in Ireland receive a Bible in their own language*

■ **From Keady, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland**

Thank you very much for the Bibles received recently. During the last two or three weeks I visited Mosney and gave out a large amount of English Bibles which the people requested. Three families also requested Russian Bibles which I was able to give them. They were very grateful. Two French families requested a French Bible each. I received cash donations from Mosney and Monaghan refugee centres which totalled £25. I have enclosed a cheque for this amount.

■ **From Warrington, Lancashire, England**

Please find enclosed a photograph taken at Warrington Bank Quay Station. The young man sitting on the flower pot was

reading the text of the poster as I arrived on the opposite platform to take the shot, but as I focused on the text he turned round again. I pray that the Lord will use His Word as He sees fit.

*The Word of God displayed in a British railway station*



## North America

### ■ From Tucson, Arizona, USA

**G**reetings in the name of the Lord. I want to apologise for not sending back the yellow slip sooner, but when we received the boxes we put them into our storage unit, taking them out as needed. When I got your letter we went looking for it and found it in the last box. We received the full complement as we have noted on the yellow copy enclosed. I want to once again tell you just how thankful we are for those in the service of our Lord like yourselves who are able to help ministries like ours. The students in all the 147 institutions we service all look forward to receiving those Golden Thoughts Calendars. One thing you might include in your daily prayers is that the Lord would reverse some of the rules in several of our institutions, as they will not let us send the calendars inside. I really think it is because they sell calendars and want to make a little money. Fortunately, there are only a few that restrict us, so we just keep on praying for complete freedom. The Lord bless you in all your efforts for His Glory.

### ■ From Tucson, Arizona, USA

**G**reetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I thank you for sending the bag of Spanish Bibles and the two cartons of Bibles to be used in the Jail Ministry. The Adult Detention Center is an interim holding facility where inmates are detained until they are either released back into the community or moved along into the prison system. Our daily population fluctuates between fifteen and sixteen hun-

dred inmates. We have many faithful, dedicated Chaplains and volunteers, some of whom are in the jail every day. They go into the living areas of the inmates and tell all who will listen about the saving power of Jesus. Hearts are touched and lives are changed as they surrender to the Lordship of Jesus and ask for forgiveness of their sins. Macho men shed tears of repentance and at times we cry with them, too. Salvation is from the Lord and it is beautiful. May the Lord bless you and perhaps He will lay it on your heart to continue to send Bibles or other Christian literature to us for our Library as these items are given to inmates free of charge. If our program did not give them Bibles they would not have access to the Word of God. Again, I thank you for the Bibles. They will be put to good use.

## South America

### ■ From Caruaru, Pernambuco, Brazil

**A**s the pastor of the Evangelical Church here, I like the work of evangelization very much. I should like to do much more for Christ and His cause. Brazil is an open door to the Gospel's preaching now. Beyond the local church, around us there are many places where the persons need to know the word of God. Tracts, booklets and Bible portions are very useful to us. We always distribute them in our meetings in the Church, in streets and in home visitations with good profit, God thanks. As we begin a new work of evangelization in a district of the city, we need New Testaments and Bibles to give to the new believers. With good joy I

say to you that we received the packages of Bibles and Testaments that you goodly sent to us to supply our urgent need! God thanks. Thank you for all! God bless you richly and reward you.

### ■ From Santa Ana District, Peru

**M**y parents and I had an evangelism campaign in the Santa Ana district of Huaycahuacho. They were twelve blessed days when the Lord was exalted. Our journey in this area experienced a few difficulties. At one point we broke down in the desert with the nose of our bus overhanging a precipice. However, this presented us with the opportunity to preach and distribute literature to occasional travellers that came along. Unlike on previous visits, we were warmly welcomed by the Authorities who let us preach using their microphones. I was invited to give talks about physical health in my capacity as a natural health doctor as well as preaching the Gospel. It was so nice to hear my dad address the crowds who had so long rejected him but he has continued to love them. The people started asking questions about the Gospel: children, young people and adults. They were asking about different matters of the faith in the streets, shops, homes and parks. I was able to preach in the school assemblies at both the primary and secondary schools at the invitation of the headmasters of both schools. They have invited me to come back on future visits saying they want me to fulfil these appointments first as children and young people are the priority. The Authorities invited me to speak at a Health Conference for the gen-

eral public. They invited me to speak about alcoholism and family violence. The Authorities said they would be interested in hearing me speak about natural medicine on my next visit. We left them tracts, booklets and magazines. Whilst all this was happening in Huaycahuacho, in the Ica district, a young lady was baptised. She is a member of the Assembly in Parcona. Another older lady was also baptised. She has wanted to be baptised for six years but due to circumstances was unable to. She lives alone in a remote area. The Lord's work is being strengthened in our country and has endured over time.

## Africa

### ■ From Accra North, Ghana

**G**reetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is to acknowledge receipt of the three hundred KJV Bibles sent to me for distribution and use of the pupils of our school. You can imagine the joy of these pupils receiving their own copies of the Word of God, some for the first time. We now read the Bible every morning for one hour for devotion and studies as well as a reading textbook to enable everyone to learn how to read. Questions such as, 'What does it mean to believe?', 'Can one have his sins forgiven?', etc., come forth. They are helped to find the answers from the Word of God itself. We trust God will use His Word to bring many to salvation and faithful Christian living and service of the Lord. God richly bless all of you with much grace in His Work.





*The Scriptures on display in a Nigerian church*

■ **From Abidjan, Ivory Coast**

The fifty Calendars were divided in three parts, the first for one church and the second for another church. The third stay with me. All calendars are destined to new believers, who come recently in local church. Some women and men who got this calendar enjoyed the words from Bible because they come as a solution of their need. You must remember that our country is in war (rebellion). Now a lot of people look for God and new life in Jesus Christ. We thank you for this grant and pray God to give everything necessary for our mission.

■ **From a mission to Abidjan, Ivory Coast**

We have just had a message from the pastor in Ivory Coast to say that he and his wife managed to escape from the rebel held city of Bouaké but have lost everything. He has been relocated to minister in a church in Abidjan and is asking if he can have 1000 Pensées Précieuses calendars in French as per last year. He has not been able to send an order form in as all post is blocked in the north. There is such a hunger now for the Gospel since the rebellion and he is already helping to train others in evangelism which he so enjoys. It would be a great uplift to him to get these calendars as he virtually lost every book he had when his place was ransacked.

■ *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.*

■ **From Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

I am sending you testimony of one of the people who received the Scriptures, with a photograph: 'I was born into a nominal Christian family of the Roman Catholic, I grew up with their doctrines, I was attending to Morning Mass and every other activities in the Cathedral. I was not convinced of the saving grace that comes through the finished work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. In November 1990 my husband and I gave our lives to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through two persons that came to our house and preached the gospel to us. In April 21, 1991 I was baptised in Church. We came to this church through a leaflet called Golden Thoughts Calendar given to my by late Sister E-; when I showed this leaflet to my husband he was so happy to accept the Calendar. We are convinced that the Lord has a remnant for His Name, hence I and my family have decided to join this Church as members. May the Good Lord give me the grace to serve Him in truth and in spirit, Amen.



# Trinitarian Bible Society

## International Headquarters

Tyndale House, Dorset Road, London, SW19 3NN, England  
 Telephone: (020) 8543 7857 Facsimile: (020) 8543 6370

e-mail: TBS@trinitarianbiblesociety.org

Website: www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Registered Charity Number: 233082

V.A.T. Registration Number: GB 215 9219 67

**Auditors:**

**Jacob Cavenagh & Skeet**  
 Acorn House,  
 2 Greenhill Crescent,  
 Watford Business Park,  
 Watford, Herts., WD18 8AH

**Bankers:**

**Barclays Bank PLC**  
 99 Hatton Garden,  
 London, EC1N 8DN  
 Code No.: 20-32-29  
 Account No.: 70023531  
 Euro Account No.: 72732599  
 Swift Code: BARCGB22

**Solicitors:**

**Bates, Wells & Braithwaite**  
 Cheapside House,  
 138 Cheapside,  
 London,  
 EC2V 6BB

## International Branches

### Brazilian Branch

**President:** The Rev. Dr. T. L. Gilmer  
**Sociedade Bíblica Trinitariana do Brasil,**  
 Casa João Ferreira de Almeida,  
 Rua São Vicente, 230 - Bela Vista,  
 Caixa Postal, 3352  
 CEP 01060-970 São Paulo - SP - Brazil  
**Tel.:** (011) 3105-7181 **Fax:** (011) 3107-3775  
**e-mail:** sbtb@biblias.com.br

### U.S.A. Branch

**President:** Mr. J. Stehouwer  
**Trinitarian Bible Society (U.S.A.)**  
 1600 Leonard Street, N.W.  
 Grand Rapids, MI 49504, U.S.A.  
**Telephone:** (616) 735-3695  
**Fax:** (616) 735-9373  
**e-mail:** TBSUSA@aol.com

### Australian Branch

**National Secretary:** Mr. C. Tuck, B.A.  
**Trinitarian Bible Society (Australia),**  
 G.P.O.Box 777  
 Sydney NSW 2001, Australia  
**Tel.:** 1300 303 827 **Fax:** 1300 783 827  
**e-mail:** TBS@trinitarianbiblesociety.org.au

### Canadian Branch

**Canadian General Secretary:** Mr. G. den Boer, B.A.  
**Trinitarian Bible Society**  
 259 - 7610 Evans Road  
 Chilliwack, B.C., V2R 2Z5, Canada  
**Telephone:** (604) 858-2354  
**Fax:** (604) 858-8326  
**e-mail:** tbs@dowco.com

### New Zealand Branch

**Secretary:** Mr. U. Haringa  
**Trinitarian Bible Society (New Zealand),**  
 5 Dryden Street,  
 Gisborne, New Zealand  
**Tel. & Fax:** 06-863-3700

## *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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## **Reading Wycliffe's Bible by George Clausen**



**Trinitarian Bible Society**

*Tyndale House, Dorset Road,  
London, SW19 3NN, England*

*e-mail: [TBS@trinitarianbiblesociety.org](mailto:TBS@trinitarianbiblesociety.org)  
[www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org](http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org)*