

THE WORD OF GOD
AMONG ALL NATIONS



Quarterly Record



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Trinitarian Bible Society

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

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The 186th Annual General Meeting

GOD WILLING

commences at **11.00 a.m.** on

Saturday, 16 September 2017

at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London SE1 6SD

The Business Meeting at **11.00** will include reports and updates on the Society's work.

After the Business Meeting,

at **2.00 p.m.**

Mr J. R. Rutt

Pastor of Lamberhurst Strict Baptist Chapel, Kent, is expected to preach.

Lunch will be served between the Meetings.

All are invited to attend.





From the Desk of the General Secretary

In the following pages will be found what I believe to be excellent and encouraging articles. It is the desire and prayer of all involved in the production of this magazine that the material contained in each issue is interesting, helpful and spiritually profitable, and above all God glorifying. I hope that our readers will agree that this is true of this edition.

It is our aim each quarter to provide a variety of articles describing something of the wide array of our activities in different parts of the world, in a magazine published in an attractive and pleasing format. We seek to give a diverse selection of articles related to the Bible and its distribution that will be both of a general and also of a particular interest to our many readers. We try to be as inclusive and as respectful as is possible to all our readers, not forgetting that many of our friends and supporters do not live in the United Kingdom, that they are all of different ages, and that they all come from many different backgrounds and church, chapel and assembly affiliations. Some of the editorial material is of necessity technical in nature but we try to ensure that the information is conveyed in a form that is comprehensible, and we seek to avoid language that will be deemed unduly offensive to any particular group or sector of our valued supporters and readers. (We freely acknowledge that in this we may be seen

by some to come woefully short. However, we do try, and every article is submitted to scrutiny from many different perspectives before it is published, to try and ensure that we have not strayed from our constitutional and historical background, and—most importantly—from our adherence to the truths of Holy Scripture.)

As our supporters and friends will realise, most of the contributions in the *Quarterly Record* involve considerable research and editorial preparation before they can be published. The items that are written by those who are employed by the Society (which accounts for most) have to be worked upon by the staff member responsible whenever they can find spare moments of time between the many other important and often very demanding activities in which they are engaged. Sadly, this very real lack of time available to give to the *Quarterly Record* accounts to a great extent for the most regrettable delay in the magazine being published on time each quarter. We wish this was not so and extend our sincere apologies, and assure our readers that this is a matter that we are now (with additional qualified and experienced staff recruited during 2016) seriously endeavouring to rectify. We thank all our supporters and readers for their understanding and for bearing with us over the years.

To assist practically in the aim of publishing this particular edition of the *Quarterly Record* on time, and as there is so much excellent material in the following pages, this Desk that you are reading will be comparatively short, and the material originally prepared for it will be deferred until another time, the Lord willing.

This leaves me with the comparatively simple task of introducing and warmly recommending to our supporters the reading of every page of this magazine. I hope that all our readers will appreciate what lies before them as much as I have. The articles in this edition of the *Quarterly Record* are all in their own right interesting and helpful, and all are worthy of being carefully and prayerfully read. In his article the Editorial Director draws attention to some of the interesting principles and practices that underlie the work of his department, whilst the Resources Director in his article updates us with the continuing need to remember the work of the Society both prayerfully and practically, as the daily financial demands upon us are so very considerable. In addition to the extracts from correspondence to be found in 'The Word of God among all Nations' there is an extended report on the distribution of Scriptures in refugee camps in Italy. Peter Hallihan, an Editorial Consultant, provides an overview of the wonderful history of the work of God in Manipur where several of our translation projects are based, and Larry Brigden, our Senior Editorial Consultant, brings us a fascinating study of an important grammatical construction in the translation of a verse in the Gospel according to John (John 5.39), which is of significant practical relevance to us each, and to all to whom the Holy Scriptures come.

Alexander Thomson, another of our Editorial Consultants, draws our attention to the wonderful correspondence that existed between all the Protestant translations

of the Holy Scriptures that began at the time of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, a subject in which I have had a particular interest for many years. An admirable and singularly blessed of God corpus of guidelines can be drawn from these masterpieces of translation (so evidently undertaken in the fear of God); these precepts have provided us to a very great extent with the underlying philosophical and practical bases for the translation principles recommended by us to those undertaking a variety of Scripture projects under the auspices of the Society. We look forward to the second part of this study which is due later in the year, God willing. (We hope that a much greater and more extensive study of this all-important subject will be undertaken in the future.)

Finally, and yet most importantly, the Rev G. Hamstra, the President of the Society, has once again drawn our attention to the very Word of God itself, and the all-glorious Divine Subject of the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his characteristically able and spiritual devotional 'Behold the Lamb of God'.

May each of these articles, reports and accounts of our activities be not only encouraging, but also humbling as you read and learn about what the Lord is doing through the ministry of your Society in providing the Word of God for our fellow men. May we each be stirred up daily to seek more earnestly and urgently the hallowing of the Name of the Lord and the advance of His Kingdom throughout the world, through the almighty, miraculous power of the Holy Spirit graciously and wondrously accompanying in our own day the sowing of the Word of God among the many millions of our fellow men lost in sin and unbelief, and living in gross spiritual darkness.

Brethren, pray for us.

BEHOLD the LAMB of GOD!

*by the Rev G. Hamstra
President of the Society*



Jordan River

The next day John
seeth Jesus coming
unto him, and saith,
Behold the Lamb of God,
which taketh away the sin
of the world! *John 1.29*

John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, was a prophet with a unique and remarkable mission. As the herald and forerunner of the promised Messiah, he prepared the way of the Lord. With a sacred boldness, he proclaimed the Word of God to a people whose religious worship was by and large characterised by a cold and barren formalism.

His plain and clear message was not weakened by man-pleasing inconsistencies

or deceptive compromises. It was, rather, marked by strength of conviction, by faithfulness to the truth of God. It was of an awakening nature. It aimed at the heart with the blessed purpose of arousing a sense of sin and guilt, all to make room for the Christ whose presence was soon to be announced.

John stood on the threshold of the Old and New Testaments; he was called to introduce Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, promised and sent by the Father. John's prophetic witness was not based on private insights but on the authority of a special Divine revelation. This was essential in order to make his testimony authentic and of Divine sanction. From Matthew's account of Jesus's baptism, we may conclude that John was acquainted with Jesus enough that he recognised His superiority. However, in the fourth Gospel we are informed that John did not know Jesus as the Messiah until this was made known to him at Jesus's baptism, when he saw the Spirit descending and abiding on Jesus. 'And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God' (John 1.33–34).

John was highly favoured of the Lord with rich views of Christ. Long before the cross, even before the inception of Christ's ministry, John well understood the unsurpassed beauty, glory, and excellence of the suffering Servant of the Lord, who gave His life as a ransom for many. None of his contemporaries had more light than John. Neither has anyone in the church of all ages been able to go beyond John and give a richer testimony of the One who came to save. John proclaimed the matchless glory of Jesus; He is 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (verse 29).

As the son of a priest, John certainly was well acquainted with the manifold, rich Old Testament prophecies which foretold the coming of the Messiah. Moreover, he also knew of the countless offerings pointing forward to the one and only sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who was the fulfilment of such numerous blessed promises.

John declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God. This Lamb belonged to God in a very particular way. He was ordained from all eternity to be the sacrificial Substitute, whose blood was to be shed for guilty and hell-worthy sinners. John could not have made a richer designation of the One who, in the counsels of eternity, was chosen by the Father to be the sin-Bearer of His people.

The sinless, spotless Lamb of God was the Father's choice and delight. He alone could accomplish redemption in harmony with divine truth and righteousness. He was qualified to do what neither men nor angels could even begin to achieve, namely, to take away the sin of the world.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, standing there among them, was already active in taking away sin by taking it upon Himself. He had publicly assumed this burden on the occasion of His baptism. God's Lamb bore the sacred load until at Calvary He was victorious over sin, death and hell.

God's Lamb was appointed to take away the sin of the world. The great mass of all the sins of God's people, whether they were Israelites or Gentiles, is expressed by the collective singular 'the sin of the world'. The manifold transgressions of the elect of every nation are, in a certain sense, a mass of rebellion and of missing the mark of God's perfect and holy law.

What the Lamb of God accomplished can never be valued too highly. He took away the sin, the rebellion which brought man so sorely under God's displeasure. By the perfect sacrifice of His love, He atoned for the transgressions of His people. His blood cleanses from the deepest stains of sin.

When John employed the expression 'Behold!' he was definitely pointing away from himself and to Jesus. In John's audience there were those who, in self-righteousness and pride, rejected his prophetic witness concerning Christ. Only after the second proclamation (see verse 36) did two of John's disciples leave him and become followers of the Lamb (verse 37).

Also today, many hearers of both law and Gospel sadly have no desire for the One who came to take away the sin of the world. Yet there is wondrous hope and refuge in the Lamb of God for needy and helpless sinners. His grace is overwhelming in its power. His love is without measure. His beauty is beyond compare.

How blessed are all who, knowing their emptiness and poverty, look to Him alone for pardon full and free.

**'Behold the Lamb of God,
which taketh away the sin of
the world!'**

Editorial Director's Report

by *Philip J. D. Hopkins*



The Society's Bible translation and revision work

In the few days prior to drafting this article I was given cause to reflect on the work the Society does in preparing new editions of the Scriptures translated faithfully from (or revised according to) the Divinely-preserved Biblical Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts. As we handle our Bible project work we do so recognising that the Bible is like no other book: it is the Word of God, whereas every other writing is the word of man. The extraordinary nature of God's Word is conveyed to us in many portions of the Bible. Just a few verses illustrate the wonder of the Holy Scriptures:

- Psalm 12.6, 'The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times';
- Psalm 138.2, 'I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name', and
- 1 Peter 1.25, 'But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.'

The Society is one of exceedingly few organisations anywhere in the world that prepares new editions of the Holy Scriptures based on the Hebrew Masoretic and

Greek Received Texts in a scholarly, Reformed and inter-denominational manner. This is an approach that comes down to us from the period of the Reformation when Godly, zealous and learned men engaged in preparing, directly from the Biblical Hebrew and Greek, new editions of the Scriptures in many of the common languages of Europe. Today, however, almost every other organisation and individual, even if they are preparing Scriptures based on the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts, are often doing so from a denominational basis, and relatively few approach the work in a scholarly fashion. As part of our work, the Editorial Department fairly frequently evaluates Scriptures produced by other organisations. Some of these are sent to us by the organisation while they are still being prepared and some have already been published. In such instances it is often surprising (and disappointing) to see what a thorough analysis of such Scriptures brings to light.

At the Society we recognise that the primary qualification for a translator must be that they are truly born again. It is vitally necessary that anyone seeking to translate or revise the Holy Scriptures possesses genuine saving faith, and is walking worthily with the Lord as becomes a person professing belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. A subordinate but very necessary qualification for the work of

translation is sufficient ability in the original languages of the Holy Scriptures (or in English if translating from the Authorised [King James] Version) and in the receptor language to competently translate from one to the other. Yet however capable the translators may be on each of the Society's Bible projects, and we have some very able and gifted translators, the Society's scholarly review of the Scriptures we publish is vital. Indeed, we are very blessed to have individuals with considerable abilities in Biblical Hebrew and Greek working for us as editorial consultants, along with competent linguists engaged on our Bible translation and revision projects. Their God-given abilities help us to ensure that, as far as possible, what we publish conforms to the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts and exhibits a high view of each individual word. Considerable effort is made on all our Bible projects by the Editorial Department to ensure that we uphold the principles embodied in our Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture (available online at www.tsbibles.org/basis/doctrine-of-holy-scripture or by writing to the Society's offices).

Sadly, the same level of scrutiny, for one reason or another, is not applied across the board by other groups. In recent years we examined a New Testament in an African language which purported to be a translation from the Authorised (King James) Version. When we checked it against our Textual Key, it was found to contain dozens of Critical Text readings. This particular work had been done inconsistently and poorly, and therefore it only partially conformed to the Authorised Version.

It is one of the Society's principles that we do not prepare new Scripture editions along denominational lines, but rather endeavour to prepare faithful Bibles which can be used by all. For example, one of the

many strengths of the Authorised Version is that it transliterates the Greek Word *baptiso* as baptise. In one Asian language in which we have been exploring the possibility of working we have found that two editions of the Bible have 'sprinkle' rather than 'baptise'. Unsurprisingly a further translation is being prepared in this language in which 'immerse' is used in place of 'baptise'. Partisan translations like this can further divide denominations and diminish what ought to be a shared Christian heritage: that of a sound faithful Bible that can be used, for example, by credo-Baptists as well as by paedobaptists. The Society seeks to follow in the worthy tradition of the AV and other Reformation-era Bibles by using 'baptise' in the editions we publish.

The Society also endeavours to ensure that the Bibles we publish are prepared to a good literary standard. Whilst the Society rightly believes the receptor language should be stretched to match as much as possible the underlying Hebrew and Greek, as it was by the translators of the AV, we do not wish to violate fundamental rules of grammar and sentence structure in the receptor language. In the course of our work we have come across published Bibles that are derided by native speakers because of the poor standard of language employed—a problem which consequently greatly diminishes the usefulness of such endeavours.

Perhaps most serious of all are the Bibles we have examined in which the text of Scripture has been deliberately tampered with. In one instance Acts 13.48, 'as many as were ordained to eternal life believed', was altered to read (contrary to the underlying Koiné Greek) 'as many as ordained themselves to eternal life believed'. In another Bible there were several instances of a clear departure from the underlying Hebrew and Greek in order

to tailor the reading to a particular doctrinal viewpoint. The Society seeks, as far as possible, to translate the underlying Biblical text without interpreting it, thus letting Scripture speak for itself.

Through its Reformed doctrinal stance and approach, the Society is continuing the tradition of the Reformation-era Bibles that have been made such a blessing to Christians from countless different groups and denominations across many generations. Today, Bible translation and revision work can take considerable resources, and it can also take many years to prepare a faithful new edition of the entire Bible. But the eventual outcome is

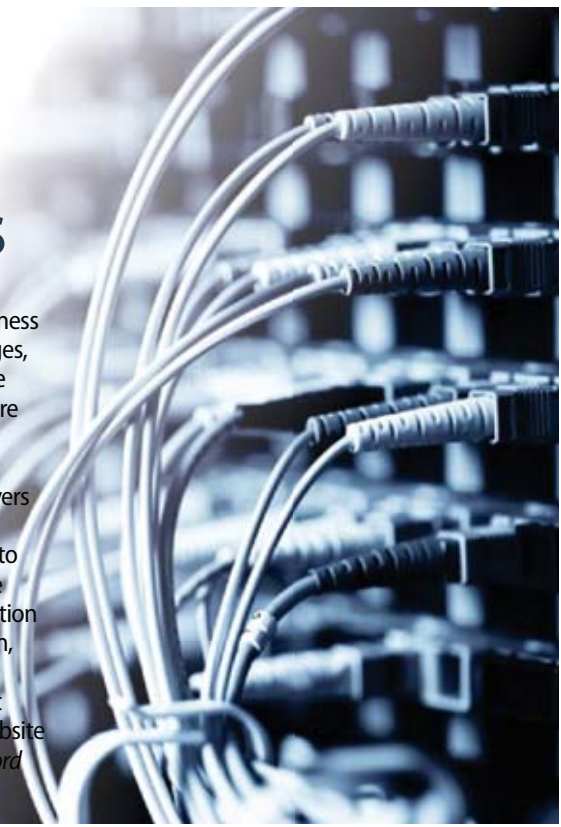
of extraordinary value. Please remember in prayer the Editorial Department and all of our co-workers as they engage in this invaluable task of translating the priceless Word of God. Please pray that we would be helped to maintain the highest standards in all of our Bible translation and revision projects, and that everything would be done to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10.31).

God willing, a full update on all of the Society's Bible translation and revision projects will be given in the combined Annual Report edition of the July to September 2017 *Quarterly Record* magazine.



New business system for TBS

The Society is in the process of implementing a new core business system and website. The changes, which we hope to have in place later this year, will not yet require any action on the part of our supporters and customers, but we would encourage your prayers for this major change. We are endeavouring to do all we can to minimise disruption during the development and implementation of this new system. It is our plan, God willing, to provide regular progress updates on the recent news section of our current website and through the *Quarterly Record* magazine.



John 5.39: Imperative or Indicative?

by L. Brigden, Senior Editorial Consultant

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

This article considers the question of the correct translation of John 5.39, which in the Authorised (King James) Version begins with the imperative, ‘Search the scriptures,’ but in the vast majority of modern versions with the indicative, ‘You search the Scriptures.’¹ So which is correct, the imperative or the indicative? Is our Lord exhorting the Jews to perform a duty, or is He acknowledging that they were already performing that duty, albeit to no good effect?

It is noteworthy that all the Reformation-era translations, both English and foreign language—for example, Tyndale, Luther, Coverdale, Geneva, Authorised Version, French Olivetan, Spanish Reina-Valera, Polish Gdansk, Dutch Statenvertaling, Italian Diodati—begin John 5.39 with the imperative. But since the time of the English Revised Version (1885), the indicative ‘you search’ has been the uniform choice of English translators. Most modern commentators also are

of the opinion that the verse should be understood as beginning with the indicative.² This very great change in opinion regarding John 5.39 from the Reformation era to modern times is quite remarkable. But are the modern versions and modern commentators correct in their opinion? This article contends that they are not correct but on the contrary quite mistaken, and that the Reformation-era understanding of the verse has all along been correct.

The question of the correct translation of the beginning of John 5.39 cannot be decided simply from the form of the Greek verb ἐρευνᾶτε, with which the verse begins. This is because the verb has exactly the same form in the imperative ‘search!’ as in the indicative ‘you search.’³ We must therefore look beyond the word itself and examine carefully the Greek of the verse and then also the context.

The Greek of the Verse

The original Greek of John 5.39 is as follows:

ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζῶην αἰώνιον ἔχειν, καὶ ἐκεῖνὰ εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ·

This is rendered in our Authorised (King James) Version as:

‘Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.’

The following may be observed regarding the Greek of this verse. Firstly, the verb ἐρευνᾶτε stands as the very first word in the verse, exactly where one would expect for an imperative. Secondly, the verse contains no connective words (e.g. και, δε, μεν) linking it to the previous verse, so that the verse appears abruptly, just as one would expect if the verse begins with an imperative. And thirdly, there is actually no positive evidence from the Greek of the verse that favours ἐρευνᾶτε being the indicative, such as, for example, a pronoun subject appearing alongside the verb.⁴ Hence, ἐρευνᾶτε has every appearance of being an imperative and no real appearance of being an indicative.

This point may be expressed another way. We may ask: ‘If the Holy Spirit had intended the imperative, is there any clearer way that that could have been expressed?’ The answer must be, ‘No, there is no clearer way. If the imperative had been intended, then the Greek would look exactly as it does.’ We may further ask: ‘If the Holy Spirit had intended the indicative, is there any clearer way that could have been expressed?’ The answer is, ‘Yes, the indicative could more clearly have been expressed by the verb not appearing first in the verse, or by including some connective word, or by the pronoun subject appearing alongside the verb.’⁵ So how are the modern translators and commentators so sure that the word is indicative? On the contrary, the presumption must be that it is an imperative, unless some convincing evidence for the indicative may be presented from the context.

But before passing on to consider the context, one further point may be made regarding the verse itself. A personal pronoun subject, ὑμεῖς (you), does appear in the verse, though not with ἐρευνᾶτε but with the next verb, δοκεῖτε (you think).

When the personal pronoun subject of a verb is explicitly expressed in Greek along with the verb, an emphasis on that subject is intended, so the meaning will be, ‘you, for your part, think.’ Now, if ἐρευνᾶτε is to be understood as the indicative, then we will have ‘you search the scriptures, for in them you, for your part, think you have eternal life.’ But this does not make good sense, for there is no reason to expect an emphasis on δοκεῖτε when the preceding verb, ἐρευνᾶτε, is without any such emphasis. If our Lord is indeed conceding to them that they search the Scriptures, then the personal pronoun should have appeared with ἐρευνᾶτε, since it would be quite natural for the emphasis to lie on the first verb of the verse and from there to be also conveyed to the next verb, δοκεῖτε: ‘you, for your part, search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life.’

On the other hand, if we take ἐρευνᾶτε as the imperative, the personal pronoun ὑμεῖς before δοκεῖτε makes perfectly good sense. We then have: ‘Search the scriptures, for in them you, for your part, think you have eternal life.’ The exhortation to search the Scriptures is supported by an appeal to the fact that they could not reasonably object to such a searching, for they themselves believe that in those Scriptures they have eternal life. Thus the position of the personal pronoun ὑμεῖς next to δοκεῖτε gives a very good sense with ἐρευνᾶτε as the imperative, but no good sense as the indicative.

The Context

Those who argue for the indicative against the imperative, appeal very much to the

context as favouring their view. They point out that there are indicatives both before and after verse 39 and that it would be an abrupt change for verse 39 to begin with an imperative.⁶

But this is not a convincing argument. It is based on the formal structure of the passage, without taking any account of its meaning, presuming ἐπευῶνται to be indicative because it is preceded and followed by indicatives. If such an argument were valid, how could an imperative ever appear amongst indicatives? It would lead to the absurd result that a speaker could never interject an imperative among indicatives, even if it was his purpose to do so.

Proponents of the indicative also argue that the indicative agrees better with the rest of the verse, the verse expressing a great wonder and a reproach: that while the Jews searched the Scriptures they saw not Christ in them, though those very same Scriptures spoke of Him.⁷ But this gives a meaning to the Greek word ἐπευῶνται—that it refers to a superficial and ineffectual attention to the outward form of Scripture—which is not, as we shall see, consistent with its Scriptural usage.⁸ It also conveys a notion concerning the use of the Scriptures which is contradicted by the rest of Scripture,⁹ that is, that the diligent ‘searching’ of the Scriptures is not a sufficient outward and ordinary means for the attaining of saving faith or for determining any other article of true religion. Here the anti-Protestant tendency of the indicative argument is apparent.

But before embarking on a full discussion of the question of which mood of the verb¹⁰ best fits the context, weighing the argument for the imperative against that for the indicative, it is necessary to define more precisely the meaning of the Greek

verb ἐπευῶν (the lexicon form from which ἐπευῶνται is derived). Obviously, whether the imperative or indicative best fits the context will depend on the precise meaning of the verb. In order to determine that precise meaning we must examine how the verb is used elsewhere in Scripture.¹¹ It is used in five other places:

John 7.52: ‘Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet’

Romans 8.27: ‘And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit’

1 Corinthians 2.10: ‘for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God’

1 Peter 1.11 ‘Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow’

Revelation 2.23: ‘And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts’

From these verses it is evident that the Greek verb ἐπευῶν does not signify any superficial and ineffectual inspection of something, but on the contrary signifies an exhaustive, thorough and effectual examination of it. So then, is it more probable that our Lord was exhorting (imperative) the Jews at John 5.39 to such a ‘searching’ of the Scriptures? Or was He merely acknowledging (indicative) that this was something they already did?

If we look at the immediate context, we note that in the previous verse, Jesus says of them that ‘ye have not his word abiding in you’. If the beginning of verse 39 is understood as the indicative, and hence as an acknowledgement that they did exhaustively, thoroughly and effectually search the Scriptures, how is this

consistent with verse 38 saying that they have not God's Word abiding in them? If they have taken such great pains over the study of the Scriptures, thereby using the divinely appointed means to obtain the true knowledge of God, how may it be still said of them that His Word does not abide in them? But if verse 39 begins with the imperative, then our Lord is prescribing to them the cure for the Word of God not abiding in them and their consequent unbelief. Thus, the imperative makes very good sense.

We may also note that at the end of verse 38 Jesus plainly says that the problem with the Jews is that they did not believe Him, and in the last part of verse 39 He says equally plainly that it is the Scriptures 'which testify of me.' What then must be the cure for the unbelief of the Jews? Surely it is those same Scriptures that testify of Him. From where else should they seek a cure? Hence, an imperative at the beginning of verse 39 makes perfectly good sense. Jesus is exhorting them to do exactly what would cure them of their unbelief.

But an indicative at the beginning of verse 39 creates a problem, for then we have an acknowledgement in the first part of verse 39 that they do already exhaustively, thoroughly and effectually search the Scriptures; however, the last part of verse 39 says those same Scriptures testify of Him and yet according to verse 38 they remain in unbelief. So what remedy is proposed to cure them of their unbelief? None is ever mentioned in the text. Apparently their unbelief is incurable, for though they were using the appointed means to cure it, yet it is not cured!

On the other hand, with the verb as an imperative, the verse points exactly to the problem of the Jews. It was their lack of 'searching' that was the problem; they did

indeed 'read' the Scriptures (Acts 15.21), but they did not 'search' them. Therefore, Jesus is commanding them to perform this duty as the remedy for their ignorance and unbelief.

The implication of the indicative at John 5.39 is also contrary to the more remote context of Scripture which plainly indicates that the diligent searching of the Scriptures is the appointed outward and ordinary means for belief in Christ. The Bereans 'searched the scriptures daily'¹² and as a consequence of using the divinely-appointed means 'many of them believed' (Acts 17.11-12). And Paul laboured 'mightily' to convince the Jews 'by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ' (Acts 18.28). Thus he used the Scriptures as the divinely-appointed means to engender belief, consistent with Romans 10.17, 'So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'

It is also evident from the numerous interactions between our Lord and the religious leaders of His day that 'searching' the Scriptures in this exhaustive and thorough way is exactly what they generally did not do. When, for example, Jesus asks the Pharisees in Matthew 22.43-46 why David in Psalm 2.1 calls his Son 'Lord', they are unable to answer Him. They had evidently never carefully considered the meaning of that Scripture.

In Matthew 19.3-8 Jesus corrects the Pharisees' faulty understanding of marriage and divorce by correcting their misunderstanding of Moses's writing of divorcement. The Pharisees had apparently never weighed Moses's provision with regard to divorce against the original institution of marriage in Genesis. If they had thus 'searched' the Scriptures, they would never have come tempting Jesus by asking the question on divorce.

We may also note how the people are ‘astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes’ (Matthew 7.28–29). If our Lord’s doctrine was astonishing to the people, it must have been quite different to the doctrine of their regular teachers. This can only be because He rightly understood the Scriptures, whereas their regular teachers poorly understood them or misunderstood them. Our Lord often reproves the religious leaders of His day for their very obtuse understanding of the Scriptures. Thus He says to Nicodemus: ‘Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?’ (John 3.10). He calls the Pharisees ‘blind leaders of the blind’ (Matthew 15.14) and He says of the Sadducees that they erred ‘not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.’ (Matthew 22.29).

Given this key difference between our Lord and the religious leaders of His day, that is, His own clear understanding of the Scriptures in contrast with their poor understanding of them or misunderstanding of them leading to unbelief, it is not surprising that He should seek to correct this their fault at John 5.39 by exhorting them to a searching of those Scriptures. Our Lord says many times to them ‘have ye not read...’ (Matthew 12.3, 5, 19.4, 22.31; Mark 12.10, 26; Luke 6.3) or ‘have ye never read...’ (Mark 2.25; see also Matthew 21.16, 42). He is evidently prodding them to a searching of the Scriptures and an intelligent reflecting upon them, this being the cure for their misunderstanding of them.

But if they were indeed already ‘searching’ the Scriptures, as the indicative at John 5.39 would imply, how are we to explain this continual refrain upon Christ’s lips? And is it not entirely consistent with the decayed state of the church at the time of Christ that He directs them to a ‘searching’

of the Scriptures to recover them from that decayed condition? In the same way, the Reformers also directed a decayed Roman Catholic Church of their own day to a diligent study of the Scriptures.¹³

Thus, the imperative fits the context better than the indicative, both the immediate and the more remote context.

The Doctrinal and Practical Consequences of the Imperative vs the Indicative.

We should not overlook the fact that there are significantly different consequences, doctrinal and practical, of taking the beginning of John 5.39 as an imperative, rather than an indicative. With the imperative ‘Search the scriptures...’, the Reformed doctrine of *sola scriptura* is clearly implied in the text.¹⁴ Jesus directs the Jews to the Scriptures, and He directs them to no earthly testimony beside those Scriptures to decide the critical point of their believing upon Him. But if the beginning of John 5.39 is to be taken as the indicative, the implication of *sola scriptura* is no longer evident. The verse will then imply that an exhaustive, thorough and effectual examination of the Holy Scriptures is not sufficient to determine any doctrine or duty of true religion. Something extra is required which must be added to the testimony of Scripture. This is directly contrary to the Reformation and Protestantism.¹⁵

There is also a practical duty implied by the imperative, but absent with the indicative. That duty is the duty to search the Scriptures; a mere reading of them leading only to a superficial acquaintance with them is not sufficient, nor consistent with, that supreme love to God, which

includes a loving Him ‘with all thy mind’ required in ‘the first and great commandment’ (Matthew 22.37–38). The Word of God is that by which a man shall ‘live’ (Matthew 4.4), that by which he is ‘nourished’ (1 Timothy 4.6), and is thus called ‘the sincere milk of the word’ as the means by which we are to ‘grow’ (1 Peter 2.2).

Of course, it may be argued that both the doctrine of *sola scriptura* and our duty to search the Scriptures are taught elsewhere in Scripture (Isaiah 8.20, 34.16; 2 Timothy 3.16–17) and therefore, as we are not dependent on the evidence provided by John 5.39, we need not overly insist on the imperative at that place. It is certainly true that we are not utterly dependent on John 5.39 for evidence of the doctrine and the duty. But given the importance of both the doctrine and the duty, why should we easily part with the evidence so clearly tendered for them by this verse, especially if no necessity demands it, but quite the contrary? And if the doctrine and the duty are both of great importance, as is evident by the Reformation, is it not reasonable to suppose that the Lord should provide abundant, rather than sparse, evidence for them in His Word?

Conclusion

We conclude that the Reformation-era understanding of the imperative at John 5.39 has all along been correct. There is clear reason from the Greek of the verse and from the context for maintaining that the verse begins with the imperative, and not with the indicative. There are also significantly different consequences, doctrinal and practical, of adopting the imperative as opposed to the indicative, consequences reaching as far as to divide between Protestantism and Popery.

We have here another instance of the

Authorised (King James) Version proving itself superior to the modern English Bible versions available today. It is a staggering fact that no modern English Bible¹⁶ renders John 5.39 as the imperative, but all uniformly render it as the indicative. Even the New King James Version and the Modern English Version, both of which purport to be revisions of the Authorised Version carried out in the same spirit as the original, comply with the anti-Protestant spirit of the times to render the verse as the indicative. The fact that the Authorised Version has the imperative at John 5.39 clearly marks it as a genuinely Protestant Bible, and none of its modern competitors can justly lay claim to the same title while they all fall short at that verse. All English-speaking peoples should give profound thanks to God for the inestimable gift of so faithful a translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Endnotes

- 1 NASB, NIV, NKJV, ESV, MEV.
- 2 For example, L. Morris, in *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI, USA: W. B. Eerdmans, 1979), p. 330, remarks, ‘We should almost certainly take it as indicative.’ Lenski is a notable and refreshing exception amongst modern commentators in arguing for the imperative (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* [Minneapolis, MN, USA: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961], pp. 413–415).
- 3 In English, we distinguish the imperative from the indicative by the omission of the pronoun subject of the verb. Thus, ‘search’ will be imperative, while ‘you search’ is indicative. But in Greek the imperative and indicative cannot be so easily distinguished in this way because the pronoun subject is already indicated

by the form of the verb ending and hence does not need to appear alongside the verb. The first word in the Greek of this verse is ἐρευνᾶτε, which has a second person plural ending, that is, ‘you’, and so the meaning may be either the imperative, ‘search’ with the implied subject, ‘you’, or the indicative, ‘you search.’ The context must be used to decide between these two.

4 In Greek the subject of the verb is expressed in the verb ending and does not, as in English, need to be separately expressed. When it is separately expressed in the Greek an emphasis is intended and it is also much more probable that the mood of the verb is indicative.

5 Thus the verse might have begun with: τὰς μὲν γραφὰς ἡμεῖς ἐρευνᾶτε (you search the scriptures).

6 See, for example, C. Ellicott, *A New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, 8 vols. (London, England: Cassell & Co., 1897), 1.422; H. W. Meyer, *Handbook to the Gospel of John* (New York, NY, USA: Funk & Wagnalls, 1895), p. 191.

7 Ellicott.

8 Ellicott says that the word is ‘just the expression for the literal spirit in which the Rabbis treated their Scriptures.’ The problem here is that while we may suppose that the word aptly describes how the Rabbis ‘treated their Scriptures,’ if we have no evidence from Scripture to support that meaning of the word, it must remain merely a supposition. The scriptural testimony alone on the use of a word is authoritative.

9 Isaiah 8.20, 2 Timothy 3.16–17.

10 There are four moods of the Greek verb: indicative, subjunctive, optative and imperative.

11 Ellicott tries to ward off the fatal con-

sequences to the indicative argument of this approach by saying that ‘the argument from the meaning of the Greek word must be pressed only within strict limits when we remember that it represents in translation a late Hebrew original.’ However, this is quite inadmissible since it is contrary to the Reformed doctrine of Scripture. It is the meaning of the inspired Greek word in the text that is authoritative, not the supposed underlying word of which the Greek word is supposed to be a translation.

12 The Greek word here for ‘searched’ is a different word, ἀνακρίνοντες from ἀνακρίνω, but the meaning is the same, the word being synonymous with ερευνᾶω.

13 Thus the various expressions of the doctrine of *sola scriptura* contained in Reformed Confessions, such as the First and Second Helvetic Confessions Ch. 1, Belgic Confession Article 7, Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion Article 6, Westminster Confession of Faith Ch. 1, London Baptist Confession Ch. 1.

14 Thus the Westminster Confession of Faith (1.8) and the London Baptist Confession (1.8) cite John 5.39 as a proof text of the final authority of Scripture.

15 It is not surprising therefore that both Roman Catholics (www.sedevacantist.com/van_noort_infallibility.html) and Seventh Day Adventists (text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=RABV&lang=en§ion=all&pagenumber=78) generally favour the indicative at John 5.39.

16 Except of course for minor attempts to update the AV. We tend to use the word ‘attempts,’ since none are accepted as being valid, useable updates.

The Treasury

From **David J. Broome**
Resources Director

The Word of God has much to say on the subject of giving. One of the best known passages is Acts 20.35, where Luke records the Apostle Paul exhorting the elders of the Ephesian church '...to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive'. Like many of our Lord's actions and sayings, this is not recorded in the Gospels—for, as John reminds us, if all had been written down 'the world itself could not contain the books that should be written' (John 21.25). And yet how instructive it is to notice that the Holy Spirit brought this saying to Paul's attention (we are not told how) and inspired Luke to record it in the Acts of the Apostles. We are reminded here that we must seek the teaching of the whole of Holy Scripture, not just favourite parts, and that we must not take passages in isolation or out of context to suit ourselves. But surely this matter of giving must also be very important.

The Society has always been very clear that God Himself is the Originator of the supply of all our needs (see Philippians 4.19). Therefore as a principle we do not carry out fundraising in the way that most charities do. However, it is self-evident that the Lord provides through the instrumentality of our loyal members, supporters and sponsoring organisations, to whom we also owe a great debt of thankfulness. So, from time to time we do



make the Society's specific needs known in the hope that this will help our supporters in their prayerful exercise before the Lord in relation to their giving.

The Society's financial needs remain as great as ever—the final accounts for 2016 are currently being worked on, but, as indicated on the pages of previous *Quarterly Records*, we expect to close the year with a deficit of more than £0.5 million. God willing, we will give a more in-depth analysis of this in the 2016 Annual Report edition of the QR due out this summer. In the meantime, the Society's General Committee has made some painful cuts to areas such as General Grants and Railway Posters for 2017, as well as taking some restructuring measures, particularly to reduce the Society's dependence on legacy income in-year, the low level of which contributed significantly to the financial challenges of 2016.

The Society has substantial regular ongoing costs to fund from month-to-month, not least in paying staff and translators, running and maintaining its buildings, etc. So it is particularly useful when our supporters are constrained to give in a regular way, as this brings more stability to our cash-flow and helps support these regular costs.

We have written in the pages of the QR in the past about the methods by which our supporters can give to the Society, but the last articles were written in 2000–2001 and the world has moved on a long way in that time, so it is opportune to revisit this subject.

TYPES OF GIVING

There are several types of giving to the Society which are explained briefly below. This section has necessarily been written primarily from a UK standpoint. We recognise that certain aspects of what is written will differ in the various countries where the Society has branches and supporters, particularly in relation to matters of taxation—where this is the case, please take your own tax advice locally.

■ *Joining the Society as a Member*

For a minimum annual subscription of £5 in the UK (Australia AUS\$10; Europe €6.50; Canada \$10; New Zealand \$15; USA \$10), any supporter who agrees to sign up to the Society's principles can join as a member. As an unincorporated association, the Society is legally owned by its Trustees (Members of the General Committee), who are elected by the members of the Society at the Annual General Meeting each year. Thus members have a real stake in the running of the Society, and we would warmly encourage our supporters to become members and stand with us publicly in this vital work and witness. Members can give whatever amount they like by way of annual subscription.

■ *Donations*

This is the most common way of giving to the Society. Over the 186 years of the

Society's existence, we have received countless donations, from the 'widow's mite' to individual donations of tens of thousands of pounds. Donations can come to the Society in two forms: (1) general donations where the donor gives to the work without making any stipulation as to how the funds should be spent, and (2) restricted donations where the donor makes a stipulation as to how they would like their donation to be used.

■ *General Donations*

General donations are especially welcome as they give the Trustees the discretion and flexibility to use the funds in accordance with their assessment of priorities in the light of the Society's operational and financial needs. (Large scale restricted donations, on the other hand, carry the risk of skewing activity away from the Trustees' priorities.) General donations also necessitate much less financial administration. In addition, there is no question about whether it is even possible to spend the money in accordance with the donor's wishes, which can occasionally be an issue with restricted donations.

■ *Restricted Donations*

Restricted donations can be useful, usually where the Society has indicated its need for funds for a particular purpose. However, for the reasons explained in the previous paragraph, we are generally cautious about encouraging donors to place restrictions on the use of their gift.

■ *Gift Aid Donations*

We realise that some of our supporters may object to Gift Aid on principle, because they see it as a form of 'government aid' which it would be unbiblical for the Society to receive. However, we understand it from another

giftaid it viewpoint:
Gift Aid makes the
outcome as
if the donations were
given before income tax is
deducted. Jesus said 'Render to Caesar
the things that are Caesar's, and to God
the things that are God's' (Mark 12.17).

Therefore, for our supporters who are UK taxpayers and have signed a Gift Aid declaration in favour of the Society, we are able to increase the value of your donation or subscription by 25%. We would warmly encourage all our taxpaying supporters and members to do this, because it increases the value of your donation substantially at no extra cost to you. What many people are less aware of is that higher-rate taxpayers can claim back a further 25% of their donation through their annual tax return, and some choose to increase their donations as a result of this. It is possible to sign up for Gift Aid when completing a transaction on the Society's website, or a form can be obtained by contacting the London office (contact details are given on the inside back cover of this magazine).

■ **Collections and Offerings**

Many supporting churches and assemblies take collections or give offerings on the Society's behalf. These are received at meetings arranged by or on behalf of the Society too, and are a valuable source of income. Collecting for the Lord's work and His people is a thoroughly Biblical principle on which we have commented previously in the pages of the QR. Just one Scripture, dealing with providing for the poor (which the Society does through the provision of free Bibles) will suffice for now to illustrate this: 'Now concerning the collection

for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye' (1 Corinthians 16.1).

The significant advantage of giving in this way is that it can be completely anonymous in accordance with Christ's words in Matthew 6.3, 'But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth'. Also, the receipt of collections and offerings from churches gives us a helpful indication of those churches which are prayerfully and practically supportive of the Society.

Collections can also be a tax efficient way of giving through the use of Gift Aid, if a little care is taken, though this will impact on the anonymity of some givers. If you have a current Gift Aid declaration with your church or assembly and your gift to the Society is separately identifiable (in an envelope with your details on it), your church treasurer will be able to reclaim the tax through Gift Aid and pass the increased amount on to the Society. Or, alternatively, if you had a valid Gift Aid declaration with the Society, you could include your details in the envelope with your gift and address it directly to the Society, and your church treasurer could pass it straight to the Society without ever knowing what you had given.

■ **By Legacy**

To whom we leave that which we cannot take with us when we leave this world (1 Timothy 6.7) is a very personal matter, to be considered prayerfully before the Lord. The future needs of one's family will necessarily be paramount in such considerations and that is entirely Biblical (1 Timothy 5.8). However, some people do not have family or their family is already well-provided for, in which cases their attention will understandably turn elsewhere. And what better inheritance is there that could be left in this world

than to contribute to the spread of the Word of God throughout the world? This is a legacy that is sure to be fruitful after we are gone, for we are told that ‘so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it’ (Isaiah 55.11).

Leaving a legacy to a charity is a very efficient way to reduce or even eliminate the liability to inheritance tax on your estate—clearly each individual needs to take his or her own tax advice as this is a very complex area and each situation is unique. In order to leave a legacy you will need to make a will; it would usually be wise to enlist the help of a solicitor to do this. If you choose to leave a legacy to the Society, it is very important that the Society’s full name and address (whether that be the International Headquarters in London or one of our overseas branches) is correctly included, to avoid any ambiguity and the potential for legal disputes. Occasionally, the Society is asked if it (or one of its officers) will take on the role of executor of a will, but sadly we are unable to do that—executors need to be independent and it is often wise to name a solicitor as one of the executors.

METHODS OF GIVING

These days there are a vast array of methods by which individuals can give to charity. The list below gives details of some of the more common ones, but it is by no means exhaustive.

■ **Cheques and Cash**

Some of the Society’s supporters send us cheques and cash in the post. (We would respectfully caution against sending cash in the post, due to the risk of theft.)

■ **Standing Order/Electronic Bank Transfers**

Donations and subscriptions, whether one-off or regular, can be sent by setting up an electronic payment to the Society. Some donors like to establish a regular donation as this saves them from having to administer their gift every month, whilst retaining the freedom to amend their gift at any time. This can be set up either through direct contact with your bank or by using internet banking. In order to allow us to allocate the funds correctly to your account, please ensure that your name and membership/account number (if you have one) are clearly identifiable on the payment, unless of course you intend to make the donation anonymous, in which case it is helpful if you state ‘anonymous’ on the payment.

■ **Direct Debit**

As intimated previously, the Society is currently replacing its main business system and website, and we hope that in the future we will be able to offer our supporters the option of donating and paying their subscriptions by Direct Debit, if they so wish. We will provide further information on this at such time as the option becomes available.

■ **TBS Website and Facebook Page**

On both the Society’s website (www.tbsbibles.org/donations) and Facebook account (www.facebook.com/pages/Trinitarian-Bible-Society/294634290628870) you will find a Donate button, which will take you to a page on our website where you can enter your credit or debit card details in order to make a payment. Subscriptions can be paid on the website, and your

membership with the Society can be renewed (or started) by setting up an online account, which you will then have for future use.

■ **Charity Accounts**

A number of charities devoted to boosting charitable giving (including CAF and Stewardship) provide charity accounts which allow individuals to make donations to charities (typically using a voucher book or online), anonymously if they so wish, and deal with the Gift Aid relief, thus saving the recipient charity having to reclaim the tax. These organisations may charge a small fee.

■ **Give As You Earn/Payroll Giving**

There are a number of schemes, adopted by some employers, by which regular donations to charities can be deducted from employees' pay, before tax, and passed through an approved agency (e.g. CAF Give As You Earn) to the charity. The Society would very much welcome further regular financial support of this nature.

■ **Give As You Shop/Give As You Live**

Donors can nominate a charity to which a small percentage of the amount they

spend on shopping online is sent, at no extra cost to themselves. The Society is in receipt of funds from a couple of these schemes, and although the sums involved are not great, nevertheless they are useful and we are thankful for them.

IN CONCLUSION

We recognise that giving to the Lord's work is an intensely personal matter and a spiritual exercise, but increasingly complex in today's world. We therefore hope that the material given above is helpful. Truly, when we consider how rich is the gift of salvation which we have received (Romans 8.32), surely there will be a warm and hearty response in each believer's heart to the exhortation of our Lord, 'freely ye have received, freely give' (Matthew 10.8).

We remain deeply thankful to all our members, supporters and friends for their partnership with us in this work, practically, financially, and especially in prayer. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of anonymous gifts totalling £8,924.63 for the period October to December 2016 (Matthew 6.4).

Overprinted 2018 Calendars

To enable the timely delivery of overprinted calendars it is necessary for initial design and print preparation work to commence many months in advance. All orders must therefore be placed by Wednesday 31 May 2017 so that we can ensure delivery by the end of October, God willing. Please refer to the form that was sent out with *Quarterly Record* no. 618, or download the form from www.tbsbibles.org/pdf_information/502-1.pdf.

Back Orders

We would like to inform our customers that we have recently changed the way that our London Headquarters deals with 'back orders'. These are orders that include items which are not in stock and so cannot be despatched immediately.

In the past in such cases the out-of-stock items have been despatched in a second consignment at a later date, as soon as they become available. However, the Society has found a difficulty in operating a back order system in that it can take as much as several years before certain items come back into stock, leading to long delays for customers with items on back order. The delay in restocking normally comes down to one or two important considerations: that there are multiple bindings within product ranges and/or the need to achieve economic print quantities.

An example is the leather-bound Daily Light. There is a relatively low annual demand for these leather editions, but it is only economically viable to print them as part of a large production run for the more popular hardback edition. If the leather editions sell out more quickly than was expected, they cannot be reprinted until the

hardback editions also need restocking, which may not be for several years.

Experience has proven that at times the back order process can be an inconvenience to customers, who may be kept waiting for some time for their items. Additionally, the back order process is expensive to administer: customers often have to be contacted individually to check that they still want the items, and the Society incurs additional postage costs for the back order which is despatched separately.

We will therefore now only take back orders for items which are due to be in stock within the next fortnight. For items due to be in stock more than two weeks after the date of order, customers will be advised of the estimated in-warehouse date and invited to contact the Society after this date to place their order. Thus it is in the interests of both the Society and our customers to make this change.

We are grateful for your ongoing custom and support, and trust that this new system will not be an inconvenience.

FOR THE CHILDREN: Protestant Reformation Quizzes

As part of our commemoration of the Protestant Reformation, we have prepared quizzes on the Reformation for children aged 7 to 11 and 12 to 16. A commemorative hardback Reformation Compact Westminster Bible will be awarded to those who complete the quizzes. (If stocks of the Reformation Bible run out, the Society will send a suitable substitute. This offer is

valid until 31 December 2017.) The quiz for the younger children can be downloaded at www.tbsbibles.org/pdf_information/532-1.pdf; the senior quiz is at www.tbsbibles.org/pdf_information/535-1.pdf. Printed copies of the quizzes are available upon request from our International Headquarters in London and from our branches at the addresses on the inside back cover of this *Quarterly Record*.



Bible Translation Philosophy

by A. C. Thomson, *Editorial Consultant*

Readers of the *Quarterly Record* will be familiar from past articles with the fact that the Reformation- and Puritan-era Bible translations undertaken the length and breadth of Europe and

beyond were all based on the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Greek Received Text of the New Testament.

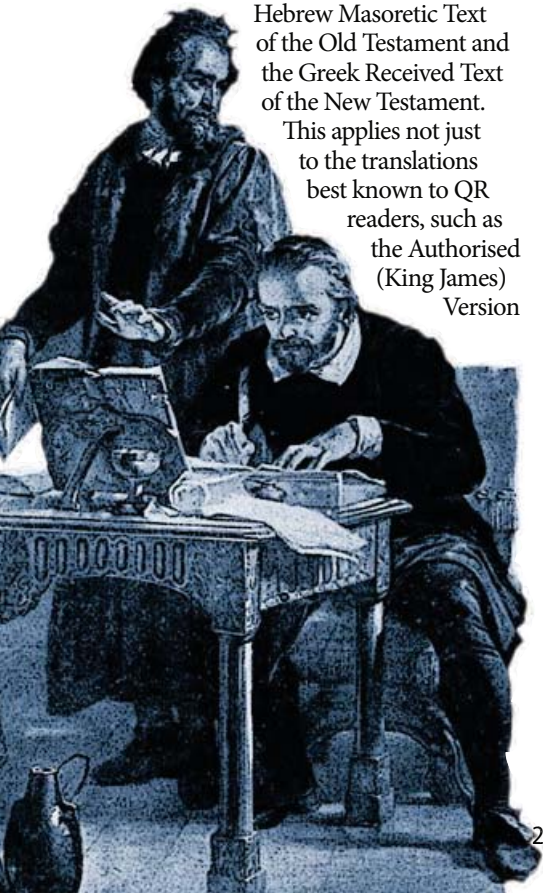
This applies not just to the translations

best known to QR

readers, such as the Authorised (King James) Version

in English, the Luther Bible in German and the Statenvertaling in Dutch, but also to a host of lesser-known Bible versions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which likewise each became the cornerstone of a language and a nation: the French, Italian, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Spanish (Castilian), Danish, Swedish, and a dozen more translations.¹ It does not, of course, apply to translations made in the late Middle Ages from the Latin Vulgate (such as the Wycliffe Bible in English, the Bonifaci Ferrer Bible in Valencian [Catalan], and the Peter Waldo Bible in Franco-Provençal), although these translations were scholarly and accurate to their Latin source text.

Even after that great era of pioneer Bible translation in Europe, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the continuance of the Masoretic and Received textual basis of what may be called the 'daughter translations' into languages which were not the vernacular of any large nation state. What is meant by 'daughter translations' here is not, in most instances, that the translation was made directly from English or another language which already had a Bible translation (though this did happen with the earliest efforts to produce Protestant Bibles in countries including the Netherlands²



and Denmark,³ with Luther's German as the source language). Rather, in most cases the same Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible was translated directly into these new target (or 'recipient') languages by men well familiar with the Biblical languages, but with very much the same theological convictions and typographical conventions as had driven their respective 'parent' versions in the first wave of national Bible translations.

For instance, Bible translations which observe the commendable practice of italicising words not strictly reflected by any one word in the Biblical language texts include not just the Authorised Version in English but the whole family of translations whose translators were intimately familiar with the AV, including the Statenvertaling in Dutch (1637, whose translators were given advice from those of the AV and other translations⁴), the Scottish Gaelic Bible (New Testament 1767, Old Testament 1801), a host of Colonial-era translations, and indeed in Bibles which predate the AV, including the French Geneva Bible (sixteenth century), the William Morgan Bible in Welsh (1588) and the Italian translation of Giovanni Diodati (1607). We even find the practice in the Synodal Bible in Russian (1876).

The Russian is a particularly fine example of how sound translation principles can spread beyond political boundaries when their correctness is evident to serious-minded translators further afield. The Synodal Bible, with its AV-style italicised words, chapter summaries and cross-references, was translated by the Russian Bible Society, which from its foundation in 1816 onwards had far more contact with the British and Foreign Bible Society than with any other nation's Bible society⁵ and whose Eastern Orthodox patrons were greatly impressed by the undeniable effect of the AV upon British life. In

senses such as this, the men undertaking the second-wave daughter translations reapplied the basis of the Reformation-era English, German, Dutch or French Bible translations to their native languages.

This second wave included the Celtic languages (other than Welsh, which already had the excellent 1588 William Morgan translation),⁶ the remaining Scandinavian languages, some of the smaller languages of Roman Catholic-dominated southern and central Europe and some of the languages of the Baltic and Balkans, as well as a great number of translations across the British Empire and the overseas colonies of other Protestant nations. TBS's own fine work in that second wave is described, for example, in the 'Several Overseas Projects' section of Andrew J. Brown's *The Word of God among All Nations: a brief history of the Trinitarian Bible Society 1831–1981*.⁷ And today, the Society maintains a vigorous program to prepare new Bible editions according to Reformation-era principles of translation in languages from across the globe, as described regularly in the pages of the *Quarterly Record*.

The philosophy of Bible translation

That there was pan-European agreement prior to the twentieth century on the textual basis of the Bible may well be known to QR readers. What is not perhaps so well known, and what this two-part article will address, is the translators' remarkable degree of agreement over two or three centuries regarding matters not of text *per se* but of translation: what the Bible is and how to translate it. This may be called their philosophy of translation.

Readers without any foreign languages can still gain an impression of just how

much difference one's philosophy of Bible translation makes to the outcome from thorough works such as Tyndale expert David Daniell's *The Bible in English*,⁸ which provides startling examples of discrepant philosophies in minor English Bible translations and the great shortcomings of the resultant Bible versions from as far back as the mid eighteenth century.

Like the study of translation as a wider discipline, the philosophy of translation is a subject which has gained much more academic attention in recent decades than ever before. As a growing discipline, translation studies have shed much light not only on the great learnedness of the Bible translators of the Early Modern era amid highly adverse circumstances,⁹ but also on their philosophical unity.¹⁰

This article will consider the translations of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries to identify their shared, and correct, philosophy of Bible translation which led them to be in agreement (despite differences between the target languages) on the verses which we today are assured are contentious and subject to all manner of 'better' interpretations by 'experts'. To do so, we shall employ the 'six honest serving-men':¹¹ the question-words What, Why, When, How, Where and Who (though not in Kipling's original order). 'Who' will of necessity take up the rest of Part 1 of the article.

God willing, the second part of this article in a later *Quarterly Record* will complete that review, citing more primary-source examples than the present part, and will then look briefly at how the Reformers' and Puritans' translation philosophy and adherence to sound textual principles fed through into all of Europe's great confessions of faith of that era. It will conclude by considering

more broadly why it should be that the twentieth century saw such a huge and sudden innovation in Bible translators' understanding of their task after such universal consensus among many previous generations of men separated by wide gulfs of education, time and place.

I write as a self-employed professional translator who is currently undertaking doctoral studies under the Rev. Prof. W. J. Op 't Hof (Free University of Amsterdam [VU Amsterdam], retired) on the many translations of the Puritan era's bestselling piety manual, *The Practice of Piety* (by Bishop Lewis Bayly, c. 1611).

Who should translate the Bible?

To understand the consensus among the classic era of Bible translators, we must first throw their unity into sharp relief by contrasting it with what went wrong in later times. Translation, even the careful translation of the Word of God by men of God under His special guiding, is inevitably a deeply **human** process. Those of us who, like many evangelists in the early church, also undertake interpreting (spoken translation) are even more aware of the demands of this human dimension.

Machine translation (such as Google Translate and Systran¹²) is now capable of rendering the gist of most kinds of text with surprising intelligibility, to the extent that thousands of translators around the world are already looking for alternative employment. Even though this is now the case, it is of course unthinkable to translate even human laws or literature by machine, let alone the Bible.

Why should this be? What is it that the human brain adds to the translation of any serious and precise text beyond the

immense corpora (vocabulary databases) and staggeringly sophisticated rules of syntax processing which machine translation now boasts? What the brain adds is, of course, the one thing that a computer can never envisage: an intimate familiarity with the cultural priorities of the human author (and, for Bible translation, theological considerations and, above all, a saving knowledge of its Divine Author), and the understanding which a given word or phrase will impart to the target audience.

It is worth labouring this point even to those well familiar with the fact that the Bible they read is a translation. No translation is mechanistically word-for-word, not even a verbatim, formal-equivalence Bible translation. Some of us have heard horror stories of well-meaning friends of Bible translators who, failing to grasp this fact, have offered to ‘take a passage or two off your hands if you send me a dictionary’. As translation studies¹³ have developed into a fully-fledged academic subject in our day, reinforced by the burgeoning discipline of early-modern intellectual history, we have understood better than ever before that translation is an occupation intimately bound up with processes of the brain and the spirit, processes which are highly specific to the individual.

In the various working environments of the British Civil Service and a Dutch translation agency, and in assistance to the TBS, I have been struck that discussion among translation project coordinators inevitably revolves around identifying translators of sufficient calibre and motivation, whatever the subject area, and then trusting their judgement. Subject matter expertise is certainly not the be-all and end-all of Bible translation: this was the mistake committed in the late nineteenth century from which we have

collectively never recovered. Worse still, we in the West have exported this error to the rest of world Christendom in recent decades as supposed Bible translation scholarship has become a cottage industry in its own right.

A condescending downgrade

At the end of the nineteenth century, the condescending notion took hold in the universities of Germany, England and New England simultaneously (and due to a great degree of mutual influence and emulation among these seats of learning)¹⁴ that Bible translation had been done somewhat amateurishly in the preceding ages and that it had better be left to committees of university doctors henceforth, men informed by the recently-concocted ‘correct’ textual basis (the Critical Text of the Greek New Testament in particular) and by more enlightened translation theories than heretofore.

The timing of this intellectual downgrade (simultaneous with the theological Downgrade Controversy which hastened C. H. Spurgeon’s death) is significant. Many were coming to regard German scholarship, particularly in theology and linguistics, as an improvement over the antiquated views and teaching methods of the universities in England and the USA. It was at just this juncture that, regrettably, interest in rethinking and redoing Bible translation exploded in the English-speaking world, later tugging the other languages of the world in its wake.

The increasingly woeful Greek and Hebrew knowledge (particularly at the level of syntax, i.e. grammar above the level of an individual word) of the subsequent generations of British and American Bible translators, especially

those at the English universities, is not the subject of this article. But I have no reservation in mentioning here that the Revised Standard Version-New Revised Standard Version-English Standard Version succession of revisions is a particularly clear case of what I would call Oxbridgeitis: the failure of one generation's men to spot their predecessors' translation errors and the elegant cosmetic disguising of this declining scholarship by means of touching up the English. Daniell is rightly scathing about this English twentieth-century affliction in the introduction to his modern-spelling edition of *Tyndale's Old Testament*.¹⁵

So much for translation errors of omission. As regards translation errors of needless commission, suffice it to say that we translators are well aware of the inverse relationship between a person's mastery of the source language and his interest in fiddling with an already decent translation. This is a phenomenon which plagues our lives daily.

I have set out above that when, by God's providence, the right translator or small team of translators and reviewers is assembled, a Bible society or publisher would be well advised to provide them with guidelines and expectations and then let them plough on according to their own prayerful insights. And this is just what the TBS does, while being careful to check the accuracy and textual basis of the result before publication. Sadly, Bible translations or revisions undertaken in the past century by denominationally-affiliated bodies or liberal national Bible societies have missed this point completely, spoiling the translation with far too many editors and other reviewers involved.

The most flagrant examples of this trend come from the Dutch- and German-

speaking world. I must stress that they are only flagrant because they are less well covered up than what goes on in other parts of the world. The Swiss Reformed Bible, an outstanding translation effort¹⁶ by Zwingli and Leo Jud, printed by a first-generation Zwinglian, Christoph Froschauer (1490–1564), continued to be published for centuries, with whole-Bible revisions published in 1540, 1589, 1665, 1756, 1817, 1868 and 1931.¹⁷ The 1931 revision, commissioned by the Zurich Synod of 1907, already contained the ominously long-winded stipulation that this revision of Froschauer's work 'be checked precisely throughout for correctness, and where it contradicts the true sense or the rightly-recovered source text [i.e. the Critical Text], or where it is otherwise imprecise, unclear or unseemly, it is to be improved, using first and foremost the best translations [sic!] available, and only seeking a new expression where these are found insufficient'.¹⁸

Having got away with this precedent for passing off effectively a new modernistic translation under the trusted brand name of 'the Zurich Bible', the Evangelical-Reformed Church of Zurich went a great deal further in 1984. Bible scholarship and linguistics had now made such leaps and bounds, the Synod proclaimed, that an entirely new translation now needed to be made, with the Old Testament translation trio significantly made up of one Hebraist, an 'exegete' and a literature specialist (*Germanist*). (Notice that a literal middleman has crept in here: one whose professional skill is neither source- nor target-language-related). During its translation, the text of the new Zurich Bible was adapted by other consultant parties, including a Jewish team chaired by a rabbi (to check for 'unintentional antisemitism')¹⁹ and a women-readers'

group (to pick up on ‘discriminatory’ renderings).

Dutch Bible translations of recent decades have used far more than one literature specialist, or *neerlandicus*, per committee. The TBS’s Dutch sister organisation, the Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting (GBS), is commendably refraining from doing so by planning to use at most only one *africanist* (Afrikaans language specialist) as against seven translators in its just-launched Afrikaans Bible project to translate the Statenvertaling marginal notes and potentially also to revise the 1933 Afrikaans text. On the contrary, the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap (NBG; a very different kind of Bible society to the GBS), with characteristic Dutch frankness, became in 2013 the first liberal Bible society in the world to admit openly that it exists for ‘those who find the Bible relevant’.²⁰ Far from implying a trustworthy Bible translation philosophy, this can be taken as a dressed-up way of saying that translation committees now have free rein to choose readings which please themselves, defending themselves with the assertion that church people (i.e. a straw-man notion of someone bored by traditional translations) will appreciate the inventive renderings offered. For its current policies, the NBG has been roundly ridiculed²¹ by alert Dutch readers as a blundering body which enjoys charging heavily for new editions which come out so regularly that one might as well take out a subscription.

The challenges of revision

Expert translators take a light touch to the task of revision (which is in many ways a skill more demanding than fresh translation from the source, and which

tends even in secular translation projects to be entrusted to senior colleagues). These experts are highly aware of the possible range of meaning of a given word or phrase in both the source and the target language, and have a breadth of view which allows them to see why (for etymological or grammatical reasons, for instance) historical translation choices were counterintuitively accurate. An example would be the oft-assailed ending of the AV’s rendering of 2 Corinthians 5.14:

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then **were all dead**

Now, it is true that the Second Westminster Company of AV translators, which translated 2 Corinthians, did not contain the very finest Greek scholars on the project.²² It is also true that 2 Corinthians—with its densely rhetorical Greek in which Paul tackles his readers’ worldly thinking using sophisticated language—was challenging to express in English. That said, to claim—as many twentieth-century Establishment critics of the AV have claimed—that ‘then were all dead’ is a mistranslation for ‘died’ which somehow implies a continuation over time or some conjunct form, is simply to reveal an ignorance of the English language. Anyone who has had a modicum of French or German at school will know that these languages express the past simple ‘died’ with ‘to be’, not ‘to have’. The same was true historically of English, lingering longer in emphatic contexts such as 2 Corinthians 5.14. Hence, what many would rashly call a ‘revision need’ in the AV is not in fact one; it is a sound rendering of the aorist ἀπέθανον (they died). A great deal of the variance within twentieth-century Bible translation in many languages has been due to nothing more than ill-informed twiddling of this

kind, at the root of which is a disrespect, borne of ignorance, of the original translator's labours.

Revision can also go wrong when a very good explanatory note from the early modern era, or even from the early twentieth century, is foolishly cut out. The Württembergische Bibelanstalt Stuttgart (WBS), when it was still a relatively conservative Bible society, brought out a *Jubiläumsbibel* edition of the Luther Bible in 1912 (reprinted 1937 and 1964) to mark its centenary. While Luther's translation was already peerless in the German language, the WBS provided even greater accuracy in its running notes on the text. One such example is found at Romans 1.20, 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,' where the note points out that the often under-translated participle *νοούμενα* (being understood) describes a logical **precondition** to grasping the character of the Creator and that its sense can be helpfully expanded as *wenn man nachdenksam darauf achtet* (if/when attentively pondered over).

Although this note is good parsing of the Greek and is consistent with passages such as Psalm 8, it was ignored by the much blander equivalent note in the newest explanatory edition by the successor body in Stuttgart, the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft,²³ simply stating that the heathen, unlike the Jews, were obliged to *erkennen* (recognise) God from His works only. There could hardly be a clearer-cut example of what loss a change in translation philosophy can effect, and the second part of this article will present more examples of such slippage from the same timeframe, the mid to late twentieth century.

Once translation philosophy is allowed to become deformed in rendering the text of the Bible itself, this quickly spreads to exegesis in preaching and teaching. In January 2017 an ever-perceptive Texan commentator observed of the generation-long struggle over how to translate *κεφαλή* (head) in Ephesians 5.23, that Wayne Grudem's exhaustive seventy-page treatment of the matter in *Trinity Journal* (1990) 'of course still didn't satisfy the egalitarians, because this was never really about a serious disagreement on what the Bible said. This was a feminist rebellion against Scripture, with a minimal effort made to pretend this was a real theological discussion.'²⁴ Such 'minimal effort' would easily have been seen through if the English-speaking Christian world at large had stuck with the AV and the responsible reader's attitudes that it brings with it. Instead, Christendom has let down its guard against the argument that a particular Biblical word 'could also be translated' in some novel way. The historical, and correct, rejoinder to this fig-leaf argument would be, 'But the Bible translator(s) did **not** translate it that way.'

Who, then, **should** translate the Bible and revise Bible translations? The history of the Reformation and Puritan era answers this question over and over. Bible translators need to have, as Dr David Allen put it in QR 614 (January to March 2016) when describing William Tyndale (p. 29), 'a burning and compulsive burden to translate the Bible into [their] mother tongue,' and they may need to keep as much distance from ecclesiastical and academic 'experts' during their labours as Tyndale had to. Without this in place—if the learning is not coupled with the 'burning'—the translation philosophy of any Bible version will be in a total state of confusion.

Endnotes

- 1 Historical details per language are brought together at *Wikipedia*, ‘List of Bible translations by language’, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Bible_translations_by_language.
- 2 Jacob van Liesvelt published, and may have edited, some unknown translators’ Dutch translation of the Luther Bible in 1526, although the translators had to work from a German version of the Latin Vulgate for parts of the Old Testament. See *Wikipedia*, ‘Jacob van Liesvelt’, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_van_Liesvelt (article in German), and (in Dutch) August den Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel van 1526 en later: naar een protestantse bijbel’, in: Paul Gillaerts et al. (eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 226–236. Parts of the Statenvertaling’s immediate predecessor, the Deux-Aes Bible, were likewise based indirectly on Luther’s German.
- 3 *Wikipedia*’s ‘Danske bibeloversættelser’ sets out how the Danish Lutheran Church stuck particularly close to the text of the German Luther Bible until the nineteenth century. This reflects a peculiarity of Danish church history which researchers, including Frans Huisman MA (Free University of Amsterdam), have written about: the Court was very keen for the nation to remain orthodox-Lutheran and was affected by all the currents (such as eighteenth-century Pietism and the dead formalism which preceded it) which arose in German Lutheranism; da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danske_bibeloversættelser (article in Danish; brief English summary available at bottom of left-hand margin).
- 4 See C. P. Hallihan, ‘Dutch Bible: The Road to the Statenvertaling’, in Trinitarian Bible Society, *Quarterly Record* no. 576, July to September 2006, pp. 13–17.
- 5 ‘Российское Библейское Общество’ (‘Russian Bible Society’), www.biblia.ru/about/history (article in Russian).
- 6 As detailed in Trinitarian Bible Society, *Quarterly Record* no. 603, April to June 2013, pp. 23–35.
- 7 London, England: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1981, p. 83.
- 8 London, England: Yale University Press, 2003.
- 9 Not merely the persecution and exile of so many of the Reformation-era translators (stretching into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the case of those from Roman Catholic-dominated countries), but also the early stage of the recovery of Greek and especially Hebrew knowledge in which these men laboured. Luther and Tyndale, in particular, proved to be astoundingly capable and God-favoured linguists, given the unpromising circumstances in which they laboured. See e.g. G. Lloyd Jones, *The discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: a third language* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1983).
- 10 Space precludes the citing of examples here, but particularly recommended (and expensive!) books on this are Massimiliano Morini, *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006) and Andreas Höfele and Werner Koppenhals (eds.), *Renaissance Go-betweens* (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2005). Even more enlightening on the intellectual rigour of Early Modern Bible translation for readers of French, is Chapter 8 ‘Spiritualité: Bible, ouvrages de dévotion, théologie’, by Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud in *Histoire des traductions en langue française: XVe et XVIe siècles*, Véronique Duché (ed.) (Paris, France: Éditions Verdier, 2015).

11 Rudyard Kipling, 'I Keep Six Honest Serving-men', *The Kipling Society*, www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_serving.htm, 30 January 2017.

12 Developed by UK and US intelligence agencies in the 1950s to afford analysts a gist of large volumes of material in Russian to select what needed the attention of scarce human translators, Systran is based on a superior syntactical model than that of Google Translate but cannot compete with the vast corpus which has now been fed into the latter.

13 See for example the standard work by Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: theories and applications* (Abingdon, Oxford, England: Routledge, 2001, 2008), which is frank from the outset of chapter 1 about the difficulties inherent in defining, let alone studying, translation. The work's abundant citing of Bible translation and of the heavy debt which secular translation owes to Bible translation typifies the discipline of translation studies; this is one area in which the world cannot hope to pretend that God's Word lacks primacy.

14 This was also seen in the rapid spread of unbiblical and anti-Biblical Prussian and Viennese notions of psychology, schooling and statecraft to the post-Civil War United States and late Victorian Britain due to the excessive adulation of German universities and their plethora of new professorships in the Bismarckian era. Any good history of these disciplines will point out the web of personal connections and the chain of transmission.

15 London, England: Yale University Press, 1992; see particularly pp. xvii–xix.

16 See (in German) Christoph Sigrist (ed.), *Die Zürcher Bibel von 1531: Entstehung,*

Verbreitung und Wirkung (Zurich, Switzerland: TVZ-Verlag, 2011).

17 *Wikipedia*, 'Zürcher Bibel', de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zürcher_Bibel (article in German)

18 *Ibid.*

19 *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 14 July 2007: *Satz für Satz „deutsch gemacht“*

20 *Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap*, 'Nieuws Jaarverslag Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap 2013', www.bijbelgenootschap.nl/jaarverslag-nederlands-bijbelgenootschap-2013 (in Dutch)

21 *Creatov.nl*, 'Een ander Bijbelgenootschap misschien?' www.creatov.nl/2014/10/ander-bijbelgenootschap (in Dutch)

22 '[The Company's] director was William Barlow, the dean of Chester. Other members seem to have been included for reasons other than their scholarly standing in Greek, though all were no doubt competent.' Gordon Campbell, *Bible: the story of the King James Version 1611-2011* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 54. Even a merely 'competent' Greek scholar of that generation of Anglican churchmen was, of course, **very** competent by the standards of almost any other time and place. Barlow's committee suffered from the early death in 1607 of William Dakins, although John Spenser, another member of the same Company who had, like Dakins, been his college's Greek reader, did survive to see the translation through.

23 *Stuttgarter Erklärungsbibel mit Apokryphen* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005).

24 *Dalrock*, 'Surely they will be reasonable once they see how reasonable *we* are', <https://dalrock.wordpress.com/2017/01/17/surely-they-will-be-reasonable-once-they-see-how-reasonable-we-are>.

MANIPUR

by C. P. Hallihan, Editorial Consultant

Where is Manipur?

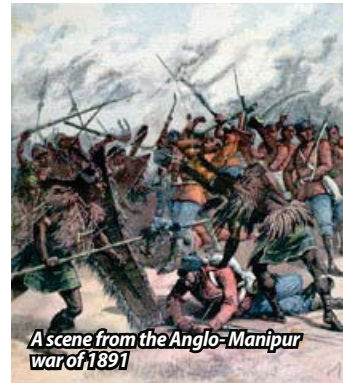
Manipur is a state in Northeast India, on modern maps west of Bangladesh. Nagaland is to the north, Mizoram to the south, Assam to the west and Burma to the east. It is not contiguous at all with Nepal, yet there seems to have been mutual influence and association between the two countries. Imphal is the capital city; it boasts a 2.722 million population (2011 figure). Manipur lies just north of the Tropic of Cancer, a similar latitude to that of central Saudi Arabia and Monterrey, Mexico.

History

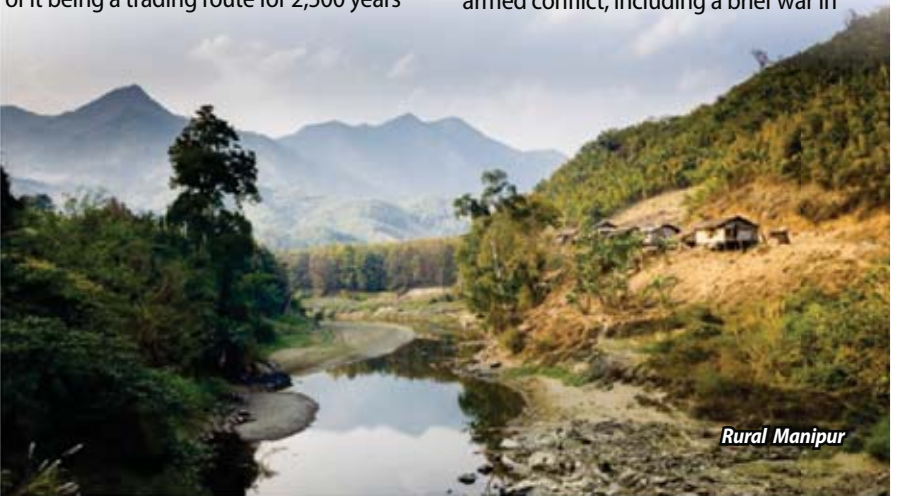
The ancient history of Manipur is unclear and disputed, but there is a strong tradition of it being a trading route for 2,500 years

between the Indian subcontinent, China and Southeast Asia. Such involvement with economic activity, warfare, movement of peoples and religions made it a cultural melting pot.

During the nineteenth century, Manipur was invaded by Burma and requested the help of the British government. In 1824 Manipur was thus made a British protectorate, but many years of political unrest—and sometimes armed conflict, including a brief war in



A scene from the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891



Rural Manipur



1891—followed. British colonial rule (in Hindustani, 'rule' is *rāj*) prevailed in the Indian subcontinent from 1858 to 1947. During that time Manipur was counted as one of the semi-sovereign 'princely' states, under British administration but only indirectly, with local indigenous 'princes' having some autonomous control.

During the reign of Raja Churachand (1907–1941), Manipur enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity. However, after 1917 the people of Manipur pressed for negotiation of their rights against British rule. Their preference was to be part of India, not Burma (Myanmar). World War II cut short these negotiations, but in September 1949, after a brief period of independence, a treaty was signed merging Manipur with India.

In 1972 Manipur broke from direct rule by India and became a separate state. However, internal disputes as to complete independence from India together with

violence between ethnic groups and tribes in the state continue as these groups—Meitei, Kuki, Naga, Muslim—seek complete freedom from India.

People

In 1901 the Meitei were listed as the main tribe of Manipur, living mostly in the valley region. They have a recorded civilisation from AD 33, and a written script for their language, Manipuri or Meeteilon. The Kukis and Nagas are two other major groups, but to list the divisions and subdivisions beyond that becomes confusing to Western minds. Take for instance Tangkhul, Maram, Poumai, Sumi, Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khamniungan, Konyak, Liangmai, Lotha, Pochury, Rongmei, Zeme and Mao as just some of the Naga subgroups.



Women in a market selling varieties of rice

We should also include the Nepalese of Manipur, whose migration to India began in the nineteenth century. They came to join the British army and to work on tea plantations in Assam and Darjeeling, and started settling in Manipur after World War II, becoming a significant group among the non-Manipuri communities of Manipur.¹

Zou, Kom, Gangte, Kuki and Simte; some of these names will be familiar to our supporters. But these are mostly the 'valley' languages. When we come to the hill people there are twenty-nine dialects spoken, although only six are accepted for use in teaching and exams for qualifications. And don't forget Nepali. The effect of all this upon language, literature and specifically the Bible, is great.

Changes in the languages themselves are compounded now by changes in the written presentation (orthography) of these various scripts. Meitei originally had its own script, but that was officially replaced in the eighteenth century with a Bengali script. In the twentieth century a move to reintroduce the Meitei script began, but additional letters have been needed in order to cover the current language. A Western romanised script, adapted to the sound of the language, is also making inroads into the culture. After a recent visit to Manipur, the Society's Editorial Director noted:

Languages

From 2013 it has been mandatory for children up to eighth grade to



An example of Meitei script taken from a royal chronicle c. eighteenth century

Alongside English, Manipuri (Meitei or Meeteilon), classified as Sino-Tibetan, is the official language with over a million speakers. Then follow Poula, Thado, Tangkhul, Kabui, Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, Liangmai, Bengali, Hindi, Maring, Anal,

learn Meitei using the indigenous Meitei Mayek Script, which differs very greatly from the previous Bengali Script. However, both of the current Meitei Bibles are published in the Bengali script, and thus cannot be read by young people under the age of sixteen, leaving young

people without the ability to read the published Bibles. On the other hand, those over sixteen years of age generally cannot read the Meitei Mayek Script. What Christian parents therefore have to do for their children so that they can read the Bible is to make their own conversion of certain Bible passages into Roman Script.²

Mission and Bible in Manipur

Robert Arthington was born May 1823



A rather faded photograph of Robert Arthington

in Leeds, to Robert (a brewer) and Maria Arthington, members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). He had an excellent academic record at Cambridge University, but 'not being in fellowship' with the established church he was not able to take a degree.

Robert's father closed his brewery business in

1846 and died in 1864, leaving a £200,000 inheritance to his son (in the region of £17.5 million purchase power today).

Young Robert left the Society of Friends in 1848, and joined the South Parade Baptist Church. He directed his wealth to the support and extension of missionary work, being fully persuaded that the spread of the Gospel would hasten the Lord's return. His great interest in and help to Gospel work in Central Africa are worthy of separate attention, but our concern is his commitment to the tribal people of Northeast India.

The Arthington Aborigines Mission began in 1889 to bring the Gospel to the tribes residing in Northeast India. Two British

missionaries, J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge,³ working with the mission, moved to the area and in 1894 began working in Mizoram, just south of Manipur. They reduced the language to writing, and were instrumental in the printing of textbooks, dictionaries and parts of the Bible. Lorrain and Savidge's involvement was marred by Arthington's impatience to see the Gospel more widely and quickly spread, and by awkward practical differences in evangelism. They left for other fields⁴ while Arthington moved to Orissa (now called Odissa), a group of princely states further south on the east coast of India.

Robert Arthington died in October 1900. He had been a lifelong bachelor and lived in severe austerity, and was able to leave a considerable legacy to Christian work and workers, notably the Baptist Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society. He also specified that preference should be given to making the books of Luke, John and Acts available in vernacular translation work. These, of course, give in full the 'declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us' (Luke 1.1), together with the assurance that 'these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name' (John 20.31).

But what was to come of the work in Northeast India? William Pettigrew was already there, sent by the Arthington Aborigines Mission. He was born in Edinburgh in 1869, and brought up in the Episcopalian Church of Scotland (James I and VI's imposition of Anglicanism in Scotland as a counter to the Presbyterian General Assembly). Pettigrew moved to London for his education, and then applied to serve with the Arthington Mission. He was directed to Bengal and worked for two years (1890–1891) in Dhaka and Singh before asking permission to work for the

mission in Manipur. This was not granted until 1894, so in the interval he worked as a teacher in Imphal.

Pettigrew's subsequent Gospel labours amongst the Meitei people in Manipur brought opposition, both racial and religious. The colonial authorities and the Arthington Mission withdrew their support, and Pettigrew, already uncertain about his Episcopalian baptism, joined the American Baptist Church at Sibsagar in Assam. The American Baptist Missionary Union in Assam designated him as missionary to Manipur.

In a visit to England before taking up that task Pettigrew met and married Alice Goreham of Brighton, who had a similar commitment to the Gospel and mission. Alice Pettigrew accompanied William to Ukhrul, Manipur, in 1896 to begin their work among the Tangkhul Naga tribe. They opened a school in the hills, today called William Pettigrew College, and in 1902 a first church, Phungyo Baptist Church, was planted. Converts were from the Nagas and the Kukis; another church was planted at Imphal in 1917.

Thirteen delegates from five churches had met in 1916 and formed the Manipur Christian Association. In late 1917 armed conflict broke out between the Kukis and the British as the Kukis sought

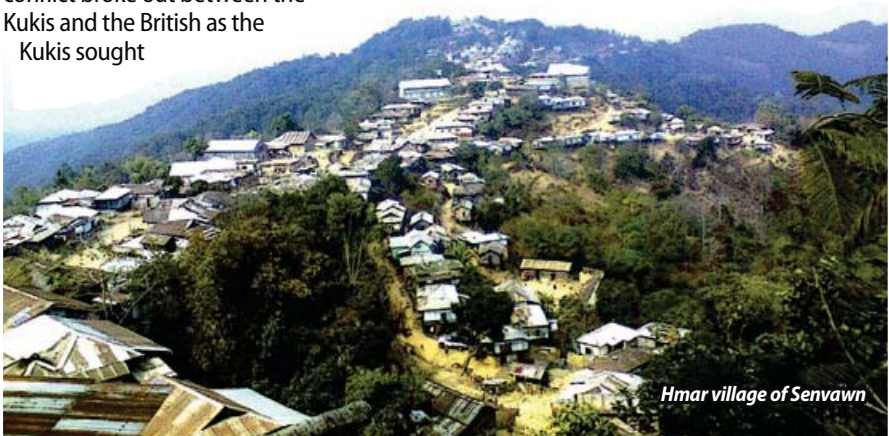
independence. Although after 1928 the Pettigrews were unable to return to Manipur, until her death in New York in 1934 Alice worked tirelessly for the cause of women's education there. William died nine years later.

We must now pass on to Watkin R. Roberts (1886–1969), a slate quarryman from Caernarvon in Wales. Reading sermons of R. A. Torrey, alongside the influence of the 1904–1905 revival in Wales, brought him to faith in Christ and a strong conviction that the mission field was his future.

Among Watkin Roberts's Christian friends were Dr Peter Fraser and his wife, also with a deep concern for foreign mission work, the three of them having shared a mission commitment together at the Keswick Convention in 1908. The Frasers were appointed by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists Foreign Mission Society to work at Aizawl in Mizoram as medical missionaries. When they left for the Mizo tribal people of India they took Roberts with them, at their own expense. They reached Aizawl, India, in December 1908. At twenty-two years old, Roberts was very



Watkin R. Roberts



Hmar village of Senvawn

much younger than other missionaries in the area, and the Mizos called him Saptlangvala, or 'Youthful Sahib'. He was still being called that in his eighties, a sure sign of enduring affection.

North of Mizoram in Manipur, people in the Hmar village of Senvawn had heard news of the Gospel, and their village chief wrote to the missionaries in Aizawl asking for more information. The Hmar were headhunters and lived beyond the area where British authorities had granted permission for missionary work. Roberts sent the chief a copy of the Gospel according to John and the response was a request for someone to come and explain what was written in that Gospel. The local British government agent said 'No, they only want to chop your head off', but in February 1910 Roberts went, literally putting his head on the line for the Gospel.

After just one week of teaching, the chief and four other Hmar men announced that they wanted to make peace with the God of the Bible, believing on Jesus Christ. Roberts actually spent only five days with the Hmar, yet these converts grew in faith to become leaders of a new, energetic church. Within two generations, the entire Hmar tribe had been evangelised. Chawnga Pudaite was one of the early converts; his son, Rochunga (1927–2015),⁵ went on to become a pastor, develop a romanised script for the tribal language and translate the New Testament into it. Headhunting stopped. Great is the Gospel of our glorious God.

In 1912 Roberts suffered a prolonged bout of enteric fever and was sent home to Wales to recuperate. While there he attended the 1914 Keswick Convention, the assembly where a few years earlier he had shared the missionary conviction with the Frasers. Now he met an English woman, Gladys

Wescott Dobson of Brighton, who was also heartily concerned for Christian mission. Travelling prayerfully, they were married in Kolkata, India, on 8 March 1915. Gladys Watkins wrote the words of 'Wounded for Me', published in an early edition of the *Golden Bells* hymnal.

Being of the Welsh Calvinist Methodist Church/Presbyterian Church of Wales, Roberts formed congregations that were of Presbyterian principles, but without any denominational attachment. He called his mission the Thadou-Kuki Mission, later renamed the Northeast India General Mission. In 1920 the Kangpokpi Christian Hospital was opened in Manipur, and a visit to the United States in 1924 brought Roberts welcome financial support from there. He was then able to respond to the longings of his own local Manipuri congregations to take the Gospel on into Burma. The work was renamed again in 1930 to be the Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission, later spreading to areas in Assam, Tripura and Arunachal states in India, and to tribes in the Sagaing Division and the Chin Hills in Upper Burma and even to tribes in Bangladesh.

This was all too much for the tidy-minded British officials, who expected mission work to obey the government's own territorial plans. In 1922 Roberts was expelled from India on the charge that he had stayed overnight in Hmar homes and ate their food. But he had been doing that since 1910: surely they just wanted someone they considered a troublemaker out of their way. Watkin Roberts returned to Wales, but eventually went to Canada where he became involved with the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. Watkin Roberts died in April 1969; his wife Gladys Wescott Roberts died in Toronto in 1983.

After Roberts, missionary field work across Northeast India was largely undertaken

by the American Baptist Mission, with some Australian Baptist help. Supportive associations were formed amongst churches in Assam, Arunachal, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland to further the Gospel, and since 1950 this work has been under the ministry of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI).

The general worldwide decline with regard to the text, translation and sufficiency of the Bible has been reproduced in Northeast India, as reflected in the Society's Editorial Director's report of a visit to Manipur.⁶ The report noted that,

A number of the tribes do not have a Bible or a New Testament in their own tongue; some have Scriptures, but often these are poorly translated from a Critical-Text-based edition of the English Bible such as Today's English Version or the Revised Standard Version. We were, in the end, quite overwhelmed with the demand for the Society to help some of the many tribes of Manipur produce accurate versions of the Scriptures in their heart languages.

A number of the Society's Bible projects in the tribal languages of Manipur were mentioned in that report. In Thadou, Simte and Vaiphei the Society has been working for many years. However, since the visit of the General Secretary and Editorial Director to Manipur in July 2016, the Society's General Committee have approved the commencement of new projects in two further tribal languages of Manipur: Kom and Chothe.

We are thankful in these five projects for the provision of enthusiastic and capable translators, backed-up by the support of knowledgeable translation

committees. Among those working on these Bible projects the names of William Pettigrew and Watkin Roberts are fondly remembered—for these were the men, who in God's providence, were instrumental in bringing the Gospel to their tribes. Truly, 'the memory of the just is blessed' (Proverbs 10.7).

Endnotes

- 1 See Mary Bachaspatimayum, 'Changes in the Religion of the Nepalese of Manipur: Conversion and Acculturation', *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5, 2001, www.ku.edu.np/bodhi/vol5_no1/03.%20Mary%20Bachaspatimayum.%20Changes%20in%20Religion.pdf accessed 28/11/2016.
- 2 Trinitarian Bible Society, *Quarterly Record* no. 617, October to December 2016, p. 13.
- 3 Again, worthy of separate consideration, as is Nathan Brown, a missionary to Assam.
- 4 Writing these articles for over twenty years, I groan as these dissensions appear again and again. Perhaps the evangelised saints around the world groan too when they see the fractured nature of our testimony. Our God will not share His glory.
- 5 Rochunga Pudaite's father had prayed that he would have a son who would learn to read and write and bring the Scriptures to the Hmar people. The Lord answered that prayer and by 1958 Rochunga had completed the translation of the New Testament from Greek into Hmar. In time he went on to found Bibles For The World to send Bibles—one at a time—to people who had no access to the Word of God. Working with various organisations, Dr Ro, as he was known, was able 'to provide language-appropriate copies of God's Word to millions upon millions of people in more than 100 nations who would, otherwise, have little or no access to the Bible' ('Dr. Rochunga Pudaite, 1927–2015', *Bibles for the World*, biblesfortheworld.org/home-2/in-memoriam-dr-rochunga-pudaite).
- 6 *Quarterly Record* no. 617, p. 12.

Go ye into all the world...

A report from **Missionswerk Voice of Hope**, a German ministry established in 2008 to bring the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who do not know it, with whom the Society has partnered over the past year to provide Scriptures for refugees and other migrants moving through Europe.

Jesus 'said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'

Mark 16.15

Midway through 2013 we became increasingly aware of the great wave of refugees washing up on the shores of Sicily and Lampedusa and realised that this was a wonderful opportunity to bring the Gospel to these people, an opportunity that would not be available under normal circumstances. The refugees had only recently been staring death in the face, and many of them are ready to hear the Word of God.

A few months before our first trip to Sicily, thousands of Bibles in Arabic and Persian were donated to us. At first, we did not really know what we should do with them. But when we learned of the great wave of refugees, we sent all these Bibles to Sicily. In autumn 2013 we distributed the Bibles and evangelistic literature in the refugee camps. Like children, many refugees gleamed with joy when they held their own Bible, and our joy was indescribable. Some refugees were

crying with joy or kissing the Bible, while others began to read immediately.

So many people stretched out their hands, but we could not give a Bible to everyone. Therefore, we asked God to provide further Bibles for the refugees. Most people know that printing the Bible is not easy or inexpensive, and accordingly the price of



Desperation and danger: scenes such as this have been all too common in the southern European Mediterranean region in recent years.

a Bible is higher than of a simple book. But God also cared for that. From the Trinitarian Bible Society we bought 5,000 Bibles at reduced price. At the same time the Lord opened the hearts of others to help.

But God did much more. In spring 2015 He gave us material and helpers to begin



weekly Bible teaching. The refugees live in camps of fifty to three hundred people, and they have a lot of free time. They could easily spend their time learning from the Word of God. Daniel, our missionary, regularly visited four refugee camps, where the refugees wanted to get lessons from the Holy Scripture. And in other refugee camps we distributed Bibles and literature, and could also sometimes hold devotions.

We would like to tell you more about two camps.

How God's Word changed people

In April 2015 we learned of a large refugee camp where more than three hundred African refugees were. With us was a retired doctor and evangelist from Germany. The rescue of the refugees is close to his heart. It soon turned out that most of the inhabitants of this refugee camp are Muslims who were in a prayer room when we arrived. The doctor first entered this room and told them all about the way to heaven. He asked them, 'Who knows how we can get to heaven?' He then preached

Jesus Christ: that He is the only way to heaven. The refugees were astonished. Many of them took a Bible. We finished our ministry and said goodbye. A few months later Daniel began there with weekly Bible teaching. God opened for His Word the hearts of some of the young men, including Muslims, whom we met on our first visit in the prayer room. Daily they came together for prayer and reading the Bible, and met once a week with Daniel for learning from the Word of God.

In November 2015 we came again from Germany and rode together with Daniel and Festus, a refugee, to Valderice. Festus, an aggressive and quick-tempered man before his conversion, was now completely changed. When we arrived at that refugee camp we wanted to conduct the eighth session of a Bible seminar we had been holding, but we were turned away by the leadership. We would not be permitted to enter or conduct seminars as long as we could not show that we had permission, and this although we had conducted all the previous seminars there. This led to quite a stir among the refugees. 'Muslims have their prayer room; Roman Catholic

priests can hold their mass without further ado. Why couldn't our seminars and Bible studies be conducted any longer?', they asked incredulously. For the young believers this was beyond belief.

The group of men grew louder, and the situation was getting more and more acute. Daniel looked at us questioningly. At this point, Festus stepped into the midst of the protesting group, calmed the refugees down, and ushered the ones that were most upset out of the room. Then, quietly, he went over to the leaders of the home and said, 'I used to be malicious and quarrelsome, but look! God has changed me. I am still Festus, but now I am a different person. God has completely changed me, and because God has given us a living faith in Jesus Christ, we would like to read the Bible and learn from it.'

One of the workers there, who translated for the other leaders, was much moved as she heard this testimony. But as she was beginning to translate the directors of the refugee camp just brushed her aside and didn't want to listen. Again, indignation arose among the refugees, but one of our number said, 'That is normal'. They looked at him sceptically, so he went on to explain, 'Rejection is normal, because Jesus Christ was despised and treated with hostility for the sake of the truth. It is normal, because even the first Christians had to suffer for the truth. It is normal, because the Word of God is alive: it cuts, and it judges the thoughts and attitudes. God's Word will be held in contempt by those who are lost.'

After that we left the premises and had our planned Bible seminar in the open air. How encouraged the participants felt as they returned to the refugee home, having enjoyed the fellowship. There was no more bitterness against the home's leadership. The Christians had laid their need before God's throne and had received peace in

their hearts. The refugees continued to meet for prayers and reading the Bible every day, but the Bible teaching did not take place after that.

In July 2016 we received a call: it was a refugee from the same camp asking us to come again because there was a great desire to receive Bibles. More refugees had come into this refugee camp and had no Bible but visited the daily prayer meetings. For this reason, we drove again to this camp with Bibles and literature. At the entrance to the refugee camp we were received by the people in charge. After we had explained in friendly terms why we had come, we were allowed to visit the refugees inside for 15 minutes. How eager they were to accept the Bibles and tracts in English, Arabic and French. Some of them received Bibles and literature for friends who were not present at the moment. This desire for God's Word can only be granted by the Father in Heaven.

Shortly thereafter, there was a change of leadership in this refugee camp. Immediately, the brothers informed Daniel about it, and he travelled there a few days later. In the meantime, we prayed for an open door to this camp. Daniel met with the leadership and presented them the request for meetings. And the leadership allowed the believers to gather regularly. At the end of last year, a young brother of this group, who came to this refugee camp as a Muslim, has been given the key to a room that they have been allowed to use for their daily meetings. The condition for this was that they ensure the tidiness of the room. How gladly they agreed with this condition, you can certainly imagine. The young men built a kind of pulpit and placed flowers in the room. We are so thankful to God for this open door! He still works miracles with His Word, the BIBLE!



Hungry for God's Word

There is a camp that looks almost like a big village but is completely locked. High fences surround a variety of barracks, a large sports field and more. Behind the heavy iron gate are guards of the Italian military. In December 2015, when after a three-hour drive from the other end of the island and having finally found the camp after looking a long time, 'How can we get Bibles into this refugee camp?' was our question. We went to the guards, and Daniel told them why we had come. But because we could not give them a written permission, one of the soldiers said relentlessly: 'Here you cannot bring in anything!'

There we were, having travelled such a long way. Had we come all that way in vain? We asked God for another possibility. After we had prayed, a young refugee came out of the camp. As we conversed with

him, it turned out that he was a Christian and that there were other Christians living in this camp. He told us that only one of them had a Bible. We took him to our car and gave him many New Testaments, tracts and calendars. Happy and grateful he said, 'God has heard our prayers and sent you to us!' He carried as much as he could back into the camp and distributed it there. We were very astonished that the refugee was allowed to enter the camp with all that literature. Time after time in close succession he returned to get more literature. We gave him our telephone number and prayed for the refugees here.

After a few hours, another refugee called and thanked us for the calendars and New Testaments. We observed a great hunger for God's Word and soon we sent another shipment of Bibles to Sicily. Daniel drove back to the refugee camp and was even enabled to preach the Gospel to the

refugees. They asked Daniel to return soon and to tell them more about Jesus. Full of joy we thanked God that He had created the possibility to take literature into this closely-guarded refugee camp.

In May 2016, we drove back to that refugee camp. Again about ten soldiers guarded the entrance, and behind the entrance stood a great crowd. A soldier recognised us and beckoned us. 'All here want a Bible! Now you can give one to each of them. To the women first!', he commanded in a harsh tone. We would never have thought that there could be such an openness and gladly recognised that God had opened the doors of this camp to His Word! We positioned our cars nearer to the entrance and then distributed the Bibles.

All English Bibles we had in stock in Sicily were accepted here. A large number of refugees were from Congo. How happy were they to hear that we had French Bibles, too! We were told that there also were refugees speaking Arabic or Tigrinya; therefore, we gave the people present further Bibles and literature to give them.

The number of Bibles we had brought with us was not by far sufficient. Again and again the refugees asked us if we would return. At the time, in our flat in Sicily we only had a few French and Italian Bibles left as well as some tracts in English and Arabic. But God knew before of this need and had already taken care of it: in our mission's headquarters two additional pallets with Bibles donated recently to us were ready to be shipped. This was amazing for us—we only can adore and revere our God for His great mercy! Thereupon we reported to the refugees that God had already cared for them and that we would send the Bibles to

them as soon as we were back in Germany. We had arrived at the camp with two cars stuffed full of all these Bibles and literature; with empty cars we returned. But our hearts were full of gratitude and joy! When God is paving ways and opening doors, nobody can close them.

About 2,000 Bibles were distributed in this refugee camp within a year, and we must always remember the promise of God from Isaiah 55.10-11: 'For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it'.

In 2016, over 181,000 refugees came to Italy, and about 12,000 Bibles were given to them from the abundance we received from the Lord. Yes, we are convinced that the Lord moved people to finance these Bibles. We received a total of 22,000 Bibles last year from the Trinitarian Bible Society and other foundations in the Netherlands, England and Switzerland. Until this day, God gave us a total of over 60,000 Bibles and New Testaments for Sicily. Today African believers bring their Bibles to the Italian Roman Catholics, and tell them about God's plan of salvation through Jesus.

Dear readers, please pray that the recipients may read their Bibles constantly and attentively, and that God may open their eyes through His Word to give them repentance and faith.

The Word of God Among All Nations



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



Europe



From Croydon, England

The service of making available the Word of God in the language of a given people is one of the greatest services one can render. I have recently read an article in your magazine about the labours of William Tyndale, and realise what it meant to this country to have the Bible in English, in effect for the first time, and the motivation he had to complete this task before his life ended, despite tremendous opposition and danger. What a blessing this has been, and how sad that today's Britain has thrown the Bible behind its back. We know that even now, God's Word is not bound, and is still living and operative in the hands of those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is working.

From London, England

It has been a moving touch accompanied by an overwhelming joy since today's afternoon. We received two messages from YODEL shipping informing us that

three parcels (sent from the TBS) are on their way. Although we are speechless, and lack even the slightest skills to articulate our gratitude, we cannot refrain from commenting. You have followed on the footsteps of forerunners who adopted our Christian ministry throughout the years. You are, as they were before, the Godly assets to the Society, and the openhanded sponsors who provided the Scriptures and printed materials in different languages, formats, and subjects. Thank you for keeping this custom alive and strong. As we are greatly blessed, we pray that our faithful Lord would encourage each one of you. May you receive from His hand (as we received from your hands) according to His riches in glory, in Christ. Your generosity and hard labour for His Name's sake are not only priceless, but also reward-worthy.

From England

I just wanted to extend thanks and encouragement for your Work for God. I still hold an old bookmark which I referred to

today reading 'The joy of the LORD is your strength' (Nehemiah 8.10). I was this given by a lady who used to come to my primary school years ago when they allowed people to speak about Christ at schools. It was a safe place and special time: rather than playtime having her teach the Word at my school setting.

From a prison in England

Let's start by saying that, yes, I am a prisoner here. I also want to say a huge thank you to you and all the men and women who produce and distribute your Bibles. I have been given one by a chaplain here; I must say that the little blue Ruby Bible is a fantastic colour and the text is the perfect size for me. I don't know if you normally get thank you letters but I thought I would send one anyway as the Bible has reintroduced me to God. Thank you very much from all the prisoners here.

From Scotland

Please accept this small donation (£430) from our congregation, for the work of the TBS which we wholeheartedly and prayerfully support. This sum is made up of £230 raised from a congregational collection and £200 donation from the children of our Sabbath School.

From a British mission to Portugal

When I first began working in Portugal in 1978, there were *barracas* [ed.: a rough shack] on the outskirts of most of the major cities and large towns. Now they are more difficult to find but still too many people are living in abject poverty. For the December holidays, we prepared food parcels for them. We are grateful not only for the space loaned to us from a local warehouse company but also for the many church volunteers who spent several days

putting together the 120 food parcels from the bulk supplies which arrived on pallets from the supermarkets. The Trinitarian Bible Society who provide their Scripture calendars contribute to this programme by providing spiritual food in the language of the people (Portuguese) so that hearts and minds can be touched and made fertile for the Word of God.



From Lithuania

We are very grateful for your sending calendars Lithuanian, Russian and Polish to us for these many years. That is an excellent method to proclaim the Gospel. It is very rare for someone to refuse the calendars you print. And those who have received them always request them for the next year. We are grateful to God that in this way His Word gets into the homes of unbelievers. We must merely wait for Him to touch weary souls.



Australasia



From Grafton, NSW, Australia

Please accept our sincere thanks for the grant of Scriptures you supplied for this important outreach. The Royal Adelaide Show is South Australia's largest event, displaying the best of our agriculture, livestock, arts and crafts, along with exhibits of goods and services from all walks of life. It attracts a combined audience of about half a million over the 10-day period. Many thousands visit the exhibition areas.

We were located in the main exhibitor pavilion in the Lifestyle section. Interestingly, there were also two Islamic stalls in the pavilion promoting Islam.



TBS Gospels at the Adelaide Show

The Mormons also had a stand. Outside the show ground on the road leading up to the main entry gate, the Jehovah's Witnesses were present daily, distributing their damnable heresies. We were thankful that the Lord enabled us to be there to promote the truth! Many believers stopped by our stall and expressed gratitude for our presence at the Show, particularly in light of the stands promoting falsehood. We had an excellent position on one of the main walkways through the building. This meant that apart from the occasional quiet period we had a constant flow of people walking past the stall. By God's grace, we were able to distribute thousands of Gospel items (tracts, DVDs, Gospels, etc.) to people walking past our stall during the 10 day period of the Show.

The materials provided by TBS were a tremendous asset to this outreach. We were greatly blessed to see the quality of the materials provided by TBS. I believe this is an important part of our testimony to the lost. The quality of our outreach materials reflects on how much we value the Gospel we preach. The presentation of each of the TBS Scriptures is second to none. For example, the

beautiful graphics on the Gospels and the crisp, clean layout of the text with headings. Here is an overview of how we distributed the Scriptures you provided for us:

Bibles and New Testaments: These were displayed on the table and used for those who specifically requested them or showed an interest in the Gospel. We did have the opportunity to share the Gospel each day with interested individuals. One elderly lady told me that she had been to Sunday school as a child and wanted to know more. She asked me "where do I start?" I was able to give her one of these Bibles and encouraged her to begin reading in the Gospels. A young man from the stall next to us (Cancer Council) also came in one day after he had finished his shift and asked for a Bible. There seemed to be a softness of spirit in this young man to the Gospel. Many Bibles were taken on the weekends by families visiting the Show. It is heartening to know that there are still hearts that are hungry for the Gospel in this country. There are no Bibles left over as they were all distributed well before the Show was over! We have a small handful of New Testaments left over (the small ones) but again, the majority of these were taken by interested people.

Distributing Scriptures at the Adelaide Show



Gospels: We kept a stock of these displayed on our stand for those interested. We mainly gave these out in the Gospel packs we assembled (e.g. a TBS Gospel, with a DVD and tract). One great way of giving these away that we found worked really well was to give away a free show bag with a selection of items in it. The Gospels came in handy for this as well. All of the Gospels were given away.

Tracts, Booklets and Bookmarks: The TBS tracts were primarily given away with the Gospel packs we made up each day. The bookmarks were primarily used for the Gospel show bags we gave away. We have a small quantity of tracts left over but most were distributed.

We rejoice that the seed has been sown into many lives. In many ways, this outreach exceeded our expectations. We know that the Word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4.12) and that it will not return unto our God void (Isaiah 55.11). We trust and pray that there will be eternal fruit from this outreach for the glory and honour of our blessed Saviour.

Again, we express our sincerest gratitude for the generous supply of materials to help with this outreach. It would not have been what it was without the materials graciously supplied by TBS. Thank you for being channels for the Word of God. The few items left over will be used in the regular Gospel endeavors of our church (e.g. door knocking, street evangelism, etc.).



The Americas



From the USA via Facebook

I do pray for the calendar ministry. Here in the USA, I gave your Spanish

calendars (both pictorial Words of Life and Golden Thoughts) to my cleaning ladies, to their delight.



From Brazil

Dear brothers and sisters, I looked forward to the calendars in Portuguese 2017. We distributed in various places here in the city and elsewhere, our goal of presenting the Word of God to many people. God bless you abundantly.

Distributing Scriptures in Brazil



Africa



From Zimbabwe

I am writing to thank you most sincerely for the donation of 500 Ndebele Bibles and 180 Shona New Testaments that was made at the time of the visit my wife and myself made to Zimbabwe. We are very grateful to the Trinitarian Bible Society and your supporters for making these Scriptures available to the believers in Zimbabwe at what is a most difficult time for them in their country.

The Bibles and New Testaments were collected from your depot in Bulawayo

by one of the pastors, who oversees the ministry of around 200 'bush churches' in the rural districts surrounding and to the south of Bulawayo. The majority of these congregations are Ndebele speaking and the pastor received 400 of these Bibles to distribute among these congregations. He also has a smaller number of Shona-speaking churches under his care and he had 80 of the Shona New Testaments to

be a great comfort and encouragement to these believers.

I also gave 25 Ndebele Bibles and 40 Shona New Testaments to a man who works among rural congregations to the east of Bulawayo and these were most gratefully received. A further 25 Ndebele Bibles were given to the principal of the Theological College of Zimbabwe based in Bulawayo for him to pass on to believers who would not be able to purchase copies of the Scriptures for themselves.

We also visited Harare during our trip and we took 50 Shona New Testaments to pass to an elder there who oversees a course used widely in the Christian prison ministry in Harare. These 50 Shona New Testaments were being devoted to use in the prisons. A prisoner at a Harare prison writes of receiving Jesus Christ as his Saviour in 1996 and has since completed 20 of the courses.

He writes of a visit from the ministry earlier this year: 'On 1 July I saw Matthew 25:39 being fulfilled, two guys visited us (me and a fellow inmate) and brought us each an Old and New Testament Bible, 2 litre of mango flavoured drink, 1 giant bar blue soap and other things. After the precious visit I went back in my cell and looked at the parcel and opened the Bible with tears of joy running down my cheek. I remember very well saying to myself "He is Jehovah Jireh (Genesis 22:13-14)—Jehovah the Provider". The guys who had been sent by God to pay us a visit told us the Bibles had been donated to us by some other people who have got prisoners at heart and always in their prayers. They brought us parcels worth \$10 each. May the Lord bless



distribute among these congregations. I spoke at a seminar for pastors and church leaders from some of these churches and my wife spoke at a seminar for ladies from some of the churches as well. Some of the Bibles and New Testaments were distributed at these seminars and were received with great joy. I have attached some photos of these being received.

I gave 50 Ndebele Bibles and 10 Shona New Testaments to the elder who oversees the work in a smaller number of fellowships in the Bulawayo area and he is distributing these among the congregations, who are very poor and would not be able to afford to purchase a Bible for themselves. This donation of Bibles and New Testaments will



Shona New Testaments arrive for distribution

the hand that giveth, Oh especially to me a prisoner’.

Another prisoner writes: ‘I engage in Theological/ Bible studies with the Bible Correspondence school. Since 2002 so far I have completed more than two dozen correspondence courses. I am amazed at the blessed work the Lord is doing in the Bible school to continue bringing Divine Light in prisons to hundreds of inmates in many parts of the country. It is a source of great encouragement and inspiration. I appreciate the goodness of the Lord as I continue to pursue these blessed courses. Thank you for the Bible. What a wonderful treasure within my fingertips’. These Shona New Testaments will be used in the prisons alongside this ongoing course work.

Thank you for partnering with us in seeking to support the believers in Zimbabwe and their ministry to reach out with the Gospel by providing these Ndebele Bibles and Shona New Testaments.

From an English ministry to Africa

I am thankful for the Lord’s preservation through what has been at times a difficult and very challenging visit. We proved the Scripture, ‘For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many

adversaries’ (1 Corinthians 16.9). Given the sheer numbers of Bibles and literature distributed, it is not surprising that Satan, the adversary of God’s people, would seek to do his worst to disrupt this mission. I was touched by the prayers and concern of the brethren prior to the visit, and I believe those prayers have been answered.

At the end of a meeting, we distributed a large quantity of French literature including the Trinitarian Bible Society edition

of Matthew’s Gospel in French, requesting for the local pastors to provide comments that can be passed back to TBS. At the hotel, a porter, learning that we were ministers of the Gospel and after being given a French Matthew’s Gospel, did not ask for any money but still ensured our safety. Furthermore, we met with a border official who spoke very good English and showed us great kindness; he has kept in contact subsequently as he is requesting French literature and Scriptures for distribution.

On the Zambian side we found that one of the brethren is a police chaplain and another an army chaplain. We had a private meeting with them and several other brethren. The two chaplains spoke of the great need and opening for the distribution of KJV English Bibles amongst the police and army. They earnestly requested if Bibles could be provided for distribution amongst the units that they had responsibility for as chaplains.

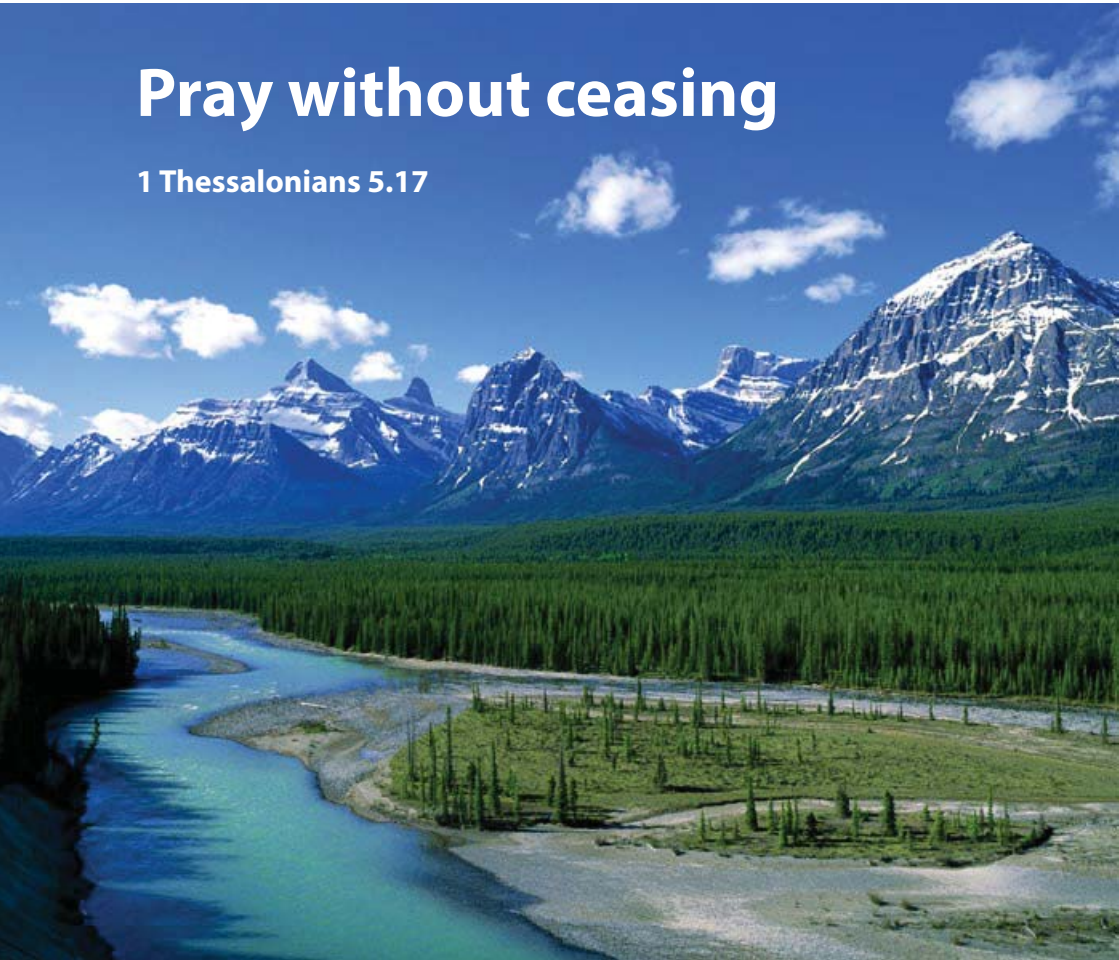
The pastor’s house was filled with boxes of Bibles and books awaiting distribution. We are most grateful to the TBS for a grant of 2,000 KJV Bibles and 4,000 booklets on Bible versions. A stock of local language Bibles was also purchased. The plan was to hold a conference and distribute Bibles

to about 270 people. Then we found that people were queuing up outside the building; some were shouting out that there were Bibles being distributed, thereby gathering yet more people. That evening about 170 people remained without a Bible, and they refused to leave the church building until meeting organisers promised that night to collect more Bibles and distribute them at the church at 10.00am the following morning. These 170 Bibles had to be taken from an allocation for meetings planned for later in the year, but they were released so that the remaining 170 people duly received a Bible each the following morning.

Two gentlemen had tirelessly laboured at all the meetings in the organisation and distribution, seeking to do all things in a proper and right order. As an expression of appreciation, both are being given a Westminster Reference Bible. As I returned to the UK, one of them informed me that from his detailed records a total of 1,483 Bibles in English and local languages were distributed, in addition to thousands of pieces of literature. We seek that the Lord would be pleased to graciously water the seed that has been sown. We also thank God for His preservation through the mission and deliverance from many dangers seen and unseen.

Pray without ceasing

1 Thessalonians 5.17





Trinitarian Bible Society

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The aims of the Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

For introductory literature and catalogue please contact the Society.

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