

# Quarterly Record

The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society • Issue Number 646 January–March 2024

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG ALL NATIONS

# **(The Society Trinitarian** Bible Society

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

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# Saturday 9 March 2024 G O D W I L L I N G at the Society's Headquarters

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

W e are again opening the doors of our London Headquarters for a time of information about the Society and fellowship with like-minded believers. All ages are equally welcome, and children will be catered for.

#### THERE WILL BE TWO SESSIONS,

MORNING between 10.00 & 12.00 AFTERNOON between 13.30 & 15.30. Those wishing to attend are invited to select one. Open Day is free of charge as always, but booking is essential; 100 tickets will be available for each session, obtainable online at tbsbibles.org/event/openday2024 or by contacting the Society. Please book for only one session in order that others will have opportunity to attend. During the first part of each session, attendees will have opportunity for fellowship and refreshments, and will be able to explore various displays and activities. After this, visitors will move throughout William Tyndale House in groups to watch three presentations about the Society's work and principles. Topics will include the TBS Spanish Bible Project, the Translation of the Scriptures, and the Publication and Distribution of the Scriptures.

Please mark your diaries for 9 March and make plans to attend. We look forward to seeing you then.



# ADVANCE NOTICE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

# Saturday 21 September 2024 g o d willing

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

After the Business Meeting, at 2.00 p.m.

the Rev. W. Irwin Member of the General Committee is expected to preach.

All are invited to attend. Please <mark>see</mark> our website fo<mark>r m</mark>ost up-to-date details.





# **The General Secretary's Introduction** Jonathan D. Arnold

s a New Year begins, and we are granted health and strength, we must look forward, seeking the Lord's help. 2 Chronicles 32.8 tells us, 'With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah'.

Likewise, a similar view is expressed in Isaiah 31.1, 'Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!'

At that stage Israel were trusting in the strength of man, in numbers, and equipment. While Israel was trusting in the arms of men, Judah was also tempted to lean on that same 'broken reed, on Egypt' (Isaiah 36.6), yet they had at hand a sure support, an Almighty Deliverer, one that would be as a lion for fearlessness and irresistible strength, and as a mother bird for swiftness and tenderness (cf. Isaiah 31.4–5).

We must remember that, whilst we have many things to help us in Bible distribution, it is the Lord who blesses it. This coming year we seek to labour as the Lord enables and look unto Him to bless the work of the Society.

### Retirement of Mr Adrian Stoutjesdyk

The end of 2023 marked the conclusion of Mr Adrian Stoutjesdyk's work as General Secretary for TBS (Canada). Mr Stoutjesdyk has laboured there for fourteen years. In December, it was my privilege to attend in Chilliwack the last public meeting at which he spoke as General Secretary. We are very grateful for the work he has been enabled to do for the Society.

I would also thank all the volunteers that have helped at the Chilliwack office over many years; we trust their labours are not in vain in the Lord. It is a time of change for TBS (Canada) as Mr William Grisnich takes up his new role as General Secretary, and the office premises move from Chilliwack, British Columbia to Lethbridge, Alberta. During my recent visit to Alberta, it was encouraging to see the interest in volunteering for the Society there, and we continue to pray the Lord will supply our needs.

#### **Missionary to Korea**

During Mr Stoutjesdyk's last meeting at Chilliwack, he mentioned a nineteenth

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century missionary who was instrumental in bringing the Scriptures to Korea. Robert Jermain Thomas, a Welsh Protestant missionary, was only young when he heard of the need for Scriptures in Korea. He studied Chinese and Korean, after which he began his mission work in China. He was subsequently able to travel to Korea twice. In 1866 the Rev. Thomas travelled towards Pyongyang (the modern day capital city of North Korea) in an American trading ship called the General Sherman. Westerners were viewed with great suspicion and the boat was attacked, eventually being set on fire. The Rev. Thomas continued with the task of distributing the Scriptures from the boat. After he had distributed all the books but one, he left the burning boat, taking with him his last copy of the Bible. It is said he stretched out this copy towards the soldier waiting for him on shore and begged him to accept the Bible, shutting his eyes to pray. The soldier hesitated to execute him, but then did so, and so the Rev. Thomas give his life for the Gospel.

These final moments spent in distributing the Scriptures were used by God to lay a foundation. In a letter dated 16 January 1928, the Rev. Han Suk Chin, a minister in Korea who assisted the Rev. Dr S. A. Moffett in establishing the church in Pyongyang, wrote, I came to Pyongyang for the first time in October 1892. That was only twenty-five or six years after Mr. Thomas's death. If I had tried to find out something about his preaching at that time, I could have obtained guite a good many interesting facts. But I did not pay any attention to it at all, and I only heard about him when I was going round that district to preach as a colporteur. The people who had witnessed the events of that time, said that they had seen a foreigner on deck saying 'Jesus' and throwing out many books to the shore when the foreign vessel was being burnt, and they also said that the books I was selling were the same as those thrown by the foreigner.<sup>1</sup>

Missionaries in the following years later heard accounts of an eleven-year-old boy named Choi Chi Ryang who went down to the riverbanks with his uncle to see the foreigners on the *General Sherman* and brought back three copies of the Scriptures. Another person, a woman

named Lee Shin Haing, also came back with a book, and a man, Kim Chang Koo, got hold of several copies and brought them home. However, after a few days an edict was issued threatening with arrest any person who might be found possessing such books. Many people may have thrown them away, but a clerk of the Prefectural Office named Pak Young Sik gathered them up and used them as wallpaper in his house just inside the East Gate of Pyongyang, which was later bought by Choi Chi Ryang.<sup>2</sup> These premises were

The Rev. R. J. Thomas

subsequently used as a church. Years later in 1893, Samuel A. Moffett discovered, on forming a catechism class, a man who received a Bible in China from the Rev. Thomas before he died.<sup>3</sup>

This is a moving example of someone's dedication to distribute the Word of God in perilous circumstances. I trust it might humble and inspire us as we serve the Lord in this generation, that we, by God's grace, might have a burden for the distribution of God's Word.

#### **Metrical Psalms**

For those who have recently enquired about the editions of the Bible the Society publishes with Metrical Psalms, we are pleased to say that, at the time of writing, we are expecting the Windsor Bibles with Metrical Psalms to arrive in the coming days. The Society remains committed to making editions with Metrical Psalms available, and we are hoping to reprint the Westminster with Metrical Psalms in the future if the Lord will. In this area, and for all our Bibles, we are experiencing severe price rises and so we continue to try and ensure we cover our costs, as well as find a good price with a good reliable printer.

#### UK TBS events in 2024

I would like to encourage those of you in the United Kingdom to join us at the upcoming Open Day on Saturday 9 March 2024, if the Lord will. This Open Day will consist of a series of three talks around the building in a manageable number. We trust this will be interesting to young and old and give an insight into the Society's work.

Likewise, you would be most welcome to join us in November 2024 when we hope to hold two conferences, Lord willing, one in England and the other in Northern Ireland. These addresses, which will be on the subject of inspiration, will be recorded. We hope throughout the year we can supply further material to assist those who stand for the verbal plenary inspired Word of God.

#### The Inspiration of Scripture

The Samuel Moffet (mentioned previously) noted the position of the view of Scripture and the place it had in mission work,

[T]he one great God-given means for the evangelisation of a people is His own Word, and ... the emphasis which has been placed upon the teaching and preaching of the Word of God has brought God's own blessing upon the work in Korea. The one great commanding feature of the work in Korea has been the position, the supreme position, the perhaps almost unparalleled position given to instruction in the Scriptures as the very Word of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.<sup>4</sup>

There are various theological arguments being put forward regarding inspiration, some that would cast doubt on the belief that the modern-day believer has access to a reliable copy of the inspired Scriptures. We hope to address this, encouraging believers to stand where those who went before us stood, namely, on a reliable, inspired Old and New Testament preserved through the centuries by the Hand of God.

The inspiration of the Scriptures as having the authority of God is set before us by Christ himself, as He declares 'It is written'. Immediately after His baptism, Christ went into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan (Matthew 4.1–11). Satan suggested that Christ convert stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, but the Lord replied, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' (Matthew 4.4). In this, Christ quoted Deuteronomy 8.3, and then twice more He stopped the devil's mouth with 'It is written', citing Deuteronomy 6.16 and Deuteronomy 6.13. In declaring 'It is written' Jesus employs the perfect tense, denoting completed action with abiding results.<sup>5</sup> He therefore is declaring that God's words were written and remain so! That which was inspired, albeit now in copies of the original many years after Moses wrote them, is the Word of God. As such it refers to the results of a process of Divine inspiration whereby the Old Testament Scriptures are in existence in all their fulness and purity.

We also get a sense of Christ's teaching in terms of the depth of inspiration. He speaks not just of the general principles, but of the very detailed parts of words. As Matthew 5.17–18 reads, Christ said, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled'. The jot and tittle respectively represent the tiniest Hebrew letter and letter stroke, and set forth the minutest accuracy for the entire Old Testament Scriptures. This directs us to a high view of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

This view is further shown by Christ using individual words or each tense to make a point. In debating the Sadducees Christ said, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine' (Matthew 22.31–33).<sup>6</sup>

Here, Christ accuses the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection) that they didn't know the Scriptures because here He points us to Exodus 3.6. Years after the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it could still be said that Jehovah was their God, because while their body was buried, they were not annihilated but living. Here the very tense that is used is vital, and the means by which Christ makes defence of the resurrection to the Pharisees.

#### Conclusion

I commend this edition of the QR to you. As always, it has many different parts of the Society's work represented and we would be grateful for your prayers as we start this New Year.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. Oh, M. W. The Two Visits of the Rev. R. J. Thomas to Korea'. *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22, 1933, p.121.

2. lbid., 95–123.

3. During the past year the Society has been digitising and reviewing a Korean Bible translation that had already been favourably assessed in relation to text and translation. In due course we hope to publish it online and are now ready to begin this with the Gospel according to John.

4. Y. K. Park, 'Korean Presbyterianism and Biblical Authority: The Role of Scripture in the Shaping of Korean Presbyterianism, 1918-1953', (Doctoral Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991), p. 78.

5. H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, (New York, USA: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 191.

6. For more information on these arguments and others, see Louis Gaussen, *Theopneustia: The Bible: Its Divine Origin and Inspiration*, Section V (Cincinnati, USA: G. S. Blanchard & Co, 1859).

A Vice-President of the Society

EVERY WORD By Pastor M. J. Harley Man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live *Deuteronomy* 8.3

hen God speaks it is law, because of who He is. He is the triune God who was never created and has always been; His Word is the ultimate expression of His will. As Creator, His Word is law to all that He has made, and authority resides with Him because of His own intrinsic Being. His power to sustain all things and enforce His Word lies in the essence of His Being, the essential part of being the uncreated Godhead. We might also say that what He says stands, because in every age His Word continues to be true, authoritative, and always enforceable.

We do not know every word which God has ever spoken. For example, while we know that the Father covenanted with the Son to save the people which the Father had given Him, we do not know all the exact words between their Persons by which they ratified this eternal arrangement (see Ephesians 1.3–5, Psalm 2.7–8, Luke 22.29, and John 17.2). This is because they are not necessary for us to know.

The Father has authorised the Holy Spirit to put down in writing (that is, the Scriptures) everything which He wishes mankind to know of His words for their salvation and for their continuance in the faith. Commands, promises, and warnings all come from the character of His innermost Being, and are designed for mankind's benefit. Eve, then Adam, disobeyed God's Word (a promise, a command, and a warning) and all mankind has fallen by the same inherited error of disobedience.

The Scriptures come with no less authority because they are written. God's Word

is always His Word whether spoken or written, publicly or privately. Neither does it come with any less authority because the Holy Spirit, being authorised to do so, prepared the entirety of the experience of the Scripture writers to declare in writing without error those words which God spoke to them.

We feel pangs of hunger sometimes; the prospect of famine is life threatening because we need food for our bodily subsistence. However, our souls need a different sort of food in order to live. It is indeed frightening when we see those enduring a famine and imagine the prospect, but a famine of 'hearing the words of the LORD' (Amos 8.11) is more so. This is because the need of our eternal souls is more precious than the need of our bodies which die; that much greater is the need to feed upon the Scriptures than to eat our food. Each person knows how vital the latter is; so how much more vital is the Scripture, the written Word of God!

The Lord Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8.3 to the devil in Matthew 4.4, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' and in Luke 4.4, 'It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God'. The context of each of these verses is worthy of in-depth study and meditation. The wilderness experience of our own lives, and our own temptations, will be guided by these words.

The expression 'every word' appears in each reference. I expect that many of you will recall when your parents told you at dinner as children to 'eat it all up'. They may have threatened you with no dessert, or they may have relented and kindly said, despite your fuss, that you did quite well.

Every word of the Lord is life to our souls. Over the years we must become

familiar with all the words of Scripture for our good. We need it all. You may have been thinking that the parents who allowed you to leave a little failed of their purpose. Not so. 'Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little' (Isaiah 28.9–10). The written Word is assimilated little by little, though we need it all. The aim is to accumulate God's Word so that the Holy Spirit may bring it back to our memory: words which are not needed today but will be needed for one of our tomorrows. The Scriptures are not written like a manual; they may be better described as a map. But whether manual or map we are to examine them in time of need, as well as to be aware of the contents at all times.

It is very special that we have such a guide. Some have called it 'a love letter from home' as it is to a believer, but it is relevant to the whole of mankind, Christian or not. Ignorance of the human law is culpable, and so it is with the Law of God.

The translators of the AV urge their readers 'Tolle, lege; tolle, lege: Take up and read, take up and read the Scriptures' (TBS Westminster Reference Bible, page vi). As with the early Reformers they well knew the power of the Scriptures to deliver us from error. In Psalm 119.28 we read: 'My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word' which points us to the Scriptures to overcome all discouragement—to search the map so to speak. Our translators rightly thought that encouragement to read the Scriptures was worthy of repetition, and as TBS supporters we should make this our emphasis too.



# UKRAINE AND THE BIBLE

## by Natalie Hanks, Lead Editor

kraine's unique history means that the country still doesn't have a complete Bible in current literary Ukrainian that can be understood across the whole of Ukraine, based on the Greek Textus Receptus and Masoretic Hebrew Texts. For centuries the Ukrainian language has been suppressed, and only since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of an independent Ukraine in 1991 has the Ukrainian language revived and Ukrainians been able to worship God openly. Since 1998 the TBS has been publishing the Kulish translation of the Bible, which can be understood by Ukrainians in the far west of Ukraine, but the dialect is not easy for people in the rest of the country to read and understand. It is with great joy that the TBS are shortly

publishing a new Ukrainian New Testament in current literary Ukrainian, which we hope will be blessed to many souls across the country.

## 'Borderland'

The name 'Ukraine' means borderland, and this gives a good indication of the geographical situation of the country and how it has fared in history, being either a gateway to Europe from Eurasia, or a battleground of various empires. Ukraine is the second biggest country in Europe after Russia, forming 6% of the continent's land—by comparison the United Kingdom forms 2.4%. Russia borders the east and north-east: Belarus in the north: Poland. Slovakia, and Hungary to the west; and Romania and Moldova to the south-west. The rest of the country borders the Black Sea. Ukraine has some mountains, but most of the country is flat steppes (fertile plains). It is often called the 'breadbasket of Europe' with some of the most fertile land on earth perfectly suited for growing grains.

The history of Ukraine is filled with the country's struggle to maintain their own unique identity, as a succession of people

have conquered and occupied it, each leaving an imprint on the history and culture of this frontier land.

## The Kyivan Rus'

The ninth century saw the rise of the first influential state in Eastern Europe at the time, the Kyivan Rus'. Kyiv, its capital, became the most important seat of power in Eastern Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The state was established by the Varangians, a group of Scandinavian warriors led by the Viking warrior Rurik, and at its height it encompassed the territories of much of modern-day Ukraine and Belarus, and part of Russia. It was known for its sophisticated culture, architecture, and military might.

In A.D. 988 the pagan ruler of the time, Prince Volodymyr, converted to Christianity, potentially for political reasons. It is thought that the Eastern Orthodox Christian Byzantine emperor, Basil II, asked Prince Volodymyr for military assistance as he was facing a revolt, promising the hand of his sister Anna in return. Volodymyr helped him, but Basil insisted that Volodymyr convert to Christianity before he could marry Anna. Accordingly, Volodymyr was baptised in the Crimea. Back in Kyiv he commanded that the citizens participate in a mass baptism in the Dnieper River, thus claiming Kyivan Rus' as Christian. However, even before Prince Volodymyr accepted Christianity the Byzantines were already sending Christian missionaries into the region. Cyril of Thessalonica and his brother Methodius devised the Glagolitic alphabet to translate Christian texts into the Slavic languages.

Today, over a thousand years later, Eastern Orthodox Christianity remains the dominant religion in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

The Kyivan Rus' reached its golden age in the eleventh century under Volodymyr's son Yaroslav the Wise. Yaroslav promoted learning and scholarship, and his rule marked the beginning of literacy in Kyivan Rus', with Kyiv becoming Europe's chief political and cultural centre. Religious texts were translated from Greek into church Slavonic, written in the alphabet specifically created by Cyril and Methodius for the Slavs. Yaroslav also engaged in enduring construction projects, the most famous and impressive of which is St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, which was modelled on the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (now Istanbul).

## **Mongol Occupation**

The Kyivan Rus' empire began to decline in the thirteenth century due to internal strife and attacks from Mongol invaders. In 1237 the Mongols, led by Batu Khan (a grandson of Genghis Khan), invaded the land. The conquest was swift and brutal, and many towns and cities were destroyed. The Mongols became known as the Tatars and established the



The Mongol Golden Horde ride into battle

Empire of the Golden Horde. This was a Mongol khanate that ruled over the area encompassing present-day Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe. The Khan was responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, and appointing local rulers who were responsible for governing their respective territories. Whilst they united the country, the Mongols imposed their own language and culture in the region, which had a lasting impact. The Mongols also brought Islam to the country.

## The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

In 1363 Lithuanian forces defeated the Mongols and incorporated Ukraine into the grand duchy of Lithuania. In 1569 the Union of Lubin formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with the majority of the Ukrainian land being transferred to Poland's control. Most of Ukraine was controlled by this confederacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

# The Cossacks

Tired of the oppression and poor living conditions brought on by the Polish and Lithuanian rulers, groups of peasant Slavs and Tartar warriors began to form on the steppes of Ukraine and southern Russia. These became known as Cossacks, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they became a powerful presence in the region, coalescing into larger groups such as the Zaporozhian Cossacks. The name Cossack comes from the Turkic word kazak which means 'free man'. and the Cossacks were fiercely loyal to their communities and independence. They were also known for their unique military tactics, including firing guns whilst riding horses, as well as their distinctive clothing. The Cossacks spread and popularised the term 'Ukraine' as the name of their territories

In 1648 a Cossack called Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595–1657) led an uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, forming a Cossack state

Zaporozhian Cossack

(or Hetmanate) in central Ukraine. Khmelnytsky then had a terrible defeat in a battle with the Polish in 1651 and turned to the Russian Tsar for help. The Hetmanate had to agree in 1654 to the Pereiaslav Agreement, which formed a political and military alliance with Russia.

Between 1657–1686 there was a devastating war for control of the Hetmanate. The Cossacks, Russia, Poland, the Crimean Khanate, and the Ottoman Empire were all involved and thousands of lives were lost. This period of time became known as 'The Ruin'. A treaty between Poland and Russia in 1686 divided the land of the Cossack Hetmanate between Russia and Poland.

# The Russian Empire

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Russian Empire expanded into Ukraine, oppressing the Cossacks. Early in the eighteenth century there was another Cossack uprising but this was crushed at the Battle of Poltava in 1709 under the leadership of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great (1672–1725), who felt that

Ukrainian independence would threaten Russian prosperity and its ability to consolidate power.

In 1783 Catherine the Great (Empress of Russia from 1762–1796 after overthrowing her husband, Peter III) annexed the Crimea to secure access to the Black Sea, and she also completed the dissolution of the Cossack Hetmanate. Her aim was to 'Russify' Ukraine, suppressing the Ukrainian language and supporting immigration into Ukraine. The Russian Empire believed that Ukraine was theirs, a 'Little Russia' that should be amalgamated into the Russian empire.

The Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth declined during the late eighteenth century, which led to it being portioned by its powerful neighbours (Austria, Prussia, and Russia). Russia gained the majority of Ukrainian lands, with Austria taking an area in the south-west of the country, leading to serious consequences for Ukraine in the World Wars.

Ukrainians tried to promote and keep their language and culture in the nineteenth century, but Russia imposed more repressive measures. This included a ban on Ukrainian books and papers. A directive in the 1860s stated that 'A Little Russian [i.e. Ukrainian] language never existed, does not exist, and never shall exist. Its dialects as spoken by the masses are the same as the Russian language.<sup>1</sup> Russia emphasised the shared ethnicity and the growing Russian population who had moved into the area.

## The First World War

The First World War had a devastating effect on the people in Ukraine—those under Russian control were fighting for the Imperial Russian Army, while those in the south-west under Austrian control had to fight for the opposing Austrian-Hungarian army. This meant that many Ukrainians found themselves fighting each other.

## The Russian Revolution

Early 1917 saw the Russian Revolution, followed by the collapse of the Russian

**Catherine the Great** 

Empire and the eventual formation of the communist Bolshevik party under Lenin. However, many Ukrainians were opposed to the imposition of communism and formed a 'Central Rada' which declared full independence for Ukraine in 1918—the Ukrainian People's Republic. This step



was opposed by the Bolsheviks and a period of complex warfare developed between the two sides, assisted by various external powers and factions, lasting until 1921. During this period, numerous rival governments struggled for control, but in November 1921 the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established, Russia taking the majority of the country with smaller pieces going to Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed. This communist state consisted of Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, and the Transcaucasian Federation, and later included other republics such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

Initially the Soviet leadership encouraged nationalism, promoting Ukrainian language and culture, and improving education and health care. However, this was drastically reversed when Joseph Stalin came into power.

## The Holodomor – Great Famine

The Soviets had a centrally planned economy, with collective farms having to produce high quotas of specific crops. Stalin wanted to crush the Ukrainian people into submission since the Ukrainian farmers generally refused to ioin the collective farms. In 1932 the crop quotas were impossibly high, but collective farms were not allowed to receive grain for themselves until they had fulfilled the guotas; if they failed all the grain they had was confiscated. The borders into Ukraine were then sealed, and food supplies into the country were blocked. As a result, in 1932 and 1933 between four and seven million Ukrainians starved to death in a manmade famine, called the Holodomor, which is a combination of the Ukrainian words 'starvation' and 'to inflict death'<sup>2</sup> This has been recognised as a genocide, and Stalin was found posthumously guilty in 2010.

In the 1930s Stalin ordered a purge of all perceived enemies throughout the Soviet Union. These were executed or shipped off to the Gulag labour camps (which were like concentration labour camps). 'The Great Terror' lasted from 1936 until Stalin's death in 1953, and many Ukrainians, including ordinary people, farmers, and teachers, were among those either imprisoned, exiled to labour camps, or executed without a trial.

## The Second World War

Ukraine suffered terribly in the Second World War. In 1939 Poland was invaded,



and Germany and Russia shared Poland's Ukrainian territory between them. The whole of Ukraine was then occupied by the invading Nazis beginning in 1941. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens were deported to Germany as slave labourers. One of the worst massacres of the Holocaust took place when around 35,000 Jews were killed in a ravine outside Kyiv. It is estimated that over six million Ukrainians died in total, including one million Ukrainian Jews. Ukraine lost around 16% of its pre-war population during the war.<sup>3</sup>

In 1943 the Soviet Red Army recaptured Kyiv. In 1944 Stalin deported the entire population of Crimean Tatars, around 200,000 people, to the east of Russia, nearly half dying of starvation or disease along the way.

## Post-War Ukraine

After the war, Ukraine was under Soviet rule once again. Soviet policy suppressed Ukrainian language and culture, leading to a loss in historical practices and knowledge. The Ukrainian language was banned in official documents and the media, and many intellectuals were arrested and killed. Religion was also banned, the Soviet state being atheistic.

## **Chernobyl Disaster**

In April 1986 a nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant exploded. This was the worst nuclear accident in history, and has been linked to many deaths and thousands of cases of cancer, particularly thyroid cancer in people who were children and adolescents when the





accident occurred. The disaster increased anti-Soviet feeling in Ukraine, and hastened the demise of the Soviet Union.

### Ukrainian Independence

The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and in 1991 the Society Union crumbled. The leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, met with the leaders of Belarus and Ukraine and signed an agreement freeing the two countries to form independent states.

The Ukraine parliament declared independence, making the country technically fully free for the first time, although it was still under Russian influence. A referendum took place, with 92% of the population voting in favour of the Declaration of Independence. Initially the country suffered high inflation and economic decline but this gradually improved.

In 1994 negotiations between the USA, Ukraine, and Russia led to a deal in which Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons they had inherited from Russia. One of the items they received in exchange was a promise from Russia to respect the existing borders of the country.

However, tensions remained in Ukraine with pro-Europe factions pitted against pro-Russian parties. In 2004 a pro-Russian president, Yanukovych, was appointed in an election which was seen as rigged. This led to protests in favour of his pro-European rival, Yushchenko. These protests became known as the Orange Revolution (Yushchenko's campaign colour was orange), and the election was re-run with the pro-European Yushchenko being elected.

Yushchenko was in favour of becoming a member of NATO and the EU, but infighting meant he made slow progress, and in 2010 he was defeated by his rival Yanukovych once again, who had support in the more pro-Russian eastern and southern regions. The new government refused to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in 2013, which lead to a huge opposition movement known as the Euromaidan Protest. For nearly four months hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians occupied public spaces (such as the Maidan Independence Square, Kyiv) and called for ties with the EU, despite police opening fire on protestors and killing many. Yanukovych was forced out of government and fled the country.

After elections in 2014, Petro Poroshenko became president and Ukraine had a level of independence not seen before. Meanwhile, Russia under Putin responded by occupying and annexing the Crimea and promoting a separatist revolt in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine which claimed around 14,000 lives over the following years.

# **Ukraine Today**

In 2019 Zelensky became president of Ukraine. He was initially an actor and screenwriter, but was elected by a landslide with 73% of the vote.<sup>4</sup> Zelensky aimed to improve the country's economy, and try and resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. He promised to clean up the political system and tackle oligarchs who had been dominating the economy.

In 2021 Russia began a military buildup along the borders of Ukraine, and in February 2022 Ukraine was invaded. Russia met with far stronger resistance than expected, and, at the time of writing, the war continues to this day with no real end or resolution in sight.

# **Religion in Ukraine**

Eastern Orthodoxy has long been the dominant religion in Ukraine. There is a formal separation between state and religion which gives Ukrainians a high level of religious freedom. However, Eastern Orthodoxy tends to have a considerable influence over Ukrainian politics and society.

A report in 2022 stated that 72% of the population are Orthodox, 8% are Greek Catholic, 2% Protestant (with the strongest concentration in western Ukraine), and a further 2% other Christian groups.<sup>5</sup> There are very small numbers of Jews and Muslims.

'Religiosity' in general has risen significantly in the Ukrainian population since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. This is predominantly caused by there now being freedom of religion, particularly since 2013.

During the Soviet Era, people were forced to be atheist or stay faithful and face persecution, including possible death or imprisonment. Atheism was taught in schools and church buildings destroyed. Many Christians who did not collaborate with the atheistic state were killed, deported to Gulags or imprisoned; others were fined or had their property confiscated or destroyed. The official church, which was





recognised by the state, was infiltrated by the KGB and its leadership was effectively controlled by the state. Evangelism was prohibited and baptisms had to be sanctioned by Communist Party officials.

Many churches refused to collaborate with the state and went underground, placing the attendees in danger of imprisonment or even death for gathering together to worship God. These Christians realised that the state was destroying the church from within, and they believed that God should be obeyed rather than man. Freedom of conscience and of speech for citizens existed on paper only. While Christians were supposed to be treated equally with the Communists, Communists actually controlled all the media while Christians were denied the basic right to possess the Word of God and preach the Gospel. Bibles were confiscated and new ones were not printed, leading to a real shortage of Bibles. Many Christians risked their freedom and smuggled Bibles into the country, while others secretly printed Bibles using homemade printing presses manufactured from parts taken from bicycles, washing machines, and other household appliances. The Communists did their utmost to eliminate such printing activities, but God preserved His Word and His work, and most underground printing presses remained undetected.

It has been suggested that the Chernobyl Disaster prompted many people in Ukraine to think about the Christian faith. The current war has also led to an increase in the number of people worshipping and seriously seeking the Lord.

Protestants make up a much smaller proportion of the country than Eastern Orthodox, but the number is increasing. The number of registered Christian Protestant organisations increased from around 6,800 in 2010 to more than 10,500 in 2020.<sup>6</sup> An article in *Christianity Today* in 2008 called Ukraine the 'Bible Belt' of Eastern Europe, as it was a hub of evangelical church life and missions, the country being a key supplier of missionaries and printed material for the countries of the former Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup> Today, in the free parts of Ukraine, people are allowed to practice their religion openly.

### **Ukrainian Bible**

Soviet policy was to actively discourage the use of the Ukrainian language, combining all ethnic groups into a new formation of 'the Soviet people', a similar policy to that of the Russian Empire which governed the country for so long. However, people in Ukraine still retained the language, and since independence they have tried to revive the culture and language, making it the official language of the country. Bilingualism still exists (mainly in the eastern part of Ukraine and in large industrial centres), but society as a whole is definitely moving towards Ukrainian speaking. Historically, many Ukrainian Christians read the Russian Bible while speaking Ukrainian in everyday life. However, the situation is different today,

and people want to read the Bible in the Ukrainian language that they speak every day at home.

The first complete Ukrainian Bible was published in 1903, with the New Testament first published in Lviv, Western Ukraine in 1881. At that time, most of Ukraine was governed by the Russian Empire, and the use of Ukrainian language was very restricted. Nothing was permitted to be printed in Ukrainian, only in Russian. Panteleimon Kulish, a Ukrainian scholar and writer, commenced a translation in the 1860s. The Russian Orthodox church and the Russian authorities forbad Kulish from preparing the Bible in the standard literary form of Ukrainian spoken in the areas under their control and so Kulish published his work in a dialectical form of the western Ukrainian language spoken in the parts of Ukraine then in the Austro-Hungarian empire. In 1885 a fire destroyed the manuscript of the Old Testament and Kulish had to start again, but died before he could finish it. Two other Ukrainian scholars finished the work, and it was finally published in 1903. This is known as the Kulish Bible.

Once the Bible became available in Ukrainian. permission was sought to bring copies into the Russian controlled part of Ukraine. Permission was denied, so the Bible had to be smuggled into Ukrainian parts of the Russian Empire. While the Kulish Bible is primarily anteleimon Ku based on

the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received texts, the Ukrainian language used is difficult to understand for some modern Ukrainians as it is written predominantly in a western dialect which wasn't used in other parts of Ukraine. The spelling system used in the Kulish is also different to that in use today. Being a dialect also means that many words are not used in current literary Ukrainian, and some have become offensive such as the word used for Jews.

A few other translations have since been made, but these have serious translation problems. For example, in the 1930s Ivan Ohienko commenced work on a new translation, published in 1958. However, the Greek text upon which it was based was the Critical Text, and some of the language used is also different to that understood in Ukraine today. The UBS recently produced a new translation, but this is also based on the Critical Text.

## TBS and the Ukrainian Bible

The Society has published the Kulish for many years, and this can still be understood by some people in the west of Ukraine there are people who speak the old western dialect in Uzhhorod, which borders Hungary and Slovakia, and this has helped maintain a regular demand for the Kulish Bible since it was first published by TBS in 1998.

The demand for this Ukrainian Bible has increased dramatically since Ukraine was invaded in February 2022. Since that time, the Society has been able to distribute over 24,000 Ukrainian Bibles, nearly 10,000 Ukrainian New Testaments, and over 21,000 copies of the Ukrainian Gospel according to John. However, many other Ukrainians would struggle to understand this version, meaning that there is currently no good complete Ukrainian Bible based on the Greek Received Text that can be understood easily and widely by all modern Ukrainian speakers across the country.

We have been in contact with a native Ukrainian who has been working on a reliable translation of the Bible for many years, and if the Lord will, we hope shortly to publish, under license, the Ukrainian New Testament in the current literary form of the language, while continuing to stock the Kulish Bible for those that still use it, and so that people still have an Old Testament to use whilst translation work is ongoing on the rest of the Bible.

There is a huge demand for God's Word among Ukrainians, so please pray for the publication and distribution of all our Ukrainian Scriptures that they might be blessed to many needy Ukrainian speakers, millions of whom now languish outside their native land.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. P. Valuev, The Valuev Circular, July 1863.

2. C. Mills and N. Walker, Ukrainian Holodomor

DOES IT MATTER? The Power and the Glory Matthew 6.13

#### AV/KJV

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

#### ESV

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...[the rest is missing]

*and the war in Ukraine*, commonslibrary. parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2023-0051/, last accessed 30.10.23.

3. J. Greenspan, *Ukraine has seen centuries of conflict*. history.com/news/ukraine-timeline-invasions, last accessed 30.10.23.

4. 'History Brought to Life', *Ukrainian History* (Independent Publisher, 2023).

5. A. Hrushetskyi, Dynamics of religious self-identification of the population of Ukraine: results of a telephone survey conducted on July 6–20 2022. archive.ph/ Gdul6#selection-279.5-279.135, last accessed 30.10.23.

6. 'Cultural Atlas'. *Ukrainian Culture: Religion*, culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/ukrainian-culture/ukrainian-culture-religion, last accessed 30.10.23.

7. S. Wunderink, *Eastern Europe's Evangelical Hub*, christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/januaryweb-only/105-22.0.html, last accessed 10.10.23.

# It does matter ...

Because every word of God matters (cf. Proverbs 30.5). But also because there is overwhelming documentary evidence since the earliest times for the retention of these words. They have been read and used by millions all over the world for nearly two thousand years.

There are most substantial grounds for retaining these disputed words in our Bibles with full confidence that they came from the lips of our Lord Himself, were faithfully recorded by Matthew, and preserved through the ages. To find out more read the article The Power and the Glory found online at tbsbibles.org/Matthew6verse13





# Editorial Director's Report

### by Matthew A. Vogan

Much of our translation work is making continual progress. However, there is also regular potential for fresh projects, some of which are at a preliminary stage making it too early to bring them to wider attention. The Society's strategic aim is 'to proactively seek (subject to funding) suitable translations or translators for some of the most widely used languages in the world where there is a need for a faithful translation. Smaller language projects are nevertheless important and will be considered as they are made known to the Society'.

This report provides information on recent progress on many of our translation projects. While it does not cover all ongoing projects, it highlights significant progress or important updates of some. There are also a large number of other projects that we cannot report on due to security concerns, in particular, twelve languages which have never had Scripture before for which we are looking to the Lord for the funding to translate the New Testament. Please continue to pray for our translators as many of them labour in difficult settings, suffering conflict, persecution, or economic hardship.

# AFRICA

#### AMHARIC: Ethiopia (57.6 million)

There has been a very enthusiastic reception for the Amharic New Testament and Psalms at launch events across Ethiopia and in South Africa. Further distribution events are planned for the southern, south-eastern, and north-eastern parts of Ethiopia, and for the USA and the UK. There are also large numbers of Ethiopians in France, Germany, Sweden, and Israel. The publication of the New Testament and Psalms has also stimulated potential interest in preparing faithful translations in other Ethiopian languages.

Meanwhile, work on the Old Testament progresses in the books of Moses, and it is hoped they can be completed soon and then passed on for further checking and proofreading. Various articles are in preparation for the TBS Amharic webpage. We are grateful



Amharic New Testament and Psalms

for financial support from TBS (Canada) for the translation project, and to firstBible International (fBI) for funding and printing some of the New Testament and Psalms at Bearing Precious Seed, Milford, OH, USA. Please pray for the project and the distribution of the Word from the distribution hub recently established in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

# **CHICHEWA:** *Malawi and Zambia* (14.4 million)

We were very pleased to receive the Chichewa Old Testament files in recent

and the text retypeset. It is now with the Dan/Gio team for a final check. We look forward to preparing the New Testament text for printing in 2024, Lord willing, and are thankful for the funding provided for this through the generosity of a particular congregation and individuals. The Old Testament translation work progresses well: the team have prepared Genesis to Judges in first draft. We encourage you to pray that this people group will soon receive a faithful rendering of God's Word in their language. The need is very great because most Dan/ Gio Christians cannot access a Bible of



Distribution of (left) Amharic and (right) Chichewa New Testaments

months. These have passed through a process of extensive review and careful proofreading, and we have moved to further checking and analysis. The New Testament will also be thoroughly reviewed and proofread again, prior to the whole Bible being published. Please uphold the translation team in prayer during this process. We are thankful for the partnership of the Free Grace Evangelistic Association in this project.

# **DAN/GIO:** *Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire* (1.6 million)

The work to correct the misapplication of tonal marks in typing up the revised New Testament has been completed their own, relying on what is read aloud in church each Lord's Day. We hope that a visit to Liberia will be possible in early 2024.

#### KABYLE: Algeria (7.9 million)

Kabyle is a Berber language predominantly spoken in Kabylia, a region in north-east Algeria, as well as in the capital Algiers. In March 2023 we were able to commence a pilot project on the Gospel according to John, and in recent months the draft Gospel was approved for publication after a successful review. There is significant persecution for Christians in Algeria, and all churches have been closed down. This presents some significant challenges for the project; please pray that the Lord will open the way for the Scriptures to reach these needy believers.

#### **NDEBELE:** Zimbabwe (3 million) and South Africa (2.5 million)

The main languages of Zimbabwe are Shona, spoken by approximately seventy percent of the population, and Ndebele, spoken by about twenty percent. The TBS Ndebele Bible was published in 2012 via a project under the auspices of the Zimbabwean Mission of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Recently it was agreed that now is an appropriate time to conduct a small-scale review before the next printing; a lightly revised second edition is envisaged.

#### SHONA: Zimbabwe (10.9 million)

We are glad to report a further printing of the Shona Bible has been made as the original printing of 12,000 Bibles funded by GBS were rapidly distributed.

#### SWAHILI: Eastern Africa (86.5 million)

Swahili is a major lingua franca in many countries of central and eastern Africa, particularly Burundi, Kenya, Mozambigue, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The translation work is being undertaken directly from the Greek Received Text by a suitably gualified Swahili speaker, supported by other Swahili speakers based in Kenya and Tanzania. Feedback on the draft Gospel according to John has been very helpful, and a deeper work of grammatical review is currently underway. We hope that the Gospel according to John will be published online and in print after this detailed review has been accomplished. Please pray for this ongoing work and the eventual distribution of the Gospels in Kenya and Tanzania, if the I ord will.

# EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

#### STANDARD ARABIC: (274 million)

We are preparing a fully digital text of our existing Smith-Van Dyck Arabic Bible that we can make available online as well as in print. This is a major world language and very necessary to have in an online format, especially for those who are restricted from using physical copies for various reasons such as persecution.

#### BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE: (86,000)

In October 2020 the General Committee agreed to commence a pilot project in British Sign Language (BSL), where the signing would be placed in video above the English Authorised Version on the Society's website. The main signer has now passed his BSL Level 6 course—the top BSL qualification—which will be beneficial for the project. Progress is being made through the Gospel according to John, but we are waiting for more feedback from a review group. Please remember this endeavour in your prayers, especially the project lead who is unwell.

# **FRENCH:** France, Canada, and Africa (310 million)

The team continue revising the 1872 Lausanne Bible. They have finished revising the books of Psalms and Proverbs, and we

hope that in due course it may be possible to print these together with the New Testament. Draft Old Testament revision work on the books of Moses has been completed, and the team are now well through the book of Joshua. We are grateful to our friends at TBS (Canada) for their



French New Testament

financial and prayerful support of this project.

#### GREEK: Greece (13 million)

Modern Greek is spoken by over 13 million people, primarily in Greece but also in Albania, Cyprus, Italy, and Türkiye. A project has been ongoing to prepare a new translation of the modern Greek New Testament directly from the Society's edition of the Koiné Greek New Testament. In recent months the Gospel according to John in modern Greek was approved for publication after a careful review and an analysis process in which it was checked for errors and omissions in terms of language flow, punctuation, etc. We hope to publish it this year, Lord willing.

#### HUNGARIAN: Hungary (12.5 million)

The digitisation of the TBS Karoli Bible is progressing well. Meanwhile, we have entered conversations about a potential revision of the 1908 Karoli Bible, which is the edition published by the Society. We commend that matter to your prayers.

#### ITALIAN: Italy (67 million)

We are pleased to report that the digital text of the entire Diodati Bible is nearly ready to be published online, following work to prepare it together with a set of cross references. We look forward to seeing how this will be received among those who value this translation. We also prayerfully commit the matter of a potential revision project to the Lord, Who can bring to us suitable personnel for such an undertaking.

#### NEW! LATVIAN: Latvia (600,000)

For some years the Society has been exploring the potential for the Latvian Scriptures. It has been difficult, however, to establish contact with those who speak the language and can help evaluate existing translations and the manuscript of a revision submitted to the Society.

#### MALTESE: Malta (600,000)

We rejoiced recently to have a new person leading the revision work on the New Testament, so that it conforms to the latest set of Maltese grammar rules, and to update the language to modern usage. There was great hope the project could progress at a reasonable pace. In the Lord's mysterious providence this person has recently been undergoing treatment and an operation for a serious illness. The healing process after the operation has been difficult. Please pray for their recovery and the Lord's grace in this time of great affliction. They do hope to return to the work of revision when back to reasonable health.

#### NORWEGIAN: Norway (5 million)

The Society has been in touch for some years with a translator in Norway who is working on a new edition of the Bible in Norwegian, primarily using the English Authorised Version but with secondary reference to the underlying Biblicallanguage texts. The translator recently informed us that so far in his final review of the Bible he has completed the New Testament and the poetic and prophetic books of the Old Testament, and is making good progress with the historical books.

#### NEW! POLISH: Poland (41 million)

For some time we have been prayerfully seeking that it might be possible to revise our long-published New Testament for closer conformity to the Greek Received Text, using current literary Polish. During recent months we have been in contact with a translator and his draft text of the Gospel according to John has been approved by the General Committee for publication. Please pray for his ongoing work as he drafts the text of the other Gospels.

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#### SLOVAK: Slovakia (7 million)

Slovak is the official language of the Slovak Republic and spoken by over 5 million people as their native language, with a further 2 million people also able to speak it. It is closely related to Czech and Polish. The corrected typeset texts of the Gospel according to John and Paul's Epistle to the Romans have now been submitted to the Editorial Department, where they will undergo final review prior to publication. We hope these will be available in print soon. The lead translator is continuing with a translation of the Gospel according to Matthew. A Slovak translation of the Society's article The Lord aave the Word is also being prepared but further work is necessarv.

#### HEBREW: Israel (9 million)

The Society continues to revise the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament (DHNT) so that it is more faithful to the Greek Received Text and in a more understandable form of modern Hebrew. All books have been drafted and reviewed using feedback from native Hebrew speakers and long-time immigrants to Israel who have learnt Hebrew. The feedback has generated a more extensive review than anticipated which has slowed progress towards completion. This work, together with checking by our translation consultant and other analysis, is not likely to be completed until the spring of 2024 after which it can be prepared for printing. While the war situation has had its impact, we are thankful that it has not delayed the digitisation of the Masoretic Old Testament. Once this work is complete, it will enable us to produce a new setting of the printed Hebrew Old Testament text as the current image is becoming rather worn.

We acknowledge the generous financial support for the DHNT revision project received over many years from TBS supporters, the Finnish Bible Institute, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting, da Costa Foundation, and the Board for Israel.

#### TURKISH: Türkiye (91 million)

We are thankful to the Lord for answering our prayers about the Turkish Bible Revision, as we were able to approve a suitable reviser to begin this work at the end of 2022. The first half of the Old Testament has been completed. It is an arduous work in considering the word choices and examining the cases where a word is used. Our reviser earnestly seeks prayer on his behalf that he may be as faithful as possible to the Biblical text with as good Turkish as possible, which sometimes requires going back and reworking some verses.

Meanwhile, the already-revised books are being re-read, so that any typos or necessary changes are being written down along the way, to be sent to Editorial for correction. After the whole revision is finished, it is planned to take some months to go over the final text.

# THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

# **BORO:** Assam, India, and Nepal (1.5 million)

Boro, also known as Bodo, is spoken primarily by the Boro people of north-east India and Nepal. The current Boro Bible was published in the 1960s in the now unused Latin script and is not based on the Received Text. Since 1975 the language has been written using the Devanagari script. The team, based in Assam, have completed a final draft of the Gospel according to John which has been approved for publication. They have also prepared some other portions of the New Testament in first draft, and we look forward to progressing with this project.

#### GANGTE: Manipur, India (40,000)

After the approval of a pilot project in 2023 work has, in providence, been delayed. This was connected to a family tragedy affecting the lead translator. It is now hoped to make better progress. Please continue to pray for the work and the lead translator's son who is seriously ill.

#### NEW! HALAM: Tripura, India (58,000)

A pilot project was approved by the General Committee in 2023. The team have made good progress and a first draft of the Gospel according to John has been completed. It is being circulated to every village to the church pastors, elders, and other leaders. This is the first time the Halam tribe will see any part of the Bible in their mother tongue. After feedback the translators will then prepare a second draft which they also plan to circulate. After this the usual translation analysis checking will be carried out.

#### HINDI: India (609 million)

Hindi is the sixth most-spoken language in the world and one of the two official languages of the government of India, the other being English. Our Hindi translator is now based in India and this has helped significantly with advice and collaboration, particularly in finalising the text of the Gospel according to John, which we hope will be ready for final Editorial checking early this year. Our translator has also translated up to the end of the Gospel according to Matthew. In addition, he plans to prepare a new translation of the Gospel according to John in Bhojpuri, which is widely used in parts of India and Nepal.

#### HMAR: Manipur, India (99,000)

The team are making excellent progress through the Pauline epistles in their first draft of the New Testament. God willing, the first publication will be the New Testament in a few years' time.

#### KOM: Manipur, India (25,000)

This language is also known as Kom Rem and Kohlreng. Almost one hundred percent of the Kom tribe would consider themselves Christian. They are part of a tribal group known as 'Kom Rem' which includes five tribes: the Kom as the main tribe, and four subtribes collectively known as 'Rem' numbering 10,000. The languages of these subtribes have seventy percent homology with Kom. The Kom Rem tribes currently only have a Bible published by the Bible Society of India, which is a translation of the English Good News Bible.

Our translator lives in a tribal village in Manipur, which is surrounded by Hindu Meitei, and so we have been thankful for his safe keeping at this time of conflict there, and pray he will continue to be protected. The current project began in 2016 and the New Testament has been typeset and is currently being reviewed for corrections. We are grateful to firstBible International for funding this New Testament to be printed at Bearing Precious Seed of Milford, Ohio, and it is hoped that it can be published next year.

#### TAMIL: India and Sri Lanka (87 million)

We are thankful to have the assistance of someone with the ability, desire, and time to work on a Tamil Bible project. The initial draft of John has undergone extensive peer review by other Tamil speakers. After assessing this feedback, it is clear that a light revision (where definite change is needed) of the Tamil Old Version rather than a fresh translation is the best approach. The Gospel according to John will be reviewed in light of this so that only necessary issues are addressed, and the current theological, ecclesiastical, and other important terms historically accepted by the Tamil Christian community are maintained.

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#### TEDIM ZOMI: India (257,000)

In February 2023 we met regarding a potential project in the Tedim Zomi language with an older retired gentleman who had travelled from Delhi to meet with us in Manipur. The translator had devoted decades to this task and showed us his handwritten translation; his great sadness was that the Bible Society of India version was based on the Good News Bible, Also known as Tedim Chin, Tedim Zomi is an Indian version of Tedim Zokam, the language in Myanmar in which we have a project. A digital version of the Gospel according to John in Tedim Zomi has helped to provide a comparison with the Tedim Zokam translation. This showed there were sufficient differences to warrant a separate project, and in July 2023 the Committee approved the Gospel according to John and for work to continue on the rest of the New Testament. Please pray that the translator will be upheld to complete his life's work.

#### TELUGU: India (96 million)

Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken by people predominantly living in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Yanam district of Puducherry, India, where it is also the official language. Along with Hindi and Bengali it is one of the few languages with primary official language status in more than one Indian state, and is fourth among the languages with the highest number of native speakers in India. The Society published a Telegu New Testament in 1983. In the early 1990s we were advised that it had problems such as omissions, but by then we had stopped publishing it. Some revision work was undertaken in the late 1990s and 2000s but it transpired that there were also issues with this work. We continue to work with a translator who has prepared a draft of the Gospel according to John which is undergoing further review and analysis. The translator also has a burden for people groups in the interior of his state who do not have the Scriptures in their own tribal languages.

#### THADOU: Manipur, India (350,000)

It was a delight to rejoice with the Thadou at a thanksgiving service for this Bible held in Damdei, Manipur on Friday 24 February 2023. The service was attended by about 400, the majority of them young people. At that time we discussed further minor corrections that were needed and have now received these. Sadly, the Thadou people have experienced considerable distress in the current ethnic conflict in Manipur. Some of those now displaced had to flee their homes which were being burned down and they were unable to retrieve their Bibles from the fires. Some have received new copies, but a further printing is needed to provide the Word of God in their time of need. We are grateful to our friends at firstBible International who



funded the first printing of this Bible at Bearing Precious Seed of Milford, Ohio.

#### VAIPHEI: Manipur, India (43,000)

It was a joy to have one of the key members of the revision committee at the 2023 TBS AGM, where he reported on the history and current status of the Vaiphei Bible. It was moving to understand the great need they have for the Scriptures. which are even more scarce following the recent violence in Manipur. The Vaiphei Bible Revision Committee have made final corrections and, once implemented, the Bible will be prepared for printing. We are grateful for the partnership of firstBible International who have committed to fund this Bible to be printed by their sister organisation, Bearing Precious Seed of Milford, Ohio. The Vaiphei Committee have also translated two TBS articles—The Lord Gave the Word and Which Bible: Does it really matter?—to be published alongside the Bible in due course.

# **ZOU:** Manipur, India and Myanmar (200,000)

We give thanks to God that the Zou Bible was approved by the Society for publication and, after all the usual checks, has been typeset. Currently, the typeset text is being reviewed by the lead translator for potential corrections, and it is hoped that it will be published during 2024 or early 2025. We are grateful for the partnership of firstBible International who have committed to raising the funds for this Bible to be printed by Bearing Precious Seed of Milford, Ohio.

# **REST OF ASIA**

#### ASANG-KHONGSO: Myanmar (4,000)

Asang-Khongso is one of the tribal languages of Myanmar. This is a people who were reached with the Gospel by a third or fourth generation missionary from the work of Adoniram Judson. However, they have never had Scripture in their own language. TBS has been providing a consultancy-only service to our friends at WorldView Ministries to which this project belongs. We were able to give comment on the translation of the New Testament and were delighted to confirm that it met with our approval. It has now been printed and we trust it will be a great blessing to this people group.

#### **CHINESE:** (1 billion)

There is growing Thinks H interest in this translation endeavour. The translators have also prepared a first draft of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and are partway through the Psalms. An edition Chinese New Testament of the Chinese New Testament is currently being prepared in traditional script in addition to the simplified script currently available. This will be helpful for countries that continue to use traditional characters. TBS is very grateful for the substantial financial support given by GBS for this major project, including the printing of 10,000 Chinese New Testaments for distribution. Please remember the distribution of the New Testament and opportunities for it to become more widely used. We were thankful to assist a church in New York City in having 10,000 Gospels printed and freely distributed last year.

#### KOREAN: (81 million)

A full Korean text of the Bible is available to the Society, but it needs some further

digitisation and review. The Gospel according to John has been approved for publication online and in print. We look forward to progressing with this project.

#### LHAOVO: Myanmar and China (125,000)

All of the Lhaovo New Testament and a small part of the Old Testament are available in digital format. We have some hopes of contacts who can evaluate the accuracy of this text, and we continue praying that this will result in publishing the Scriptures for the benefit of this people in due course.

#### LISU: Myanmar and China (1 million)

We have a complete digital text available of the original TBS Lisu Bible which was first published in 1980. Recently we have been able to make contact with people who can help us to evaluate the TBS Lisu Bible, some corrections proposed for it, and a Lisu Bible published by another organisation. We pray that this may prove fruitful.

#### MONGOLIAN: (5.2 million)

On a recent visit to Mongolia the project leader was able to assess the ongoing translation work, streamline the translation process, resolve outstanding issues, and provide necessary encouragement for the translation team. A first draft is available for most Old Testament books but considerable time is needed in the revision and review process involving other team members and a reading committee. New Testament revision work continues together with this and the whole Bible is expected to be complete within the next few years. Please pray for the translation team in their work, health, and personal circumstances.

#### TAGALOG: Philippines (83 million)

A final draft of the Gospel according to John is currently being prepared for publication having been approved by the General Committee. The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke have been translated in first draft, and work is soon to start progressing in Romans. Oral proofreading on the Gospels is also due to be completed. We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by a church in Canada for this project. Please continue to pray that this excellent progress can be maintained and that the translator will be helped in this valuable work.

#### TEDIM ZOKAM: Myanmar (41,000)

Earlier in 2023 we rejoiced to receive the New Testament text after many years of labour. This has now been input to our Editorial System and thoroughly checked, together with some supplied cross references. Later in 2023 we were very thankful to receive the Old Testament text as well. This is now being thoroughly checked by the Editorial Department in conjunction with the translators in Myanmar. The team there are currently working on a translation of the booklet *The Lord Gave the Word*.

# Conclusion

In addition to the many existing projects, the Lord is also bringing new ones to us, some for smaller languages, others for those more widely spoken. It is a great privilege to be involved in this work, especially where we are helping to provide the Scriptures to people groups that have never had them before. Please pray for our translators and revisers, and for the editorial staff, to be given grace and strength to sustain the work that the Lord is providing. We also give thanks to Him for re-opening projects that have stalled for years as well as providing new languages to work on.

It is hoped that this snapshot will be an encouragement for our readers and an aid to their prayers for this vital work.



# SPECIAL OVERPRINT Words of Life Calendars for 2025

e offer churches and other organisations the opportunity to have their contact details printed onto each page of their calendars. It is our hope that this overprint facility will prove useful to the furtherance of the Gospel in various localities. Please note that this year all orders must be placed online at tbsbibles.org/ overprintform



Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world

LORD'S DAY 5 12 19	MONDAY 6 13 20 <sup></sup>	тиезрау 7 14 21 28	WEDNESDAY 1 <sup>100</sup> 8 15 22 29	2 9 16 23 30	FRIDAY 3 10 17 24 31	SATURDAY 4 11 18 25
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# Prices

Calendars cost £0.75 each (excluding VAT). Minimum order quantity for each edition is 1,000. UK shipping is free. All other shipping charged at cost. Discounts cannot be applied to orders for overprinted calendars.

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# **Advance notice**

To enable the timely delivery of overprinted calendars it is necessary for initial design and print preparation work to commence many months in advance. All orders must therefore be placed by **Friday 31 May** so that we can ensure delivery by the end of October 2024, God willing.

enter on the form will be what appears on the calendar, including capitalisation, so we advise that you ask another person to check what will be entered on the form.

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





# **The Spanish Bible** A Story of The Lord's Faithfulness

**by William Greendyk**, General Secretary TBS (USA) and Coordinator of the Spanish Bible Revision Project

Luesday 25 July 2023 represented an unforgettable milestone for the TBS Spanish Bible revision team and the Society as a whole. In the Lord's goodness, and after more than fifteen years of painstaking work, the Society's revision of the Spanish Reina-Valera Bible was launched for the first time to the public at a special presentation and thanksgiving service in Medellín, Colombia. After many years of patiently waiting the time had come to 'unveil' the Society's Spanish Bible, named the 'Reina Valera SBT,' abbreviated as the 'RV-SBT' (SBT is the abbreviation of TBS in Spanish, Sociedad Bíblica Trinitaria).

# An overwhelming interest in the work

This event had first been made known online two months earlier, and within

two days the venue—a large hotel hall in Medellín which holds 550 people—was fully booked. Interest in the Society's Spanish Bible has been substantial for many years, partially due to the numerous conferences held by TBS over the past decade in cities throughout Latin America regarding the need for the Spanish Bible revision. However, the high level of interest is also due to the fact that in Colombia, as in many countries in Latin America, there appears to be a 'Reformation' occurring, with thousands upon thousands of people turning away from Roman Catholicism and embracing evangelical, Biblical Christianity. This intersects with the Society's translation as one based on the Greek Received Text and Hebrew Masoretic Text used in those Reformation translations, as well as maintaining the



translation principles of the Reformation, namely formal equivalence.

The event in Medellín was scheduled to begin at 6.30 p.m., but by 5.00 p.m. the first attendees were already arriving, excited to be a part of this special moment. Every attendee received a special TBS bag which contained a copy of the new Spanish Bible, together with a Spanish *Words of Life* calendar and a copy of the Society's article *How the Holy Bible Came to Be* translated into Spanish. The enthusiasm and excitement of many of the attendees overwhelmingly the desire of the team and the TBS directors and staff who were present for this momentous occasion.

The hotel hall filled to capacity, and I began the proceedings by welcoming everyone and thanking them for being a part of this special occasion. After the opening prayer and Scripture reading by Julio Benitez (TBS representative in Colombia), Jonathan Arnold, the Society's General Secretary, delivered a devotional message (translated as he spoke into Spanish) from Psalm 68.11, 'The Lord



was palpable, and as the people entered the hall they were quickly opening the packaging to look at their new Spanish Bible.

#### Giving thanks unto the Lord

The primary focus of this first Spanish Bible presentation conference (as well as those which followed) was to acknowledge the Lord for having granted the team the health, strength, and abilities necessary to carry out the work, and to provide the audience with the purpose of the revision as well as a brief history of the work. As Mr Paul Rowland, the Society's former General Secretary, had so aptly stated at a Spanish Bible team meeting in Spain more than ten years ago: 'When this revision is concluded, we must give all the glory to the Lord'. In Medellín this was gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*. Mr Arnold then gave an overview of the Society's work throughout the world since many of those in attendance were unaware of the Society's long history of providing faithful translations of God's Word to all nations. He mentioned some of the many translation projects that are currently being undertaken by the Society and asked that the Christians of Colombia remember the work in their prayers.

I then gave a brief history of how the Society began to revise the Reina-Valera 1909 after it was discovered that there were a number of readings based on the Greek Critical Text in that version, along with some very archaic terms that were almost impossible for most Spanish readers to understand. I related how the Lord

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providentially brought the team together after myself and Dr Bill Patterson—who had begun the original work on the revision in 2006—realised that the work needed on the Spanish Bible was much more than had been originally thought. Most of the team's work was done via online meetings, but the team had also met at least eighteen times in Spain and during the many conferences given throughout the Spanish-speaking world between 2009 and 2022.

The team members were introduced, each providing a brief presentation on different

followed by the New Testament, to which later were added Psalms and Proverbs, and to the moment we have now arrived at—the printing of the complete RV-SBT Bible in 2023.

At the conclusion of the service, we thanked the many friends and supporters who had come to the event. Before concluding with prayer, I reminded the attendees that, unlike many other Bible publishers, the Society has a policy of not signing Bibles upon their presentation. Our desire is that all thanks, honour, and



aspects of the work. Alejandro Riff gave a brief history of the Reina Valera Bible and the revisions carried out to that Bible over the centuries since the Reina Bible was published in 1569. Jorge Ruiz explained the difference between the Received Text (Textus Receptus) used by Reina and Valera and the Critical Text, a revised Greek text that has been the basis of many newer translations of the Bible. Bill Patterson then gave an explanation of the textual sources used by Reina and Valera and by the TBS team in its revision of the Spanish Bible. Finally, Antoni Mendoza provided a history of the Spanish Bible that had been printed by the Society for over a hundred years, concluding with a pictorial history of the different facets of the revision process and the publications that resulted from it: the Gospel according to John,

glory might go to the Divine Author of Scripture, and that the readers may find His Name alone on every page of His Holy Word.

Following the evening's program the attendees were invited to a time of refreshments and fellowship. This was a special time during which old and new friends met each other and the team. Many of the supporters in Colombia had previously received copies of the revised Spanish New Testament which had been completed in 2016. Some churches were already using that for their worship services as they anxiously awaited the final complete revision of the entire Bible. For these pastors and church leaders, the time had come when they could finally present the Society's Spanish Bible to their members and friends





#### The second launch service

A second, similar event was held in a large local church the following evening, 26 July, because the registration for the first event had reached its capacity only days after publishing the announcement. At this second event, over 450 eager attendees received their copy of the new Spanish Bible with thanksgiving and gladness. At the end of this second event we could only marvel at the goodness of the Lord in providing for the revision throughout the many years, and also for gathering such an enthusiastic audience that appeared to have a genuine hunger for the Word of God.

#### The Colombian distribution centre

Colombia has become one of the key countries in which and from where Spanish Bible materials have been distributed for the past few years. The country is strategically located at the heart of Latin America, and its two oceans make it a good country for importing and exporting. There has also been a huge growth in the number of Christian churches over the past twenty years, with many churches filled to overflowing with young members eager to hear of the Biblical doctrines of grace.

Colombia's strategic position led to the establishment of a small distribution centre in Medellín in 2019, where, from

a small rented office within a seminary, shipments of Gospels, New Testaments, and Scripture calendars were sent throughout the country and beyond. However, in late 2022 it was felt that the distribution centre was too small to house the work, and the Board of TBS (USA) gave permission to begin seeking a larger, stand-alone property that could be used as a warehouse and distribution centre in Colombia. A suitable facility was found with the help of Julio Rodriguez, and after the necessary paperwork had been completed the new rented facility was ready to be used for the distribution of TBS materials

It was decided to officially inaugurate the new Colombia distribution centre the morning of 26 July, the same day as the second Colombia presentation event. This was a special and joyful occasion, when praver was made for the Lord's blessing upon this new endeavour in the presence of TBS employees and representatives from many parts of the world. Matthew Vogan, the Society's Editorial Director, spoke some pertinent words regarding the storehouses provided by the Lord (see Ouarterly Record 645 for the full address), after which the official ribbon-cutting ceremony was held. Jonathan Arnold, the entire Spanish team and several of the team members' wives, along with TBS representatives from the USA, Venezuela,





Bolivia, and Honduras, and the Society's present and future employees at the Colombia distribution centre were present at the event. Lord willing, Mariela Guardia, who has managed the Society's Bolivian distribution centre since 2011, will be relocating to Medellín at the beginning of 2024 to begin assisting with distribution of Spanish Bibles and Bible materials from Colombia.

## Second Spanish launch presentation event in Chile

The day after the conclusion of these unforgettable occasions in Colombia, the group travelled south to Santiago, Chile, where the second Spanish Bible presentation was held on Saturday 29 July. This followed the same format as that of Colombia, and another full crowd of nearly five hundred people eagerly received the new Spanish RV-SBT. Several large church groups in Chile have already contacted the Society to find out how they can purchase enough Spanish Bibles for everyone in their congregations.

Chile is another country where the Society has a long history, with records showing that TBS Spanish Scriptures and calendars have been sent there since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Throughout the Spanish Bible revision project a number of large conferences were held in the major cities of this long, narrow country surrounded by the beginning of the Andes Mountain range to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Many pastors and church groups had been actively following the progress of the Spanish Bible revision, so it was with thanksgiving and joy that the moment had finally come for them to receive the end product.

### Further Spanish Bible presentation conferences across the world

Since the first two Spanish Bible presentation conferences in Colombia and Chile in late July 2023, the Society has also presented the Spanish Bible at conferences in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Spain, Bolivia, and Peru. In each of these countries the Bible has been received with eager anticipation by the people, many of whom travelled almost an entire day by bus to reach the conference. We have been humbled to see the wide and warm reception given to this project for which so much prayer has been made.

The Lord's faithful hand in providence was seen at each of the presentation conferences, but this was particularly evident in the arrival on time for the conferences of the Bibles from Brazil, where they were printed. In Colombia the 1,000 Bibles needed for the conference arrived in Medellín twenty-four hours before the first people began filing into the conference hall. In Mexico, the Bibles

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were held up in customs for more than two weeks, so I had to bring many heavy suitcases loaded with Bibles from the TBS (USA) office. Nowhere was God's provision seen more clearly in this regard, however, than in Honduras. The Bibles had been sent in time from Brazil to Honduras, but the delivery route required a stop in Nicaragua. That very day an airport workers' strike broke out (also in the Lord's providence!), and we frantically called the printer to see if they could expedite matters in Nicaragua to get the Bibles to the neighboring Honduras. After discussion and prayer, the manager of the printing company decided to send two employees with ten suitcases from São Paolo to Honduras. I was at the airport to meet them when they arrived, and after a couple of hours explaining to the Honduras customs officers at the airport, the Bibles were quickly driven the ninety-minute route to the hotel in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The Bibles were brought into the conference just forty-five minutes before the event began—by

which time many attendees were already seated. The team was humbled by this and shared with the large Honduran audience how the Lord had provided in this wonderful manner.

Plans are now being made to begin a largescale distribution effort to ensure that the Spanish Bibles arrive in all of the Spanishspeaking countries around the world. Over the past decade we have established good working relationships with brethren from each of these countries, enabling the Society to have a fully functioning network for the distribution of the Spanish Bibles. Shipping costs have become prohibitively high, but we pray that the Lord will continue to provide the means with which the Society can begin to send Spanish Bibles for sales and grants throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

At the time of this writing, printings of the Spanish Bible have been undertaken in Brazil, the Netherlands, and the United States, from where they will be shipped to

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the strategic distribution centres and hubs across Latin America as well as to groups in the fast-growing Hispanic community in the United States. Christian bookshops in many Latin American countries have approached us with requests to carry the RV-SBT, and large church groups and missions have expressed much interest in



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receiving copies of the new Spanish Bible. May the Lord grant wisdom as we begin this massive new phase of the Spanish Bible project—its distribution throughout the Hispanic world.

In all of these activities it remains our sincere and prayerful desire that the Lord Himself, the God of His Word, may be glorified through the salvation of many and the building up of His church throughout the Spanish-speaking world. In the end the names of those who translated, revised, or had any other part in the work will be of little importance. Rather, may the Name above all names, that one Name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved, the Lord Jesus Christ, be lifted up in the Spanish world, to the coming of His Kingdom and to the eternal glory of our Triune God

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# A TRINITARIAN BENEDICTION

THE SERMON PREACHED BY MR G. D. BUSS, A Vice-President of the Society AT THE 192<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2023

Edited for publication

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. *2 Corinthians 13.14* 

These words are probably the most repeated words from Holy Scripture in the worship of God's great and Holy Name. We read these words as we end worship, and they contain all that we would wish both for ourselves and for our hearers. We could desire nothing better than this.

Solomon wrote, 'The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it' (Proverbs 10.22). Here then is the blessing of the Lord, in a sense a counterpart to that which Aaron was commanded to pronounce in Old Testament times: 'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace' (Numbers 6.24–26). Here in the benediction we have the fulness of the Gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ set before us in these desires: this great desire that the Apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write.

### The Church in Corinth

I t might surprise us that it was to the church at Corinth that this blessing was first pronounced. Had it been Philippi, where we read their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, 'He which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 1.6), or perhaps had it been Ephesus, 'You *hath he quickened*,

The ruins of ancient Corinth

who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Ephesians 2.1), we might not be so surprised. But the history of Corinth, certainly when Paul wrote, was not a very happy one. Yet it was to this church in its low, perplexed, and difficult estate that this blessing was pronounced. What else can put matters right in the church of Christ than these three things: the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost? Perhaps someone reading this has the affairs of the church weighing heavy upon their spirit at the minute and wondering how, or what, or when, matters will be put right. Here is the answer; this matter can be referred back to the great Head of the church: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you'. That would put matters right; bless God for it.

Corinth was known as the city in which every sin the Word of God condemns ran freely down its streets. It was a very wicked city where Satan ruled and seemed to hold supreme power, but it was of this city God said to Paul—even before his ministry had really taken root there—'I have much people in this city' (Acts 18.10), and those people were rushing along the broad road that leads to destruction. They were without God, they were without Christ, they were without hope; and yet Paul was sent. What was he to preach?

It's very instructive what Paul says about his preaching to Corinth because it's an example to us all. 'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Corinthians 2.2). Paul went to that wicked city. He planted the Cross of Christ right in the centre of it, and kept preaching Christ crucified. We know the wonderful effects of this preaching: sinners were called by grace and the Holy Ghost worked mightily. A vibrant church was formed of members of Christ's mystical body, who loved the truths that Paul was preaching. They followed his example in setting before them the order of the church, what they should be to each other, and most of all, to their right Head of the church.

## Satan Causing Trouble in the Church

S atan has never been pleased to see the church prosper, and whenever we have a little prosperity in our churches be on your guard because Satan will seek an opportunity, if he could, to mar it or even destroy it. However, he could never destroy the church of Christ or the Word of God's Truth. But we know through sad experience in the history of the church what havoc he can cause, as he did in Corinth.

First of all, Satan brought a party spirit. 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ' (1 Corinthians 1.12). He also brought in heresy; there were those who denied the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Immorality was not dealt with, and many other things afflicted this church. What did Paul say when he began to deal with this matter? He went right back to the Cross of Christ, and here is the standard before you, 'Christ, and him crucified'. Paul wrote these two precious epistles with much instruction and teaching. Looking on this church with all its defects and deformities he says he desires for them to have 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Could we desire anything better for either ourselves or for our churches?

The Apostle James wrote, 'From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war

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in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God' (James 4.1–4).

If you were the Apostle James writing that chapter what would you have written next? James wrote, 'But he giveth more grace' (James 4.6). In other words, the answer to all those terrible things that James records which are so true about fallen nature is grace; that was the answer to it. This is the hope of every God-sent minister, that as they preach the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ those very ills might be dealt with in a way consistent with the justice of God, but also with His mercy.

### The Trinity

gather today in the interest of the Trinitarian Bible Society, a noble society that God has done much good through, and we bless God for it to this generation. We know its history, that on the very foundation of a Triune God it was founded, separating from what was then the British and Foreign Bible Society because they were countenancing unitarians on their committee and even hindering people pleading the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in prayer and committee meetings. It was the right thing to do to come out from among them and establish a society built on the foundation of the one true and only Triune God.

Let us pause for a moment and just examine what we mean by the Trinity. There is only one God. There is only room for one God; He fills time, He fills eternity, and He is the one true and living God. We believe this, not only because it says so in Scripture, but because all true believers understand that there are three Persons in the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. There is an eternal relationship between those three Persons. God the Father has an eternally begotten Son. This is a great mystery; you cannot explain it and you are not called to, but the Word of God says it is true.

There is God the Son. Sometimes Jehovah's Witnesses come knocking on your door and you ask them a question: 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' 'Oh we believe that' they say. 'Do you believe in God the Son?' you then ask, and they reply, 'Oh no, we don't believe that'. They deny the Godhead of God's Son. He is as much God as the Father and as the Holy Ghost.

From those two glorious Persons, God the Father and God the Son, proceeds that equally important Person, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is a person, not just an influence. He is a blessed person; nothing can ever be communicated from the Throne of God without the power of the Holy Ghost. He is that third Person, that co-equal, co-eternal, triune God.

All those with living faith in the salvation taught in the Word of God will be thankful for the love of God, for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the communion of the Holy Ghost. 'A threefold cord is not quickly broken' (Ecclesiastes 4.12), and this relationship can never be broken. Satan has attacked this truth throughout the history of this world because he hates it. He knows it is the truth and he hates the one true and living God.

There are many other witnesses in Scripture we could speak of. There's a plurality of persons speaking in the Trinity; for example we read, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' (Isaiah 6.8). You go to the baptism of our dear Saviour at Jordan, and there is the voice of the Father, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 3.17). God the Son is there, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Him. We read in John's first epistle, 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one' (1 John 5.7–8). If it's not true, then there is no Saviour, and there's no Gospel to preach. Cleave to it, cling to it, whatever men may say against it.

### The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

What is grace? It has several meanings. One of course is that it is God's favour. Every child of God can say, 'Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto* thy people: O visit me with thy salvation' (Psalm 106.4). And if you have grace, you'll want more of that favour to be displayed in your heart. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord in that terrible day in which he lived. May we find the same favour in this terrible day in which we're living.

What is grace? It is God giving what we do not deserve. You say, 'What is mercy then?' Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve.

Listen to Paul: 'And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. (1 Timothy 1.14–16). Paul brings the two together: the one thing he does not deserve is grace, and he marvels that what he did deserve he has not had to endure. That is what grace is then; it is God's riches at Christ's expense.

When God created the world it cost Him nothing. 'He spake, and it was done' (Psalm 33.9). He didn't have to borrow the materials or buy them from another being-indeed, there is no other being to buy them from. God commanded and it stood fast. However, when it comes to the giving of grace, what it cost the Trinity! 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3.16). See that dear Saviour, bearing His cross from the judgment hall to Golgotha. It was not just the wooden cross on His bleeding shoulders-that was heavy enough-but it was all the unseen burden of the guilt of a people that 'no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people' (Revelation 7.9). See Him hanging on that cross between two thieves in ignominy and shame, and hear His sorrowful cry, 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?' (Matthew 27.46). There you see the cost of redemption, the cost of mercy, the cost of grace, in the blood of our Lord Iesus Christ in laying down that perfect, pure, holy, and guiltless life. Oh, we thank God for it.

I like to think of what Paul has to tell us in 2 Corinthians 12 and 13 where he speaks about his thorn in the flesh. The poor man felt so weakened by it that he could not bear it and he asked the Lord three times to remove it. The Lord answered in a better way than Paul could have imagined: 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect

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in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12.9). Paul went on to say that since 'the power of Christ may rest upon me', he could live with his thorn. Child of God, you can live with your burden, that crook in the lot, that thorn in the flesh, that weighty cross, that deep disappointment. The power of Christ, 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' will be sufficient for you.

In James we read, 'But he giveth more grace' (James 4.6). These are blessed words because the Lord never wearies of giving. He is not like the man in the parable who had a friend knock on his door at midnight requesting 'Friend, lend me three loaves' (Luke 11.5) when the man replied no, 'the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed' (Luke 11.7). The Lord is not like that; the door of His mercy is open always and He never fails, He gives grace according to the day.

That grace isn't limited; there is always more to follow. The grace is in Christ, and you can't exhaust that. The barrel of meal and the cruise of oil that the widow woman enjoyed did not run out.

Perhaps you have come to the end of your patience today, the end of your wisdom, the end of your strength. Perhaps you've told the Lord like Elijah himself did, 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life' (1 Kings 19.4). Did Elijah die? No, the Lord gave him more grace, 'Because the journey is too great for thee' (1 Kings 19.7). So if you have come to the end of your strength the Lord says, 'Go on'. You say, 'How?' and He replies, 'My grace is sufficient for thee'. He doesn't weary of you knocking at His door and asking for more grace. If a beggar knocked at our door, perhaps the first time we might give him something and perhaps also the next day. But if he continued knocking, we'd get a bit weary and wish he would go somewhere

else. Our God is not like that; He never wearies of giving more grace.

### The Love of God

Tt might surprise you why the 'grace of Lour Lord Jesus Christ' comes first in the benediction. Why doesn't the love of God come first? We speak of God the Father as the first Person of the Trinity. But the word 'grace' comes first. It is grace that opens our heart to receive the love of God. Our old nature is not fit to receive grace. It's at enmity so we need a vessel to receive the love of God. That vessel is the new birth, the new nature, in which God gives grace. The old nature is still there, which is one of the greatest battles that a child of God faces and why he needs more grace and yet more grace. But blessed be God, wherever the Lord has given the new birth, grace is working; and in that new birth you begin to experience that love of God which actually preceded the giving of grace.

Does God love a child of God because he is quickened? Or does He quicken him because He loved him? God quickened him because He loved him. Grace sent forth that blessed work of the Spirit flowing from the love of God.

Can we measure the love of God? The prophet Ezekiel was taken to a river. He was told to enter the river and while he was just ankle deep he could move quite freely in it. Then he went a little further at God's command, and it came to his knees, and then to his loins, and eventually he was out of his depth. Here was a river to swim in, and that is what the love of God is. You will never plumb its depths; you are out of your depth trying to do so because it is a river to swim in.

I like to think of this in another sense. The love of God is the centre of this

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benediction, as if God has stretched out two hands in giving. In one hand is the unspeakable gift of His dearly beloved Son, 'Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift' (2 Corinthians 9.15). In the other hand is the gift of His Holy Spirit. Therefore we have two blessed gifts flowing from the love of God through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Thanks be unto God for these two unspeakably precious gifts, both of them flowing from the love of God.

God was not bound by you or me to provide a substitute. We had no claim on Him so to do, and the fact that He was willing to accept a substitute for sinners is a great mercy. And a yet greater mercy is that He Himself was willing to provide that substitute, and a greater mercy even yet that His dear Son should be that substitute. What love, 'He that spared not his own Son' (Romans 8.32). He spared not His own Son: no person has ever endured more than the Son of God endured on Calvary's cross. He drank the very dregs of the hell that were due to His church, right to the last drop. As one good minister put it, 'He drained the cup of the curse and filled it with the blessing, the blessing of this text. The 'cup of blessing' Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 10.16 is because there's One who's drained it of the curse-all the blessed work of God Himself in doing that for His dear people. We see the willingness of God the Father to provide the substitute, and that it is His dear Son.

Many years ago in the eighteenth century there was a Justice of the Peace who had a very unruly son. This son caused havoc, and in the end he had to come before the bench. It happened that his father was the judge appointed for that day. The whole village gathered to see how he would deal with his son. His numerous crimes were read out and the people waited for the judge to pronounce the sentence. Would he be lenient? Would he try to get his son off the hook? No, he pronounced the severest sentence he could possibly have given. The villagers gasped; is the father dealing with his son like that? Then the father laid aside his judge's robes, went and stood by his son, and said, 'I will pay it'.

That is what Christ has done: when He hung on the cross He laid aside His own robes and said concerning His church what Paul said to Philemon, if he owe ought 'I will repay *it*'. All your tears and prayers—good though they are and God forbid we should cease to pray and weep—do not atone. Only one thing atones: the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this atonement flows from the love of God. This love is infinite. No wonder that the hymn says:

O Christ, He is the fountain, The deep, sweet well of love! The streams on earth I've tasted; More deep I'll drink above: There to an ocean fullness His mercy doth expand, And glory, glory dwelleth In Emmanuel's land.<sup>1</sup>

Heaven will be the enjoying the fulness of the love of God, through Christ Jesus, by His Spirit.

There is love in all God's dealings with you. You may not understand them all; a child doesn't always understand what his parents are about. Sometimes there is the frown rather than the smile, but it's always in love. 'Too wise to be mistaken, He, too good to be unkind',<sup>2</sup> or as someone else put it, 'He gives and He takes, He makes no mistakes whatever may be the amount. Nor have we a right, wherever He smite, to ask Him to give an account?', but it's always, always in love.

### *The Communion of the Holy Ghost*

nd now we come to 'the communion of the Holy Ghost'. Salvation is a communication: it is God communing with poor sinners through His dearly beloved Son by the Holy Spirit. I like to think of this in the likeness of the smiting of the rock when the children of Israel murmured and grumbled because they had no water. Poor Moses did what he did again and again: he cried unto the Lord. The Lord says 'Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it' (Exodus 17.6). Notice the Lord didn't tell him to smite those murmuring Israelites, and here the Gospel was preached in a very wonderful way in the wilderness. Christ is that Rock; Divine justice smote it that the Holy Ghost might flow out freely, fully to sinners. What a mercy! They were in the desert sand, but this water was so abundant that it ran in the dry places like a river. Do not we sometimes feel dried up if the Holy Spirit withholds? Oh may the river flow again!

*There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God' (Psalm 46.4). And what river is this? It is the dear Spirit coming in that blessed fulness into the hearts of His dear people. Oh, we should thank God for the communication with the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God, the uncorrupted, infallible Word of God as His sword or as His mouth. It has been said, 'the Spirit without the Word is dumb, and the Word without the Spirit is dead'. That is why the Trinitarian Bible Society doesn't spread man's opinions. Instead it sends forth the uncorrupted Word of God, knowing the blessed confidence that this is the Sword of the Spirit, the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. This is the dew that descends, the rain, and the snow that comes down to water the earth. We distribute the Word with the desire that the Holy Ghost will communicate through it to awaken sinners to their perilous state, and open their eyes to see the danger of the broad road that leads to the destruction, to open their eyes to see their need of the precious Christ, and the dear Spirit to fulfil His office in bringing sinners to Christ. That is His office, He delights to do it; and it is a mercy. He awakens sinners to a sense of their need in conviction. He delights to point that sinner to the one and only way of salvation: the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son that cleanseth us from all sin. Oh what a mercy!

We cast this bread, the Word of God, upon the waters in the humble confidence that it is God's Word that cannot return to Him void. However, we need the Holy Ghost to use it. Every page of God's Holy Scripture is inspired, but while it remains just a printed letter on a page it does us no good. We need the Spirit of the Word to take the Word and do what He did for the Psalmist, 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee' (Psalm 119.11).

Perhaps you are just beginning to be concerned about your soul and its eternal welfare. This is the Book to come to, these are the pages to read. As you open the Bible beg the Holy Spirit to communicate to you the life, blessing, love, mercy, and grace that is in it.

'The communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all': that must have put matters right at Corinth, it must have driven that party spirit away, healed that heresy, resolved that matter concerning the immorality, and restored order. That is what is needed, and that's why we should be so careful lest we grieve the Spirit and He withhold His sacred power and influence.

We read in the prophecy of Ezekiel how the Spirit was on the threshold of the door of the Temple, ready to depart. It is a solemn judgment if the Lord take His Holy Spirit from us personally or from His church; we are utterly helpless and ruined. No wonder David prayed, 'Take not thy holy spirit from me' (Psalm 51.11).

### Be With You All. Amen.

The Apostle then says two more things. Firstly, 'Be with you all'. He knew there were some of Apollos, some were of Christ, and some were of him, but he wasn't partial: he said 'Be with you all'. God is no respecter of persons, and those of us who stand in office in the church will remember that the wisdom from above is without partiality, and that the Holy Ghost operates without partiality.

Finally, Paul ends with, 'Amen'. Now when some of us were younger, we would look forward to the Amen, but there comes a time in the life of a true seeker when they don't want the Amen to come too quickly. They want to hear and receive something for themselves.

What does the word Amen mean? If God says it—and blessed be if He does say it— He says 'it is true: so be it.' His dear Son is called the Amen, one of His many names-it means 'It shall be so'. When our Lord lifted up His once wounded hands over the little gathering at Bethany and blessed them as He was parted from them, He was saying the Amen to them, 'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace' (Numbers 6.24-26). That's what He was saying, if not in words certainly in spirit. He was in a way repeating our text.

When we say Amen, it is a prayer, and when we pronounce it at the end of a

service—and it's a wonderful way to close a service—we are saying 'Lord, let it be so'. Despite all the infirmities of our preaching and hearing, and there are many, 'Lord, let this be so'; for where this is so, then there is that prosperity we so much long for.

Charles Hodge said this, 'The distinct personality and divinity of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, to each whom prayer is addressed, is here taken for granted. And therefore this passage is a clear recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, for the Christian is one who seeks and enjoys the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup> That's his definition as to what a Christian is.

Some years ago I was privileged to go to the United States and viewed the Niagara Falls. It is a marvellous sight, thousands and thousands of tonnes of water pouring over and going right down hundreds of feet. As I looked at it, I thought that this is a faint picture of our text: the love of God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit. What struck me was that the falls went right down to the bottom. This is how it will reach those whom God is calling. It changes hearts, renews wills, and turns the feet to Zion's Hill.

So dear friends, whenever you enter the House of God, enter with this prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all', and when you leave it, 'Lord, let it be so'. Amen.

### **Endnotes:**

 A. R. Cousin, 'The sands of time are sinking,' hymnary.org/text/the\_sands\_of\_time\_are\_sinking
S. Medley, 'God shall alone the refuge be', *Gadsby's Hymns*, No. 7.

3. C. Hodges, An exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/AJH0319.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext, p 315.



## 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.



## From a hospital in England

Thank you for the generosity of the Trinitarian Bible Society. Over the last eight years I have at various times received KJV Bibles from yourselves. They are greatly appreciated by the patients and by the Chaplaincy team.

Without benefactors like TBS we would struggle to fulfil our patients' needs. Having something as meaningful as a Bible helps them maintain their faith when suffering traumatic experiences. Please be assured of our prayers and good wishes.



### 🔁 From Zimbabwe

Chanel, 21, was asked by the church leader at this small village church which held its meetings under a tarpaulin, if she can look after the small children during the meetings which usually run for three to four hours. She was given a handful of very dog-eared leaflets with Gospel tracts, and this young woman, in a few weeks, had started the first children's Bible lessons for the village. Our visit coincided with her fourth week in control of the 32 children of various ages, but already they were reciting memory verses and singing Gospel songs. Chanel was overjoyed to be given one of the Bibles provided by the Trinitarian Bible Society under a grant, and now not only will she be able to read the Scriptures but also the children under her stewardship will benefit from her reading the Word to them under the stick lean-to shelter while the adults meet nearby.



### 📔 From Malawi

We are just wordless for the great gift you have given us here. Primary school pupils very happy and so thankful to have a copy of New Testament Chichewa Bible. Some secondary school students are very happy



and so thankful to have a copy of the complete Bible in English. Once again thank you so much for this great gift to us.

### 🏥 From Kenya

This photo is one that I took of one of the men that I distributed the TBS Articles to. You gave me three sets. I gave one set to my local church, the other set I gave to a friend that I do Bible study with. The other set I divided between two other friends. One of the people whom I divided them between is the one in the photo attached to this email. Thank you very much. Again, TBS is in my prayers.





TBS artiteles in Kenya

### From Uganda

Staff and students were very excited to receive a consignment of English hardback and softback Bibles, English New Testaments and colouring books from the Trinitarian Bible Society recently.

A missionary said that this was the first time they had been able to give a copy of God's Word to all of the 31 staff and 448 children in the school.

Many had been asking for a personal copy of the Scriptures but with so many other demands on funds, and with Bibles costing



up to a day's wages locally, it seemed like a dream. Now the dream has become a reality.

Not only will the children and young people enjoy free access to the Word of God, other family members and caregivers will also have an opportunity to read or hear it in their homes.

When news reached the wider community that Bibles were available a number of people visited the mission station requesting for a copy of God's precious truth. This is all the more amazing given that the school is located in a predominantly Muslim and Roman Catholic area.



### **From the Philippines**

This photo shows the distribution of Golden Thoughts calendars in the Philippines, which were greatly appreciated.

Asia









We would like to thank you once again for your generosity in passing on another 64 Bibles to us. We are most grateful—the Bibles go very well at the markets here locally, and also at the many rural shows we're privileged to be at.

You'll notice in the attached photo that we have the TBS Bibles in a small stack at the left of the table. Where possible, we take people on a short overview of the Bible, and then follow it up with a written piece explaining about the Old and New Testaments.

Many thanks—these Bibles are much appreciated, and will be put into the hands of seeking souls.

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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.



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