

The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

STATION 13: TYNDALE - Part 1

TYNDALE: Father of the English Bible

"I defy the Pope and all his laws: and if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of Scripture than the Pope does." - William Tyndale

The time span from Tyndale's first printed Testament to the King James Version is a scant 86 years. An unbroken line of revisions joins the two, the first an "outlaw" publication, the latter duly "Appointed." The period was marked by the controversy over secular reading of sacred texts, by Lutheran and Calvinist inroads in theology, by the break with Rome best represented by the "Ten Articles" of King Henry VIII, shown at [Station 6](#). All of these sprung from latent tinder, which Tyndale's "spark" set aflame.

William Tyndale (born Hutchins, his mother's maiden name) was born in Gloucestershire about 1494, took his B.A. at Oxford in 1512 and his M.A. in 1515. From an early age, he had shown great propensity for languages. He supported himself for a while as tutor for the children of the privileged, and preached in public forums. It was his heart-felt tactic to let the Bible speak for itself, and to refute Church dictums by letting God's Word have the final say. His wide-ranging discussions of controversial topics promulgated by Luther and Erasmus made Tyndale a target for the "establishment," and drove him from Oxford to Cambridge in 1517.

Cambridge was a milder climate for debate and study; it was there that Tyndale perfected his knowledge of Greek, and became a member of the "White Horse Inn Society" (also known as "Little Germany") where daily open discussions of Luther and Erasmus led to close scrutiny by the local Inquisition. By 1519-20, Tyndale resigned from the society and went to his home district, assuming the role of tutor and chaplain to the children of Sir John Walsh at Sodbury Manor. On weekends, Tyndale preached at St. Austen's Green in front of the Cathedral at Bristol. Walsh's home was a gathering place for distinguished clerics, who discussed the upheavals in Europe created by Luther.

Tyndale's participation in such discussions, based on what the Bible says rather than established dogma, soon made his presence uncomfortable for his benefactors. Lady Walsh, for one, equated her guests' power, position and influence with Truth. Tyndale replied, obliquely, by translating Erasmus' "Enchiridion of a Christian Soldier" into everyday English; this book condemned the arguments and conduct of wealthy clerics in matters of indulgences,

penance and pilgrimages, and convinced Lady Walsh that Truth was not necessarily synonymous with power and position. Though this stopped the debate, it positioned Tyndale as an enemy of the ecclesiastical power brokers who were monitoring his preaching and contacts in the community - as well as making life difficult for the Walsh family.

Tyndale records that in one instance when he was brought up on charges of heresy, one chancellor "threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog." He left the countryside in 1523, in the hopes that the Bishop of London (a close friend of Erasmus) would support him in his project of translating the New Testament into English.

Tyndale's New Testament

"Epistle of Paul to the Romans"



Tyndale's "Epistle of Paul to the Romans" from Tyndale's New Testament

1534 - From the New Testament published by Marten Emperowr of Antwerp, a careful revision by Tyndale of the 1525 edition. The leaves herein contain nearly all of "Romans" including part of Tyndale's 34-page "Prologue;" also included are the end of Luke and beginning of John. Collated and assembled by noted Biblical scholar Francis Fry. (From Herbert #13)

Other books by Tyndale, and from Tyndale's period shown at this Station include:

"Dialogue..." of Sir Thomas More

1530/31 - Second edition of this superb early English printed book, done in a "Black Letter" typeface highly reminiscent of monastic manuscripts. Title page states "Newly oversene" and gives More's title, "Chauncellour of England." The purpose of book was to confute the "pestylent secte" of **Luther** in Saxony and his "apostle," **Tyndale** in England. Very few examples of this book are recorded.

"Obedyence of a Chrysten Man" by Tyndale

1561 - "Black Letter" octavo by William Copeland of London. Headlines and page numbers in Roman type. Tyndale's most important religious and political work (except for his translation of the Bible). The full title: *"The Obedyence of a Chrysten man, and howe christen rulers ought to governe, wher in also (if thou marke dilygently) thou shalt finde eyes to perceave ye crafty conveiaunce of all iugglers."* The table (or index) records such anti-Papist subject matter as *"Pope dyspenseth to kepe whores."*

Tyndale's "A Proper Dialoge..."

1863 - Facsimile edition of the **unique** original, bound with Tyndale's "Prophete Jonas" in a book of old tracts in the library of Lord Arthur Hervey. Like "Jonas," this edition, containing two tracts by Tyndale, was published by Willis & Sotheran. This example is one of the few on vellum, and is inscribed by Fry to Hervey, in appreciation of his loan of the original (as such, unique!). The full titles: *"A proper dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and a husbandman eche complaynyng to other their miserable calamite through the ambicion of clergye"* with *"A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scripture in Englysshe"*

STATION LOCATION MAP

Below is a floor plan map of the Cathedral in 3 sections, one for each level. The first section is the Lower Level, the second is the Foyer Level, and the third is the Mezzanine Level. This station is located in the "Smoking Room" on the Lower Level at the red #13.



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