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# Tyndale's Dependance on Luther

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by

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation is to determine to what extent William Tyndale, the translator of the Bible into the English tongue, was dependent upon Martin Luther. No attempt shall be made to compare the historical significance of the two men, for there can be no doubt that the labors of Luther made a much greater impact and had a much more far-reaching effect than those of Tyndale.

One thing that these two reformers have in common is that they presented the people of their respective homelands with God's Word in the vernacular. However, our inquiry shall not be limited to the relation between Luther and Tyndale in respect to translation. Rather we shall concern ourselves with the formative effect which the entire Lutheran movement had upon Tyndale, and the effect which his association with this movement had upon his literary production and theological inclinations.

There are both vast differences and striking similarities between the English and German Reformations. Yet neither of them were carried out in a vacuum without respect to the other, but by flesh-and-blood men who were capable of being influenced and learning from the contributions of others. Although the limited scope of this paper does not lead us into a discussion of the many areas--theological, political, liturgical and others--in which these two reformatory movements were related to one another, yet it will of necessity touch upon some of them.

Tyndale's New Testament appeared in 1526, four years after Luther's had first been printed. It is impossible to assign the proper importance to the presence of an English Bible for the entire English move toward reformation. The influence of William Tyndale in the religious life of his people has often been underestimated, but there can be no doubt that we are indebted to him for one of the greatest services ever rendered to the English-speaking world. Every subsequent English version of the Bible can be traced, either directly or indirectly, back to the work of Tyndale.

There are many similarities between the lives of Tyndale and Luther other than that they were contemporaries. Both of them possessed a deep love and concern for the common people and their spiritual welfare; both were fearless and polemic in nature, severely censuring their enemies, and equally fearless in defending what they believed to be the true import and meaning of Scripture; both, through their translations of Scripture, set the style for their respective languages for centuries to come. Many of the same concerns motivated them; they attacked many of the same abuses, Luther a man working in his own country and loved by his countrymen, Tyndale living in exile and for the most part hated by those who called themselves Englishmen. Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that both were men committed to the Word of God, and were willing to sacrifice all, even their lives for it.

The writer feels that the importance of this investigation revolves around two things. First of all, by studying the life of Tyndale we are looking at the Lutheran Reformation in a wider context. It is hoped that this study will shed some light on the more far-reaching effects

of Luther's life and work, as they expressed themselves through Englishmen on English soil.

Secondly, to those who are English-speaking Lutherans such a study ought to be of special interest in properly evaluating the English Bible. There may be some validity to a claim that the Bible which has had such an influence among English speaking nations is a "Lutheran Bible." Only through a study of the Lutheran influences upon the translator of God's Word into English can such a claim be supported or refuted.

It is imperative that this study be concerned with more than a comparison of the literary production of Tyndale with that of Luther, of drawing parallels and cases of probable "borrowing," on Tyndale's part, from Luther. Rather it is necessary that we look at Tyndale's entire life to see what role Lutheranism played in making him what he was.

The problem is somewhat heightened by the fact that two extreme views have been promoted. On the one hand it is said that there was absolutely no contact or relationship between the two and that Tyndale's work was performed apart from and dissociated from the Lutheran movement; on the other hand the claim has often been made that Tyndale was only a servile imitator and echo of the great German Reformer. We shall attempt to determine where, between these two opposite assertions, the truth lies.

The entire investigation of the problem has been approached from the standpoint of Tyndale's life. Events important in the German Reformation, as well as Luther's career and writings, enter into our consideration only insofar as they pertain to the influence which they had upon Tyndale.

Excluding the introductory and concluding chapters it has seemed advisable to divide our study into six chapters. Two of these, chapters two and four, deal with Tyndale's contact with Luther and the Lutheran Reformation, the former chapter covering Tyndale's life in England, the latter his life on the continent. The intervening chapter attempts to evaluate the various causes which formed Tyndale's resolution to translate the Bible. Chapters five and six deal with Tyndale's dependence on Luther in literary production, and chapter seven with the influence wielded by the Lutheran Reformation upon Tyndale's theological thought. The final chapter will consist of a summary and a relating of the conclusions of the foregoing chapters to one another.

Several volumes have proven particularly fruitful in the research for this paper. Among those which ought to be mentioned specifically are the volumes containing the works of Tyndale, under the editorship of Henry Walter. In the area of contemporary documents the two works following have proved particularly helpful: John Foxe's Acts and Monuments and Records of the English Bible, edited by Alfred W. Pollard. For much valuable information on Tyndale's life and work we are especially grateful for excellent biographies of Tyndale written by R. Demmus and J. F. Mozley.

## CHAPTER II

## TYNDALE'S CONTACT WITH LUTHERANISM UNTIL 1524

### Tyndale's Birth and Early Life

"William Tyndale, the faithful minister and constant martyr of Christ, was born about the borders of Wales."[1] Thus begins Foxe's narrative of the life of Tyndale. All the succeeding research on the question of his birthplace has produced little more, except that it happened in the county of Gloucestershire. Many have proposed different places as the exact birthplace, but there is little or no agreement among scholars.

Nor is there agreement on the date of his birth. Demmus places it in the year 1484.[2] On the other hand Mozley would have him born a full ten years later. He bases this on the fact that Tyndale received his master of arts degree from Oxford during the year 1515, which degree could not legally be taken before one was twenty years of age.[3] His parents are unknown, as there seem to have been a number of Tyndales in the surrounding neighborhood, but almost all agree that they were of the middle class and wealthy enough that they were able to help William

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[1]John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition, edited by Stephen Reed Cattley (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1838), V, 114.

[2]R. Demmus, William Tyndale, A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 24.

[3]J. F. Mozley, William Tyndale (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), p. 1.

in his schooling.

One of the largest gaps in the life of Tyndale occurs in the early years of his life before he entered Oxford, where Foxe says that he was brought up from a child.[4] What we know of Tyndale's life with any certainty can be divided into the four following periods: First, his period of training at Oxford and Cambridge. This period occupies the years until 1521. Secondly, his residence as private chaplain to Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury from 1521 to 1523. Thirdly, his residence in London which lasted approximately one year and where he was associated with Humphrey Monmouth. Fourthly, his life and work on the continent, which lasted from 1524 until his martyrdom in 1536.[5] In this chapter we shall endeavor to trace the Lutheran influences upon Tyndale during the first three. But first a word must be said concerning the spread of Lutheranism in England until this time.

## The Spread of Lutheranism in England

The condition of England prior to the Reformation in Germany is perhaps best summed up in the words of Cardinal Bellarmine: "Some years before the rise of the Lutheran heresy there was in morals no discipline, in sacred literature no erudition, in divine things no reverence; religion was almost extinct."[6] However, before the time when Luther's reform had

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[4]Foxe, op. cit., pp. 114f.

[5]Cf. H. W. Hoare, The Evolution of the English Bible: An Historical Sketch of the Successive Versions from 1382 to 1885 (London: John Murray, 1901), pp. 108f.

[6]William Dallman, William Tyndale, The Translator of the English Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 16.

grown to full flower there was a revival of learning in England, particularly in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Some of the leading lights of this "new learning" were Erasmus, who came to England in 1510, Grocyn and Linacre, and others such as John Colet and Sir Thomas More. However this revival was not interested in ecclesiastical reform, nor in the study of the Holy Scriptures, except as aspects of the new learning. When the doctrines of Luther found their way into England Trevelyan tells us that these older humanists who had been instrumental in bringing the new learning to England shrank back and reacted towards orthodoxy.[7] In a similar vein Newman says, "The New Learning . . . which seemed at first so friendly to reformation . . . had become, by 1525, actively hostile to the Lutheran and kindred reformatory movements."[8]

Despite resistance to the importation of Lutheranism, the teachings of Luther became a power in England almost as soon as they had been proclaimed in Wittenberg. His books and tracts, as well as those of others, were rapidly distributed. Concerning this Conant says that "The thunder of Luther's tones came reverberating over the water; and, in spite of the vigilance of the clergy, translations of his writings were extensively circulated in England."[9] There is evidence that at

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[7]G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), p. 299.

[8]Albert Henry Newman, A Manual of Church History (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1951), II, 250.

[9]Mrs. H. G. Conant, The English Bible: History of the Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman and Co., 1856), p. 123.

least as early as 1520 great numbers of Lutheran books were imported and being distributed in England. Concerning the time when Luther's influence began to be felt in England Smith has the following to say:

> In May 1519 Erasmus felt it wise to assure Wolsey that he knew nothing of Luther, and did not know if he had written well or ill. A fortnight later he wrote Luther an encouraging letter, in which he told him that many of the greatest men in England were on his side.[10]

Two years later (in May of 1521) writing to Oecolampadius, the same Dutch humanist declares that there are many of Luther's books in England and hints that but for his exertions they would have been burnt.[11]

What was the result of this invasion of England by the doctrines and writings of the German Reformer? While previously the proponents of the new learning had many adherents and had changed to a great extent the theological studies of the day, it seems as if the introduction of Lutheranism wielded an even more powerful influence. Demaus says:

> Neither Colet nor Erasmus ever very heartily sympathised with the popular desire for a reformation, and both were constitutionally weak, and unequal to the labours which the reformation of a nation required. When the movement had spread beyond the Universities and the learned to the common people, a stronger mind and a more robust frame were demanded, and Colet and Erasmus gave place to the more masculine energy of Luther.[12]

Newman adds the following:

> A considerable and zealous Lutheran party had been formed in England . . . . Especially did the Lutheran influence manifest itself

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[10] H. Maynard Smith, Henry VIII and the Reformation (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 249.

[11] Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), II, 320.

[12] Demaus, op. cit., p. 40.

in the universities, several of the leading theologians, Barnes, Bilney, Latimer, Clark, etc., becoming open and zealous adherents of the new doctrine.[13]

Tyndale's Contact with Lutheranism while at Oxford and Cambridge

Tyndale attended Oxford from 1504 or 1505 until at least 1515 when he received his master of arts degree, and perhaps for a year or two longer. Although Mozley places his entrance at Oxford at a somewhat later date, it is more likely that he matriculated there somewhat earlier than 1510. It does not seem that Lutheranism had infiltrated Oxford to any degree during Tyndale's stay there. Although Archbishop Warham, in a letter written to Wolsey in March of 1521, complains of the extent to which the university was infested with Lutheranism, this was at least three years after Tyndale had left to pursue his scholarly interests at Cambridge. Furthermore it seems as if Lutheranism found a foothold in Cambridge somewhat earlier than it did at Oxford and was transmitted from the former to the latter place. In any event, we can assign no particular influence of Lutheranism upon Tyndale's life during this time.

The exact reason why Tyndale left Oxford for Cambridge is uncertain, but the move no doubt occurred during the year 1518 and he remained there until 1521. At Cambridge Tyndale came more directly under the influence of Luther's writings and more closely associated with men who had been attracted to the study of Scripture and the teachings of the Reformer. Some claim that Tyndale heard Erasmus lecture while at Cambridge, but

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[13]Newman, op. cit., pp. 254f.

Westcott, Smith and Demaus have shown that it could not have been until some time after Erasmus had left in 1514 that Tyndale made his appearance there. The question concerning whether or not Erasmus' work prepared Cambridge for the introduction of Lutheranism has been asked. Smith denies that there was any connection between the labors of Erasmus and the felicitous reception which Luther's teachings received. He says further that he does not think that Erasmus wielded any great religious influence at Cambridge while he was in residence.[14] Although Smith may not be giving Erasmus his proper importance, certainly there is some truth in what Campbell says, that "when Tyndale reached Cambridge, he encountered a generation that knew not Erasmus, but was warming its hands at the fiercer fires of Martin Luther."[15]

There seems to have been an intense interest in the writings of those who were effecting the Reformation on the continent. It was at this time that Thomas Bilney was converted by "a perusal of Erasmus' New Testament and the works of Luther," the historian of the University informs us.[16] Rupp tells us that the names of at least twenty-five of the young men at Cambridge are preserved to us as having come to the fire of martyrdom in the decades that followed.[17] Although at this time

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[14]Smith, op. cit., p. 243.

[15]W. E. Campbell, Erasmus, Tyndale and More (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 103.

[16]Henry Eyster Jacobs, The Lutheran Movement in England during the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI (Philadelphia: General Council Publishing House, 1916), p. 7.

[17]Gordon Rupp, Six Makers of the English Religion, 1500-1700 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. 15.

they did not press for a vernacular Bible, their main interest was in the new Biblical commentaries as they stemmed from Luther, Melanchthon, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Zwingli, Hedio, and Lambert of Avignon.[18]

There are references to a group of scholars who were called "Germans" and who met at the White Horse Tavern, which came to be known as "Little Germany," for the purpose of studying and discussing Luther's propositions. Among those who gathered in this place Trevelyan mentions Latimer, Cranmer, Coverdale, and not too surprising, the name of William Tyndale.[19] It seems as if Barnes was the leading member of this group which continued to meet for a period of about ten years, beginning in 1518, the year in which Tyndale came to Cambridge. Although the White Horse Tavern was at the time a place of no importance in the sight of the university, it is of great importance to English Reformation history, for as Smith says, "it was the nest from which those who were to change the Church took their flight."[20] Smith then goes on to make the following comment concerning the Germans at Cambridge:

> Romantic historians have exaggerated their influence at the time. Protestants have pictured godly men at the risk of their lives stealing in at the back door of the inn that they might together study the Scriptures and pray that England might receive a purer faith. Catholics, on the other hand, have pictured dark conspirators assembling together that they might plan the destruction of Holy Church . . . . There was nothing secret about these meetings

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 300. A more complete listing can be found in Rupp's Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), p. 197.

[20] Smith, op. cit., p. 254.

> . . . . There was no objection to men discussing the latest revolutionary movement, and until the end of 1520 there was no ban on Lutheran books. Still less was it forbidden to study that edition of the New Testament which Leo X had graciously accepted, and Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, had largely paid for.[21]

Whatever the exact status of the "Germans" was at this time, there can be no doubt that they were composed largely of men who had become attracted to the teachings and work of Martin Luther, and that he was one of the chief topics of discussion. Likewise there can be no doubt that for a period of at least two years or longer William Tyndale was intimately associated with this group.

There are also at this time mysterious references to a "Society of Christian Brethren," which existed at Cambridge.. It has been described as:

> a kind of "Forbidden Book of the Month Club". It seems to have been an organized sodality with its own accounts and auditors. It subsidized scholars like William Tyndale, and it underwrote the dangerous but not unprofitable godly trade of smuggling into this country the works of the Reformers from 1520 onwards, and then from about 1526 a whole spate of English religious literature.[22]

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[21] Ibid., p. 252.

[22] Rupp, Six Makers of English Religion, p. 16. The evidence for the fact that this was a well organized operation is found in Foxe's Acts and Monuments, in a letter written by a certain Sebastain Newdigate. In his Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition Rupp quotes a portion of it:

"'Item yt one Thomas Deyle, Mercer of London shewid me yt there was made for the Augmentacion of Christen brethern of his Sorte: Auditours and Clerks yt in this Citie. And yt every christen brother of their sorte shulde pay a certayn sum of money to the aforesaid Clerks which shulde goo in to all the quarters of this Realme and at certayn tymes, the Auditours to take Accompte of them . . . .

'And then I asked hym how he and hos other Felowes wolde do seying the Kyngs Grace and these greate lordes of the realme were agaynst them: the whiche said yt they had all redy twoo thousande bookes out ageynst the blessid Sacrament in the Commens handes with bookes concernyng dyverse other matters, affirmynge yt if it were once in the Commens heds thei wolde have no further care.'"

Concerning the operations of this society it has been said that its activities covered all quarters of the realm and that it was a

> society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge as well as a society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It is evident from the feverish attempt of secular and church authorities to stem the traffic in contraband literature that it was being carefully organized and that as well as ordering books to be made, it was subsidizing scholars who continued their work in the comparative safety of distant exile.[23]

It has been suggested that this society was carried on within the congregations which were the remnants of Lollardy. However, it does not seem that the Society and the remnants of Lollardy were co-extensive, but only that there were a number of men who had been affected by Lollardy who were important members of the Society.

In any event it can be proven that the Society had its contacts at Cambridge. The young students so interested in reform proved to be a ready market for the contraband books. Furthermore, Cambridge was situated on a river and was easily accessible to the ships which made a practice of transporting books for the Society. No doubt this is one of the reasons why Cambridge became infested with Lutheranism somewhat earlier than Oxford.

What was Tyndale's connection with this group? Although it is doubtful that he was an active member in the society, it is only logical to assume that he was aware of their work, and no doubt proved to be one of their best customers. Notice that the Society was active by at least 1520, if not somewhat earlier. It seems only logical that the later

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[23]Rupp. Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition. p. 7.

concern of this society for transporting and circulating Tyndale's translation of the New Testament can be traced back to an earlier mutual acquaintance of Tyndale and prominent members of the Society.

## Tyndale at Little Sodbury

Whether it was pressure which was beginning to be exerted against the "Germans" at Cambridge which influenced Tyndale to leave, or whether he left for some other reason, is uncertain. But in the year 1521 he severed his connections with the university to take up residence as private chaplain for Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury in his native county of Gloucestershire, and also served as tutor to his master's children. Here he remained for a period of approximately two years, from 1521 until 1523.

It is apparent that at this time Tyndale was already a man firmly grounded in the Holy Scriptures. He shows this by his use of Bible references to confute those who disagreed with him. Foxe tells us the following story:

> This gentleman [Walsh], as he kept a good ordinary commonly at his table, there resorted to him many times sundry abbots, deans, archdeacons, with divers other doctors, and great beneficed men; who there, together with Master Tyndale sitting at the same table, did use many times to enter communication, and talk of learned men, as of Luther and of Erasmus; also of divers other controversies and questions upon the Scripture.
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> Then Master Tyndale, as he was learned and well practised in God's matters, so he spared not to show unto them simply and plainly his judgment in matters, as he thought; and when they at any time did vary from Tyndale in opinions and judgment, he would show them in the book, and lay plainly before them the open and manifest places of the Scriptures, to confute their errors, and confirm his sayings.[24]

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[24]Foxe, op. cit., p. 115.

Hoare says that this habit of Tyndale's must have been in the highest degree inconvenient for those who opposed him.[25]

Although Foxe mentions that there was talk of Luther at the table of Sir John Walsh, yet it seems that at this stage of his life Tyndale was more under the influence of Erasmus than of Luther. In order to prove his opinions to his master and mistress he translated into English a short book written by Erasmus entitled Enchiridion Militis Christiani, thereby showing that the opinions which he expressed were not only those of a somewhat radical young chaplain, but also those of a great learned man.

Other incidents which happened during Tyndale's residence at Little Sodbury will be related in the following chapter which deals with Tyndale's resolution to translate the New Testament into English. It is difficult to trace any direct influence of Luther upon Tyndale during his two year residence with John Walsh. However, it is also evident that he did not cut himself off from the Lutheran ties which he had made before.

In the year 1523 Tyndale resigned his position and turned his back on his native county, which he was never to behold again.

## Tyndale in London

Tyndale's purpose in going to London was to contact the proper authorities in order to get the proper help and backing to translate the New Testament into English. With him he carried a translation of an oration of Isocrates with which he intended to impress Tunstal, the

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[25] Hoare, op. cit., p. 119.

bishop of London. Tyndale, however, was the victim of unwarranted optimism. Tunstal had no intention of supporting a private translator of the Bible. Tyndale's plea was rejected. For the time being Tyndale found himself in London without friends and without support. It happened that he occasionally preached at St. Dunstan's. Here it was that he became acquainted with Mr. Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy citizen of London, who later became an alderman. With him Tyndale made his abode for a period of almost a year and received from him a certain amount of money to help him in his work.[26] Here, in Monmouth's home, Tyndale had ample time for the study of Scripture and the original languages in which they were written. Although Tyndale shortly came to realize that he would never receive the patronage of Tunstal for his work, yet we can rest assured that his time was not ill-spent.

Something must be said about the character and religious leanings of Monmouth. Demaus says that he had "begun to be a Scriptureman" and that it was his pleasure to "assist needy scholars."[27] It is known from his later activities and his trial for being instrumental in the transportation of books into England, that he was a member of the Society of Christian Brethren; very likely, then, he was himself acquainted with the work and writings of Luther. Demaus says that

> it is quite certain that Monmouth himself was considerably influenced by the opinions of Luther . . . . he had bought and studied the works of Luther; and he was subsequently charged with eating

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[26]Most scholars feel that at this point in his life Tyndale had begun serious work on his translation of the New Testament.

[27]Demaus, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

> flesh in Lent, with speaking disrespectfully of the pardons granted by the Pope and the bishops, and with denying the utility of pilgrimages and offerings before the images of the saints; all the customary indications, in fact, of one who adhered to what was then styled the 'detestable sect of Lutherans'.[28]

Hoare adds this comment: "Looking to what are known to have been Monmouth's personal sympathies in religious matters, it is more than probable that some of the current Lutheran literature was to be found in his house."[29] He felt the need for a reformation of the Church and it was his special pleasure to assist men like Tyndale who were already resolved to assist in such a reformation.

In Monmouth's house Tyndale had a chance to study more fully the work which Luther had effected in Germany and to examine the teachings of the Reformation in the light of the Scriptures. While at Cambridge he had to some extent become acquainted with the principles of the Reformation, but it was in London that he really had the opportunity to examine these principles and their results firsthand. By this time the German Reformation had grown into great dimensions; it was no longer a mere local dispute, but a great movement. Two years before Tyndale's arrival in London "Wolsey issued a proclamation requiring all who possessed any copies of that arch-heretic (Luther) to deliver them up to the custody of the ecclesiastical authorities."[30] In spite of this prohibition we know that Lutheran books continued to be imported by the

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[28] Ibid. p. 90f.

[29] Hoare, op. cit., p. 124.

[30] Demaus, op. cit., p. 80.

merchants who traded with the Low Countries.[31]

It was with these merchants that Monmouth, also a merchant, carried on his trade, and no doubt Tyndale became personally acquainted with a number of them. Hoare tells us that at the table of Monmouth

> Tyndale met London traders and merchants from the country towns, and from Germany, France and Switzerland, listened eagerly to the talk of the day, and heard how the new Lutheranism was fast making way on the Continent, and how this violent uprising of Teutonic against Latin Christianity was revolutionising the attitude of English Catholics towards Church reform.[32]

Smith adds the following concerning these merchants:

> These London merchants, with agencies at Antwerp and Calais, were associated with German merchants from Lubeck and Hamburg who were domiciled in the Steelyard of London. Not only were they interested in the Lutheran movement, but they knew more about it than English statesmen and bishops, and desired a similar reformation in England.[33]

Through his acquaintance with these men Tyndale heard all the details of the Reformation of which he, as most Englishmen, had previously only a general knowledge. From the lips of these men Tyndale heard the progress which the Reformation was making narrated with the accuracy and impressiveness that belongs only to eye-witnesses. Rupp feels that it is very possible that at this time Tyndale first came into possession of Luther's new German Testament, and that he began to learn to read enough German to use it as a tool.[34]

In summing up Tyndale's residence in London it must be said that

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Hoare, op. cit., p. 124.

[33] Smith, op. cit., p. 286.

[34] Rupp, Six Makers of the English Religion, p. 18.

during this time he came under the influence of Luther more than at any previous time. While hitherto he was aware of Luther's work and was in sympathy with it, yet it was Colet and Erasmus to whom Tyndale had looked as the great lights and guides of the age. But in London

> he heard of a greater Reformer, whose words of more impressive eloquence, and still more, whose conduct of more resolute determination, had achieved what Erasmus had rather recommended than attempted.[35]

Hoare concurs in Demaus' judgment expressed above:

> Speaking generally it may be said that up to the year 1523 Tyndale remained more or less the disciple of his earliest instructors, John Colet and Erasmus. Thenceforward he felt very strongly the influence of Luther.[36]

Through the first-hand information which Tyndale received during this year it seems that he came to the conclusion that a genuine reform could not be effected through the methods of Erasmus and the humanists who followed in his train. Because of the vigor and methods which Luther used there can be no question that from this time onward Luther occupied the highest place in the mind of Tyndale, and exercised very considerable influence over his opinions.

Early in 1524 Tyndale left behind his native England never to see it again. It seems that his decision to do so was influenced by those merchants who were so interested in an English reform, for evidence points to the fact that they paid his passage and also sent him financial aid later. Left behind were his friend and patron Monmouth and

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[35] Demaus, op. cit., p. 90.

[36] Hoare, op. cit., p. 109. Although the essence of Hoare's statement is true, it is doubtful that Tyndale studied directly under either Colet or Erasmus.

his future co-worker, Frith.[37] Taken with him were the beginnings of his translation work, and an intense desire that through his labors England would have the Word of God in her own tongue. During the next twelve years thousands of copies of his translation found their way across the English Channel into English homes and hearts, fulfilling Tyndale's wish.

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[37] Most scholars believe that Tyndale was acquainted with Frith before he left England, many feeling that he had come to know him while at Cambridge. It seems impossible, however, on the basis of the evidence, to determine at just what point of his life Tyndale first met Frith.

## CHAPTER III

## TYNDALE'S RESOLUTION TO TRANSLATE THE BIBLE

### The One Goal of Tyndale's Life

In Chapter II we considered the influences of Luther upon the early life of Tyndale. In the following chapter we shall consider to what extent Luther and Lutheranism influenced him in the latter part of his life. The present chapter will be devoted to a study of when and why Tyndale first resolved in his mind that he would translate the Scriptures into his native tongue. It has often been affirmed that it was only after Luther's German translation of the New Testament appeared in 1522 that Tyndale decided that he would render the same service for the English people. The writer hopes that this chapter will prove that assertion to be false.

> To give his countrymen a native Bible was felt by Tyndale to be the mission of his life, and the overmastering desire to fulfil it took possession of him with all the power of a passion.[1]

Everything else was subordinate to this one purpose. Even Tyndale's controversial and devotional writings were secondary to him. He was willing to sacrifice everything if only this purpose could be accomplished. For that cause he was willing to leave his native land never to see it for the last twelve years of his live. In order that this one purpose might be accomplished he was willing to live as a "man

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[1] H. W. Hoare, The Evolution of the English Bible: An Historical Sketch of the Successive Versions from 1382 to 1885 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 154.

without a country," hated and persecuted by his countrymen, yet never fully accepted by the foreigners with whom he associated. He was willing to cut himself off from the majority of his friends for a long period of his life, and spend long hours and days working at that one task which he felt to be so important. Concerning the tenacity with which he held to this purpose Smith says,

> William Tyndale was an austere Puritan, perfectly sincere, altogether disinterested, utterly uncompromising and unafraid. He believed that it was his vocation to translate the Scriptures, and he believed it with an intensity that precluded his being interested in anything else. With great abilities, and sound scholarship, he devoted himself to his task. He was one of those narrow-minded men who get things done.[2]

Tyndale was possessed with a love for his countrymen; he was concerned with their spiritual welfare. In his mind only one thing could raise the spiritual level of his people above the corruption and impiety which was so much a part of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in England. Dallman sums it up thus:

> Tyndale was convinced that, to save the Church, the common people must have the Bible in their own tongue. He was no dreamer or fanatic; with a clear eye he saw the seat of the trouble, and with glowing heart and firm will he set about to seek the only remedy.[3]

Concerning Tyndale's resolution to translate the Bible Foxe makes the rather lengthy statement:

> He perceived by experience how that it was not possible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scriptures were so plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they

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[2]H. Maynard Smith, Henry VIII and the Reformation (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 280.

[3]William Dallman, William Tyndale, the Translator of the English Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 18f.

> might see the process, order, and meaning of the text; for else, whatsoever truth should be taught them, these enemies of the truth would quench it again, either with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making, founded without all ground of Scripture; or else juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as it were impossible to gather of the text, if the right process, order, and meaning thereof were seen.
>
> Again, right well he perceived and considered this only, or most chiefly, to be the cause of all mischief in the church, that the Scriptures of God were hidden from the people's eyes; for so long the abominable doings and idolatries maintained by the pharisaical clergy could not be espied; and therefore all their labour was with might and main to keep it down, so that either it should not be read at all, or if it were, they would darken the right sense with the mist of their sophistry, and so entangle those who rebuked or despised their abominations, with arguments of philosophy, and with worldly similitudes, and appa rent reasons of natural wisdom; and, with wresting the Scripture unto their own purpose, contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text, would so delude them in descanting upon it with allegories, and amaze them, expounding it in many senses laid before the unlearned lay people, that though thou felt in thy heart, and were sure that all were false that they said, yet couldst thou not solve their subtle riddles.[4]

What does Tyndale himself say concerning this resolution to translate the Bible? In the preface to his Pentateuch of 1530 he writes concerning the purpose of his leaving England. He says that it was only when he "understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the new Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England" that he departed from his native land.[5] Here Tyndale himself points out that it was for this one consuming purpose of his life that he was willing to forsake his country.

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[4]John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition, edited by Stephen Reed Cattley, (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1838), V, 118f.

[5]William Tyndale, Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures, edited by Henry Walter, (Cambridge: University Press, 1848), p. 396.

Another incident in his life points it out even more forcefully. After Tyndale's New Testament had been translated and was being distributed in England the authorities attempted to get him to return to England. One of the agents sent for this purpose was a certain Stephen Vaughan. In a letter written by him to Cromwell he tells of a meeting with Tyndale and an attempt to entice him to return to England by an offer of pardon. A portion of the letter written by Vaughan reads as follows:

> I perceived the man (Tyndale) to be exceedingly altered,--in such wise that water stood in his eyes, and answered: "What gracious words are these, I assure you," said he, "That if it would stand with the King's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the scripture to be put forth among his people--be it of the translation of what person soever shall please his majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same: (Tyndale was at Antwerp at the time), but immediately to repair into his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his royal majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain or torture yea, what death his grace will, so this be obtained."[6]

Certainly the evidence quoted seems to be conclusive. No more needs to be produced to show what importance Tyndale attached to the performance of the mission he had set for himself. He was willing to offer his life for the fulfillment of his task. The further purpose of this chapter is to determine not only whether the resolution to perform that task was dependent upon Luther, but also to make an inquiry into the nature of the various causes which compelled him to hold to that resolve so relentlessly. To that end we shall first take a look at the state of Bible translation in England prior to Tyndale's edition of the New Testament in 1526.

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[6]This letter is quoted in Gordon Rupp's Six Makers of the English Religion, 1500-1700 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. 23.

## The State of Bible Translation in England

Exactly what was the attitude of the ecclesiastical and political authorities which made it impossible for Tyndale to translate the Bible in his homeland? "The attitude of the Mediaeval Church to biblical translations was one of tolerance in principle, and distrust in practice."[7] There were vernacular versions of the Scriptures licensed by authority, but not widely distributed, in Flanders, France, Italy and Spain. It cannot be said, therefore, that there was at this time an absolute prohibition against possessing the Bible in the vernacular.

The attitude of the English clergy was perhaps somewhat more severe than in other countries. Two hundred years previously Wycliffe had translated the Bible into English. Because of his attacks upon the established church and his attempts at reform, both he and his translation were looked upon with extreme disfavor. It was primarily for the purpose of suppressing Wycliffe's Bible that in 1408, during the time of Archbishop Arundel, the Provincial Council had declared among other things

> That no man by his own authority may translate any text of the Scriptures . . . and no man may read any such books until the said translation be approved by the Diocesan of the place, or if the case so require by the Council Provincial.[8]

In spite of this canon banning Lollard books and the Lollard Bible "there have survived until the present day no less than a hundred and

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[7]Smith, op. cit., p. 276.

[8]Ibid.

eighty manuscripts, and only a fifth of them were written before Arundel's decree."[9] Due to the absence of printing presses this Bible, however, never gained wide distribution among the people, but rather survived as the possessions of private individuals and of small congregations of Lollards who were still hoping for a reform of the type that Wycliffe had attempted. These manuscripts, particularly in the form in which it was revised by John Purvey, were laboriously hand-copied, a task which was considerably hampered by the constant vigilance of the clergy. The unqualified statement that England was completely without a vernacular Bible cannot, however, be made.

Except for the study of Scripture in these isolated instances, the Bible in general was neglected by clergy and laity alike. Demaus says,

> The study of Holy Scripture did not even form a part of the preparatory education of those who were destined to be the religious teachers of the people; theological summaries, compiled by scholastic doctors, took the place of the Word of God; and St. Paul was cast into the shade by the "doctor sanctus," the "angel of the schools," "divus Thomas de Aquino."[10]

The resultant ignorance of Scripture itself and of the doctrines contained therein was inevitable.[11] In his Answer to Sir Thomas More of 1530 Tyndale asserted that there were twenty thousand priests in England who could not have translated into plain English the clause in the Lord's Prayer, "Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra."[12] Al-

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[9] Ibid. pp. 276-77.

[10] R. Demaus, William Tyndale, A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 29.

[11] Infra. pp. 28f.

[12] Compare Demaus, op. cit., p. 28.

though this was no doubt an exaggeration, yet there was an abject ignorance of the Holy Bible throughout England. But more of this later.

Cardinal Gasquet has made a gallant, though somewhat unconvincing, attempt to prove that there was in actuality a very tolerant attitude among the bishops concerning the possession and reading of the Bible in the vernacular.[13] His arguments are based primarily upon statements made by Sir Thomas More in his Dialogue of 1529. It is true that More had denied that he was opposed to a vernacular translation of the Bible, as also had Erasmus.[14] However, as one reads through More's statements on this subject one must bear in mind that this was written some time after Tyndale's translation had been widely distributed in England. One gets the impression that More senses the futility of a protest against a vernacular version, and therefore is critical of Tyndale's translation on the basis of what he terms mistranslations and also on the basis of the marginal glosses which accompanied the text. More realized that whatever he might say, the English Bible was there to stay. On the other hand, it cannot be stated definitely that More was personally opposed to such a translation. It must be remembered that he was one of those instrumental in first introducing humanism to England.

What were the specific attitudes of those who were in political and ecclesiastical leadership in England at Tyndale's time? Henry VIII was king, and as is well-known, he was a promoter of the new learning;

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[13]For a fuller and more complete study of Gasquet's evidence and conclusions see his The Eve of the Reformation (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1927), pp. 208-28.

[14]Infra., p.39.

but the idea of a vernacular translation at this time was far removed from his mind. The chief ecclesiastical authority was Cardinal Wolsey, also a humanist, but opposed to a translation for the people. The man with whom it was necessary for Tyndale to deal directly was Tunstal, the bishop of London. Although somewhat more moderate, yet at this time he had neither the desire nor the finances to promote a translation of the Bible. In the first place he was still heavily in debt to Rome for his appointment to the bishopric of London; furthermore the recent ecclesiastical and political upheaval in Germany, was felt by many to be a direct result of the propagation of the Scriptures in the vernacular. By the time that Tunstal was approached by Tyndale he was well aware of the fact that Luther had already brought the Bible to the German people in their own tongue,[15] and the English clergy had no desire that a situation exist in England such as existed in Germany. Whether Tunstal was at this time aware of Tyndale's Lutheran leanings is doubtful, but certainly at this time he had no intention of authorizing or supporting a translation of the Bible. Anderson rightly observes that

> Neither the political nor literary condition of England, under the dominant sway of Cardinal Wolsey, afforded the slightest indication of the Sacred Scriptures being about to be given to the people, but the reverse.[16]

In summing up the attitude in England in regard to Bible translations, it can be stated that there was not a shred of hope that Tyn-

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[15]Tyndale approached Tunstal in the year 1523. Luther's German translation of the New Testament had appeared in 1522.

[16]Christopher Anderson, The Annals of the English Bible (London: William Pickering, 1845), I, 10.

dale would have received official authorization for his work. Despite what Gasquet says Tyndale's statement that there was no place "in all England" to translate must be accepted at its face value.

### At What Time in His Life Tyndale Resolved to Translate

In order to prove that Tyndale's resolve to translate was not dependent upon Luther, we must establish approximately at what time in his life this resolve became established in his mind. Although no exact point in Tyndale's life can be referred to as the exact moment at which Tyndale discovered what his mission in life was to be, the evidence indicates that it occurred quite early.

In his preface to The Obedience of a Christian Man, written in 1527, Tyndale says,

> Yea, and except my memory fail me, and that I have forgotten what I read when I was a child, thou shalt find in the English chronicle, how that king Adelsone caused the holy scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England, and how the prelates exhorted him thereto.[17]

Concerning this quotation Demaus says,

> "The child is father of the man;" surely, in this picture of the boy Tyndale studying the chronicles, and carefully noting in the past history of England the manner in which the free circulation of the vernacular Bible had at different times been dealt with, we may see a significant and almost prophetical forecast of the future life of the man.[18]

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[17] Tyndale, op. cit., p. 149. The underlining is that of the writer. Demaus here points out in a footnote on page 26 of William Tyndale that it is possible that Tyndale was mistaken in here assigning to Athelstane what should have been assigned to Alfred. English history seems to be full of confusion on this subject, Demaus avers.

[18] Demaus, op. cit., p. 26.

The point here is that Tyndale seems to have been impressed while very young with this rather obscure reference, due no doubt to the absence of the Scriptures in his own day. That this item of information should remain lodged in his mind for such a long time would seem to indicate that he was already aware of the need for the task which he was to perform at a later date.

His native Gloucestershire was as good a place as any to observe the need for the Scriptures. Demaus tells us that

> so predominant was the influence of the clergy throughout the country that "as sure as God is in Glouchester" had come to be a familiar proverb all over England. Nowhere, probably, was religion more entirely a thing of form and ceremony; and of these ceremonies, in almost all cases, unmeaning, and in not a few, grotesque and ridiculous, the young Tyndale, shrewd and thoughtful from his childhood, was no inattentive observer.[19]

That the ignorance of the people was the cause of his translation Tyndale himself affirms in his Preface to the Pentateuch:

> Which thing only moved me to translate the new Testament. Because I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to establish the lay-people in any truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue.[20]

Hoare also attributes Tyndale's resolution to translate to the ignorance which was so prevalent in his day. He says,

> His experience of the arrogance and ignorance of the official teachers of religion had so disgusted him with the emptiness and unreality of the current theology, as to give birth to his resolution to translate the Bible.[21]

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[19] Ibid., p. 31.

[20] Tyndale, op. cit., p. 394.

[21] Hoare, op. cit., pp. 135f.

The ignorance of the clergy in Tyndale's home county is not without further attestation. A generation later than Tyndale, Hooper, then bishop of Glouchester, made a visitation in his diocese. In his report he found that, of the 311 clergymen examined, no less than 168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, 31 ignorant of the source of the Ten Commandments, 40 who could nor repeat the Lord's Prayer, and about the same number who did not even know to whom it should be ascribed.[22] There can be no doubt that Tyndale met such ignorance face to face during his youth, and also during his residence with Sir John Walsh in the same county from 1521 to 1523.

Whether any idea of translating the Scriptures had so much as crossed Tyndale's mind before he entered Oxford is questionable. But we can already see the pattern forming and the background being laid out of which this resolution arose.

Any such existing predisposition toward his future work was strengthened during his university life. Here it was that he gained a greater knowledge of the Bible and became acquainted with the original languages. Foxe tells us that during his Oxford days he

> increased in the knowledge of tongues, and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted; insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen college, some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures.[23]

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[22]These statistics are given in Hoare, op. cit., pp. 117f.

[23]Foxe, op. cit., p. 115.

His interest in the reading and exposition of Scripture is shown already at this early stage of his life by his organizing Bible readings among his fellow-students.

On the question of whether or not Tyndale's resolution was already being formed at this time, Mrs. H. C. Conant provides us with the following piece of interesting evidence:

> There is even strong reason for believing that, while still at the University and before he had reached his twentieth year, the purpose of translating the Scriptures was already working in his mind. An autograph collection in the hands of one of his biographers, of translations made by him of select portions of the New Testament, shows in its ornamental, missal-like captions and borders, the initials W.T., and the date 1502, several times repeated. To the latter are prefixed, in one instance, the significant words "TIME TRIETH"; as if the youthful translator even then had it in view, to submit his labors to the test of publication. It is a fact no less remarkable than interesting, that these early attempts were transferred, for the most part verbatim, into his complete New Testament; and that many passages have come down, through the successive revisions, unaltered into our common version! Thus the bent of his mind, from its first known development, marks him out as a man of earnest purpose, who already comprehends what is his work and calling in the age.[24]

There is no doubt that during his residence at Little Sodbury (1521-1523) this resolution was firmly established in his mind. Mozley seems to indicate that it was at this time that Tyndale formed his resolution to translate.[25] It is more conceivable, however, that at this time the resolution had already been formed, as shown by the above evidence, and that the incidents given below served to strengthen and

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[24]Mrs. H. C. Conant, The English Bible: History of the Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856), pp. 124f.

[25]For Mozley's discussion of Tyndale's resolve to translate see his William Tyndale (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), pp. 26-36.

reinforce the decision made earlier in his life.

Foxe gives two incidents of such a nature which occured during this period of Tyndale's life. One is the following:

> There dwelt not far off a certain doctor, that had been an old chancellor before to a bishop, who had been of old familiar acquaintance with Master Tyndale, and also favoured him well; unto whom Master Tyndale went and opened his mind upon divers questions of the Scripture: for to him he durst be bold to disclose his heart. Unto whom the doctor said, "Do you not know that the pope is very Antichrist, whom the Scripture speaketh of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life;" and said moreover, "I have been an officer of his; but I have given it up, and defy him and all his works."[26]

These words seem to have strengthened Tyndale in his opinion that a reform of the Church was needed, a reform that could not be accomplished "except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue."

The other incident related by Foxe which is of interest is the following:

> It was not long after, but Master Tyndale happened to be in the company of a certain divine, recounted for a learned man, and, in communing and disputing with him, he drave him to that issue (of the Antichrist), that the said great doctor burst out into these blasphemous words, and said, "We were better to be without God's laws than the pope's." Master Tyndale, hearing this, full of godly zeal, and not bearing that blasphemous saying, replied again, and said, "I defy the pope, and all his laws:" and further added, that if God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that driveth a plow, to know more of the Scriptures than he did.[27]

Here we see the resolve to translate firmly implanted in his mind, a resolve to which he held unswervingly throughout his life.

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[26]Foxe, op. cit., pp. 116f. Mozley, op. cit., produces evidence that this doctor in all likelihood was William Latimer, pp. 31f.

[27]Ibid., p. 117.

Concerning this Westcott says,

> By this time he knew what his work was, and he was resolutely set to accomplish it. At the same time he was prepared to furnish the bishop for whose countenance he looked with an adequate test of his competency.[28]

His translation of an oration of Isocrates is the instrument with which he hoped that Tunstal might be convinced of his qualifications for performing the task which he had appointed for himself.

It is not known whether Tyndale heard of Luther's translation before he came to London or not. It is certain that before he left London in 1524 that he was aware of, and perhaps owned a copy, of Luther's 1522 New Testament. Certainly the appearance of this work was another factor which served to strengthen his resolve and give him hope that his mission could be accomplished.

In Foxe's Life of Frith we are told that while in London Tyndale and Frith conferred together on the subject of an English version as the only means of bringing the truth to the people.[29] It is quite likely, in fact, that Tyndale was already at the task of transferring the original Greek into Anglo-Saxon. The following statement of Monmouth, with whom Tyndale lived in London, is of interest:

> When I heard my lord of London [Monmouth is here referring to Tunstal] preach at St. Paul's Cross, that sir William Tyndale had translated the New Testament in English, and was naughtily translated, that was the first time that ever I suspected or knew any evil of him.[30]

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[28] Brooke Foss Westcott, A General View of the History of the English Bible (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), pp. 27f.

[29] J. I. Mombert, English Versions of the Bible (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., n.d.), p. 81.

[30] Ibid., p. 82.

Notice the emphasis on the word naughtily. Monmouth does not deny knowledge that Tyndale was engaged in the process of translating, but that he was engaged in the publication of a perverted translation.

## The Resolve of Tyndale in its Relation to Lollardy

Something has been said previously concerning the movement of Lollardy.[31] It is necessary that something be added at this point of our discussion. The question which is of concern presently is the extent to which Lollardy survived during Tyndale's day and whether it was instrumental in the formation of Tyndale's resolve to translate.

Although Lollardy, during Tyndale's lifetime, was very much in the background, it had not died out. In a letter to Pope Adrian VI in 1523 Erasmus makes the comment that the Wycliffite party "was not extinguished, but only overcome."[32] If the flames were extinguished the embers smouldered on, so that when, in 1529, a royal proclamation appeared against unorthodox writings, no particular distinction is drawn between "Lollardies" and other "heresies and errors."[33] Scholars have varied in their estimation of Lollardy's influence at this time. Some have said that their influence was nil or at least very limited, while others have made this phase of Wycliffitism the moving force behind the English Reformation. It is perhaps worthy of note that in the most comprehen-

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[31] Supra, pp. 26f.

[32] Cf. Hoare, op. cit., p. 102.

[33] Ibid.

sive study of Lollardy until this present time the work of Tyndale is presented as one of the aspects of the Lollard revival.[34]

A comprehensive study of Lollardy does not enter into the scope of this paper, but something must be said of Tyndale's relation to the movement. It can hardly be questioned that even at an early age Tyndale came into contact with the Lollard movement. It is known that Purvey, an avid Lollard, previous to Tyndale's time had worked and preached in an area near Tyndale's birthplace. The effects of his work were still being felt. Smith conjectures that "if the Tyndales were not Lollards, they may have inherited Lollard tendencies."[35]

Also there can be little doubt that during his university days, especially at Cambridge, Tyndale became more acquainted with the nature and work of the Lollards, although it is doubtful that he ever associated himself with any Lollard congregation. Humphrey Monmouth, mentioned previously, was very likely at least in contact with Lollards who shared his interest of importing religious books into England from the continent. Sir Thomas More, Tyndale's avowed opponent in the literary ranks, writing to Erasmus in 1533, calls Tyndale and his sympathizers "Wicliffites."[36]

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[34]Reference is here made to James Gairdner's monumental Lollardy and the Reformation in England: An Historical Survey (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1908). The section referred to is found in Vol. II, 221-65.

[35]Smith, op. cit., p. 103.

[36]Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1928), II, 317. More's reference in itself is inconclusive. In his day being called a Wycliffite was almost synonymous with being called a heretic. More had no aversion to hurling defamatory epithets at Tyndale.

It must be admitted that the career of Tyndale was in many ways similar to that of Wycliffe. He had the same aim and the same incentive in his work as Wycliffe. It was from the breakdown of the Church as a moral and educational agency and from her gross and persistent neglect of the spiritual trusts committed to her charge, that both reformers derived their determination that the Gospel should be opened out through the medium of an English Bible.[37] Furthermore we see in Tyndale the same fearless moral energy, the same reverence to the supreme authority of God's Word, and the same heartfelt love for the common people, which characterized Wycliffe.

Mr. G. P. Marsh considers it certain that Tyndale is merely a full-grown Wycliffe. He further claims that Tyndale's New Testament is merely a recension of the Wycliffe Bible, that Tyndale retains the grammatical structure, the verbal combinations, and the rhythmic flow which characterized Wycliffe's edition.[38]

Something more shall be said of the relation of Wycliffe's Bible to that of Tyndale in one of the following chapters. Concerning the matter at hand, namely that of Tyndale's resolve to translate, it appears to this writer that Lollardy did not influence Tyndale in any specific way, but rather, that its influence was more general, being a part of the entire background in which Tyndale lived before he left England.

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[37] Cf. Hoare, op. cit., p. 109.

[38] Mr. Marsh's opinions on the relationship of Tyndale and Wycliffe may be found in W. F. Moulton's The History of the English Bible, revised by James Hope Moulton and W. Fiddian Moulton, (London: Chas. H. Kelly, n.d.), p. 91.

The Resolve of Tyndale in its Relation to Erasmus

Although Pollard and others aver that Tyndale had probably heard Erasmus lecture, this view has for the most part been exploded by chronological evidence. Even though it is possible that Tyndale made a special trip to Cambridge from Oxford to hear him lecture, it is unlikely that he did, and it is certain that he did not study under him for any period of time. Erasmus was professor of Greek at Cambridge from 1509 to 1514. It has been proved that Tyndale was at Oxford at least until, if not later than, 1515.[39]

On the other hand it cannot be denied that Tyndale was influenced by the work of Erasmus. In 1516 Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament had appeared, followed shortly by his Latin edition, and subsequent revisions of the Greek text. It can be shown that Tyndale was acquainted with both the Greek and the Latin editions, and it was, of course, Erasmus' Greek edition which formed the basis of his translation.

Hoare, referring to Erasmus' Greek New Testament, says that its circulation "would naturally be hailed as giving speedy promise of a version in English."[40] Furthermore, in his preface to the Greek New

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[39]The evidence for this is an entry in the Oxford Register which states that William Hichyns took his master of arts degree in 1515. Westcott, who in the first edition of his work held the former view, in his revised edition states that his former position is untenable. Demaus and most others agree. Just what the connection between Tyndale and the name Hichyns is, is uncertain. Some claim that it came over from his mother's side. In any event Tyndale often uses this "second name" in referring to himself, as do also his contemporaries.

[40]Hoare, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 114.

Testament, Erasmus had come out, at least in principle, in favor of vernacular translations. He said:

> I would that all private women should read the Gospel and Paul's Epistles. And I wish that they were translated into all languages, that they may be read and known, not only by the Scotch and Irish, but also by the Turks and Saracens. Let it be that many would smile, yet some would receive it. I would that the husbandman at the plough should sing something from hence, that the weaver at his loom should sing something from hence, that the traveller might beguile the weariness of his journey by narrations of this kind.[41]

Concerning the above quotation from Erasmus Smith says:

> But Erasmus could only write in Latin, which his husbandman and weaver did not understand. He fired, however, the imagination of William Tyndale, who devoted himself that Englishmen might have a Bible that they could read for themselves.[42]

And Pollard adds that Tyndale "must have been prepared, if Tunstall had given him any encouragement, to make his English version in the spirit of Erasmus."[43] Also of interest is the fact that in the first two chapters of Demaus' biography of Tyndale, covering the period of Tyndale's life until 1523, much more stress is laid on Tyndale's dependence upon Erasmus than upon Luther.[44]

It cannot be denied that Tyndale's resolution at least in part grew out of Erasmus' work and the impression which the Dutch humanist made upon him. However, any attempt to trace an early relationship of

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[41]Moulton, op. cit., p. 47. Notice the similarity of Tyndale's statement while at Little Sodbury, supra, p. 39. There can be little doubt that Tyndale had these words of Erasmus in mind.

[42]Smith, op. cit., p. 280.

[43]Records of the English Bible Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525-1611, edited by Alfred W. Pollard, (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), p. 4.

[44]Demaus, op. cit.

Tyndale with Erasmus as the sole cause of Tyndale's resolution will only prove futile. Rather it was only one in the entire complex of causes which made Tyndale the translator of the Bible into the English tongue.

The Resolve of Tyndale in its Relation to Luther

The following two quotations show the influence which some scholars assign to the publication of Luther's German New Testament: "Luther's example had fired the heart of William Tyndale to give his countrymen an English version translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek originals."[45] "Soon after Martin Luther had begun his German translation of the New Testament, Tyndale formed a resolution to turn the Bible into English."[46] However the idea that the translation of the New Testament into German by Martin Luther which appeared in 1522 was the sole or even the primary cause of Tyndale's resolve is altogether untenable. It has been shown in the previous discussion that while at Little Sodbury Tyndale's resolve was firmly established. In fact very likely Tyndale had committed himself to the mission of his life somewhat earlier. Tyndale was at Little Sodbury from 1521 to 1523, and although Luther was of necessity at work on his New Testament at this time, we have no reason to believe that Tyndale was aware of this work until shortly before he came to London. Although due to her following

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[45] Lindsay, op. cit., p. 337.

[46] Laurence M. Larson, History of England and the British Commonwealth (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1925), pp. 268f.

many of the principles and presuppositions of Mr. Christopher Anderson, she is often unreliable, yet there is truth in the statement of Mrs. Conant that

> it can be no matter of surprise, to find the design of a new translation of the Scriptures already ripened in the bosom of an English scholar, years before Luther began the publication of the Bible in German. That scholar was William Tyndale.[47]

In the same vein of thought Demaus says:

> Luther's translation indeed appeared in September, 1522, about the same time perhaps when Tyndale had formed his purpose; but there is no reason to believe that it had reached England, or that it in any way suggested Tyndale's work.[48]

The appearance of Luther's New Testament in 1522 must be considered as one of the things which contributed to the strengthening of Tyndale's resolve to translate. Perhaps it was one of the things which moved Tyndale to remove himself to the continent in 1524. But it is no more than that, since all evidence indicates that Tyndale had come to the realization of his mission in life before Luther's New Testament appeared.

## Conclusion

The resolve made by Tyndale to translate the Bible was precipitated by a number of causes, none of which can be pointed to as the sole cause. Ultimately it must be said that it was Tyndale's own observation of the ignorance among the common people and the corruption among the clergy which moved Tyndale to translate, as he himself affirms.

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[47] Conant, op. cit., p. 124.

[48] Demaus, op. cit., pp. 70f.

All evidence points to the fact that this resolve was formed early in his life. As attendant causes which effected in some manner or another this resolve must be mentioned the influence of Lollardy, the work of the humanists, especially Erasmus, and the appearance of Luther's German New Testament.

## CHAPTER IV

## TYNDALE'S CONTACT WITH LUTHERANISM, 1524-1536

### The Lutheran Atmosphere in which Tyndale Lived

It would be futile for the purpose of this paper to trace the movements of Tyndale on the continent. In the first place our intention is not to present a biography, but only to review those aspects of his life and work which are related to Luther and Lutheranism. It is necessary, therefore, that much of importance in Tyndale's life will be omitted. One of the purposes of the preceding chapter was to show that although Lutheran influences were strong in Tyndale's life, yet they were not the only influences operative.

Furthermore, no authoritative account remains of Tyndale's movements during these years. He himself has left none and there are gaps and omissions in the account given us by John Foxe. The imagination of those who have studied this period of Tyndale's life has run rampent, and views as to his whereabouts at a particular time differ widely. The situation is best described by Mombert when he says: "The question of Tyndale's movements on the continent is one of great interest, but apparently involved in inextricable confusion."[1]

Rather than attempting to give a strictly chronological account of the last twelve years in Tyndale's life, in this chapter we shall in-

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[1] J. I. Mombert, English Versions of the Bible (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., n.d.), pp. 104f.

stead take up the various cities in which Tyndale resided at various times during this period. Each of these cities will be discussed in their relationship to the Lutheran Reformation at the time of Tyndale's supposed residence. What we shall attempt to show is that during much of his life on the continent, Tyndale lived in an atmosphere that had been affected by the Reformation. In the latter part of the chapter we shall treat more thoroughly the vexing and widely disputed question of Tyndale's residence in Wittenberg and personal contact with Luther.

Hamburg

Tyndale had left England early in 1524. A short time later he landed in the city of Hamburg. We know too that he was there also about one year later when he picked up money sent to him by Monmouth. Some scholars believe that he spent the intervening time in Hamburg, but as we shall show later, this is rather doubtful. It is known that Tyndale was in Hamburg on at least one other occasion. Foxe tells us that in 1529 he came there from Antwerp for the purpose of meeting Coverdale. During the trip, however, his manuscripts and work on the translation of the Old Testament were all lost by shipwreck. He took another boat and arrived in Hamburg near Easter 1529, and remained there, working with Coverdale on the translation of the Pentateuch, until December of the same year.[2] Although some have questioned Foxe's narrative at this point there seems to be little reason to doubt its truth. Tyndale was

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[2]This information is supplied in The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition, edited by Stephen Reed Cattley, (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1838), V, 120.

in the city of Hamburg, then, for at least ten to twelve months, and in the opinion of some, for a year longer than this.

Concerning the status of Hamburg at this time Demaus gives us this description:

> Hamburg was, in Tyndale's time, as *now*, a bustling city, wholly immersed in trade, one of the chief commercial entrepots of Germany. Even here, however, the influence of that mighty movement which Luther had inaugurated had made itself felt.[3]

The Reformation under Luther had made early inroads in northern Germany, Hamburg not excluded. We know that Hamburg joined the Smalcaldic League not long after it was formed. When Tyndale visited it there can be no doubt that the Reformation was well under way. By the time that he made his visit there in 1529 there can be little doubt that it was thoroughly Lutheranized.

There is one other piece of evidence which shows that while in Hamburg Tyndale fell under the influence of Lutheranism. Foxe tells us that on this 1529 visit to Hamburg Tyndale lived with a von Emerson family. Of this family Mozley has the following to say:

> The study of the unpublished documents of Hamburg has revealed much concerning the family von Emersen. It was one of the great Lutheran families of the town. Matthias von Emersen, a senator, died in 1522, having taken for his second wife a sister of Marquard Schuldorp, the reformer of Schleswig-Holstein. His younger brother John married a lady named Margaret, and when he died at some date before May 8, 1523, he left her with six children, seemingly in no very good circumstances. In 1526, braving the stern forbiddal of the senate, she sent two of her sons to Wittenberg.

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[3] R. Demaus, William Tyndale, A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 96.

whither also as we have seen, her nephew, Matthias the younger, had gone two years before.[4]

With this "Lutheran" family Tyndale lived for some time. Furthermore, the younger Matthias von Emersen mentioned above is enrolled in the registers of the university of Wittenberg very close to the name which Mozley feels proves the Wittenberg residence of Tyndale. It is Mozley's conjecture that Matthias von Emersen made the trip to Wittenberg with Tyndale in 1524.

Cologne

We know with certainty that Tyndale spent at least two or three months in Cologne. After having received his ten pounds from Monmouth in 1525, he, with his amanuensis, Roye, went there for the purpose of having his New Testament published. The brevity of his residence there is due to the fact that John Dobneck, Cochlaeus, an inveterate opponent of Lutheranism, discovered his plot of flooding England with the English Bible, and promptly had him expelled.

Although there seems to have been a certain amount of freedom in Cologne (This is shown by the fact that Peter Quentel, a Roman Catholic, took the job of printing Tyndale's translation), yet for the most part Cologne remained solid Roman Catholic. At the instigation of Cochlaeus it took little time for the authorities to make sure that Tyndale no longer remained in their city. Therefore during the short stay of Tyn-

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[4]J. F. Mozley, William Tyndale (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), p. 96.

dale in Cologne we can assign almost no Lutheran influence whatsoever. Anyone living in the city who had been attracted to Lutheranism would have found it necessary to keep his religious convictions underground.

Worms

Leaving Cologne in the fall of 1525 Tyndale then retired to the city of Worms where his New Testament was printed. After his encounter with the Roman Catholic authorities of Cologne, it is only natural that Tyndale would select a place where the printing could be carried on without fear of opposition. Worms was such a city, the attractiveness of which was contributed to by the fact that it was supplied with ample facilities for printing.

Although the printing of the New Testament was completed early in 1526 many conjecture that Tyndale remained in Worms for some months following. We can then assign a residence of at least six to eight months, if not more, in Worms. Evidence for a longer residence at Worms hinges upon two facts. First of all, many feel that it was at Worms that Tyndale learned Hebrew, since there were a number of Jews and a large synagog in that city. Secondly, there is an entry in the diary of Spalatin, dated in August of 1526, concerning a letter received by Spalatin from Hermann von dem Busche, the earliest German Hebraist. In this letter Spalatin is informed that Busche had met a man in Worms who had translated the New Testament into English, "who was so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he spoke you would suppose

it his native tongue."[5] This quotation has been almost universally applied to Tyndale. Note the date rather late in 1526 on which this entry appears in Spalatin's diary and also the fact that Busche includes Hebrew as one of the tongues with which Tyndale was conversant.

As Moore tells us, by this time Worms had become "strongly Lutheran."[6] And Westcott adds this comment:

> The place to which Tyndale fled was already memorable in the annals of the Reformation. It was then not much more than four years since the marvellous scene when Luther entered Worms (1521) to bear witness before the Emperor. But within that time the city had "become wholly Lutheran."[7]

Smith sums up the situation of Worms somewhat more concisely in these words:

> Tyndale entered the city five years after the famous Diet, and in those five years Worms had become protestant. The citizens were very proud of the fact that they were a free city, but also liked to remember that they had only to cross the Rhine in order to be in Hesse, and that they could rely for defence on a powerful Protestant prince.[8]

Although Tyndale remained in Worms for a relatively short time it is certain that while there he was acquainted with and worked with men who had accepted the principles of the Reformation and were concerned with its spread.

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[5] Mombert, op. cit., p. 107. For further information on this entry in Spalatin's diary see also Demaus, op. cit., pp. 130f.

[6] H. W. Hoare, The Evolution of the English Bible: An Historical Sketch of the Successive Versions from 1382 to 1885 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 128.

[7] Brooke Foss Westcott, A General View of the History of the English Bible (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), pp. 31f.

[8] H. Maynard Smith, Henry VIII and the Reformation (London: Macmillan and Co., 1948), p. 291.

Marburg

Tyndale's place of residence from 1526 until 1530 is widely disputed. The generally accepted position is that during these years he made his abode in Marburg. Two pieces of evidence for this will be produced.

First of all, the books published by Tyndale during this period all bear the colophon: "Emprented at Marlborow in the lande of Hesse, by me, Hans Luft, the yere of oure Lord," etc.[9] This applies in particular to three of Tyndale's major works--The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, The Obedience of a Christian Man, and his translation of the Pentateuch. Marlborow has in general been accepted as being the city of Marburg, and the further designation of being "in the lande of Hesse," leaves little room for disagreeing that this is the place referred to.

Furthermore, Demaus, after a thorough study of the question, has come to the conclusion that the greater part of these years were spent in Marburg. He accounts for events which took place in Antwerp ascribed to these same years by assuming that Tyndale made two rather short visits there during this time.[10]

On the other hand, there are those who claim that Tyndale never was, at least for any period of time, in Marburg. Supporting this position are Mombert and Mozley. The main evidence supporting their view is the questionable fact of whether or not Hans Luft ever had a

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[9]Mombert, op. cit., p. 107.

[10]Demaus, passim.

printing press at Marburg. Mombert supports his position by a letter he received from Professor Dr. Julius Caesar, at that time the librarian of the Marburg university, who after carefully exploring the archives and documents of the university, came to the conclusion that Hans Luft never lived nor had a printing-press at Marburg and that there is no evidence that Tyndale ever matriculated at that university.[11] Mombert's position is that Tyndale used the aforementioned colophon in order to hide the actual base of his operations, and therefore it is false. While Mozley agrees with Mombert in denying a Marburg residence to Tyndale, they differ as to the place where he spent these years, Mozley taking his stand for Antwerp and Mombert holding out for a Wittenberg residence at this time.

In the opinion of this writer a Marburg residence cannot be positively denied. The university records of Marburg can hardly be taken as proof positive that Hans Luft never printed in that city nor that Tyndale never resided there. Furthermore, it seems out of line with Tyndale's character that he should attempt to cover up where he was and what he was doing.[12] Marburg would have been a logical place for Tyndale to continue his work, particularly because there he would have had no fear from the authorities, but would rather have received the

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[11] Mombert, op. cit., pp. 31f.

[12] It is true that Tyndale had omitted his name from his first edition of his translation of the New Testament. This appears to have been motivated, however, by humility rather than by fear, as is shown by the following statement found on the first page of his "Parable of the Wicked Mammon," in Tyndale's Doctrinal Treatises, Parker Society Edition, p. 37. Notice the reason he gives for omitting his name.

support of Philip of Hesse. It is better perhaps to leave the question open for the moment. In any event, if a Marburg residence is accepted, Tyndale would have spent the better part of from three to four years there.

It is not necessary to say much concerning the Lutheran influence which Tyndale would have met in Marburg if we accept his residence there. Demaus writes that

> Under the protection of the young and enthusiastic Landgrave, Marburg had become one of the great centres from which the principles of the Reformation were vigorously propagated . . . . Nowhere was the Reformation more thoroughly carried out, or the doctrines of the Reformers more rigorously pushed to their logical conclusion. . . . Here there was much to solace Tyndale in his exile. Here at least he was to all appearance safe, in an unknown retreat, beyond the reach of Wolsey's emissaries, and under the protection of a prince who was a zealous adherent of the doctrines of the Reformation.[13]

If there is any place where Tyndale would have been influenced by the Lutheran Reformation more than at Wittenberg itself, it is Marburg. There was no one more zealous for the propagation of Lutheranism than Philip, whose protection Tyndale would certainly have enjoyed.

Of further interest is Demaus' conjecture that Tyndale may have attended the Marburg Colloquy of 1529. Demaus himself says that "there

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"The cause why I set my name before this little treatise, and have not rather done it in the New Testament, is, that then I followed the counsel of Christ, which exhorteth men (Matt. vi.) to do their good deeds secretly, and to be content with the conscience of well-doing, and that God seeth us; and patiently to abide the reward of the last day, which Christ hath purchased for us: and now would I fain have done likewise, but am compelled otherwise to do."

However, in all fairness it must be said that Mozley's evidence for a residence of Tyndale at Wittenberg also rests upon the assumption that he used a pseudonym.

[13]Demaus, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 166f.

is not a tittle of positive evidence either in favour of, or against the supposition of Tyndale's presence in Marburg at the conference.[14] Nevertheless Demaus senses no difficulty in fitting such a presence into the chronology of Tyndale's life as we know it. Perhaps one bit of positive evidence could be supplied. In writing to Frith Tyndale exhorts him to a position of moderation concerning the Lord's Supper.[15] One could view this as growing out of being present at the Marburg Colloquy and seeing what dissension the question of the Lord's Supper brought about. Until the time when more evidence is presented, however, the conjecture of Demaus on this point will remain an interesting one, but can be accepted as no more than a conjecture.

Antwerp

Foxe tells us that Tyndale "had his most abiding in the town of Antwerp."[16] Whether or not we accept a residence here in the period from 1526 to 1529, a good share of Tyndale's life on the continent was spent in this city. For at least from the year 1530 onward he resided there, being finally betrayed in 1535, then taken to the castle at Vilvorde, where he was executed on October 6th, 1536.[17]

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[14] Ibid., p. 219.

[15] Tyndale's letter to Frith is found in full in Demaus, op. cit., pp. 334-37.

[16] Foxe, op. cit., p. 119.

[17] For the account of Tyndale's arrest, imprisonment, trial and martyrdom see especially the final chapter of Demaus' biography, where it is covered in detail.

The city of Antwerp was a free city, but located within the domain of Charles V. Although Charles was forced to moderation in his treatment of Lutheranism in the Empire, it was not so in the lands which he ruled directly. What then was Tyndale's position while residing at Antwerp? Butterworth has this to say:

> Not only had his controversial stand embittered the clergy of England, but much more he had offended the authorities of the Holy Roman Empire, who were then in control of the country in which he was living. In their eyes he was a notable heretic, safe from their hands only so long as he was sheltered by his English friends inside the city limits of Antwerp.[18]

There seems to have been quite a settlement of English merchants, many who were interested in the cause of English reform, residing in the city of Antwerp. With one of these, Thomas Poyntz, Tyndale made his abode during much of his stay there. Tyndale was safe as long as he did not venture into territory where he was subject to the agents of Charles V. The city of Antwerp, because of its privilege as a free city, had encouraged English merchants to settle there and had accorded to them the same privileges as the citizens of Antwerp enjoyed. Among these privileges was included the regulation that none could be arrested merely on suspicion, or could be imprisoned for more than three days without trial. Demaus sums up Tyndale's life in Antwerp thus:

> So long as Tyndale was within the shelter of the English House (the building provided by Antwerp authorities for the housing of English merchants), Tyndale was protected by the privilege which exempted the citizens of Antwerp and strangers resident there from being arrested in their houses except for some great crime. Outside of the House, however, he walked in perpetual danger: he enjoyed no

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[18]Charles C. Butterworth, The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible, 1340-1611 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), p. 93.

> special protection; he had no house or hired chamber of his own, and might be arrested on mere suspicion at any hour of day or night.[19]

As it happened it was Tyndale's being enticed from the amiable surroundings of the English House which eventually led to his arrest and execution.

For the most part it is difficult to assign any great Lutheran influence to Tyndale's life during this period, which lasted for at least four years and possibly as long as eight.

Negative factors

In an attempt to be objective it is necessary that we also enumerate some of those things which would indicate that Tyndale was not so strongly influenced by Lutheranism during his stay on the continent as one would at first suppose.

In the first place, it does not seem as if Tyndale ever allied himself with any particular movement or group which was a part of the German Reformation. Much, or even most, of his time was spent, not among Germans and those affected by that Reformation, but rather among Englishmen who were interested in reformation of their native England. His long residence in the English House at Antwerp attests this. Also his constant association with one or more Englishmen during his entire stay on the continent, namely with such men as Roye, Coverdale, Vaughan, Joye, Frith, Poyntz, and others, would tend to indicate that the most of his

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[19]Demaus, _op. cit._, p. 385.

time was spent in company with other Englishmen.

Secondly, it is apparent that Tyndale was not interested in the German Reformation "per se." His eyes were always cast toward his native England, and his consuming purpose was always to bring God's Word to her. To Tyndale the German Reformation was an example of how he might accomplish his task for England and also a base of operations from which to perform that task.

Thirdly, as far as this writer has been able to determine, there was no intimate association between him and other great men of the German Reformation. The question of his personally meeting and conferring with Luther himself, which will be considered shortly, in any event appears to have been more of a passing acquaintance than an intimate association. Neither Tyndale himself or Luther refer to any close friendship or working together. The same applies to the other leaders of the German Reformation, such as Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Bucer, and others. Even the solitary reference in Spalatin's diary does not mention Tyndale by name, and some have questioned whether it should be referred to Tyndale at all.

In summing up then, we must affirm that during the last twelve years of his life Lutheranism played an important role in the life of Tyndale. This is shown particularly in the Lutheran atmosphere in which he spent much of his time, and also in that it provided him with the method of carrying out his projected mission of bringing the vernacular Bible to England. But on the other hand this ought not to be emphasized unduly, since it appears as if Tyndale never actively supported the German Reformation nor contributed anything toward it.

## The Question of Tyndale's Residence at Wittenberg

One city in which Tyndale may have resided has not thus far been considered. The city of Wittenberg deserves special treatment both because a Wittenberg residence for Tyndale has been such a disputed question, and also because of the tremendous Lutheran influence which would have been exerted through meeting and hearing Luther personally.

Little need be said about the extent to which Tyndale would have been influenced by residing in Wittenberg. He would have heard Luther preach in the Schlosskirche, sat in the classrooms where Luther and Melanchthon lectured, perhaps even have sat around Luther's table and listened to his famous table talk. He would have had an opportunity to become acquainted with the methods and program by which the Reformation was being spread. He would have seen the manner in which the German Bible was accepted by the Germans and the effect which it had upon their personal religious lives.

It is necessary that we define our problem somewhat. There are two periods of Tyndale's life on the continent during which it is conjectured that Tyndale may have been in Wittenberg. The first is the period between May 1524 and April 1525, at which two times we know beyond any doubt that he was in Hamburg. The other is the period from 1526 to 1530, shortly after his New Testament had been printed and while it was being smuggled into England. The chief proponent of the latter view is Mombert. However, the evidence for a Wittenberg residence at this time is far too scanty to deserve any serious consideration. Therefore we shall not take up the question of a Wittenberg residence during those years.

We shall deal only with the former view, considering the probability of Tyndale's residence in Wittenberg during parts of the years 1524 and 1525. Through a study of the evidence it is the opinion of this writer that Tyndale did reside in Wittenberg at this time. However, besides presenting the evidence supporting this view, an attempt shall also be made to refute the arguments of those who reject a Wittenberg residence for Tyndale.

It ought to be mentioned first of all, that a trip to Wittenberg would be the natural thing for Tyndale to undertake. As illustrated in Chapter II he had already become impressed with the doctrines which were being propagated by Luther and was in sympathy with a reformation such as Luther was carrying out in Germany. Wittenberg seemed to be somewhat of a refuge for young men who were dissatisfied with religious conditions in their own locality and in some way or another had defied the ecclesiastical authorities. Luther himself seems to have been one of the chief tourist attractions for the continental traveller of that day, as is shown by the tremendous influx of students of all nationalities into Wittenberg primarily for the purpose of seeing and hearing him. It would be only natural that Tyndale, too, so interested in the cause of reform and especially of that aspect of reform which pertained to the publication of a vernacular Bible, would be interested in seeing one who had accomplished what he wished to accomplish in his native England. Although this argument in itself is in no wise conclusive, there is added to it all the weight of contemporary evidence, which attests a Wittenberg residence.

Contemporary evidence

In the Acts and Monuments of John Foxe the author declares that "At Tyndale's first departing out of the realm he took his journey into the further parts of Germany, as into Saxony, where he had conference with Luther and other learned men in those quarters."[20]

Cochlaeus, whose hostility had caused Tyndale to suspend the printing of his translation at Cologne, speaks of Tyndale and his amanuensis, Roye, as "two English apostates, who had been sometime at Wittenberg."[21] It must be remembered that Cochlaeus was in daily conversation with the same printers who had been working for Tyndale, and therefore had abundant means of ascertaining knowledge concerning his immediate past.

To this the testimony of another of Tyndale's enemies must be added, that of Sir Thomas More. In his Dialogue he says that as soon as Tyndale left England he "got him to Luther straight," and also that "at the time of his translation of the New Testament Tyndale was with Luther at Wittenberg, and the confederacy between him and Luther was well known."[22] When, in his Answer to Sir Thomas More, Tyndale had denied the charge of confederacy with Luther, More, in his Confutation, then no longer accuses him of confederacy, but repeats the assertion that he was in Wittenberg with Luther at this time.

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[20]Foxe, op. cit., p. 119.

[21]Demaus, op. cit., p. 99. Cochlaeus published three accounts of his encounter with Tyndale at Cologne. In all three he affirms a Wittenberg residence for Tyndale.

[22]Demaus, op. cit., p. 99.

There is a letter extant written by Edward Lee, the king's almoner, to Henry VIII in 1525, which asserts the same thing.

> Please it your highnesse moreover to vnderstond that I am certainlie enformed as I passed in this contres that an englishman your subiect at the sollicitacion and instaunce of Luther with whome he is hathe translated the newe testament in to Englishe and within four dayes entendethe to arrive with the same empriuted in England. I nede not to aduertise your grace what infection and daunger maye ensue heerbie if it bee not withstonded. This is the next waye to fulfill your realme with lutherians.[23]

Although the above letter does not mention Tyndale by name, there can be little doubt that it refers to him. First of all, the designation of the translator as an Englishman, the subject of Henry VIII, fits Tyndale perfectly. Secondly, the date of the letter, December 2, 1525, shows that it was written just about the time or shortly before the time at which Tyndale's New Testament would have been completed.

There is also a letter written by Robert Ridley, chaplain to the bishop of London, to Henry Gold, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, dated February 24, likely of the year 1527. In this letter Ridley refers to both Tyndale and Roye as "manifest lutheranes heretikes & apostates, as doth opynly apeir not only by their daily & continuall company & familiarite with Luther & his disciples."[24] Just what the source of Ridley's information concerning Tyndale's association with

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[23] L. Franklin Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther: The Real Extent to which Tyndale was Dependent upon Luther as a Translator (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1928), p. 31.

[24] This letter is found in its full form in Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525-1611, edited by Alfred W. Pollard, (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 122-25.

Luther was, is uncertain. It provides us, nonetheless, with one more piece of contemporary evidence that asserts that Tyndale had met and conferred with Luther.

Humphrey Monmouth, mentioned frequently previously, was in 1528 tried for importing Lutheran books and Tyndale's New Testament into England. Among the articles of accusation against him was the following: "Thou wert privy and of counsel that the said Sir William Hutchin, otherwise called Tyndale, and friar Roye, or either of them, went into Almayne (Germany), to Luther, there to study and learn his sect." Although Monmouth in his defence denies some of the charges placed against him, he does not deny this, which he certainly would have done had it been false.[25]

Also, in the English edition of the answer of Henry VIII to Luther written in 1527, Henry charged Luther with being back of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament into English.[26] This statement by Henry VIII may be deemed of little importance because it is possible that it was merely a repetition of what he had heard from Lee.

One cannot disregard the sheer weight of this contemporary testimony. Furthermore this is unanimous on the part of those who lived at Tyndale's time. There is no one who asserts the contrary, that Tyndale did not go to Wittenberg and spend some time there. Not even Tyndale himself, as shall be shown in the following, denied it.

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[25] Demaus, op. cit., p. 99.

[26] Gruber, op. cit., pp. 33f.

No printing press at Hamburg

The evidence that finally and definitely concludes this question for Demaus is the fact that apparently there was no printing press in the city of Hamburg at this time. The importance of this argument is that those who deny Tyndale's Wittenberg residence, maintain that he remained in Hamburg for the entire period from May, 1524, until April, 1525. Demaus makes this comment:

> One consideration alone may suffice to dissipate for ever the hypothesis that Tyndale spent the whole of the first year of his exile in Hamburg. He had left England for the sole purpose of preparing for the press a translation of the New Testament; and, indeed, it is asserted by those who maintain that he remained in Hamburg, that he printed the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark in that city before April 1525. Now, though Hamburg was a wealthy and enterprising commercial town, it did not as yet possess a single printer. Printing does not appear to have been introduced into that money-making community till after Tyndale's martyrdom; and in these circumstances, the theory that he spent a whole year in a place where he could not possibly accomplish the work for which he had left his home, may be dismissed as untenable.[27]

Although Demaus himself presents no evidence for the lack of printing facilities in Hamburg at this time, he says that this fact has been established by Dr. Maitland and refers the reader to his book Essays on the Reformation, page 371 and following. Assuming that sufficient evidence has been presented to prove that there was no press in Hamburg, Demaus' argument would throw some rather important weight in favor of a Wittenberg residence. In any event it reinforces the contemporary evidence to some extent, as does also the argument presented by Mozley.

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[27]Demaus, op. cit., p. 98. Underlining is that of Demaus.

Mozley's discovery

For Mozley the determining factor differs from that of Demaus. Although he too speaks of the unanimity of contemporary evidence the ultimate evidence rests on a discovery he made himself. He tells us the following story:

> I am happy to lay before the reader evidence--hitherto overlooked, though it has been in print for ninety-five years--which all but settles the matter. In the registers of the university of Wittenberg we read that Guilhelmus Roy ex Londino, William Roye of London, matriculated on June 10, 1525, more than a year after Tyndale's departure from England. So far, so good: but where is Tyndale's name? One searches for it in vain; can he have resided in the town without matriculating? But stay! A year earlier a name meets our eyes, which at once awakens our interest. This is Matthias von Emersen of Hamburg, nephew to the widow Margaret von Emersen who entertained Tyndale five years later, when he visited that city. This young man matriculated on May 30, 1524; and in close neighbourhood to him, under date May 27, stands the name Guillelmus Daltici ex Anglia, William Daltici from England. Who is this?
>
> It was Dr. Reincke, the director of the Hamburg Staatsarchiv, who suggested to me that William Tyndale lay here concealed. Indeed, it was he that brought to my notice the above entries in the matriculation lists: for up till then I had taken for granted that the Wittenberg registers had been thoroughly searched by the investigators of a hundred years ago. I felt at once that he was right; for the date exactly tallies with Monmouth's narrative: nevertheless for two days I could give no explanation of the name Daltici. I could not trace it as a place name, or a family name, or a Christian name. Its form seems not at home in English, or Latin, or in any other tongue that Tyndale was likely to use. But suddenly it flashed upon me that by reversing the two syllables of Tindal you get Daltin, which only differs from Daltici by one letter. The present register is but a copy of the original, and if the copyist misread the final letter, all becomes clear. In those perilous times it was common enough for men to disguise their names. Robert Barnes is entered in the Wittenberg register of 1533 as Antonius Anglus, though his real name was added in the margin by Melanchthon.[28]

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[28] Mozley, op. cit., pp. 52f.

Most scholars who have written since the appearance of Mozley's book in 1937 have accepted his view that the aforementioned entry in the Wittenberg University register does refer to William Tyndale. Certainly it is plausible.

Mozley also presents some other evidence which we have not yet mentioned, although its importance may be questioned. When Tyndale wrote to Monmouth in 1525 asking him for financial aid, he sent with that request a "little treatise." It is Mozley's belief that this treatise is Bugenhagen's Letter to the English. Contained in Bugenhagen's treatise is the statement, "We could not but rejoice, dear brethren, when we heard that in England also the gospel of the glory of God has a good report, etc." Since Tyndale is the only Englishman supposed to be in the vicinity of Wittenberg at this time, Mozley feels that Bugenhagen's hearing of conditions in England reflects Tyndale's presence, and further conjectures that Tyndale may have had a hand "in the making thereof," namely, of Bugenhagen's letter.[29]

Mozley also feels that there may be traces of Tyndale's influence in Luther's letter to Henry VIII. In it Luther excuses himself for his violent onslaught against the king and explains that he had been informed that it was written not by the king himself, but rather by Wolsey. Mozley feels that this bit of information (false though it might have been) in all likelihood was supplied by Tyndale.[30]

Although influence exerted by Tyndale in both Bugenhagen's letter

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[29] Ibid., pp. 54f.

[30] Ibid., pp. 55f.

and in Luther's letter is plausible, it does not appear that by themselves they carry any great weight.

The contrary view of Anderson and others

Mr. Christopher Anderson, in his Annals of the English Bible, completely discounts a Wittenberg residence for Tyndale. He claims that More's statement that Tyndale was with Luther can be disproved by two facts. First of all when Tyndale read More's charge of his being confederate with Luther he makes the following denial in his Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue: "And when More saith Tyndale was confederate with Luther, that is not the truth." Secondly, in Monmouth's account of his association with Tyndale, in which he speaks also of those same years under consideration, no mention is made of a Wittenberg residence. For Anderson this settles the matter; however the fallacies in his argument shall be shown below.

Anderson then goes on to say that we must ask ourselves how Luther was occupied at this time. His claim is that Luther was too busy with his difficulties with Carlstadt at this time to have anything to do with an exile from England.[31] It might be added at this point, as others who oppose a Wittenberg residence readily do, that it was during this same year that Luther was married, and that also much of his time during which Tyndale is supposed to have resided in Wittenberg, Luther was occupied in attempted reconciliation in the Peasant's War.

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[31]The arguments of Mr. Anderson have been summarized from his book The Annals of the English Bible (London: William Pickering, 1845), II, 45-52.

Refutation of the view of Anderson

The position of Anderson has been amply refuted by Demaus in his biography of Tyndale. Both he and others, notable among them being Jacobs, make much of the fact that in Tyndale's denial in his Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue he does not deny that he had been with or met Luther, but rather denies that he was confederate with Luther. A closer examination of Tyndale's statement shows that this is true and who would deny that there is a world of difference between meeting someone and being confederate with him.

As to Anderson's use of Monmouth's account to disprove a Wittenberg residence it is pointed out that Monmouth had no intention of giving a complete picture of Tyndale's movements during this time. Rather, he was only pointing out for the benefit of his accusers what his association with Tyndale had been. On both of these points Anderson's arguments fall down.

In regard to Luther's having been too busy at this time to have anything to do with Tyndale Demaus says that

> The German Reformer was, indeed, busily occupied in what was one of the most eventful years of the Reformation; and . . . he may have been somewhat sharp in his treatment of opponents; but such arguments, besides involving a gross imputation upon so noble a soul, would not, even if true, prove that Tyndale did not go to Wittenberg. Wittenberg was, in fact, the head-quarters of the new movement that was agitating all Europe: it was, as Duke George of Saxony styled it, "the common asylum of all apostates;" every man, in every country, who longed for some reformation of religion, and whose opinions rendered him obnoxious to the ecclesiastical authorities, flocked to Wittenberg; and for them all the German Reformer had a hearty welcome; after his marriage his house was open to their visits, and . . . he was easy enough of access.[32]

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[32]Demaus, op. cit., p. 101.

In this writer's opinion the final stumbling block to Anderson's opinion is the preconceived notions with which he approaches the problem. He apparently sets out with the purpose of attempting to prove the absolute independence of Tyndale and then attempts to fit all evidence into this presupposition. For example he never treats, at least not seriously, those points on which Tyndale is evidently and manifestly dependent upon Luther. Furthermore, he seems to do everything possible to degrade Luther in the eyes of his reader, criticising him on those very points for which Luther is to be most admired. Allowance must be made because of the fact that he wrote more than a century ago, but his very subjective approach to the problem is difficult to tolerate.

In the main those others who have denied a Wittenberg residence for Tyndale have followed, with some amplification, the arguments used by Anderson. Two authorities who seem to leave the question open who must be mentioned, however, are Rupp and Westcott. Rupp says that in spite of all contemporary evidence he still believes that Tyndale may not have gone to Wittenberg. The only evidence he produces to prove this is that he feels Spalatin would have known him had he been there, and Spalatin gives no indication of this in his diary entry mentioned previously in this chapter.[33] Westcott, although he does not deny the possibility of a Wittenberg residence, prefers to leave the question open,[34] as does also Hoare.[35] However, none of these present arguments

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[33]Gordon Rupp, Six Makers of English Religion, 1500-1700 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), pp. 18f.

[34]Westcott, op. cit., pp. 29f.

[35]Hoare, op. cit., pp. 125f.

which are in any way original, or are worthy of any further consideration in our study.

Conclusion

In favor of a Wittenberg residence must be mentioned, besides Demaus and Mozley, such reputable scholars as Moulton, Cameron, Jacobs, Pollard, Smith, Mombert, and a host of others. The considered conclusion of such a group, added to the weight of contemporary evidence, constrains us to accept a personal meeting of Tyndale and Luther and a residence of at least some months in Wittenberg on the part of Tyndale.

However, it seems that some things must be kept in mind, in order that this point is not overemphasized. First of all, a Wittenberg residence of Tyndale does not prove an intimate association between the two men. It dare not be forgotten that Luther was busy at this time and that Tyndale was not blessed with an extrovert personality which made speedy and close friendships. The fact that neither Tyndale nor Luther refer to such an acquaintance seems to dispel a conclusion so grandiose as "Tyndal saw Luther, and under his immediate direction translated the Gospels and Epistles while at Wittenberg."[36] If Tyndale did sit at the table of Martin Luther listening "to his wonderful 'table-talk', as he sipped his beer in friendly, social intercourse,"[37] one gets the impression, knowing Tyndale's personality to be what it was, that his

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[36] James Anthony Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1862), II, 31. Underlining is the responsibility of this writer.

[37] Demaus, op. cit., p. 103.

participation in any such conviviality would have been more reserved, and it is likely that among the crowd in Luther's home he would have scarcely been noticed. Smith's comments on this matter seem to be most acceptable:

> It is probable that, what with his politics and his honeymoon, Luther had little time to be interested in the projects of an unknown scholar. Besides, at no time was he likely to be intimate with a man who only drank 'small single beer' . . . . However, Tyndale must have been thrilled by the torrential eloquence of Luther in the Castle Church, must have been an attentive listener to Melanchthon's lectures, and must have rejoiced in having access to a good library. But nothing, we may be sure, distracted him for long from his work he had come to do. We can imagine him working day by day on his translation--working alone and by himself.[38]

It must be stated furthermore that the acceptance of a Wittenberg residence in no way degrades or detracts from the character and scholarship of William Tyndale. Although the following quotation from Rupp does not refer specifically to Tyndale's residence at Wittenberg, it seems pertinent here.

> We need not be ashamed or afraid to acknowledge the full indebtedness of the English Reformers to their brethren on the Continent. We shall be wise if we refuse to imitate those historians who loved to glorify some imaginary and splendid isolation of the English Church, as though there were something inherently disreputable in borrowing from abroad, and who shied at the word "Continental" with something of the blushing aversion for the word of a traditional spinster.[39]

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[38] Smith, op. cit., p. 288. Smith's rather humorous reference here to Tyndale's drinking but "small single beer" is an allusion to Monmouth's account of Tyndale's life with him in London, of which he says, "Tyndale studied most part of the day and of the night at his book; and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will, and drink but small single beer," quoted in Demaus, op. cit., p. 87. Although it is unlikely that one gained admittance to Luther's home through consumption of beer, it does seem apparent that there is a clash in the personality types of the two men.

[39] Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), p. 47.

## CHAPTER V

## TYNDALE'S DEPENDENCE ON LUTHER AS A TRANSLATOR

### Tyndale's Bible

Before we take up the main problem of this chapter, viz. Tyndale's dependence or independence in regard to the translation of the Bible, it is necessary that some preliminary comments be made concerning the nature and importance of Tyndale's translation, and also what helps other than Luther's New Testament Tyndale consulted.

Some general statements concerning the reception which Tyndale's translation has been accorded and the high repute in which it is held are certainly in order. Rupp says that

> We cannot understand the first decade of the English Reformation unless we recognize that the edition of the English New Testament was its supreme event, and that it, and the other Biblical translations following, fell into a more important category than the theological writings of the Reformers. The great battle for the vernacular scripture was by no means settled in 1526, and yet the quality of Tyndale's work made this the decisive blow.[1]

R. Demaus makes the following statement:

> Of the merits of the English Bible and of its influence upon all English-speaking people who is able to treat adequately? And this English Bible, it must once more be repeated, is the work of Tyndale; is for the greater part exactly what he made it, and in every part speaks in that style which he infused into it. That exquisite felicity of language which has made it dear to the hearts of all classes, which has constituted it a true national treasure, it owes to Tyndale. His translation was no dead piece of learned labour; it was instinct with the life of the man that produced it; it was the Word of God transmitted through the agency of one to

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[1] E. G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), p. 48.

> whom that Word was not an outward letter, but the very life of his soul. It is on this account that the individuality of Tyndale is inseparably associated with the English Bible; its tone and spirit have, in a certain sense, come from him; no revision has ever presumed to touch what Tyndale has stamped on it; no progress of scholarship is ever likely to efface from it that which makes it truly Tyndale's work.[2]

And Hoare, commenting on the linguistic characteristics of Tyndale's work and the formative effect it has had upon the English language, says,

> Far from vulgarising the Bible by lowering his standard of language down to the popular level (as though a man should descend to render Shakespeare's Comedies into the dialect of the modern farce), he lifted the common language, in a true nobility of homeliness, up to the sublime level of the Bible. He worked, like a sane and sound scholar, on the principles of grammer and philology. He endeavoured, in a spirit of unpedantic sincerity and conscientiousness, to find out what it was that each sacred writer had meant to say, and then to say it in plain and vigorous Saxon-English with all the idiomatic simplicity, and grace, and stateliness which characterise the Authorised Version, and which our latest revisers might with advantage have been more jealous than they have been to emulate and preserve.[3]

These testimonies as to the quality of Tyndale's work are only representative and could be multiplied endlessly. Perhaps the most forceful testimony of all as to the importance of Tyndale's translation is the influence it has exerted upon every subsequent English translation to appear. Every English version of the Bible from Coverdale down to that of the latest revision of the Revised Standard Version is deeply indebted to William Tyndale.

> In our present Bible eighty per cent of Tyndale has been retained in the Old Testament and ninety per cent in the New, and in spite of many revisions almost every sentence is substantially the same

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[2]R. Demaus, William Tyndale, A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), pp. 445f.

[3]H. W. Hoare, The Evolution of the English Bible: An Historical Sketch of the Successive Versions from 1382 to 1885 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 107.

> as Tyndale wrote it. No greater tribute could be paid to his industry, scholarship, and genius. To him we owe the exceeding beauty and tender grace of the language of our present Bible. For felicity of diction and for dignity of rhythm, Tyndale never has been, and never can be, surpassed.[4]

Rupp adds that it is estimated that of the words used in Tyndale's New Testament seventy-five per cent have survived into the Revised Version.[5] And in another book the same author declares that "we who speak the tongue which Shakespeare spoke because Tyndale made the English New Testament, have given him his best memorial in that English Bible which incorporated his best work."[6]

Although not all have spoken so energetically in favor of Tyndale's English Bible, yet this is the preponderance of opinion, not only among the majority of scholars, but also among the best. Independent of the question of Tyndale's dependence on Luther, it must be affirmed that Tyndale has rendered an immense service to the English-speaking world in bringing to it the Bible in the vernacular and also in the powerful influence he has wielded in the shaping of the English language.

The first edition of Tyndale's New Testament appeared in 1526, printed in the city of Worms. Although work had been begun at Cologne, it was interrupted and halted by Cochlaeus in October of 1525. Completed some six months later at Worms, it appeared in two forms, a quarto edition and an octavo edition. Originally three thousand of

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[4]William Dallman, William Tyndale, The Translator of the English Bible (Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 78f.

[5]E. G. Rupp, Six Makers of English Religion, 1500-1700 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), pp. 19f.

[6]Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition, p. 199.

each were printed, but through subsequent editions it is estimated that thirty thousand New Testaments found their way into England. Extent today are only one copy of the original quarto edition and two copies of the octavo edition. The various technical questions concerning the publication, printers, etc., of Tyndale's Bible do not here concern us.

In the first edition Tyndale promised his readers a revision. It was slow in appearing. First came Joye's revision of Tyndale's New Testament, to which Tyndale was opposed and for which he severely censured Joye. His wrath over Joye's perverted edition prompted him to hurry his own revision, which appeared with minor changes in 1534.

Tyndale never completed his translation of the Old Testament. The Pentateuch appeared in the year 1530, and its revision in 1534. The only other portion of the Old Testament that we know with certainty that he published was the book of Jonah, although it is generally believed that Tyndale had completed the Old Testament as far as the book of Nehemiah, and that these hitherto unpublished books were incorporated into Matthew's Bible.

## Tyndale's Helps in Translation

The task of translating the Bible more than four hundred years ago differed widely from any such present day attempt. It is only natural, however, that we ask what text Tyndale used from which to translate and what other aids and helps he had open before him.

Discounting for the moment the charges of those who impugn Tyndale's scholarship by asserting that his New Testament was merely a translation of some other translation, and assuming that he translated

from the Greek, our first question obviously concerns itself with which text he used. Although the question would not occur to a modern translator the decision of using the Latin or Greek was an important one four hundred years ago. Wycliffe had translated from the Vulgate, as had others. Tyndale decided, however, to follow Luther's example and translate directly from the original Greek. The state of the Greek text at that time is pointed out by Moulton:

> Until the year 1516 not more than six or seven chapters of the Greek Testament had been printed and published; the sacred book was accessible in manuscript only. In that year Erasmus's first edition of the Greek Testament was given to the world. It is obvious that the correctness of this printed text would depend on the excellence of the manuscripts from which it was derived. These manuscripts (five in number) are still at Basle, where the volume was printed; and when the science of textual criticism began to be studied with care, scholars were at pains to examine them and estimate their value. Not one of these manuscripts is ancient. The most valuable of the five was written in the tenth century; to this manuscript, however, Erasmus seems to have attached but little value. In the Gospels Erasmus followed almost entirely a manuscript written in the fifteenth century. Before Tyndale's earliest translation was placed in the printer's hands, Erasmus had published three editions of the Greek text, the third bearing the date 1522. Tyndale may have had in his possession manuscript copies of the Greek Testament, but there can be no doubt that he made full use of the results of Erasmus's labours, and that the printed text was the basis of his translation.[7]

Demaus says that

> no Greek Testament was in reality accessible to him, except that of Erasmus, which had been originally printed in 1516, and of which a second edition appeared in 1519, and a third in 1522. From this third edition of Erasmus it can be demonstrated that Tyndale made his English version.[8]

However Moulton presents what seems to be incontrovertable evidence that

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[7] W. F. Moulton, The History of the English Bible, revised by J. H. Moulton and W. F. Moulton, (London: Chas. H. Kelly, n.d.), p. 74f.

[8] Demaus, op. cit., p. 104.

Tyndale did not use any one of Erasmus' three editions exclusively, but rather used his own judgment concerning the variant readings, sometimes preferring the first and second editions to the third.[9]

Westcott in particular has asserted that though Tyndale used his own judgment, he was to quite a great extent dependent upon the new Latin version which had accompanied Erasmus' Greek text. He says:

> There is, however, one other authority who had greater influence upon Tindale than the Vulgate or Luther. The Greek text of the New Testament published by Erasmus, which Tindale necessarily used, was accompanied by an original Latin version in which Erasmus faithfully rendered the text he had printed. This translation is very frequently followed by Tindale.[10]

Although there can be little doubt that Tyndale was acquainted with this edition and likely had it before him, it seems unlikely that he used it to the extent which Westcott would have us believe.

It is also quite certain, and this has been more frequently asserted, that Tyndale used the Vulgate to some extent. On occasion he has been charged with merely translating this Latin version. Mombert produces sufficient evidence to prove that, although indebted in some ways to the Vulgate, Tyndale did not follow this version blindly.[11]

Pope, on the other hand, has suggested that Tyndale was heavily dependent upon Wycliffe's translation, and Marsh is in agreement with this proposal. Basing his opinion in large upon Gairdner Pope says:

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[9] Moulton, op. cit., pp. 75-73.

[10] Brooke Foss Westcott, A General View of the History of the English Bible (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), p. 135.

[11] For Mombert's evidence on this point see his English Versions of the Bible (London: Samuel Begster and Sons Limited, n.d.), pp. 90-93.

> Their (Wycliffe's and Tyndale's) almost identical renderings of a multitude of passages---e.g., Matt. 12:18; 13:20; Luke 1:38---would argue an intimate relationship between the two versions. Indeed Gairdner, who describes Lollardy as "an influence which arose mainly out of Wycliffe's translation of the Bible, and which tended to regard the book more and more as an infallible and all-sufficient guide in faith and morals capable also of infallible interpretation by private judgement," goes on to say: "this influence was revived by the publication of Tyndale's New Testament and by the power of the printing press in disseminating copies of that and other heretical literature."[12]

It has also been said that Tyndale's "translation of the text shows abundant traces of Luther's German version."[13] To this problem we wish to address ourselves more thoroughly in the remainder of this chapter.

Other than those already mentioned Tyndale no doubt also had other lexicographical and expository aids. In summing up all the helps which Tyndale likely consulted, Demaus says:

> He had before him in his work not only Erasmus' New Testament with its Latin version, but the Vulgate, and the German translation of Luther, all of which it can be proved that he systematically consulted; some favourite expositors probably; and, without doubt, such grammars and lexicons of Lascaris, Creston, and others as could be procured.[14]

Concerning the aids which were probably consulted by Tyndale in his translation of the Old Testament, Mombert says that

> The helps available to Tyndale were: The Hebrew Bible (Soncino, 1488, Brescia, 1494), the latter edition was that from which Luther translated; Bomberg's Bible, published in 1518; and the Rabbinical Bible, in 1519 and 1525. Pellican's Hebrew Grammar had appeared in 1503, Reuchlin's Dictionary in 1506, Munster's Gram-

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[12] Hugh Pope, English Versions of the Bible (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1952), pp. 136f.

[13] Records of the English Bible Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525-1611, edited by Alfred W. Pollard, (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), p. 5.

[14] Demaus, op. cit., p. 105.

mer in 1525, and the Complutensian Polyglot with a Hebrew Grammar and Lectionary in 1517-20. The Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible, by Pagninus (Lyons, 1528), and his Thesaurus (1529) he may have seen, but the presumption is that he did not.[15]

One conclusion seems inevitable. Although Tyndale to some extent no doubt used all of the various versions ascribed to him, viz. the Vulgate, Erasmus' Latin edition, Wycliffe's Bible if available, and Luther's New Testament, it appears that too much faith cannot be placed in the comparison between Tyndale's version and one of these others mentioned. On the very basis of comparative studies men of reputable scholarship have attributed the dependence of Tyndale on at least four different versions. It stands to reason that some similarities will occur, since all, whether first or second hand, were derived from the same ultimate source. Furthermore, the borrowing of what Tyndale felt was a felicitious turn of expression does not necessarily denote dependence on the version from which he borrowed it. This is not meant as a denial that Tyndale compared and used these other versions, but a word of caution seems to be in order against drawing unwarranted conclusions on the basis of such comparative studies.

## The Outward Form of Tyndale's New Testament

We must consider briefly the outward form of Tyndale's New Testament. The dependence upon Luther in this matter is manifestly evident. Demaus sums it up in this way:

> To any one who has enjoyed the opportunity of placing side by side the folio of Luther's German Testament, printed in September, 1522,

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[15] Mombert, op. cit., pp. 117f.

> and the quarto of Tyndale, printed in September, 1525, the whole matter is clear at a glance. Tyndale's New Testament is Luther's in miniature; the general appearance of the page is the same; the arrangement of the text is the same; and the appropriation of the margins, the inner one for parallel passages, and the outer for glosses, is also the same.[16]

In addition to these similarities just noted one might be added. Tyndale retained the same order of books as did Luther. Moulton writes:

> As far as the Epistle to Philemon the arrangement does not differ from that of our own Bibles, but this Epistle is immediately succeeded by those of St. Peter and St. John. So far, the books are numbered from 1 to 23. After the 3rd Epistle of St. John there is a break in the list, and the names of the four remaining books, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the Apocalypse, are left without numbers, and most carefully kept apart from those which precede. This arrangement is Luther's; the four books were placed last by him because, in his judgment, they stood below the other books in rank and importance.[17]

Even those who are vitally concerned with upholding Tyndale's independence of Luther, such as Moulton quoted above, and Hoare, are constrained to admit dependence on this point. Only Anderson does not acknowledge dependence on this point, and that only because his mind is so predisposed to the absolute independence of Tyndale, that he never considers the question.

## Tyndale's Independence

Tyndale's ability to work with the original tongues is well attested, and although he himself never appears to have made a direct claim that he translated directly from the originals, his works are full of implications to this effect. Also there are other things which would lead us

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[16]Demaus, op. cit., p. 131.

[17]Moulton, op. cit., pp. 78f.

to believe that he not only was capable of doing so, but also that he, in fact, did.

As mentioned previously the one goal and mission of Tyndale's life was the bringing of the Word of God to the English people in their own tongue. A mere translation of Luther's translation would seem to be inconsistent with his aim and purpose, and there is every reason to believe that his Bible was translated from the Greek and Hebrew texts.

Tyndale seems to be completely at ease both in Greek and also in Hebrew. In his other works, notably also those where there is no connection with any work of Luther, such as his Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, he discusses the meaning and import of Greek and Hebrew words with a sense of deep insight and understanding.

The high regard with which he held the holy Word of God would also lead us to accept Tyndale's independence in translation. Although many statements could be summoned to demonstrate this point, one will suffice. In his letter to Frith Tyndale makes the following declaration:

> For I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me.[18]

This affirmation, given under oath, coupled with what we know with certainty to have been Tyndale's facility with Greek and Hebrew, seems to be a strong indication that his translation did not flow from the translation of someone else, but that Tyndale carefully delved into the original texts in order to find the true meaning of the words. Then he put

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[18]This letter is quoted in full by Demaus, op. cit., pp. 333-37.

them into the best Anglo-Saxon idiom he knew. It must also be remembered that Tyndale had set in mind to translate, and likely had begun to do so, before acquiring Luther's German New Testament.

In regard to Tyndale's facility with languages and his intellectual ability much evidence exists. John Foxe gives every indication that Tyndale was a scholar in his own right. His years at Oxford and Cambridge had been spent in diligent study. When he left Little Sodbury for London, he carried with him a translation of a Greek oration of Isocrates. Frith, one of his co-laborers, speaks of Tyndale as being "more worthye to be promoted than all the bushoppes in england" because of "hys larnynge and Iudgement in scrypture."[19] It is proper that at this time we once again call to mind the entry in Spalatin's diary which attests Tyndale's linguistic abilities. Concerning this entry Demaus says,

> Herman Buschius found Tyndale residing at Worms with two other Englishmen, and it was doubtless as the result of his own interviews with the translator that the illustrious German spoke so highly of his acquirements in Greek, Hebrew, and other languages.[20]

Even Tyndale's opponents do not disparage his learning. Cochlaeus, whose determined hostility against Tyndale we have already seen, speaks of him and his associate in Cologne as "learned, skillful in languages, and eloquent."[21]

George Joye, who quarrelled with Tyndale and writes with extravagent vehemence against him, speaks of Tyndale's "high learning in his Hebrew,

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[19]For Frith's defense of Tyndale and his work see Records of the English Bible, op. cit., pp. 172-74.

[20]Demaus, op. cit., p. 143.

[21]Ibid., p. 130.

Greek, Latin, etc." even after their disagreements.[22]

Likewise Sir Thomas More's treatment of Tyndale's work attests his learning. Concerning this Moulton says:

> More's skill in Greek is not doubted, and as little can any one question his eagerness as a disputant; if, then, Tyndale's translation of the New Testament were bad and false, by such an opponent the defects must surely be brought to light. It is no small testimony to Tyndale's substantial accuracy that More occupies himself so largely with his adversary's doctrines, so little with the translation.[23]

And writing in the same vein, Demaus says that

> Sir Thomas More, a thoroughly competent judge, perfectly free from all prepossession in Tyndale's favour, admits that Tyndale "before he fell into these frenzies (of Luther's opinions) was taken for full prettily learned." Whilst criticising and condemning his translation on account of its countenancing Lutheran doctrines, he never denies Tyndale's competent scholarship: nay, he even goes so far as to suggest that a certain book which he bitterly opposed, could not possibly have been written by Tyndale on account of its lack of learning.[24]

Lindsay likewise says that Tyndale's New Testament was "severely censured by Sir Thomas More, not because the work was badly done, but really because it was so scholarly."[25] And more directly related to our present question Mombert asserts that "many of the Germanisms charged upon Tyndale's version are good old English, characteristic of the period, and found even in the writings of Sir Thomas More."[26]

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[22] Ibid., p. 129.

[23] Moulton, op. cit., p. 89.

[24] Demaus, op. cit., p. 129.

[25] Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1928), II, 338.

[26] Mombert, op. cit., p. 89.

There is one other statement made by Tyndale which must be given some consideration. In the "Epistle to the Reader," subjoined to his 1526 octavo edition, Tyndale says,

> Then that are learned christianly I beseech, forasmuch as I am sure, and my conscience beareth me record, that of a pure intent, singly and faithfully, I have interpreted it, as far forth as God gave me the gift of knowledge and understanding, that the rudeness of the work now at the first time offend them not; but that they consider how that I had no man to counterfeit, neither was holped with English of any that had interpreted the same or such like thing in the scripture beforetime.[27]

Two things are worthy of notice. First of all, Tyndale declares that his interpretation was rendered "singly and faithfully" as God gave him the gift of knowledge and understanding. Such a statement seems out of line with what we know to be Tyndale's character, if his work were only the translation of Luther or anyone else. Secondly, his denial that he had help is worthy of note. Concerning this Demaus has the following to say:

> He was himself a good Greek scholar, quite as good, in all probability, as Luther; but while he understood German, none of the learned men of Wittenberg understood English, so that their help must have been of very slight importance, and such as in no way to affect Tyndale's originality. He might, indeed, be able to consult them on the correct meaning of difficult or disputed passages; but in the actual translation of the New Testament into the English language he was thrown entirely upon his own resources.[28]

The most convincing testimony of Tyndale's independence is his translation itself. Demaus says,

> To a scholar, the most convincing proof of what has now been asserted is that which arises from the actual comparison of Tyndale's

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[27] William Tyndale, Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures, edited for the Parker Society by Henry Walter, (Cambridge: University Press, 1848), p. 390.

[28] Demaus, op. cit., pp. 104f.

work with the original Greek, and with the versions which unquestionably lay open before him as he proceeded in his work.[29]

Those scholars who have most extensively studied Tyndale's work concur in this opinion. It would not be in place to quote all of them, but the names of some ought to be mentioned--names such as Butterworth, Pollard, Walter, Moore, Mombert, Mozley, Rupp, H. Maynard Smith, and Westcott.

As to specific instances of Tyndale's independence we shall not provide examples. Rather we refer the reader to Mozley's fine presentation on this point found in pages 81-89 of his William Tyndale. Similar examples of Tyndale's independence can be found in many of the volumes listed in the bibliography.

Two general conclusions of Mozley in his comparison of Tyndale and Luther, however, are in place at this time.

> The attempt has sometimes been made to prove Tyndale's dependence upon one or other of his rivals by drawing up lists of passages where he follows their renderings. This does not carry us very far. Agreements may proceed from a common standpoint and a common method rather than a slavish imitation. That Tyndale should favour the Vulgate less than he favours Erasmus or Luther, is what we should expect from the circumstances. To Luther Tyndale was akin in two ways. Both men used living tongues of Germanic stock, and both were writing for the common people, whereas Erasmus wrote for scholars in a dead tongue and a prosaic style. . . . This common standpoint accounts for many agreements between the two translators.[30]

Mozley's other conclusion is that

> Tyndale sticks closer to the Greek text than Luther, and often refuses to follow him in those free and bold renderings which are so striking and pleasing a feature of the German version, e. g. where Paul addresses Agrippa as "dear king Agrippa." He prefers to find an idiomatic rendering of a more literal kind, and thus

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[29] Ibid., p. 133.

[30] J. F. Mozley, William Tyndale (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), p. 86f.

> ranks himself by the side of Erasmus. . . . But whatever be decided on this point, it must again be strongly asserted that such agreements, with whichever party, are not proof of dependence, or of ignorance of the Greek tongue, but they proceed from the free and unfettered choice of a well-equipped scholar.[31]

Exactly where or from whom Tyndale learned Hebrew is uncertain, but there can be little doubt that he was a competent Hebrew scholar. Westcott says that

> His knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is also incidentally attested by the evidence of Spalatinus, of his opponent Joye, and yet more clearly by the steady confidence with which he deals with points of Hebrew and Greek philology when they casually arise.[32]

It is not necessary once again to reiterate evidence for this as the greater share of evidence quoted in support of Tyndale's knowledge of Greek also pertains to his knowledge of Hebrew. Tyndale's Pentateuch appeared in 1530, and although he was not so familiar with Hebrew as Greek, his knowledge can scarcely be questioned. Concerning the Pentateuch Smith says:

> The translation has the same merits as Tyndale's New Testament. It was made direct from the Hebrew text, and is very little indebted to Luther's version; competent Hebraists today declare that the author of this translation had a sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to justify him in exercising his own judgment on disputed points.[33]

Only one particular instance of Tyndale's independence in Hebrew shall be summoned. Referring to Tyndale's translation of Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24, Demaus says:

> In the last passage the reader will have observed that Tyndale's

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[31] Ibid., p. 87.

[32] Westcott, on. cit., p. 226.

[33] H. Maynard Smith, Henry VIII and the Reformation (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 307.

> version varies considerably, and certainly not for the better, from that now used in our churches. Curiously enough, however, even this inferiority affords another proof of his originality; for the translation of Luther, which he unquestionably had before him, approaches very much nearer to our Authorised Version; and it is thus evident that Tyndale did not follow it with the slavish deference of a copyist, as he is sometimes said to have done.[34]

It is perhaps worthy of further mention that the one who asserts Tyndale's independence in the Old Testament most vociferously is the same author who has studied Tyndale's Pentateuch most extensively. Reference is here being made to J. I. Mombert, and especially to his exhaustive study of Tyndale's Pentateuch.[35]

Before we come to a definite conclusion on the matter of Tyndale's relation to Luther in translation, it is necessary that something be said concerning those who claim a greater amount of dependence upon Luther.

## Tyndale's Dependence upon Luther

Many have accused Tyndale of being no more than an echo and a servile imitator of Luther in translation. In the remainder of this chapter we shall attempt to survey briefly the basis of this assertion and point out the reliability or unreliability thereof.

Dallman tells us that there are some men who have called Tyndale "nothing more than an English echo of the great German heresiarch," and

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[34]Demaus, op. cit., p. 226.

[35]William Tyndale, Five Books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, Being a Verbatim Reprint of the Edition of M.CCCCC.XXX. Compared with Tyndale's Genesis of 1534, and the Pentateuch in the Vulgate, Luther, and Matthew's Bible, with Various Collations and Prolegomena, edited by J. I. Mombert, (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1884).

that others have called his New Testament "Tyndale's Lutheran translation." Still others have maintained that Tyndale worked chiefly for the printers and seems to have translated mainly from Luther's German Bible. Summing up such criticisms of Tyndale, Dallman says the following:

> Dore speaks of Tyndale's "strong Lutheran bias"; Bishop Marsh says: "His translation was taken at least in part from Luther's"; Cardinal Gasquet says: "Luther's direct influence may be detected on almost every page of the printed edition issued by Tyndale." McComb says: Some of the happiest renderings in our English New Testament we owe indirectly to the German Reformer." Another writes: "Happily our own excellent translation of the Bible still retains striking evidence of the influence of his (Luther's) admirable version, and perhaps it is not too much to say that the two most copious and energetic languages are greatly indebted to him (Luther) for their terseness and expression."[36]

Many more such statements could be invoked which would tend to prove that Tyndale was a mere translator of Luther. However it should be noted at once that no such accusation proceeds from those men such as Mozley, Demaus, Mombert, Westcott and others who have produced the most exhaustive studies on Tyndale's life and work. There seems to be a great deal of truth in what Moulton says, namely that the modern writers who have depreciated Tyndale's labors in the main have unhappily repeated the assertions made by Tyndale's personal enemies and that they have in their haste mistaken the statements of partisans for authentic history.[37]

It appears as if the source of the accusation against Tyndale revolves around the testimony of two of his contemporaries, namely Sir Thomas More and John Cochlaeus. In his Dialogue, the complete title

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[36]Dallman, op. cit., p. 79.

[37]Moulton, op. cit., p. 87.

of which shows the connection which the author believed existed between Tyndale and Luther.[38] More says:

> It is quod I to me gret meruayl that eny good cristen man hauing eny drop of wyt in hys hed wold eny thing meruell or complayn of the burning of that boke if he knowe the mater which who so calleth the new testament calleth it by a wrong name except they wyl call yt Tyndals testament or Luthers testament. For so had tyndall after Luthers counsayle corrupted & chaunged yt from the good & holsom doctryne of Criste to the deuylysh heresyes of theyr own that it was elene a contrary thing.[39]

And in the "Commentaria Iohannis Cochlaei, de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri," the following may be found:

> Verum Duo Angli Apostatae, qui aliquandiu fuerant Vuittenbergae, non solum quaerebant subuertere Mercatores suos, qui eos occulte in exilio fouebant & alebant: Verum etiam cunctos Angliae populos, volente nolente Rege, breui per nouum Lutheri Testamentum, quod in Anglicanam transtulerant linguam, Lutheranos fore sperabant.[40]

It must be borne in mind that More later retracted his charge of Tyndale's collaboration with Luther. Concerning the accusation of Cochlaeus Mombert says:

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[38]The complete title of More's work is "A dialogue of Sir Thomas More, Knight, one of the Council of our Sovereign Lord the King and Chancellor of his Duchy of Lancaster, wherein be treated divers matters, as of the veneration and worship of images and relics, praying to saints and going on pilgrimage; with many other things touching the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale by the tone (one) begun in Saxony, and by the tother (other) laboured to be brought into England." Demaus, op. cit., p. 251.

[39]L. Franklin Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther: The Real Extent to which Tyndale was Dependent upon Luther as a Translator (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1928), pp. 16f.

[40]Ibid., p. 17. The Latin of Cochlaeus may be rendered as follows: "But two English apostates who sometime had been at Wittenberg, not only were seeking to ruin their own merchants, who secretly were fostering and supporting them in exile; but they were even hoping for all the people of England, whether the King were willing or unwilling, soon to become Lutherans, through Luther's New Testament, which they had translated into the English language."

> It was doubtless Cochlaeus, who, in order to disparage the work of Tyndale and to ingratiate himself with the influential ecclesiastics in England, maliciously or ignorantly, circulated the slander that it was an English translation of Luther.[41]

It must be remembered that these two men were both life-long enemies of Tyndale and did everything in their power to prevent his work. This, to some extent at least, casts doubt upon the boldness of their assertions.

Yet there was reason why Tyndale's New Testament would be called a Lutheran book. It cannot be denied that at this time the idea of vernacular versions was identified with the name of Luther.[42] The English New Testament had been printed in Reformation lands, was being smuggled into England, and was being sold by men who were suspected of Lutheran leanings. It is only natural that in the minds both of the ecclesiastical authorities and of the common people it was a Lutheran book. As Jacobs points out, it was common at that time to call all men Lutherans who showed any leaning toward reformation.[43] In this sense certainly it can be said that Tyndale's New Testament came to England as part of the Lutheran movement.

Furthermore, the resemblance in outward form of Tyndale's New Testament to that of Luther was readily noticed, and the more evident dependence of Tyndale upon Luther in other areas, particularly that with

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[41] Mombert, op. cit., pp. 88f.

[42] Westcott, op. cit., p. 131.

[43] Henry E. Jacobs, The Lutheran Movement in England during the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI (Philadelphia: General Council Publishing House, 1916), p. 35.

which the next chapter deals, would lead many to conclude that it was merely a translation of Luther's work. Rupp says that "there was some colour for the Catholic outcry that this was simply an Englishing of Luther's Bible."[44] It can be safely stated that Tyndale's New Testament followed Luther's in every respect, except that of the actual translation.

The fact that Tyndale's New Testament was considered a Lutheran book is one of the reasons why it was denounced and burned in England. The other reason is the charge of wilful mistranslation levelled against Tyndale by More. Although it is not directly pertinent to a discussion of Tyndale's dependence upon Luther, for the sake of completeness it is well that we consider it briefly. Translations which More had adduced as unpardonable heresies were Tyndale's substitution of congregation for church, seniors for priests, love for charity, favour for grace, knowledge for confession, repentance for penence, and troubled for contrite.[45] More charged Tyndale with "neglecting the use of those words which long custom had sanctioned as being appropriately ecclessiastical, and had adopted others which had no peculiar association with theology."[46]

To this charge Tyndale's answer was easy and obvious; not only was his rendering in accordance with the strict signification of the original, but the terms which he had avoided were depraved by so many abuses that

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[44]Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition, p. 20.

[45]See Smith, op. cit., pp. 297f.

[46]Demaus, op. cit., p. 259.

their use could only mislead the unwary reader and give him a false impression of the true meaning of Scripture.

In summing up our findings we quote the conclusion of Demaus:

> It would be a small compliment to Tyndale's good sense to believe that he undertook a labour of so much importance without availing himself of all materials that could in any way contribute to the successful completion of his task. Indeed, it is obvious to anyone, who has sufficient scholarship to compare the various works, that as he proceeded in his undertakings, Tyndale had before him the Vulgate, the Latin version of Erasmus, and the German of Luther, and that in rendering from the original Greek he carefully consulted all these aids; but he did so not with the helpless inbecility of a mere tyro, but with the conscious independence of an accomplished scholar. He consulted those who had preceeded him, as a modern classical critic consults the scholiasts and commentators who have laboured on the same work. . . . It is no derogation from the originality of any modern editor of Virgil or Sophocles that we can trace in his writings the influence of previous editors; and equally it is no derogation from the independence of Tyndale's version that we can trace in it the influence of previous translators.[47]

There is insufficient evidence to prove any great dependence of Tyndale upon Luther in his translation. First of all, the borrowing of a phrase or a particular form of expression does not prove dependence throughout. It can also be shown that such borrowing took place from the Vulgate and from Erasmus' Latin edition. We here repeat that comparative studies can hardly be considered an accurate measure of dependence or independence.

Secondly, the fact that Tyndale followed the outward form of Luther's New Testament and in many of his other writings borrowed directly from Luther does not prove that he was also dependent upon him in the matter of Bible translation.

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[47]Demaus, op. cit., p. 259.

Thirdly, the original accusation of dependence with which Tyndale was charged was made by his enemies. Later similar charges have, for the most part, been made with a minimum of verification, and have been only repeat performances of what someone has said in the past. These must be called in question. Just as the charges made against Luther by his enemies cannot be taken at their face value, so also the charge against Tyndale by enemies cannot be considered valid unless accompanied with more substantial data.

In accord with the great importance which Tyndale attached to the translation of the Bible into English, and in accord with what we know to have been Tyndale's competence in dealing with the original languages we therefore concur with Westcott when he says that "Tyndale deals with the text as one who passed a scholar's judgment upon every fragment of the work,"[48] and with the statement of Demaus that

> Tyndale had Luther's work before him, and constantly consulted and occasionally adopted it, but he never implicitly follows Luther, but translates from the original with the freedom of a man who had perfect confidence in his own scholarship.[49]

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[48] Westcott, op. cit., p. 137.

[49] Demaus, op. cit., p. 226.

## CHAPTER VI

## TYNDALE'S DEPENDENCE ON LUTHER IN OTHER WRITINGS

In this chapter's area of investigation it is somewhat easier to evaluate Luther's influence upon Tyndale. Although the question of Tyndale's dependence upon Luther in translation is fraught with many problems, his dependence upon Luther in other writings is easier to detect and becomes more apparent. In general we shall note quite a great degree of dependence, but shall also note independence and originality on Tyndale's part in some areas and in some of his work.

Luther's writings appeared in both German and Latin. It is perhaps necessary to say at this time that Tyndale was sufficiently acquainted with either language to borrow extensively from Luther if he so desired.

One other thing ought to be mentioned before taking up the writings themselves. In the days of Tyndale and Luther, before copyright laws, etc., it was not necessarily considered plagiarism to adapt another man's work into another language. The point is that Tyndale's dependence upon Luther in this area detracts neither from his scholarly work on the New Testament nor from his personal integrity and honesty.

### Marginal Notes in the Bible

Although Tyndale's octavo edition of 1526 contained no marginal glosses, the quarto edition of 1526 and subsequent revisions did contain marginal notes, as well as his 1530 edition of the Pentateuch. It seems that the presence of these comments added to the biblical text was customary at that time; Luther's New Testament contained such glosses, as

well as several of the Wyclifite and other versions of the day.

For the most part Tyndale merely took over the marginal glosses of Luther's New Testament, translated them into Anglo-Saxon, in some places curtailing or expanding the notes, and placed them in his own English edition. Campbell attributes the condemnation of Tyndale's translation in England primarily to the existence of these Lutheran glosses of "unorthodox character."[1] In a comparison of the second edition of Luther's New Testament and of the one remaining fragment of Tyndale's 1526 quarto edition, Gruber makes a very convincing attempt to prove Tyndale's dependence in this matter. On pages 76 to 96 of his book he lists side by side all the marginal notes found in both of the editions mentioned as far as Matthew 22:12, where Tyndale's fragment stops. The similarity between the two sets of notes is readily apparent. Gruber's summary of the situation follows:

> The exact number of the marginal glosses in Tyndale's Fragment is 92. Of these, we find 57 to be almost wholly (several partly) practically literal translations of Luther's notes; and these are the notes of importance. At least three other notes are based upon Luther's notes (Matt. 2:18; 5:8; 15:5). And 32 are apparently not based upon Luther's notes in Matthew (1--22:12); but these are generally short and comparatively unimportant. Therefore, of Tyndale's 92 notes, almost two-thirds, and these the notes of significance, are taken directly from Luther's parallel notes.[2]

Demaus admits an almost equal amount of similarity between the two sets of notes, alleging that fifty-two of the ninety-two have been taken more

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[1] W. E. Campbell, Erasmus, Tyndale and More (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 108.

[2] L. Franklin Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther: The Real Extent to which Tyndale was Dependent upon Luther as a Translator (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1928), p. 73.

or less literally from Luther, as compared with Gruber's assigning direct dependence to fifty-seven.

However Demaus also points out that there is not absolute dependence upon Luther in this matter, but that he used his own judgment in his selection. He says:

> The marginal notes, those "pestilent glosses," against which the indignation of the clergy was especially excited, have been to a large extent translated by Tyndale from those of Luther. Not that Tyndale translated like a servile imitator, whose intellect was too barren to be capable of originality; everywhere he uses his own judgment; sometimes he curtails Luther's notes; sometimes he omits them; often he inserts notes of his own, and these of various kinds, explanatory and doctrinal. Some of the longest of these marginal glosses, as well as some of those which most emphatically propound the doctrine of justification by faith, are original to Tyndale; in other cases the words of Luther have been expanded, and have formed not so much the source of Tyndale's note as the nucleus out of which it has grown.[3]

It is necessary that we also say something of the marginal notes found in Tyndale's Pentateuch. These notes are not to such a degree dependent upon Luther as those found in the New Testament. Westcott, however, says that "the spirit and even the style of Luther is distinctly visible in them."[4] Demaus and Mombert concur in denying a close similarity between Tyndale's and Luther's notes in the Pentateuch. Demaus says,

> Strange as it may appear, it is actually the fact that in his notes on the Pentateuch, Tyndale has taken nothing whatever from his German contemporary. Amongst upward of a hundred glosses, there is only one instance of similarity sufficiently strong to suggest that Tyndale borrowed from Luther; and the note is in that case so very

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[3]R. Demaus, William Tyndale, A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 131.

[4]Brooke Foss Westcott, A General View of the History of the English Bible (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), p. 44.

> obvious and common-place, as to afford no ground for asserting that even this one solitary gloss has been translated from the German.[5]

Demaus apparently puts his finger on the cause of Tyndale's departure from using Luther's notes in the Pentateuch to any great extent. He conjectures that by doing so Tyndale, as it were, was protesting against the whole popular slander that he was nothing more than an English echo of the great German heresiarch. Demaus then goes on to say:

> Perhaps it would have been better if Tyndale had in this matter more closely followed his German predecessor; for the greatest of Tyndale's admirers must admit that his keen sarcasms are by no means so suitable an accompaniment to the sacred text as Luther's topographical and expository notes.[6]

## Prefaces and Introductions to the Biblical Books

Tyndale's translation, as well as Luther's, also contained a preface or prologue to the New Testament as well as introductions to the various books, both of the Old and New Testaments. In regard to most of these we can also see a close dependence upon Luther, noting however in some of them a position on Tyndale's part very contrary to that of Luther.

Concerning Tyndale's "Prologue" to the New Testament found in the 1526 quarto fragment Rupp says, "The whole of Luther's Preface is translated by Tyndale, with the exception of a few isolated and unimportant words. To this Tyndale has made certain additions which amount in all

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[5] Demaus, op. cit., p. 227.

[6] Ibid.

to about four folio pages."[7] And Westcott admits that "There is indeed a ring in the opening words which might have led any one familiar with Luther's style to suspect their real source."[8] To show the great similarity between the two we have included an appendix to this thesis comparing portions of the two. The reader will readily see that there can be no doubt concerning Tyndale's dependence.

For most of the introductions to the various books the same dependence is evident. Westcott sums it up as follows:

> The Prologues to 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Thimothy, Titus, Philemon, 1, 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, are almost entirely taken from Luther, but in nearly all cases in a compressed form. That to the Galatians incorporates a large piece of Luther's, but is fuller.[9]

Westcott also says:

> In other places Tindale omits the temporal applications with which Luther delighted to animate his teachings and tempers the peremptoriness of his exposition by a fuller reference to the text itself.[10]

Two other differences ought to be noted. First of all, Luther had no special prologues to the four gospels; in his 1534 revision Tyndale included prologues to the accounts of all four of the evangelists.[11] And although the prologues to Mark, Luke and John are short, yet they show

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[7] E. G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), pp. 49f.

[8] Westcott, op. cit., p. 146.

[9] Ibid., p. 150.

[10] Ibid., p. 151.

[11] Tyndale's prologues may be found in Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures, by William Tyndale, Martyr 1536, edited by Henry Walter, (Cambridge: University Press, 1848).

that Tyndale was not incapable of departing from what Luther had done.

Secondly, Tyndale's independence becomes even more apparent in his prologues to Hebrew, James and Jude. Luther, as is well known, had treated these books as not entitled to apostolic authority. After carefully examining all the arguments, Tyndale concluded, in direct opposition to Luther, that these books ought to be included with the same authority as the other biblical books.

Although Tyndale leaves the question of the authorship of Hebrews open, he concludes: "Ye see that this epistle ought no more to be refused for a holy, godly and catholic, than the other authentic scriptures."[12]

Concerning the authority and worth of the epistle of James, Tyndale says:

> Though this epistle were refused in the old time, and denied of many to be the epistle of a very apostle. . . yet, because it setteth up no man's doctrine, but crieth to keep the law of God. . . methinketh it ought of right to be taken for holy scripture.[13]

And in his prologue to the epistle of Jude Tyndale also says that "seeing the matter is so godly, and agreeing to other places of holy scripture, I see not but that it ought to have the authority of holy scripture."[14]

### Other Writings

Two of Tyndale's largest and best-known works are his The Parable

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[12] Ibid., pp. 532f.

[13] Ibid., p. 525.

[14] Ibid., p. 531.

of the Wicked Mammon and The Obedience of a Christian Man, both published during the time when Tyndale was supposedly at Marburg by Hans Luft. The former is an exposition of the parable of the unjust steward, and is a treatise on the doctrine of justification by faith. Concerning this work Rupp says:

> Tyndale's first work after the translation of the New Testament was the Wicked Mammon, which included the whole of Luther's sermon on the Unjust Steward, preached in 1522, while the rest of the treatise is Lutheran in sentiment and imagery and may be borrowed from another writing of the German Reformer.[15]

The Obedience of a Christian Man is the largest of Tyndale's works except for his translation. Portions of it are drawn from works of Luther, but it is for the most part original, although the Lutheran theological influence can be seen throughout. Demaus sums up the work thus:

> The whole book is argumentative and polemical; it was intended as a defence of the Reformers from the imputations made against them that "they caused insurrection, and taught the people to disobey their heads and governors, and to rise against their princes, and to make all common, and to make havoc of other men's goods."[16]

Another of Tyndale's larger works is his "Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount." Although similarities are not so frequent as in The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, yet it is evident that Tyndale not only had before him, but also used rather extensively, Luther's work on the same three chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. The accusation that Tyndale is here dependent was made long ago by George Joye, who spitefully declared that in reality it was "Luther that made it, Tyndale only but

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[15]Rupp, op. cit., p. 51.

[16]Demaus, op. cit., p. 186.

translating and powdering it here and there with his own fantasies."[17] Although Joye is exaggerating, yet all commentators agree that the similarities between the two exclude the possibility of Tyndale's complete originality in regard to this work.

In addition most of the smaller works of Tyndale are related to works of Luther. Rupp says:

> An exposition of I Cor. vii was widely known as "Tyndale's Matrimony" and though there is some doubt of Tyndale's authorship, it too was derived from Luther. The expositions of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew are also translations of sermons by Luther, while Tyndale's Pathway to Holy Scripture is his edition of Luther's preface to the New Testament. The exposition of I John may prove to have had a similar origin.[18]

We can say, then, that almost all of Tyndale's controversial and devotional writings were derived directly from Luther, and that Tyndale often expanded and added to them, but in essence they were but translations of Luther.

Nevertheless, at least one of Tyndale's major works which we have not considered thus far points us to the fact that Tyndale could be original. The Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, because of its very nature, could not to any extent be indebted to Luther, even though Lutheran theology is evident throughout. In his Dialogue More had criticized Tyndale both on his translation and also on other points. Because among other things Tyndale's Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue takes up the value of the translation of original words into the English idiom, the originality of Tyndale cannot be ignored or denied in this work. It is

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[17] Ibid., p. 323.

[18] Rupp, op. cit., p. 51.

evident that this would never have been a problem for Luther. The style and value of this work illustrate well that Tyndale was capable of producing good literature without seeking the aid of Luther or freely consulting his works.

Concerning this work, other small works of Tyndale which are original to him, and original portions of those in which he is indebted to Luther, Campbell, a Roman Catholic, declares:

> As an original author Tyndale is distinguished for the humble yet not too ordinary virtues of clearness and directness. He had a complete command of language for the purposes of theological argument and controversy. His meaning is always plain, and if his treatises are not now popular, that comes from the loss of general interest in the matter, and not from any deterrent or wearisome qualities in his style.[19]

Rupp, who perhaps more than anyone else points out Tyndale's dependence upon Luther, declares:

> Tyndale invariably speaks of Martin Luther with great respect, and his translations, particularly of writings concerning "Justification by Faith", are the best evidence of his debt to the German Reformer. Yet it is also clear that he was nothing of the complete devotee, and certainly no mere mechanic snapper-up of another's considered trifles. His other writings, and his controversial dialogue against More, witness that he had something virile to add on his own account.[20]

In summary, then, it can be said that in the area of literary production, excepting his translation, Tyndale is perhaps more evidently dependent upon Luther than in any other area. Nevertheless, Tyndale is capable of originality and often displays it in his writings.

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[19]Campbell, op. cit., p. 16.

[20]Rupp, op. cit., p. 51.

## CHAPTER VII

## TYNDALE'S DEPENDENCE ON LUTHER IN THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

### Tyndale's Imprisonment and Martyrdom

As mentioned previously, the latter part of Tyndale's life was spent in the city of Antwerp. Here it was that he finally was betrayed by one Henry Philips, a fellow Englishman, and removed to the castle at Vilvorde, a short distance away, where Tyndale was subsequently martyrred. He met his fate on October 6, 1536, leaving this life with a prayer that the eyes of the King of England might be opened.

From the formal entry in the Archives at Brussels we learn that Tyndale was imprisoned for a period of one year and one hundred and thirty-five days.[1] This would place his arrest on the 23rd or 24th of May, 1535. The account of his arrest and imprisonment is given in great detail by Foxe, who supposedly received his information from Poyntz, with whom Tyndale had resided in Antwerp.[2]

Although Tyndale's imprisonment and execution are not important to our discussion, yet it is pertinent that he was executed as a Lutheran. Summing up the conditions in the Netherlands immediately prior to Tyndale's arrest, Demaus says the following:

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[1] R. Demaus, William Tyndale. A Biography (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 391.

[2] John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition, edited by Stephen Reed Cattley (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1838), V, 128-34.

> The Emperor Charles V., compelled to bow to the force of circumstances in Germany, and to tolerate the Protestants whom he was unable to repress, compounded for this reluctant weakness by treating the Protestants in his hereditary dominions with increased severity.[3]

It must be stated that it was not due to the instigation of either the King of England or of Bishop Tunstal, an accusation frequently made, that Tyndale was put to death. Rather, it was done under the authority and through the promotion of the agents of Charles V.

This all becomes rather important when we consider the circumstances of Tyndale's trial and the charges of heresy for which he was executed. Tyndale was condemned to die on the basis of the decree against heresy which had been issued at Augsburg against Lutherans. Conant says that

> In 1530, a very stringent decree against heresy had been issued at Augsburg under the Emperor's authority, directed particularly against the doctrine of justification by faith. This still remained in full force.[4]

It was as a Lutheran, and for Lutheran doctrines, then, that Tyndale was condemned to die.

At his trial Tyndale was charged with holding and teaching the following heretical doctrines:

> "First, he had maintained that faith alone justifies;
> "Second, he maintained that to believe in the forgiveness of sins and to embrace the mercy offered in the Gospel, was enough for salvation;
> "Third, he averred that human traditions cannot bind the conscience, except where their neglect might occasion scandal;

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[3] Demaus, op. cit., pp. 383f.

[4] Mrs. H. C. Conant, The English Bible: History of the Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856), p. 304.

"Fourth, he denied the freedom of the will;
"Fifth, he denied that there is any purgatory;
"Sixth, he affirmed that neither the Virgin nor the Saints pray for us in their own person;
"Seventh, he asserted that neither the Virgin nor the Saints should be invoked by us."[5]

One cannot escape noticing the Lutheran emphases of the "heresies" with which Tyndale was charged. The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent Tyndale was in agreement or disagreement with Luther in the matter of theological thought.

## Tyndale's Use of Luther's Works

In the two preceding chapters we treated Tyndale's use of Luther's theological writings and translation. This is one of the strongest arguments for doctrinal agreement between Tyndale and Luther. If Tyndale had not agreed with Luther on so many points of doctrine, it would have been impossible for him to present as his own views so much of which had come from Luther's pen and for the most part was only an English translation by Tyndale. We here are making reference especially to Tyndale's two larger treatises, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon and The Obedience of A Christian Man, as well as the many marginal glosses and expositions of various portions of Scripture in which Tyndale made copious use of Luther's previous labors. Also, the extent to which we attribute Tyndale's "borrowing" from Luther in his translations, particularly those which reveal a decided Lutheran emphasis, must be recognized as a manifestation of doctrinal agreement between the two.

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[5]Demaus, op. cit., pp. 422f.

Concerning the Lutheran nature of Tyndale's writings Rupp writes:

> Next to his Biblical translation, Tyndale was concerned to make known the teaching of Luther in an English dress. He had to walk delicately for the works of Luther were everywhere proscribed, but he succeeded so well that down to our time the full extent of his debt to Luther has not been made apparent.[6]

Writing against The Obedience of a Christian Man More enumerates the various Lutheran heresies of which Tyndale was guilty and then goes on to say,

> He hath not only sowked out the most poison that he could find through all Luther's books, or take of him by mouth, and all that hath spette out in this book, but hath also in many things far passed his master, running forth so mad for malice that he fareth as though he heard not his own voice.[7]

That Tyndale surpassed Luther in those "heresies" which Lutherans hold so dear is doubtful, but it cannot be denied that Tyndale's works reflect a definite Lutheran inclination.

Campbell says the following in regard to The Parable of the Wicked Mammon:

> In the year 1528 Tyndale published his Parable of the Wicked Mammon, or, as he calls it elsewhere, "my book of the justifying of faith." It is an exposition of Luther's key doctrine of Justification by Faith, and is a clue not only to Luther's theological mind, but also, and perhaps even more, to his tempted and tortured nature--a nature, indeed so very unlike Tyndale's that we may wonder how Tyndale came to be enamoured of such a doctrine. But perhaps with him it came to express his own longing for union with God rather than any exaggerated sense of delivery from the bondage of sin. The very word atonement, at-one-ment, which he introduces for the first time into our own English theological language, seems to bear this out.[8]

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[6] E. G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), p. 49.

[7] Demaus, op. cit., p. 202.

[8] W. E. Campbell, Erasmus, Tyndale and More (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 111.

Although Campbell's psychoanalysis of Tyndale and Luther is questionable, the pre-eminence of the doctrine of "sola fide" in the Wicked Mammon is immediately evident.

Even in those writings where Tyndale is not dependent upon Luther his very style and manner of expression are reminiscent of the German Reformer. Although the following passage shows no particular traces of Lutheran theology, it should illustrate that Tyndale is capable of the same fiery invectives which characterized Luther. In this passage Tyndale is criticizing Fisher for a sermon he had preached against Luther.

> Mark, I pray you, what an orator he (Fisher) is, and how vehemently he persuadeth! Martin Luther hath burnt the Pope's Decretals: a manifest sign, saith he, that he would have burnt the Pope's Holiness also if he had had him! A like argument which I suppose to be rather true, I make: Rochester and his royal brethren have burnt Christ's Testament, an evident sign, verily, that they would have burnt Christ also if they had had Him.[9]

Countless other passages original to Tyndale could be adduced to prove this point, but even a cursory reading of any of Tyndale's works will readily convince one that even in style of writing Tyndale was very close to Luther.

## Agreement with Luther

Westcott has said that the problem of defining the doctrinal agreement and divergence in the opinions of Tyndale and Luther would be difficult, but that the results would be a most instructive passage in the

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[9]Quoted in H. Maynard Smith's Henry VIII and the Reformation (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 300.

doctrinal history of time.[10] What Westcott says is true, but it is necessary that we attempt to cover, at least in a survey fashion, the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two.

Concerning Tyndale's theology Demaus states:

> More than most of the early English Reformers, Tyndale seems to have subjected all his religious beliefs to a searching examination, and to have applied to them with rigorous logic the standard of judgment which he found in Holy Scripture.[11]

It must be remembered that the above assertion is not necessarily incompatible with agreement with Luther. Although Tyndale's views may have, and evidence indicates that they did, agree very greatly with those of Luther, this does not exclude the possibility that Tyndale himself subjected all doctrines to the rigorous scrutiny of Scripture.

As for Luther, so also for Tyndale the basis of all doctrine was that of Sola Fide. E. G. Rupp, in his Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition, has made a very convincing attempt to prove that there was very little difference in regard to the doctrine of justification by faith alone between Luther and many of the early English Protestants. He says:

> Zwingli and Calvin, like the other Continental Reformers, differed hugely from Luther and Melanchthon about many things, differed not inconsiderably about matters derivative from Justification, but about the fundamental teaching enshrined in the watchword "Sola Fide" there was among them all a striking and substantial unity, a unanimity we may venture to assert to be shared by the English Reformers from William Tyndale to Richard Hooker.[12]

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[10]Brooke Foss Westcott, A General View of the History of the English Bible (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), p. 146.

[11]Demaus, op. cit., p. 41.

[12]Rupp, op. cit., p. 171.

And again he says:

> All we can fairly do is to indicate where the demonstration must lie, and repeat that there was striking and substantial agreement among the Continental and English Reformers about the doctrine summarized in the watchword "Sola Fide". That doctrine is best studied, not in snippets from this or that work, but in such tracts as Tyndale (Luther's) Wicked Mammon, and . . . .[13]

Notice Rupp's placing of Luther's name in parentheses when he refers to a writing of Tyndale which is dependent upon Luther.

We have already enumerated the charges made against Tyndale at his trial. The first of these was that he taught that faith alone justifies. In Tyndale's ensuing defence it seems that this doctrine formed the chief theme of discussion. Although the treatise written by Tyndale in his defence has not survived, the reply of his chief antagonist, Latomus, has been printed among his collected writings. From this writing and a knowledge of Tyndale's other writings it is not difficult to piece together Tyndale's doctrine of justification by faith alone. Concerning this Demaus says:

> Faith alone justifies before God (Fides sola justificat apud Deum). Such was the motto of Tyndale's treatise: and he treated this fundamental assertion as he had already done in his Parable of the Wicked Mammon, maintaining that it was the cardinal axiom of the New Testament, and applying it to the question of human merit with the most fearless and rigorous logic.
>
> "The key of the saving knowledge of Scripture," he asserts, "is this: God gives us all things freely through Christ without regard to our works; or in other words, faith in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, by the grace and works of Christ, and without any regard to any merit or goodness of our works, alone justifies us in the sight of God."
>
> This assertion he perpetually repeated in his treatise as the foundation of all his religious system; he defended it with clear

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[13] Ibid., p. 185.

> and cogent arguments; and he pushed it to its logical conclusions with a boldness from which many who hold the doctrine of justification by faith would, now-a-days, be inclined to shrink. He denied any distinction between works which preceded justification and those which followed it, as regarded their power to merit anything from God (vim et efficaciam merendi); for works which followed justification did not increase the inward goodness of a man, but only manifested it openly.[14]

Smith goes so far as to say, "Tyndale, it seems, was more consistent in his solifidianism than Martin Luther."[15] He then goes on to point out the tragedy that it was for a doctrine which hardly anybody in England now holds and in which few are interested that Tyndale was condemned to die.[16]

Furthermore, in Tyndale's controversy with More it is this same doctrine which formed the chief topic of discussion. Mrs. H. C. Conant points out the cause of More's vehemence against Tyndale by saying:

> The mainspring of his (More's) zeal, the motive which furnished its most powerful impulse, and dipt his pen in the gall and wormwood, is to be found in something more personal to himself, namely, in his own inward religious history. The distinguishing doctrine of the Reformation, justification by faith alone, was the object of his deepest aversion. With all his intelligence, Sir Thomas More could not rise above the belief, that the hair shirt which he wore next his skin, the frequent fastings, vigils, and flagellations with which he afflicted his body, were offerings acceptable to the God of love.[17]

In Tyndale's writings against More, in which he is independent of Luther, he upholds and defends the doctrine of "Sola Fide" with the same determination with which he propounds it in those writings where he is indebt-

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[14] Demaus, op. cit., p. 424.

[15] Smith, op. cit., p. 320.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Conant, op. cit., p. 186.

ed to Luther. There can be no doubt that Tyndale's acceptance of this doctrine was identical with Luther's understanding of it.

Tyndale's acceptance of "Sola Fide" is shown also by his complete rejection of human merit. Demaus makes this statement:

> As to human merit, Tyndale asserted that it was not only denied by Scripture, in express words, but that it was inconsistent with reason. "How could man merit anything from God?" he asked. "God needs not our works; they confer no benefit upon Him; they are all His gifts, and it is we alone who derive any advantage from them. What claim, therefore, can we have to be rewarded by God for them? The patient who drinks a bitter draught deserves nothing from the physician on that account; he has conferred no benefit upon the physician; it is the patient, in fact, that reaps all the good, how then can he establish any ground of merit with the physician? And if we perform some difficult and disagreeable duty which the Great Physician assigns to us, how can we thereby merit any reward from Him? He is not benefitted thereby; it is He that has enabled us to perform the duty, and the performance of it redounds not to His advantage, but to ours."[18]

Likewise on almost all other doctrines there is complete agreement between Tyndale and Luther. Smith says that "Tyndale has ceased to believe in the Church except as an invisible body whose members were only known to God, and he had ceased to believe in any Ministry except that of preaching, and realized that a preacher needed a congregation."[19] And Campbell says: "To More's assertion of the paramount authority of the Church, Tyndale replied by appealing to the Scripture, with an ultimate resort to individual judgment."[20] Also on the matters of Law and Gospel, the bondage of the will, and of other doctrines there is substantial unity between Tyndale and the traditional Lutheran position.

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[18] Demaus, op. cit., p. 425.

[19] Smith, op. cit., p. 298.

[20] Campbell, op. cit., pp. 15f.

It is needless to enumerate Tyndale's understanding of all these various teachings of the Scriptures. Rather it seems advisable only to consider those points any further in which Tyndale is said to have differed from Luther.

## Disagreement with Luther

It has been pointed out previously that Tyndale disagreed with Luther in his estimation of the worth of various books of the Bible. However this can hardly be considered a variance in doctrine, since it revolves around the personal value which each attached to these books, rather than a difference in explicit doctrines of Scripture.

The only other doctrine where difference between Tyndale and Luther is frequently asserted is the subject of the Lord's Supper. Even here, however, one cannot assert disagreement between them because, at least later in life, Tyndale avoided committing himself definitely on this question. In his letter to Frith Tyndale says,

> Of the Presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament, meddle as little as you can, that there appear no division among us. Barnes (a Lutheran, and always hot-tempered) will be hot against you. The Saxons be sore on the affirmative; whether constant or obstinate, I remit it to God. Philip Melanchthon is said to be with the French king (a mistaken rumour). There be in Antwerp that say they saw him come into Paris with a hundred and fifty horses; and that they spoke with him. If the Frenchmen receive the Word of God, he will plant the affirmative (i.e., the Presence of Christ's body, as held by the Lutherans) in them. George Joye would have put forth a treatise of the matter, but I have stopped him as yet: what he will do if he get money, I wot not. I believe he would make many reasons, little serving the purpose. My mind is that nothing be put forth, till we hear how you shall have sped. I would have the right use (of the Sacrament) preached, and the Presence to be an indifferent thing, till the matter might be reasoned in peace at leisure of both parties. If you be required, show the phrases of the Scripture (i.e., use simply the words of Scripture), and let them talk what they will. For to believe that God is everywhere,

> hurteth no man that worshippeth Him nowhere but within in the heart, in the spirit and verity; even so to believe that the body of Christ is everywhere, though it cannot be proved, hurteth no man that worshippeth Him nowhere save in the faith of the Gospel. You perceive my mind: howbeit, if God show you otherwise, it is free for you to do as He moveth you.[21]

The fact that Frith later accepted the view of Oecolampadius on this matter is not necessarily a reflection of Tyndale's position.

In his earlier works it seems as if Tyndale was in agreement with Luther on the question of the Sacrament. He constantly accused the Roman Church of corrupting the Sacrament, and says,

> Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense,---whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way.[22]

And Demaus speaking in regard to Tyndale's presence in Wittenberg in 1525 says that

> there is no ground whatever for believing that at this period Tyndale's views on the Sacrament differed from Luther's, or even that he had at all departed from the ordinary teachings of the Church on this point; indeed, Sir Thomas More repeatedly asserts--and no denial was ever offered of his assertion--that at first Tyndale did adopt the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament.[23]

If Demaus' conjecture that Tyndale attended the Marburg Colloquy is correct, his reluctance to commit himself on this matter is easily understandable. Tyndale would have seen the dissension caused by disagreement on this all-important doctrine. Tyndale was not one to stir up unnecessary controversy, especially if such controversy might interfere with

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[21]Demaus, op. cit., pp. 334f.

[22]This statement of Tyndale is quoted by William Dallman in his William Tyndale, The Translator of the English Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 37.

[23]Demaus, op. cit., pp. 101f.

his one purpose in life, the publication of an English Bible. On the other hand Tyndale was not one to remain non-committal on a point which he felt was clearly substantiated by Scripture. The obvious conclusion seems to be that Tyndale had not yet definitely made up his mind on this matter and therefore refused to take sides.

There is, then, essential doctrinal agreement between Tyndale and Luther. Only over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper must a question mark be placed, and even there it can not definitely be asserted that Tyndale disagreed with Luther.

## Was Tyndale a Lutheran?

Can we say that Tyndale was a Lutheran? Hoare answers this question negatively, saying,

> It is only just to Tyndale to add, that, in his own estimation, he was neither a Lutheran nor indeed a sectarian of any kind. In the "Protestation", printed in his new Testament of 1534, he vows that he never wrote "Either to stir up any false doctrine or opinion in the Church, or to be the author of any sect, or to draw disciples after me, or that I would be esteemed above the least child that is born, but only out of pity and compassion which I had, and yet have, on the darkness of my brethren, and to bring them to the knowledge of Christ."[24]

Eadie is of a similar opinion. Jacobs quotes him as making the following statement:

> It was a mistake of no common magnitude to associate the name and work of Tyndale with the name and work of Luther . . . . The great Reformer (Luther) had so stamped an image of himself upon the Teutonic movement, that similar tendencies in other lands, were

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[24] H. W. Hoare, The Evolution of the English Bible: An Historical Sketch of the Successive Versions from 1382 to 1885 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 131.

> vaguely named after him . . . . He (Tyndale) was no sectarian, was never allied to Luther as colleague or instrument, and nothing was farther from his thoughts than to found a sect and identify his name with it.[25]

Jacobs himself disagrees with Hoare and Eadie. He says that if we accept Eadies definition of a Lutheran, then neither Luther himself nor any of his co-laborers were Lutherans. To answer the question of whether Tyndale was a Lutheran, according to Jacobs we must simply determine whether or not Tyndale was of the same doctrine as Luther. He concludes that Tyndale was and can be called a Lutheran.[26]

Although in the very strictest sense perhaps one cannot say that Tyndale was a Lutheran, yet one is inclined to accept the judgment of Jacobs on this point. While it is true that Tyndale never expressly stated that his intention was to introduce Lutheranism in England, yet so many of his own writings betrayed the Lutheran influence that his very work and the distribution of his writings became a very definite part of the Lutheran movement. If we accept Jacobs standard, namely that of doctrinal agreement, then there can be little doubt that Tyndale can be called a Lutheran.

Although Tyndale, as far as we know, never closely allied himself to any of the prominent Lutheran reformers or to any Lutheran congregation, this may have been caused for the most part by factors of a more external nature. Two facts would lead us to conclude that Tyndale was and can be called a Lutheran in almost every sense of the word.

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[25] Henry Eyster Jacobs, The Lutheran Movement in England during the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI (Philadelphia: General Council Publishing House, 1916), p. 35.

[26] Ibid., pp. 35-38.

First, the almost doctrinal agreement between the two men, as shown particularly in the writings of Tyndale, must be taken as an evidence of Tyndale's Lutheranism. Secondly, the fact that Tyndale's work was accepted in England and came to that country as a part of the English Lutheran movement.

## CHAPTER VIII

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although some attempt has been made to draw conclusions at the ends of the several chapters, it is only proper that our findings be summarized in a more general way, and that an attempt be made, at least to some extent, to relate the various conclusions to one another. This final chapter shall serve that purpose.

Tyndale became interested in the Lutheran movement at an early age, shortly after his entrance at Cambridge in 1518, if not during his earlier residence at Oxford. It seems, however, that until Tyndale removed himself from Little Sodbury to London in 1523, he was more under the influence of those who had promoted humanism in England, especially John Colet and Erasmus. During his London residence Tyndale came into direct contact with men who were first-hand observers of the Reformation in Germany. It appears that through their instigation and the influence of those who were interested in a similar reformation for England Tyndale went to the Continent to perform the task of translating the Holy Scriptures into English.

While on the Continent Tyndale spent much of his time in an atmosphere which was decidedly Lutheran and it can be proved that to some extent he associated with those who had accepted and were promoters of the Lutheran Reformation. In all likelihood he spent almost a year in the city of Wittenberg and there at least met and had some contact with Luther himself. It must be remembered, however, that there seems to

have been no intimate association between the two men. Also the fact that a large part of Tyndale's twelve years on the Continent were spent in the city of Antwerp, where no great Lutheran influence would have been brought to bear on him, would seem to diminish the amount of Lutheran influence upon his life at this time.

All evidence indicates that Tyndale's resolution to translate the Bible was made prior to and independent of the appearance of Luther's German New Testament in 1522. In the matter of Tyndale's actual translation of the original languages, his own scholarship and learning are too well attested to assert that it was necessary for him to translate Luther's German into English. However, there can be no doubt that Tyndale borrowed not only the outward form of Luther's German New Testament, but also frequently uses a phrase or manner of expression from Luther which he felt preserved the meaning of the original text. In a sense then, it can be said that Tyndale's translation is a Lutheran Bible.

In the matter of other writings it is demonstrable beyond any contradiction that Tyndale used Luther to a very great extent. This holds true especially for his introductions to the various books of the Bible and also for the marginal notes found in his 1526 New Testament. Even in those few writings in which Tyndale is completely original, his Lutheran theological inclinations are readily apparent. Likewise in the domain of theological thought there is very close agreement between the two men. While agreement between the two does not mean that Tyndale was dependent upon Luther in the sense that he followed him blindly, yet there is such close agreement, save on the matter of the Lord's Supper,

that we feel it is perfectly legitimate to call Tyndale a Lutheran.

The Lutheran influences upon the life and work of William Tyndale were indeed great. Yet this in no way detracts from the importance of the work which he performed or from his own personal character or integrity. William Tyndale was an independent scholar who worked faithfully upon the task which he felt God had appointed him, the bringing of God's Word to the English people in their own tongue. His own personal sacrifices and the individuality which his work stamped upon all successive English versions of the Bible have earned him the title not only of "The Translator of the English Bible" but also that of a "faithful minister and constant martyr of Christ."

## APPENDIX

## A COMPARISON OF THE INTRODUCTIONS TO THE NEW TESTAMENTS OF LUTHER AND TYNDALE

### Luther: First Edition September, 1522

### Vorrhede

Es were wol recht vnd billich das dis buch on alle vorrhede vnnd fremdon namen auszgieng vnnd nur seyn selbs eygen namen vnd rede furete Aber die weyl durch manche wilde deuttung vnd vorrhede der Christen eynn da hyn vertriebe ist des man schier nit (nicht in eds. 2 & 3) mehr weys was Euangeli oder gesetz new oder alt testament heysse fodert die noddurfft eyn ant-

### Tyndale: Cologne Fragment 1525

### The Prologge

I haue here translated (brethern and susters moost dere and tenderly beloued in Christ) the newe Testament for youre spirituall edyfyinge consolacion and solas: Exhortynge instantly and besesoynge those that are better sene in the tonge then y and that have hyer gyfts of grace to interpret the sence of the scripture and meanynge of the spyrite then y to consydre and pondre my laboure and that with the spyrite of mekenes. And yf they perceyve in eny places that y have not attayned the very sence of the tonge or meanynge of the scripture or haue not geven the right englysshe worde that they put to there hands to amende it remembrynge that so is there dutie to doo. For we haue not receyved the gyfts of god for ourselues only or forto hyde them: but forto bestowe them vnto the honouringe of god and christ and edyfyinge of the congregacion which is the body of christ.

The causes that moved me to translate y thought better that other shulde ymagion then that y shulde rehearse them. More over y supposed yt superfinous for who ys so blynde to axe why lyght shulde be shewed to them that walke in derknes where they cannot but stomble and where to stomble ys the daunger of eternal damnacion other so despyghtfull that he wolde envye eny man (y speake nott

zeygen vn vorrhede zu stellen da mit der eynfelltige man aus seynem allten wahn auff die rechte ban gefuret vnd vnterrichtet werde wes er ynn disem buch, gewarten solle auff das er nicht gepott vnnd gesetze suche da er Euangeli vnd verheyssung Gottis suchen sollt.

his brother) so necessary a thinge or so bedlem madde to affyrme that good is the naturall cause of euell and derknes to proceade oute of lyght and that lying shulde be grounded in trougth and verytie and nott rather clene contrary that lyght destroyeth derekness and veritie reproveth all manner lyinge.

Darumb ist auffs erste zu wissen das abtzuthun ist der wahn das vier Euangelia vnd nur vier Euangelisten sind vn gantz zuverwerffen has etlich des newen testaments bucher teyllen ynn legales historiales Prophetales vnnd sapientales vermeynen damit (weysz nicht wie) das newe dem alten testament zuvergleychen Sondern festiglich zu halten das gleych wie das allte testament ist eyn buch darynnen Gottis gesetz vn gepot da neben die geschichte beyde dere die selben gehallten vnd nicht gehallten haben geschrieben sind. Also ist das newe testament eyn buch darynnen das Euangelion vnd Gottis verheyssung dancbe auch geschichte beyde dere die dran glewben vnd nit glewben geschrieben sind. Also das man gewissz sey gleych wie nur eyn buch des newen testaments vnd nur eyn glawb vnd nur eyn Gott der do verheysset.

Also hit has pleasyd god to put in my mynde and also to geue me grace to translate this forerehearsed newe testament into oure englysshe tonge howesoever we haue done it. I supposed yt very necessary to put you in remembrance of certayne poynts which are; that ye well vnderstonde what these words meane. The olde testamet. The newe testamet. the lawe. The gospell. Moses. Christ. Nature. Grace. Workinge and belevynge. Dedes and faythe Lest we astrybe to the one that which belongeth to the other and make of Christ Moses of the gospell the Lawe despise grace and robbe faythe: and fall fron meke lernynge into ydle despicious braulinge and scoldynge aboute words.

The old testamet is a boke where in is wrytten the lawe and comaundmets of god and the dedes of them which fulfill them and of them also which fulfill them nott.

The newe testamet is a boke where in are coteyned the promyses of god and the dedes of them which beleue them or beleue them nott.

Denn Euangelion is eyn kriechlisch wortt yn heyst auff deutsch gute botschafft gute meher gutte newzeytung gutt geschrey dauon man singet saget vn frolich ist gleych als do Dauid den grossen Goliath vberwand kam eyn gutt geschrey vnd trostlich neutzeyttung vnter das iudisch volck das yhrer grew-

Euagelio (that we cal the gospel) is a greke worde & signyfyth good mery glad and ioyfull tynings that maketh a mennes hert glad and maketh hym synge deunce and leepe for ioye. As when Davyd had kylled Galyath the geant cam glad tydings vnto the ieves that their fearfull and cruell enemy was slayne and they delyvvered

licher feynd erschlagen vnd sie erloset zu freud vnd frid gestellet weren dauon sie sungen vn sprungen vnnd frohlich weren. Also ist dis Euangelion Gottis vnnd new testament eyn gutte meher vn geschrey ynn alle wellt erschollen durch die Apostell von eynem rechten Dauid der mit der sund tod vnnd teuffel gestritten vnd vberwunden hab vnnd damit alle die szo ynn sunden gefangen mit den todt geplagt von teuffel vberweldigt gewesen on yhr verdienst erloset rechtfertig lebendig vnd selig gemacht hat vnd da mit zu frid gestellet vnd Gott wider heym bracht dauon sie singen danckan Gott loben vnd frolich sind ewiglich szo sie des anders fest glawben vnd ym glawben bestendig bleyben.

cute of all daunger: for gladnes were of they songe daunsed and wer ioyfull. In lyke manner is the evangelion of god (which we call gospell and the newe testamet) ioyfull tydings and as some saye: a good hearing publisshed by the apostles through oute all the worlde of Christ the right Davyd howe that he hathe fought with synne with dethe and the devill and over cume them. Whereby all me that were in Bodage to synne wouded with dethe ouercu of the devill are with oute there awne meritts or deservinge losed iustufyed restored to lyfe and saved brought to libertie and reconciled vnto the favour of god and sett at one with hym agayne: which tydings as many as believe laude prayse and thancke god are glad synge and daunce for ioye.

Solch geschrey vnd trostliche mehre odder Euangelisch vnd Gotlich newzeyttung heyst auch eyn new testament darumb dz gleych wie eyn testament ist wenn eyn sterbender man seyn gutt bescheydet nach seynem todt den benandten erben aus zu teylen. Also hatt auch Christus fur seynem sterben befohlen vnd bescheyden solche Euangelion nach seynem todt aus zuruffen ynn alle wellt vnd damit allen die do glewbe zu eygen geben alles seyn gutt das ist seyn leben da mit er den todt verschlungen seyn gerechtigkeyt da mit er die sund vertilget vnd seyn seligkeyt damit er die ewige verdamnis vberwunden hat. Nu kan yhe der arme mensch ynn sunden todt vn zur helle verstrickt nichts trostlichers horen dann solch thewre lieblich botschafft vo Christo vn mus seyn hertz von grund lachen vnd frolich druber werden wo ers glewbt was war sey.

This evangelion or gospell that is to say suche ioyfull tydings is called the newe testament. Because that as a man when he shall dye apoynteth his goodds to be dealte and distributed after hys dethe amonge them which he nameth to be hys heyres. Even so Christ before his dethe commaunded and appoynted that suche evangelion gospell or tydings shulde be declared through oute all the worlde and there with to geue vnto all that believe all his goodds that is to saye his lyfe where with he swalowed and devoured vp dethe: his righteousnes where with he banyshed synne: his salvacion where with he overcam eternal damnacion. Nowe can the wretched man (that is wrapped in synne and is in daunger to dethe and hell) heare no moare ioyus a thynge then suche glad and comfortable tydings of Christ. So that he cannot but be glad and laugh from the lowe bottom of his hert if he believe that the tydyngs are trewe.

Nu hat Gott solchen glawben zu
stercken dises seyn Euangelion vnd
testament viel fellltig ym allten
testament durch die propheten ver-
sprochn (verheyssen, in third edi-
tion) wie Paulus sagt Ro. 1. Ich
byn ausgesondert zu predigen das
Euangelion Gottis wilchs er zuuor
verheyssen hat durch seyne pro-
pheten ynn der heyligen schrifft
von seynem son der yhm geporn ist
von dem samst atoe. Vnnd das wyr
der etlich antzihen hat ers am
ersten versprochen da er sagt zu
der schlangen Gen. 3. Ich will
feyndschafft lege zwischen dyr vn
eynem weyb zwisschen deynem samen
vnd yhrem samen der selb soll dyr
deyn hawbt zutretten vn du wirst
yhm seyn solen zutretten Christus
ist der same dises weybs der dem
teuffel seyn heubt das ist sund tod
helle vn alle seyne krafft zurtret-
ten hatt. Denn on disen Samen kan
keyn mensch der sund dem todt der
hellen entrynnen.

To strength such feyths with all god
promysed this his evagelion in the
olde testament by the prophetts (as
paul sayth in the fyrst chapter vnto
the romans). Howe that he was chosen
oute to preache godds evangelion which
he before had promysed by the prophetts
in the holy scriptures that treate
of his sonne wchich was borne of the
seed of davyd.. In the thyrd chapter
of genneais god saith to the serpent:
y wyll put hatred bitwene the and the
woman bitwene thy seede and her seede
that silfe seede shall treade thy head
vnder fote. Christ is this womans
seede he it is that hath troden vnder
fote the devylls head that is to saye
synne dethe hell and all his power.
For with oute this seede can no man
avoyde synne dethe hell and euer-
lastynge dannacion.

This comparison of the introductions to the New Testaments of Tyndale and Luther was taken from Gruber's The First English New Testament and Luther. A comparison of the remainder of the introductions reveals the same type of similarity between the two.

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