

The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

STATION 15: TYNDALE - Part 3



Detail from Station 15

Tyndale's Martyrdom & Legacy

After years spent evading agents of the established Church (who attempted to entrap him and return him to England), Tyndale was betrayed in May 1535, and imprisoned in the dungeon of the castle at Vilvorde, Belgium. There is a plaintive letter from him, written in Latin:

"I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell... My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out... And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening... But

most of all I beg and beseech your clemency... to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study."

In October 1536, Tyndale was martyred at Vilvorde, tied to a stake, strangled, and then burned to ashes (like many of his books). His personal struggles stemmed from his central mission, to free Christianity from the authority of the corrupt established church by arming the common people with the texts of scripture in their own language. So armed, they could fight the wickedness of the establishment, Bible in hand. Tyndale was a revolutionary, a true reformer, unlike More who wore the mantle of reform while serving his own agenda. His efforts began the process that would lead to an accepted, accurate English Bible within a century of his death. His dying words echo down through the centuries:

"Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Tyndale's greatness also lies in his use of the newly discovered and published Greek and Hebrew texts, the fruits of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, to clear up the errors of readings (and thus doctrine) enshrined in the Vulgate. With Luther, he accepted Paul's Christianity based on Faith rather than Works, which was the antithesis of conventional doctrine and dealt a death blow to the selling of indulgences and other obnoxious practices.

Contrary to what history teaches about Chaucer being the father of the English Language, this mantle rightly belongs to Tyndale, whose work was read by ten thousand times as many people as Chaucer. Tyndale's contributions, enshrined in his and subsequent English Bibles, affected the speech of even those who condemned him. Much of Tyndale's rough and vigorous English survives in our modern Bibles; 90% of the Authorized New Testament, the best therein, is his. Such readings as 'the burden and heat of the day', 'tender mercy', 'eat, drink and be merry', 'the powers that be', 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow', and 'A prophet has no honor in his own country' are familiar to us all. He invented words when needed: 'Passover' and 'scapegoat' are but two examples. He introduced near-literal readings from the Hebrew: 'to die the death', 'flowing with milk and honey', 'a stranger in a strange land', 'apple of his eye.'

Tyndale's efforts were enshrined, albeit anonymously, in Matthew's Bible. His New Testament and parts of his Old Testament were practically unchanged by Coverdale in both the Coverdale Bible and the "Great" Bible. Even the Bishop's Bible, the Genevas, and the King James Version include major portions of his work, albeit altered to reflect the concomitant evolution of the English language. More than any other man who attempted to bring the English Bible to the people, Tyndale, by using freshly rediscovered Greek and Hebrew texts, gathered anew the

scattered threads of the Truth and made possible the fundamental rediscovery of the message of Faith and Grace contained in God's Word.

*Works relating to
Tyndale shown at
this Station include:*



"The Works of Tyndale, Frith & Barnes"

*Click on the image
above to see an
enlarged view*

Works of Tyndale, Frith & Barnes

1573 - Printed by John Day of London, in a "Black Letter" folio edition. Collected here are all of Tyndale's major writings (except his translations). An extremely scarce resource, giving these three great martyr's own words.

Tyndale's New Testament - 1525 Original Translation

Made in **1836**, this book presents the first published version of Tyndale's Testament, together with George Offor's "memoir" of Tyndale and a brief comparison of readings with the 1534 revised edition. Published in London by S. Bagster. (Herbert #1816)

Two examples, varying slightly in collation, are shown at this Station.

Tyndale's New Testament of 1534

1939 - Printed by the University Press, Cambridge, in a limited edition of 500 copies. Includes variants from the edition of 1525. (Herbert #2273)



FOX'S "MARTYRS" - The Martyrdom of Tyndale

Woodcut from the three-volume 7th edition. Tyndale's long imprisonment in the dungeon of the castle at Vilvorde, Belgium ended in October 1536, when he was tied to a stake, strangled, and then burned to ashes (like many of his printed Bibles).

STATION LOCATION MAP

Below is a floor plan map of the Cathedral in 3 sections, one for each level. The first section is the Lower Level, the second is the Foyer Level, and the third is the Mezzanine Level. This station is located in the "Smoking Room" on the Lower Level at the red #15.



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