

SESSION TWO

WILLIAM TYNDALE

AND

— THE ENGLISH REFORMATION —

The only true reformation is that which emanates from the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures, by bearing witness to the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, create in man by the Holy Ghost a faith which justifies him.¹

J.H. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ

PRIVILEGED SON (1494-1506)

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT (1506-1515)

- Tyndale expressed his great disappointment with being shielded from the Bible and theology:

In the universities, they have ordained that no man shall look on the Scripture until he be noselled [nursed] in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scripture. . . . [T]he Scripture is locked up with . . . false expositions, and with false principles of natural philosophy.²

REFORMED BELIEVER (1519-1520)

PRIVATE TUTOR (1521-1524)

¹ J.H. Merle d'Aubigné, *The Reformation in England, Volume One* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1853, 1994), 167.

² William Tyndale, "The Practice of Prelates," *The Works of William Tyndale, Vol. 2* (1849 and 1850, repr.; Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 2010), 291.

- Local priests came to dine at the Walsh manor, and Tyndale witnessed firsthand the appalling biblical ignorance of the Roman church. During one meal, he found himself in a heated debate with a Catholic clergyman. The priest asserted:

We had better be without God's law than the pope's.³

- Tyndale boldly responded:

I defy the pope and all his laws. If God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that drives the plough to know more of the Scripture than he does.⁴

FOCUSED MAN (1523)

DETERMINED EXILE (1524)

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones notes that Tyndale's departure from England to the European Continent marked the origin of Puritanism:

Puritanism, I am prepared to assert...really first began to manifest itself in William Tyndale, and as far back as 1524.... Puritanism...is a type of mind. It is an attitude, it is a spirit, and it is clear that two of the great characteristics of Puritanism began to show themselves in Tyndale. He had a burning desire that the common people should be able to read the Scriptures. But there were great obstacles in his way; and it is the way in which he met and overcame the obstacles that show that Tyndale was a Puritan. He issued a translation of the Bible without the endorsement and sanction of the bishops. That was the first shot fired by Puritanism.... Another action on his part which was again most characteristic of the Puritans was that he left this country without the royal assent...in his anxiety to translate and print the Scriptures. Tyndale left the country without the king's assent, and went to Germany, and there, helped by Luther and others, he completed his great work. Those two actions were typical of what continued to be the Puritan attitude towards authority.⁵

NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATOR (1525)

³ Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 77.

⁴ William Tyndale, "Biographical Notice of William Tyndale," *The Works of William Tyndale, Vol. 1* (1848, repr.; Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 2010), xix.

⁵ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (1987, repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002), 240-241.

BIBLE PUBLISHER

ILLEGAL SMUGGLER (1526)

THEOLOGICAL WRITER (1528)

- Of *sola fide*, or justification by faith, Tyndale writes:

Christ is thine, and all His deeds are thy deeds. Christ is in thee, and thou in Him, knit together inseparably. Neither canst thou be damned, except Christ be damned with thee: neither can Christ be saved, except thou be saved with Him.⁴²

HUNTED FUGITIVE (1528)

HEBREW TRANSLATOR (1529)

CONDEMNED HERETIC (1529)

POLEMIC AUTHOR (1530)

PURSUED OUTLAW (1531)

TIRELESS WORKER (1534-1535)

- Tyndale also coined new English words, such as *Jehovah*, *Passover*, *atonement*, and *scapegoat*. Further, he originated such now-familiar phrases as

“lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,” “knock and it shall be opened unto you,” “twinkling of an eye,” “a moment in time,” “seek and you shall find,” “judge not that you not be judged,” “let there be light,” “the powers that be,” “my brother’s keeper,” “the salt of the earth,” “a law unto themselves,” “filthy lucre,” “it came to pass,” “gave up the

ghost,” “the signs of the times,” “the spirit is willing,” “live and move and have our being,” and “fight the good fight.”⁶

CAPTURED CRIMINAL (1535)

CONFINED PRISONER (1535-1536)

- During the harsh winter of 1535, Tyndale wrote of his difficult circumstances in a final letter:

I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh [discharge], which is much increase in this cell. . . . My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out.⁷

- Even active, always productive, Tyndale requested:

a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary . . . permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study.⁸

STRANGLED MARTYR (1536)

⁶ Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 3.

⁷ William Tyndale, “Introduction,” *Tyndale’s New Testament* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), ix.

⁸ William Tyndale, “Introduction,” *Tyndale’s New Testament* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), ix.