

Life of Tyndale and the Reformation

by Ian Murray

Ian Murray's sermon explores the life and impact of William Tyndale, emphasizing his role in the Reformation and the importance of making the Bible accessible to the English-speaking world.

Duration: 1:27:19

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:23, Matthew 6:33, John 10:16, 1 Timothy 2:2, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Church History", "Reformation Theology"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the life and work of William Tyndale, a key figure in the Reformation. Tyndale was a scholar who translated the New Testament into English in 1526, and later proceeded to translate other books of the Bible. He also wrote treatises on justification by faith alone and the relationship between Christians and the state and the church. Tyndale believed in the authority of the Word of Christ over all spiritual powers and warned that receiving the gospel could lead to martyrdom. He spent eleven years traveling and spreading the message of the gospel before being hunted and pursued. The speaker encourages the audience to read Dolbini's book 'Reformation in England' for a more detailed account of Tyndale's life.

Transcript

We have just read from the words of the authorised version of the early 17th century and we are often quite unconscious when we hear the authorised version that we are by and large hearing the words that William Tyndale first wrote and had printed in the English language. It is said that 80 and perhaps even 90 percent of the authorised version was the work of Tyndale and Tyndale wrote and completed his work on the New Testament 80 years, 80 years before the authorised version. William Tyndale died at the stake in the year 1536.

The last commemoration of his death therefore was in the year 1936 and I begin by giving you a few brief words that were written at that time. The Times newspaper in October commemorating Tyndale's death said that Tyndale the controversialist is a figure of pathos whose acrimonious treatises are already forgotten. But then it paid this tribute that Tyndale the translator of the Bible lived and Bishop Hensley Henson at the same time said that Tyndale's books were little read and those books which multitudes of readers once ran desperate risks to obtain fail to stir the faintest flicker of interest in our minds.

And one writer went even further than that and said that William Tyndale died for a doctrine which hardly anybody in England now holds. Well I don't want to stay on those words but it was quite clear that in 1936

when people wrote about Tyndale they always said more or less the same thing. They said that he did indeed do an extraordinary work in the translation of the scripture but that as a man as a Christian as a reformer he is one whose memory has now languished and no doubt will no longer raise any interest.

Let me give you one more quotation from the Times. On his work as a translator the Times said that to have endowed hundreds of millions with such a book through centuries past and centuries to come is a very wonderful achievement and to William Tyndale more than to any other man the chief glory of the achievement belongs. Well that was a high and just tribute and yet it was inadequate because Tyndale's work as a translator of the Bible was united with his whole conviction of the work of Christ in history in the revival of nations in the reformation of churches and you simply cannot make a division between Tyndale as a translator and Tyndale as a reformer of the church of Christ.

These two things are bound up together. Now as we speak then of Tyndale I shall first try to give you and this will take no doubt much of our time some account of his life. The first definite date that we know about Tyndale was that he entered Magdalen College in Oxford in the year 1510.

Before he was at Magdalen College he was at a school a kind of preparatory school to the college. We know that to have entered Magdalen in 1510 he must have been at least 12 years old and possibly 15 or 16 years of age. That puts his birth somewhere around the year 1495.

The place of his birth is in that beautiful Vale of Berkeley at the edge of the Cotswolds where the Cotswolds come west and fall down into the valley of the Seven. There is a hill spur called Stinchcombe Hill. It's approximately perhaps halfway between Briscoe and Gloucester.

And beneath Stinchcombe Hill there are several scattered villages. And in one of these villages for certain William Tyndale was born. There is today a very old house just beneath Stinchcombe Hill and it is very likely indeed it is certain that that house belonged to the Tyndale family.

But whether it was there that William was born or in another home of the family there is no certainty. He went up then to Oxford when he was still a child. And John Fox the great Reformation historian who wrote his Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs it was printed in 1563.

He wrote in that great history that Tyndale came from the borders of Wales and he tells us that while he was still a child in Oxford he read to others from the scriptures. He said he was singularly addicted to the holy scriptures in so much that he being in Morgan Hall that was the school for parity to the college. He read some parcel of divinity to his fellow students instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the scriptures.

And we have therefore the remarkable fact that before the conversion of Martin Luther before the great reformation had even begun on the continent of Europe there was a child in the university city of Oxford who was as Fox says singularly addicted to the holy scriptures. Now at one time it was thought that Tyndale's conversion took place as a result of the Greek New Testament of Erasmus. Erasmus the continental Dutch scholar produced his Greek New Testament in 1516 which was a very vital date.

But the evidence that we now have shows that William Tyndale was converted before that day not by the Greek New Testament but by the Latin Vulgate. He did not of course have an English Bible. Since the year 1428 any circulation of the English Bible had been forbidden and no one could translate or handle the Bible in the native tongue without Episcopal permission.

There were no English Bibles in Oxford but Tyndale through the Latin Vulgate version of the scripture was evidently early brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. He proceeded with his training in arts and he graduated as a master of arts in the year 1515. Now at that point he should have proceeded to become a bachelor of divinity but he did not do so.

Instead he went to the University of Cambridge. The reason why he did that is not clear. I think there are probably two reasons.

I think he was utterly wearied with the dead scholasticism which surrounded him in Oxford. In one of his books he says that if all the theological writings that were in existence in England were put into the largest warehouse in London you probably wouldn't even get them in. But he said of all those books you could not find one that was used in the university which would show a man the way of salvation.

I think he was wearied of all the scholasticism, the dead treadmill he talks about of scholasticism. And secondly there was in Cambridge a revival in the study of the Greek language and Tyndale went to Cambridge from Oxford to study Greek. Erasmus himself had taught in Cambridge and Tyndale stayed in Cambridge until the year 1521 by which time he was certainly one of the foremost Greek scholars then in this country.

And in 1521 or thereabouts he returned to his native home in Gloucestershire. Now I do not know how long or he had been away or how many times he had been home. People did not travel so readily in those days as they do now.

But it is quite clear that when he went back to Gloucestershire in 1521 his impression of his native county would have been very different to what it was in the days of his childhood because he now knew and understood the word of God and he read the situation in that light. Now Gloucestershire was one of the most religious counties in England. Religious in the sense of being traditionally a bastion of the Roman religion.

If Tyndale climbed, as I am sure he often did, Stinchcombe Hill, he could have seen in the surrounding countryside scores, perhaps a hundred parish churches. Fifteen miles to the north he would have seen the great Cathedral of Gloucester. And then from Stinchcombe Hill you could see into seven counties of England.

And Tyndale knew as he surveyed that scene that he was looking on a country where there was scarcely a handful of those who understood the way of salvation. He tells us how he read the 28th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy where God said that in his judgment he would make the heavens as brass and the earth under them as iron. And that's how Tyndale read his own situation.

He said a Christian man's heart might well bleed for sorrow at the reading of it. But the proverb was as sure as God's in Gloucester. But God was not in Gloucester.

Gloucestershire had six great abbeys with their abbots including the Abbey of Hales where the Christ was displayed in a bottle. It was a centre of pilgrimages and relics and so on. And this was characteristic of the whole state of the country.

John Hooper, the martyr who died in the reign of Queen Mary, he wrote in the year 1547, speaking of the time before Tyndale's work, He that had sought in all the churches in England before 16 years ago should not have found one Bible but in every church such abomination and idolatry as the like was not seen since

the time of Josiah. Everywhere idols and all abomination. You have no doubt read in books like J.C. Ryle's Five English Reformers, the description of the spiritual corruption.

How at Canterbury for example there was an account kept of the money paid at the various shrines to which people had made their pilgrimages. And at one shrine in the year the annual amount of gifts at the shrine of Jesus Christ amounted to three pounds two and sixpence. And how at the shrine of the Virgin Mary there were gifts of sixty three pounds five and sixpence.

And then at the great shrine of Sir Thomas of Bedford there was an annual account in the same year of eight hundred and thirty two pounds and twelve shillings. And these kind of little details give you an impression of the complete inversion of all truth. These abbeys as the Abbey of Hales in Gloucestershire they all had their relics.

Some had pieces of the cross. One had part of the hand of St. James. The spear that pierced the side of Christ.

These and countless other things were supposedly to be found all over England. And what was the situation in Wales? Well if anything it was worse. Tyndale as he stood on Stinchcombe Hill he looked across the waters of the river Severn.

The river into which the ashes of Whitcliffe had been thrown into one of the upper tributaries. John Whitcliffe was martyred early in the 15th century. His ashes were thrown into the tributaries of the Severn.

On the other side of the Severn Tyndale could see the mountains of Wales. And it was at that time a common joke that the Welsh were wholly ignorant. Sir Thomas Moore the scholar of the period laughed at the ignorance of the Welsh.

And Tyndale replied at a later date he says I wonder that Mr. Moore can laugh at it. But not rather weep for compassion to see the souls for which Christ shed his blood to perish. Now Tyndale had been ordained some years earlier we're not quite sure of the date.

Probably 1514. But by the time he came back to Gloucestershire he had determined that he could not in conscience undertake the work of a parish priest. So he became a tutor in the home of Sir John Walsh.

Sir John Walsh owned the manor house at Little Sodbury. Little Sodbury is about 15 miles south of Stinchcombe. And Sir John Walsh had a six-year-old son and Tyndale came back from Cambridge to tutor the six-year-old son.

And I hope that someday you can all go and stand in the manor house at Little Sodbury because it stands today very much as it was in Tyndale's day. There is the old great hall with its long table where Sir John Walsh used to entertain his guests. There is a gargoyle up on the wall which was really a spyhole.

There's a corridor behind and as you walk down you could look through this gargoyle and see everything that was going on. And then at the end of that corridor you may find the bedroom of William Tyndale. The room where he began his work and where he spent so much time in meditation and prayer.

And when some of us visited that bedroom a couple of years ago we were thrilled to find something on the windowsill of Tyndale's bedroom. It was a copy of Daubini's Reformation in England by Daubini. And it seems to me an extraordinary thing that here in the room where that Reformation began in England there

should be a copy of this great book by Daubini.

Of course it got there because someone had sent the owner, the present owner, a copy of Daubini's book and he had placed it in Tyndale's room. Well Tyndale went to Little Sudbury Manor House. Sir John Walsh was a very hospitable man and it had been the practice for the local clergy and the abbots and so on to come in often for their dinner in the evening at Little Sudbury Manor.

And when they did that they came into encounter with William Tyndale. You may have read the story of how Tyndale quietly at first but then more decidedly, John Fox says, he confronted these men with open and manifest scripture. By which of course he meant the Latin Bible.

And after several of these experiences Fox says, these great benefice doctors waxed weary and bear a secret grudge in their hearts against Master Tyndale. There's the famous remark that Lady Walsh made one morning. She had been listening to the debate at the dinner table the evening before and she had come to the conclusion that this was simply a question of one learned view against another.

And as William Tyndale was much younger than these other men it was far more likely that the older men would be right. And she said to Tyndale, she said, were it reason that we should believe you before them so great learned and beneficent men? And we don't know what Tyndale replied but we do know that he wrote this on one occasion and I'm sure that it would be in this way that he replied that morning. It would be to say that the gospel in which he believed did not depend upon mental abilities.

That it wasn't a case of one scholarship against another. This is what he wrote, well I know that I never deserved it, it is the knowledge of the gospel. Nor prepared myself unto it but ran another way clean country in my blindness and sought not that way but he sought me and found me and he showed it me and therewith he drew me to himself and I bow the knees of my heart unto God night and day that he will show it unto all other men.

And with that conviction Tyndale at this period was giving himself to prayer and to preparation for his life's work. He never wrote his spiritual experience but from time to time he writes sentences which give us an idea of what went on in his innermost being. For example he says in one place, whom God chooses to reign everlastingly with Christ, him he seals with his mighty spirit and pours strength into his heart to suffer afflictions also with Christ for bearing witness unto the truth.

He poureth strength into his heart to suffer afflictions with Christ for bearing witness for the truth. And very soon Tyndale began to find his experience of suffering affliction with Christ. It was first of all the warning that one of the old clergymen in the district gave to him.

I'm sure you've read the story. This old man came to Tyndale and he said to him, do you not know that the Pope is the very antichrist of which scripture speaks? And then he says, but beware what you say for if it is known that you are of that opinion it will cost you your life. Now Tyndale knew a little already no doubt of the persecution that to some extent was already being carried on.

In the year that he left Cambridge, if he left Cambridge in 1521, in that same year Martin Luther's books had been publicly burnt in Cambridge. And worse than that two years earlier in 1519, seven Christians had been burnt to death at Coventry because they were so-called Lollards. They possessed part of the Bible handwritten of course in their own language.

That was in 1519. And Tyndale within a short space of time was summoned before the Archdeacon of Gloucestershire, a man by the name of John Bell at Chipping Sodbury. He was summoned to appear before his ecclesiastical court.

And we are told evidently by a friend of Tyndale's who had the report from him, that as Tyndale walked that day to Chipping Sodbury, in going thitherwards he prayed in his mind heartily to God to strengthen him to stand fast in the truth of his word. When the meeting took place the Chancellor, the Archdeacon rated him like a dog. You bear yourself he said boldly among the gentlemen in this county.

Obviously angered at the way Sir John Walsh was favouring Tyndale. You bear yourself boldly but you shall be otherwise talked with. And he went on to threaten his removal to some other place.

And although this was only a first warning, Tyndale came to the conviction that he as one voice, as one solitary figure in Gloucestershire was surrounded by such tremendous forces of prejudice and ignorance and evil. Better to be without God's laws than without the Pope's he was told one day. Just as those walls of Sodbury Manor were about eight foot thick, the prejudice of the ignorance of the people was even thicker.

On one occasion Tyndale says that error was like a great ivy tree with its roots planted in the middle of England and spreading under every little house and village all over the country. Like a great, he says, a great ivy tree. And he came to the conclusion, the momentous conclusion that as he had been converted by the word of God alone as it seems, that if that word could be brought to the hands of the people even though they had no preachers to preach it to them, that word could be the means of subduing a nation to the gospel of Christ.

I perceived by experience, he says, how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth unless the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue. In order that they might see the process and the order and the meaning of the text. For otherwise whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again resting the scriptures onto their own purpose and deluding the people by distorting upon it with allegories and expounding it in many senses before the unlearned people when it has in truth but one simple and literal sense.

Which thing, he says, moved me to translate the New Testament? Well, one can see Tyndale's experience developing and evidently in this earlier part of his life he felt that probably the greatest problem was the sheer ignorance of the people. He later came to the conclusion that the problem was deeper. It was a problem of evil and of superhuman darkness.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood. It was not merely the absence of light but it was the positive power of darkness. But that was something that grew in his consciousness as the years went by.

His first step then was to go to the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, who had a reputation for favouring the Renaissance learning and was himself a scholar. And Tyndale translated a portion of the Greek writer Isocrates and with this translation of Isocrates he went to Tunstall in order to plead the benefit of translating the New Testament. And he evidently thought that Tunstall as a reasonable and scholarly man would approve of this proposal.

But Cuthbert Tunstall understood something of what might be involved. He was very cool and reserved and evasive and he apologised to Tyndale that he had no room in his Bishop's Palace to give him any

hospitality or to give him any support for his proposal. And in so many words he told him that he was not to proceed with it.

Now as I mentioned earlier on, the authority to translate Scripture was vested entirely in the Bishops. That's why Tyndale went to Tunstall. And when he received this reception he was led to that great step which seems to us perhaps a straightforward step.

But it was the turning point in the history of England in the 16th century. In 1524 William Tyndale voluntarily became an exile. In order that in hiding, hunted, pursued, he might bring to the English people the Scriptures in their own tongue.

There is a fine portrait of Tyndale in Oxford and underneath that portrait there is a verse written by an anonymous hand which goes something like this. That light or all my darkness roam might arise freely an exile I became freely a sacrifice. It's a translation from a very old verse and I cannot give it to you exactly but this is the heart of it.

Freely an exile I became freely a sacrifice. He was given 10 pounds by Humphrey Monmouth who was a Christian merchant and with that 10 pounds he crossed the English Channel never to return and began his journeyings in Europe. I say journeyings because once it was known that Tyndale was abroad and once it was known what he was doing he was hunted and pursued through the 11 years that he was free.

11 years of life were given to him to complete the work that God intended him to do and that is a very thrilling and marvellous story. You can read it at much greater length in Dalbini's Reformation in England. I hope many of you have already read this but if you haven't it is a truly wonderful and readable book.

This is volume one there is a second volume and that takes you right through Tyndale's period on the continent and earlier. Thomas Moore who was Tyndale's great enemy and opponent he wrote on one occasion that Tyndale he is an exile he said both nowhere and everywhere because Tyndale's books were filling the country coming into London going to Scotland to Edinburgh to St Andrews he is an exile nowhere nobody could put their hand on him and yet his voice Moore exclaimed was being heard everywhere and John Fox wrote it cannot be spoken what a door of light this man's writings opened to the eyes of the whole English nation.

Now when Tyndale first went to the continent he went to Wittenberg and no doubt he met Martin Luther and it is quite likely that he spent several months in the university at Wittenberg but then in 1525 we find him at Cologne and at Cologne he completed the New Testament into the English tongue and he handed it over to the printer Peter Crensaw with an order for 6,000 copies later on the Catholics heard the quantity that he had ordered and were staggered at the man's audacity 6,000 copies it was a great quantity in actual fact I think less was to be printed but that was the original order as it was in fact none were printed complete because the printer had completed Matthew's gospel and was just starting mark when one of the printers of course not being a Christian was out at the pub

drinking that night and he began to tell some of the people the odd book they were printing in the English tongue uh something on the gospels and mentioned Matthew and Mark and of course word traveled fast and the next day the authorities were at the printers and only gave Tyndale time for he evidently had news of what had happened to board a boat on the Rhine he took from the printers what was completed just these handfuls of Matthew in the beginning of Mark and fled up the Rhine to Berns and that was the end of the first venture to print the New Testament those fragments the Cologne fragment was the first Bible ever

printed in the English tongue the first parcel of the Bible well at Berns they had to start again because the printing presses were different sizes it wasn't a question of

just continuing but the New Testament was completed at Berns and in the year 1526 began to appear in England in London Gloucestershire copies furtively and secretly handed from person to person often read in the dead of night so on and I'll read you a few words from the prefaces to these New Testaments it was the first time that an Englishman had ever used print as a way of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ that's extraordinary thing first time the printing press was ever used for this purpose and Tyndale said in his preface that it was not he that was doing this work but he said it is God himself who is sending unto our Englishman the scripture in their own tongue and he is but the translator of that word for he says we have not not received the gifts of God for ourselves only or

for men to hide them but to bestow them unto the honoring of God and Christ and we have received these gifts he says for the edifying of the congregation which is the body of Christ and then he goes on to say what the gospel is the New Testament is a book wherein are contained the promises of God and the deeds of those that believe them or believe them not that which we call gospel is a Greek word and means good merry glad joyful tidings that makes a man's heart glad and maketh him sing dance and leap for joy this gospel is called the New Testament because that as a man when he shall die appoints his goods to be dealt and shared after his death among those whom he names as his heirs even so Christ before his death commanded and appointed that such gospel or tidings should be declared

throughout all the world and therewith to give unto all that believe all his goods that is to say his life wherewith he swallowed and devoured death his righteousness wherewith he banished sin his salvation wherewith he overcame eternal damnation now the cinder can the wretched man that is in sin and in danger to death and hell hear a more joyous thing than such glad and comfortable tidings of Christ so that he cannot but be glad and laugh from the low bottom of his heart if he believes that these tidings are true and so he goes on beautifully to write of what the gospel is now i said at the beginning that 80 perhaps 90 percent of the authorized version is tindale and we forget how many words tindale actually coined you have heard bible translators and missionaries today speaking of the

difficulty of finding new words in languages where the bible has not yet been printed that was so with tindale in the 16th century and the words that he coined or some of them let me give you a few the word pass over the pass over the scapegoat the mercy seat these were all words that tindale coined for the very first time and then words to do with the attributes of god which did not exist in our time the long suffering of god that's tindale's word the tender mercies of god that's another of his words and you know it's said that even when the revised version was completed in the last century that 75 percent of the words of the revised version were still tindale's words now our time is running fast on he completed the new testament then in 1526 and then he then he proceeded to other books

he wrote the parable of the wicked mammon which is really a little treatise on justification by faith alone he printed an epilogue on the epistle to the romans or i should say a prologue to the epistle to the romans then he proceeded to the obedience of the christian man the book which speaks of the relationship between the christian and the state and then the relation between the christian and the professing church and at the latter point tindale said that it was their duty while obeying the secular powers to disobey all spiritual powers unless those powers themselves bowed to the word of christ and he warned those who were receiving the gospel that their receiving of this message would lead many of them to the fires of martyrdom nevertheless he says be bold in the lord and comfort your

soul christ is with us unto the world's end let his little flock be bold therefore for if god be on our side what matter is it who be against us be they bishops cardinals popes or whatsoever names they will we are called not to dispute as the pope's disciples do but to die with christ that we may live with him we are called to suffer with christ that we may reign with him that was 1528 then you have the very exciting years that followed let me just give you a little sketch perhaps of one year in 1529 tindale was in antwerp and the english spies were searching antwerp they had arrested more than one printer and the thing the place was becoming very hot so tindale took ship to hamburg that is up the coast of holland of course and into germany but on that voyage the ship was wrecked and the

most disastrous thing for tindale was all the work that he had done on the pentateuch beginning he was beginning the old testament from the hebrew it was all lost in the wreck and when he got to hamburg he had to start again from the beginning when he got to hamburg he stayed in the home of a christian woman he tells us that the plague was raging in the city so that for several months he was unable apparently even to venture out of doors so you see this exile in a strange city with the tremendous disappointment of losing all his manuscripts beginning again on the pentateuch and in 1530 the pentateuch was ready and it's one of the most beautiful parts of tindale's work and with his translation he always added marginal notes as thou readest he says in book of genesis think that every

syllable pertains to yourself and suck the piss out of scripture and i can't give you more of his notes but they are splendid notes well who were tindale's friends he had a little group of friends who were responsible some of them for carrying the bibles and new testaments across the channel several of them were fellow cambridge students and of this little group of friends only one survived to die a natural death of the others everyone died as a martyr the one who survived was miles coveredale the others your names their names you perhaps have scarcely heard of john lambert was one he lived in antwerp across the channel carrying these books until he was captured and burnt to death it was lambert who said at the stake none but christ none but christ richard byfield was another man who

carried these new testaments thomas bilney little bilney he was called was also a friend of tindale's and he was martyred in 1531 perhaps tindale's greatest loss was the death of john frith one day maybe you will go to western and visit the home of sir winston churchill at chartwell but when you go there you must remember that in western there was born and grew up tindale's great friend john frith frith was a man whose reputation was uh esteemed all over the country and king henry the eighth attempted very uh diligently to separate frith from tindale he made a special offer of pardon to him if he would return and so on but frith did return secretly to evangelize he was captured imprisoned and martyred in 1533 and before he was executed he was again offered a pardon on condition that he

would desist from the work he was doing and this is what he said in reply i assure you he said he told his judge i assure you i neither will nor can cease to speak for the word of god boil up in my body like a fervent fire and must needs have an outlet two years later william tindale himself was arrested he was then in the home of thomas points in antwerp an englishman who played the part of judas uh gained tindale's friendship then he revealed his whereabouts tindale was arrested thrown into prison without anything except the clothes in which he stood spent 16 months of in cold and suffering in the castle of veal board and then at the beginning of october 1536 was taken out into the marketplace at veal board strangled and then burnt to death the last words that he was heard to cry were

words of lord he said open the king of england's eyes when tindale published his pentateuch he speaks about joseph being put in prison in egypt and i think these words parallel his own experience those

promises of god accompanied him always and went down with him even into the deep dungeon and brought him up again and never forsook him till all that was promised was fulfilled and there's a verse of john milton which describes so perfectly what william tindale was faithful found among the faithless faithful only he among innumerable false unmoved unshaken unswayed unterrified his loyalty he kept his love his zeal nor number nor example with him wrought to swerve from truth or change his constant mind though single now our time has gone and i think perhaps i should break off at that point

if i have just said enough to stir you up to read torpini then my greatest purpose will have been fulfilled after reflecting on yesterday morning i decided to take another session today on the reformation and that means that i shall give you perhaps another 10 minutes or quarter of an hour at the most on tindale and then an overall sketch and survey of some of the events which followed tindale's death and led to the establishment of the reformation and perhaps the years that followed now i had not intended to do the latter and have not had reference to notes on the subject and i'd like you to check any particular dates that i may throw out because i won't guarantee that they'll all be accurate now a little more then on tindale and particularly on the characteristics of the man which made

him the christian leader that he was we saw yesterday how he was converted as a young child or certainly not much more than a youth at oxford how having been in gloucestershire in the home of sir john walsh for a few years he crossed founders in 1524 and how he had 11 years of freedom before his martyrdom in 1536 and in those years his greatest work was the translation of the new testament and of the old testament i think he went as far as the second book of chronicles as well as that he published a number of important books which circulated with the bible and these were all printed in the last century in three large volumes in the parker society collection now the first thing then tindale was the first english reformer to bring out again what it means to be a christian and while tindale

brought forward a great deal of biblical truth he was continually returning to this one great theme it is his first point and the point that he was always compelling people to listen to what is a christian now in the day in which he lived a christian met a person who belonged to holy church that is to say a person who said prayers in a sacred building who respected the priesthood who observed the sacraments who was submissive to the ceremonies of the church and such was a christian tindale says of this general opinion that to be a christian was nothing else than to serve ceremonies and him that was not popish and ceremonial was no christian man at all and sir thomas moore tindale's great opponent charges tindale with impiety because says moore he says no service at all neither matins even

song nor mass nor cometh at church nor cometh at no church but either to gaze or to talk in other words tindale was no longer as moore had heard partaking in the ritual and ceremony of the church so called of his day and to tindale that definition of christian was false at the foundation because it made no account of a man's individual relationship to christ so that a man could be as ungodly as cardinal wolsey or a pope alexander the sixth and yet be a christian in terms of that definition and the great shame of medieval christianity was that by corrupting the scriptures it had brought into being a system of religion which was compatible with wilderness and with corruption and which nevertheless gave to men a false assurance of their relationship to god now in contrast to this tindale

says two things are required to be in a christian man the first is a steadfast faith and trust in almighty god to obtain all the mercy that he hath promised us through the deserving and merits of christ blood only without all respect to our works and the other is that we forsake evil and turn to god to keep his laws to fight against ourselves and our corrupt nature perpetually that we may do the will of god every day better

and better now i won't stop on the first a steadfast faith and trust in almighty god to obtain all through the deserving of christ blood but tindale was in the english language the first to expound in its fullness the doctrine of justification by faith alone that is to say that the ungodly sinner is justified by the receiving of the righteousness of christ and the

obedience of christ unto death is counted as our obedience and christ deserving becomes the ground upon which we obtain all the blessings of calvary let me give you just a sentence from speaking to a believer he says 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 the believer is one with christ in his righteousness and in his redemption then let me just say a little more on tindale's exposition of the living of the christian life and his key words here are the words obedience and the words love christians do not seek to do god's will he says in order to obtain his favor for he loved them when they were yet

evil and his enemies in their hearts and before they came to the knowledge of his son he loved them and before his law was written in their hearts so that the christians obedience is not in order to obtain the favor of god but on the contrary it is the knowledge of god's eternal love to us in christ that leads us to obedience and a true believer says tindale must obey christ's word even though it cost him his life because what christ has done for him makes him put him more precious than all the world so when the question was put to tindale why must a christian man obey if he's already accepted and justified before god tindale says why must i work i answer because love compels me for as long as my soul feeleth what love god has showed me in christ i cannot but love god again and his will

and commandments love god again and his will and commandments and out of love work then so he has this great emphasis on love as the fulfillment of the christian's living it compels him to obedience let me give you one more quotation if we be in christ we work for no worldly purpose but of love as paul says to corinthians time the love of christ compels us we are otherwise minded than when peter drew his sword to fight for christ we are ready to suffer with christ and to lose life and all for our very enemies to bring them unto christ if we be in christ we are like-minded unto christ christ is all to a christian man christ is the cause why i love thee why i am ready to do the uttermost of my power for thee and why i pray for thee and as long as the cause abides so long lasts the effect

even as it is always day as long as the sun shines do therefore the worst thou canst unto me take away my goods take away my good name yet as long as christ remains in my heart so long i love thee not a whit the less and so long are thou dear unto me as mine own soul and so long am i ready to do thee good for thine evil and so long i pray for thee with all my heart for christ desires it of me and hath deserved it of me thine unkindness compared unto his kindness is nothing at all yea it is swallowed up as a little smoke by a mighty wind and is no more seen or thought upon and in contrast to that teaching the whole system of Rome was cold and heartless indeed when Tyndale's charges were laid by the church against him one of the charges was that he taught the heresy and quoting Tyndale

Tyndale had said they charged him with saying i am bound to love the Turk with the very bottom of my heart the Turk of course in the 16th century was supposedly great enemy of Christendom and that was a heretical statement in the eyes of the church and the church so called did nothing to bring the scriptures to men she said prayers and masses for them for their for the church's profit and not for their own good and this was the kind of cloister love which Tyndale castigates with tremendous vehemence the so-called love of the contemporary church was a love which had no regard to the salvation of poor sinners listen to

Tyndale as he talks about this cloister love if i stick up to the middle in the mire ready to perish without immediate help and you stand by and will not succor me but kneel

down and pray will God hear the prayers of such a hypocrite God bid of thee so to love me that thou put thyself in jeopardy to help me and that your heart of while your body labors doth pray and trust in God that he will assist and hypocrite that will not put neither body nor soul in peril to help me in my need loveth me not neither have compassion on me and therefore his heart cannot pray though he wag his lips never so much and although we don't know a great deal about Tyndale's personal life what we do know illustrates this fact people who knew him likened him to the apostle John the apostle of love when John Frith was on trial and Tyndale's name was brought up and denounced Frith said to Sir Thomas Moore I am sure that no man can reprove him of any sin and Tyndale had this great

gentleness and kindness about him when he was for those last months of his life in the castle at Veil Ward the jailer's daughter was converted and I believe one or two others in the household when he was in Antwerp we read how he used to take Sunday services amongst the merchants they would meet in an upper room with their doors no doubt locked and there Tyndale would preach to them and John Fox says that he did it so fruitfully so sweetly and so gently that it seemed much like to the writing of John the evangelist and Tyndale's motto was concerning his concerning those to whom he witnessed tell them their fault lovingly and with kindness win them to thy father so much then in these few words on Tyndale as the recoverer of the meaning of the word Christian a one with steadfast faith and

trust in almighty God and one who out of a consciousness of the love of Christ seeks truly to love and serve his fellow men now secondly a word or two on Tyndale as a reformer in the dependence which he showed upon God and here is something which it is indeed extraordinarily difficult for us to realize here was one man with no support from anyone in the professing church singly going into exile to translate scripture taking a course of action which no one else had taken and doing it in steadfast dependence upon God and refusing in any point to trim the truth or to adjust his policy in order to obtain favor from men do I now seek to persuade men or gods as the apostle Paul for if I yet please men I should not be the servant of Christ and as one reads Tyndale one sees this uh shining

through the man he was constantly telling other Christians that it was their business to serve God alone and to leave all consequences with him God wills he says that we care not to know what shall come that is as a result of our serving he will have us care only to keep his commandments and to commit all events unto him all things are in his hand he can remedy all things and will for his truth's sake if we pray to him and after John Frist was arrested in England and put in the Tower of London Tyndale somehow managed to get two letters to him and these letters still survive and in one of them we have this sentence in which Tyndale exhorts his friend if you give yourself cast yourself yield yourself wholly and only to your loving father then shall his power be in you and make you strong to

look for no man's help brings the help of God to them who seem to be overcome in the eyes of hypocrites yea it shall make God to carry you through thick and thin for his truth's sake in spite of all the enemies of his truth there falls not a hair until his hour become and when his hour is come then necessity carries us hence well that could be illustrated in many respects but he was a man whose policy was framed by the word of God and in a policy in which he refused to deviate in any degree to accommodate the opinions of men there is one a striking illustration of that i'm sure you all know how many wives King Henry VIII had and i need not to remind you of such historical facts but the second wife of Henry VIII was Anne Boleyn and Anne Boleyn became the second wife of Henry VIII through

the divorce of Catherine of Aragon now in that divorce dispute there were those who favored the protestant cause who condoned and even supported the divorce and they could see as they believed um no doubt good consequences following from the remarriage of the king but Tyndale from the very outset of all Catherine of Aragon was a staunch a Roman Catholic he steadfastly opposed the divorce and in doing so he brought a great deal of wrath down upon him and this is why he says he opposed I could not but declare my mind to discharge my conscience lest any man should later cast in my teeth when this old marriage was broken and a new one made why I had not spoken earlier a last thing on Tyndale is before we move on Tyndale gave to this country as we've seen the English Bible but with the Bible

he restored along with other reformers the doctrine of the authority of scripture and the explanation why people were willing to translate the scriptures and die for the scriptures was the belief that when scripture spoke God was speaking it wasn't simply that the scriptures were a novelty or that the translation was remarkably beautiful though it was beautiful it was the fact as Tyndale says that you should deal with scripture so that you believe that God himself is speaking and they taught that the word of God is not the word of popes it is not the word of the church it is not the word of tradition it is the word of the written scriptures and one stands in awe at the sense of the majesty of scripture which these men had at one point in 1531 in the middle of that period when Tyndale was

being hunted by spies and pursued in Flanders he made an offer to King Henry VIII and this was the offer that he made I give it to you in his own words he offered to suffer what pain or torture yea what death his grace will that is the king wills if it will stand with the king's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the scripture to be put forth among his people that was his offer he would surrender himself at once if the king would but put forth the bare word of scripture and another time writing to John Frith Tyndale said this I call God to record against the day when 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 I this day if all that is in the earth whether it be

pleasure honor or riches might be given to me he was bound solely to the word of God now let me then try to sketch in a very broad way for the benefit of those of you who have done perhaps a little reading of what happened following Tyndale's death two things were happening in England there were those within the church itself whose eyes were gradually being opened to the gospel and among these men was the archbishop of Canterbury himself Thomas Cranmer Cranmer who became archbishop in the days of Henry VIII another was Nicholas Ridley who was bishop of Rochester and Cranmer and Ridley and one or two others of the bishops began to work for the furtherance of scripture the great bible was printed in England a few years after Tyndale's death consisted very largely of Tyndale's own work but

without his name on the title page so there began a movement within the church for reform then the second thing conversions took place in the monasteries and in other places of men who became a fervent preachers and evangelists and these men often were not able to stay within the church but were driven into exile I give you one who is a typical instance John Hooper Hooper was born about the same time as Tyndale at the end of the previous century he graduated at Oxford and then he became a Sir Sir Stein monk he went down to the beautiful abbey of Cleve in Somerset and he seems to have been there about 17 or 18 years completely immersed in the religion of his day and then Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and so Hooper was thrown adrift he went back to Oxford and there he was converted

he was a very young Christian with very imperfect knowledge and his next post was the post of a courtier really in the household of a nobleman in London and in London Hooper found some of the books of Henry

Bullinger the reformer of Zurich and other books from the continent and as he read these reformed books his knowledge advanced swiftly and he found that he was forced to flee into exile crossed over the channel he found a young lady to be his wife he was married and he had two years study in Zurich now Hooper was typical of other men in whom the same thing was happening you see in periods where there has been great corruption and darkness Christ builds his church by causing a mutiny in the camp of satan in days of spiritual prosperity when Christian homes are being blessed then many

children are called from the families of God's people but there are ages in the history of the church where there are hardly any Christian families and in those ages in a singular way God takes his people and the leaders of his people from the very strongholds of the kingdom of satan now of course he's always doing that in the world but in the times such as the reformation that stands out now Henry VIII went on living to 1547 and he was a godless tyrant as you well know his policies changed sometimes he favoured reform sometimes he was against it but at the time of his death the cause of reform was growing in strength and his successor was his only son Edward VI and in Edward VI we have the first Christian king since the English reformation he was only 16 years old when he died but

there's no question whatever concerning his piety and his attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ he came to the throne in 1547 and now two things happened one was that the men in the church like Cranmer and Ridley and began to press forward the reformation more openly the other thing was that those who had been in exile like Hooper came back home and herein lay a difficulty because there were two different policies in existence Cranmer's policy was the broader policy it was the slower policy it was a policy which aimed to carry along as many as possible of the professing church into the reformed church whereas men like Hooper and others believed that the professing church was so far gone from the word of God that there should be a new beginning and that those men who have been in the

priesthood all these years should be cast out of their office and that the reformed church should stand upon a new foundation now both these parties were Christians one was more thoroughgoing the other was more broad but there's no question that the spirit of God was working in both but it led to tensions and these tensions came to a height in the year 1550 in the middle of Edward VI reign John Hooper was asked to preach the open air sermons at Paul's cross now of course it was a feature of the time of the movement of the spirit but great numbers of people now gathered for the preaching of the word and the most famous place was Paul's cross in London out just outside St Paul's Cathedral sometimes as many as 6,000 people would gather in the open air there for the preaching of God's word

and it was an annual event in the month in the uh months preceding Easter in the Lent period that a series of sermons should be given and John Hooper was the preacher in 1550 and he expounded the book of Jonah right through beginning to end you can read his expositions and he began by speaking of the disobedience of the prophet Jonah a true servant of God yet a disobedient servant and then he went on to show how Jonah's disobedience brought the whole ship into jeopardy and then he had many practical applications and how many Jonas as he said and he went for the broad policy of Canberra and other bishops and he insisted that everything should be brought down to obedience to the word of God and we must not he would say depart from one hair's breadth from holy scripture the word of God is

not a reed but a scepter of iron and we must bend to it and not bend scripture to us well there was quite an uproar with Hooper's sermons and there was a division not only through the church but through the Privy Council which governed in the king's name and there were those in the Privy Council who were very taken with Hooper's earnestness and through their encouragement he was appointed Bishop of Gloucester now

I mustn't be sidetracked into an account of what took place and so on he became the Bishop of Gloucester other men who were in England then were John Knox, Knox who had entered the ministry in 1547 being captured by the French galleys from the castle at St.

Andrews spent 18 months as a galley slave then he was released probably by English intervention he came to England in 1549 and he gave four years to preaching the gospel in England another man was John Rogers, John Rogers was a priest in Antwerp who was converted through the personal witness of Tyndale he now came home and Rogers also became an eminent preacher and then in the university something was happening, Continental reformers came across to Oxford and Cambridge, Peter Martyr in Oxford Martin Butzer or Butzer in Cambridge and students began to receive the love of the truth we have descriptions of how they would rise at five in the morning how the scriptures became their first love and so on all this went on until the year 1553 and then after that comparatively short reign Edward VI died as I said before at the early age of 16.

He had no other brothers but the lawful successor to the throne was the daughter of Catherine of Aragon and you can well understand why Mary Tudor or Bloody Mary as she was sometimes or he'd often called you can well understand why she was hostile to many Protestants they had been some of them at any rate responsible for her mother's divorce and you can see too how considerations of policy which earlier seemed to favor perhaps the cause of reform now rebounded against it Mary Tudor came to the throne of course she promised that there would be religious toleration but her promise only survived well indeed it had only survived a matter of months and in the year 1554 began the great Marian burnings and Mary Tudor has gone down in history as the woman who was responsible for the martyrdom of

some 282 or 283 men and women within about three or four years this number was burnt to death the first to die was John Rogers that priest from Antwerp converted through Tyndale's witness he died in the early days of February walking to the stake in Smithfield said the French ambassador as though he was walking to his wedding leaving behind him a wife and 11 children in the baby arms John Rogers was first to break the ice and the policy was to put these men to death and women too but mostly men in different parts of the country some of you may go to Chester this afternoon there George Marsh was tried and condemned they were moved around the country in order to terrorize the people and so Hooper was sent down to Gloucester for his martyrdom Roland Taylor was sent to Hadley in Suffolk and

they were scattered around Hooper of course had been arrested stripped of all his titles then he was taken down to Gloucester in disgrace burnt to death at a spot which you can still see close to the cathedral it said that when Hooper came to Gloucester people were afraid to own him or even recognize him one nobleman came to visit him before his death and he said to Hooper master Hooper he said remember that life is sweet and death is bitter and he tried to win Hooper back but Hooper replied that eternal life is sweeter and eternal death is more bitter but Hooper had a very lonely night and day in Gloucester before his death with one exception a young boy came to the place where Hooper was imprisoned and asked if he might see Hooper he was totally blind he was committed to see him and

this young boy with fervent love to Christ in his heart was a means of encouraging the old man as he prepared for his death I say old he was perhaps approaching 60 years of age which was old in those days Roland Taylor as I told you died at Hadley approaching the last stile before the village green where he was to die why he said one more stile to cross and I shall be at home the famous story of how Ridley and Mattimer died together in that ditch outside Balliol College in Oxford play the man master Ridley said Mattimer we shall today by God's grace light such a candle in England as I trust shall never be put out and

then he added and we shall have a merry supper with our lord this night most of the martyrs were burnt in London some of them were so popular amongst the people that they did

not seem to dare to move them to their own counties John Bradford was a Lancashire man and he was meant to have died in Lancashire but they didn't move him from London he was burnt to death in Smithfield when he died it was said that he embraced the flames like a cool breeze on a hot summer's day and the last word that he was heard to speak were the words of Christ on the sermon on the mount straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few that be that find it well you may read at length the story of the Marian burnings and there's no question at all that those burnings opened a great door for the gospel far more people were converted in those years than were burnt and the reason for that or at least one of the reasons was that people were given a tangible

demonstration of the point which Tyndale had made to Lady Walsh that this wasn't just a matter of learning and one opinion against another it was a matter of being able to die at peace with joy instead of the old fear of death which had prevailed under potpourri the fear of purgatory here were men and women dying with triumph and with confidence and that led others to search the scriptures and the Marian burnings gave a great move forward in the history of the reformation while Mary's reign was short she died in 1558 and towards the end of that year good Queen Beth as she was called began to reign reign of Queen Elizabeth sometimes of course Protestants extolled Queen Elizabeth as though she was a Christian saint she was hardly that on her deathbed it is said that she cried out a thousand

pounds for an inch of time and she said call time again she was a woman who followed the vile media she was moderate in her religion moderate in her worldliness she did great good for England under the hand of God but she was no favorer of the reformed gospel her reign then lasted until the turn of the century and it was in that reign that the Puritan movement gathered such strength one reason why it did so was that in the reign of Mary Tudor when the burnings were going on others had gone into exile again on the continent and some of those students that I mentioned from Oxford and Cambridge they had gone to the continent they formed little churches in Frankfurt and in Geneva and elsewhere and the church in Geneva became the kind of pioneer church of the Puritan movement there were never

more than 200 people in that church they had four ruling elders and two preaching elders but their greatest work under God's hand was the publication in 1560 of the Geneva Bible and that Bible went through 140 editions by the middle of the 17th century and it was very slowly that the authorized version gradually superseded it in the 17th century now our time is almost gone and here we are in midstream in the Elizabethan period fellows and dons and professors one of the first was Thomas Cartwright in Cambridge and under Cartwright many young men were these young men were then sent out to parishes scattered all around England they came to parishes where the gospel had never been heard sometimes they labored for 15 years without seeing a conversion but these men multiplied in their numbers

they started village schools they taught the people they expounded these great books that we have these Puritan commentaries were often beaten out in the pulpits of these parishes first of all men like Richard Rogers at Wethersfield in Essex he had a cousin called John Rogers and he paid for John Rogers to go up to Cambridge to study twice Rogers was sent down from Cambridge on account of his bluntness the third time his uncle sent him back and he was converted John Rogers became one of the most famous of all the preachers of the 17th century and then moving on a little in time but illustrating the same thing a Philip Henry was a student at Oxford his first charge was at Worthingbury about what 15 miles from here last year we went to see the church and an old lady showed us round and she

opened up a big chest big as this table and what did we find in this chest but the old church records of Philip Henry's day in his own writing and some of the enthusiastic men with their cameras you can imagine we had there we had quite a day well Philip Henry was turned out of his church at the great ejection of 1660 and lived for the rest of his life at Broad Oak which is just three miles from which church where some of the friends are staying at the moment almost at Broad Oak and then what did Philip Henry do well he trained a son Matthew Henry and Matthew Henry's commentary has sold by 7 million in all parts of the English-speaking world Matthew Henry labored at Chester until the year 1712 you can see I've taken a pretty big step in those dates well I think we must break off at that

point it's quarter to 11 and this is just then by way of wetting your appetite more to read these things shall we close in prayer we thank thee for the assurance thou art the one that maketh crooked ways straight thou dost lead the blind in a way that they know not and we praise thee that thou art leading thy church in this day and lord it is our prayer that we might have in our hearts that faith and confidence that thou didst give to those who belong to thee in that day of which we have thought oh god it is by thy hand and providence that we are gathered here this week and we pray that thy hand may lead us on that we may each one be deepened in our conviction of the truth of thy word and lord help us that we may wholly surrender ourselves unto thee and spend our lives in that which will

be pleasing in my sight lord may thy blessing then be upon us this day bless our fellowship together our discussions and in all that we do we ask it with the pardon of our sins through jesus christ our lord and savior amen

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