

Sunday, February 2, 2020—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 108 William the Translator: Work on the Old Testament

Introduction

- Lessons 106 and 107 were focused on a consideration of Dr. David Norton's thesis that Tyndale's New Testament served as the rough draft for the King James New Testament some eighty years later. Little was said in these Lessons regarding Tyndale's work on the Old Testament.
- Therefore, the focus of this Lesson will be on upon Tyndale's translation work on the Old Testament ([Click here](#) to view an online version of Tyndale's 1530 Pentateuch.). At the outset, please recall the following points taken from [Lesson 105](#) on the Life and Times of William Tyndale regarding his work on the Old Testament.
 - Amidst the chaos at home in England, 1530 also saw Tyndale translate and publish the Pentateuch into English.
 - “The hierarchy is still on the alert for the apprehension of William Tyndale. Vaughan, the English envoy and successor of Hacket, has a special commission to watch Tyndale's movements. In the meantime, Tyndale has been engaged in translating the Pentateuch, aided doubtless by his friend Fryth, who, at the persecution at Oxford, fled across the sea. These five books were printed separately [David Daniell adds that they could also be bought together. (Daniell, 147)], with titles and prologues to each, but without dates, excepting that of Genesis. . . These books are quite rare, since there is but one complete set known, which is preserved in the Grenville Library, British Museum.” (Condit, 114-115)
 - “The original Hebrew text of the Pentateuch (or of anything) was in English for the first time. Instead of *Fiat lux, et facta est lux*, Tyndale gave us ‘Let there be light, and there was light,’ and the name of God as Jehovah.” (Daniell, 148)
 - As noted earlier, in 1530 Tyndale translated and released the five books of Moses separately, each with its own title page. In 1534 they were all bound together and reissued in a stand-alone volume. As far as the rest of the Old Testament is concerned, Condit reports:
 - “The book of Jonah was translated by Tyndale in 1531, but was not reprinted. There has been some doubt as to how much of the Old Testament Tyndale translated. Hall, the chronicler, claims that beside the New Testament and the Pentateuch, he completed the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the four books of Kings, the two books of Chronicles, Nehemiah, and the first book of Esdras, and the Prophet Jonah. But whatever Tyndale may have left behind in manuscript, he only published besides the New Testament, the Pentateuch and the book of

Jonah. That Tyndale translated directly from the Hebrew and that he was a master of that language, there is no longer any question.” (Condit, 132-133)

Tyndale’s Old Testament

- In 1992, Dr. David Daniell edited a modern spelling addition of *Tyndale’s Old Testament* for Yale University Press. This volume included Tyndale’s Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) from 1530, Joshua to II Chronicles from 1537, the book of Jonah, as well as an explanatory Introduction of its contents and layout. Dr. Daniell’s Introduction to *Tyndale’s Old Testament* opens with the following sentiments:
 - “William Tyndale’s Old Testament translations laid the foundation of our English Bible. They have been even more hidden from general view than his work on the New Testament. Half of what appears in this volume has not been generally accessible since 1551.

Tyndale published his first translations from Hebrew into English—the earliest ever from that language into this—in 1530, when he printed his Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. He gave us our bible language: the words and rhythms, for example, of the story of the Creation and the Fall—‘Let there be light and there was light,’ ‘male and female created he them,’ ‘who told thee thou wast naked?’ and much else. Two generations later, in 1611, the scholars and divines who made the Authorized Version under King James were happy to use what Tyndale had given them, though without acknowledgment. Very many great passages from the Pentateuch come to us from Tyndale, like the blessing from Numbers 6: ‘The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be merciful unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’ Ringing phrases such as ‘For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire’ or ‘a mighty hand and a stretched out arm’ from Deuteronomy 4; or from Deuteronomy 6, “For the Lord thy God is a jealous God,’ as well as ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might’—these and many, many more come to us from his Pentateuch.

Yet that volume was less than half his Old Testament work. Two years after his execution in 1535 [should be 1536] there appeared a thick folio Bible, also printed abroad, which announced itself as both ‘set forth with the King’s most gracious license’ (marking a change in Henry VIII’s policy) and ‘truly and purely translated into English by Thomas Matthew.’ Matthew is a cover name. The Volume was in fact assembled by Tyndale’s close friend John Rodgers, who later became the first Protestant martyr in England under the Catholic Queen Mary. In his ‘Matthew’s’ Bible, Rodgers reprinted the Pentateuch and all the New Testament directly from Tyndale. The section after the Pentateuch, from Joshua to 2 Chronicles, was also Tyndale’s work. For this section, there is, it has been said, no direct evidence. Yet the strong likelihood, together with an overwhelming accumulation of internal effects, convinces both the general reader and the

scholar that this is Tyndale—probably from his manuscripts, entrusted to Rogers at his death.” (Daniell, *Tyndale’s Old Testament*, ix-x)

- Later, in his Introduction, Dr. Daniell presents his evidence for arguing that William Tyndale was the translator for the text of Joshua through II Chronicles as found in the Matthew’s Bible of 1537. For the sake of time and space I have limited my citations of Daniell’s work on this point to what I believe are his most important points.
 - “Matthew’s Bible reprints Tyndale in the Pentateuch and the New Testament. From the end of 2 Chronicles to the end of the Old Testament it prints Coverdale. Who is the translator of Joshua to 2 Chronicles?

The case for this being Tyndale’s work rests on five points. The first three carry such weight as to make the ascription virtually certain.

1. Tyndale’s way with Hebrew can be very much his own, as we have noted above. When he strikes out independently of any immediate influences (Luther, the Septuagint, the Vulgate) he leaves, as it were, a distinctive signature on his treatment of Hebrew words. . . the musical instrument that in Hebrew is תֶּפֶח (*toph*) is consistently translated by Coverdale, in the books from Ezra onwards, as ‘tabret.’ In the Pentateuch Tyndale makes it ‘timbrel’ as this is the word in Judges 11, 1 Samuel 10 and 18, 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13. Examples of such continuity of idiosyncrasy, as we might put it, can be found many times, and accumulate to make a powerful case.

2. The translator of Joshua to 2 Chronicles shows exactly the same desire to make sense, almost at all costs, as Tyndale in the Pentateuch. It has been seen above that such nearly impenetrable Hebrew passages as the accounts of the furniture of the temple almost defeat him. The same can be said of the descriptions of the ritual garments in Leviticus and Numbers. . .

4. There are the same particular formulations in English phrasing in both: ‘men of activity,’ the literal ‘the fat of the land,’ ‘observed dismal days,’ ‘upon high mountains and on high hills and under every green tree’ and very many more.

5. Finally, there is evidence of large ornamental initials in ‘Matthew’s.’ Those in the introductory matter, I.R. and H.R., are taken to stand for John Rogers and Henricus Rex. Before the prophets, R.G. and E.W. are taken to be Richard Grafton and Edward Whitechurch, the London printers who financed and distributed the volume; and W.T. at the end of the Old Testament, before the Apocrypha, may be intended to suggest the larger presence of William Tyndale in the volume. Edward Hall, in his *Chronicle* of 1548, adds the Old Testament historical books to a list of Tyndale’s translations. Moreover, copies of ‘Matthew’s’ exist in which all the prologues and all the notes have been obliterated, to escape the penalties that were threatened in 1543, when, as Bishop Westcott notes, ‘Parliament proscribed all translations bearing the name of Tyndale, and

required that the notes in all other copies should be removed or ‘obliterated.’ (Daniell, *Tyndale’s Old Testament*, xxv-xxvi)

- Therefore, I think it is safe to conclude that Tyndale’s translation accomplishments with respect to the Old Testament include the following before his martyrdom in 1536.
 - 1530 Pentateuch
 - *W.T. to the Reader*
 - *A Prologue Showing the Use of Scripture*
 - The First Book of Moses, called Genesis
 - *A Table Expounding Certain Words*
 - *A Prologue into the Second Book of Moses, called Exodus*
 - *A Table Expounding Certain Words of the Second Book of Moses*
 - The Second Book of Moses, called Exodus
 - *A Prologue into the Third Book of Moses, called Leviticus*
 - The Third Book of Moses, called Leviticus
 - *A Prologue into the Fourth Book of Moses, called Numbers*
 - The Fourth Book of Moses, called Numbers
 - *A Prologue into the Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy*
 - The Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy
 - 1537 Matthew’s Bible
 - The Book of Joshua
 - The Book of Judges
 - The Book of Ruth
 - The First Book of Samuel
 - The Second Book of Samuel
 - The First Book of the Kings
 - The Second Book of the Kings
 - The Chronicles of the Kings of Juda, The First Book
 - The Chronicles of the Kings of Juda, The Second Book
 - *The Prologue to the Prophet Jonah*
 - The Story of the Prophet Jonah
- All told, Tyndale is responsible for penning the rough draft for 15 of the 39 books or 38 percent of the Old Testament found in the KJB. In addition to producing full English renderings for the 15 books listed above, it is important to note that Tyndale’s 1534 and 1535 New Testament revisions also included English translations for a select number of Old Testament passages not included in the preceding list.
- These additional Old Testament translations can be found in the back of his New Testament revisions (1534 and 1535), after the book of Revelation, in a section titled “These Are the Epistles Taken Out of the Old Testament which are read in the church after the use of Salisbury upon

certain days of the year.” “The use of Salisbury” is referring to the rites and cycles of the Cathedral and Diocese of Salisbury, England after the change to the “New Sarum” (See Wikipedia entry on the “[Use of Sarum](#)”). This Diocese had a schedule of determined Scripture readings in their lectionary to be read on certain days of the year. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* explains the origins of the rite as follows:

- “Salisbury or Sarum, Use of. The local medieval modification of the Roman rite in the use of the cathedral church of Salisbury, traditionally ascribed to St. Osmund (d. 1099) but much later. The Customary, i.e. the cathedral statutes and customs and a complete directory of services, were compiled by Richard Poore (d. 1237). The ‘New Use of Sarum’ was a further (14th cent.) revision, effecting certain changes in the Calendar. In the later Middle Ages, the Sarum was increasingly followed, in whole or in part, in the other diocese, and in the 1457 stated to be in use in nearly the whole of England, Wales, and Ireland.” (Cross & Livingstone)
- So, Tyndale’s decision to include the Old Testament passages listed in his 1534 and 1535 revised New Testaments was done to grant the common Englishman access to readings of the accepted liturgy in his own tongue. Tyndale included English renderings for the following Old Testament passages along with the day/time of year they were to be read as stipulated by the “use of Salisbury.”
 - Isaiah 51—The First Day of Advent
 - Zechariah 8—The Wednesday in the Second Week of Advent
 - Isaiah 62—The First Next Following
 - Isaiah 11—The Friday in the Third Week of Advent
 - Isaiah 2—On the Wednesday in the First Week of Advent
 - Joel 2—The Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Advent
 - Zechariah 2—The First in the Fourth Week of Advent
 - Ecclesiasticus 15—On Saint John the Evangelist’s Day
 - Isaiah 60—The Twelfth Day
 - Isaiah 12—The Next Sunday After the Twelfth Day
 - Joel 2—On Ash Wednesday
 - Isaiah 58—On the Friday Next Following
 - Exodus 24—On the Wednesday after the First Sunday in Lent
 - I Kings 19—Another for the Same Day
 - Ezekiel 18—The Friday Next Following
 - Esther 13—The Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent
 - Genesis 37—The Friday next Following
 - Exodus 20—The Wednesday after the third Sunday in Lent
 - Numbers 20—The First next Following
 - Isaiah 1—The Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent
 - Ezekiel 36—Another for the Same Day
 - I Kings 17—The Friday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent
 - Leviticus 19—The Wednesday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

- Jeremiah 17—The Friday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent
 - Isaiah 53—The Wednesday after Palm Sunday
 - Exodus 12—On Good Friday
 - Jeremiah 33—The Last Sunday after Trinity Sunday
 - Amos 9—On the Wednesday in the Ember Week After Michaelmas
 - Hosea 14—The Friday in the Ember Week before Michaelmas
 - Ecclesiasticus 44—On Saint Nicholas' Day
 - Ecclesiasticus 24—On the Conception of Our Lady
 - Malachi 3—On Candlemas Day
 - Isaiah 7—On the Annunciation of Our Lady which is Our Lady Day in Lent
 - Wisdom 5—On Saint Philip and Jacob's Day
 - Isaiah 49—On the Nativity of St. John Baptist's Day
 - Song of Solomon 2—On the Visitation of Our Lady
 - Proverbs 31—On Saint Mary Magdalen's Day
 - Ecclesiasticus 24—On the Assumption of Our Lady & On the Nativity of Our Lady
 - Ezekiel 1—On Saint Matthew's Day the Apostle & On Saint Luke
 - Ecclesiasticus 51—On St. Katherine's Day
- The preceding list contains forty English readings from ten additional canonical Old Testament books and two Apocryphal books that are not found in either Tyndale's Pentateuch (1530) or the Matthew's Bible (1537). Tyndale's "Salisbury" translations demonstrate that his work extended to the other parts the Old Testament before his martyrdom in 1536.
 - Regarding the Salisbury Epistles, Dr. David Daniell states the following in his *William Tyndale: A Biography*:
 - "At the back of the book are fifteen pages containing forty Old Testament passages, the extracts read on certain days in the services in Salisbury Cathedral (which 'Sarum use' became the basis of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549) translated so that the worshippers could hear, or use, all the Bible passages in English. Those pages are followed by a further eighteen giving a table of the set readings from Epistles and Gospels throughout the year, again anticipating the Prayer Book." (Daniell, *Biography*, 316-317)
 - As of this date, I have not been able to ascertain with any certainty the source text for Tyndale's Old Testament Salisbury Epistles. Tyndale could have used any of the following to make these translations: 1) the Latin Vulgate, 2) the Hebrew text, or 3) a Latin version of the Salisbury liturgy. Given all that we have studied regarding the translational practices of Tyndale to date, I favor the notion that he utilized the Hebrew text, but I can offer no definitive proof of that position at this time.
 - While proof may be lacking as to the textual basis for the Salisbury Epistles, they do establish beyond doubt that Tyndale labored to revise and improve upon his Old Testament translations. These efforts on the part of Tyndale with respect to the Old Testament to revise and improve his

work are consistent with what we saw in Lesson 107 when we looked at the New Testament. Regarding this matter, Dr. Brooke Foss Westcott states the following in his *A General View of the History of the English Bible*:

- “The texts of the ‘Epistles from the Old Testament’ appended to the New Testaments of 1534 and 1535 differ in small details from the published Pentateuch of 1531 (1530); and, what is still more interesting, from one another. Thus, in these, as in the New Testaments themselves, there is a double revision. . .” (Westcott, 156-157)
- This citation from the pen of Westcott contains two footnotes in support of its claims. The following are photos of Westcott’s footnotes from pages 156 and 157.

¹ I regret that I have been unable to collate the text of the Pentateuch

Bristol Museum has only one edition, and not two, as stated in Anderson’s list. Compare pp. 169, 208 notes.

PENT. 1531.

*this dreame which I haue dreamed
makynge sheues*

loo

yours—to

because of—of

saynge

I haue had one dreame more

[In *Notes and Queries* for the 10th and 24th of February, 1883, Mr Fry printed a collation of the 1531 and 1534 editions of Tindale’s *Genesis*. See also Dr Mombert’s edition of Tindale’s Pentateuch (1885), Prolegomena, pp. ciii.—cviii.]

¹ For example, in Is. liii. 6, went astraye (1534): went *all of vs* astraye (1535): 8, *whē* he is taken (1534): *though* he be taeken (1535): 12, of y^e *ryche* (1534): of the *mightie* (1535).

The last Epistle (for St Catharine’s day) is wrongly given in 1534, Ecclus. li. 9—12. The right lesson is substi-

of 1531 (see p. 169) with that of the ‘corrected’ Pentateuch of 1534. The

In Gen. xxxvii. 6—9, the following variations occur between the ‘Epistle’ and the first Pentateuch:

NEW TEST. 1534.

*a dreame that I dreamed
makynge of sheues*

se,

your sheues—vnto

for—for

and he sayd

I dreamed yet another dreame

tuted in 1535, Ecclus. li. 1—8. [See p. 145, n. 4.]

Two most surprising misprints of 1534 are also corrected in 1535: Gen. xxxvii. 20, *a sand* pitte (some pitte, 1535). Is. liii. 2, came vp as a *sparow* (as a *spraye*, 1535).

² For example, in Ecclus. xxiv. 17—22 the following corrections occur: 18, of *greatnes* and of holye hope (1534): of *knowledge* of holly hoepe (1535): 20, than honye or honye combe (1534): then honye, *and myne inheritaunce passeth honye* or honye combe (1535).

- The Salisbury Epistles appended to Tyndale’s 1534 and 1535 revised New Testaments contain two readings from the Pentateuch: Genesis 37 and Exodus 12. In the case of Genesis 37 (see Westcott’s first footnote), if one compares the readings found in Tyndale’s original Pentateuch (1531) with the same passage in the Salisbury Epistles from 1534, one observes textual variants. Likewise, in Westcott’s second footnote comparing the Salisbury readings for Isaiah 53:6, 8, 12

in the 1534 and 1535 editions of his New Testament. This evidence demonstrates that Tyndale never ceased to try and improve upon his translations.

Conclusion

- Next week in Lesson 109 we will cover an additional topic in our mini-series on William the Translator and that is Tyndale and the Biblical Narrative.

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