SUMMARY OF THESIS

The first part of the thesis (chapters I-V) considers possible sources of Tyndale's theology. There were influences from Lollardy, Erasmus, and Luther, however, Tyndale modified these sources where he disagreed with their theology, rejecting everything he believed was unfaithful to Scripture.

The second part of the thesis (chapters VI-XIII) assessed Tyndale's theology. I found it was consistent through all his writings (1525-1536), a biblically based theology uninfluenced by Greek philosophy. A covenant theology made between the Persons of the Trinity; it was unilateral for the Fall was total, man was dead and until born again unable to respond to God's love.

God the Father was to be a Father to those elected to life, the elect are born into God's family, which, being through birth, has no place for the legalistic covenant found in Reformed theology.

The blood of Christ is essential for Tyndale's theology. It satisfied God's justice enabling the Father to elect his children. The blood of Christ makes every part and every stage of the Christian's life a reality.

The Holy Spirit applies the blood of Christ – the elect are born again, have faith and repentance, respond to the gospel, are able to love God and his commandments, love their neighbour and do good works, pray and worship God.

Two regiments form society:-

The temporal, a creation ordinance to which everyone belongs.

The spiritual is the church and post Fall. The elect were a 'little flock' whilst the majority were not born again nor part of the family of God. The papal church broke the covenant, teaching salvation through works.

Christians love God and neighbour, the blood of Christ enables them to please God, serving their neighbour by good works to strengthen faith, or to evangelise.

Tyndale's theology was consistent, scriptural, spiritual and practical.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE THEOLOGY OF WILLIAM TYNDALE

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

Ralph Sidney Werrell, S.Th. (Lambeth)

September 2001.

WILLIAM TYNDALE

1494 – 1994



FRONTISPIECE:

The Portrait of William Tyndale in Hertford College, Oxford.

(Tyndale Quincentenary Poster)

With permission from the Principal, Fellows and Scholars

of

Hertford College in the University of Oxford.

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NOTES

Generally where more than one scholar have agreed any direct quotation has been the clearest and shortest one. Acknowledgements are made for all quotations, and, where necessary, footnotes will refer to sources of 'near quotations' or similar ideas.

Everyone writing about Tyndale's theology have tried to make it fit into the fifteenth and sixteenth century moulds without letting Tyndale speak for himself. Carl Trueman's words about John Owen apply equally to William Tyndale. "The task in hand is one of explication and clarification. After all, even if one wishes ultimately to make a case that Owen was either a perverter or a preserver of the Reformed tradition, one must first establish exactly what he said and why he said it." (Carl R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1998. p. 9)

ABBREVIATIONS

ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
BIHR	*The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BJRL	*The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BL	British Library
CH	*Church History*
CQR	*Church Quarterly Review*
CWM-	*Collected Works of St. Thomas More,* - (volume number)
EETS	Early English Text Society
ET	*Expository Times*
EQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ISBE	*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JHI	*The Journal of the History of Ideas*
JMRS	*The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Reformation Studies*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LW-	*Luther's Works* (American Edition), - (volume number)
MAE	*Medium Aevum*
MED	Middle English Dictionary
MPh	*Modern Philology*
NAKD	*Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis.*

N&Q	*Notes and Queries*
RQ	*Renaissance Quarterly*
SCH	*Studies in Church History*
SCJ	*Sixteenth Century Journal*
SCE&S	Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies
SJTh	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SPh	*Studies in Philology*
SR	*Studies in the Renaissance*
TBGAS	The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
TS	Tyndale Society
TSJ	*The Tyndale Society Journal*

Tyndale's Works

from the Parker Society are referred to be the title of the work followed by (vol)/(page no.)

1525 *The Cologne Fragment,* (Arber)

Pater Noster Bodleian PP274 TH

NT	New Testament 1534 (Daniell)
OT	Old Testament 1530, 1537 (Daniell)
WThJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

Other References

Either the Author's name, or Name + an abbreviated title.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tyndale is generally not regarded as a significant theologian.

Since Clebsch wrote *England's Earliest Protestants* in 1964 this work has been regarded as the standard for those thinking about Tyndale's theology. Clebsch portrayed Tyndale not as a theologian but as a person whose thinking swung under the influence of different theologians. He wrote, "Considered as a theologian, however, Tyndale must be regarded at once as less persistent than Luther, less consistent than Frith, and less insistent than Barnes. For Tyndale adopted first one and then another theme as the clue to scripture's meaning and therefore as the heart of Christian faith."[1]

My thesis is that Tyndale was a first-rate theologian and that his theology was consistent over all his writings (1525-1536), more scriptural, more spiritual, more tolerant, and more evangelistic than other sixteenth-century Reformers. Tyndale was a first-rate theologian because he brought his analytical mind to the word of God and the theology found in his writings reveals the results of this. He did not work in isolation, and he used Luther and others, but always he rejected from their writings anything which could not be proved, to his satisfaction, from scripture. Tyndale's interpretation of scripture was consistent for he took the word of God at its face value and rejected the Greek philosophical systems and therefore their claims for man and the innate powers of man's reason. His theology was scriptural and consistent, he discovered the *Covenant* and the way the Trinity worked together for the salvation of the elect. The Holy Spirit

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[1] Clebsch, *England's*, 138

raises the elect from death into life, the blood of Christ purges them from all sin, and they are made sons and heirs of God.[2] Being born again by the Holy Spirit the elect are able to choose and love God, and the Holy Spirit enables them to live as children of their heavenly Father and supports them throughout their life. Loving our neighbour leads to toleration and evangelism, and enemies, Turks and pagans are to be loved and helped – but we do it not just for humanistic reasons but that they might be converted and saved.

It was from the Scriptures that Tyndale drew his theology, and although he used the works of others he only used them as far as they measured up to God's word. We have been warned against trying to make Tyndale conform to other Reformation theologies, as Collinson wrote, "He was in the best sense too radical, the voice crying in the wilderness."[3] Brown wrote, "Far more allowance should further be made for the extent to which his beliefs were based on his own independent study of the scriptures."[4] As we examine Tyndale's theology we need to keep those two statements in mind if we are to be able to understand and make sense of Tyndale's theological position.

My thesis divides itself into two main sections. In the first I examine the many areas where others are supposed to have affected Tyndale's thinking. I have examined the case for and against the influence of others in the formation of Tyndale's theology, and whether Tyndale was linked (at different times) to one or more of those influences. There are

---

[2] *1 John*, 2/149
[3] Collinson, "Tyndale", 84
[4] Brown, 21

many claimants to the position of having influenced Tyndale's theology – some claims being perhaps greater than others. The fact that there are so many who are given a role in directing Tyndale's thought underlines the fact that historians and Reformation theologians have not made a proper study of his theological position. We are dealing with the years 1525-1536, and using *all* the influences claimed by scholars on his thinking he was very confused about what to believe changing his views on average every 9 months – or the scholars have (between them) got it wrong. William Clebsch, whose thesis is the most accepted, wrote that Tyndale changed his theology twice, from Lutheran (1524-1529), to rediscovering the Law, (1530-1532), and finally his covenant theology (1532/3-1536).

THE GLASS SLIPPER SYNDROME

On the whole people have approached Tyndale's writings with preconceived ideas, and anything he wrote which supported their idea was jumped on; anything which did not support it was ignored. The glass slipper of one's theory about Tyndale's theology is all important, and Tyndale's writings have to be trimmed until they fit the slipper.[5] In this way they ignore the fact that Tyndale's theology was a much greater threat to the papal Church than Luther's theology. Thus one of the great dangers facing scholars who are involved in trying to assess the faith and beliefs of people during the Reformation is what I call *THE GLASS SLIPPER SYNDROME.* Cinderella's slipper would only fit her feet and everyone else tried to make it fit theirs. If we reverse the image and make Tyndale's

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[5] see *Background,* 16-18.

theology the slipper and the different theories the 'feet' we find there are plenty of 'feet' which are supposed to fit Tyndale's theology, in fact so many that it is surprising scholars have not realised that something must be wrong somewhere in the ideas being put forward. Many of the instances where the 'feet' have been made to fit will be seen as Tyndale's theology is unfolded during this dissertation, and so only one or two examples of each 'foot' will be given.

The first 'foot' is that Tyndale was a follower of Luther. It is obvious that it fits because there are supposed to be many similarities between Luther's theology and Tyndale's, also the way in which Tyndale used Luther's writings and translated large sections of, for instance, *The Preface to Romans* in his own *Prologue*. Yet one must not ask, when Tyndale was 'translating' Luther, "Why did he deviate theologically from Luther on so many important doctrines?" After all, they both had a 'big toe' of 'justification by faith'. MacCulloch wrote, "Among the early enthusiasts for Luther was a rare Oxford man in a Reformation which would come to be dominated by Cambridge academics. William Tyndale (?1495-1536); his pioneering work of Bible translation went hand in hand with translations of sections of Luther's biblical commentaries presented in discreet anonymity."[6] Scarisbrick wrote, "The English Lutheran, William Tyndale."[7] Cargill Thompson gave a warning, "By and large, Tyndale has been accepted simply as an extreme exponent of Luther's teaching ... without any effort being made to analyse the precise character

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[6] MacCulloch, "England," 171.

of his views."[8] Tyndale's denial that he was a Lutheran carries no meaning at all.[9] Nor does More's comment, "but hath also in many thynges farre passed his mayster / ronnynge forth so madde for malyce / that he fareth as though he herde not his owne voyce."[10] More also wrote of Fisher's comments on Tyndale's writings: "And ouer this he sayd y^{t} he had sene of Luthers owne wordys worse than he had euer herde rehersed / and in Tyndall worse yet in many thyngys than he sawe in Luther hym selfe."[11]

The second 'foot' is that there was no reformation thinking before Luther nailed his theses to the door at Wittenberg. Therefore, for instance, Tyndale must have made a mistake in the date Tracy was well versed in Augustine.[12] Also, Tyndale made other errors such as linking the Reformation to Wyclif. Trueman wrote, "Furthermore, he [Tyndale] makes no reference to Wyclif or to the Lollards at any point in his work."[13] In spite of the fact that there are six references to Wyclif in Tyndale's writings. Tyndale wrote of those "which at that time were converted unto repentance and to the true faith, to put their trust in Christ's death and blood-shedding for the remission of their sins, by the preaching of John

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[7] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII,* 400. Elton, *Reform and Reformation,* 74, "In England, Luther's impact came early, … It was here that his leading English follower, William Tyndale …"
[8] Cargill Thompson, "Two Regiments," 17.
[9] *Answer,* 3/147
[10] *CWM-6,* 424-426
[11] *CWM-6* 431
[12] Craig and Litzenberger, 421
[13] Trueman, *Legacy,* 41f.

Wicliffe."[14] Locher criticised those who used this foot for proving their thesis, "Luther is made the norm for every reformer."[15]

The third 'foot' is misquoting from sources, and some doctoral dissertations have been accepted because the examiners have failed to check adequately the references given. From *The Lanterne of Light* Smeeton "claimed that Christians have pledged their covenant and, therefore, they should live out their obligation."[16] This is what Tyndale would have agreed with. However, *The Lanterne* is writing of the spiritualty and not every Christian.[17] Yost quotes a statement from the middle of a paragraph beginning, "As concerning the transubstantiation," and wrote, "Tyndale asserted that the bread and wine remained merely bread and wine until the words of God repeated over them made them more than that …" as if it were Tyndale's doctrinal position. Walter's footnote on this passage, "in this paragraph Tyndale speaks again of consubstantiation, as he avowedly returns to transubstantiation in the next."[18]

The fourth 'foot' is a reliance on previous writers. Because someone has written from a position of authority does not mean they are of necessity right in what they say. Lindberg quotes Dickens, "In essentials the early English Protestants … were Lutherans, led by Tyndale, …"[19] He also backs his statements by referring to other scholars, Clebsch, O'Day, Seaver, Haigh, etc., but he does not refer to the original sources.

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[14] *Prelates,* 2/296
[15] Locher, 3; see p. 24
[16] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes,* 152
[17] Swinburn, 105f
[18] Yost, "Tyndale" 178, *Sacraments,* 1/372

The fifth 'foot' is selectivity. If one makes selections of Tyndale's writings which agree with one's theory and ignores those parts of his writings which disagree, you can prove every one of the sixteen (at least) variations which say they are definitions of Tyndale's theology. Knox quotes Tyndale, "He also affirmed that 'the greatest sinner is righteous in Christ and in the promise.'" However, when we look up the reference, we find that Tyndale wrote, "I say that no man is so great a sinner, if he repent and believe, but that he is righteous in Christ and in the promises."[20] More often we find this 'foot' occurs when the adjoining paragraph or page has not been considered. Yost, in his PhD dissertation, claims that Tyndale advocated reading the Church Fathers, whereas Tyndale wrote that if we wanted men's opinion rather than scripture then the Church Fathers were the best.[21]

A sixth foot is found with some historians claiming that Tyndale's position is not theologically possible, it can only have theological validity if it fits into one of the various theological options or theological schemata which are available, there are no alternative positions. Laughlin wrote at the beginning of his dissertation, "What makes this discrepancy more than merely intriguing, however, is that the two hermeneutical devices suggest two fundamentally contradictory and inimical underlying theological systems."[22] However, his understanding of Tyndale's theology changed by the end of his dissertation, he realised that Tyndale's theology had a

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[19] Lindberg, *Reformations,* 309, see also 314
[20] Knox, *Faith,* 5; *Obedience,* 1/198
[21] Yost, "Christian", 29; *Obedience,* 1/205
[22] Laughlin, 4

consistency which did not depend on what have been considered acceptable schemata.[23]

The 'foot' I am seeking is the one which is true to all the evidence. It has meant comparing between 200 and 1,000[24] extracts of every doctrine, within the context in which they were written, to discover if there is a single theology lying behind Tyndale's thought in the following areas..

1. God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The Fatherhood of God, Adoption, Christ's blood, redemption, the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Election, mercy, grace.
4. Creation, Man, the Fall, sin, the devil.
5. Covenant (Unity of throughout the Old and New Testaments), promise, new birth, the child of God, faith, repentance, justification, salvation.
6. The Scripture, revelation, the gospel, the law, obedience.
7. The unity of Old and New Testaments, sacrifice, the sacraments, Circumcision, Baptism, The Passover, The Lord's Supper.
8. New life, the heart, hope, obedience.
9. Good works, love, love to God, love to neighbour.

[23] Laughlin, 268, see *Background*, 21f

[24] Most doctrines involve linking more than one set of extracts. e.g. *Sacraments* comprises 3 sets, sacraments/sacrifice; baptism/circumcision; and Lord's Supper/Passover. The approximate figure, 1000, is composite linking, e.g., salvation (621) and faith (656) with adjustments made where faith and justification appear in both or faith is not in context of salvation. *The Covenant Broken* includes "spiritualty", "idolatry", "errors of the Church" as well as sections from "worship", "good works" and "the Church".

10. Evangelism, to those outside of Christ, nominal Christians, heathen and Turks.
11. Heaven and God's eternal kingdom.
12. The two regiments of Church and State
13. The State, kings, subjects, masters, servants, fathers and mothers, children.
14. The Church, ministry, Christian life and behaviour.
15. Worship, prayer, preaching.
16. The family, duties of parents and masters.
17. The papacy, errors and failings of clergy and laity, false doctrines, false worship and sacraments, and, false 'good' works.
18. Those who have sought to reform the Church, Luther, Wyclif, etc., use of language in Tyndale's writings.[25]

THE METHODOLOGY

The evidence collected had to be analysed. First, to see if there were any changes which took place in Tyndale's thinking between 1525 and 1536, not only major shifts but also any modification of his understanding of any doctrine. Secondly, to discover if there was a coherence in his thinking throughout that period and between his different writings, and whether what appeared to be different emphases were real or

[25] e.g. Repentance (421); Faith (656); Good Works, (601); Loving God and Neighbour (428). All these extracts (on A4 paper, single spaced 12pt type) within the context in which they are found occupy just over one half a filing cabinet drawer.

only due to the different emphasis of that work. Thirdly, to collate the evidence in order to build up a picture of Tyndale's theological position. Examining the evidence revealed no sign that Tyndale changed his theological position between 1525 and 1536. Different works had their different emphases, but they all pointed to the same underlying theology. I was grateful to find that Paul Laughlin, Judith Mayotte and others who have made a critical examination of Tyndale's writings reached the same conclusions. I believe that since Sir Thomas More ended his controversy with William Tyndale no one has come closer to understanding Tyndale's theology than he did. My aim has been to examine theologically all of Tyndale's writings.

From the evidence it is clear *The Glass Slipper Syndrome* has had a great impact on the study of Tyndale's theology, and this has resulted in his genius as a theologian not being recognised. The next four chapters will be looking at Tyndale's theology and assessing the truth or falsehood of the claims of scholars regarding those who might have influenced his thought.

SUMMARY

In the first part of my thesis I examine what links there are (if any) between Tyndale and Wyclif and the Lollards; the Christian humanism of people like Colet, scholasticism and Erasmian humanism; Luther; Zwingli and the Swiss Reformers; the Radical Reformation; and the suggestion that Tyndale was the father of English Puritanism. I show that Tyndale used and modified Lollard and Lutheran positions, possibly being in early life a Lollard, but the evidence shows that he drew heavily

on Luther's writings yet he never was a Lutheran; and although he owed a debt to Erasmian humanism he had made it conform to his own theological position. The validity of other possible influences cannot be ascertained since there is not enough evidence to go on.

The second part of my thesis examines Tyndale's theology from his own writings, and only refers to others where necessary. They were assessed to see if there was any real change in theology according to date; and also to discover what Tyndale believed by that doctrine. Finally a coherent theology was formed from Tyndale's writings which did justice to each doctrine, and its place in the totality of Tyndale's theology.

The more I re-read Tyndale's writings the clearer it became that there was a unity in them from the 1525 Cologne Fragment of the New Testament through to his last writings. I was struck by the importance of the blood of Christ (used with a strong theological as opposed to a sacramental meaning) in Tyndale's theology.[26] During the course of my research I also realised that 'the Trinitarian covenant' and the 'Fatherhood of God' were also part of the equation which made Tyndale's theology distinctive, and united the whole of his thinking. I was helped by the work of Paul Laughlin, ("The Brightness of Moses' Face") whose examination of four doctrines in Tyndale's writings, according to the date of the work, had proved that Tyndale's theology had not changed between 1525-1536. He, and others, (e.g. Mayotte, "William Tyndale's Contribution to the Reformation in England") whose research had come to the same

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[26] See my paper given at the First International Tyndale Conference, Oxford. September 1994.

conclusion, have supported my case that Tyndale's theology did not change. Others also have written of the importance of 'the blood of Christ', 'the covenant' and 'the Fatherhood of God' in their writings,[27] but they have never followed it through – sometimes it was outside the scope of their study, or because it would mean accepting that Tyndale's writings did not fit the academic criteria into which Tyndale's theology had to fit.

The basis of Tyndale's theology is *The Covenant.* A covenant between God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which enabled the Father to adopt the elect into his family. God's justice was satisfied because the Son shed his blood, and the Holy Spirit applied Christ's blood to the hearts and lives of the elect so that they could become the children of God. As we will see, for Tyndale, the relationship between God and the elect has no forensic teaching in it: the elect are born into God's family as his children, and they have the same relationship to him as any child to its loving father. In this way Tyndale differs from other covenant theologies where the sinner has to be legally declared righteous.

Tyndale's theology breaks down into seven sections. *The Covenant Revealed* describes Tyndale's total reliance on the Scriptures for his theology. *The Covenant Envisaged* looks at Tyndale's understanding of the Fall, and God's plan to rescue the elect from the consequences of the Fall. *The Means to Achieve the Covenant,* deals with Election and the Fatherhood of God and the elect as his children. *The Covenant* examines the place of the law and the gospel within the covenant. *The Covenant*

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[27] McGiffert; Trueman, *Legacy;* et al.

Introduction

Signs concerns the place of the sacraments within God's plan for man's salvation. *The Covenant in Action* brings God's mercy to man and man's response in repentance, faith and love. *The Covenant People* is about their place in the Church and the world (the spiritual and the temporal regiments). Because these sections are, in a sense, artificial, there will be a considerable amount of overlap between them.

In the section *The Covenant Broken*, there is a lot of material in Tyndale's writings about the failures of the Church, and the state of the spiritualty, but a large area of Tyndale's attack on the unreformed Church I have left untouched. I limited myself to two areas, *The Covenant Broken*, and *The Errors of the Spiritualty*. *The Covenant Broken* is divided into three sections as we look at *The False Faith*, *False Actions*, and, *False Worship* within the unreformed Church. It is in the last of these that we find Tyndale's strongest criticism of Luther's theology where Tyndale equates consubstantiation with transubstantiation. *The Errors of the Spiritualty* examines the way which, Tyndale thought, led to the covenant being broken as the spiritualty turned from the word of God and the Bible became a closed book, for the spiritualty listened to the pagan philosophy of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, finding in them a way to satisfy their desire for self righteousness, and their covetousness, both of which were denied them in the scriptures.

In the exegesis of Tyndale's theology it is virtually impossible to relate what Tyndale wrote to what has been written about his theology. Also there has been very little written about his theology, and that has generally been to prove that Tyndale followed the teaching of one or

another of the Continental Reformers or movements of the sixteenth century. Occasionally it has been possible to make notes where scholars have been sufficiently close to Tyndale's position to show that it has – to a greater or lesser extent – failed to do justice to the whole picture of Tyndale's thought. For example, when Clebsch wrote, "Although any continuous narrative of Tyndale's career from 1532 until its end in 1536 builds on supposition after supposition, his theology, *newly organised around the idea of covenant* ..."[28] (italics mine): has he considered the many references to 'testament' or 'covenant' in Tyndale's writings before 1532[29], such as "the testament that God hath made to man-ward in Christ's blood"?[30]

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[28] Clebsch, *Englands,* 181
[29] see Laughlin
[30] *Mammon,* 1/92

II BACKGROUND TO TYNDALE'S THEOLOGY

There have been several biographies of William Tyndale and I do not intend to duplicate them and write about his life. There is, however, a lack of appreciation of his academic abilities. Most writers on the English Reformation hardly mention Tyndale, at best that he translated the Bible, at worst that he was a Lutheran, and as a theologian he was hardly worth taking note of. Many have treated Tyndale as someone hardly worth considering, as Lord Herbert wrote of "William Tindal, who had translated into English a great part of the Bible, (a witty, but violent, and sometimes railing disputant)."[1] Others have recognised in Tyndale's translation an importance for the development of the English language.[2] David Daniell has written about Tyndale's grasp of language and how his written English opened the way for Shakespeare and the Authorised Version of the Bible.[3] Michael Weitzman wrote of the strengths of Tyndale's translation of the Hebrew, and of his grasp of that language.[4] His writing about the way the Christian faith should be lived meant that David Rollison, who considered the development of society in Gloucestershire from 1500-1800, could write, "Tyndale's genius lay in the fact that he concentrated into one highly articulate lifetime, cultural forces which were to take many generations before they were taken for granted as 'normal' dimensions of

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[1] Herbert, 591, 469; Ackroyd, 272f; Bindoff, 101; Burnet, 51f, 260-262; Cameron, 350; Chadwick, *Reformation*, 113f; Haigh, ..*Revised*, 59; Powicke, 21; Scarisbrick, *Reformation,* does not even mention Tyndale. Williams, *Dictionary* refers to Tyndale under *Thomas More,* 317, and also that Cambridge scholars, influenced by Continental Reformers, "came very much under the influence of Tyndale." 375.
[2] E.g. Lawton, 67 etc.
[3] Daniell. *Biography*
[4] Weitzman, 165-180

human experience."[5] Expanding this, Rollison wrote, "Wycliffe and Tyndale were visionaries, agents in the making of something that was not yet a tangible reality: a unified England in which the people was sovereign and independent; a nation-state."[6]

As we have seen in the *Introduction,* the task is made much more difficult when we try to assess Tyndale's theology because of the various theses people have sought to prove. Each one thought that their thesis was Cinderella's glass slipper, and whatever Tyndale had written had to be trimmed so that it fitted the slipper.[7] The first part of my thesis is looking at the different 'sources' which combined in different combinations create these various ways Tyndale's theology was thought to swing as new ideas were presented to him, and lifting Tyndale from the theological doldrums by showing he was an original and independent theologian. It was because of the confusion caused by the views of different scholars that Glen Bowman could write of the complexity of establishing the background of Tyndale's theology.[8] "It is easy to oversimplify ideas – including theological ones – by thinking only in terms of origins and past influences. This is clearly dangerous, for attempting to determine with precision the sources of Tyndale's eucharistic theology is akin to embarking on a voyage into an oceanic abyss: the deeper one probes into the sources, the

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[5] Rollison, 4
[6] Rollison, 16
[7] see *Introduction,* 3-7
[8] Bowman mentions Rupp, Tjernagel, Clebsch, Smeeton, Locher, Trueman, Dugmore, who bring different sources for the background of Tyndale's theology. Also, Cross, Thomson, J.F. Davis and Aston who have different ideas of the theological boundaries of the end of Lollardy and the beginning of Reformation.

murkier the waters become."[9] Tyndale's comment on the spiritualty of his day was, "the sentences of the scripture are nothing but very riddles unto them, at the which they cast as the blind man doth at the crow, and expound by guess, an hundred doctors an hundred ways:"[10] this statement applies equally (almost) to the scholars who have written on Tyndale's theology.

Was Tyndale a humanist?[11] a Lutheran?[12] a Zwinglian?[13] a Lollard?[14] Was he influenced by the Christian humanism of Colet?[15] What effect did the Radical Reformation have on his theology? Was he an original thinker?[16] Did his theology change between 1525 and 1536 – if so, how many times (1-4 or perhaps 5)[17], and in what variations of moves? Where did his *covenant theology* come from? What effect had the Scriptures on his theology?[18] Was he the father of English Puritanism?[19]

However as Bowman wrote, "Until the early 1960s, scholars generally regarded him as an English Lutheran, but then revisionists started linking his style and emphasis on morality also to Christian

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[9] Bowman, 424. This comment has bearing on those scholars who try to simplify Tyndale's position by saying here he is following Luther, or some other Reformer or school of thought.
[10] *1 John,* 140
[11] Brown; Campbell, *Erasmus*; Knox *Faith*; Loane; Trueman, *Legacy*; Yost, "Christian Humanism"; Hutchinson, "The cause of the Reformation in England was less advanced by Lutheran treatises than by the acquaintance of scholars with Erasmus' Greek Testament …" 15
[12] Cameron; Cargill Thompson, "Regiments"; Clebsch, *England's*; Daniell, *Biography*; Davies, *Peace*; Dick, "Mammon"; Dickens, *Reformation*; Elton, *Reformation England*; Haigh, *English Reformations*; Lindberg, *European*; Loane; O'Day, *Debate;* Rex, *Henry*; Scarisbrick, *Henry*; Trueman, *Legacy*
[13] Daniell, *Biography*; Cross.
[14] Guy, *Tudor*; Hudson, *Premature;* Knox, *Faith*; O'Day, *Debate*; Penny; .Richardson, Smeeton, *Lollard Themes*; Stackhouse.
[15] Brown; Renwick. O'Day, *Debate.*
[16] Edwards.
[17] Clebsch *England's*; Daniell *Biography*; Dickens, *English*; etc.
[18] Brown

humanism. A few have argued for Lollard tendencies in Tyndale's thought, while others have suggested viewing him as a Zwinglian. Most of these arguments, however, have emphasized Tyndale's views of justification and the role of law, and have neglected the origins of his enigmatic doctrine of the Eucharist."[20] More importantly they have failed to look at the three key facets of his theology, the *Covenant,* the *Fatherhood of God,* and the *Blood of Christ,* and have thus failed to see how Tyndale's theology has a strength and unity which is based solely on the word of God, and not on what Luther, Zwingli, or what any one else believed. The fact is that English Protestant theology has not received a real examination, as Collinson wrote, "A point still at issue is whether or to what extent such English divines as William Tyndale, Robert Barnes, John Frith and, indeed, Thomas Cranmer constructed a distinctively English Protestantism rather than incorporating or eclectically borrowing from German and Swiss doctrine. Meanwhile a caustic and perhaps unfair comment has been made about 'the theological mediocrity of the movement.'"[21]

There is some truth in most of the suggestions, but, because they try to prove too much they achieve too little, Tyndale's theology is warped and diminished and made to appear as something differing from what he actually wrote. The awkward questions were ignored as if they did not exist. Almost every book one reads about the early English Reformation says, Tyndale was a Lutheran. This is justified by its advocates because of

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[19] Hill, "Tyndale"; Knappen, "Tyndale"; Packer; Stowell; Trinterud, "Puritanism".
[20] Bowman, 422f
[21] Collinson, "England", 86. ref to McGrath, *Iustitia-2*, 98

Tyndale's partial translation of some of Luther's works. As we will see, the important question to ask is, Why did Tyndale alter Luther's theology in so many places, rather than making a straight translation? We then find the differences in their theologies are more important than their agreements, and even where they use the same terminology it does not necessarily mean they are saying the same thing.

Of the many suggestions of influence on Tyndale there are four which will need extended treatment, they are primarily the influence of Lollardy and of Luther, then, to a lesser extent, humanism and, finally, Tyndale's possible links with the Puritan movement of Elizabethan and Stuart England. Although the Swiss Reformers are important, comments on their possible influence on Tyndale will be mentioned at the relevant places in other sections. Other possible sources of Tyndale's theology, because they have less academic acceptance, will be dealt with in this section. Scholasticism (although generally discarded as a source of his theology) and Continental Radical theology have all been claimed as influencing Tyndale in some way.

Where one can show two possible theologies influencing Tyndale's doctrine, I will tend to give priority to the earliest source, although I will not rule out that later influences might have contributed or modified Tyndale's thinking, or that later theologies might be (in some instances) the prime source.

William A Clebsch has perhaps had the most influence on people's views of Tyndale's theology. Clebsch had worked out his thesis that Tyndale was at first a Lutheran (1524-1529) before he re-discovered the

law (1530-1532). Finally, he found his theology of contract (1532-1536)[22]. Clebsch wrote, "Considered as a theologian, however, Tyndale must be regarded at once as less persistent than Luther, less consistent than Frith, and less insistent than Barnes. For Tyndale adopted first one and then another theme as the clue to scripture's meaning and therefore as the heart of Christian faith."[23] This has been a generally accepted theory of Tyndale's theology since 1964. However, Laughlin's very thorough examination of Tyndale's doctrine according to the date of writing, has shown Clebsch's theory of change is wrong and therefore his conclusions cannot stand.

As stated in the *Introduction* Tyndale was a great theologian whose theology was consistent over all his writings (1525-1536), more scriptural, more spiritual, more tolerant and more evangelistic than other sixteenth century Reformers.[24]

There have been criticisms made of Clebsch's theory, some are basically minor which modify rather than change Clebsch's theory. For example, McGiffert wrote, "the bone to be picked here with the interpretation of covenant as contract is not so very large or hard."[25] L.J. Trinterud re-assessed the evidence of Tyndale's dependence on others and concluded, "He used the works of Luther, Erasmus and others, as many other lesser reformers and advocates of religious change did, as sources, proto-types, and patterns for their own works."[26]

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[22] Clebsch, *England's*
[23] Clebsch, *England's,* 138
[24] *Introduction,* 1
[25] McGiffert, 172
[26] Trinterud, "Reappraisal", 42

One of the main planks used by those claiming Tyndale's theology changed is that he used the word "testament" in his early writings, and "covenant" in his later writings, and it is argued that there is a difference in meaning between these words which reflected Tyndale's differing theologies. I can find no basis for this claim which ignores Tyndale's own explanation that his change of word had no theological significance: "God hath also made us promises, and hath sworn; yea, hath made a testament or a covenant, and hath bound himself, and hath sealed his obligation with Christ's blood."[27]

Research by Paul Laughlin and others have shown the fallacy of Clebsch's arguments. Laughlin in his PhD dissertation, "The Brightness of Moses Face", said that in Chapter 1 he started by following Clebsch as the most thorough interpreter of Tyndale. He examined Tyndale's theology of Law and Gospel, Covenant, and Hermeneutics looking at each of Tyndale's writings in date order to discover the changes Tyndale made to his theology. However, he has shown that Clebsch's argument has no real basis and could only be supported by selective use of Tyndale's writings and by historians preconceived concept of the limited number of sixteenth-century theological options open to Tyndale. "It is not surprising, then, that Tyndale's free use of disparate schemata and terminology has beguiled some interpreters into positing either a basic inconsistency or a momentous shift in his thought. But it is now clear that he by no means employed two different theological frameworks, either simultaneously or successively, but rather maintained consistently

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[27] *Obedience,* 1/292; *Sacraments,* 1/363; etc.

throughout his writings an essentially covenantal framework for theological reflection and discourse."[28]

Judith Mayotte, "William Tyndale's Contribution to the Reformation in England", wrote, "Clebsch either did not see, or else did not consider the fact that Tyndale worked throughout his life from the primary foundation of a 'testament betwene' God and man, freely given by God with the attendant response from man of love of God and neighbor."[29]

When Tyndale's writings are examined impartially there are no substantial changes to his theology which can be found. Different writings have different emphases, but these can be accounted for when the different purpose of the writing is considered. But underlying them all is "the new Testament, or covenant made with us of God in Christ's blood."[30]

Donald Dean Smeeton[31] introduced the idea that Tyndale's theology had an English background in the Lollard movement. Smeeton's theory has found support from scholars like Anne Hudson.[32] I believe Tyndale came from a background which was, at its least, strongly sympathetic to the Lollards, and that there are stronger grounds for making this connection than is found in Smeeton's work.[33] Although it has brought a new dimension into the study of Tyndale's theology, there are many who do not think Smeeton has proved his point, and so they still think Tyndale's move from Catholicism started with Luther.

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[28] Laughlin, 268
[29] Mayotte. 77
[30] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/468
[31] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes*
[32] Hudson, *Premature*
[33] see next Chapter, *Tyndale and Lollardy*

I have not discovered anyone who has claimed scholasticism had any influence on Tyndale's thinking, although it is evident that he had experienced scholastic teaching in his education at Oxford. Where he does turn to scholastic methods in his writings it is obvious he is using them sarcastically. Further research into Tyndale's background and the possible influence of Lollardy in his early life would possibly account for the lack of scholastic influence in his writings.

One of Tyndale's great criticisms of scholasticism is its dependence on the teaching of Aristotle, a pagan philosopher. "First, they nosel them in sophistry, and in *benefundatum*. And there corrupt they their judgements with apparent arguments, … and of all manner books of Aristotle. … When they have thiswise brawled eight, ten, or twelve or more years, and after that their judgements are utterly corrupt, then they begin their divinity; not at the scripture, but every man taketh a sundry doctor."[34] Tyndale's criticism of Greek philosophy was valid whether the person relying on it were a papist or a reformer. We can trace many of Tyndale's deviations from humanism, Luther and others to his absolute rejection of Aristotle, Plato and the Greek philosophers with their stress on human reason instead of a total reliance on the revealed word of God. So Tyndale commands his readers, "Try therefore all doctrine. Wherewith shall we try it? With the doctrine of the apostles, and with the scripture, which is the touchstone."[35]

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[34] *Obedience,* 1/157f.
[35] *1 John.* 2/195

There are no good grounds for linking Tyndale's theology with the Radical Reformers. Tyndale's theology was basically in the main stream of the Reformation, and the areas where his theology was radical it can be shown they are also found in Lollardy.[36] I am sure that if Continental Radicalism had an influence on Tyndale we would have found more signs of this radicalism in his writings[RW1].

One of the beliefs we have to bury is that the Reformation began with Luther's discovery of *justification by faith alone*, and that every Reformer had a dependence on Luther. Locher wrote against this view with regards to Zwingli's theology: "For this evaluation proceeds from the tacit assumption that the inner development, the way and the doctrine of Martin Luther provide the standard by which every attempt at reformation should be measured. Luther is made the norm for every reformer. Whatever conforms to the phenomenon of Luther is valid, and whatever does not conform is alien. As if it were impossible for the Holy Spirit to lead each one of us, just as we are, in our own way!"[37] As we will see, Locher's words are equally valid with regards to Tyndale's theology, for there are few areas where we can say Tyndale and Luther agreed, and, even in those areas of seeming agreement, Tyndale's was not an exact copy of Luther's theology because they came from different starting points, travelled along different theological routes, and reached different conclusions.[38]

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[36] see chapter, *Tyndale and Lollardy*
[37] Locher, 2f, see *Introduction* 5.
[38] see chapter, *Luther and Tyndale.*

John R. Loeschen provides a useful starting point in his *Patterns of association between certain concepts and Persons of the Trinity.*[39] He examines the theologies of Luther, Calvin and Simons. If we break down Tyndale's theology using his method we find that Tyndale's theology follows Calvin's pattern and not Luther's. But when Loeschen considers the Church and social ethics, Tyndale's theology differs radically from all three Reformers. I have found Loeschen's methodology helpful in the initial stages of an examination of a Tyndale's theology, as it paints a broad outline into which the details can be fitted, even though the outline might need refinement from time to time.

Under *Love, or Order,* Loeschen places Calvin as, *Father: basis of the church.* Tyndale fits this division, for the basis of the church is the elective love of the Father who adopts his chosen ones into his family. (Under this heading Loeschen wrote that Luther made this the work of the Holy Spirit.)

Under *Form, or Justice,* Tyndale would join with Luther, Calvin and Simons in making the Son responsible for this work of God, for it is the shedding of his blood which has opened the way for our salvation. Loeschen wrote that under this heading Luther regarded it as the *Son: basis of the church.*

Under *Power, or Freedom,* Tyndale, once again, shares with Calvin that this is the work of the Holy Spirit; for the Holy Spirit applies Christ's blood to the elect and enables them to become children of God, whereas for Luther this aspect was the work of the Father.

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[39] Loeschen. 7

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Following Loeschen's analytical method we see that Tyndale differed from Luther in each case. Although in his second section Luther and Calvin (and Tyndale) agreed that *form or justice* was the work of Christ Luther alone believed the Son was the basis of the Church.

Even Tyndale's understanding of justifying faith differed from Luther's. For Luther, "Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1 [:12,13]. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit."[40] Tyndale's 'translation', however, is, "But right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us, which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature, and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God, as thou readest in the first of John; and killeth the old Adam, and maketh us altogether new in the heart, mind, will, lust, and in all our affections and powers of the soul; the Holy Ghost ever accompanying her, and ruling the heart."[41] In these few lines from the *Preface/Prologue to Romans,* we find Tyndale's theology differed from Luther's in their doctrines of God, of salvation, and, of the place of a Christian in God's kingdom.

Every change Tyndale made to Luther's *Preface to Romans* has a theological significance, whether they are minor changes, as quoted above, or major changes where Tyndale totally leaves Luther and re-writes large sections in his own words. We will find that these, and other, theological differences have their roots going back to their understanding of scripture

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[40] *LW-35,* 370.
[41] *Romans,* 1/493.

and from their differing backgrounds. We will consider these differences in more detail in the chapter on *Luther and Tyndale*.

In the same way the links between Tyndale and Erasmian Humanism or the Swiss Reformers become less viable when we examine the theology underlying the apparent agreements. It is in the meaning given to Christ's words in the Lord's Supper that we find the clearest links between Tyndale and the Swiss Reformers. "The third sort affirm, that the words mean no more but only that we believe, by the things that are there shewed, that Christ's body was broken and his blood shed for our sins, if we will forsake our sins and turn to God to keep his law."[42] A few pages further he writes, "it is the memorial, the earnest, and seal of his body and blood, as the use of the scripture is to call signs by the names of things signified thereby."[43] For Tyndale the bread and the wine were symbolic of Christ's body broken and blood shed on the Cross. Tyndale rejected the Roman Catholic transubstantiation and the Lutheran consubstantiation, and he believed, along with the Swiss Reformers that the bread and the wine were symbolic only and that Christ's body ands blood were received by faith and not through the mouth. "It is therefore the sacrament, sign, and memorial of that sacrifice wherewith Christ offered his body for our sins, and commanded, saying, 'This do in the remembrance of me.'"[44]

His statements about the "third part" appear to be referring to a recognisable position in sixteenth-century theology, and it seems obvious that Tyndale is referring to Zwingli but also that he is looking back to the

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[42] *Sacraments*, 1/368
[43] *Sacraments* 1/371
[44] *Answer*, 3/177

beliefs of the Lollards. However, Tyndale is not following Zwingli by using his writings and modifying them. Zwingli understood three kinds of error, instead of the two in Tyndale, but the most significant thing is their arguments against both the Roman view of transubstantiation and the Lutheran of consubstantiation are independent of each other.[45]

When we consider covenant theology, Tyndale provides a multitude of covenants between God and man, but none of these covenants relate to a legal justification of sinners. At the same time *the covenant* underlies and underpins man's salvation for it enables the sinner to be born into God's family and become a child of God. We will look more closely at this when examining Tyndale's covenant theology.

One of the main differences between Tyndale and other Reformers is his tolerant attitude to those who differed in their faith from true Christianity and also those who were not Christians. Hendrix wrote, "A common Reformation agenda of re-Christianization helps to explain more clearly the patterns of intolerance in sixteenth-century Europe."[46] Hillerbrand, in his essay on the "Other" opens up a main reason for this intolerance, and writes: "Luther's comment offers a revealing insight into the broader topic of society's attitude toward the Other. The Jews' distinctive (albeit invisible) Otherness was identified – their religious otherness – and the verdict was that they were not to be tolerated unless they surrendered that religious Otherness."[47] But for Tyndale there was no Otherness, through creation we were all related as brothers and sisters, and

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[45] *Sacraments,* 366ff; Bromiley. 188ff
[46] Hendrix. "Rerooting", 576
[47] Hillerbrand, 253

that was all important for the Christian as he loved his neighbour as himself. Loving one's neighbour as oneself extends to everyone, "though he be a Turk."[48] As Tyndale wrote, "If thy neighbours which thou knowest be served, and thou yet have superfluity, and hearest necessity to be among the brethren a thousand miles off, to them thou art debtor. Yea, to the very infidels we be debtors, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ, or to blaspheme Christ."[49]

The background to Tyndale's theology is the word of God. *Sola scriptura* is the key to the understanding of Tyndale's theology. He read, he used, he adapted what others wrote, but (as with his own thoughts) he put it alongside the Scriptures and ruthlessly rejected anything which did not stand that test. His theology (as we will see) was tied more closely to the Scriptures than other Reformers, a position made possible by his rejection of pagan philosophy which exulted human reason.

We will examine in detail any links between Tyndale and the Lollards, Luther, and Humanism (both Erasmian and the English Christian Humanists) in separate chapters. Also his possible link to Elizabethan and seventeenth-century Puritans. As far as possible we will deal with all these external influences in the first half of the thesis, leaving the second half, the study of Tyndale's theology free (except where necessary) from the 'clutter' of showing how Tyndale's theology differed from that of other sixteenth-century Reformers.

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[48] *Pathway,* 1/26
[49] *Mammon,* 1/99 (see *The Covenant in Action,* 264

III TYNDALE AND LOLLARDY

INTRODUCTION

The strength of Lollardy is customarily measured by examining the trials in the Bishop's courts and the language used in wills. Although these can prove where Lollardy was present the lack of evidence does not prove the absence of Lollardy in an area. Since Lollardy tended to be present where the textile industry flourished we should suspect there are grounds for its existence in these areas even if there is little or no traceable evidence available. Though in fact G. R. Elton, Joan Johnson, and others (see following pages) have shown evidence for Lollardy in south Gloucestershire, where Tyndale grew up.[1] Malcolm Lambert suggested the lack of evidence of Lollard activity here is "due to the lack of prosecuting zeal of the bishops of Worcester."[2]

William Tracy's will was definitely heretical, and it resulted in his body being exhumed and burnt. Tyndale's testimony was that Tracy "was a learned man, and better seen in the works of St Austin twenty years before he died, than ever I knew doctor in England."[3] This would date it to 1510, some seven years before Luther posted his 95 Theses. Tyndale's comment suggests he had a personal knowledge of Tracy at that time, when Tyndale would have been about sixteen years old. Those who argue that Tracy got his reforming ideas from Luther suggest that Tyndale meant

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[1] Elton, *Reformation England*, 74: Johnson, 35f
[2] Lambert, 278. From 1487 the Bishops of Worcester were Italians who never resided in the Diocese.
[3] *Tracy*, 3/279

ten years and not twenty, or perhaps that the printer made an error. This seems to be a case of changing the evidence to fit the theory.[4] In reaction to the revisionists, "such as Dr. Christopher Haigh and Professor Jack Scarisbrick,"[5] Dickens wrote, "The rather spectacular manifestation of Protestantism at Bristol had tended to obscure its diffusion throughout the many towns and villages long since made prosperous by sheep-farming and the cloth trade; places like Wotton, Duresly, Tetbury, Chipping Campden, Stroud, Stonehouse, Newent, Lidney, Tewkesbury and Gloucester itself."[6]

If we go back to about 1387, John Trevisa was Vicar of Berkeley and Chaplain to Lord Berkeley. There are many enigmatic questions About Trevisa's life and faith. He was with Wycliffe at the Queen's College, Oxford, and both held Prebends at Westbury-on-Trym. He was interested in the vernacular and has been credited with translating the Bible into English. Caxton wrote, "Treusa vycarye of barkley which atte request of one Sir thomas lord barkley translated this sayd book *[Polychronicon]* the byble … out of latyn into englyssh."[7] Pollard believed Caxton's evidence for Trevisa being responsible for the second Wycliffite Bible is stronger than the evidence that it was the work of Purvey, whilst Margaret Deanesly considered Purvey's claims to be strongest. Fowler, having quoted from *The Preface to the King James*

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[4] Craig and Litzenberger, 421fn.
[5] Dickens, "Expansion", 187
[6] Dickens, "Expansion", 203. Although Haigh, *Revised*, referring to a later period; "In Bristol and Gloucestershire the position appears to have been similar: there were already Lollards in the weaving villages, some of the county gentry were influenced by Tyndale through family contacts, members of the Bristol merchant oligarchy supported Latimer's evangelical preaching …" 25f

Bible, wrote, "Yet it is true that for nearly five hundred years this idea has been debated back and forth by editors, historians, and students of the Bible. Unfortunately, no decisive evidence has been brought forward, and it therefore cannot be said that anyone has clearly established the truth or falsity of the allegation quoted above."[8] Anne Hudson has looked at the evidence and concluded "a verdict of 'not proven' must be entered to any charge against Trevisa of Wycliffism."[9]

The real question is Trevisa's attitude to a vernacular Bible which was important for Tyndale, and not whether Trevisa had Lollard connections. Trevisa was concerned about the Bible being translated into English. Fowler quotes from Trevisa's *Original Prefaces on Translation,* "Also holy writ was translated out of Hebrew into Greek and out of Greek into Latin, and then out of Latin into French. Then what hath English trespassed that it might not be translated into English?"[10] Could this have triggered Tyndale's urge to translate the Bible into English?

We know that Tyndale knew Trevisa's translation of *The Polycronicon,*[11] and he may have read some other Chronicles from which he drew his historical passages.[12] Tyndale had almost certainly read some of Trevisa's writings and other translations into English as well, and echoes of Trevisa are found in Tyndale's writings. The *Dialogus* is

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[7] Trevisa, *Dialogus,* cxv.
[8] Fowler, *Trevisa, Medieval Scholar,* 213
[9] Hudson *Premature,* 397
[10] Fowler, *Trevisa, Medieval Scholar,* 231, modernised from Waldron, "Trevisa's", 292
[11] Pineas, "History", 122
[12] *Prelates,* 294

closely followed in Tyndale's writings on more than one occasion.[13] (Further study is needed to establish if there is any link between the theology of Tyndale and Trevisa.)

A hundred years later the area around Berkley in south Gloucestershire is associated with William Tyndale. In his 1997 Presidential Address to the *Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* Joseph Bettey spoke about the supporters of Church reform in south Gloucestershire. Sir John Walsh, who employed Tyndale at Little Sodbury, Sir Anthony Poyntz of Iron Acton who, with his son Sir Nicholas Poyntz, supported reforming preachers (it was a Poyntz who supported Tyndale at Antwerp). The Baynhams, who were related to the Tracys of Toddington, and James Baynham married the widow of Simon Fish. The Trotman family possessed books by Luther, Bucer and Zwingli, given to them by John Dydsin, Vicar of Coaley.[14] The Tyndale family had considerable assets in that part of Gloucestershire. William's brother, Edward, succeeded Sir James Walsh as Crown Steward for the Berkeley estate. The Tyndales and Trotmans were related by marriage, and William's mother was probably a Trotman.[15] Dickens wrote of James Bainham's supposed beating by More and his death for heresy in 1532,[16]

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[13] e.g. "And also wrytynge vnto the Romaynes the thyrtene chapiter he sayth on this wyse: Everye soule shall be subjects to the hyghe powers. Whan he sayth euery soule, it semeth than, none is excepted." (*Dialogus,* 13.) "For it is written, 'Let every soul submit himself unto the authority of the higher powers.' Here is no man except; but all souls must obey." (*Obedience,* 1/178)

[14] Bettey, 13-15

[15] Trotman, 6f

[16] Dickens, *English Reformation (2nd edn)* 120

also Rollison wrote about the trial of John Didson, and also Andrews of Wotton-under-Edge for heresy.[17]

K.G. Powell reminds us that "Bristol became a centre of Lollard activity and remained so until the 1530s."[18] Clement wrote, "Sir Thomas More claimed that heretical books were so freely available there that they were 'throwen in the strete and lefte at mennes dores by nyghte'. These 'poysoned bookes', as More calls them, were distributed in the city by Richard Webb of Chipping Sodbury."[19] Janet Wilson wrote, "Bristol was particularly susceptible to religious conflict: it was a traditional centre of Lollard heresy and was able to maintain independence in religious matters due to its division between the dioceses of Worcester and Bath and Wells and its distance from episcopal supervision."[20]

Aston and Richmond point out that the fact that the gentry seemed to be immune from persecution for heresy "is notable, because it tells us about the realities of gentry status, not about gentry Lollardy or the lack of it."[21] It is also true, as Richard Davies wrote, "Such well-shod sympathisers with Lollardy still did the right things in public. They went to church and sat as prominently as they should. They served as churchwardens and wardens of fraternities."[22]

From the evidence, and from recent studies, we can say that Lollardy was almost certainly not unknown to Tyndale as he grew up in the Vale of Berkeley and the southern Cotswolds. Rollison wrote,

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[17] Rollison, 89f
[18] Powell, 98
[19] Clement, 70
[20] Wilson, 23; Skeeters, 35
[21] Aston & Richmond, 20

"'Protestantism' was indigenous to the Vale of Berkeley, its roots in the history and social structure of the *countrey* and its tentacles – the 'alternative social *bloc*' – which radiated out from it."[23] The stress on the Scriptures and the vernacular from John Trevisa and from Lollardy may have contributed to Tyndale's desire to make the Word of God more widely known amongst the people.

WILLIAM TYNDALE

Glen Bowman's comment that "the deeper one probes into the sources, the murkier the waters become,"[24] rests on the assumption that Tyndale was dependant on different Reformers for his theology, and that we have to read the sources into Tyndale's writings.[25] We can only see the clear waters of Tyndale's theology as we examine his writings and see the different stages which existed in his life and which in all probability affected his theological development, and not artificially try to prove his thinking might have been influenced by ideas Tyndale clearly rejected if we read his writings carefully.

Tyndale referred to Wyclif six times in his writings. One is a reference to the Wyclif Bible,[26] three refer to Wyclif's preaching which rebuked the spiritualty *(Answer)*, that he preached repentance *(Jonas)*,

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[22] Davies, R.G., 206
[23] Rollison, 90
[24] Bowman, 424 (already quoted *Background,* 16, see also 16 n.8, n. 9)
[25] *The Glass Slipper Syndrome* – see *Introduction,* 3-8
[26] *Answer,* 3/169

which led to true faith in Christ's death *(Practice).*[27] The other two refer to charges laid against Wyclif.[28]

Lollard tracts were published in the sixteenth-century, Tyndale is credited with editing *The Examination of Thorpe and Oldcastle,* and, *The Praier and Complaynte of the Ploweman vnto Christe.* Bill Cooper has recently discovered part of *A Compendious Olde Treatyse* in Tyndale's handwriting.[29] As Smeeton wrote, "If Tyndale, in fact, edited these works and issued them, it is strong evidence of his identification with their cause and content."[30]

Smeeton sought to prove there is a Lollard influence in Tyndale's writings,[31] quoting passages from Lollard writings which had a similarity to phrases found in Tyndale's works. Many scholars do not think he has proved his case, often because it undermines their own position regarding possible influences on Tyndale's thought. There is much to commend Smeeton's work, not least in pointing out the many areas of theology where Lollardy possibly had influenced Tyndale, but also he has opened up a new understanding of the importance of Lollardy for the Reformation. Smeeton wrote, "Lollardy's impact on Tyndale has too frequently been ruled out, even though on the other hand, its influence 'must not be too lightly assumed.'"[32]

Sometimes Smeeton's arguments for a Lollard background to Tyndale's theology were taken out of context, for instance, when he

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[27] *Answer,* 3/40f; *Jonas,* 1/458; *Practice,* 2/296
[28] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/224f; *Answer,* 3/165f
[29] Parker, 42f; Hudson, *Lollards,* 245; Cooper, *Reformation-3,* 328ff
[30] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes,* 258; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers,* 233
[31] Smeeton *Lollard Themes*

discussed the covenant he supported his claim with a quotation from *The Lanterne of Light.*[33] This reference is a quotation from Ezekiel.[34] Also from *The Lanterne* Smeeton "claimed that Christians have pledged their covenant and, therefore, they should live out their obligation."[35] The quotation in context refers to the spiritualty, and not to the laity.[36]

Smeeton then quotes from *The Song of Moses,* "Another Lollard tract asked why some children disgraced their parents by rejecting established morality, then answered, 'for thei holden not that thei highten [promised] in her baptem'."[37] But the context has the cause being the bad example set by the parents to their children. "Untrewe fadris geten often tymes untrewe sones, … Fadris and modris ben cause if *th*e child be vicious. … And *th*us yvele trees bringen for*th* yvel fruyt. For ne*th*er *th*e toon ne *th*at o*th*ir *th*at is, nei*th*er eldris ne her children, ben trewe to God. Whi? For *th*ei holden not *th*at *th*ei hi*gh*ten in her baptem."[38]

Although one can find places to criticise Smeeton we have to remember that he was opening up a new aspect of reformation studies. He was going behind the accepted theory that everything began with Luther, and Smeeton attempted to show that Tyndale's reformation theology went back over a hundred years before Luther. In spite of any shortcomings we may find in Smeeton's work his thesis has to stand for there are more

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[32] ibid. 36, quote from Greenslade, 26
[33] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes,* 153
[34] Swinburn, 105
[35] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes,* 152
[36] Swinburn, 105f
[37] Smeeton. *Lollard Themes.* 153
[38] Arnold, 3/38f

substantiated statements in his work than his weak ones.[39] There are Lollard themes in Tyndale's theology (even though they have been altered and developed as Tyndale carried the Lollard's attitude to the Bible to its logical conclusion).[40] For as Parker wrote, "Smeeton's book is the most thoroughgoing study of possible Lollard influence on Tyndale, and it shows convincingly and with copious documentation the similarities of thought between Tyndale and Lollardy."[41] As I examine Tyndale's use of language one can see there are close links with Lollardy in his writings. Then when we examine doctrinal links between Lollardy and Tyndale we discover that Tyndale was in many ways closer to the Lollards than he was to Luther, and therefore Thomas More was justified when he wrote that Fisher "sayd y^{t} he had sene of Luthers owne wordys worse than he had euer herde rehersed / and in Tyndall worse yet in many thyngys than he sawe in Luther hym selfe."[42]

TYNDALE'S LANGUAGE

Anne Hudson wrote that Christians were "known men" or "true men", and Lollards used "true" and "false" to distinguish the Lollard from the Catholic Church. She also mentions other words which had a Lollard connotation.[43] Tyndale's use of Lollard words with a Lollard meaning appears to be natural, and not as a means to make his writings accepted by the Lollard community. Although "true" and "false" are often used in

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[39] I am certain that in every pioneer research, such as Smeeton's, it is easy for later scholars to find areas of weakness, and also profitable lines of research which have been missed.
[40] Matthew, *Wyclif*, 313
[41] Parker, 32.
[42] *CWM-6*, 431

Christian writings there is a peculiarity in the way they are used by Lollards which can reveal the writer was a Lollard. There is sufficient evidence in the way Tyndale used them to make them stand out and suggest a Lollard background. There are also occasions when he used "true" and "false" in a general way without any such overtones. Anne Hudson quoted from Knighton *(Cronicon Henrici Knighton)*, "about the mode of speech and style of argument favoured by the heretics." She quoted two of Knighton's examples and continued, "It is not difficult to guess their import: *trewe prechoures* are those who propound Wycliffite doctrine, *false prechoures* those who controvert this, or preach orthodox beliefs rejected by the Lollards." After referring to some other examples from Lollard writings, Hudson continues, "Knighton's example is in fact an illustration of a very common opposition between *trewe* and *false* in these texts."[44] It is, in fact, the way the Lollards used these two words which is important rather than the fact that they use them, and we find Tyndale used them in exactly the same way.

Smeeton only has passing references to the words Tyndale used which carried Lollard overtones, he mentions Tyndale's use of "true" and "false" in three paragraphs and quotes five cases within twelve pages of the *Exposition of Matthew*, and also draws attention to the use of these words in two or three other places.[45] Tyndale's use of "true" and "false" covers all his writings, and he used "true" 83 times, and "false" 15 times in

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[43] Hudson, *Lollards*, 166f
[44] ibid. 166f.
[45] Smeeton, *Lollard Themes*, 79f. 130, 160.

direct contrast to "true". But he never used "known" in a way which would suggest Lollardy.

In *Mammon* it is through knowledge of the Scripture that we know "the difference between a false believer and a true believer." "Now is the true believer heir of God by Christ's deservings." Christ will "try his true friends" who will have a "true faith" and his outward works of faith show "he is a true believer."[46]

The Obedience uses these words in a wider way. Tyndale disagreed with Fisher over the figure of Aaron. Aaron does not represent Peter and his successors, "but signifieth every disciple of Christ, and every true preacher of God's word." God "hath ever sent his true prophets and true preachers" to call people to repentance. "Paul, Peter, and all true apostles preached Christ only."[47]

> But if the preacher preach false; then whosoever's heart God moveth, to the same it shall be lawful to rebuke and improve the false teacher with the clear and manifest scripture; and that same is no doubt a true prophet, sent of God. For the scripture is God's, and theirs that believe, and not the false prophets.[48]

In *Sacraments,* the "true faith" was preached by "the true priests and prophets unto the people." Also the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper "cease to be any more bread and wine in the hearts of true

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[46] *Mammon,* 1/64,65,45,61.
[47] *Obedience,* 1/209,163,288
[48] *Obedience,* 1/283

believers."[49] This same pattern is found in *The Prologues to the Books of the Bible* and in his *Marginal Notes.*

We find "true" contrasted with "false" many times in both Tyndale's *Expositions.* In *Matthew* God will give you "a pure eye, both to discern the true doctrine from the false, and the true doctor from the howling hypocrite." And comparing the spiritualty with those of the Old Testament, "Covetousness taught the false prophets in the old Testament to interpret the law of God falsely, and to pervert the meaning and intent of all the sacrifices and ceremonies, and to slay the true preachers that rebuked them."[50] Whilst in *1 John,* the true preachers seek that we "shall ever know and discern the true word of God from all false and counterfeited doctrine of vain traditions."[51]

In his *Answer to Sir Thomas More,* Tyndale asked, "Wherewith should the true preacher confound the false, except he brought true miracles to confound the false, or else authentic scripture, of full authority already among the people."[52]

The most interesting passage comes in *The Practice of Prelates,* where there is a link made with John Wyclif. The prelates

> Could not at their own lust slay the poor wretches which at that time were converted unto repentance and to the true faith, to put their trust in Christ's death and blood-shedding for the remission of their sins, by the preaching of John Wycliffe.[53]

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[49] *Sacraments,* 1/382,372
[50] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/40,99
[51] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/147
[52] *Answer,* 3/26
[53] *Prelates,* 2/296

Although "true" and "false" are important in pointing towards a Lollard influence, they are not, in themselves, conclusive evidence that Tyndale came from a Lollard background. Significantly Tyndale used other words which had a significant meaning for Lollardy.

Anne Hudson mentions other words commonly used in a technical sense by the Lollards, I will take two of these, "ground" and "authentic". She wrote that "grounde" means "not the bland *M.E.D.* sense 'justify', but the more precise 'establish as deriving from the Bible.'"[54] It is in this sense we find Tyndale frequently used this word. The preacher is to "teach them the principles and the ground of the faith." The Christian is to judge the teaching against the Scriptures so they can "make Christ the foundation and the ground, and build all on him." For "the scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all."[55] I have already quoted one passage where Tyndale used "authentic" in a way which would have been familiar to the Lollards. Tyndale also told More, "We can confound your false doctrine with authentic and manifold scripture."[56]

The translation of the Jewish *Passover* with the word *Easter* shows possible links between Tyndale and Trevisa. Trevisa wrote, "And *th*is estir of Iewis was figure and bodynge of *th*e estir of cristene men."[57] Tyndale, in the New Testament, and also in *Sacraments,* referred to the *Passover* as *Easter.*[58]

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[54] Hudson, *Lollards*, 172
[55] *Obedience* 1/156,167,304
[56] *Answer,* 3/128
[57] Trevisa, *Properties*, 546
[58] Matthew, chapter 26 etc.; *Sacraments,* 1/353

DOCTRINAL LINKS

Lollard themes shaped "the English Reformation rests on Lollard foundations.[59] Cooper, in the conclusion to his dissertation, states, "Even a brief examination of John Wyclif's teachings is sufficient to reveal the similarity between Lollardy and Protestantism. The resemblance goes beyond a common anticlerical criticism of abuses: Lollards and Protestants also shared certain basic doctrines."[60] He continued, "The Lollards also discarded involved traditional interpretations of the Bible. … They rejected papal supremacy, indulgences and pardons, excommunication, transubstantiation, and most of the teaching concerning the other sacraments." Their Bible teaching "led them to adopt a doctrine of salvation through grace," predestination, church polity and organisation, the power of the state, and criticism of monks and friars; "Thus," he wrote, "on matters of doctrine, church polity, and ethical standards, as well as criticism of clerical abuses, Lollardy largely anticipated the Protestant position."[61]

In *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale,* Smeeton sought to demonstrate by some of the phrases Tyndale used that he had a Lollard background. It is the same method which is used to show he was a Lutheran, a Zwinglian, and so on. The danger of this approach is that it can prove too much, and, if we are not careful, our thesis is 'proved' by the selectivity of the evidence.

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[59] McGrath, *Reformation*, 37f; Clebsch, *England's*, 4
[60] Cooper, "Revival", 245
[61] Cooper, "Revival", 245-247

Lollard theology, as was Reformation theology, was an attack on the abuses of the Church. Although Tyndale (and the other Reformers) went much further than the Lollards they were, generally, attacking the same abuses. We would expect, therefore, many similarities to be found in their arguments. Also, Tyndale did not reject the past and history was important for him, we can see this most clearly in *The Practice of Prelates.*

For Lollards, as for Tyndale, the pre-eminence of Scripture was basic to their faith, as Lambert wrote, "Lollardy was a religion of the book,"[62] and they insisted "upon the 'naked text' of the bible."[63] For, as Leff wrote regarding Wyclif, "Just as Christ as a man is of infinitely greater worth than any other man, so the bible is infinitely greater than any other book."[64]

Tyndale followed Wyclif's teaching on the pope, and the spiritualty being the Antichrist. Bostick demonstrates the link with a quotation from Wyclif's *Opus Evangellicum* and Tyndale's *Parable of the Wicked Mammon.* "In this regard," he wrote, "William Tyndale was a faithful Wycliffite."[65]

Hudson refers to Sir Thomas More's attack on Tyndale's doctrinal errors, which were greater than Luther's.

At the end of the *Dialogue* More sets out a number of ways in which Tyndale is more extreme than Luther. Tyndale wishes to abolish all oral confession whilst Luther tolerates some as "profytable", Tyndale dismisses purgatory altogether though

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[62] Lambert, 371
[63] Biller and Hudson, 234
[64] Leff, *Heresy*, 513

> Luther has hesitated, Luther allows prayers to saints, pilgrimages and honour to images, all of which Tyndale wishes to abolish [CW6. 424-426] In all these matters Tyndale followed late Lollard radicalism. Tyndale's tendency to move Lutheran views on the salvific effect of faith towards a greater stress on morality is also explicable in terms of his English background.[66]

More was able to put Lollard,[67] Lutheran and Tyndale's teaching alongside each other and see where they agreed and disagreed, and he was conversant with the beliefs of all three heretical sources, as can be seen from his writings against heresies and heretics. More wrote to Erasmus that Tyndale's eucharistic theology was akin to the Lollards.

> The heretic Tyndale, a fellow Englishman, who is nowhere and yet everywhere an exile …, wrote here recently that Melanchthon was a guest of the King of France. … Tyndale further expressed his fear that, if the French were to receive the word of God from Melanchthon, they would be confirmed in their belief in the Eucharist in opposition to the teaching of the Wycliffites.[68]

Although there was no coherent Lollard doctrine there was sufficient common ground amongst their most important writings (and the court books relating to Lollard trials) to make them valuable in dealing

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[65] Bostick, 72
[66] Hudson, *Premature*, 504
[67] More was involved in examination and trials of heretics. The heretical statements of Thomas Hitton were Lollard and not Lutheran. *CWM-8*, 11-17
[68] McCutcheon, 246

with Lollard beliefs. More was able to see the ways in which Tyndale's doctrine agreed with the Lollard's and not with Luther's theology.[69]

Tyndale disagreed with the Catholic Church and Luther over Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. He agreed with the Lollards that the bread was still bread, pointing out that Paul still called it bread after the words of consecration were spoken.[70] Wyclif, in his *Trialogus* wrote against transubstantiation, "of all heresies that have ever sprung up in the Church, I think none was ever more cunningly brought in by hypocrites or cheats the people more than this; for it robs the people, it makes them commit idolatry, it denies the faith of Scripture, and in consequence by unbelief provokes the Truth in many ways to anger."[71]

Gordon Leff discussed Wyclif's sacramental theology and concluded, "From this it can be seen that transubstantiation for Wyclif consisted not in any change to the bread in its natural state but in its conversion sacramentally, so that it both remained the same and became something new – Christ's body. It was essentially a spiritual transformation which could only be felt as a spiritual, not a physical, presence."[72] This position was commonly taken by Lollards. In his *Abjuration,* John Grebill, senior, said, "First that in the sacrament of the aulter ys not the verey body of Criste but oonly materiall brede."[73]

When we turn to Tyndale's doctrine of election we find a link with Lollardy. Andrew Penny drew a comparison between Wycliffism and

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[69] Proof of More's assessment of Tyndale's theology being worse than Luther's and closer to Lollardy is seen as we consider Tyndale's doctrines in detail.
[70] Tanner, 5 et al., *Sacraments,* 1/369 et al
[71] quoted. Matthew, *Wyclif,* xxif.
[72] Leff, *Heresy* 556 (reference to *Trialogus,* 263-4)

Tyndale, "A close examination and reappraisal of their treatment of the subject of divine sovereignty and human responsibility reveals a stance much less hard-line than that pursued by Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth century, and that Tyndale's covenantal theme appears to echo the moderation of the Wycliffite circle, and thus the Lollard foundations, in some respects."[74] Although he has not fully understood Tyndale's covenantal theology he has picked up one important point, Tyndale's "stress upon the notion of covenant appears to weaken the forensic approach to grace and faith matters so pronounced and one-sided in Luther and Calvin."[75]

Lollardy and Tyndale teach the same relationship between the spiritual and the temporal regiments. "*th*at men of holi church a*gh*t to be soveraynes ouer all kinges and o*th*er men in spiritualte … But in all *th*inge *th*at longe*th* to temporalte *th*ei schuld be suggete to *th*e kinge and to o*th*er lordes temperales."[76] This same thought is found in Tyndale, "the king is as deep under the spiritual officer, to hear out of God's word what he ought to believe, and how he ought to live, and how to rule, as is the poorest beggar in the realm. And even so the spiritual officer … is under the king's or temporal correction, how high soever it be." Tyndale continues that it is "damnable" for the king to withdraw from the spiritual jurisdiction, or for the spiritualty to withdraw from the temporal jurisdiction.[77]

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[73] Tanner, 30
[74] Penny, 17
[75] Penny, 15
[76] Hudson, *Selections*, 133f
[77] *Exposition Matthew*, 2/67

Davies wrote, "There is the purely circumstantial evidence that Lollardy professed the whole gamut of opinions that were later to be adopted by the Reformation from anti-papalism to crude doctrines of the celestial flesh of Christ."[78] For we find there are similarities between Lollard and Reformation theology, although the Lollards had not moved as far from the scholastic Catholicism of the Middle Ages. But it was only a small step between Lollardy and Reformation. However, if Tyndale came from a Lollard background it would account for the fact that there are many similarities between Lollard writings and Tyndale's.

There is room for more research into the links between Tyndale and Lollardy, and also if there is a heritage, relating to the vernacular, which we can trace back to John Trevisa in the area around Berkeley where Tyndale grew up as a boy. Trevisa, in the "Dyalogue" to the *Polychronicon,* wrote about early translators of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek into Latin (from the translators of the *Septuagint* to Jerome) and continued, "Then it needeth to have an English translation. and for to keep it in mind that it be not forgotten, it is better that such a translation be made and written than said and not written. And so this foresaid lewd reason should move no man that hath any wit to leave the making of English translation."[79] Tyndale knew the *Polychronicon* and referred to it[80] – did he take that passage to heart?

The evidence for a Lollard background to Tyndale's theology is strong, and probably accounts for most of the differences between his

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[78] Davis, "Reformation", 220
[79] quoted, Fowler, *Trevisa, Medieval Scholar,* 231
[80] *Prelates,* 2/294

theology and that of the humanists and the continental reformers. Even in those works which are regarded as the most Lutheran of Tyndale's writings we find, when we examine them, many places where Tyndale deviated from Luther, the changes he made frequently show an affinity to Lollardy. However, Tyndale had progressed beyond the position held by Wyclif and the Lollards and in Tyndale we see what was begun by Wyclif carried to its logical conclusion.

IV THE INFLUENCE OF HUMANISM

It has been suggested that the Christian humanism of Colet[1] and, perhaps, Fisher had influenced Tyndale. Tyndale possibly had read Colet's Convocation Sermon and some of his other writings, and he knew some of Fisher's writings at least (certainly the *Sermon made agayn the pernicyous doctryn of Martin luuther)*, but I do not think it is possible to deduce that similarities show any links between Tyndale and these Christian humanists. However, Orlaith O'Sullivan has suggested that "Fisher's direct, uncomplicated translations of the Bible may have made an impression on men such as George Joye, John Frith, and William Tyndale at a crucial stage of their development."[2] Further work is necessary to see if Tyndale did gain anything from these Christian humanists.

Tyndale's criticisms of scholasticism were its dependence on Aristotle and Greek philosophy; its fourfold way of biblical interpretation; and the life and practice of the papal church. Tyndale was very scathing in his comments on medieval theology and of its teaching in the Universities. We also find, to a lesser extent, criticism of scholasticism in the Christian humanists as well. Although Colet remained faithful to the Roman Church there was in him a desire for reform. We have to take into account his "acknowledged appeal among London's Lollards and his troubles with Bishop Fitzjames."[3] Trapp's comment is probably a true summary of him,

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[1] Brown, 20f; O'Day, *Debate*, 7
[2] O'Sullivan, "Bible Translations". 26
[3] Kaufman, "*Opus de sacramentis*", 2

"John Colet is an enigma, a contradiction. His piety, at the same time fervent and rigid, which made him such a faithful servant of the Church, was so critical of mere observance in religion as to give the view of him as a Reformer *avant la lettre* a colour of truth."[4]

Fisher's humanism is closer to scholasticism than Colet's, and what, on the surface, appear to be links with humanism and Tyndale's thought break down when put into context and his scholastic background comes to the surface.. In his exposition of *Psalm 50* Fisher mentions the blood of Christ in a way Tyndale would agree with, until Fisher continues, "As often as the holy sacraments are repeated and used according to the commandment of Christ's Church, so often is the blessed blood of our Lord sprinkled abroad to cleanse and remove sin" then we realise Fisher was using "the blood of Christ" in a sacramental way.[5] Tyndale describes Fisher as a "school-doctor"[6] and he sets out to prove this in the long section in *Obedience* where he dealt with Fisher's attack on Luther and the Reformation. It is probably best to take Tyndale's criticisms of Fisher and medieval theology at their face value rather than comb through his writings to see if there might be any links between them.

Humanism had a profound effect on the thinking of the sixteenth-century. Many, like Colet, Fisher, More and Erasmus remained faithful to the medieval Church – although they varied in their attitude to the need for reform in the Church. Others, like Tyndale, realised the only way to true reform of the Church was by breaking away from it. But humanism made

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[4] Trapp, "Colet," 233
[5] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms* 114
[6] *Obedience*, 189

them all critical of certain aspects of scholasticism. "Christian humanists asserted that the Bible, as the earliest and purest sourcebook of Christianity, presented Christ's teachings in their purest form; and the most trustworthy interpreters of these teachings were the apostles. Next in importance to the apostles as interpreters came the great Church Fathers of the third to fifth centuries."[7] Humanism opened up the whole history of Christianity. The fathers (especially the Greek ones) became much more accessible to the Christian world as their works were edited and printed

Humanism brought into the academic world the desire to get back to the sources, and so languages became important. Tyndale was certainly a humanist in this sense which enabled him to translate the Bible from Greek and Hebrew. In other ways Tyndale's humanism can be seen with links between him and Erasmus. Tyndale translated Erasmus' *Enchiridion* into English, and we can find many ways in which the teaching of *The Enchiridion* is reflected in Tyndale's works, often – but not always – modified and altered. Although Tyndale was not a follower of Erasmus it is possible to see signs of common ground between them. In criticising scholasticism Erasmus wrote of their expository method, "These preachers think their preamble (as we may well term it), to be the most fashionable, when it is farthest from the subject they propose to treat of. … and bandy it about pro and con till they lose it in the heat of the scuffle. And here they shall cite their doctors invincible, subtle, seraphic, cherubic, holy, irrefragable, and such like great names to confirm their several

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[7] Friesen. 8f

assertions."[8] And Tyndale, "Seeing that one of you every preacheth contrary to another; and when two of you meet, the one disputeth and brawleth with the other, as it were two scolds; and forasmuch as one holdeth this doctor, and another that; one followeth Duns, another St Thomas," and so he continues listing different doctors.[9] Both Erasmus and Tyndale have a long list of scholastic methods of argument and proof,[10] and there are many places where Tyndale is echoing Erasmus' criticisms of scholasticism and the failures of the medieval Church. However, Tyndale went further than Erasmus, he did not just criticise the scholastic method where "these subtleties are alchymized to a more refined sublimate by the abstracting brains of their several schoolmen;"[11] he rejected scholasticism and the corruption which had stemmed from the rejection of *sola scriptura.* Doctrinally Tyndale was not an Erasmian, but he did approve of some of Erasmus' writings. Tyndale pointed out to More that Erasmus had translated "*ecclesia* into *congregation,*"[12] and so why had not More criticised Erasmus for this? Tyndale's most important references to Erasmus are in *Obedience,* where he commends his reader to "read also Erasmus's Annotations in the said places."[13]

GOD AND GOD'S REVELATION

Erasmus wrote of the Scriptures being God given, and to be used to try all doctrine, "For there is no doctryne of man, whiche is not defyled

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[8] Erasmus, *Folly* 145
[9] *Obedience,* 149-153
[10] *Obedience,* 157f; Erasmus, *Folly,* 145f.
[11] Erasmus, *Folly,* 124
[12] *Answer,* 3/16
[13] *Obedience,* 1/316; see also 1/161f.

with some blacke spot of errour / onely the doctryne of Christ is euerywhere bright / euery where pure and clene."[14] Although Tyndale does not quote this it permeates the whole of his theology, and on several occasions he comes close to what Erasmus wrote. Erasmus continued with our understanding of Scripture, "If thou handle the vtter syde and if I may so call it the codde / what is more harde or vnsauery? They tasted but the vtter rynde of manna / whiche sayd to Christ / that is an hard sayeng / and who may abyde the heryng therof. But get out the spirituall sence / and nothyng is more sweter nor more full of pleasure and swete iuce."[15] Tyndale used this illustration, The scripture "hath without a bark, a shell, and as it were an hard bone, for the fleshly-minded to gnaw upon: and within it hath pith, kernel, marrow, and all sweetness for God's elect."[16]

> Tyndale's famous words, "'I defy the pope, and all his laws;' and further added, that if God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that driveth the plough, to know more of the scripture than he did:"[17] come directly from Erasmus' *Paraclesis*, "I am totally against those who do not want the Holy Scripture to be read by the laity in their vernacular, … Thus I would like the farmer to sing Scripture as he plows."[18] But as Greenblattt wrote, "Tyndale may indeed have conceived his project from this vision of Erasmus; … But we must also note the vast difference between Erasmus's 'Would that' and Tyndale's 'I will cause,' a difference compounded of the intertwining conflicts between generations,

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[14] Erasmus, *Enchiridion*, 44
[15] Erasmus, *Enchiridion*, 45
[16] *Jonas*, 1/449
[17] Foxe, *A&M-5*, 117
[18] Lindberg, *Sourcebook*, 48

temperaments, and cultures. What Erasmus is willing to express as a wish, Tyndale puts as his personal mission."[19]

Another way in which Tyndale appears to owe a debt to Erasmus can be seen in his reference to "filthy Priapus" (although there is little connection in the rest of the quotations). For example, in *The Religious Treat* Erasmus wrote, concerning Christ, "I have made him Keeper, not only of my Garden, but of all my Possessions, and of both Body and Mind, instead of filthy Priapus."[20] In his *Answer* Tyndale wrote, concerning confession, "it is clean against the scripture, as they use it and preach it; and unto God an abomination, and a foul stinking sacrifice unto the filthy idol Priapus."[21]

CONCLUSION

John Yost is one of the leading contenders for Tyndale being a Christian humanist, but he has taken it further than the evidence allows. Yost criticises those "who tag Tyndale the leader of English Lutherans," and praises those who "have recently underlined the originality of Tyndale's thought,"[22] he wrote, "Tyndale was the leading advocate of humanist reform in the beginning stages of the religious aspect of the English Reformation."[23] Yet his dissertation seems, to me, to come short of substantiating that claim. He wrote, "If it could be demonstrated, however, that the early English Reformers, who were led by William

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[19] Greenblatt, 106
[20] Erasmus, *Colloquies-1*, 169
[21] *Answer*, 3/22
[22] Yost, "Christian Humanism", 7
[23] ibid. 4

Tyndale, were essentially Protestant advocates of humanist reform, this would make them an important part of the immediate background to the Reformation."[24] Yost acknowledged (in an understatement) that Tyndale did not share Erasmus' "more positive understanding of the value of the pagan poets and philosophers for Christian understanding."[25] Tyndale totally rejected everything to do with the "pagan poets and philosophers" and wrote, "Is it not a madness then to say, that we could not understand the scripture without Aristotle?"[26] Tyndale's understanding was, (after referring to the story of Lucrece) that it was pride in the classical learning of Greece which inspired Erasmian humanism, "which pride God more abhorreth than the whoredom of any whore. Of like pride are all the moral virtues of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, and all the doctrine of the philosophers, the very gods of our schoolmen."[27] Although, as we have shown, Humanism was part of Tyndale's background we need to examine some of Yost's claims carefully to see if he has justified them.

Yost claimed that, for Tyndale, "When a person understood and received it properly, the Sacrament absolved his sins and brought faith."[28] Yet this is not Tyndale's view of the sacrament but a criticism of the Church's teaching, for the passage Yost quoted to substantiate his statement began, "As concerning the transubstantiation," and continued after Yost's quotation, "And thereof, no doubt, came up this

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[24] Yost, "Tyndale", 168
[25] Yost, "Christian Humanism", 72; see *Obedience*, 1/154f
[26] *Obedience*, 1/155
[27] *Obedience*, 1/184
[28] Yost, "Tyndale", 178

transubstantiation through false understanding."[29] I cannot find the support for Christian humanism in his quotation, "If any man, for lack of spiritual feeling, desire the authority of men, let him read the old doctors.'"[30] If only he had continued his quotation another sentence, "If any man desire authority of scripture, Christ saith, Luke xi. 'Woe be to you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge:"[31] Although, for Tyndale, the old doctors are better than the new for the unspiritual, they are still (in many cases) the lawyers Christ condemned. Other examples of this kind of misuse of the evidence can be found in his writings.

Most of Yost's examples could equally prove that Tyndale had a Lollard rather than a humanist background, and, as we have seen, there is a strong probability of a Lollard influence on his thought, and we will look at some of the points raised by Yost.

A large part of Yost's dissertation claims that Tyndale's opposition to sholasticism and the doctrine of the medieval Church shows he was a humanist. Tyndale's denial of transubstantiation does not prove him to be a humanist,[32] for Wyclif wrote, "trewe men ... denyen *th*at *th*e oost whijt & rou*n*d, *th*at bifore was breed, is maad goddis bodi bi u*er*tu of hise wordis."[33] Concerning Scripture, Yost wrote, "Like Erasmus and the humanists, Tyndale was concerned mainly with the spiritual meaning of

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[29] *Sacraments,* 1/372
[30] Yost, "Christian Humanism" 29
[31] *Obedience,* 1/205
[32] Yost, "Tyndale", 178
[33] Matthew, *Wyclif,* 357; but in some places Wyclif appears to favour consubstantiation, "*th*at *th*o sacrament of *th*o auter, whyte and rounde, and like to o*th*er bred, or oost sacred, is verrey Gods body in fourme of bred." Arnold, 3/502f, although even here, Wyclif continues, "*th*at *th*is sacrament in his kynde is verrey bred, and sacramentaly Gods body."

the text."[34] Yet this is also the message of *The Lanterne of Light.*[35] We also find that Tyndale followed the Lollard tract, *How Antichrist and his Clerks Travail to Destroy Holy Writ,* in defending the Scriptures against More.[36] Tyndale's attack on images[37] also has a base in Lollardy and is not proof of humanist thinking. In fact Tyndale appears to have a double standard regarding images and relics, and follows Wyclif's *Tractatus de Mandatis Divinis,* "It is evident that images may be made both well and ill."[38] However, with Tyndale, "if thou which knowest the truth, and canst use thine image well, wilt not yet forbear thine image, and suffer it to be put out of the way, for thy weak brother's sake;" means you are dishonouring God.[39]

Yost does find some problems arising which undermine his theory, "The divergencies from the Scriptural interpretation of Erasmus in the exegetical method of Tyndale pose some problems for a study of his Christian humanism."[40] Tyndale not only condemns using Aristotle and the pagan philosophical methods of exegesis, but also brings Paul in to support him, "How, I say, couldst thou understand the scripture without philosophy, inasmuch as Paul, in the second to the Colossians, warned them to 'beware lest any man should spoil them' (that is to say, rob them of their faith in Christ) 'through philosophy and deceitful vanities, and through traditions of men, and ordinances after the world, and not after

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[34] Yost, "Christian Humanism" 63
[35] Swinburn, 4
[36] Matthew, *Wyclif,* 255ff
[37] Yost, "Tyndale", 172f.
[38] quoted, Aston, *Lollards,* 137
[39] *Answer,* 3/184
[40] Yost, "Christian Humanism" 65

Christ?""[41] In fact he could write, "In his exegetical method, therefore, Tyndale stood closer to Colet than to Erasmus."[42]

Tyndale had links with humanism, and in many ways he had a respect for Erasmus. However, he used humanist ideas (as he did others) only as far as they were aids to the understanding of the Gospel and would stand the test of Scripture. As Anne Richardson wrote, "We are so accustomed to assume all great Renaissance figures were humanists, that Tyndale's independence from that powerful movement – even as he joins it in repudiating scholastic theology – comes as a shock. Although he anticipates the Enlightenment in what might be called (anachronistically) a 'humanist' emphasis upon humanity's right to think and criticize, he fails the rigorist criterion of devotion to the classics upon which modern scholars of humanism insist. His anti-classicist attitude, as it propagated itself through the Elizabethan puritan movement, may have remotely inspired *Paradise Regained,* IV, 343-47, in which the Son of God rejects the bait of pagan literature."[43]

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[41] *Obedience,* 1/155f
[42] Yost, "Christian Humanism", 72
[43] Richardson, "Quarrel", 55

V LUTHER AND TYNDALE

INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons why scholars believe Tyndale was a Lutheran, but some of these reasons are being questioned today. I will only look at the theological differences. From his study of the social background of the Vale of Berkeley at the time of Tyndale, Rollison wrote, "The greatest influence on Tyndale's life and thought was not Oxford, even less Cambridge … I also question the proposition that Tyndale was seminally influenced by Luther. In certain areas his and Luther's backgrounds were similar. … He came from a *countrey* in which manufacturing was the chief employer of labour."[1]

There is no doubt that Tyndale used Luther, we have only to look at the way he lifted passages from some of Luther's writings and inserted them in his own to see this. But to move from this fact and say that it proves Tyndale was a Lutheran goes beyond the evidence from Tyndale's writings, a point made by Laughlin, "The earliest of the serious interpreters of Tyndale's thought were quick to recognize the influence of Luther. … For they deduced from Tyndale's literary and terminological dependence upon Luther his theological and conceptual dependence as well. But in so doing they greatly overstated Luther's influence upon his English contemporary, even with respect to the latter's "early" period, mainly because of their failure to appreciate the extent to which Tyndale

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[1] Rollison, 5 I have omitted Rollison's statement that "Tyndale was less a peasant than Luther" as its truth is questionable.

could (and did) depart from Luther theologically even while using language reflecting his distinctive thought."[2] It is obvious Luther had an influence on Tyndale, and he went to Wittenberg, but Tyndale soon left the security of that city. Edwards wrote, "One of the pressing reasons why Tyndale left the security of Luther's university was simply that he did not wish to become a Lutheran."[3] What Tyndale rejected of Luther's theology is as important as what he accepted. The fact that here I am concentrating on the differences does not mean that I am not aware of the many ways Tyndale used Luther and his theological works, however, there are many scholars who have ably demonstrated Tyndale's positive use of Luther which means this aspect of Tyndale's theology is catered for. The differences have generally been overlooked, and these show where Tyndale's theology differed from Luther's. The danger is to overload the evidence of Luther's importance, as Gerrish wrote, "The significance of Protestant ideas cannot be appraised historically if Luther is treated as the sole point of reference."[4] Once we have established what Tyndale's theology was there will be a need for an in-depth research into the relationship between Tyndale and Luther which will answer the questions, such as, where did Luther and Tyndale agree theologically? and, if Tyndale disagreed with many aspects of Luther's theology, why did he incorporate so much of Luther's writings into his own? Tyndale never criticised Luther, and defended him from some of the attacks made against

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[2] Laughlin, 140f Even Anthea Hume in her pro-Lutheran position regarding Tyndale's thought admits, from time to time that there was a difference in their understanding of "common" doctrines (although she always casts doubts on her finding, writing, 'if there is a difference'). 65, 77, 166, et al.
[3] Edwards, 80

him, however, Tyndale was often guarded in his remarks. More in *Dialogue,* wrote, "The author sheweth many of Luthers heresyes to be so abominable … And for a sample the author reherseth dyuers / wherof some be newe set forthe by Tyndall in hys englyshe bokys / wors yet in som part than hys mayster Luther ys hym selfe."[5] One problem with More's work is that "Swynglius and Ecolampadius scolers of Luther" are included, even though they, like Tyndale, have gone beyond Luther's doctrine.[6] Tyndale wrote at length defending his theology, and at times he is indirectly supporting Luther's doctrines against More's attack. "But yet, to say the truth, the very apostles of Christ learned not all truth in one day: … How then could Martin (brought up in the blindness of your sect above forty years) spy out all your falsehood in one day?"[7]

Even when we find Tyndale using a Lutheran phrase, it does not mean that he necessarily gave it the same meaning. Often theological terminology was used in a variety of ways and with different meanings. Franz Lau warns us against using a phrase as if it only had one meaning; "The doctrine of the two kingdoms is not specifically a doctrine of Luther's. Other reformers such as Melanchthon, Zwingli and Calvin have ideas similar to Luther's. but also depart from him in characteristic ways."[8] My Lambeth Diploma dissertation proved that, in the doctrine of the two kingdoms Tyndale and Luther had very different ideas.[9]

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[4] Gerrish, 2
[5] *CWM-6,* 348
[6] *CWM-6,* 354
[7] *Answer,* 3/185
[8] Lau, 355
[9] Werrell, *Lambeth Diploma.*

Before we can reach a conclusion of how much Tyndale owed to Luther we must examine the doctrines of both Reformers and put them alongside each other to see where they agree and where they disagree; only then can a true decision be reached. We also need to examine any real, or imagined changes in Tyndale's theology between 1525 and 1536. If Tyndale's theology changed, we will come to a different conclusion than if it was consistent. We have already seen that Laughlin has proved conclusively there were no changes in Tyndale's theology.[10]

Tyndale's *Prologue to the Epistle to the Romans* is a prime example of the way scholars approach Tyndale's dependence on Luther. Carter Lindberg wrote as if it is pure Luther.

> Along with biblical translation Tyndale also made Luther available in English (Cargill Thompson 1979). Since Luther's writings were banned, Tyndale's translations did not present them as the works of Luther. … Catholics could read and be inspired by Luther's celebrated *Preface to Romans* without knowing it was by the arch-heretic.[11]

Lindberg's statement is too simplistic and does not take into account the deviations Tyndale made to Luther's *Preface.* He has even overlooked an important sentence in Cargill Thompson's article which he referred to.

> Tyndale has been accepted simply as an extreme exponent of Luther's teaching on non-resistance and the divine right of authority, or as a precursor of the royal supremacy, *without any*

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[10] *Background,* 21f. Also en passant in the chapters on Tyndale's theology.
[11] Lindberg, *Reformations*, 314f

> *effort being made to analyse the precise character of his views.*
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> (italics mine)[12]

In spite of that warning Cargill Thompson believed "the evidence that Luther was the primary influence on Tyndale's thinking at least down to 1530 is incontrovertible."[13]

The similarities between Tyndale and Luther have been stressed but the differences have generally been ignored. We need to ask, why have these important differences been overlooked? I believe there are three reasons. Firstly, those who have written about Tyndale's theology have, on the whole, been historians and not theologians. Secondly, there is the assumption that the Reformation started with Luther, and therefore there must be a Lutheran input into Tyndale's theology. Thirdly, because Tyndale used Luther's writings in the way he did, there must be a theological agreement between them, and the changes Tyndale made were underestimated. As Trinterud pointed out, "About one eighth of Tyndale's prologue consists of roughly half of Luther's prologue."[14] Dick also wrote, "The amount of independent material, as opposed to direct translation, is far greater in the Mammon than in the earlier works."[15] These facts hardly support the claim that Tyndale translated Luther's *Preface to Romans* and *Mammon* and published them as his own work.

When we put Tyndale and Luther alongside each other we are struck by the deviations made by Tyndale to Luther's *Preface to Romans.* Why did Tyndale make these changes? When we answer that question we

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[12] Cargill Thompson, "Two Regiments", 17
[13] ibid. 21. see Englander, 203; Clebsch, *England's,* 137ff
[14] Trinterud, "Reappraisal" 26

find that they meant a change in doctrine. Tyndale altered Luther's work because he did not agree with Luther's theology at that point. Rollison wrote of Tyndale, "Like Luther, he taught that without faith here was no true religion. But unlike Luther, and like Wycliffe and the Lollards before him, he always stressed that in practice faith and works were inseparable. … This brought his theology (and that of the Lollards before him) into line with the conventional view of the English neighbourhood, that an 'elder' was a person who had earned the title by helping and advising his neighbours in thoroughly practical ways."[16] David Loades wrote, "The English reformers of this generation, even those who visited Wittenberg, such as William Tyndale, treated Luther simply as one source of ideas among many. … They became 'Lutherans' in the sense that they embraced the essential evangelical doctrine of justification, but disagreed with Luther … about virtually everything else."[17] Brian Edwards stated, "Tyndale was a servant of no man, his mind was far too large and independent for this."[18]

Carl Trueman pointed out that the difference between Tyndale and Luther stemmed from his "different understanding of the fundamental categories which control his understanding of the Scriptures. For Luther, it was law and gospel. These two were totally opposed to each other and … remained so even for the believer. For Tyndale, however, this is not the case, and his use of Lutheran terminology and the priority he gives to the

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[15] Dick, "Mammon" xxxi.
[16] Rollison, 92
[17] Loades, *Politics*, 152. see also Loades, *Revolution in Religion*, 39
[18] Edwards, 80

language of law and gospel should not be allowed to mislead us on this issue."[19]

The comment Lohse makes about the German Reformation applies equally to Luther and Tyndale. "Where others assumed leadership roles as spokespersons of the Reformation, there were significant differences of opinion among the reformers themselves. Looking back on the whole situation, it is now clear – although this was completely ignored at the time – that these differences were the result of two different factors. On the one hand, various reformers represented a variety of traditions … On the other hand, various reformers had differing understandings of the nature of Reformation theology."[20]

THE PROLOGUE TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

There is no better place to start than with this most Lutheran of Tyndale's writings.[21] When we put Luther's *Preface* and Tyndale's *Prologue* together we can see where Tyndale translated Luther and where he altered Luther. Much of the translation includes doctrine which is not Lutheran *per se*, but it is found in the Fathers and medieval theology and is common ground for mainstream Christianity.

The first significant difference occurs in the opening sentence:-

Luther: This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that

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[19] Trueman "Pathway", 24
[20] Lohse, 50

> he should occupy himself with it every day, as the bread of the soul.[22]

Tyndale: Forasmuch as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the new Testament and most pure evangelion, that is to say, glad tidings, and that we call gospel, *and also is a light and a way unto the whole scripture;* I think it meet that every christian man not only know it, by rote and without the book, but also exercise himself evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul.[23] (italics mine)

Tyndale's addition of "the whole scripture" is significant. *Sola scriptura* meant one thing to Luther and another to Tyndale. Luther's view of the canon of Scripture was much more flexible than Tyndale's, as can be seen from his attitude to the *Epistle of James* and other books or scriptural passages. Lohse wrote, "It is thus clear that Luther can describe the relationship between God and the Scripture in three ways. (1) he identifies the Bible and the Word of God; (2) he also describes the Word of God as the real content of the Bible without identifying this content with the external form in which we encounter it; (3) he also describes a dialectic relationship in which he differentiates the Bible and the Word of God by describing the one as the Creator and the other as the creature."[24]

Or as Bainton wrote, for Luther, "Scripture is the manger in which lies the Babe, the Word. But Scripture is infinitely precious because it is the

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[21] *The Wicked Mammon* has similar doctrinal differences, but I will not deal with them in detail.
[22] *LW-35*, 365
[23] *Romans*, 1/484
[24] Lohse, 156

record of the Word. Scripture as the cradle of the Word provides a norm by which to judge the Church. At the same time, the Word within Scripture may be used to judge Scripture. Luther treated Scripture with amazing freedom, with so much freedom indeed that one wonders why he did not disrupt the canon."[25] But for Tyndale, the whole canon was Scripture if we do not bring preconceived ideas to it.[26] Scripture is "the touchstone" which judged all doctrine.[27] Whilst Luther accepted the *Apocrypha,* Tyndale rejected it and never referred to it in his writings.

The whole of Tyndale's doctrine of salvation, from first to last, depends on the blood of Christ. Luther, in his *Preface to Romans,* mentions it once. Tyndale disagreed with Luther over his use of Christ's blood and therefore omitted it in that place, although he referred to Christ's blood three times in his *Prologue*, where it is not found in Luther.[28] Tyndale's use of the blood of Christ has a strict doctrinal meaning within the covenant God has made for man's salvation. Luther wrote, "They are all sinners making no boast of God; but they must be justified without merit [of their own] through faith in Christ, *who has merited this for us by his blood.*"[29] (italics mine) Tyndale wrote, for that last phrase, "who hath deserved such righteousness for us."[30] Luther's use of "Christ's blood" gave man an importance which Tyndale could not recognise as scriptural. As McGrath wrote, for Luther, "Christ became sin

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[25] Bainton, *Studies,* 5
[26] *Prologue Hebrews; James,* 1/524,525
[27] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/195
[28] *Romans,* 1/488, 497, 503
[29] *LW-35,* 373
[30] *Prologue Romans,* 1/496

on our behalf, in order that his righteousness might become our righteousness."[31]

Tyndale's covenant theology is Trinitarian, a covenant made by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world.[32] Our salvation is the work of the Trinity, and it comes to us "through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; unto whom, and unto God our Father through him, and unto his holy Spirit, that only purgeth, sanctifieth, and washeth us in the innocent blood of our redemption, be praise for ever."[33] It is in this context that *the blood of Christ* has meaning. Tyndale believed the blood of Christ enabled the Father to adopt the elect to be his children, and for the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's blood at every point of man's salvation to sanctify him.[34]

Tyndale differed from Luther in the doctrine of God. Tyndale could not make a difference between *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus,* because man should only be concerned with what God has revealed about himself[35]. The differences are clearest when we consider God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and the relationship between God and man.

In 1528 Luther wrote, "These are the three persons and one God, who has given himself to us all wholly and completely, with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us, with heaven and earth and all the creatures, in order that they may serve us and benefit us. But this gift has

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[31] McGrath, *Theology,* 173.
[32] *Mammon,* 1/110f; *Answer,* 3/111f
[33] *Jonas,* 1/466
[34] *Pathway,* 1/11
[35] *Answer,* 3/191

become obscured and useless through Adam's fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself and bestowed all his works, sufferings, wisdom, and righteousness, and reconciled us to the Father, in order that restored to life and righteousness, we might also know and have the Father and his gifts. But because this grace would benefit no one if it remained so profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also, wholly and completely."[36] This is a theology Tyndale would not have recognised, God does not give himself to man, for our salvation is not a benefit for man, but for God to fulfil his desire to be a father of men and to receive from his children his worship and honour.[37] No Person in the Trinity gives himself to man in Tyndale's theology. God the Son shed his blood to enable God the Father to adopt those he has chosen to be his children, God the Holy Spirit ensured that the elect became God's children in fact.[38] Tyndale wrote, "Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul (Rom. ix.) forbiddeth to ask why; for it is too deep for man's capacity. God we see is honoured thereby, and his mercy set out and the more seen in the vessels of mercy."[39]

Althaus wrote, "Luther finds the Father in the man Jesus Christ and nowhere else."[40] He quotes Luther who wrote that both Saints John and Paul, "join and bind Christ and the Father so firmly together that we learn

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[36] *LW-37*, 366
[37] Although he does not quote them, Tyndale's theology is in line with texts such as Psalm 33:12.
[38] It is "as a father loveth his young son, while he is yet evil, and ere it know the father's law to consent thereto." *Answer*, 3/111f. This is the basis of *the covenant* and is developed in the chapters related to *the covenant*.
[39] *Answer*, 3/191
[40] Althaus, 182; Lohse, 74

to think of God as only in Christ."[41] For Tyndale, however, God the Father was separate from Christ, and he tells us to "Turn thine eyes to Christ, and see there the exceeding mercy of thy most kind and loving Father. … Remember that Christ made not this atonement that thou shouldest anger God again."[42] Tyndale's God is in a very real sense *our Father*. "Kepe vs father with thi myghty power / and lett vs not faule in to temptacion and synne agayne / butt geve vs grace thatt we maye abyde stondynge / and fighte manfully vn to the ende."[43] We can come to our Father in that way because "God is ever fatherly-minded toward the elect members of his church."[44] Even if we have left home, like the prodigal son, we are "safe and welcome" when we "repent and come again" to our Father.[45]

We have already touched on a difference between Tyndale and Luther over the work of the Holy Spirit (p. 66). Where Luther could write, "Faith, however, is a divine work in us, … and it brings with it the Holy Spirit."[46] Tyndale had, "But right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us."[47] For Tyndale God the Holy Spirit is the active power of God without whose work we are dead and unable to do anything towards our salvation. As Althaus wrote concerning Luther's theology, "The Holy Spirit comes to us and brings Christ to us through the external, physical,

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[41] *LW-24*, 64
[42] *Prologue Romans*, 1/510
[43] *Pater Noster*, [cv]
[44] *Answer*, 3/111
[45] *Obedience*, 1/267
[46] *LW-35*, 370
[47] *Prologue Romans*, 1/493

sensible means of the word, of the human voice, and of the sacraments."[48] But for Tyndale, the Holy Spirit comes to us to bring us life. "No man therefore, can prevent [go before] the Spirit in doing good. The Spirit must first come, and wake him out of his sleep."[49] For it is "the Spirit of God; which looseth the bonds of Satan, and coupleth us to God and his will."[50]

We find Tyndale differed from Luther over our status as Christians. Luther's *Preface* has, "Faith, however is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God."[51] Tyndale's *Prologue* has, "which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature, and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God."[52] This change is easily understood because of Tyndale's stress on the Fatherhood of God, and we constantly find Tyndale writes of the Christian as a child of God.

Tyndale also differs from Luther over the place of "righteousness" in our salvation. Luther wrote, "Righteousness, then, is such a faith. It is called 'the righteousness of God' because God gives it, and counts it as righteous for the sake of Christ our Mediator."[53] But to be "counted righteous" is a legalistic fudge, as Luther wrote *(Against Latomus),* "Nevertheless, because he [God] judges truly and righteously, it must be that those who are under this judgement are at the same time righteous, and yet unclean."[54] Neither would Tyndale have agreed with "Meanwhile,

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[48] Althaus, 22
[49] *Prologue Romans*, 1/498
[50] *Pathway*, 1/22
[51] *LW-35*, 370
[52] *Prologue Romans*, 1/493
[53] *LW-35*, 371
[54] *LW-32*, 172

the righteousness of Christ must be our cover. His perfect godliness must be our shield and defence. For his sake, the sin that remains in those who believe in him, may not be charged against them."[55] Tyndale believed that the Christian *is righteous.* It "is called God's righteousness, or righteousness that is of value before God. For it is God's gift, and it altereth a man, and changeth him into a new spiritual nature, and maketh him free and liberal to pay every man his duty."[56] Luther's *Theology of the Cross* means that Christ mediates between God and man, and that it is with Christ crucified that we relate to God. As McGrath wrote, "The theologian of the cross (theologus crucis) recognises the presence and activity of the 'crucified and hidden God' (Deus crucifixus et absconditus), who is not merely present in human suffering, but actively works through it. It is with *this* God, and none other, that Christian theology must come to terms." He then quotes Luther, "The cross is the safest of all things."[57] The Cross and the Crucifixion are relatively unimportant in Tyndale's theology.[58] Where Luther has *the theology of the Cross,* Tyndale would have had, *the theology of the blood of Christ.* Luther's *crucified and hidden God* is foreign to Tyndale's theology, for the crucifixion related to Christ satisfying the justice of the Father thus enabling the elect to be born again as God's children and experience their Father's love. Yet that love seemed to be hidden when Luther wrote, "A theologian of the cross (that is, one who speaks of the crucified and hidden God), teaches that

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[55] *LW-32,* 28
[56] *Prologue Romans,* 1/494
[57] McGrath, *Theology,* 175
[58] In all his writings (apart from marginal notes) Tyndale only refers to the Christ's Cross 6 times in a theological sense, and 3 times in a historical sense. See *Conclusion,* 368 n 6

punishments, crosses, and death are the most precious treasury of all."[59] Gerrish wrote concerning Luther, "It is impossible to read him and not recognise that there was a terror in his encounter with the hidden, predestinating God and the emotional, religious, or spiritual content of the experience burst the limits of the merely rational and conceptual."[60] Against this, in Tyndale we can only find God as a loving Parent, (for Tyndale often expresses God's love as that of both a father and a mother").[61]

Luther, with other sixteenth-century Reformers, did not share Tyndale's severe view of fallen man. Luther wrote, "Through sin and that awful fall not only our flesh was disfigured by the leprosy of sin, but everything we use in this life has become corrupt."[62] Again, he wrote, "We were dressed in the leather garment of Adam, which is a deadly garment and the clothing of sin. That is, we were all subjected and sold into the slavery of sin; horrible blindness, ignorance, and a contempt and hatred of God are present in us. Besides, we are filled with evil lust, uncleanness, and greed. By propagation from Adam we have acquired this garment, that is, this corrupt and sinful nature, which Paul calls, 'the old man'."[63] To write of a "leprosy of sin" or of "a corrupt and sinful nature" does not convey Tyndale's thought of being "stone dead." For Tyndale we were "nailed, chained and glued" to the devil, and "were stone dead,"

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[59] *LW-31*, 225
[60] Gerrish, 137
[61] *Answer*, 3/111f etc.
[62] *LW-1*, 64
[63] *LW-26*, 352

being totally unable to desire let alone change our nature or do anything about it.[64]

Justification by faith alone points to an influence of Luther, but even here Tyndale gave it a different meaning to Luther. As McGrath wrote, "William Tyndale, … tends to interpret justification as 'making righteous'. Tyndale's emphasis upon the renewing and transforming work of the Holy Spirit within man is quite distinct from Luther's emphasis upon faith."[65] As Tyndale wrote, "The faith in Christ's blood, … doth justify us only,"[66] for our justification is being "copled to god by Christes bloud."[67]

Tyndale also rejected Luther's understanding of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. He followed the Lollard view that the bread remained bread, and "that the words mean no more but only that we believe, by the things that are there shewed, that Christ's body was broken and his blood shed for our sins, if we will forsake our sins and turn to God to keep his law." Tyndale continues with examples of the way we use "is" in a figurative way, also "we have a thousand examples in scripture, where signs are named with the names of things signified by them."[68]

We could have looked at Tyndale's theology of the gospel, law, and good works and seen that in these doctrines he differed from Luther as well. There is, therefore, a need for a thorough comparison of the

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[64] *Pathway*, 1/17,18; *Exposition 1 John*, 2/199
[65] McGrath, *Iustitia-2*, 99
[66] *Answer*, 3/196
[67] *1525*, 14
[68] *Sacraments*, 1/368

similarities and differences between Tyndale's and Luther's theology to be carried out.

The fact that I have concentrated on some of the theological differences between Tyndale and Luther does not mean there was not a considerable amount of theological agreement between them. For even where Tyndale modified Luther's theology we can see areas of common ground between them. We can appreciate the reason for their differences (and between many of the sixteenth century Reformers) when we look at their background and where they are coming from, not necessarily their religious background but also all the factors which made them the people they were; but above all their understanding of the word of God and of the Greek understanding of man's reason.

VI THE FATHER OF ENGLISH PURITANISM?

INTRODUCTION

The claim that Tyndale was the father of English Puritanism is something which deserves examining in greater detail than I can give in this preliminary section of my study of Tyndale's theology. I can only look at the claims other people have made and see if there are grounds for further research and where this might be most profitable.

Brauer wrote of four elements in Puritanism. Those applying to Tyndale are: a deep dissatisfaction with the Church's interpretation of the faith arising from "a deep religious experience" leading to "a zeal for reform." Also, "The use of covenant theology as the primary vehicle for structuring their experience of and understanding of the Christian faith."[1] Although he realised there were many doctrinal differences between individual Puritans, Bauer believed the four characteristics are common to all, and he mentions Puritans of differing theological positions. He concludes, "English Puritanism is a complex historical entity" which lasted for about a century.[2]

In *The History of the Puritans in England,* Stowell begins with William Tyndale, he wrote, "His writings, … are not very numerous; but they breathe the same sentiments as those of the Puritans in later times."[3] Although he takes a brief look at Tyndale's doctrines (and of other early English Reformers) he is probably more concerned to give Puritans an

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[1] Brauer, 100
[2] ibid. 107

English base and linking their theology to England rather than Geneva and the Continent. James Packer wrote, "Puritanism was at heart a spiritual movement, passionately concerned with God and godliness. It began in England with William Tyndale the Bible translator, Luther's contemporary, a generation before the word 'Puritan' was coined."[4] Anne Richardson wrote, "Tyndale's conviction of justification by faith, perhaps for him not so much a Lutheran import as a deeply-internalized marriage of folly to 'feeling,' kept alive the experience of persecuted apostolicity in a continuum from Lollardy to the Elizabethan puritan movement."[5]

More serious attempts have been made by those who have traced a link from Tyndale's covenant theology to the Puritans. A sweeping generalisation of this position is that in the process of time Tyndale's covenant doctrine became modified and altered, mainly through Calvin's influence, to form the Puritan doctrine. Firstly, Tyndale's covenant theology is believed to be a base for Puritanism. Secondly, some of Tyndale's ideas are believed to have taken root in Puritanism. Knappen wrote, "It is on the political side that Tindale appears as the founder, or at least the first English representative, of a new movement."[6]

Clebsch has made one of the most important contributions to the debate, he wrote, "Tyndale gave to Puritanism its first theological expression. He founded the theology upon which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English speaking Calvinists built Bible commonwealths in Cromwell's England and in the New England of the

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[3] Stowell, 23
[4] Packer, 32
[5] Richardson, "Quarrel", 65

Mathers."[7] The covenant was important for both Tyndale and the Puritans, McGiffert wrote, "Tyndale was not the first theologian to discover covenant in scripture, but he infused the concept with unprecedented energy: it became his cardinal principle of exegesis and the ruling element in his project of religious revolution."[8] His article is important as a corrective to many of the wrong analyses of Tyndale's theology, although McGiffert has in places missed the real meaning of Tyndale's arguments.

On the Continent, and about the same time that Tyndale was writing, Heinrich Bullinger's theology was also covenantal. When we compare Tyndale's and Bullinger's covenant theologies we find both similarities and differences between them. The differences mean that the link with Puritanism was either through Tyndale or the Continental Reformers, but we find individual Puritans whose covenant theology leant towards one or the other of these two theologies. Bullinger had a special place in the English Reformation through his *Decades* and Coverdale's translation of some of his works. Tyndale is firmly in the Puritan arena through *A Treatise Tending unto a Declaration* by William Perkins.

Patrick Collinson warned of the danger of reading too much into the available evidence. "There is no more hard evidence that Puritan covenant theology was shaped by the thought of William Tyndale than that Tyndale himself was influenced by Wycliffite doctrine. The common dependence of all three on the same biblical words, tropes, paradigms and doctrines must make it nearly impossible to isolate 'influence', as if it

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[6] Knappen, "Tindale" 210; *Puritanism*, 39
[7] Clebsch, *England's*, 203
[8] McGiffert, 167

were some electrical discharge, arcing over and above the biblical text."[9] In spite of that warning there are some pointers which may help us find some links between Tyndale and the Puritans.

THE REFORMERS

We must not think *the covenant* had a fixed meaning for the early sixteenth-century Reformers. They used 'covenant' and 'testament' in different ways and several different patterns can be traced in their writings. Baker wrote,

> Bullinger, then, used the terms interchangeably but not necessarily indiscriminately. Many reformers, such as Calvin and Olevianus, used them interchangeably and indiscriminately. Whether the word was *testamentus* or *foedus*, it meant a theology of testament, not a bilateral or mutual covenant. Bullinger, on the other hand, posited a conditional covenant, which included the idea of testament.[10]

The one thing they have in common is everyone believed in *sola scriptura,* and that they were making a true interpretation of God's word. However, the Bible presents us with passages which appear incompatible. (Erasmus highlighted one aspect of the problem in *On the Freedom of the Will.)* Some verses of Scripture seem to proclaim a universal salvation, others a limited atonement. Christ says both, "Come unto me," (Mt. 11:28) and also, "You cannot come," (Jn 6:44). The problem faced by Luther, Zwingli and other Continental Reformers is they looked at the

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[9] Collinson, "Tyndale". 87

problem as either/or; whilst Tyndale saw it as both/and. Whilst others said, "Somewhere in God's wisdom they can be reconciled:" Tyndale said, "God has shown us how they are reconciled."

What was the scriptural teaching concerning the reprobate? The various views can get quite complicated, and there are still disagreements among theologians about them. At one end we have the *Universalists* who believe everyone is predestined to life. At the other end are those who believe some are predestined by God to damnation (which is the logical conclusion if some are predestined to life). The *Arminians* sought one way round it by believing that God predestined to life those he knew would exercise their free-will rightly and choose life. Others tried to sweep the problem under the carpet and speak of God having a revealed and a hidden will. It seems to be an insuperable problem, "For every doctrine of election," wrote Locher, "of whatever nuance, is nevertheless seen as a double predestination (praedestinatio gemina), and behind the old commonplace objection that the unequal treatment of men is contrary to God's justice, there lurks the problem as to where this lauded grace of God is to be found in relation to the reprobate."[11]

For Tyndale the problem of those not chosen did not exist, with God there was no injustice done to those left in their sin. This has left Baker with a wrong understanding of Tyndale's position, he wrote, For Tyndale "the covenant idea was implicitly, if not always explicitly, universalist."[12] He reaches that conclusion because he assumes the

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[10] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, xxii
[11] Locher, 123
[12] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, 209

covenant for Tyndale was the same as it was for Bullinger. But to understand Tyndale's covenant theology we have to start with the Fall. Trueman wrote,

> Tyndale makes several references to the fallenness of man, but this is always related to discussions of man's consequent inability to fulfil the law. He does not mention the idea of God being angry with man because of his moral guilt. Tyndale's approach to the Fall is thus centred on man, not God, and emphasizes its actual existential results in the consequent bondage of man's moral will. Therefore, for Tyndale, the basic problem in the salvation of man is not his objective guilt before God, but his bondage to sin and to Satan.[13]

Yet, for Tyndale, the Fall was a moral act which brought to man moral guilt. "With the law he condemneth himself, and all his deeds, and giveth all the praise to God."[14] No one could write in stronger terms that Tyndale of the fate of mankind as a result of the fall which "made us heirs of the vengeance and wrath of God, and heirs of eternal damnation; and hath brought us into captivity and bondage under the devil." Tyndale takes away from man all hope of either desiring or being able to change his position. Thus the damned (or reprobate) are in their position because of their own (and Adam's) sin and volition.[15] Tyndale goes on, "Neither can any creature loose the bonds, save the blood of Christ only." Those

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[13] Trueman, *Legacy*, 84f
[14] *Pathway*, 1/14
[15] *Pathway*, 1/17f; and many other places in his writings.

chosen and elected by God are "plucked out of Adam, the ground of all evil, and graffed in Christ, the root of all goodness."[16]

With the same background Richard Baxter wrote in *The Absolute Dominion of God-Redeemer,* "Mankind by sin became guilty of death, liable to God's wrath, and a slave to Satan, and his own lusts. The sentence in part was past, and execution begun: the rest would have followed, if not prevented. This is the bondage from which we were redeemed." He continued, "He that redeemed us is the Son of God – himself God and man, and the Father by the Son. 'He purchased us with his own blood,' Acts xx.28"[17]

Trinterud makes us turn to Oecolampadius who, "in a commentary on Isaiah, had put forth the view that the eternal covenant of God with man was the law of love. … Here the entire law-contract structure is seen."[18] Although Tyndale would agree with the law of love, he could not have accepted a law-contract structure. Both Zwingli and Bullinger had a covenant theology. Locher wrote that for Zwingli, "God's true, personal deliberate decree relates to the elect and their salvation. His definition states: 'Election is the free disposition of God's will concerning those who are to be saved.'"[19] God's justice is seen in the rejection of those not being saved. "In Article 3 of the Fideo (sic) Ratio (his Augsburg confession)," Zwingli places the decree of election "before the foundation of the world." This act reveals God's mercy and justice. "It belongs to his justice to adopt the elect as his children and to bind them to himself through his son,

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[16] *Pathway,* 18,14
[17] Baxter, 4/785
[18] Trinterud, "Puritanism" 41

whom he gave for a sacrifice to render satisfaction to divine justice for us."[20] Baker adds that Zwingli believed in the unity of the covenant, starting with Adam it was "renewed with Noah, with Abraham, and finally with the entire nation of Israel, … each renewal clarifying the contents of the covenant." He continues, the most important aspect of Zwingli's concept of covenant or testament was the idea of covenant unity, … Furthermore he affirmed the corporate nature of the covenant. Finally, Zwingli's thought brings out an additional aspect of covenant theology: the unity of the Old and New Testament, at least in the soteriological sense, which is actually correlative to the unity of the testament or covenant."[21] This is basically the same as Tyndale's doctrine.

Bullinger had developed Zwingli's covenant theology. For "Bullinger affirmed not only the eternity or unity of the covenant, but also its bilateral nature." The covenant sign of circumcision" obligated both God and man,"[22] and the unity of the covenant meant that after Christ's death the covenant sign of circumcision was changed to baptism. Baker summarises Bullinger's covenant theology with five points. (1) There is but one covenant in history. (2) This covenant is bilateral. (3) This covenant is the subject of all scripture. (4) The old sacraments of the covenant – circumcision and the Passover – were replaced by Christ with baptism and the Eucharist. (5) The Christian faith is the essence of the covenant that was first made with Adam.[23] Apart from Bullinger believing

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[19] Locher. 129f
[20] Locher. 132f.
[21] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*. 3
[22] ibid. 6
[23] Baker. "Reformed Tradition". 361

the covenant was bilateral, we find that Tyndale's theology included the other points.

However, Tyndale could not have agreed with a covenant based on the law and, as with Oecolampadius, there was a legality about Bullinger's covenant as he expresses it in *The One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God.* "The death and resurrection of Christ are the most certain testimonies of divine mercy, justice, and life restored, with which God has revealed himself, poured out his entire self for us, blessing us and receiving us who have been cleansed by him into partnership and into the eternal kingdom."[24] With Tyndale there is no legal framework nor bilateral covenant. Tyndale's covenant was between the Persons of the Trinity and not between God and man.

Trinterud believed there was a link between Tyndale's covenant theology and that of the Puritans. He wrote, "What seems to be emerging is an account of Puritanism in which the heritage from medieval English thought and life is the controlling element. Puritanism was indigenous, not exotic, to England."[25] He also built on the political aspect which Knappen found as a link between Tyndale and the Puritans as part of the covenant. "The various writings of William Tyndale show a whole-hearted and systematic adoption of the law-covenant scheme as a basis of his entire religious outlook." It was a covenant, Trinterud continued, which affected the whole of a man's life. "All strictly religious matters, public and private, all moral standards, public and private, and all sense of ethical and

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[24] Bullinger, "Testamento", 116
[25] Trinterud, "Puritanism" 37

religious obligations are founded upon this sworn covenant of promise to obey God's law."[26] Trinterud stressed the importance of this covenant, "Tyndale states plainly that it is *the* organising principle for an understanding of the Scriptures."[27] But this idea is not in Tyndale's covenant theology.[28] Howe wrote, "Thou hast come to God the Judge of all, having come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, Heb. xii.23,24. And been enabled to covenant with him, according to what he himself hath declared to be the purport and sum and substance of his covenant; that is, if thou art reconciled, thou hast taken him to be thy only God, thy supreme and sovereign good, thy chief and only satisfying portion (Psalm xvi.5,6), whom thou art most pleasantly to enjoy," etc.[29]

Tyndale's covenant starts with the Trinity and looks at the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who have covenanted together to bring the elect into fellowship with the Father as his children. Møller expressed this, "It is God who takes the believers into the covenant with him for Christ's sake, as it is Christ who gives grace to do the Law and to understand it 'and writeth it with his holy Spirit in the tables of the hearts of men; and maketh it a true thing there, and no hypocrisy.'"[30] This is very much in line with Thomas Goodwin's covenant between Christ and his Father (although it is not quite Tyndale's idea).

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[26] ibid. 39
[27] ibid. 43
[28] The confusion arises because Tyndale uses 'covenant' in two senses. *the covenant* is within the Trinity which enables the elect to be born again as children of God. Between God and man there are as many *covenants* as God has made promises to his children.
[29] Howe. 262
[30] Moller. 52

> Christ thus willingly undertaking to die, and to fulfil his Father's will, his Father, to gratify him, enters into a covenant with him, and binds himself to him to bestow the worth and value of all his obedience in all spiritual blessings (both of grace and glory, which that his death should purchase), to those whom he had given him, and that he and his children should have it out in everlasting revenues of grace and glory. As Christ undertook to God, so God undertakes to Christ again, to justify, adopt and forgive, sanctify and glorify those he gives him.[31]

Cartwright also has a Trinitarian aspect to man's salvation (although it is not very clear in *Sermon VII* to the Colossians). "So that the scope and drift of the apostle is to set forth unto us the salvation prepared for us, set forth in two sorts: one is proceeding from God the Father by his Spirit, the principal working cause, And by Christ Jesus the material or meritorious cause of our salvation."[32]

Richard Baxter also stressed the importance of the Trinity in man's salvation.

> This one God in three persons, hath created man and all things, which before were not; hath redeemed man when he was lost by sin; and sanctifieth those that shall be saved by redemption.
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> Though the external works of the Trinity are undivided, yet not

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[31] Goodwin, vol. 5., 27
[32] Cartwright, *Colossians,* 13

> indistinct, as to the order of working, and a special interest that each person hath in each of these works.[33]
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> It is life eternal to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, John xvii.3. The Father redeemeth us by the Son, whom he sent, and whose sacrifice he accepted, and in whom he is well pleased.[34]

Bunyan in *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded* has many similarities with Tyndale's covenant theology; "The covenant or bargain was made in deed and in truth before man was in being. … that was concluded on before time between the Father and the Son, which may very well be concluded on for a truth from the word of God, if you consider, 1. that the Scripture doth declare that the price was agreed on by the Son before time: 2. The promise was made to him by the Father that he should have his bargain before time; and 3. The choice, who they were that should be saved was made before time, even before the world began."[35]

Packer writes of the works of the Trinity in man's salvation in Puritan theology,[36] but generally we do not see in their writings the closeness of a loving Father to an erring child which is found in Tyndale. The covenant in Tyndale is not a legal contract between God and man. As far as man is concerned it lies in a father's love forgiving an erring child as the covenant is applied to the elect. McGiffert drew our attention to this fact when he wrote, "There is nothing contractual about Tyndale's metaphor; the relation of parents and children in no way resembles those

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[33] Baxter, 3/787
[34] Baxter, 3/790
[35] Bunyan, 1/523; see also Greaves.

of masters and servants, landlords and tenants, creditors and debtors. Rather, the familial imagery gave him a perfect similitude for a covenantal relationship bonded not by law but by love."[37] It is this aspect of Tyndale's theology which removes the problem about the fate of the reprobate. They are not part of the family and therefore they cannot have any claim on the Father's love.

Man's salvation was the work of the Father in adopting his elect to be his children. This adoption was possible because the Son had shed his blood, and it was effectively applied to the chosen by the Holy Spirit. The Puritans did not have the softness of the Father's love because they (like most of the Reformers) needed man to be made judicially righteous. Luther had a legal basis so that the Christian has "a 'double being,' partially already holy (through faith in Christ), partially still a sinner, partially already in the spirit, partially still in the flesh. He is partially holy, partially a sinful man."[38] As Luther wrote, "Job is both righteous and a sinner."[39] The Swiss Reformers had a forensic righteousness, McGrath wrote, "So significant a rôle did the federal foundations of justification assume within the Reformed theological tradition that the covenant-concept was frequently defined as the 'marrow (*medula)* of divinity.'"[40] Although Reformed theology understood the Christian to be fully righteous having received the righteousness of Christ, Cartwright expresses this in his *Short Catechisme,*

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[36] Packer, 268f
[37] McGiffert, 178f
[38] Althaus, 268
[39] LW-27 231
[40] McGrath, *Iustitia-2,* 41

Q. What are the partes of this Redemption?

A. Reconcyliation & Sanctyfication.

Q. What is Reconciliation?

A. That where by the wrath of god is taken away frome vs & wee Restored to his favor.

Q. Where in doeth it consist?

A. In forgyvnes of synnes & ymputation of Ryghteousnes.

Q. What is Remysyon of synns?

A. The abholeshyng & takyng away our synns by his death.

Q. What is the ymputation of Ryghteousnes?

A. The applyeng of Christes Ryghteousnes vnto vs and takyng it for ours.[41]

In Tyndale's theology he was not concerned with "the wrath of god" being "taken away from vs," because he believed that the legal aspect had been dealt with in heaven between the Persons of the Trinity and man was involved by being born as a child of God and in God's family the Christian has a place as a child, and it is through the family relationship of the Father with his children that we find the problems of a legalistic covenant disappear. "Christ … appeased the wrath of God; brought the favour of God to us again; obtained that God should love us first, and be our Father, and that a merciful Father, that will consider our infirmities and weakness, and will give us his Spirit again."[42] And, as God's children we are "his double possession, by creation and redemption."[43] For "In Christ

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[41] Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana,* 168
[42] *Pathway,* 1/18f
[43] *Pathway,* 1/24

we are sons. In Christ we are heirs. In Christ God chose us, and elected us before the beginning of the world, created us anew by the word of the gospel, and put his Spirit in us, for because that we should do good works."[44] This aspect of Tyndale's theology is not found in Baxter, who wrote, "Redemption brings God nearer unto man. The mystery of incarnation giveth us wonderful advantages to have more familiar thoughts of God, and to see him in a clearer glass, than ever we should else have seen him in on earth, and to have access with boldness to the throne of grace."[45] Neither has Thomas Goodwin the gentleness of the Christian being a true child of God, and this is due to the legal aspect of his theology of justification.

Luther's *simul justus et peccator* has no relevance for we have a righteousness which is real and not imputed to us. Yet this does not mean we are perfect.

> And as they sin not, so they err not. And on the other side as they sin, so they err, … but of weakness and infirmity: as good obedient children, though they love their father's commandments, yet break them oft by reason of their weakness.[46]

The Elizabethan Separatists formed one strand of the Puritan movement and their emphasis was on a legal covenant between God and man. Browne wrote, that the Christian became part of God's church, "First by a couenant and condicion, made on Gods behalfe. Secondlie by a

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[44] *Mammon*, 1/77
[45] Baxter, 3/793
[46] *Answer*, 3.32f

couenant and condicion made on our behalfe. Thirdlie by vsing the sacrament of Baptisme to seale those condicions, and couenants."[47] Browne's explanation of these covenants reads very much like a legal document drawn up between God and man. "Our profession and submission to his lawes & gouernement, is the keeping of our couenant, by leading a godly and Christian life."[48] This same legality is found in Cartwright as salvation is "for all such of of [sic] mankynd as growe ashamed of theyr corruptyons and synns And Repent, and beleeve the holly covenantes and promyses of almyghty god & gloreous gospell of christ Jesus."[49] Tyndale would have looked on this as a works righteousness the Christian can only do good works because in Christ he is righteous,[50] and also that aspect of good works destroyed the scriptural meaning of the family relationship between the Father and his children.

The relationship between the Christian and God is generally linked to Christ, which is a consequence of the stress on a legalistic covenant and not the family. Sibbes wrote, "So that the love of Christ is a kind of love that is unconquerable; no water will ever quench it; no sin of ours; no infirmity. So as it is very comfortable that the church considered under infirmities is yet the love of Christ."[51] Although Tyndale does not reject the love of Christ he stresses more the love of the Father towards his children. As Christians the Father's love, which we know through the work of the Holy Spirit, is very real.

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[47] Browne. 254
[48] ibid. 254-257
[49] Cartwright, *Carwrightiana,* 172
[50] *Mammon,* 1.112; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/6f
[51] Sibbes. 2/74

For Tyndale the Holy Spirit applies God's covenant to the elect and enables every aspect of the Christian's life to happen from new birth, faith, works, to our final entry into heaven. Tyndale's stress on the work of the Holy Spirit is shared by the Puritans.[52]

Knappen stressed the political aspect of Tyndale's link with Puritanism, "For it is in this sense of the term that he can be called the first English Puritan."[53] He uses Tyndale's *Obedience* and the duties of landlords as an important sign showing politically there was an affinity between Tyndale and the Puritans. In Tyndale's political stance he detected this link, "Tindale never weakened under pressure, and his program meant an open defiance of his government."[54] Knappen sums up his essay, "The more important Puritan characteristic of pursuing an active Protestant religious policy independent of crown leadership but short of Anabaptism he certainly possessed. And from the evidence presented I think he may fairly be called the first Englishman to show it since the time of the Lollards."[55]

Christopher Hill finds three areas where there is a similarity between Tyndale's theology and the Puritans. The first concerns the importance of the Sabbath Day, that it should be a day when Christians are taught the Christian faith and how to live it out in the world. He quotes Tyndale's *Answer*, "We may make two every week, if it were expedient, and one not enough to teach the people."[56] Hill does not produce any

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[52] see Brauer, 102
[53] Knappen, "Tindale" 209
[54] ibid. 211
[55] ibid. 215
[56] *Answer*, 3/97

evidence for the Puritans taking this idea forward, but wrote, "It was the day for edification, for education."[57] Packer wrote, "The Puritans created the English Christian Sunday – that is, the conception and observance of the first day of the week as one on which both business and organised recreations should be in abeyance, and the whole time left free for worship, fellowship and good 'works.'"[58] Matthew Henry in his article, *The Sabbath,* has very little on the educational aspect of the Sabbath. "Reading the Holy Bible and other good books, repetition, catechising, singing psalms, praying, praising, profitable discourse, these are the exercises" which make the Sabbath a delight.[59] "The Sabath day is a market day, a harvest day for the soul."[60]

Another link Hill finds between Tyndale and the Puritans was over the taking of oaths, he quotes from Tyndale's *Exposition Matthew,* "Our dealing ought to be so substantial that our words might be believed without an oath."[61] Cartwright quotes Tyndale regarding oaths, "And Tyndall in Fox pag 122. Let the Judge iudge the Trespasser under lawfull wittnesses and not breake uppon the consciences of men, after the example of Antichristes dissciples and compell them either to foresweare them selves, or to testifie against themselves which Abhomination oure prelates learned of Caiphas saing to Christ Matt. 26. I adjure the[e] by the living God tell me whether thou be Christ or noe." Cartwright also quotes from other passages in Foxe which relate to Tyndale's attitude to oaths. He also

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[57] Hill, *Puritanism,* 142
[58] Packer, 311
[59] Henry 285f
[60] ibid. 287
[61] Hill, *Puritanism,* 341; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/56

quotes where Tyndale refers to the misuse of civil power. "The kinge cannot, but to his damnation, lend his sword to kill whom he iudgeth not by his owne lawes. Lett the partie accused stand on the one syde and the accuser on the other syde and let the judge sitt, and iudge the cause, if the king will not kill and be a murdereer before God."[62]

The third link Hill makes is in the education of families. Fathers should teach their families and also their neighbours the Christian faith.[63] However, this teaching was not restricted to Tyndale, it was common to Lollards and other Reformers. In fact Hill refers to the Wyclif text, *Of Weddid Men and Wifis and of Here Children* where we have clearly to duty of parents to teach their children the Christian faith. "Of *th*is may weddid men and wifis knowen hou *th*ei owen lyve togedir, and teche here childre Goddis lawe."[64]

Tyndale's writings had not faded away with the dying embers at Vilvoorde on October 6th, 1536. Fifty years later William Perkins wrote to Valentine Knightley, and sent him *A Dialogue of the State of a Christian Man Gathered Here and There Out of the Sweet and Savoury Writings of Master Tyndale and Master Bradford.*[65] Is this where we will find a real link between Tyndale and the Puritans? Ian Breward, in his *Introduction to A Dialogue*... wrote, "this little treatise sums up in brief form what were to become the classical concerns of puritan piety."[66] There are places where Perkins deviated from Tyndale, and places where he has a different

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[62] Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana*, 43f
[63] Hill, *Puritanism*, 401f
[64] Arnold, 3/195
[65] Breward, 362-385
[66] ibid. 355

emphasis. However, Perkins generally follows Tyndale's thought, interspersing and altering it as he turns to Bradford, but his dependence on Tyndale is clear.

Perkins follows Tyndale with the effect of Adam's Fall, and the way in which man is tied to the devil, consenting with all his heart, strength and will to serve the devil. Man is, through the Fall, an heir of eternal damnation. When the law is preached "then began my conscience to rage against the law and against God."[67] From this captivity Christ has delivered us and set us free, and has restored the Holy Spirit to us.

It is through the blood of Christ we are liberated from the devil's bondage and become Christians. For Perkins the blood of Christ appears to be limited to man's salvation and being set free from bondage to the devil and made God's children, he does not appear to have taken up the far reaching importance Tyndale gives to the blood of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit becomes separated from Christ's blood.[68]

Perkins also picks up Tyndale's doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the Christian as a child of God. However, he has not the confident assurance Tyndale taught us to have in our Father's love when we sin, rather, for Perkins there was fear. This quotation goes much farther away from the breakdown of the Father/child relationship than Tyndale's illustration of the boy who played truant from school, "Notwithstanding, many temptations went over my heart and the law as a right hangman tortured my conscience and went nigh to persuade me that my father

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[67] ibid. 362f, quote 363
[68] ibid. 370f

would thrust me away and hang me if he catched me, so that I was like a great while to run away, rather than to return to my father again."[69]

Once again Perkins returns to Tyndale and writes about God's discipling us, and the contrast between what God appears to be doing and what he is doing. "Whom he loveth, him he chasteneth; whom he exalteth, he casteth down;... when he buildeth, he casteth all down first. He is no patcher."[70]

Perkins follows Tyndale over the doctrine of baptism, and the importance of keeping the profession of our baptism. We need to be taught the meaning of our baptism so that we can understand the scriptures, and also fulfil the good works God requires of us. Finally, Perkins turns to the two regiments, following Tyndale he teaches that the Christian is in both regiments, the temporal and the spiritual. Although the regiments are separate, the Christian is in both and is, as it were, a double person. But in both regiments because we are Christians we are under God's law of love.

CONCLUSION

In trying to find a link between Tyndale and the Puritans we reach out to find a hook to hang a coat on. The quotations I have taken from a few writers are interesting in their possible similarities to Tyndale, but their differences make a link uncertain (we need a knowledge that they were drawing from Tyndale). Generally speaking there were many differences between Tyndale and the Puritans.

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[69] ibid. 373

1 The Puritans tended to follow the Continental Reformers with a legalistic covenant, whereas Tyndale lifted it out of the law courts and placed it firmly in a family relationship.

2 Tyndale's theology placed a greater emphasis on the Trinity and especially in God the Father, whereas Puritan theology was much more Christocentric. Although there were some whose emphasis was Trinitarian (i.e. Bunyan).

3 Even William Perkins, although he used Tyndale's writings freely, had lost much of the thrust of Tyndale's theology of the blood of Christ and of the Fatherhood of God.

4 Areas of common ground, picked up by Knappen and Hill, could have come from the Bible or other Christian sources.

5 Tyndale's writings were known, and editions of his works were available to Elizabethan Puritans.

6 We cannot say there were no links, or that Tyndale had no influence on Puritan thought. Until a real study has been made of the subject we can only say that *William Tyndale – the father of the English Puritans* has not been proven. There are pointers for and against it, and (in the first instance) there is a need to work on the theology of those who were nearest to Tyndale's theology to see if there are grounds for believing that Tyndale might have influenced their thinking and their theology.

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[70] ibid, 374; *Obedience,* 1/135

VII THE COVENANT REVEALED

INTRODUCTION

The covenant runs through the whole of Tyndale's theology and binds it into a coherent whole. Tyndale believed that to understand the covenant we have to turn to the word of God, for it is here, and here alone that we can hear what God is revealing to us.

According to Tyndale there is a tendency for man to bring his own preconceived ideas and his reason into theological discussions and so the scriptures and man's reason together build up his theology. In this way we find God's revealed plan being subordinated to man's reason. For the medieval Church Aristotle became the key which opened the way for man to understand theology. Tyndale wrote, "They will say, yet more shamefully, that no man can understand the scriptures without *philautia*, that is to say, philosophy. A man must be first well seen in Aristotle, ere he can understand the scripture, say they."[1] Apart from using philosophy to interpret the word of God the medieval Church believed that God had added to his revelation in scripture and so the Church altered the meaning of God's word through the glosses it added to the text and also with the apostolic traditions the Church had received. Tyndale accused the spiritualty of his day of being the successors of the Jewish religious leaders Christ condemned.[2] He said the spiritualty of the Church had perverted

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[1] *Obedience,* 1/154
[2] Mark 7:13

and completely altered the scriptures so that its true meaning and right sense were completely hidden from view.[3]

"The standard method of biblical interpretation used during the Middle Ages is usually known as the *Quadriga*, or the 'fourfold sense of Scripture'"[4] (the literal, tropological, allegorical and anagogical), and these caused confusion in exegesis so that no one knew the real meaning of a text. Tyndale said there was no difference between the tropological, allegorical and anagogical senses for they were all allegories. He wrote that the only true meaning is the literal one, but this had been lost "for the pope hath taken it clean away, and hath made it his possession."[5] As a result the medieval Church was left with the other "meanings" which are no sense at all.[6]

Humanism brought with it a change, Surtz wrote, "The humanists differ among themselves insofar as some make a wholesale condemnation of the Schoolmen and the scholasticism of every century, whereas others make exceptions for the sane doctrine and method of Aquinas, etc."[7] McGrath wrote, "Erasmus' *Enchiridion* made much of the distinction between the 'letter' and the 'spirit' – that is between the words of Scripture and their real meaning. … The surface meaning of the text often conceals a deeper, hidden meaning, which it is the task of the enlightened and responsible exegete to uncover. Biblical interpretation, according to Erasmus, is concerned with establishing the underlying sense, not the

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[3] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/144
[4] McGrath, *Reformation*, 147
[5] *Obedience*, 1/303
[6] *Obedience*, 1/343f
[7] Surtz, 550

letter, of Scripture."[8] But Augustijn wrote that Erasmus continued with the medieval method of biblical understanding. The spiritual sense included the tropological, allegorical and anagogical understandings of the meaning. "Erasmus rejected the arbitrary and eccentric spiritual exegesis he found in his contemporaries, but he did not reject the method as such."[9] Humanism, then, moved some way towards the 'literal' meaning being the only way to understand scripture, but stopped short of the position Tyndale believed to be the true way to understand God's word.

REFORMERS AND SCRIPTURE

Although *sola scriptura* was one of the watchwords of the Reformation it predated the sixteenth-century as a tool in reform. Hurley demonstrates that it was fundamental to Wyclif. "According to Netter, Wyclif as a theologian appeals to Scripture alone, openly defying and rejecting the Tradition of the Church. … My original reading of Wyclif, undertaken as a check on the *Doctrinale,* had satisfied me that Netter's interpretation was substantially correct and true. Further reading and study, the results of which are presented here, have served only to confirm that view."[10] In his conclusion he wrote, "As grace is not just a condition of dominion but rather its source and cause, so conformity to Scripture is no mere condition but very source and cause, sole source and cause, of the validity and authority of all ecclesiastical acts."[11] This was also Tyndale's position regarding the importance of Scripture, Flesseman-van Leer wrote,

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[8] McGrath, *Reformation,* 149
[9] Augustijn, 99
[10] Hurley, 278

"In brief, it is evident that scripture is the sole and exclusive source of faith for Tyndale and also the only standard and rule by which to judge it."[12] Pineas wrote, "The cornerstone of Tyndale's doctrine is that the Scriptures are absolute and sufficient authority in all matters of church dogma and practice."[13]

All the Reformers claimed that they were faithful to the word of God, but the differences between their theologies showed different understandings of the meaning found in the Bible, and some did not always accept the whole canon of scripture of equal value. Bullinger lists the books of the scriptures[14] and these consist of the Old and New Testaments only with no reference to the books of the Apocrypha. Tyndale only mentions the Old and New Testaments, and never quotes from the Apocrypha, and I think we can assume that for him the scriptures were the canonical ones we find in the Authorised Version of the Bible, and that these alone were the Word of God. (The fact that he translated the Apocryphal Old Testament 'Epistles' used in the *Sarum Rite* of the mass was to help worshippers understand the Epistle in the mass when they were not in the New Testament - and cannot give any indication of Tyndale's attitude to the Apocrypha.) Luther included the Apocrypha in his *Prefaces,* and wrote of *Judith,* "This is a fine, good, holy, useful book, well worth reading by us Christians. For the words spoken by the persons in it should be understood as though they were uttered in the Holy Spirit

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[11] ibid. 344
[12] Flesseman-van Leer, "Scripture" 145
[13] Pineas, "Scriptures", 65
[14] Bullinger, *Decades,* 1/54f

by a spiritual, holy poet of prophet."[15] Luther also quoted the Apocrypha to support his exegesis.[16] Zwingli, in *Clarity*, "He who comes to the Scriptures with his own opinion and interpretation and wrests the Scriptures into conformity with it, … it will be with him according to the saying in Wisdom 2: 'For their own wickedness hath blinded them, …'"[17] Zwingli, like Luther, accepted Apocryphal writings for scriptural proof texts.

Apart from writing Prefaces to and quoting from the Apocrypha, Luther found grounds to criticise some of the canonical books. He had a low opinion of the *Epistle of James,* and considered it "is really an epistle of straw,"[18] and in his *Preface to James,* he wrote, "I do not regard it as the writing of an apostle."[19] Again, in his *Table Talk,* Luther said, "We should throw the Epistle of James out of this school, for it doesn't amount to much. It contains not a syllable about Christ."[20] (Luther could draw on the history of *St James' Epistle,* Eusebius (d.340) wrote, "Such is the account given of James, who is stated to be the author of the first of the epistles which are entitled 'catholic'. But it should be known that it is considered spurious."[21] However, "The 3d Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. finally settled its status for the Western church, and from that date in both the East and the West its canonicity was unquestioned until the time

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[15] *LW-35,* 339
[16] e.g. *LW-26* 36
[17] Zwingli, *Clarity,* 74
[18] *LW-35,* 362
[19] *LW-35,* 395f
[20] *LW-54,* 424f
[21] Eusebius, 1/59

of the Reformation."[22]) Luther's criticism of James was that it had little Christian teaching in it, and that "it is flatly against St. Paul and all the rest of Scripture in ascribing justification to works."[23] Tyndale picked up Luther's criticisms of *James* and wrote, it "hath also nothing that is not agreeable to the rest of the scriptures, if it be looked indifferently on."[24] It was the same with Luther's criticisms of the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* which received the same response from Tyndale. "Looking indifferently upon" what the writers of those Epistles had said showed that they did not disagree with Paul's doctrines,[25] and he explained how to reconcile Paul and James. "Faith justifieth in the heart and before God, and the deeds before the world only, and maketh the other seen: as ye may see by the scripture."[26] The acceptance of James' Epistle was important for Tyndale and its teaching was as important for him as it was for the Lollards.

We have already looked at the way the scholastics and Erasmus interpreted the scriptures. Reardon wrote of Luther, "Of all the reformers he is apt to strike us today as the most medieval, the most unmodern."[27] Of the Reformers, Zwingli was the most influenced by humanism.[28] McGrath wrote, "Zwingli's basic concern echoes that of Erasmus. The interpreter of the Bible is required to establish 'the natural sense of Scripture' – which is not necessarily identical with the literal sense of

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[22] *ISBE,* 3/1566
[23] *LW-35,* 396
[24] *James,* 1/525
[25] *Mammon,* 1/125
[26] *Answer,* 3/202
[27] Reardon, 44f
[28] Reardon, 32

Scripture."[29] The different approaches of the Reformers to the word of God made their understanding of *sola scriptura* lead to the differences between their understanding of doctrine.

Tyndale believed there was only one sense which can enable us to understand the meaning of God's word. "Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way."[30] In this way his approach to understanding the word of God differed from both that of Luther and Zwingli. In understanding the literal sense we have to be careful and examine the text carefully and make sure we keep it within the context of the whole passage. Therefore Tyndale tells us, "Cleave unto the text or plain story, and endeavour thyself to search out the meaning of all that is described therein, and the true sense of all manner of speakings of the scripture; of proverbs, similitudes, and borrowed speech, whereof I entreated in the end of The Obedience; and beware of subtle allegories."[31] Allegorising the Scriptures had a long history, "for Origen and the doctors of his time drew all the scripture unto allegories." This led to all kinds of misunderstandings about the true meaning[32], "insomuch that twenty doctors expound one text twenty ways, as children make descant upon plain song. Then came our sophisters with their anagogical and chopological sense," which Tyndale illustrates, "and with an antitheme of

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[29] McGrath, *Reformation* 149f
[30] *Obedience*, 1/304
[31] *Prologue Exodus*, 1/411
[32] Barnett. 65

half an inch, out of which some of them draw a thread of nine days long."[33]

Tyndale pressed the literal sense, and insisted that we had to recognise that writers used all manners of speech. He recognised in the scriptures there were allegories, similitudes and other forms which were not factual. The literal sense of the text recognises the meaning of the writer and interprets the passage in the context in which it was written.[34] The danger posed by using other methods of interpreting the Bible is that they prevent the true meaning of God's word being seen. The Bishop of Rochester is a good example of the way the spiritualty "pervert" the word of God and "play bo-peep with the scripture," "wresting them unto their abominable purpose, clean contrary to the meaning of the text." One of the examples Tyndale gives is that of Aaron in the *Epistle to the Hebrews.* Fisher takes Aaron to mean the pope, whilst it is obvious that the author meant us to understand that Aaron stood for Christ.[35]

The plain literal meaning of scripture is lost because the doctors argue that we need the pagan philosophy of Aristotle without which we could never understand the Scriptures,[36] and they would remain a closed book unless we had a sound knowledge of Aristotle's teaching.[37] The result is that "when they be admitted to study divinity, because the scripture is locked up with such false expositions, and with false principles of natural philosophy, that they cannot enter in, they go about the outside,

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[33] *Obedience,* 1/307
[34] Duerdon, "Justice and Justification", 78
[35] *Obedience,* 1/214f
[36] *Obedience,* 1/154f
[37] *Mammon,* 1/107

and dispute all their lives about words and vain opinions, pertaining as much unto the healing of a man's heel, as health of his soul."[38]

The doctors tore the scriptures apart to make them fit into the heathen philosophy of Aristotle, God's wisdom is locked up and man's wisdom is counted greater than God's wisdom.[39] "Such philosophy, and so to abuse the scriptures, and to mock with God's word, is after the manner of the bishop of Rochester's divinity."[40] It has led to errors, and the doctors, "against all the scripture set up free-will again; unto whose power they ascribe the keeping of the commandments of God."[41] Also it has led both the scholastic doctors and Luther to a misunderstanding of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.[42] It is therefore important that we let the scriptures speak to us, and for us to understand them in a literal and spiritual manner. Therefore, Tyndale wrote, "In conclusion, the scripture speaketh many things as the world speaketh; but they may not be worldly understood, but ghostly and spiritually: yea, the Spirit of God only understandeth them; and where he is not, there is not the understanding of the scripture, but unfruitful disputing and brawling of words."[43]

THE VERNACULAR

The Church taught that unless one was well grounded in Aristotle's philosophy one could not understand the scriptures, therefore it was unnecessary for the Bible to be in the vernacular. The clergy were trained

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[38] *Prelates,* 2/291
[39] *Mammon,* 1/45f
[40] *Obedience,* 1/208
[41] *Prologue Numbers,* 1/430
[42] *Sacraments,* 1/366-369
[43] *Mammon,* 1/88

to understand the word of God and they were able to teach the laity, not only the scriptures but also the other words of God. More's Messenger said, "I sayd that it was thought reasonable to byleue the scrypture beynge goddys owne wordys rather than the wordys of men / ye therin proued that the comen fayth of the chyrche was as well goddys owne wordys as was holy scrypture selfe / and of as greate authoryte / and that no student in scrypture sholde presume to trye / examyn / and iudge the catholyque faythe of Chrystys chyrche by y^{e} scrypture / but by the catholyque fayth of crystys chyrche shold examyn and expowne the textys of scrypture."[44]

Tyndale asked, "How, I say, couldst thou understand the scripture without philosophy, inasmuch as Paul, in the second to the Colossians, warned them to 'beware lest any man should spoil them' (that is to say, rob them of their faith in Christ) 'through philosophy and deceitful vanities, and through the traditions of men, and ordinances after the world, and not after Christ?'"[45] Tyndale pointed out that Christ had commanded the scriptures to be taught to all men so that everyone could know them,[46] "And yet Christ and his apostles, for all their miracles, required not to be believed without scripture, as thou mayest see John v. and Acts xvii., and by their diligent alleging of scripture throughout all the new Testament."[47] Because Tyndale believed "all things are profoundly grounded in the scriptures, and declared with examples of himself [Christ], of the fathers, and of the prophets, that a man can here desire no more."[48]

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[44] *CWM-6* 188
[45] *Obedience,* 1/155f
[46] *Obedience,* 1/241,249f
[47] *Answer,* 3/111
[48] *Prologue Romans,* 1/507f

Tyndale listed reasons why the spiritualty objected to God's word being in the vernacular other than that the laity could not understand philosophy, or the allegorical interpretation of Origen.[49] First, the laity are "cumbered with worldly business" and so have neither time nor quietness to understand what they read.[50] Secondly, there were also those areas of Christian doctrine (not found in the Bible) which were financially profitable to the clergy, such as purgatory. Only as the spiritualty were the sole interpreters of scripture could those doctrines go unchallenged.[51] Thus, wrote Tyndale, "thou mayest perceive how that the scripture ought to be in the mother tongue, and that the reasons which our spirits make for the contrary, are but sophistry and false wiles to fear thee from the light, that thou mightest follow them blindfold, and be their captive to honour their ceremonies, and to offer to their belly."[52]

If people are to understand God's word and allow their lives to be governed by the scriptures it is important that they are allowed to read the Bible in their own language. The scriptures must, therefore, be translated into English, and the people needed an accurate translation free from all the glosses of the medieval Church and the traditions which had been added to God's Word. It had to be translated so that the ploughboy could be familiar with it and know more about the word of God than the pope or any priest.[53] "Which thing only moved me to translate the new Testament. Because I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to

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[49] *Obedience*, 1/307
[50] *Obedience*, 1/146
[51] Pineas, "Scripture", 66,75
[52] *Obedience*, 1/144
[53] Foxe, *A&M*-5, 117

establish the lay-people in any truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text: for else, whatever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again, partly with the smoke of their bottomless pit, … (that is, with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making, founded without ground of scripture,) and partly with juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as is impossible to gather the text, if thou see the process, order, and meaning thereof."[54] All kinds of stumbling blocks were put in the way. The spiritualty argued that English was too crude a language for the scripture to be translated into English, the original languages of the Bible also did not lend themselves to be translated into English, Tyndale was one of the few Christians who knew Hebrew, and not many of the clergy knew Greek, and so he was able to refute their arguments.[55]

The original languages of the Bible were the common languages of the people so that they could understand what God was saying.[56] And it was important for the laity to have the Bible in the vernacular, for as the Pharisees had corrupted the scripture,[57] and in the same way their successors, the spiritualty, "had corrupt the scripture with their leaven of the glosses."[58] Furthermore, Moses had commanded the Israelites to learn the scriptures so they could "stick fast in thine heart." They had to "whet them on their children." Tyndale then asked the rhetorical question, "How

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[54] *Preface Moses*, 1/394
[55] *Obedience*, 1/148f; *Preface Moses*, 1/392
[56] *Answer*, 3/168f
[57] *Answer*, 3/47
[58] *Exposition Matthew*, 2/16

can we whet God's word (that is, to put it in practice, use and exercise) upon our children and household, when we are violently kept from it and know it not?"[59] Or how can fathers teach their children if they are not allowed to read God's word?[60]

More accuses Tyndale, and others, of saying the Church condemns the vernacular Bible when "it neyther forbedeth the translacyons to be red that were all redy well done of olde before Wyclyffys dayes / nor dampneth his bycause it was newe / but bycause it was nought / nor prohybyteth newe to be made / but prouydeth that they shall not be redde yf they be mysse made / tyll they be by good examynacyon amended / excepte they be suche translacyons as wyclyffe made & Tyndall / that the malycyous mynde of the translatoure had in suche wyse handled it as it were labour lost to go aboute to mende them."[61] But, wrote Tyndale, that a person is damned if they look on the Bible, and the spiritualty "moveth the blind powers of the world to slay with fire, water, and sword, all that cleave to it."[62] However, Tyndale considered that all the reasons against the laity being able to read the Bible were "vain and feigned", and the arguments of the spiritualty "are false, wicked, and the fruit of rotten trees." He gave them the opportunity of amending his translation if they could make it better and closer to God's word.[63]

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[59] *Obedience*, 1/145
[60] *OT*, 107
[61] *CHM-6*, 316
[62] *Obedience*, 1/132
[63] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/144

Lollard history showed that the Church linked heresy and the reading of God's word in English,[64] for the spiritualty taught "it is heresy with us for a lay man to look of God's word or to read it,"[65] for many had become heretics and excommunicated because they had read God's word.[66] The spiritualty try to hide the fact that they have taken the temporal sword from the devil and say the word of God leads to sedition,[67] even as the Pharisees accused Christ when they "Took him and brought him to Pilate, saying, 'We have found this fellow perverting the people, and forbidding to pay tribute unto Caesar, and saying that he is a king."[68]

UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

Tyndale taught that the covenant is revealed only in the word of God, we must begin, therefore, by looking at the source from which the covenant can be discovered before we can understand the covenant and its importance for us as God's people. From his use of the texts and the arguments he used we can say that *sola scriptura* for Tyndale meant the canonical scriptures only. Tyndale believed the scriptures were the only source of doctrine, and all theologies had to be tried by the word of God. For him, the whole canon of the Old and New Testaments alone revealed God's salvific plan for his people. This did not mean ignoring the findings and understandings of others, but everything had to be measured against God's Word. Faced by a variety of theologies Tyndale asks how he should

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[64] Lambert, 240; *Exposition John*, 2/140
[65] *OT*, 266
[66] *Obedience*, _1/132
[67] *Prelates*, 2/274ff
[68] *Prelates*, 2/241

know what was false and what was true. "Whereby shall I try and judge them? Verily by God's word, which only is true."[69]

We have seen the importance of the Bible for the Lollards, Lambert wrote, "Lollardy was a religion of the Book."[70] This was also true of the English Reformation – and Tyndale's translation of the Bible was important in this process. Tyndale's translation was not only important in liberating and reforming the English church, it also played a part in the formation of the nation. Christopher Hill wrote, "the Bible played a large part in moulding English nationalism, in asserting the supremacy of the English language in a society which from the eleventh to the fourteenth century had been dominated by French-speaking Normans."[71]

The word of God was paramount to Tyndale and the scriptures are basic to the whole of his theology; everything, every doctrine, must be tried by the word of God.[72] Mayotte wrote, "Our conjectures of other theological underpinnings for Tyndale's theology remain only conjectures and can be buried with Tyndale, for only scripture bore worth in Tyndale's eyes."[73] It was not pride, but a true humility and desire to be faithful to God's Word that made him ask to be informed if he had made any error in his translation of the Bible, and this also applied to any of his other writings where he was not true to the scriptures.[74]

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[69] *Obedience*, 1/153
[70] Lambert. 371; Biller and Hudson, 234 ; see 30
[71] Hill. *English Bible*, 7
[72] Van den Brink. 352
[73] Mayotte. 269
[74] *Preface Moses*, 1/392.396

> Forasmuch *as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the new Testament and most pure evangelion,* that is to say, glad tidings, and that we call gospel, and also is a light and a way unto the whole scripture, I think it meet *that every Christian man not only know it, by rote and without the book, but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul. No man verily can read it too oft, or study it too well; for the more it is studied, the easier it is; the more it is chewed, the pleasanter it is; and the more groundly it is searched, the preciouser things are found in it;* so great treasure of spiritual things lieth therein.[75]

Although that statement is pure Luther, it is one which Tyndale and all the Reformers could agree to. (The differences between them lay in the interpretation of what scripture was actually meaning, and their interpretations of the language and thought forms of the writers.[76] We have seen with Tyndale that the literal sense included all the figures of speech in a language, but these had to be drawn from the context and not read into them.) For Tyndale the scriptures are complete and we do not have to add to, subtract from, or read anything into God's word, "nor yet corrupt it with false glosses to confirm Aristotle: but rebuke Aristotle's false learning therewith."[77] This means that we must have an empathy with the writers of the scriptures if we are to understand God's word correctly. We must not read it after a worldly manner, but in a way which

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[75] *Prologue Romans,* 1/484 (italics Tyndale's translation of Luther, *LW-35,* 365f)
[76] Differences between Luther and Zwingli are discussed in Stephens, *Zwingli,* 37.
[77] *OT,* 262

reveals the true teacher from the false.[78] We also need the Holy Spirit to give us the true meaning of the scriptures so that we are enabled to know and understand what God is saying to us.[79] It is then that we can bring God's message to the world as the angels brought the glad tidings to the shepherds of Bethlehem. "And these tidings we bring you with the word of God only, which we received of his Spirit, and out of the mouth of his Son, as true messengers."[80] The *only* in that quotation is important for Tyndale, for any doctrine which is not drawn from 'the word of God only' is a false doctrine, and those who have deviated from a strict adherence to God's word "are fallen from Christ, and make an idol of their opinions."[81]

THE KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

It is through the profession of our baptism that we find the key to scripture and are able to discover the true meaning of the word of God.[82] In baptism we are reminded of our sin through the law of God, and of the call to repentance. We are reminded of God's promises to us, and of our promises to God – which we can only keep through a true faith. "Baptism saveth through the word, that is, through faith in the word, according to the covenant made in Christ."[83] The 'word' in baptism is not the formula used as the person in baptized, but the word of God. This is made clear in Christ's *Parable of the Sower* where the seed sown (which is the word of God) does not always bear fruit, but only to those who love and keep

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[78] *Pathway,* 1/8
[79] *Mammon,* 1/88,107: *Prologue 2 Peter,* 1/528
[80] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/148
[81] *Answer,* 3/33
[82] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/136,138f
[83] *NT,* 286

God's word. It is "A covenant to them that love the word of God to further it, that they shall increase therein, and another that they that love it not, shall lose it again, and wax blind."[84] The covenant for the baptized has a commission to evangelize attached to it, for it is "a covenant to them that love the word of God to win other with word and deed:" (whilst for those without a love for the scripture) "and another to them that love it not, that it shall be their destruction."[85] In winning others the Christian is fulfilling God's commandment that we must love our neighbour as ourselves. This evangelistic aspect in Tyndale's writings has generally been overlooked, resulting in a wrong emphasis on the law. McGiffert wrote, "It is needful to insist on the evangelical impulse and experiential reference of Tyndale's teaching because previous studies have given little heed to them and for that reason have missed the heart of the matter."[86]

"The right way, yea, and the only way, to understand the scripture unto salvation, is that we earnestly and above all things search for the profession of our baptism, or covenants made between God and us"[87] are the promises of God which give us the keys to open God's word so that we can grow in wisdom and understanding. "And thus, as the Spirit and doctrine on God's part, and repentance and faith on our part, beget us anew in Christ, even so they make us grow, and wax perfect, and save us unto the end. ... These things, I say, to know, is to have all the scripture

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[84] *NT*, 37
[85] *NT*, 67
[86] McGiffert, 171, "The leading explication of Tyndale's conception of covenant, by William A. Clebsch, accents its ethical content and legalistic tenor."
[87] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/469: We must always remember the difference between *THE COVENANT (between God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit)*, and *the covenants between God and man* in Tyndale.

unlocked and opened before thee, so that if thou wilt go in, and read, thou canst not but understand."[88] And as we understand God's word so he keeps us from falling into error.[89]

Unlike Luther, who held the law and gospel in tension – although he allowed that there was gospel in the Old and law in the New Testaments, he tended to separate them.[90] As Althaus points out, "The relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament is characterized by both unity and diversity. For Luther the decisive distinction in the word of God is the distinction between law and gospel. The difference between the Old and the New Testaments however does not simply coincide with this distinction."[91] George wrote that "Zwingli did not feel the need to separate law and gospel into polar opposites. … To the Lutherans this blurring of the distinction between law and gospel seemed to open the door to a new legalism, a kind of evangelical works-righteousness grafted onto the pure message of *sola fide*."[92]

For Tyndale there was a unity in the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments are important, both are the words of the one God, both contain law and gospel. Also for him there is not a tension between the law and the gospel for both are equally important for the Christian life as a child of God.[93]

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[88] *Pathway*, 1/27; *Jonas*, 1/464
[89] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/140
[90] *LW-35*, 236f
[91] Althaus, 86
[92] George, 133
[93] We will see how Tyndale understood the relationship between law and gospel when we examine his covenantal theology in detail.

UNLOCKING THE SCRIPTURES

We find *the Covenant* runs through the whole of the Bible. As we read the scriptures we find the covenant unfolding before our eyes. the covenant was developed through several stages in the Old Testament, with Adam, then Noah, Abraham and the Children of Israel. Each stage unfolded something more until in Christ the fullness of the covenant was revealed. Many of the promises in the Old Testament are temporal[94] and relate to the State of Israel in the Promised Land, and to the material blessings God gives them as they keep his commandments. These promises must not be spiritualized and made to apply to Christianity. At the same time the continuity of the covenant is seen "for God had made them of the old testament as great promises, that he would be their God, and that his Spirit and all grace should be with them if they kept his laws, as he hath made to us.[95] The great promise of the covenant to the Children of Israel has been continued to Christians, God has promised to be their God, and they would be his people. More than that, he will be a Father and they his children. The literal understanding of these promises means they must be interpreted in a spiritual manner.[96]

The law reveals sin to us, and the fact that we are all sinners in God's sight.[97] Through the gospel there is forgiveness of sins to those who repent,[98] and turn to God with faith in Christ's blood[99] for they are then

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[94] *Prologue Exodus,* 1/415
[95] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/43
[96] *Jonas,* 1/463
[97] *Prologue Romans,* 1/496; *Exposition 1 John,* 2/150
[98] *Obedience,* 1/270; *Prologue Numbers,* 1/434; *Answer,* 3//132
[99] *Mammon,* 48; *Exposition Matthew,* 11; *Exposition 1 John,* 136f

justified in God's sight.[100] This opens up true holiness for us not of holy works which are unable to save us, for there is no way to be shown the way from sin "save with the holiness of God's word; which only speaketh unto the heart, and sheweth the soul his filthiness and uncleanness of sin, and leadeth her by the way of repentance unto the fountain of Christ's blood, to wash it away through faith."[101]

When we realise that faith is one of the keys to open the scriptures[102] we find that we have not the strength to turn it ourselves, for only the Holy Spirit can unlock God's truth to us. "For though the scripture be an outward instrument, and the preacher also, to move men to believe, yet the chief and principal cause why a man believeth, or believeth not, is within: that is, the Spirit of God teacheth his children to believe."[103]

It was Christ who sent the apostles to preach,[104] and the Holy Spirit gives life as the seed of God's word is sown in our hearts – keeping us from sin.[105] The early Christians carried on the work of preaching,[106] and, like the apostles, their authority came from Christ and not the Church.[107] The mark of Christ's authority can be seen as they preach the pure Word of God.[108] Those called by the spiritualty 'heretics' prove their teaching with "authentic and manifest scripture," Tyndale then challenges the spiritualty to defend their preaching, "first give us authentic scripture for

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[100] *Obedience,* 1/267f; *Prologue Numbers,* 1/432
[101] *Jonas,* 1/462
[102] Flesseman-van-Leer, "Scripture", 158
[103] *Answer,* 3/139
[104] *Obedience,* 1/211
[105] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/190
[106] *Answer,* 3/69
[107] *Obedience,* 1/270
[108] *Obedience,* 1/300; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/36

your doctrine."[109] The faithful preachers are the good angels of *The Revelation*,[110] and the profession of their baptism is seen in their lives as well as heard through their words, for without the preacher visibly showing a true Christian life the laity are hurt and fall from Christ.[111] But it is not in the lives of the spiritualty that God's word is visibly preached, but in the lives of those they call 'heretics,'[112] "preach nothing save that which our Saviour Jesus Christ preached, and his apostles; adding nought thereto, nor plucking aught therefrom."[113] In this way the people are enabled to learn to love and know the scriptures.[114] Although these people have no position in the Church and are condemned by the spiritualty (to be burnt), yet they cling to the scriptures "whereunto they cleave as burs, so fast that they cannot be pulled away, save with very singeing them off."[115]

The true Christians, even though they are "lay and unlearned people," have hold of the profession of their baptism written in their hearts. they "read the scripture, and understand and delight" in it,[116] finding there a "soul, spirit, and life, for God's Word has within it "pith, kernel, marrow, and all sweetness for God's elect, which he hath chosen to give them his Spirit, and to write his law, and the faith of his Son in their hearts.[117] For it is through the covenant and the profession of our baptism that we benefit from the scripture. "If our hearts were taught the appointment made between God and us in Christ's blood, when we were

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[109] *Answer*, 3/128
[110] *NT*, 376
[111] *Obedience*, 1/229f
[112] *Answer*, 3/115
[113] *Prelates*, 2/242
[114] *Answer*, 3/114
[115] *Answer*, 3/102

baptized, we had the key to open the scripture, and light to see and perceive the true meaning of it, and the scripture should be easy to understand."[118] This key opens the door so that the Christian finds the first and whole purpose of scripture is to bring him into the true "fellowship of God and Christ, and of them that believe in Christ,[119] and God the Father reveals himself as a loving and caring Father to those he has chosen to adopt as his children.[120]

SCRIPTURE THE JUDGE OF ALL THINGS

"Search the scriptures, for by them may ye try all doctrine."[121] The scriptures are their own interpreter, and they are the only source of truth for the Christian Church. Two things follow from this. Firstly, every doctrine and way of life has to measure up to God's word. Secondly, every Christian must be able to read and understand the scriptures for themselves, otherwise they would not be able to judge whether the writings of any doctor were true or not.[122] The teaching of every preacher and teacher of the Christian faith needs to be checked, and this applies equally to Tyndale's doctrine as to anyone else, he wrote, "And when I allege any scripture, look thou on the text whether I interpret it right: which thou shalt easily perceive by the circumstance and process of them, if thou make Christ the foundation and the ground, and build all on him, and referrest all to him, and findest also that the exposition agreeth unto

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[116] *Pathway,* 1/28
[117] *Jonas,* 1/449
[118] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/141
[119] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/147
[120] *Mammon,* 1/77
[121] *NT* 189

the common articles of the faith and open scripture."[123] This scriptural test has to be applied to every sermon we hear,[124] and to all human writings.[125] It is not only individual Christians who can fall into error, the history of the Church shows that Councils have erred, and later Councils have corrected the errors of earlier ones. therefore the Church's canons need to be measured against the scriptures, as well as the teachings of the Church fathers and doctors.[126] The Christian needs God's word in his own language in order to make a true judgement.[127]

> Let God's word try every man's doctrine, and whomsoever God's word proveth unclean, let him be taken for a leper. One scripture will help to declare another. And the circumstances, that is to say, the places that go before and after, will give light unto the middle text. And the open and manifest scriptures will ever improve the false and wrong exposition of the darker sentences.[128]

Christ told the Jews to test his teaching by searching the scriptures, and he wants us to do the same. The Christian is not to believe anything he is taught unless he can give "a reason of the scripture and authority of God's word."[129] Only then can the hypocrisy of the spiritualty be seen.[130] The Christian should not be put off when told that the doctrine is too hard for them to understand without the doctors; even St Augustine had

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[122] *Obedience,* 1/153
[123] *Obedience,* 1/167
[124] *Obedience,* 1/241f
[125] *Mammon,* 1/44
[126] *Answer,* 3/99f
[127] *Obedience,* 1/324; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/121
[128] *Obedience,* 1/250

"followed the opinions of Plato, and the common persuasions of man's wisdom that were then famous," before he understood the scriptures and their teaching.[131] There are sound reasons why doctrine should be judged and examined to see if it is grounded on God's word,[132] because there are false prophets who teach lies instead of truth.[133] The Bishop of Rochester preached against Luther and the Protestant doctrines which were rocking the Church, and Tyndale challenged his readers to compare Fisher's sermon and his own writings, and judge them against the scriptures to see who was telling the truth.[134]

Tyndale allowed the argument that doctrine could be proved by miracles, but he reminded his readers that the false miracles of the sorcerers of Egypt had mimicked God's miracles performed by Moses. Only authentic scripture is the true judge of doctrine and miracles cannot prove anything without the support of God's Word.[135]

Tyndale sums it all up, "Compare therefore all manner doctrine of men unto the scripture, and see whether they agree or not. And commit thyself whole and altogether unto Christ; and so shall he with his Holy Spirit, and with all his fulness, dwell in thy soul. Amen."[136]

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[129] *Obedience,* 1/329f
[130] *Answer,* 3/137
[131] *Obedience,* 1/153f
[132] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/222f
[133] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/195
[134] *Obedience,* 1/208-223
[135] *Answer,* 3/128
[136] *Prologue Romans,* 1/508

SCRIPTURE AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The first thing we realise about the Christian life is our relationship with God. In the covenant God adopts us to be his children, and the relationship of a child to a father binds us to God and God to us.[137]

The true Christian has the law of God written in his heart, and does his best to keep the law, otherwise his faith is vain "and built upon sand of his own imagination, and not upon the rock of God's word."[138] He has to study the scriptures carefully "and to search God's word the more diligently" so that his faith may be grounded on scripture alone and not on any false teaching of the Church, even if it sounds reasonable to him.[139]

Although material things are necessary, the Christian should not "covet inordinately more than sufficient, or but even that I have need of," for that shows a lack of faith in God.[140] What is important is a knowledge of God's word, as Jesus said, man does not by bread alone, but by every word of God, which is "the daily bread of the soul."[141] The Christian, therefore, needs to search the scriptures for the promises God gives him[142] so that he might fulfil his part in the covenant God has made with him. "For all the promises throughout the whole of scripture do include a covenant: that is, God bindeth himself to fulfil that mercy unto thee only if thou wilt endeavour thyself to keep his laws."[143]

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[137] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/9
[138] *Sacraments,* 1/363
[139] *Answer,* 3/95
[140] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/111
[141] *Prologue Romans,* 1/484
[142] *Jonas,* 1/464
[143] *Prologue Genesis,* 1/403

To read God's word and to understand God's word are two different things, for, as Christ said in John 8, we have to be of God to understand his word, and we must have the Holy Spirit enabling us when we read the scriptures.[144] As Christians we have the Holy Spirit "to open our eyes, and to make us understand and feel wherefore the scripture was given, that we may apply the medicine of the scripture, every man to his own sores."[145] He will then find that the seed of God's word has been sown in his heart[146] and that this is the word of health.[147] It is the word of God which brings faith to a man, and Tyndale uses the picture of the sun driving away the darkness of night, "even so are all men's hearts of themselves dark with lies, … the lying heart of man can give the word of God no truth; but contrariwise, the truth of God's word is of herself, and lighteneth the hearts of the believers, and maketh them true, and cleanseth them from lies"[148] Until the gospel light shines into the Christian's heart not even the vernacular scriptures can teach him the profession of his baptism.[149]

Tyndale repeatedly calls on Christians to keep the profession of their baptism, then, through the holiness of God's word, he is brought to repentance and to the blood of Christ, which alone can cleanse him from sin,[150] and lead him in the paths of holiness. "Yea, and God's word will be alway in his heart, and in his mouth, and he every day perfecter than

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[144] *Mammon,* 1/88
[145] *Prologue Genesis,* 1/398
[146] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/190; *Obedience,* 1/263
[147] *Obedience,* 1/281
[148] *Answer,* 3/24f
[149] *Exposition 1 John,* 1/144
[150] *Jonas,* 1/466

other. For there can nothing edify man's soul, save that which preacheth him God's word. Only the word of God worketh the health of the soul. And whatsoever preacheth him that, cannot but make him perfecter."[151]

The profession of his baptism means a Christian has to give up trusting in man's words or stories, his task is "not to believe a tale of Robin Hood, or Gesta Romanorum, or of the Chronicles, but to believe God's word that lasteth ever."[152] For to believe in anything other than God's word is "a false faith, superstitious, and idolatry, and damnable sin."[153] Paul, Peter, and all who preach God's word faithfully preach Christ alone, "and those everlasting promises and eternal testament that God has made between man and him in Christ's blood."[154] Therefore the Christian is told, "Put youre truste i*n* goddes wordes only / & not i*n* abraham. Let saynctes be an ensa*m*ple vnto you & not youre truste & co*n*fidence: For then ye make Christ of them."[155]

The Christian follows Paul's example, whose faith came through hearing God's word.[156] And as he faithfully keeps the word of Christ the Holy Spirit is given to him,[157] and he finds the faith he has received is a true faith which enables him to understand the scriptures.[158] The Holy Spirit opens the scriptures to the Christian so that he sees the literal sense is the spiritual sense, and he can see and understand all that God is saying

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[151] *Answer,* 3/63
[152] *Obedience,* 1/328
[153] *Obedience,* 1/289f
[154] *Obedience,* 1/288
[155] *1525,* 21
[156] *Obedience, I 1/223*
[157] *Prologue Romans,* 1/488
[158] *Mammon,* 1/88

to him.[159] For the scriptures "came not by the will of man, so may they not be drawn or expounded after the will of man: but as they came by the Holy Ghost, so must they be expounded and understood by the Holy Ghost."[160]

Tyndale warns the Christian not to seek the "hidden secrets God has not revealed,"[161] For neither Christ nor the apostles kept anything back which was needful for us to know, "as Paul testified (Acts xx.), how he had shewed them all the counsel of God, and had kept nought back."[162] Those who seek to fathom the hidden wisdom of God have their eyes blinded by the Devil with "falsehood and lies," which is worldly wisdom (and this had happened to the spiritualty and the doctors of the medieval Church who could not accept the open scriptures, and "they have searched to come to the bottom of his bottomless wisdom").[163]

The Christian learns from the authentic scriptures all God wants him to know, and, where there is no one to teach him, he finds God is his teacher.[164] He is encouraged to "read God's word diligently and with a good heart, and it shall teach thee all things."[165] God teaches the Christian doctrine[166] and all truth.[167] He is taught God's mercy and shown its truth from the history of God's people revealed in the Bible.[168] The scripture teaches him the way of repentance and faith into the kingdom of God.[169] It

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[159] *Mammon,* 1/107
[160] *Obedience,* 1/317
[161] *Prologue Deuteronomy,* 1/444
[162] *Answer,* 3/169
[163] *Answer,* 3/191
[164] *Obedience,* 1/156
[165] *Prologue Numbers,* 1/440
[166] *Prologue Genesis,* 1/398f
[167] *Answer,* 3/136ff
[168] *Obedience,* 1/197
[169] *Prologue Numbers,* 1/434; *Obedience,* 1/270; *Answer,* 3/132

also teaches the Christian the service which he has to give to God.[170] With the result that the Christian delights in God's word.[171]

The scriptures also teach us that our Christian life cannot be separated into separate compartments, the whole of our life must be under the control of the Holy Spirit so that our faith may be seen. "That good works spring of the Spirit, the Spirit cometh by faith, and faith cometh by hearing the word of God, when the glad tidings and promises, which God hath made unto us in Christ, are preached truly, and received in the ground of the heart, without wavering or doubting, after that the law hath passed upon us, and hath condemned our consciences."[172] Good works called for by the word of God have an evangelistic purpose, and they reveal the goodness God has given us through faith, and through our deeds our neighbour should profit from them. "For God giveth no man his grace, that he should let it lie still and do no good withal; but that he should increase it, and multiply it, with lending it to other, and with open declaring of it with the outward works provoke and draw other to God."[173] The reason we have to do good works is not to gain favour but because "one man hath bought us all with his blood, and bound us to help one another."[174] Tyndale changes the similitudes to that of a "goldsmith, which trieth his metals with fire," to show that our works must be tested by the fire of Scripture.[175] Good works which stand this test, when faith is

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[170] *Obedience,* 1/332
[171] *Pathway,* 1/28
[172] *Prologue Romans,* 1/499
[173] *Mammon,* 1/60
[174] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/69
[175] *Mammon,* 1/115

tried, are built on "the rock of God's word."[176] Finally, to stand firm in the trials of faith the Christian must "tie to thy ship this anchor of faith in Christ's blood with the cable of love, to cast it out against all tempests; and so set up thy sail, and get thee to the main sea of God's word."[177] Therefore, the Christian must "seek the word of God in all things; and without the word of God do nothing, though it appear never so glorious. Whatsoever is done without the word of God, that count idolatry. The kingdom of heaven is within us."[178]

THE CHURCH

The spiritualty taught that the Church was not subject to the scriptures, but the scriptures were subject to the Church. In More's *Dialogue* there was a lot written about the relationship between scripture and the Church. More wrote, "And fynally to put out of questyon which is crystes very chyrche / syth it is agreed bytwene vs & graunted thorow crystendom / & a conclusyon very true / y^t by y^e chyrch we know y^e scrypture / which chyrch is y^t by which ye know y^e scrypture? Is it not this company & congregacyon of all these nacyons / y^t without faccyons taken / & precysyon from y^e remenaunt / professe y^e name & fayth of Cryst? By this chyrch know we y^e scrypture / & this is y^e very chyrch / & this hath begon at cryst / & hath had hym for theyr hed & saynt Peter his vycar after hym y^e hed vnder hym / & always synce y^e successours of hym contynually / & have had his holy fayth & his blessyd sacramentes & his

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[176] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/472f
[177] *Exposition Matthew*, 2/15
[178] *Mammon*, 1/103

holy scryptures delyuered / kept & conserued therin by god & his holy spyryte."[179]

But Tyndale, in his *Answer,* wrote, "I answer, By the pope the scripture is hid, and brought into ignorance, and the true sense corrupt. And by them that ye call heretics we know the scripture, and the true sense thereof. And I say, that the pope keepeth the scripture, as did the Pharisees, to make merchandise of it."[180] Tyndale differed from More by making the scriptures the sole authority, and not the Church. Tyndale claimed the prelates say, "'We be the church, and cannot err, and therefore,' say they, 'what we conclude, though there be no scripture to prove it, it is as true as the scripture, and of equal authority with the scripture, and must be believed as well as the scripture under pain of damnation.'"[181] But for Tyndale it is only by authentic scripture God's Word can be understood and interpreted after the "plain places and general articles of faith, which thou findest in the scripture, ... will always testify who is the right church."[182]

The scriptures are the letter sent by God to Christians, and the preacher is the one who delivers the message. Tyndale points out that the authority of the message depends on God who sent it, and not on the bearer of the message.[183] It is the Holy Spirit who calls and sends the preacher and gives him his authority "as he is found apt and meet to serve

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[179] *CWM-6* 206
[180] *Answer,* 3/114
[181] *Prelates,* 2/289
[182] *Answer,* 3/44
[183] *Answer,* 3/136

his neighbour."[184] Since it is God who has given them their authority, the officers of the Church must be true and faithful servants of the Word of God[185] for they are only servants in the kingdom of Christ, and their task is to teach the scriptures to their brethren.[186] Furthermore their task is to carry the spiritual battle into the world, and they have to be able to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, in the fight against evil – whatever the cost to themselves.[187] Because the Church is spiritual it rests upon the authority of God's word, and when, as a body, the Church has strayed from God's ways the Holy Spirit stirs up teachers "to teach them the truth of every thing needful to salvation out of God's word."[188]

For Tyndale the covenant of salvation which God has made for man can only be found in the word of God and any Church doctrine which is not found in scripture is false and of the devil. In Christ's *Parable of the Sower,* the fowls which ate the good seed are the spiritualty who have eaten the word of God and taken it away from the Church and they have built a Church on doctrines which are not found in the scriptures.[189]

Tyndale's reliance on scripture was greater than it was for some of the other Reformers. Luther quoted from the Apocryphal writings and rejected The Epistle of James, and Zwingli quoted the Apocrypha and also pagan writers, other Reformers also accepted some of the results of Greek philosophy, all of which Tyndale rejected. Pineas summed up Tyndale's teaching regarding the place of the scriptures, "The cornerstone of

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[184] *Obedience,* 1/212
[185] *Prologue Matthew,* 1/479
[186] *Prelates,* 2/251
[187] *Prelates,* 2/247
[188] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/12

Tyndale's doctrine is that the Scriptures are absolute and sufficient authority in all matters of church dogma and practice. He draws analogies from the Scriptures themselves to demonstrate that they should be the Christian's final authority. For instance, he reasons that just as the Israelites in the Old Testament were commanded to search the Scriptures to see if their priesthood kept the right way, so Christians of his era have the same obligation to measure Church practice and doctrine by Scriptural standards. Even Christ, Himself, Tyndale points out, always referred his actions to the Scriptures for authority. Therefore, Tyndale counsels his readers, do nothing without the Scriptures, and 'what soeuer is done without the worde of God, that count idolatry.'"[190] This stress on the scriptures and the literal interpretation of God's word has not the narrowness which is found in some Christian sects, as Van den Brink wrote, "The fact that faith in Scripture is, e.g. for Tyndale, always faith in the saving message of Scripture, on the other hand, safeguarded the early reformers from any trace of bibliolatry and fundamentalism."[191] We have already quoted Mayotte's comment, "only scripture bore worth in Tyndale's eyes,"[192] therefore we can say that *sola scriptura,* for Tyndale, meant the 'scriptures alone' in a more literal way than it did to those who could also refer to the Apocrypha, to the authority of the Church fathers, or even to the works of pagan writers.

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[189] *Answer,* 3/191
[190] Pineas, "Scripture", 65
[191] Van den Brink, 352
[192] Mayotte, 269

VIII THE COVENANT ENVISAGED

INTRODUCTION

Tyndale was not concerned with the creation of man. Adam had been created by God, and had fallen from his goodness and had brought sin into the world so that man was separated from God. Tyndale was concerned with the effect of man's Fall and the reality of the barrier that existed between God and the sinner. He was also concerned about the salvation God had promised to man so that he could be restored to fellowship with God.

Tyndale rejected any idea that man could contribute anything to his salvation, doing our best (facere quod in se est) was not an option open to man. He also rejected the idea that there was anything in fallen man which would enable him to respond to the preaching of the gospel until he had been born again by the Holy Spirit. For Tyndale there was only one way, and that was the one he believed God has revealed in the Bible. As we have seen *sola scriptura* for Tyndale ruled out anything and everything which could not be supported by the word of God.

THE FALL

Tyndale's doctrine of the state of man after the Fall is probably the one which is hardest on fallen man for it takes all the power from man to do anything good in God's sight, and it ties him completely to the devil's will.

When Adam disobeyed God and listened to the devil's temptation all mankind was involved in Adam's sin and man was separated from God. Man could not get any further from God, he was totally alienated from God and unable to do anything pleasing to God. Man had chosen to join with the devil and become an enemy to God.

> By nature, through the fall of Adam, we are the children of wrath, heirs of the vengeance of God by birth, yea, and from our conception. And we have our fellowship with the damned devils, under the power of darkness and rule of Satan, while we are yet in our mother's wombs; and though we shew not forth the fruits of sin [as soon as we are born], yet are we full of the natural poison, whereof all sinful deeds spring, and cannot but sin outwards, (be we never so young,) [as soon as we be able to work,] if occasion be given: for our nature is to do sin, as is the nature of a serpent to sting.[1]

"Yet testifieth the scripture, and it is true, that we are by inheritance heirs of damnation,"[2] for the Fall has "brought us into captivity and bondage under the devil. And the devil is our lord, and our ruler, our head, our governor, our prince, yea, and our god."[3] The result is we are lost and without any hope either in this life or the next, and we cannot complain that our punishment is unjust.

> For it is not possible for a man, till he be born again, to think that God is righteous to make him of so poison a nature, either

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[1] *Pathway*, 1/14: words in [ ] added to *1525* 6f
[2] *Mammon*, 1/64
[3] *Pathway*, 1/17

> for his own pleasure or for the sin of another man, and to give him a law that is impossible for him to do, or to consent to; his wit, reason, and will being so fast glued, yea, nailed and chained unto the will of the devil.[4]

Earlier he had written, "Our will is locked and knit faster unto the will of the devil, than could an hundred thousand chains bind a man unto a post."[5] As if that is not enough, Tyndale wrote, "our hearts were as dead unto all good working as the members of him whose soul is departed." He then quotes from Ephesians 2:1-10 and continues, "The text is plain: we were stone dead, and without life or power to do or consent to good. The whole nature of us was captive under the devil, and led at his will. And we were as wicked as the devil now is (except that he now sinneth against the Holy Ghost); and we consented unto sin with soul and body, and hated the law of God."[6]

Thus for Tyndale we see that there is not even the slightest glimmer of light in fallen man and he has no thoughts or desires to change from serving the devil, "because that of nature we are evyll / therfore we bothe thynke and doo evyll / and are vnder vengeaunce / vnder the lawe / convicte to eternall damnacion by the lawe / and are contrary to the will of god in all oure wyll / and in all thyngs consent to the wyll of the fende."[7]

Other Reformers did not have such a black and white contrast as Tyndale, and therefore they did not consider man's position was by nature

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[4] *Pathway*, 1/18
[5] *Pathway*, 1/17
[6] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/199
[7] *1525*, 7

quite as hopeless, even though he might be powerless to remedy it without God's grace.

Althaus wrote, "According to Luther natural man is completely flesh. This does not mean that we are 'so completely inclined toward evil that nothing at all remains in us which is inclined toward fulfilling the law.' With one side of his being man wills to do the good; this is, however, only a 'very tiny motion of his will.'"[8] Luther wrote,

> Original sin really means that human nature had completely fallen; that the intellect has become darkened, so that we no longer know God and His will and no longer perceive the works of God; furthermore, that the will is extraordinarily depraved, so that we do not trust the mercy of God, and do not fear God but are unconcerned, disregard the Word and will of God, and follow the desire and the impulses of the flesh; likewise, that our conscience is no longer quiet but, when it thinks of God's judgement, despairs and adopts illicit defenses and remedies.[9]

Luther also wrote, "The perfect natural endowments in man were the knowledge of God, faith, fear, etc. These Satan has corrupted through sin, just as leprosy poisons the flesh, so the will and reason have become depraved through sin, and man not only does not love God any longer but flees from Him, hates Him, and desires to be and live without Him."[10]

Therefore Watson could write of Luther's position, "Of course, fallen man

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[8] Althaus, 155. quote from *WA56*, 237. 275.
[9] *LW-1*, 114
[10] *LW-1*, 165

remains man; he is not a mere animal, and still less a devil. He retains his powers of reason and will, and he still has some knowledge of God and his law. But both his reasoning and his willing are radically corrupt, being governed from the start by the false premises dictated by Satan."[11] Therefore there is a glimmer of light remaining in him even though, Luther could write, "So completely is man corrupted through Adam's fall that the curse is innate with him and become, as it were, his nature and being."[12] But it was, for Luther, a sickness, "This should be emphasized, I say, for the reason that unless the severity of the disease is correctly recognized, the cure is also not known or desired."[13]

This idea of a sickness is also found in Zwingli, "First, he must know the original state of man, how he transgressed the commandment of God and became a prey to death, how by his transgression he infected and corrupted his offspring – the whole human race – for the dead cannot give birth to the living and we do not find Moors born in Britain. From this the young man will learn and acknowledge his own sickness. And he will see that sickness, too, when he realizes that everything that we do has its origin in frailty, lust and temptation."[14]

Locher wrote, "It is quite clear from all Zwingli's terminological, exegetical and dogmatic statements about 'original sin' that he certainly has no desire to conceal the depth of human sinfulness or to mitigate the gravity of human guilt, in the way that Lutherans have mistakenly represented him, … He is, rather, concerned to prevent us, as far as

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[11] Watson, in *LCC, Luther and Erasmus.* 16.
[12] *LW-21,* 352
[13] *LW-1,* 142

possible, from taking refuge in the idea of fate, and to bring us to a sense of personal responsibility for our guilt. 'Guilt' in the strictest sense is never a general concept, but is always 'my guilt'. "Just as Adam fell through love of self, so we fall also'. ... According to Zwingli, the 'sickness' has two aspects: (1) Ontologically; the necessity of sinning; (2) Noetically; blindness to God and to his revelation. 'Man is deceitful' – Zwingli emphasises this factor with especial vigour as against the optimistic search for truth of the humanists."[15]

Calvin, also, had not the clear cut division of Tyndale, he expressed the situation facing fallen man as one of exile. "Man, when he withdrew his allegiance to God, was deprived of the spiritual gifts by which he had been raised to the hope of eternal salvation. Hence it follows, that he is now an exile from the kingdom of God, so that all things which pertain to the blessed life of the soul are extinguished in him until he recover them by the grace of regeneration."[16] Where in Ephesians 2, Tyndale says we are "stone dead", Calvin starts by saying this means, "'Ye were formerly lost; but now God, by his grace, has rescued you from destruction.'" He continued that "it was a real and present death under which they laboured. ... While we remain in Adam, we are entirely devoid of life; and that regeneration is a new life of the soul, by which it rises from the dead. Some kind of life, I acknowledge, does remain in us, while we are still at a

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[14] Zwingli, *Education,* 105
[15] Locher, 204f
[16] Calvin, *Institutes-II.2.12,* 233

distance from Christ; for unbelief does not altogether destroy the outward senses, or the will, or the other faculties of the soul."[17]

Although the Canons of the Synod of Dort appear to be close to Tyndale's position as we read, "Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation." However, the Synod of Dort has not left man in the absolute hopelessness of Tyndale's theology. "There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment."[18]

We have seen that for Tyndale the picture is black and white, without the shades of grey other Reformers had, and we return to him.

> God and the devil are two contrary fathers, two contrary fountains, and two contrary causes: the one of all goodness, the other of all evil. And they that do evil are born of the devil; and first evil by that birth, ere they do evil. For ere a man do any evil outward, of purpose, he conceived that evil first in his mind, and consented unto it, and so was evil in his heart, he was born of the devil, and had received of his seed and nature;

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[17] Calvin, *Ephesians*, 219f
[18] *Canons*, 45

> by the reason of which nature, seed and birth, he worketh evil naturally, and can do no other: as Christ saith, (John viii.) "Ye are of your father the devil, and therefore will do the lusts of your father."[19]

Man, therefore, is totally separated from God, he is a child of the devil, and has no claims upon God. He neither has the desire or will to do God's will and is powerless to recognise and to save himself from the just deserts of his rebellion and disobedience to God's commandment. God alone can break the power of the devil and set man free and bring him peace.

> For how can we be at peace with God and love him, seeing we are conceived and born under the power of the devil, and are his possession and kingdom, his captives and bondmen, and led at his will, and he holdeth our hearts, so that it is impossible for us to consent to the will of God, much more is it impossible for a man to fulfil the law of his own strength and power, seeing that we are by birth and of nature the heirs of eternal damnation, as saith Paul, Eph. ii.? We (saith he) "are by nature the children of wrath;" which thing the law doth but utter only, and helpeth us not, yea requireth impossible things of us.[20]

Two things follow logically from this view of man's state since the Fall; first, the question of free-will; and, secondly, Tyndale's doctrine of election.

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[19] *1 John*, 2/190
[20] *Mammon*, 1/47

The Covenant Envisaged

The Fall was not something unforeseen by God, for God had planned the salvation of his chosen people even before the world was created.[21] Even while we were still enemies who hated God, and had no desire to be God's children, we were the elect people who had been chosen by God.[22] In spite of the glue, the nails and the chains which bound us to the devil, God provided the way of salvation through the covenant the Father made with the Son: - "Neither can any creature loose the bonds, save the blood of Christ only."[23]

Trueman has missed the thrust of Tyndale's position when he wrote, "He does not mention the idea of God being angry with man because of his moral guilt. Tyndale's approach to the Fall is thus centred on man, not God."[24] For although the Fall was man-centred as he exercised his free-will to disobey God and spiritually died, man's salvation was totally God-centred in Christ. For in spite of the hardness of Tyndale's view of fallen man the picture is not completely black. The light is real and powerful, for it lies in God and not man. "In Gen. iii. God saith to the serpent, 'I will put hatred between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; that self seed shall tread thy head under foot.' Christ is this woman's seed: he it is that hath trodden under foot the devil's head, that is to say, sin, death, hell, and all his power. For without this seed can no man avoid sin, death, hell, and everlasting damnation."[25]

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[21] *Mammon*, 1/65
[22] *Answer*, 3/192
[23] *Pathway*, 1/18
[24] Trueman, *Legacy*, 85.
[25] *Pathway*, 1/10

FREE-WILL

We need to start with the state of man after the Fall if we are to understand what is meant by free-will when we find it in the writings of the Reformers. If fallen man is 'sick' the situation is different to the man who is 'dead', neither of them is able to choose to do what is right, but for a different reason. It also makes a difference if fallen man is a slave to the devil or a child who is the offspring of the devil.

For Luther, the doctrine concerning free-will is different to Tyndale's. Commenting on Galatians 1:10, Luther wrote, "In this passage 'men' is emphatic, it means 'those who, according to their first birth from Adam, are merely men, apart from Christ and from faith in him.' For since these people are alienated from the truth, they are of necessity filled with lying and with hatred of the truth."[26] Luther was not happy with the term 'free-will' and wrote, "I would wish that the words, 'free will,' had never been invented." The reason for this is that "those who are involved in sins are not free, but prisoners of the devil. Since they may become free through grace you can call them men of free will, just as you might call a man rich, although he is a beggar because he can become rich. But it is neither right nor good to play tricks with words in matters of such great importance."[27]

In *On the Bondage of the Will,* Luther wrote, "If we are under the god of this world, away from the work and Spirit of the true God, we are

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[26] *LW-27,* 181
[27] *LW-32,* 94

held captive to his will, as Paul says to Timothy (II Tim. 2:26), so that we cannot will anything but what he wills."[28]

But for Tyndale the will is not just in bondage to the devil. As we have already seen man is a child of the devil and his will chooses evil because that is natural to him.[29] The natural man is powerless to do anything good and pleasing to God, and it is totally separated from God and under "the curse and vengeance of God."[30] "And so our deeds are evil, because we lack knowledge and love, to refer them unto the glory of God: which lack cometh of the devil, that blindeth us with lusts, and occasions that we cannot see the goodness and righteousness of the law of God."[31]

Man's will is powerless to desire freedom, and even if it were possible, he would not choose it. Tyndale wrote, "The will of man followeth the wit, and is subject unto the wit; and as the wit erreth, so does the will, and as the wit is in captivity, so is the will; neither is it possible that the will should be free, where the wit is in bondage." Tyndale recognises that men choose to do things, but man's free-will does not let him choose what is good for he is prevented by his "natural blindness," and one man thinks this is right and another that, for "we are all out of the right way, every man his ways." Tyndale continues, "Now when we say, every man has his free will, to do what him lusteth, I say, verily, that men do what they lust. Notwithstanding, to follow lusts is not freedom, but captivity and bondage." Tyndale is more concerned with the Christian than with the unregenerate man and so we find that everything he writes

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[28] Luther. "Bondage," *LCC*. 140
[29] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/190
[30] *Mammon*, 1/47

about fallen man is but a springboard to show the greatness of God's love to his elect and chosen children.

Therefore he quickly turns to the free-will God has given to the Christian. It is not until God has liberated us from that bondage to the devil, and has given us the power to "hate and resist" everything which keeps us apart from God that we are set free "even with the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free." Then we have the power to do God's will.[32] Only after God has "poured the Spirit of his grace into our souls" have we the free-will to do God's will and keep his law.[33] Tyndale also raises the problem of the Christian sinning against this spiritual will he has been given, "I mean the will of the Spirit; for after our conversion we have two wills, fighting one against the other."[34] Here Tyndale appears to be agreeing with Luther that man is *simul justus et peccator*. Quoting Romans 7, Tyndale wrote, "Thus are we sinners, and no sinners," but his explanation of this phrase moves him away from Luther. Sin, for the Christian, is "frailty" for "we never cast off the yoke of God from our necks, neither yield ourselves unto sin for to serve it."[35] We are either children of God *(justus)* or children of the devil *(peccator)*, we cannot be both at the same time, for the child of God has God's nature and the Holy Spirit so that he "cannot consent to sin."[36]

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[31] *Answer,* 3/191
[32] *Obedience,* 1/182f
[33] *Answer,* 3/174
[34] *Matthew,* 2/76
[35] *Answer,* 3/32; *Obedience,* 1/301; *Romans.* 1/492
[36] *1 John,* 2/190

The covenant has made us children of God and the Christian has been liberated from bondage to sin. "The conditions of the peace that is made between God and us in Christ's blood are these:" all sins, our fore sins are forgiven, and "also all our infirmities, weakness, proneness, readiness, and motions unto sin, are pardoned. ... This doth Paul (Rom. vii.) so confirm, that all the world cannot quitch against it." For, if we sin, we are not "judged by the rigorousness of the law; but chastised, if we do amiss, as children that are under no law."[37]

GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN'S SALVATION

Tyndale's theology of the covenant runs through all his writings, and we need to look at the overall picture if we are to understand it.[38] The question lying behind the covenant is, How can God the Father choose and adopt those he has elected from fallen mankind to be his children?

Although he did not see the full impact of the Fatherhood of God to Tyndale's theology McGiffert realised that it had an important place in his thinking and drew our attention to it.[39] Trueman moves us forward and is clearer over the importance of the family relationship, but he does not break with Clebsch over the development in Tyndale's theology.[40]

In order to understand Tyndale's covenantal theology we have to consider it in two halves: firstly, the unilateral covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: and, secondly the application of the

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[37] *1 John,* 2/158f
[38] Yet Day, "Tracy's Will", 174, wrote concerning this late work of Tyndale's, "What's relatively new here is the emphasis on covenant."
[39] McGiffert, 177-179
[40] Trueman, *Legacy,* 111 (especially n.104)

covenant to those elected by the Father to be his children. The first half is the subject of this chapter, the second half is the subject of the next, but we will find it is impossible to separate the covenant into two watertight compartments in this way, and one flows into the other.

The covenant is between the Persons of the Trinity, and it enables God, the Father, to elect those he has chosen to be his children. To enable this to happen God the Son shed his blood on the Cross, breaking down the "wall that was a stop between us" (Eph. 2:14). Then God the Holy Spirit applied Christ's blood to the elect and brought them into fellowship with the Father. Because Tyndale's writings are practical and more concerned with the Christian and his relationship with God this aspect of the covenant is not as easy to find as other doctrines. Møller wrote, "It is God who takes the believers into the covenant with him for Christ's sake, as it is Christ who gives grace to do the Law and to understand it 'and writeth it with his holy Spirit in the tables of the hearts of men; and maketh it a true thing there, and no hypocrisy'."[41] We fail to understand the covenant if we make it between God and man, and if we – like the Swiss Reformers – try to make a legal framework, which includes man, for Tyndale's covenant theology.[42]

Before the foundation of the world God made his plans for man's salvation.[43] God planned the way for man's restoration into fellowship with himself after man had chosen to rebel and disobey God's one commandment given to him in the garden of Eden. God planned to elect

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[41] Møller. 52
[42] see Penny. 15.
[43] *Pathway*, 1/11 *Prologue Ephesians*, 1/515; *Answer*, 3/111f

some of those who would be taken captive of the devil,[44] and save them from their captivity and adopt them as children of God.[45] It was an agreement between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to restore man into the favour of God, and each Person in the Trinity has their part to fulfil in that covenant. "God hath also made us promises, and hath sworn; yea, hath made a testament or a covenant, and hath bound himself, and hath sealed his obligation with Christ's blood, and confirmed it with miracles."[46]

THE COVENANT

Before we examine Tyndale's doctrine more closely we must digress and examine early sixteenth-century teaching on the covenant. To make sense of the different positions taken the relationship between God and the Christian is all important – in fact it affects every aspect of man's salvation and position in the kingdom of God.

Oberman wrote, "Luther transforms the medieval notion of the covenant into something completely new by joining objective and subjective conceptions of the covenant, thus emphasizing the necessity of faith."[47]

Hagen wrote, "The publicly proclaimed testament of God can also be called a covenant. … With his *theologia crucis* Luther lines up covenant with testament, just as in his earlier work he identifies *promissio* and *pactum* with *testamentum.*"[48] Hagen discusses Luther's and Zwingli's

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[44] *Mammon,* 1/47
[45] *Mammon,* 1/77; *Prologue Exodus,* 1/417
[46] *Obedience,* 1/292
[47] Oberman, *Reformation,* 111
[48] Hagen. 8

theologies of the covenant, and then summarises the difference between Luther and Zwingli. "On soteriological-sacramental grounds, however, the reformers differ. For Luther, man's response is not a condition for God's unilateral testament, because man's response is contained in the gift (the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the Word). Man's historical (political, ethical, etc.) life is secularized and relieved of any ulterior soteriological motivations. because of the *testamentum Christi* man is free. For Zwingli, with perhaps a different political model, the discussion of *testamentum* develops in terms of covenant. Man's historical life, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is lived in 'pact' with God. Man's response to the *foedus* must show that he is a confederate."[49]

Baker wrote, "So Luther, breaking completely from the semi-pelagian nominalist 'pact,' transmitted the Augustinian understanding of unilateral testament into the sixteenth century. In Zurich, unilateral testament evolved into bilateral covenant, and as the Reformation progressed, both testament and covenant became more distinctively Reformed than Lutheran."[50]

Bierma wrote that different theological traditions led to two different views of the covenant, "These two views of covenant were closely related to different doctrines of predestination. Calvin's unilateral testament was linked theologically to absolute double predestination, Bullinger's bilateral covenant to election only."[51]

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[49] Hagen, 22
[50] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant,* 183
[51] Bierma , "Federal Theology" 308

The Covenant Envisaged

Taking those views of covenant we find that covenant for Tyndale does not fit into any of those patterns. Like Luther and Calvin, Tyndale's covenant was unilateral; like Bullinger it related to election only; like Zwingli the Holy Spirit played a vital part. Unlike Luther it was not the work of the Word of God, nor had it any relationship to man's faith for its validity; unlike Calvin there was no double predestination; unlike Zwingli there was no 'pact' between man and God; unlike Bullinger it was not bilateral.

As we will see, Tyndale's covenant is straightforward and depends entirely on God, and it relates to our birth as children of God. Just as no human child had anything to do with its conception, so the child of God has no part in its election or new birth, but it is the work of God, and the Holy Spirit is active in applying the covenant to those God has chosen from the spiritually dead children of the devil. Until the Holy Spirit has given the elect life they can do nothing, the covenant is fulfilled and the new born child of God lives and grows within the covenant of salvation.

THE TRINITY

Tyndale sought to do justice to each Person in the Trinity, to the sovereignty of God, to his righteousness and his love. God had to be just and the justifier of sinful man (Rom. 3:26), and his theology also had to take into account man's complete inability to do anything himself towards his salvation. All his findings, Tyndale knew, had to be based on Scripture alone, without any philosophical or rational arguments influencing him. "Forasmuch as we can do no works unto God, but receive only of his mercy with our repenting faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only

Saviour: unto whom, and unto God our Father through him, and unto his holy Spirit, that only purgeth, sanctifieth, and washeth us in the innocent blood of our redemption, be praise for ever."[52]

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

The first problem to be overcome was, How can God the Father be a Father to man after his rebellion against God? Man had chosen to disobey God and to suffer eternal death and separation from God; God had to be just and righteous. If God was to love man as his child, then man had to be righteous and freed from sin. The only way this problem could be solved was for the effects of the Fall to be undone, and man to have once again a perfect righteousness.

Tyndale stressed God's plan for man's restoration to fellowship with himself was before the foundation of the world. "In Christ God loved us, his elect and chosen, before the world began, and reserved us unto the knowledge of his Son and of the holy gospel; ... and we know him as our Father most merciful."[53] And again, Tyndale wrote,

> God is ever fatherly-minded toward the elect members of his church. He loved them, ere the world began, in Christ. (Eph. 1.) He loveth them while they be yet evil, and his enemies in their hearts, ere they be come unto the knowledge of his Son Christ, and ere his law be written in their hearts; as a father

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[52] *Jonas*, 1/466
[53] *Pathway*, 1/14f

> loveth his young son, while he is yet evil, and ere it know his father's law to consent thereto.[54]

The love of God the Father shines through the whole of Tyndale's writings, and in most cases where Tyndale refers to God we have to understand that he is writing of the work of God the Father. When Tyndale mentions 'God' with reference to the Trinity, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit it is usually clear from the context who is meant.

THE LOVE OF THE SON

The certainty of the covenant depends on it being fulfilled before creation. "The treasure of his mercy was laid up in Christ for all that should believe, before the world was made; *ergo,* nothing that hath happened since hath changed the purpose of the invariable God." God's love meant that he gave his Son for the elect.[55]

Christ had to shed his blood for there was no "covenant made that was not confirmed with blood." Throughout the Old Testament the covenant was confirmed with the blood of the animals which were sacrificed, "but this new and gentle testament, ... as it is a better testament, so is it confirmed with a better blood."[56]

God the Son had to become man and shed his blood for the elect so that God the Father could adopt them into his family as his children.

> His blood, his death, his patience in suffering rebukes and wrongs, his prayers and fastings, his meekness and fulfilling of

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[54] *Answer,* 3/111f
[55] *Tracy,* 3/275
[56] *Sacraments,* 1/364

> the uttermost point of the law, appeased the wrath of God; brought the favour of God to us again; obtained that God should love us first, and be our Father, and that a merciful Father.[57]

"Jesus is God and Almighty," he is our "advocate and intercessor."[58] God the Son fulfils his part of the covenant for the chosen child of God, and "God, for his truth's sake, must put the righteousness of Christ in him, and wash his unrighteousness away in the blood of Christ."[59]

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit's part in the covenant is to apply the blood of Christ to those chosen to be the children of God. For those "whom God chooseth everlastingly with Christ, him sealeth he with his mighty Spirit."[60] But the Holy Spirit's work in us and all that he does for us "is the deserving of Christ's blood."[61]

The Holy Spirit is active from bringing the elect to the new birth as God's children, and enables us to truly be faithful and obedient children of our heavenly father. "So we see that God only, who, according to the scripture, worketh all in all things, worketh a man's justifying, salvation, and health; yea, and poureth faith and belief, lust to love God's will; and strength to fulfil the same, into us, even as water is poured into a vessel; and that of his good will and purpose, and not of our deservings and

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[57] *Pathway,* 1/18f
[58] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/152f
[59] *Mammon,* 1/94; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/90
[60] *Obedience,* 1/139f
[61] *Mammon,* 1/83

merits."[62] The whole of man's salvation as a child of God is the work of the Holy Spirit as he applies the covenant to the elect and enables God to be their Father and the Son to be their Saviour, and for the elect to grow in grace and the knowledge of God. Trueman wrote, "According to Tyndale, the presence of the Spirit within the believer has a fourfold effect: first, he frees man from bondage to the Devil. … Secondly, he assures man of the love of God towards him. Thirdly, he makes man return this love. Finally, he causes man to demonstrate this love in the performance of good works."[63]

In the following chapters we will see how the Holy Spirit is involved in every stage of the life of the elect, from giving life to God's chosen ones and bringing them from death to life, and how he enables the children of God to grow and develop until at length they come into God's eternal presence in heaven.

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[62] *Prologue Romans,* 1/498
[63] Trueman, *Legacy,* 90

IX THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE COVENANT

As we have seen in the previous Chapter, the covenant was made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One of the most important factors for the covenant to be effective was the fact that God the Son would shed his blood, thus opening the way for God the Father to adopt the elect to be children of God. This blood-shedding also opened the way for the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's blood to those God had chosen, thus making them clean and righteous.

One section in Laughlin's dissertation is "Tyndale's Soteriology and the Problem of His Thought." He traced Tyndale's thought from man's depravity to the Christian's life style and wrote, "In so doing, it summarized a soteriology that exhibited a unique character among the theologies of the Reformation." However, he found a problem because he was trying to see how Tyndale's soteriology brought together different theological schema which are found in the other Reformers. "What is needed, therefore, is a way into the inner confines of Tyndale's thought, a hermeneutical key that can unlock the secret of the true character of his theology and thus help to establish with certainty and clarity his proper place in the Reformation era of the history of Christian thought."[1]

ELECTION

Once the covenant had been made the practical aspects of it needed to be worked out. As far as man is concerned the Bible appears to make

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[1] Laughlin, 87f and 90f.

statements concerning man's salvation which contradict each other (and this has caused different positions to be taken by Reformers who claim to rely on *sola scriptura* for their doctrine). Tyndale believed that what, on the surface, appeared irreconcilable in the Bible could be brought together and harmonised within the covenant. The covenant, and its fulfilling depends on God alone, therefore there can be no uncertainty about its fulfilment. This fact, and the way the covenant was applied to man, solved all the seeming contradictions in the word of God and brought them together.[2] One passage in *Obedience* brings into the open some of the difficulties facing man regarding salvation.

> For Paul saith, Rom. vi. as it is above rehearsed: "Remember ye not (saith he), that all we which are baptized in the name of Christ Jesus are baptized to die with him? We are buried with him in baptism for to die;" that is, to kill the lusts and the rebellion which remaineth in the flesh. And after that he saith, "Ye are dead as concerning sin, but live unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord." If thou look on the profession of our hearts, and on the Spirit and forgiveness which we have received through Christ's merits we are full dead: but if thou look on the rebellion of the flesh, we do but begin to die, and to be baptized, that is, to drown and quench the lusts, and are full baptized at the last minute of death. And as concerning the working of the Spirit, we begin to live, and grow every day more and more, both in knowledge and also in godly living,

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[2] Trueman, *Legacy*. 86

> according as the lusts abate: as a child receiveth the full soul at the first day, yet groweth daily in the operations and works thereof.[3]

For Tyndale the covenant is unilateral. Man is dead and therefore powerless to do anything of himself. It is because God has chosen us in Christ that we, the elect children of God, are brought to the new birth and are enabled to respond to our Father's love, for of ourselves we can do nothing. "By grace (that is to saye by favoure) we are plucked oute of Adam the grounde of all evyll / and graffed in Christ the rote of all goodnes. In Christ god loved vs his electe and chosen / before the worlde bega*n* / and reserved vs vnto the knowledge of his Sonne and of hys holy gospell."[4] For "God chooseth them first, and they not God, as thou readest, John xv. And then he sendeth forth and calleth them, and sheweth them his good will, which he beareth unto them, and maketh them see both their own damnation in the law, and also the mercy that is laid up for them in Christ's blood, and thereto what he will have them to do.[5]

We must now turn to the way, in Tyndale's doctrine, by which God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit work together to make man's election a reality. Election is the way God has fulfilled his promises to those he has chosen in Christ. "We have a promise that Christ, and his body, and his blood, and all that he did, and suffered, is a sacrifice, a

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[3] *Obedience,* 1/261
[4] *1525,* 7
[5] *Answer,* 3/35. This contrasts with Clebsch's statement, Tyndale's "idea of covenant as a bipartite, divine human contract binding upon both parties, shouts itself from every writing attributable to the period." *England's,* 181. Penny accurately assessed Tyndale's position, Tyndale's "stress upon the notion of covenant appears to weaken the forensic

ransom, and a full satisfaction for our sins; that God for his sake will think no more on them, if we have power to repent and believe."[6] God's promise of mercy is, therefore, fulfilled in us because of the work of Christ for our salvation,[7] and all God's blessing are ours, "heaven, justifying, forgiveness, all gifts of grace, and all that is promised them, they receive of Christ, and by his merits freely,"[8] and we know that we are "beloved of God as Christ is."[9] It is through this work of Christ that we know God to be a merciful Father, whose Son has done everything for us to make this a reality, for "the bloud of Christ hath obteyned all thi[n]gs for vs of god. Christ is oure satisfaction / redeemer / delyverer / saveour from vengeance and wrath."[10] And this is applied by the working of the Holy Spirit who leads us to be imitators and followers of God, which is a sign that we "are inheritors of all the promises of God, and elect unto the fellowship of the blood of Christ."[11] Sometimes, however, it seems impossible to truly fulfil our responsibility to love with our whole being, "yet if thou feelest lust thereunto and thy spirit sigheth, mourneth, and longeth after strength to do it, take a sign and evident token thereby, that the Spirit of life is in thee, and that thou art elect to life everlasting by Christ's blood."[12]

What lies behind the motivation to do good works is most important: therefore Tyndale wrote that the Christian naturally follows Christ and imitates his example because he is a child of God. But if our

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approach to grace and faith matters so pronounced and one-sided in Luther and Calvin." Penny, 15

[6] *Obedience,* 1/278; *Exposition Matthew,* 2/6

[7] *Prologue Romans,* 1/509

[8] *Answer,* 3/109

[9] *Obedience,* 1/271

[10] *1525,* 7; *Mammon,* 1/54 etc; *Prologue Romans,* 1/504f

good works are done in order to earn a reward we are worldly-minded and not part of God's family.[13]

In this way, Tyndale believed, our sonship as God's children lies outside of us and cannot be gained by anything we do. Our election and adoption into God's family is entirely of God and his grace which he has given to us, and it is purely the work of the Holy Spirit.[14] As Trueman wrote, "Theologically all the elements in this process are undergirded by the activity of the Spirit."[15] There is, therefore, a mystery about election[16] which is beyond our human understanding: "Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul (Rom. ix.) forbiddeth to ask why; for it is too deep for man's capacity."[17] Anyone who tries to find an answer to the problem of predestination has to leave God's word and try to find the answer in man's reason, and it usually means relying on Aristotle or other pagan philosophers.[18] This leads to man having a part (however small) in his salvation.[19] For Tyndale that is a heresy which blinds a man so that he cannot see the "bright beams of the scripture."[20]

Tyndale's theology had no problem with those who had not been chosen by God to become children of God, their eternal state was the result

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[11] *Mammon,* 1/72
[12] *Mammon,* 1/85
[13] *Mammon,* 1/73. The problem raised by Trueman, *Legacy,* 94f, is a false one. His remark, "Tyndale himself does not appear to have been aware of the problem …" arises because Trueman assumes the covenant is a legalistic bilateral one between God and man, the problem disappears when covenant is understood as it is found in Tyndale's writings.
[14] *Mammon,* 1/72
[15] Trueman, *Legacy,* 90
[16] Penny, 15f. "It could be argued that Tyndale's position is rather typically English, given the somewhat ambivalent attitude on the subject found in Wycliffe."
[17] *Answer,* 3/191; *Mammon,* 1/89
[18] *Mammon,* 1/154f with *Answer,* 3/140
[19] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/190; *Answer,* 3/191ff
[20] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/141

of Adam's Fall. Tyndale did not believe in *double predestination,* those God had not chosen were naturally children of the devil and therefore under the curse of their father. "For where Christ is not, there remaineth the curse, that fell on Adam as soon as he had sinned, so that they are in bondage under damnation of sin, death, and hell."[21] In *Answer,* Tyndale argues against More who believed that God chose those he saw would have a "towardness" to doing good. His argument against More's semi-Pelagianism equally applies against those who believe God has predestined some to damnation. "Are we not robbed of all towardness in Adam; and be by nature made the children of sin, so that we sin naturally; and to sin is our nature?"[22] Election is to life: it was man who had chosen death.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

The Fatherhood of God lies behind the covenant and is the reason for the covenant, and we can only briefly consider its importance to Tyndale's theology. It is through election that the Christian becomes a child of God and the family relationship between him and the Father is worked out, Christ's blood and the work of the Holy Spirit enabled the Father to show his love to those chosen to be his children, and for the Christian to return that love as a true child.[23] Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, and his blood-shedding enabled God to adopt the elect and make

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[21] *Pathway,* 1/10
[22] *Answer,* 3/209
[23] Trueman's remark, "God is obliged to be a father to his people: and they are bound to obey the law to the best of their ability:" *(Legacy,* 111) makes fatherhood and sonship an unnatural legality and loses the motive of love in the father/child relationship.

them his children. It is in Christ and through Christ's blood that the whole of man's salvation finds its fulfilment, opening the way for God to be merciful to us and for us to live as his children, loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbour as ourselves.

> Christ is the whole cause why we do all thing for our neighbour, even so is he the cause why God doth all thing for us, why he receiveth us into his holy testament, and maketh us heirs of all his promises, and poureth his Spirit into us, and maketh us his sons, and fashioneth us like unto Christ, and maketh us such as he would have us to be. The assurance that we are sons, beloved, and heirs with Christ, and have God's Spirit in us, is the consent of our hearts unto the law of God.[24]

Here we are concerned with man's relationship to the father within God's family, it is later we must examine the parts Christ and the Holy Spirit have in the covenant. It is a relationship which comes through faith in Christ as Saviour. "Faith, or confidence in Christ's blood, without help, and before the works of the law, bringeth all manner remission of sins and satisfaction."[25]

Debora Shuger, in her chapter, "Nursing Fathers", wrote, "Tyndale in particular specializes in delicate and realistic portrayals of parental love as the single analogue for the unmerited *caritas* of God."[26] Her quotation from *Exposition Matthew* concerns the promises parents make to their children "and that such as they think should make it to see love, and to

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[24] *Obedience*, 1/300
[25] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/130
[26] Shuger, 220

provoke it to be willing to do part of his duty."[27] The validity of her remark is perhaps seen more clearly earlier in Tyndale's work, "If thou believe in Christ that he is thy Saviour, that faith will lead thee in immediately, and shew thee God with a lovely and amiable countenance; and make thee feel and see how that he is thy Father, altogether merciful to thee, and at one with thee, and thou his son, and highly in his favour and grace, and sure that thou pleasest him."[28] For the love of God towards the elect is as the love he has for his only begotten Son, so "a Christian man perceiveth that God is his Father, and loveth him even as he loved Christ when he shed his blood on the cross."[29]

Tyndale's view of the Fatherhood of God is wider than our understanding of a father's place in the family, for Tyndale takes into account the totality of parenthood and realises that there is a difference between a father's and a mother's love, and that this difference is perhaps clearer in times of difficulty for a child. Tyndale wrote, "And as for our pain-taking, God rejoiceth not therein as a tyrant; but pitieth us, and as it were mourneth with us, and is always ready and at hand to help us, if we call, as a merciful father and a kind mother."[30] God looks after us and cares for us, and we are "tended as young children are by the care of their fathers and mothers."[31] Sometimes Tyndale refers to God's love to us as

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[27] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/74f
[28] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/26
[29] *Pathway,* 1/22
[30] *Obedience,* 1/280,314; *Mammon,* 1/107; *Answer,* 3/34
[31] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/8;74f

that of a mother, "The service that a mother doth unto her child is not grievous, because she loveth it."[32]

God has made a promise which binds him[33] so that "when we look on the seals of his obligations, wherewith he has bound himself; and to keep the promises and covenants better in mind, and to make them the more deep sink into our hearts, and to be more earnestly regarded, and that we should ask what such things meant,"[34] we understand God's loving purpose for us. The covenant is that God will be our Father[35] and he has bound himself "that he will be a father unto us."[36] In order to "be to us a father …" he "hath slain his most dear son Jesus, to confirm his oath;"[37] and "has raised our Saviour Christ up again to justify us."[38] In this way Christ enabled God to be a Father to us "for he only maketh God our God, our strength, power, sword and shield, and shortly our Father."[39] Therefore God, for Christ's sake, "will be a father unto them"[40] and "to take them for his sons, and to love them as well as though they were full righteous."[41] Therefore God challenges his chosen ones "to be his people," and at the same time "the godly challenged him to be their God and Father, and to help and succour them at need, and to minister all things unto them according to all his promises."[42] Then God deals with us as "his children, in whose heart he writeth the faith of his Son Jesus and the love of his

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[32] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/208; *Exposition Matthew*, 2/110f; Shuger, 220f
[33] *Obedience*, 1/316
[34] *Sacraments*, 1/362
[35] *Answer*, 3/89
[36] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/166
[37] *Tracy*, 3/282
[38] *Obedience*, 1/167
[39] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/182; *Jonas*, 1/464; *Exposition Matthew*, 2/88f
[40] *Mammon*, 1/123; *Jonas*, 1/466
[41] *Exposition Matthew*, 2/90

laws,"[43] and he has promised that he "shall write it in their hearts with his Holy Spirit."[44] The elect therefore believe in God and "are begotten of God through that belief,"[45] for it is by faith "we be born anew, and made the sons of God … and are translated from death to life."[46]

God's wisdom is found in his promises to us for it is through his law and promises that he reveals himself to us, saying that he will "be a Father almighty to us"[47] who is a Father who cannot lie but keeps his promises to his children.[48] Tyndale wrote, "Turn thine eyes to Christ, and see there the exceeding mercy of thy most kind and loving Father."[49] For as the gospel is applied to your life thou "shalt feel God as a kind and merciful father."[50]

"God is a wise Father, and knoweth all the infirmities of his children, and also merciful,"[51] and his love is without limits, "God receiveth both perfect and weak in like grace, for Christ's sake, as a father receiveth all his children, both small and great, in like love. He receiveth them to be his sons, … to bear their weakness for Christ's sake, … and how often soever they fall, yet to forgive them."[52] Tyndale finds God's love almost beyond belief, and against More's arguments that we should

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[42] *Sacraments,* 1/349
[43] *Answer,* 3/182
[44] *Answer,* 3/51
[45] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/206
[46] *Answer,* 3/30f
[47] *Prologue Matthew,* 1/470; *Mammon,* 1/110
[48] *Answer,* 3/30
[49] *Romans,* 1/510
[50] *Epistle,* 1/390
[51] *Numbers,* 1/439
[52] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/9

pray to saints,[53] he wrote that we have direct access to the Father and do not need others to pray for us and, in going direct to God, we boldly go to him "as of a most loving and merciful father, above all the mercy of fathers."[54]

Tyndale wrote of many ways in which God shows he is a true Father to his children. When we go astray from the right way he disciplines his child[55] and chastises and pardons him[56] for he "is ever fatherly-minded towards the elect members of his church."[57] and "pardoneth sinners, and giveth them power to be the sons of God."[58] In times of hardship and difficulties, and throughout their lives God supports his children. In this way we see "how fatherly and tenderly, and with all compassion, God entreateth his elect, which submit themselves as scholars, to learn to walk in the ways of his laws, and to keep them of love."[59]

Tyndale frequently wrote of the ways God shows his fatherly-goodness to his children, sharing in their lives and helping them grow up into maturity as his people. Therefore, "the God of all mercy, which careth for his elect children, and turneth all unto good to them, and smiteth them to heal them again, and killeth them to make them live again, and

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[53] More wrote, "syth his pleasure is to haue his sayntes had in honoure and prayed vnto / that they may be for vs intercessours to hys hyghe maiestye / wherevnto ere we preume to approche / it becometh vs & well behoueth vs to make frendes of suche as he hath in fauoure. He wyll dysdayne ones to loke on vs / yf we be so presumptuous & malapert felowes / that vpon boldnes of famylyaryte with hym selfe / we dysdayne to make our intercessours his especyall beloued frendes." *CWM-6* 215

[54] *Answer,* 3/120

[55] *Answer,* 3/112

[56] *Tracy,* 3/277

[57] *Answer,* 3/111

[58] *Obedience,* 1/309

[59] *Jonas,* 1/451

playeth with them (as a father doth sometime with his young ignorant children), and tempteth them, and proveth them to make them see their own hearts."[60]

CHRIST

Christ's part in the covenant was to shed his blood and appease the wrath of God "'By whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins' (Colos. i. and Ephes. i.)." Tyndale continues, "And that 'there is but one mediator, Christ,' as saith Paul (1 Tim. ii.). And by that word understand an atonemaker, a peacemaker, and bringer into grace and favour, having full power so to do."[61]

God promised Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed, and Tyndale quoted Galatians 3; "Christ is that seed of Abraham."[62] According to his promise God sent Christ, who is the Messiah, the anointed one, to save his people, and deliver them from spiritual death, and to bless them through Christ's blood,[63] for "Christ died for their sins, and that he is their only and sufficient Saviour."[64] This means, said Tyndale, that our justification is in Christ alone, without any help from our works, the law, or anything else we might think has deserved it for us.[65] For Christ did not promise anything in this world, and his blessings come to the disciple who has forsaken worldly things."[66]

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[60] *Jonas,* 1/455
[61] *Tracy,* 3/274f (The whole passage from, *And that this trust and confidence* ... to ... *the purpose of the invariable God.* is relevant.)
[62] *Pathway,* 1/10
[63] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/205 *Answer,* 3/110
[64] *Mammon,* 1/125
[65] *Prologue Galatians,* 1/513
[66] *Practice,* 2/274

"The reward is given of the mercy and truth of God, and by the deserving and merits of Christ. Whosoever repenteth, believeth the gospel, and putteth his trust in Christ's merits, the same is heir with Christ of eternal life."[67]

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The blood of Christ is perhaps the most important aspect of Tyndale's theology and it occurs in a theologically significant sense (as opposed to a sacramental sense) over 400 times in his writings, and it is fairly divided throughout his works from the earliest writings to the latest. One exception, which can be accounted for by the subject matter of the work, is *The Practice of Prelates* where its frequency is half that of most of Tyndale's writings. Two other works of Tyndale's use the blood of Christ in a theological sense twice as frequently as the rest, they are the *Preface to the 1525 New Testament,* and the *Exposition of Tracy's Testament.* The frequency in *Pathway* is slightly less than in the *1525 Preface.* The importance and the meaning of the blood of Christ in Tyndale's theology does not change between 1525 and 1536. Most of the references to the blood of Christ relate to the work of the Holy Spirit as he applies Christ's blood to the elect and we will consider this aspect in the chapter *The Covenant in Action.*

As we have seen, for Tyndale, man's sin and rebellion against God had built a barrier between God and man, and man was dead.[68] There was nothing man could do to put things right between God and himself. Whilst

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[67] *Mammon,* 1/113

man remained a sinner, bound by the devil's chains, there was no way God the Father could show any fatherly-love to him. God the Father could not adopt those he had chosen until his justice had been satisfied and the debt of man's sin had been paid. Tyndale wrote, "The blood of Christ hath obtained all things for us of God. Christ is our satisfaction, Redeemer, Deliverer, Saviour, from vengeance and wrath."[69] It was God the Son's part in the covenant to remove the barrier caused by man's sin and make it possible for the Father to adopt the elect and make them his children. Therefore "Christ, and his body, and his blood, and all that he did, and suffered, is a sacrifice, a ransom, and a full satisfaction for our sins, that God for his sake will think no more on them."[70] It is through Christ "we have fellowship with God, and are his sons and heirs, and are purged from all sin through Christ's blood."[71] The blood of Christ is the key which opens the way for the Father to adopt his elect, it opens the way for us to be counted full righteous in God's sight, because "the scripture saith, Christ is our righteousness, our justifying, our redemption, our atonement, that hath appeased God, and cleanseth us from our sins, and all in his blood, so that his blood is the satisfaction only,"[72] and, it opens the way for the Holy Spirit to cleanse us from all sin.

> When Christ is preached, how that God for his sake receiveth us to mercy, and forgiveth us all that is past, and henceforth reckoneth not unto us our corrupt and poisoned nature, and

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[68] see pp 111-119
[69] *Pathway*, 1/15
[70] *Obedience*, 1/278
[71] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/149
[72] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/157

> taketh us as his sons, and putteth us under grace and mercy, and promiseth that he will not judge us by the rigorousness of the law, but nurture us with all mercy and patience, as a father most merciful.[73]

The blood of Christ also allows the Holy Spirit to fulfil his part of the covenant of enabling the elect to become truly God's children. "We cannot work God's will, till we be his sons, and know his will, and have his Spirit to teach us."[74] This means we must have a new life and be made anew by God. "We are, in this our second birth, God's workmanship and creation in Christ; so that, as he which is yet unmade hath no life nor power to work, no more had we, till we were made again in Christ."[75] Then we have a God-given faith which enables us to believe and trust in God and his promise. For "right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us, which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature, and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God."[76] This faith "bringeth pardon and forgiveness freely purchased by Christ's blood, and bringeth also the Spirit; the Spirit looseth the bonds of the devil, and setteth us at liberty."[77]

Whilst man is still dead in sin his will is not free to choose what is good, for "all that is done in the world before the Spirit of God come, and giveth us light, is damnable sin; and the more glorious, the more damnable; so that that which the world counteth most glorious is more

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[73] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/147
[74] *Obedience*, 1/277
[75] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/200
[76] *Prologue Romans*, 1/493
[77] *Mammon*, 1/48

damnable, in the sight of God, than that which the whore, the thief, and the murderer do."[78] But once the Holy Spirit gives us life through the blood of Christ then Christ, "the lord of free-will; which only through his grace maketh the will free, and looseth her from bondage of sin, and giveth her love and lust unto the laws of God, and power to fulfil them."[79]

The Holy Spirit as we will see in the Chapter *The Covenant in Action* applies the blood of Christ to every aspect of the Christian's life.

THE CHILD OF GOD

Man is part of God's creation, and before we turn to the covenant we must remember this unity and ignore the division caused by the Fall and by God's elective grace. Tyndale equates all mankind as one and loving our neighbour extends to all; "yea, to the very infidels we be debtors, if they need. … Thus is every man that needeth thy help, thy father, mother, sister, and brother in Christ; even as every man, that doth the will of the Father, is father, mother, sister, and brother unto Christ"[80]

Because the covenant is to enable man to become a child of God, the danger is to give man a part in the covenant, and make it bilateral between God and man. As we have seen, Tyndale believed a covenant between God and man, as the ground of man's salvation, is an impossibility because man is dead in sin, furthermore, since man has no free-will he has no power to choose to enter into any covenant with God, even if he wanted to. It is only after God's covenant of election has

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[78] *Obedience,* 1/183
[79] *Prologue Numbers,* 1/429
[80] *Mammon,* 1/99; see *The Creation Family* 183

brought the elect from death to life as a child of God, when the Holy Spirit has applied Christ's blood and brought life to the elect, that the Christian has a will set free from bondage to sin and can thus enter into the covenantal relationship with God which we find in Scripture.[81] Tyndale wrote about "covenant" or "covenants" to express the way God's promises are conditional (usually in the form, "I will …, if you …") apply to the relationship between God and man.

The key which reveals the way God's covenant works (at man's level) is through the promises God makes to his elect, and these promises, for Tyndale, link the covenant to God's children. "Where thou findest a promise, and no covenant expressed therewith, there must thou understand a covenant."[82] It is the promise of God that challenges mankind to make a response, "for though God make a promise, yet it saveth none finally but them that long for it, and pray God with a strong faith to fulfil it, for his mercy and truth only, and knowledge of their unworthiness."[83] Nonetheless, Tyndale wrote, "God's mercy in promising, and truth in fulfilling his promises, saveth us, and not we ourselves,"[84] "in which promises I see the mercy, favour, and good-will of God upon me in the blood of his Son Christ."[85]

This reveals the important difference between Tyndale's covenant theology and that of the Swiss Reformers , and shows why the problems raised by the theology of a federal covenant between God and man are not

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[81] see *The Covenant Envisaged,* 144
[82] *Prologue Matthew,* 1/471
[83] *Prologue Leviticus,* 1/423
[84] *Prologue Romans,* 1/498
[85] *Pathway,* 1/12

found in Tyndale. Since the satisfaction of the legal aspects of the covenant are between God the Father and God the Son, and not between God and man, God's justice cannot be challenged. The promises God makes to man in the gospel are made to every man, and anyone who responds to those promises and accepts their terms will be saved – the responsibility to choose between death and life is man's alone. Tyndale wrote, "Against this curse, blesseth now the gospel all the world inasmuch as it crieth openly, unto all that knowledge their sins and repent, saying, Whosoever believeth on the seed of Abraham shall be blessed; that is, he shall be delivered from sin, death, and hell, and shall henceforth continue righteous, and saved for ever."[86] Election is a secondary issue which, in itself, does not preclude those not chosen from accepting the terms of God's promises in Christ and finding his blood cleansing them from sin and giving them eternal life. Klempa wrote, "Tyndale singled out the promise of God as the central message of Scripture. He maintained that this promise constitutes a covenant by which certain blessings are offered to humankind on the condition that they keep the God's law. … God's promise involves certain conditions and is not nullified when those conditions are not met."[87]

To use Bullinger's phrase, "the one and eternal testament or covenant of God," for Tyndale is between the Persons of the Trinity, whilst for Bullinger it is between God and man. Bullinger's covenant has a secondary position in Tyndale's theology and is linked to God's

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[86] *Pathway*, 1/10

[87] Klempa, 99. Klempa has failed to see the way Tyndale separates the *Trinitarian covenant* from the *covenants God makes with the child of God.*

promises and not to election and the new birth. Tyndale contrasts "the everlasting testament of God in Christ," made with those "to whom God hath sent his promises, and poured his Spirit into their hearts," with "the testament of the law natural, which is the law of every land made for the common wealth there."[88] We can see the difference between Bullinger and Tyndale from their expositions of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17). Bullinger wrote,

> First, the passage explains who bound themselves together, namely God and the descendants of Abraham. Second, the text states the conditions under which they bound themselves together, specifically that God wished to be the God of the descendants of Abraham and that the descendants of Abraham ought to walk uprightly before God. Third, it is explained that the covenant is made between them for ever. And finally the entire covenant is confirmed with a specific ceremony in blood.[89]

Tyndale wrote,

> And Abram … he named Abraham, the father of a great multitude of people; because he had promised to make him even so, and that his seed should be as the stars and as the sand of the sea innumerable. And that name gave he him as a seal of the promise to confirm it, and to strengthen the faith of Abraham and his posterity, and to keep the promise in mind,

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[88] *Obedience*, 1/204
[89] Bullinger, "Testamento", 104

> that they might have wherewith to bind God and to conjure him, as Moses and the holy prophets ever do, holding him fast to his own promise, and binding him with his own words, … After that he made a covenant with Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his posterity, and their shield and defender; and Abraham promised for him and his seed to be his people, and to believe and trust in him, and to keep his commandments; which covenant God caused to be written in the flesh of Abraham …[90]

For Bullinger the covenant bound both God and Abraham together and it was a bilateral covenant. Whilst, for Tyndale, the important thing was the unilateral promise of God which was sealed by God changing Abram's name to Abraham; it was after God had made this promise that he made the covenant with Abraham. We also find the same pattern with God's covenant with Noah, the promise came before Noah starting building the ark, but "after the general flood God made a covenant with Noah and all mankind."[91]

The covenant, for Tyndale, always comes after God's promise has been given and sealed. In the same way the covenant of salvation follows God's promise to be our Father and make us his children because until the promise has been fulfilled and we have been born again and are alive unto God there can be no covenant (signified by baptism) between us. Therefore, wrote Tyndale, "The right way, yea, and the only way, to understand the scripture unto salvation, is that we earnestly and above all

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[90] *Sacraments,* 1/348f
[91] *Sacraments,* 1/348

things search for the profession of our baptism, or covenants made between God and us. As, for an example, Christ saith, (Matt. v.), 'Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Lo, here God hath made a covenant with us, to be merciful unto us, if we will be merciful one to another."[92]

Our becoming God's children is of God alone, long before man had any being. "In Christ god loved vs his electe and chosen / before the world bega*n* / and reserved vs vnto the knowledge of his Sonne and of hys holy gospell." We then are given grace to believe, to have the Holy Spirit, to know God as our Father, to have our sins forgiven, to love God's law and to fulfil it for "the bloud of Christ hath obteyned all thi[n]gs for vs of god. Christ is oure satisfaction / redemer / delyverer / saveour from vengeaunce and wrath."[93]

"Even so goeth it with God's elect." wrote Tyndale in his *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*. "God chooseth them first, and they not God; as thou readest, John xv. And then he sendeth forth and calleth them, and sheweth them his good will, which he beareth unto them, and maketh them see both their own damnation in the law, and also the mercy that is laid up for them in Christ's blood, and thereto what he will have them to do. And then, when we see his mercy, we love him again, and choose him, and submit ourselves unto his laws, to walk in them."[94] Because we are sons and daughters of God we receive the promises of mercy with "all

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[92] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/469
[93] *1525*, 7
[94] *Answer*, 3/35

fatherly love and kindness of God."[95] God has promised to care for us[96] and, as we care for his commandments, to give us all we need.[97] We can put our trust in God, knowing that his promises are sure and certain because he is almighty, and nothing can prevent him from fulfilling them as we come to him through Jesus Christ.[98] For through Christ's death we are heirs, as Tyndale wrote, "that as a man, when he shall die, appointeth his goods to be dealt and distributed after his death among them which he nameth to be his heirs; even so Christ before his death commanded and appointed that such Evangelion, gospel, or tidings should be declared throughout all the world, and therewith to give unto all that repent and believe, all his goods: that is to say, his life, wherewith he swallowed and devoured up death; his righteousness, wherewith he banished sin; his salvation, wherewith he overcame eternal damnation."[99] The executor of this will is the work of the Holy Spirit and his part in the covenant of God.

The Holy Spirit leads the children of God to be imitators and followers of God, and this is a sign that we "are inheritors of all the promises of God, and elect unto the fellowship of the blood of Christ."[100] But sometimes we are unable to 'counterfeit' the works of Christ, then our "spirit sigheth, mourneth, and longeth after the strength to do it," this desire is also a sign that the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts and that we are "elect to life everlasting by Christ's blood."[101] It is the motivation

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[95] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/136
[96] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/217
[97] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/101
[98] *Tracy,* 3/273
[99] *Pathway,* 1/9
[100] *Mammon,* 1/72
[101] *Mammon,* 1/85

to do good works which is all important. The Christian naturally follows Christ and imitates his example because he is a child of God. Others do their good works in order to earn a reward and they are worldly-minded and not part of God's family.[102]

There is a mystery about election which is beyond our human understanding. "Now may not we ask why God chooseth one and not another; either think that God is unjust to damn us afore we do any actual deed; seeing that God hath power over all his creatures of right, to do with them what he list, or to make of every one of them as he listeth. Our darkness cannot perceive his light."[103] The nearest Tyndale comes to answering this problem is in his *Exposition of the First Epistle of John.* "And Christ, which is contrary to the devil, came to destroy the works of the devil in us, and to give us a new birth, a new nature, and to sow new seed in us, that we should, by the reason of that birth, sin no more. For the seed of that birth, that is to wete the Spirit of God and the lively seed of his word sown in our hearts, keepeth our hearts, that we cannot consent to sin; as the seed of the devil holdeth the hearts of his, that they cannot consent to good."[104] Tyndale argued against More who believed that God chose those he saw would have a 'towardness' to doing good. Tyndale's argument also stands against double-predestination, man's eternal loss and punishment was the free choice of Adam which made us 'children of sin.'

"Are we not robbed of all towardness in Adam; and be by nature made the

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[102] *Mammon,* 1/73; see also p. 169 when discussing the child of God.
[103] *Mammon,* 1/89
[104] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/190

children of sin, so that we sin naturally; and to sin is our nature?"[105] Election (for Tyndale) was to life; it was man who had chosen death.

Those who continue to seek an answer and ask, "Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? ... have searched to come to the bottom of his bottomless wisdom; and because they cannot attain to that secret, and be too proud to let it alone, and to grant themselves ignorant, with the apostle, that knew no other than God's glory in the elect; they go and set up free-will with the heathen philosophers, and say that a man's free-will is the cause why God chooseth one and not another, contrary unto all the scripture."[106] This is a heresy which blinds man so that he cannot see the "bright beams of the scripture."[107]

The Christian's love to his Father is because he knows, through faith, that he is a child of God, "as John saith in the first chapter of his gospel: 'He gave them power to be the sons of God, in that they believe on his name.'"[108] And this power transforms us into God's likeness. "Now, to be the son of God is to love righteousness, and hate unrighteousness, and so to be like thy Father. Hast thou then no power to love the law? so hast thou no faith in Christ's blood."[109]

Tyndale constantly pointed out that the Christian does good works because he loves his Father and not for any reward he might get from doing them. "he neither learneth nor worketh now any longer for pain of the rod, or fear of bugs or pleasure of apples, but doth things of his own

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[105] *Answer*, 3/209
[106] *Answer*, 3/191
[107] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/141
[108] *Obedience*, 1/222
[109] *Tracy*, 3/276

corage."[110] In *Pathway* Tyndale wrote that the reason a child obeyed his father's will was "of pure love."[111] At the same time a father often encourages his children to obey him with promises of rewards, but the rewards are never the reason why the child obeys his father.[112] The amount of service children give to their father is also unimportant, one may do more than another, "yet is the father free, and may with right reward them all alike."[113] Trueman misses Tyndale's point that a Christian's good works spring from the assurance that we are children of our heavenly Father, when he wrote, "The idea that works constitute a primary basis for assurance introduces a tension into Tyndale's definition of the causal relationship between faith and works: to make works a basis for assurance effectively negates this relationship."[114]

Many of the signs of parental love have no connection with the child's deeds. It is a sign of her love when a mother feeds her child;[115] or "when the father giveth his son a new coat, and saith, 'Am not I a good father, and wilt not thou love me again, and do what I bid thee?' and the boy receiveth it with thanks, and saith, 'Yea.'"[116] (Tyndale also used this as an illustration regarding those not chosen by God to be his children. "Ask a little boy, who gave him his gay coat? He answereth, 'his father,' Ask him why? And he answereth, 'Because he is his father, and loveth him; and because he is his son.' ... Ask him, why his father giveth not

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[110] *Prologue Exodus,* 1/417
[111] *Pathway,* 1/20
[112] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/74f
[113] *Obedience,* 1/313f
[114] Trueman. *Legacy,* 95
[115] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/110f
[116] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/127

such and such boys coats too? 'Nay, saith he, they be not his sons; their fathers must give them, as mine doth me.'")[117]

We have to make sure we "keep the covenant of the Lord thy God," and even if we are blown off course we have still our profession of faith, and we know that God is faithful and fulfils his promises, and he "promiseth to forgive that, and not the less to fulfil his promises of one jot."[118] Sometimes, however, the loving care we receive from God takes the form of chastisement for our disobedience,[119] as Jonah discovered through his experience of God's loving correction that it is "God only that smiteth, and God only that healeth: ascribing the cause of thy tribulation unto thine own sin, and the cause of thy deliverance unto the mercy of God."[120]

However, no child is always obedient, and there are different reasons which lie behind his disobedience. It may be the child is going to school and he sees others playing, he joins them and gets carried away so he forgets to go to school.[121] Or his disobedience may be because of ignorance or frailty,[122] or deliberate disobedience,[123] then the child has to be disciplined. When "the most obedient child in the world" errs and disobeys his father's commandments he is not excused punishment because of all the good things he has done.[124] When the child realises his

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[117] *Answer,* 3/81
[118] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/110
[119] *Prologue Exodus,* 1/413
[120] *Jonas,* 1/465f
[121] *Answer,* 3/34f
[122] *Answer,* 3/112
[123] *Exposition Matthew,* 2/82
[124] *Exposition 1 John,* 2/167

sin, he is afraid of his father's anger and the punishment he must endure,[125] and his conscience torments him.[126] However, after he has erred "the child submitteth himself unto his father's correction and nurture, and humbleth himself altogether unto the will of his father, then the rod is taken away."[127] He does not need anyone to plead for him (priests or saints) for he knows his father loves him and he can go straight to him. "A child, when his father threateneth him for his fault, hath never rest till he hear the word of mercy and forgiveness of his father's mouth again, but as soon as he heareth his father say, Go thy way, do me no more so, I forgive thee this fault, then is his heart at rest, then is he at peace, then runneth he to no man to make intercession for him."[128] The child's disobedience does not alter the father's love for him, and the punishment is not more than the disobedience deserves for "no natural father punisheth his child because he delighteth in tormenting him, to take satisfaction for the sin that is past, but first teacheth kindly, and suffereth, and forgiveth once or twice," before punishing him for his fault.[129] It is because a father's love reaches out to his children in this way, even to the wayward ones, that Tyndale condemns the doctrine of purgatory. "Master More feeleth … that God forgiveth the everlasting pain, and will yet punish me a thousand years in the pope's purgatory, that leaven savoureth not in my mouth. I understand my father's words as they sound, and after the most merciful manner."[130]

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[125] *Prologue Jonas*, 1/456
[126] *Answer*, 3/35
[127] *Obedience*, 1/141
[128] *Obedience*, 1/294; *Answer*, 3/35
[129] *Exposition 1 John*, 2/138
[130] *Answer*, 3/143

Whatever their child is like its parents love it still, for "a kind father and mother love their children even when they are evil, that they would shed their blood to make them better, and to bring them into the right way."[131] And a child which is "the least and weakest," and unable to do what his parents desire receives the greatest care and love from them.[132]

All the way through Tyndale uses the family relationship to illustrate the spiritual relationship between God the Father and the child of God. Therefore, when the Christian sins and his conscience condemns him and he is tempted to run away from God he can turn to his heavenly Father who "comforteth them again with his sweet promises in Christ; and certifieth their hearts that, for Christ's sake, they are received to mercy, and their sins forgiven, and they elect and made the sons of God, and heirs with Christ of eternal life: and thus through faith are they set at peace with God."[133]

THE FAMILY OF GOD

Tyndale had two different thoughts about the family. First, there was the extended family to which all mankind belongs through creation (the temporal regiment). Secondly, there is the Christian family made up of those whom God has elected and chosen to be his children (the spiritual regiment). Two major aspects of the family will be dealt with later. In *The Covenant in Action* we will see what Tyndale taught about loving God and loving our neighbour and the place of good works in our Christian life.

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[131] *Mammon*, 1/107
[132] *Obedience*, 1/314
[133] *Mammon*, 1/89

In *The Covenant People* we will examine Tyndale's doctrine of the Church and God's family of those born again through Christ's blood.

For Tyndale there are three ways in which God looks at mankind. Firstly, he looks at everyone as part of his creation and therefore his children through our first birth. Secondly, after the Fall all mankind became children of the devil and part of the devil's family. Thirdly, the elect who, through their new birth, are doubly the children of God. The family of God includes the first and third groups, and as Christians we are only concerned with them. Although all who are not born again are children of the devil we are to look on them as brothers and sisters through creation, at the same time we have to be alert to the workings of the devil through them so that we remain ever faithful to God.

The Creation Family

Tyndale's view of mankind has a very modern ring about it (which we find expressed in the work of Christian relief agencies) – although Christians very often do not take seriously Tyndale's warning regarding our help to those outside of Christ. We have a Christian responsibility to help our brethren in their need, "Yea, to the very infidels, we be debtors, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ, or to blaspheme Christ. Thus is every man, that needeth thy help, thy father, mother, sister, and brother in Christ."[134]

We must show neighbourly love to everyone and not just to Christians for, according to Tyndale, our relationship to God lies in

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[134] *Mammon,* 1/99

creation for, "as he hath made all, and is God of all, and all are his sons, even so is he judge over all, and will have all judged by his law indifferently, and to have the right to his law, and will avenge the wrong done unto the Turk or Saracen. For though they be not under the everlasting testament of God in Christ, as few of us which are called Christians be, … yet are they under the testament of the law natural."[135] In fact as God cares for all mankind, even "Turks and Saracens, and all manner infidels to do them good," so must the child of God, "Them that are good I love, because they are in Christ; and the evil, to bring them to Christ."[136] The only difference between one man and another is that for the child of God, "when we had marred ourself through sin, he forgave us, and created us again, in the blood of his beloved Son" for the child of God is God's "double possession, by creation and redemption."[137]

In many places Tyndale wrote more directly of the Christian's relationship with those who are outside Christ. In fact it is here that we have a real test of our faith. Tyndale wrote, "If thou love him that doth thee evil, then is thy love of God." Tyndale goes on, "and when thou hurtest not thy neighbours, then art thou sure that God's Spirit worketh in thee, and that thy faith is no dream, nor any false imagination."[138]

The question has always arisen, "Who is my neighbour?" To answer that Jesus told the parable of *The good Samaritan.* Tyndale wrote, "The Samaritan holp him, and shewed mercy as long as he was present; and when he could be no longer present, he left his money behind him, and

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[135] *Obedience,* 1/204
[136] *Obedience,* 1/298f
[137] *Pathway,* 1/24

if that were not sufficient, he left his credence to make good the rest; and forsook him not, as long as the other had need. Then said Christ, 'Go thou and do likewise;' that is, without difference or respection of persons: whosoever needeth thy help, him count thy neighbour, and his neighbour be thou, and shew mercy on him as long as he needeth thy succour; and that is to love a man's neighbour as himself."[139]

Tyndale criticised the way loving one's neighbour was interpreted by the Church, "He believeth that he loveth God, because he is ready to kill a Turk for his sake, that believeth better in God than he; whom God also commandeth us to love, and to leave nothing unsought to win him unto the knowledge of the truth, though with the loss of our lives."[140] Tyndale continues this theme, "And in like wise, against this law, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' I may obey no worldly power, to do aught at any man's commandment unto the hurt of my neighbour that hath not deserved it, though he be a Turk."[141]

The Christian Family

The Christian, as we have seen, is still part of God's creation, and he has the same responsibility to his fellow Christian as to an unbeliever. However there is a difference between the believer and the unbeliever, for the one who has faith in Christ's blood is also a child of God, and this brings him into a different relationship with his fellow Christians.

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[138] *Obedience*, 1/193
[139] *Mammon*, 1/85
[140] *Answer*, 3/7f
[141] *Pathway*, 1/26

Loving our neighbour as ourselves applies equally to all through creation, but there is an added responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in Christ. The love which a Christian has for his fellow Christian has a spiritual aspect added to his love for all mankind. "And whosoever excelleth in the gifts of grace, let the same think that they be given him, as much to do his brother service as for his own self, and as much for the love which God hath to the weak, as unto him unto whom God hath given such gifts."[142] For we are to "deal soberly with the consciences of the weak in the faith, which yet understand not the liberty of Christ perfectly enough; and to favour them with christian love; and not to use the liberty of the faith unto hinderance, but unto the furtherance and edifying of the weak."[143] As Tyndale wrote, "A Christian worketh to make his weak brother perfecter," and this is done of love and not for any reward he may get for his works.[144] The Christians brotherly love is irrespective of the worthiness of the other person, for not only does our love stretch out to the brother who is weak, but to each of our brothers and sisters in Christ. For we also are to follow the example of Christ and "bear with others that are yet weak, as them that are frail, open sinners, unlearned, unexpert, and of loathsome manners; and not cast them away forthwith, but suffer them till they wax better, and exhort them in the mean time."[145]

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[142] *Pathway*, 1/24
[143] *Prologue Romans*, 1/506f
[144] *Prologue Exodus*, 1/418
[145] *Prologue Romans*, 1/507

CONCLUSION

Because the covenant is between the Persons of the Trinity we have seen that its fulfilment is the work of God alone. Although Paul's teaching about faith is as important to Tyndale as to any other Reformer he has an equally strong regard for John's teaching about the new birth. For Tyndale they both have the same importance and Tyndale has brought the two together in a simple harmony. If, as Paul wrote, we are dead in trespasses and sins, there is an impossibility for us to have faith (or anything else). But if, through the blood of Christ, we are born again by the Holy Spirit we are raised from death to life and God is our Father, and we his children. Once we have been given life then faith and repentance become realities for our life. The stress, however, is always away from man and to God with the blood of Christ making everything possible for the Holy Spirit to achieve, and his greatest achievement is to make us children of the Father.

This movement away from man to God brings in a new relationship into Christianity – the relationship of family love. The way we live and the works we do show we are children of God because they show that we love God and we love our neighbour, and because God had created them our neighbour was any other person on earth for "love that springeth of Christ seeketh not her own self, 1 Cor. xiii., but forgetteth herself, and bestoweth her upon her neighbour's profit, as Christ sought our profit. And not his own."[146] As a result, although he believed as strongly as any other Reformer in justification by faith, Tyndale found in

the family relationship that faith had been replaced by love. For "the order of love or charity" is to be like Christ, who gave his all for us, and we owe our all to him. "The love that springeth out of Christ excludeth no man, neither putteth difference between one another … without respect of persons."[147] This, too, is only possible as the Holy Spirit applies the blood of Christ to our lives so that we can love God and love to do his will.[148]

For Tyndale the means to achieve the covenant is not through a legal process, there is no judge justifying the Christian, Christ's blood has made him clean already. The covenant is achieved as the Holy Spirit applies Christ's blood to every part of the Christian's life, enabling him to be a child of God the Father – a fact he shows as his life is filled and governed by the love of God in every part.

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[146] *Obedience,* 1/299
[147] *Mammon,* 1/98
[148] *Mammon,* 1/97

X THE COVENANT – THE LAW AND GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

Law and gospel were important for the Reformers, but they did not all have the same understanding of their relationship with the Christian faith. There was general agreement over the law condemning fallen man, leaving him without hope of having a positive relationship with God, although Tyndale took the responsibility for man's condemnation from God and placed it on man's shoulders. The law in relationship to God's elect, who have been saved from their sin by Christ, caused problems for the Reformers in their interpretation and understanding of Scripture. Probably the one thing which separates Tyndale's theology from that of the other Reformers is his stress on the blood of Christ and its place in our salvation, and it is probably never clearer than in the doctrines of law and gospel, for, whatever it is, "Christ's blood hath obtained me that," and therefore all we look for is "to wait on the evangelion."[1]

"The distinction between law and gospel is one of the most important themes in Luther's theology," wrote Lohse; he continued, "Dealing with any doctrine in a formally correct manner is never enough unless we also express the proper distinction between law and gospel in the double nature of God's activity as well as our twofold relationship to God as people who are both judged and who have experienced mercy."[2] Althaus wrote, that for Luther, "The Christian conforms to the law freely,

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[1] *Pathway*, 1/21

not because the law demands it but because he loves God and righteousness. He no longer acts with the assistance of the law to say nothing of being compelled by it but in the spirit of freedom. His activity is spontaneous. Thus his works are no longer 'works of the law' forced out of him by the law, but free 'works of grace.'"[3] For Luther there is a tension between the law and the gospel, "The Law, given through Moses, is indeed a Law of life, righteousness, and everything good. But far more was accomplished through Christ. He comes and fills the empty hand and purse; He brings with Him the fulfillment of the Law's precepts and demands. He supplies grace and truth. … Thus I acquire a trust and a faith in God as my Father, and I begin to praise His name with a cheerful heart and to hallow His name."[4]

Zwingli also considered law and gospel important, but when we turn to Zwingli we notice there is a different emphasis, as Stephens wrote, "Differences in stress and substance are evident between Zwingli and Luther in the understanding of gospel and law." He continues, "Zwingli was critical of Luther's negative way of describing the law. The law itself is holy and one ought not, like Luther, to speak of it as frightening us, bringing us to despair , or causing us to hate God."[5] Locher wrote, "The law does not become meaningless for the disciple of Christ, for it is the unchanging will of God. … That which concerns the inner man has been endued with eternal validity by Christ himself, the divine lawgiver. … The 'Law of Christ' belongs to our salvation, equally with forgiveness. The

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[2] Lohse, 158
[3] Althaus, 267
[4] *LW-22*, 144

one who is filled with love rejoices in it; and so it loses its legal character."[6] He continues, "Clearly opposing the sharp antithesis made by Luther, Zwingli affirms that 'The law is gospel for the man who honours God'."[7]

As we will see, Tyndale was, in some ways, closer to Zwingli than to Luther in that there was not a division between law and gospel in his writings, though, for Tyndale, both the law and the gospel applied equally to all men whether they were of the elect or not. As we would expect, the differences between the Reformers can be traced back to the fundamental differences between them in their understanding of God's covenantal relationship with his elect, and also their theological background.

Tyndale followed Luther in his understanding of the natural law. In *How Christians should regard Moses* Luther wrote, "The law of Moses binds only the Jews and not the Gentiles."[8] When writing of the law he wrote, we "should simply drop Moses." To the question, should we not keep the Ten Commandments? Luther wrote, "Nature also has these laws."[9] Tyndale wrote that the Mosaic law could be divided into three parts, the first were the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament "which all ceased as soon as Christ had offered up the sacrifice of his body and blood." The second part were the civil "laws which were given unto the Jews only, and we heathen or Gentiles are not bound unto them." Thirdly there were the laws of creation and these "pertain unto faith and love; and

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[5] Stephens, *Zwingli,* 164f
[6] Locher, 196. *Zwingli's Thought* is very useful with the extended quotations from Zwingli's works as footnotes.
[7] Locher, 198f
[8] *LW-35,* 164

that a man believe how that there is but one God, and that he is true, good and merciful in all things; and therefore ought to be believed, trusted and loved with all a man's heart, soul, mind and strength; and that a man love his neighbour as himself, for God's sake, which hath created him and made him. And this is the law of nature and pertaineth unto all nations indifferently"[10]

In this chapter there are two areas of the covenant which we need to examine in detail. The *law* and the *gospel* are both important aspects of the covenant, and they lie as a bridge which links man to God. "Note the difference of the law and of the gospel." wrote Tyndale, "The one asketh and requireth, the other pardoneth and forgiveth. The one threateneth, the other promiseth all good things to them that set their trust in Christ only."[11] They stand as markers for all mankind which point the way for man to be set free from Satan's bondage and become the children of God. The signposts are there pointing the way back to God for everyone to see, which leads people, like Baker, to write that for Tyndale, "The covenant idea was implicitly, if not always explicitly, universalist."[12] Another reason which lies behind this universalist idea is, as Baker rightly observed, Tyndale believed in "single predestination,"[13] but as we have seen Tyndale believed man is naturally damned already and therefore double predestination has no meaning in reality. God's offer of salvation

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[9] *LW-35,* 168
[10] *Prelates,* 2/324
[11] *Epistle,* 1/389
[12] Baker. *Bullinger and the Covenant,* 209
[13] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant,* 208

is open to all – all could respond to the gospel, even if it is only the elect who will choose to do so.

As we always find with Tyndale, his obedience to the Scriptures means there is a certain amount of overlap even where law and gospel appear to be different sides of the same coin(!) because the difference between them can never be clear cut. Also *law* has one meaning for the sinner (a burden and restrictive) and another for the saint (a joy and a delight), and we need to keep these different reactions to the law separate. Tyndale commands us, therefore, "Seek therefore in the scripture as thou readest it, first the law, what God commandeth us to do; and secondarily, the promises, which God promiseth us again, namely in Christ Jesus our Lord."[14] In the *Pater Noster* Tyndale wrote, ""The sinner knowlegeth that he is worthy to be put backe / neverthelesse fayth cleveth fast to gods promises / and compelleth hym / for his truethes sake / to heare her peticion. Marke this well and take it for a sure conclusion / when god commaundeth vs i*n* the lawe to doo any thinge / he commaundeth not therefore / that we are able to do yt / but to bryng vs vn to the knowledge of oureselves / that we might se what we are and in what miserable state we are in / and to knowe oure lack / that thereby we shuld torne to god and to knowledge our wretchednes vn to hym / a*n*d to desyre him that of his mercy he wold make vs that he biddeth vs be / a*n*d to geve vs strength and power to doo that which the lawe requireth of vs."[15] To help us as we read God's word Tyndale pointed out that there are "three things in it: first the

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[14] *Genesis*, 1/399
[15] *Pater Noster*, ciir

law, to condemn all flesh; secondarily, the gospel, that is to say, promises of mercy ...; and thirdly, the stories and lives of those scholars ..."[16] Laughlin commented on this: "Thus Tyndale, in the Prologue of his Cologne New testament, already altered the law-gospel distinction of Luther," and he shows two ways this was seen, "The net effect of his modification was to present the law and the gospel in a way that obscured and blurred the careful distinction that was for Luther fundamental to their dialectical relationship."[17]

The law and the gospel must be known, and this means the "scripture ought to be in the mother tongue." Tyndale gives us reasons for this, "First, God gave the children of Israel a law by the hand of Moses in their mother tongue; and all the prophets wrote in their mother tongue, and all the psalms were in the mother tongue."[18] The value of this for us is seen in Deuteronomy, "For the keeping of the commandments of God teacheth wisdom, as thou mayest see in the same chapter, where Moses saith. Keep the commandments, that ye may understand what ye ought to do."[19] In expounding Matthew 7:13,14, Tyndale wrote, "The strait gate is the true knowledge and understanding of the law, and of the true intent of works: which whosoever understandeth, the same shall be driven to Christ, to fetch of his fulness, and to take him for his righteousness and fulfilling of the law."[20] Without God's word in the vernacular the Christian cannot understand either the law or the gospel.

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[16] *Jonas*, 1/449
[17] Laughlin, 153, 191.
[18] *Obedience*, 1/144
[19] *Deuteronomy*, 1/444
[20] *Matthew*, 2/120

LAW

The Law and Fallen Man

Tyndale wrote that we are to note and understand the contrast found in the first chapters of Genesis; "the power of God, in creating all of nought; then mark the grievous fall of Adam, and of us all in him, through the light regarding of the commandment of God."[21] The result of this is that man is powerless to keep God's law for "Paul proves that the whole nature of man is so poisoned and so corrupt, yea, and so dead, concerning godly living or godly thinking, that it is impossible for her to keep the law in the sight of God."[22] Even though man does not think about this "yet testifieth the scripture, and it is true, that we are by inheritance heirs of damnation; and that ere we be born, we are vessels of the wrath of God, and full of that poison whence naturally all sins spring." Man's works prove this and "kill our consciences, and shew us what we were …, and certify us that we are heirs of damnation."[23] The result of all this is that men "see not their own miserable estate in wickedness, and damnation under the law of God; but the worse they are, the bolder they be, and the surer of themselves, the further from repentance, and the more standing in their own conceits, for the darkness that is in them."[24] It is a darkness because sin has "blinded the spiritual eye, and perverted the right intent of the law of God, and of the works commanded by God."[25] In their

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[21] *Genesis,* 1/400
[22] *Romans,* 1/508
[23] *Mammon,* 1/64
[24] *1 John,* 2/213
[25] *Matthew,* 2/102

blindness they cannot see that "unto the disobedient, that will not turn, is threatened wrath, vengeance, and damnation, according to all the terrible acts and fearful examples of the bible."[26]

For the natural man "the word of God was sore darkened," and the prelates have introduced penance so that you can "buy out thy sins, And in their description they have clean excluded the faith in the satisfaction of Christ's blood. … And for lack of trust in Christ's blood, our contrition is but a fruitless sorrow in the respect of hell, which maketh us hate the law still, and consequently God that made it."[27] For God had given "him a law that is impossible for him to do, or to consent to."[28] And so, wrote Tyndale, every man, (even the elect before they receive the grace of God), "consented unto sin with soul and body, and hated the law of God."[29]

"It is manifest," wrote Tyndale, "that they which love not God's commandment can do nothing godly,"[30] for they neither know nor accept God and his laws. Then when he finds that he can only sin he goes further from God, "And when he is so fallen, then the law looketh upon him with so terrible a countenance, and so thundereth in his ears, that he dare not abide, but turneth his back and to go; and the enemy assaileth him on the other side to persuade him that God hath cast him away."[31] Tyndale then asks a question of fallen man, "If we will not know God to keep his laws, how should God know us, to keep us, and to care for us, and to fulfil his

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[26] *Prologue Matthew,* 1/470f
[27] *1 John,* 2/162
[28] *Pathway,* 1/18
[29] *1 John,* 2/199
[30] *Answer,* 3/83
[31] *Sacraments, 1.359*

promises of mercy unto us?"[32] Therefore Tyndale wrote, "as he which feeleth not his disease can long for no health, even so it is impossible for any man to believe in Christ's blood, except Moses have had him first in cure, and with his law have robbed him of his righteousness, and condemned him unto everlasting death, and have shewed him under what damnation they are in by birth in Adam."[33] It is in their response to the law the elect are separated from the rest of mankind.

The Law and the Elect

When we look at the gospel we see that the elect respond to it and are born again as children of God. It is after this new birth that the Christians attitude to the law changes, and to this we now turn. We will "see the difference between the sin of them that believe in the blood of Christ for the remission of sin, and consent and submit themselves unto the law, and the sin of them that yield themselves unto sin, to serve it."[34] That is, between those who love the law and those who hate it.

For Tyndale it is Christ who has opened the way for man to escape from the hopeless situation. "When the law through conscience of sin hath slain the soul, then hope and trust in Christ's blood, through certifying of the conscience that the damnation of the law is taken away, quickeneth her again; and maketh her love the law."[35]

It is to the Bible we must always turn, and so Tyndale wrote, "The scripture hath a body without, and within a soul, spirit, and life. It hath …

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[32] *Matthew*, 2/53
[33] *1 John*, 2/146
[34] *Matthew*, 2/10
[35] *1John*, 2/187

all sweetness for God's elect, which he hath chosen to give them his Spirit, and to write his law, and the faith of his Son, in their hearts."[36] God, will therefore, show his mercy to "his elect, which submit themselves as scholars, to learn to walk in the ways of his laws, and to keep them of love."[37] It is from the Scriptures, wrote Tyndale, that the children of God "have every one of them the law of God written in their hearts; so that if there were no law to compel, they would yet naturally, out of their own hearts, keep the law of God."[38]

Each Person in the Godhead is involved in helping the Christian to know, love and keep the law. The Father's love to us has made us a new creation which has totally changed us, "If God so loved us, when we were sinners and knew him not, that he gave his Son for us: how much more loveth he us now, when we love again, and would fain keep his commandments![39] It goes even deeper than that for "with his children, in whose hearts he writeth the faith of his Son Jesus and the love of his laws, he goeth otherwise to work. His law is their will: and their petitions are his honour and their neighbour's wealth; and that he will provide them of all things necessary unto this life, and govern them that their hearts be not overcome of evil."[40]

Through Christ we have been "delivered from under the damnation of the law,"[41] and with his blood he has "full purged, and made full satisfaction for all the sins of the world," (and this is for us individually,)

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[36] *Jonas*, 1/449
[37] *Jonas*, 1/451
[38] *Answer*, 3/137
[39] *Sacraments*, 1/364
[40] *Answer*, 3/182

"and I shall never be at peace with God again, until I have heard the voice of his mouth, how that my sin is forgiven me for Christ's blood sake. And as soon as I believe that, I am at peace with God, and love his law again and of love work."[42]

The Holy Spirit is active also in applying the law to the Christian's life and he "maketh the law a lively thing in the heart."[43] For "the Spirit of Christ hath written the lively law of love in their hearts; which driveth them to work of their own accord freely and willingly, for the great love's sake only which they see in Christ, and therefore need they no law to compel them."[44] The Holy Spirit makes the child of God "feel all things," and part of that feeling is a longing for health and "this longing and consent of the heart unto the law of God is the working of the Spirit."[45]

We are God's children and we know "the mercy that God hath shewed thee in Christ," and as we believe in his mercy and love his laws, then we can "know him as a Father."[46] Like all children we need to learn, and it is important for Christians to learn God's laws, and so they "have the law of God written in their hearts, and are taught of the Spirit"[47] and are told, "noosel thyself with Christ, and learn to understand what the law and the gospel mean, and the office of both the two."[48] Under these Teachers, Christ and the Holy Spirit, the true scholars "be truly taught, and

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[41] *Ephesians,* 1/514
[42] *1 John,* 2/196
[43] *Exodus,* 1/417
[44] *Obedience,* 1/297
[45] *Mammon,* 1/78f
[46] *1 John,* 2/183
[47] *Answer,* 3/99
[48] *Romans,* 1/505

know the law truly, and her office, and the office and effect of faith, and know which be good works before God, and what the intent of them is."[49]

The Teaching of the Law

The importance of the law for the child of God lies in the fact that it affects the whole of his life. "We be under the law to learn it, and to fashion our deeds as like as we can," but not through fear of punishment if we fail. Christians who are "graffed into Christ to follow his doctrine, are under the law to learn it only, but are delivered from fear of everlasting death and hell, … And we are come in to God through the confidence that we have in Jesus Christ; and are as familiar and bold with him as young innocent children, which have no conscience of sin, are with their fathers and mothers."[50] For the Christian is "knit and coupled fast to God's will, … for the law of God is written and graved in his heart, and his pleasure is therein."[51]

The law teaches the child of God humility "and maketh them as bare as Job, of all things whereof a man can or may be moved to pride."[52] Therefore "we forsake evil and turn to God, to keep his laws, … that we may do the will of God every day better and better."[53]

Another aspect of the law which the Christian is taught is obedience, not for any reward, "For Christ only hath purchased the reward: and our pain-taking to keep the commandments doth but purge the sin that remaineth in the flesh, and certify us that we are chosen and sealed with

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[49] *Sacraments,* 1/375
[50] *1 John,* 2/159
[51] *Mammon,* 1/55
[52] *1 John,* 2/140

God's Spirit unto the reward that Christ hath purchased for us."[54] It is then we show our obedience to the law as we "prepare ourselves to do the commandment of God, and to love every man his neighbour, as Christ loved him; seeking with our own works God's honour and our neighbour's wealth only." For our works cannot earn any reward for Christ has made "us heirs of eternal life with his works only, and with his blood-shedding, without and before all our works."[55] For "Christ's blood hath hired us already … that we may fulfil the commandment from the bottom of the heart."[56]

Love is another aspect of the teaching of the law, and Tyndale uses this in his argument that *The Epistle of James* should be accepted as canonical, "because it setteth up no man's doctrine, but crieth to keep the law of God, and maketh love, which is without partiality, the fulfilling of the law, as Christ and all the apostles did."[57] Our love to God sends us out to teach his love to others for the preacher "through preaching of faith, made all that consented to the law of God feel the mercy of God in Christ."[58] Therefore we are to "expound the law truly"[59] and "teach all men repentance to God and his holy law, and faith unto our Saviour Jesus Christ."[60] The true preacher must teach true doctrine so that the light of the gospel might bring "the right knowledge of Christ's blood;"[61] because "until God hath prevented us, and poured the Spirit of his grace into our

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[53] *Prologue Matthew,* 1/471
[54] *Obedience,* 1/315
[55] *Epistles John,* 1/530
[56] *Obedience,* 1/280
[57] *James,* 1/525
[58] *Matthew,* 2/131
[59] Foxe, *A&M-5,* 133; *Matthew,* 2/95

souls, to love his laws, and hath graven them in our hearts by the outward ministration of his true preacher and inward working of his Spirit, or by inspiration only, we know not God as he is to be known, nor feel the goodness or any sweetness in his law."[62] Summing up Tyndale's thoughts of the Christian's teaching role, he wrote, "The preacher comforteth them, and sheweth them the testament of Christ's blood; how that for his sake all that is done is forgiven, and all their weakness shall be taken a worth, until they be stronger, only if they repent, and will submit themselves to be scholars, and learn to keep this law."[63]

Law in the Christian's Life

McGiffert drew attention to this aspect of the covenant,[64] however, because he interpreted covenant as a legal contract he saw neither the place of the family, nor that Tyndale used 'covenant' in two different senses and therefore he did not grasp Tyndale's real theology. He wrote, "But if so much may be said for the contractual interpretation, the greater truth is that it neither exhausts the meanings of Tyndale's idea of covenant nor penetrates the heart of the piety that informed his idea: in grasping the letter it misses the spirit of his teaching."[65]

"Christ gave his disciples the key of the knowledge of the law of God, … and the key of the promises;" and "he saith, Go ye therefore, and teach and baptize; that is, preach this power unto all nations, and wash off

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[60] *Prelates*, 2/242
[61] *Matthew*, 2/34
[62] *Answer*, 3/174
[63] *Answer*, 3/108f
[64] McGiffert, 172
[65] McGiffert, 174

their sins, through faith in the promises made in my blood."[66] Faith is important for the Christian's understanding of the law in his life. "And the Christian goeth through repentance toward the law unto the faith that is in Christ's blood."[67] In *The Exposition of Matthew,* Tyndale wrote, "Faith is the trust in Christ's blood, and is the gift of God; whereunto a man is drawn of the goodness of God, and driven through true knowledge of the law, and of beholding his deeds in the lust and desire of the members unto the request of the law, and with seeing his own damnation in the glass of the law."[68] And this faith enhances our love, for "when the peace is made between God and us, and all forgiven through faith in Christ's blood, and we begin to love the law, we were never the nearer except faith went with us, to supply out the lack of full love."[69]

In many other ways Tyndale wrote of the way the law affected our Christian life, especially the good deeds we do: he links love and works,[70] and of the importance of our deeds of mercy.[71] For Tyndale the good deeds which we do as Christians are all important in our Christian life for "faith, which hath no good deeds following, is a false faith, and not the faith that justifieth, or receiveth forgiveness of sins."[72] However, works, in themselves, cannot obtain salvation for us, for "To God-ward is there no satisfaction, save faith in Christ's blood out of a repenting heart. For our outward deeds cannot be referred unto God, to do him service in his own

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[66] *Prelates,* 2/282
[67] *Answer,* 3/193
[68] *Matthew,* 2/88f
[69] *Answer,* 3/205
[70] *Pathway,* 1/15 "For love and works are under the law."
[71] *Matthew,* 2/73
[72] *James,* 1/525

person, or to help him, or make him better therewith. We can do no more with them, were they never so perfect, and done with all love, than satisfy the law for the present time, and do our duty unto our neighbours, and tame our own flesh; but not to make satisfaction to God for sin that is once past."[73] Laughlin commented on this aspect in his chapter, "Law in the Later Works"; "Tyndale continued to employ the constellation of terms he had introduced in his earliest works to denote the appropriate attitude of the righteous toward the law." He continues with details of how the Christian's "'love of the law' was the prerequisite to doing anything godly."[74]

Another of God's commandments for the Christian to obey is to pray. "Neither is it possible to believe in God, to love him, or to love thy neighbour, but that prayer will spring out there-hence immediately,"[75] and we are to "go boldly to thy Father, seeing thou hast a commandment ever to pray, and promise that he will hear thee, not for thy goodness, but of his goodness, and for his truth."[76]

The law applies to the whole of our Christian life, and the reason for this is that it is an intrinsic part of the covenant. Because the covenant "that we should be saved by Christ" was given to Abraham, Tyndale wrote, "the law given four hundred years after cannot disannul that covenant."[77] In fact all God's promises to man are also covenants God has made with his people, and we need to find and know these so that our life

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[73] *1 John*, 2/137
[74] Laughlin, 178-182 This whole chapter is worth reading.
[75] *Matthew*, 2/115
[76] *Matthew*, 2/79
[77] *Tracy*, 3/275

as God's children can grow and develop. "Seek therefor in the scripture, as thou readest it, chiefly and above all, the covenants made between God and us; that is to say, the law and commandments which God commandeth us to do; and then the mercy promised unto all them that submit themselves unto the law. For all the promises throughout the whole scripture do include a covenant: that is, God bindeth himself to fulfil that mercy unto thee only if thou wilt endeavour thyself to keep his laws; so that no man hath his part in the mercy of God, save he only that loveth his law, and consenteth that it is righteous and good."[78] For we "know it our duty to keep the law of God, and to love our neighbours for their Father's sake which created them, and for their Lord's sake which redeemed them, and bought them so dearly with his blood."[79]

Clebsch misses Tyndale's point when he wrote, "With great care, the translator, by inserting the word 'covenant' or 'promise' in the margins, drew the reader to passages that described God's demands involving rewards and punishments in this life."[80] McGiffert followed Clebsch, "The view of covenant as contract receives support from Tyndale's coupling of the gracious *if/then* with a lethal alternative."[81] Mayotte points out the real meaning behind Tyndale's words, and wrote, "Clebsch either did not see, or else did not consider the fact that Tyndale worked throughout his life from the primary foundation of a 'testament

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[78] *Genesis*, 1/403
[79] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/474
[80] Clebsch, *England's*, 187
[81] McGiffert, 173

betwene' God and man, freely given by God with the attendant response from man of love of God and neighbor."[82]

GOSPEL

Within the covenant law and gospel are closely linked. Tyndale wrote in his *Prologue to 1 Timothy,* Paul "maketh a short conclusion of all Christian learning; whereunto the law serveth, … also what the gospel is."[83] The law is divided in its work, between those who are outside the covenant of salvation and those who, through faith, have been made the children of God. This same division is found in the work of the gospel, for Tyndale does not believe God has predestined any to damnation, but "where the right way is set before us, and we of malice will not walk therein, God cannot but let the devil play with us, and juggle our eyes to confirm us in blindness."[84] Those whom God has chosen and elected to be his children will respond positively to the gospel when it is preached, but the preaching of the gospel to those who will not listen, because they are not chosen, is not vain and valueless They have the opportunity, but their rejection of the gospel rests with them and with their father the devil, and not with God, as Paul says, "'Evil men and deceivers shall prevail in evil, while they deceive, and are deceived themselves;' and have taught them to put their trust in their own merits, and brought them in belief that they shall be justified in the sight of God by the goodness of their own works."[85] And with false arguments they make God's law a "worldly law," and they

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[82] Mayotte, 77
[83] *1 Timothy,* 1/518
[84] *1 John,* 2/168

turn the gospel upside down, saying, "'God now receiveth us no more to mercy, but of mercy receiveth us to penance;' that is to wit, holy deeds."[86] The fact that the gospel is going to fall on deaf ears, or that some are going to warp and mutilate it must not prevent the true Christian from proclaiming it to everyone.

> Christ before his death commanded and appointed that such Evangelion, gospel, or tidings should be declared throughout all the world, and therewith to give unto all that [repent and] believe, all his goods: that is to say, his life, wherewith he swallowed and devoured up death; his righteousness, wherewith he banished sin; his salvation, wherewith he overcame eternal damnation. Now can the wretched man (that [knoweth himself to be wrapped] in sin, and in danger to death and hell) hear no more joyous a 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 believe that the tidings are true.[87]

In *The Pathway,* Tyndale uses both meanings of testament, in the passage just quoted he was writing of the last will and testament Christ made before his death; but in this second passage Tyndale is writing of man's fulfilling his part in the testament or covenant of salvation. The natural man is condemned by the law and delivered to eternal damnation and separation from God, and to share in the curse and punishment due to his

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[85] *Mammon,* 1/45f
[86] *Jonas,* 1/449f
[87] *Pathway,* 1/9

sin. "Against this curse, blesseth now the gospel all the world inasmuch as it crieth openly, [unto all that knowledge their sins and repent, saying,] Whosoever believeth on the seed of Abraham shall be blessed; that is, he shall be delivered from sin, death, and hell, and shall henceforth continue righteous, and saved for ever; as Christ himself saith in the eleventh of John, 'He that believeth on me, shall never more die.'"[88]

The preaching of the gospel is a universal commission given to Christians for God has given his Holy Spirit to all who believe and trust in him and are made us his children through faith, as Christ told his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach and baptize; that is, preach this power unto all nations, and wash off their sins, through faith in the promises made in my blood."[89] "By which Holy Ghost he gave them understanding of the scripture, and of all that they should preach: as thou mayest see, Luke last, where he opened their wits to understand the scripture, and said, 'That repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations,' and that they were witnesses to preach it." However, to offer the gospel to every man does not mean they are all going to respond positively, Tyndale continues, ""go ye and preach this power given me of my Father to save all that repent; and to damn them that repent not, but follow the lusts of their flesh, with full desire to live beastly, being enemies unto the law of God."[90]

Christ's disciples were sent into the world and "The authority that Christ gave them was to preach; yet not what they would imagine, but

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[88] *Pathway*, 1/10
[89] *Prelates*, 2/282
[90] *Prelates*, 2/283

what he had commanded,"[91] so that men listen only to the gospel and "to men's doctrine not at all."[92] The preacher must be single-minded in his task, for ""if a man put his hand to the plough of God's word to preach it, and look also unto worldly business, his plough will surely go awry. … He that will preach the kingdom of God (which is Christ's gospel) truly, must have his heart nowhere else."[93]

Tyndale believed that "There is not so simple a thynge i*n* the worlde / or more despised / then the gospell /& yett yt saveth a*n*d iustifieth the*m* that beleve there on."[94] Paul, after preaching the law, "Then preacheth he Christ, the gospel, the promises, and the mercy that God hath set forth to all men in Christ's blood."[95] The blood of Christ is an important part of the gospel for us and we need to "hearken unto the gospel of glad tidings in Christ's blood."[96] For the blood of Christ is all important for our salvation, for Christ "bought it of his Father dearly, with his blood. … Whatsoever good thing is in us, that is given us freely, without our deserving or merits, for Christ's blood's sake. That we desire to follow the will of God, it is the gift of Christ's blood. That we now hate the devil's will … is also the gift of Christ's blood."[97] We have the "redemption that is in Christ's blood,"[98] the forgiveness of sins in Christ's blood,"[99] and "Christ's blood hath purchased life for us, and hath made us

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[91] *Obedience,* 1/211
[92] *2 Peter,* 1/528
[93] *Prelates,* 2/253
[94] *1525, chapter 12,* 44
[95] *Mammon,* 1/96f
[96] *1 John,* 2/168
[97] *Pathway,* 1/23
[98] *Answer,* 3/33
[99] *1 John,* 2/220

the heirs of God; so that heaven cometh by Christ's blood."[100] Therefore what is required of us is to "believe as the gospel, glad tidings and promises of God say unto thee; that for Christ's blood's sake only, through faith, God is at one with thee and thou received to mercy, and art become the son of God."[101]

Therefore we must accept the gospel according to God's eternal purpose and the responsibilities which go with it. "But look that thine eye be single, and rob not Christ of his honour; ascribe not that to the deserving of thy works, which is given thee freely by the merits of his blood. In Christ we are sons. In Christ we are heirs. In Christ God chose us, and elected us before the beginning of the world, created us anew by the word of the gospel, and put his Spirit in us, for because that we should do good works."[102] Therefore we are taught in the *Epistle to the Ephesians* that "the gospel and grace thereof was foreseen and predestinate of God from before the beginning, and deserved through Christ, and now at the last sent forth, that all men should believe thereon; thereby to be justified, made righteous, living and happy, and to be delivered from under the damnation of the law."[103] As we remember that "the fulfilling of the law is a fast faith in Christ's blood, coupled with our profession, and submitting ourselves to do better;" then God will keep all his promises "of his goodness and fatherly mercy"[104]

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[100] *Mammon,* 1/65
[101] *Mammon,* 1/71
[102] *Mammon,* 1/77
[103] *Ephesians,* 1/514
[104] *Jonas,* 1/451

The gospel teaching is important for us in our Christian living, and Tyndale taught that it is the Holy Spirit who brings us into God's kingdom, gives us the love we need to be true children of God and to care for our weaker brethren, and those heathen the Holy Spirit has brought into Christ's kingdom. Then as a "man is strong in that kingdom, so love compelleth him to take the weak by the hand, and to help him, and to take him that cannot go upon his shoulders to bear him"[105] who does "yet understand not the liberty of the gospel."[106] The support and help given to the weak is "a thing that Christ commanded and charged to be had above all things."[107] To help all Christians, the weak and the strong, God gave the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to preach the gospel and "to thrust it in, not at the ears only …, neither at our eyes only …, but beat it in through our feeling, tasting and smelling also."[108]

When the gospel is received it brings with it "tribulation and persecution."[109] In spite of this the gospel is to be preached by the bishops,[110] and priests[111] who should be "virtuous and learned."[112] Tyndale explains what this preaching is, "The kingdom of heaven is the preaching of the gospel, unto which come both good and bad." Because the bad are the majority, the few have to "take adversity with Christ for the gospel's sake, and for bearing record unto the truth, that all men may hear it."[113]

This persecution falls not only on the true bishops and priests, but on all

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[105] *Prelates,* 2/250
[106] *1 Corinthians,* 1/511
[107] *Romans,* 1/507
[108] *Sacraments,* 1/361
[109] *1 Thessalonians,* 1/516
[110] *1 Timothy,* 1/517f
[111] *Prelates,* 2/288

"the children of the gospel."[114] Those who teach the faith of Christ must go out trusting only in God "to plant the gospel with all love and meekness, and to water it with their own blood, as Christ did."[115] Therefore, Tyndale could write to Frith, "Your cause is Christ's gospel, a light that must be fed with the blood of faith."[116]

We have seen that in Tyndale's doctrine of the law and gospel there is a double aspect. Both law and gospel apply to all mankind. Everyone is under the law, and because no one has kept it in its entirety all fall under its condemnation. The gospel is the good news of how man can return to God and be forgiven for breaking the law, and this, too, is offered to every man, and all who accept its terms and conditions will find God's forgiveness through Christ's blood. At the same time, for Tyndale, the law and the gospel are two important aspects of the covenant. They form a bridge between the one and eternal covenant between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to choose, justify and save the elect from fallen humanity; and the promises and covenants made between God and his elect. Through the covenant the Persons of the Trinity have made with each other the elect will be enabled to respond to the gospel and be saved. Although those not chosen by God will choose to reject the gospel offered to them it is their decision and the consequence of rejecting the gospel is theirs and the devil's. For those who have been made children of God the Father has made many promises (covenants) which are conditional on our

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[112] *Titus*, 1/519
[113] *Obedience*, 1/165
[114] *Obedience*, 1/307
[115] *Matthew*, 2/68
[116] Foxe, *A&M-5*, 131

obedience which springs out of our love for our Father and not from fear of punishment.

Although Laughlin linked 'gospel' with 'promises' which he thought were synonyms in Tyndale's thought;[117] I prefer to link 'promises' with 'covenants', which Laughlin had not taken into account, even though he wrote, "What has not yet been recognized, here or elsewhere, is that his use of the term 'promises' was always inherently covenantal and ethical in character, even in his earlier works."[118]

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[117] Laughlin, 175
[118] Laughlin, 210

XI THE COVENANTAL SIGNS

SACRAMENTS – OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

Tyndale's view of the unity of the covenant between the Old and the New Testaments meant that there was also a unity between the covenantal signs of the Old and the New Testaments. The signs were given to help man remember and understand the covenant,

> Hereof ye see also, that as the Hebrews wrote their stories in covenants and signs, giving their signs such names as could not but keep them in mind, so God the Father did follow the ensample of his people (or they following him) and commanded his promises, covenants and prophecies, to be written in gestures, signs and ceremonies, giving them names that could not but keep his covenants in mind. Even so Christ wrote the covenant of his body and blood in bread and wine, giving them that name, that ought to keep the covenant in remembrance."[1]

Our salvation does not depend on the sacraments which are signs of the covenant, but God has given them "to have his benefits kept in memory."[2] Tyndale lists many of the signs used by the Israelites to mark the covenants they made with others, and continued, "And such fashions as they used among themselves, did God also use to themward, in all his notable deeds, whether of mercy in delivering them, or of wrath in

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[1] *Sacraments,* 1/357
[2] *Sacraments,* 1/359

punishing their disobedience and transgression, in all his promises to them, and covenants made between them and him."[3] Tyndale wrote that there were many signs which marked the different covenants between God and man but they could not be called *sacraments.* The sacraments are not signs attached to those promises or covenants which God makes with man, but only those attached to the covenant of salvation whereby the elect are adopted into God's family as his children.

In the Old Testament there were two sacraments, Circumcision and the Passover, and these correspond to the two New Testament sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[4] Tyndale stressed the continuity of God's covenant therefore he showed that both Circumcision and Baptism had the same meaning and expressed the same covenantal relationship in God's plan for man's salvation. The same was true of the relationship of the Passover and the Lord's Supper within the covenant. Tyndale also wrote that the differences between the Old and New Testament sacraments were due to the change which took place when Christ fulfilled the covenant in his blood.[5]

Because of his understanding of the signification of the sacraments, Tyndale could not agree with Luther's statement in *The Little Catechism,* "What gifts or benefits does baptism bestow? Answer: It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare."[6]

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[3] *Sacraments,* 1/347f (quote 1/348)
[4] *Sacraments,* 1/354
[5] These statements will be justified later in this chapter as we expound Tyndale's theology.
[6] Noll, 72

For Tyndale the meaning of baptism was "the profession of religion of a christian man, and the inward baptism of the heart, signified by the outward washing of the body."[7] Neither could Tyndale accept Luther's insistence that "This is my body," meant Christ's body was really present in the Lord's Supper, Tyndale wrote, "As the preacher justifieth me not, but my faith in the doctrine; even so the sign justifieth not, but the faith in the promise."[8] Luther's words were much closer to the Roman Catholic position than Tyndale would allow, and therefore Tyndale wrote that there was no real difference between consubstantiation and transubstantiation in his understanding.[9] We can understand why Thomas More in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies,* included the Bishop of Rochester's remarks, "And ouer this he sayd y^{t} he had sene of Luthers owne wordys worse than he had euer herde rehersed / and in Tyndall worse yet in many thyngys than he sawe in Luther hym selfe."[10]

Like Luther, Bucer also could write of the effectiveness of the sacraments, "For by Baptism men must be washed from sins, regenerated and renewed for eternal life, incorporated in Christ the Lord, and clothed with him, and all these things are reserved only to those chosen for eternal life."[11] Again he wrote, "Since by these sacraments remission of sins and the holy communion of Christ are imparted, and the covenant of eternal salvation is sealed and confirmed," for "by these sacraments men receive

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[7] *Matthew,* 2/12
[8] *Answer,* 3/172
[9] *Sacraments,* 1/380
[10] *CWM-6,* 431
[11] Bucer, *Regno Christi,* 236

the supreme benefits of God, the forgiveness of sins and inheritance of eternal life."[12]

There is a similarity between Zwingli's and Tyndale's position: Zwingli wrote, "Circumcision did not confirm the faith of Abraham. It was a covenant sign between God and the seed of Abraham. For circumcision was given to Abraham when by faith he was already accounted righteous by God, … And in Genesis 17 God himself makes it quite clear that circumcision is not a sign for the confirmation of faith but a covenant sign. … Similarly, baptism in the New Testament is a covenant sign."[13] However, there is a difference between Zwingli's and Tyndale's doctrine which stems from their covenantal theologies and this spreads into every other doctrine they considered. Zwingli's words, "By the first of these signs, baptism, we are initially marked off to God, as we shall see later. In the other, the Lord's Supper or Eucharist, we render thanks to God because he has redeemed us by his Son."[14] It is hard to imagine Tyndale writing those words! For Tyndale there is a real meaning for "inasmuch as the sacraments of the old Testament have significations; and inasmuch as the sacraments of the new Testament … have also significations"[15] so that they have a greater depth of meaning than Zwingli allowed.

The Lollard Sermon CLXXVII speaks of the sacrament, "And of this fleisch and this blood, in his kynde, spekith the gospel, and of the goostli eetyng that men moten eten this. The breed of the sacrid oost is

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[12] Bucer, *Regno Christi* 237
[13] Zwingli, *Baptism,* 138
[14] Zwingli, *Baptism,* 131

verry breed in his kynde, and is eten bodili; but it is Goddis bodi in figure. … but this oost is eten bodili and goostli of sum men, but Cristis bodi in his kynde is not eten bodili."[16] Hudson wrote, "Yet others took up the element of pragmatism inherent in Wyclif's view, and indeed expressed overtly by him: a mouse knows bread when it sees it, even if friars do not. 'Summe folys cummyn to churche thynckyng to see the good Lorde – what shulde they see there but bredde and wyne?"[17]

As Bowman has pointed out, Zwingli and the Lollards had much in common. He wrote, "This marked similarity between Lollard and Zwinglian interpretations of the Mass – both views repudiated physical presence in favor of a commemorative interpretation – makes it difficult to trace the origins of Tyndale's theology."[18]

Tyndale's position is that a sacrament is a sign which represents the covenant "made between God and man, and God's promises." The rainbow for Noah, circumcision for Abraham and the Jewish nation, and for the Christian, baptism which "signifieth on the one side, how that all that repent and believe are washed in Christ's blood; and on the other side, how that the same must quench and drown the lusts of the flesh, to follow the steps of Christ."[19] As here was a link between circumcision and baptism there was also a link between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. In both the Old and the New Testaments the relationship between the two sacraments was very real for the understanding of our relationship with

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[15] *Answer*, 3/29
[16] Arnold, 2/112
[17] Hudson, *Premature*, 285
[18] Bowman, 425f
[19] *Genesis*, 1/409

God. With the coming of Christ the signs of the Old Testament were changed to new ones, and the Passover was changed, "in whose stead is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ come, as baptism in the room or stead of circumcision."[20] For Tyndale this continuity was essential if we were to understand God's covenant of love and mercy towards us.

It is important for us to know the signification of a sacrament "for it is impossible to observe a sacrament, without signification, but unto our damnation."[21] The sacraments when their signification "was away, they were abominable, and devilish idolatry and image service; as our ceremonies and sacraments are become now."[22] Although Tyndale only recognised Baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments he did not rule out that there might have been others, "for we destroy none, but they destroy which have put out the significations, or feigned some without."[23]

Every God-given sacrament from Adam to Christ had signification,[24] and Tyndale wrote that the *Epistle to the Hebrews* was of value to help us understand the sacraments, for "there is no work in all the scripture that so plainly declareth the meaning and significations of the sacrifices, ceremonies, and figures of the old Testament, as this epistle." It would also help us to understand "our sacraments."[25]

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[20] *Sacraments,* 1/354
[21] *Answer,* 3/30
[22] *Jonas,* 1/459
[23] *Matthew,* 2/91
[24] *Answer,* 3/29
[25] *Hebrews,* 1/524

The Covenantal Signs

The Christian in all the sacraments "searcheth the significations, and will not serve the visible things,"[26] for God gave us the "visible signs, to provoke us and to help our weak faith, and to keep his mercy in mind."[27] The "ministers of God preach God's word; and God's signs or sacraments signify God's word also, and put us in remembrance of the promises which God hath made unto us in Christ."[28] Tyndale wrote of the link between God's people in the Old and the New Testament for "their sacrifices and ceremonies, as far forth as the promises annexed unto them extend, so far forth saved them and justified them, as stood them in the same stead as our sacraments do us; not by the power of the sacrifice or deed itself, but by the virtue of the faith in the promise, which the sacrifice or ceremony preached, and whereof it was a token or sign."[29] Sacraments have one important function, they are signs representing the "appointment and promises" God has made with man.[30] Therefore they are "holy signs" and those "which Christ ordained preach God's word unto us," and "Christ's sacraments preach the faith of Christ."[31] A sacrament is only true and teaching true doctrine if it "buildeth thee upon Christ to put thy trust and confidence in his blood."[32] In order that the people could understand the signification of the sacraments, Tyndale wrote that the priest (that is an elder) had the duty "to teach the younger, and to bring them unto the full knowledge and understanding of Christ, and to minister the sacraments

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[26] *Answer*, 3/7
[27] *Matthew*, 2/91
[28] *Obedience*, 1/273
[29] *Leviticus*, 1/422f
[30] *Genesis*, 1/409
[31] *Obedience*, 1/283
[32] *1 John*, 2/196

which Christ ordained, which is also nothing but to preach Christ's promises."[33] For the people need to be taught and to understand that they are "signs that put men in remembrance either of the benefits of God done already, as the Easter lamb; either signs of the promise and appointment made between God and man, as circumcision; or signs that testify unto the people that the wrath of God is peaced, and their sins forgiven, as all manner sacrifices: which all ceased as soon as Christ had offered up the sacrifice of his body and blood for us; and instead of them come the open preaching of Christ, and our signs which we call sacraments."[34]

Although the Old Testament sacrifices and sacraments had ceased it was not because God's testament had changed, but because Christ had come. "For the sacrifices which God gave Adam's sons were no dumb popetry or superstitious mahometry, but signs of the testament of God. And in them they read the word of God, as we do in books; and as we should do in our sacraments.."[35] As Mayotte wrote, "As Tyndale considered the sacraments, he became convinced that in the Old Testament, as in the New, sacraments and ceremonies served as preachers to the people."[36]

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM[37]

Tyndale wrote that God had made a covenant with Abraham and with his children to be their God, shield and defender, and Abraham promised they would be his people "to believe and trust in him, and to

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[33] *Obedience*, 1/256f
[34] *Prelates*, 2/324
[35] *Answer*, 3/27
[36] Mayotte, 133

keep his commandments, ... which circumcision was the seal and obligation of the said covenant, to keep it in mind, and to testify that it was an earnest thing, whereby God challenged them to be his people, and required the keeping of his laws of them."[38] In the same way "we be baptized to believe in the death of Christ, and to die with him by the mortifying of the flesh"[39]

Tyndale gave several warnings of the errors we can make as we look at the meaning of baptism, and also the use we make of Biblical illustrations. Firstly, we can neither prove baptism by circumcision; "As though circumcision be a figure of baptism, yet thou canst not prove baptism by circumcision. For this argument were very feeble; the Israelites were circumcised, therefore we must be baptized." Secondly, Tyndale continued with Peter's example of the flood being a figure of baptism. "Though that the saving of Noe, and of them that were with him in the ship, through water, is a figure, that is to say an example and likeness of baptism, as Peter maketh it, (1 Pet. iii.) yet I cannot prove baptism therewith, save describe it only. ... And Paul (1 Cor. x.) maketh the sea and the cloud a figure of baptism; by which, and a thousand more, I might declare it, but not prove it"[40]

However, wrote Tyndale, "When I have a clear text of Christ and the apostles, that I must be baptized, then I may borrow an example of circumcision to express the nature, power, and fruit, or effect of baptism.

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[37] The importance of Christ's blood in Baptism is more fully covered in my article, "Tyndale's use of the Blood of Christ in the meaning of Baptism," *Churchman, 1994-3,* 213-221

[38] *Sacraments,* 1/349

[39] *Sacraments,* 1/359

For as circumcision was unto them a common badge, signifying that they were all soldiers of God, to war his war, and separating them from all other nations, disobedient unto God; even so baptism is our common badge, and sure earnest and perpetual memorial, that we pertain unto Christ, and are separated from all that are not Christ's."[41]

Whether it is circumcision or baptism, we have to know the meaning of these sacraments. "For it is the covenant only, and not the sign, that saveth us; though the sign be commanded to be put on at due time, to stir up faith of the covenant that saveth us. And instead of circumcision came our baptism; whereby we be received into the religion of Christ, and made partakers of his passion, and members of his church; and whereby we are bound to believe in Christ, and in the Father through him, for the remission of sins; and to keep the law of Christ, and to love each other, as he loved us."[42] Tyndale also calls baptism "the washing" because "The plunging into the water signifieth that we die, and are buried with Christ, as concerning the old life of sin, which is Adam. And the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in a new life, full of the Holy Ghost, which shall teach us and guide us, and work the will of God in us, as thou seest, Rom. vi."[43] The meaning of this washing, the meaning of baptism is not the cleansing we receive from the water but it is "the inward baptism of the heart, signified by the outward washing of the body."[44] Tyndale gives in *The Exposition of 1 John* some of the things

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[40] *Leviticus,* 1/425,426
[41] *Leviticus,* 1/426
[42] *Sacraments,* 1/350
[43] *Obedience,* 1/253
[44] *Matthew,* 2/11f (quote 2/12)

signified by our baptism. "All that be baptized in Christ are washed in him, to put off pride, wrath, hate and envy, with all their old conversation, by which they oppressed their neighbours; and have promised to become, every man even as Christ himself unto his brethren, in love and kindness both in word and deed."[45]

We approach Tyndale's theology of baptism from the position of fallen man and how it is damnation not to have God's "law written in our hearts, … and how there is no other means to be saved from this damnation, than through repentance toward the law, and faith in Christ's blood; which are the very inward baptism of our souls, and the washing and the dipping of our bodies in the water is the outward sign."[46] Then we are "to be scholars thereof," [47] who need to be taught the meaning of baptism, "As a man can by no means read, except he be first taught the letters of the cross row, even so it is unpossible for a man, of whatsoever degree or name he be of, to understand aught in the scripture unto the honour of God and health of his soul, except he be first taught the profession of his baptism, and have it also written in his heart."[48] For "if the signification of our baptism, which is the law of God and faith of Christ, were expounded truly unto us, the scripture would be easy to all that exercised themselves therein."[49] Unfortunately Tyndale wrote that the spiritualty did not understand the profession of our baptism and so did not teach it because "the sentences of the scripture are nothing but very riddles

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[45] *1 John*, 2/173
[46] *Pathway*, 1/26
[47] *Pathway*, 1/27
[48] *1 John*, 2/136
[49] *Answer*, 3/98

unto them, … and all for lack of the right knowledge of the profession of our baptism."[50] Therefore, "The right way, yea, and the only way, to understand the scripture unto salvation, is that we earnestly and above all things search for the profession of our baptism, or covenants made between God and us."[51] The Christian has a certainty as he approaches God's word for "whosoever hath the profession of baptism written in his heart, cannot but understand the scripture, if he exercise himself therein, and compare one place to another, and mark the manner of speech, and ask here and there the meaning of a sentence of them that be better exercised."[52] And who better than Tyndale can they turn to? He points to his translation of the scriptures, "And therefore are there divers introductions ordained for you, to teach you the profession of your baptism, the only light of the scripture; one upon the epistle of Paul to the Romans, and another called 'The Pathway into the Scripture.'"[53]

Tyndale teaches that there are three points which are important about our baptism, "the profession and religion of a christian man, and the inward baptism of the heart, signified by the outward washing of the body. And they be that spiritual character, badge, or sign, wherewith God, through his Spirit, marketh all his immediately and as soon as they be joined to Christ, and made members of his church by true faith." Those "that have their hearts washed with this inward baptism of the Spirit are of the church, and have the keys of the scripture."[54]

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[50] *1 John*, 2/140
[51] *Prologue Matthew*, 1/469
[52] *1 John*, 2/138f
[53] *1 John*, 2/144
[54] *Matthew*, 2/12

The inward baptism is important, and Tyndale explains that this is, "to believe in Christ's blood for the remission of sin, and purchasing of all the good promises that help to the life to come; and to love the law; and to long for the life to come, is the inward baptism of the soul, the baptism that only availeth in the sight of God."[55] As Christ has done all this for us we make the profession of our baptism by which we have "promised to quench and slay the lusts of the flesh with prayer, fasting, and holy meditation, after the doctrine of Christ, and with all godly exercise, that tame the flesh, and kill not the man."[56] Therefore we desire "the holiness of God's word; which only speaketh unto the heart, and sheweth the soul his filthiness and uncleanness of sin, and leadeth her by the way of repentance unto the fountain of Christ's blood, to wash it away through faith."[57]

The profession of our baptism means the promises we made when we were baptized must be kept unbroken; "For what intent? Verily, for the love of Christ which hath bought thee with his blood, and made thee son and heir of God with him, that thou shouldest wait on his will and commandments, and purify thy members according to the same doctrine that hath purified thine heart,"[58] and the Christian must "pay the vow of thy baptism."[59] The vows made to God "when you were first baptized in Christ" are not to keep new laws God has made for his people, but a precept going back to creation, "to love each other as he did you; which is

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[55] *Matthew,* 2/13
[56] *1 John,* 2/160f (quote 2/161)
[57] *Jonas,* 1/462
[58] *Numbers,* 1/433
[59] *Jonas,* 1/465

an old commandment, and was given at the beginning of the world, and hath ever since been written in the heart of all that put their hope in God."[60] There are many signs which show that we are keeping the profession of our baptism to love as God loves us. The child of God does not "laugh at another man's sins" because he realises that, however holy he is, he might "through frailty of the flesh be drawn into sin."[61] It also means that he will "care for the poor, and give them all that we may spare, in his name; … If the law of Christ be written in thine heart, why distributest thou not unto thy brethren with thine own hands, in the name of thy Saviour Jesus Christ, which died for both them and thee, as thou hast vowed and promised to him in thy baptism?"[62] Tyndale links all these aspects of baptism to the Old Testament circumcision in the *Prologue to Jonas*, "For verily, to confess out of the heart that all benefits come of God, even out of the goodness of his mercy, and not deserving of our deeds, is the only sacrifice that pleaseth God; and to believe that all the Jews vowed in their circumcision, as we in our baptism; which vow Jonas, now being taught with experience, promiseth to pay."[63]

Tyndale believed in infant baptism from the fact that circumcision and baptism had the same meaning in God's covenant. "The covenant made between God and Abraham" was effective for the child "as soon as it was born, yea, as soon as it had life in the mother's womb: for the covenant, that God would be God of Abraham's seed, went over the fruit as soon as it had life; and then there is no reason but that the covenant

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[60] *1 John*, 2/174
[61] *1 John*, 2/219
[62] *1 John*, 2/216f

must needs pertain to the males as soon as the females. ... even so must needs the covenant, made to all that believe in Christ's blood, go over the seed as soon as it hath life in the mother's womb."[64] There was then a need for the infant baptized to accept the covenant for himself, and so "for the succour and help of young children, baptized before the age of discretion, to know the law of God and faith of Christ, was confirmation instituted, that they should not be always ignorant and faithless, but be taught the profession of their baptism."[65] The children, when they were ""six or seven years old," were brought to the parish priest to be taught the profession of their baptism. Then when the children had been taught its meaning "the priests brought the children ... at eleven or twelve years old" to the archdeacon who questioned them about their faith, knowledge of God's law, and the Christian life "Then confirmed he their baptism, saying, 'I confirm you; that is, I denounce and declare, by the authority of God's word, and doctrine of Christ, that ye be truly baptized within, in your hearts and in your spirits, through professing the law of God and the faith of our Saviour Jesus, which your outward baptism doth signify; and thereupon I put this cross in your foreheads, that ye go and fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, under the standard of our Saviour, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen.' Which manner, I would to God, for his tender mercy, were in use this day."[66]

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[63] *Jonas,* 1/459
[64] *Sacraments,* 1/350
[65] *Answer,* 3/71
[66] *Answer,* 3/71f

THE PASSOVER AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments, for both of them preach the blood of Christ which was shed once and for all on the cross, and, therefore, Christ's sacrifice cannot be repeated without denying the truth of Christ's death at Calvary.[67] When we turn to the three ways the Lord's Supper is interpreted Tyndale says that both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran interpretations have lost the true scriptural meaning of the sacrament.

> One part say that these words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," compel us to believe, under pain of damnation, that the bread and wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ really: as the water at Cana of Galilee was turned into very wine.
>
> The second part saith, 'We be not bound to believe that bread and wine are changed; but only that his body and blood are there presently.'
>
> The third say, 'We be bound by these words only to believe that Christ's body was broken, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins; and that there is no other satisfaction for sin than the death and passion of Christ.[68]

The Roman Catholic Church interpreted Christ's words of institution materially. "Bread and wine, say they, cannot be Christ's natural body; therefore the bread and wine are changed, turned, altered,

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[67] *Answer*, 3/149
[68] *Sacraments*, 1/366f

and transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ."[69] Then one must believe "that there is no bread in the sacrament, nor wine, though the five wits say all yea."[70] This materialistic interpretation cannot be taken to its logical conclusion without it becoming obvious that it is untrue. Transubstantiation is an impossible, inexplicable mystery because it is not true. "The priest toucheth not Christ's natural body with his hands, by your own doctrine; …"[71] If this were true it means a Christian "must believe that it is no more bread, but the very body of Christ, flesh, blood and bone, even as he went here on earth, save his coat: for that is here yet; I wot not in how many places."[72]

The Lutherans did not accept the Roman Catholic position that the sacrament was a sacrifice because the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ, Tyndale wrote they believed "Christ dieth no more now, and therefore is no more sacrificed. Neither do we properly offer him to God. But he in his mortal flesh offered himself for us to God the Father, and purchased therewith a general pardon for ever. And now doth God the Father proffer him, and giveth him to us. And the priests, in God's stead, proffer him and give him unto the people."[73]

Tyndale joined these two together, and criticised transubstantiation and consubstantiation in the same way, "The chief hold and principal anchor that the two first have, is these words, 'This is my body: This is my blood.'" They allege Christ's words in John 6, "which they draw and

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[69] *Sacraments,* 1/367
[70] *Matthew,* 2/130
[71] *Answer,* 3/162f see p. 327
[72] *Obedience,* 1/278
[73] *Sacraments,* 1/370

wrest to the carnal and fleshly eating of Christ's body in the mouth, when it only meaneth of this eating by faith. … But truth it is, that the righteous liveth by his faith; ergo, to believe and trust in Christ's blood is the eating that there was meant, as the text well proveth."[74]

Tyndale was firmly in the Reformed position regarding the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, but as we will see, as we examine his theology, he does not follow the Zwinglian position but it is his own interpretation of the scriptures which gives this aspect of the Lord's Supper its meaning in Tyndale's theology. Stephens wrote, "Zwingli can therefore speak of a sacrament as the sign of a grace that has been given. The signs make their appeal to the senses, but what they signify must already be present to the mind or soul."[75] Zwingli was concerned with the sacramental meaning of the bread and wine, "The bread is no longer common, but consecrated. It is called bread, but it is also called the body of Christ. Indeed, it is in fact the body of Christ, but only in name and signification, or, as we now say, sacramentally."[76] George wrote, "Zwingli had no trouble affirming that Christ was present in the supper according to his divinity. However, He could be present bodily only according to contemplation and memory. The risen, glorified body of Christ remains in heaven, seated on God's right hand."[77] This emphasis is modified slightly in Tyndale who wrote, "When the priest hath once rehearsed the testament of our Saviour thereon, I look not on bread and wine, but on the body of

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[74] *Sacraments,* 1/368f. Tyndale's statement was possibly more general, and ignored Luther's position, "The sixth chapter of John must be entirelyt excluded from this discussion, since it does not refer to the sacrament in a single syllable." *LW-36,* 19.
[75] Stephens, *Zwingli,* 188
[76] Zwingli, *Exposition of the Faith,* 263

Christ broken, and blood shed for my sins; and by that faith am I saved from the damnation of my sins."[78] In other words, the bread and the wine are transformed spiritually in the heart and mind of the true recipient of the sacrament. Marc'hadour appears to understand Tyndale's use of 'the blood of Christ' in a sacramental way similar to the unreformed Church and wrote that Fisher "is quite explicit about the truths dearest to Tyndale's heart: human unworthiness, God's grace, and the redeeming virtue of Christ's blood."[79] As if 'Christ's blood' meant the same thing to Tyndale as it did to Fisher! However, Tyndale wrote, "The words mean no more but only that we believe, by the things that are there shewed, that Christ's body was broken and his blood shed for our sins, if we will forsake our sins and turn to God to keep his law."[80] For the stress Tyndale puts on the sacraments is that they are "our memorials and signs of remembrance only; and he that giveth in his heart more to them than that, is an image-servant."[81] As we read in *Wycklyffes Wycket,* "The breade is the fygure or mynde of Christes bodye in earth, and therfore Christe sayde. As oft as ye do thys thynge do it in mynde of me. Lu. xxii."[82]

We find Tyndale links both the Passover and the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, and the Christian's deliverance from bondage to Satan, with the shedding of Christ's blood.[83] The first Passover meal was eaten, before the deliverance of the Children of Israel

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[77] George, 153
[78] *Answer,* 3/178
[79] Marc'hadour, "Fisher's Sermon." 149
[80] *Sacraments,* 1/368
[81] *1 John,* 2/216
[82] Pantin, *Wycliffes Wycket,* xiiii.
[83] *Sacraments,* 1/354

from bondage in Egypt, as "a seal of the promise to be delivered the same night," even as the at the Last Supper Christ pointed forward, saying, "My passion that is at hand, and blood that now shall shortly be shed; by the which ye shall be delivered out of the power of Satan, sin, and hell."[84] As we turn to Tyndale's doctrine of the Lord's Supper we have to go back in time from the crucifixion and the events of good Friday to the Upper Room on the night of his betrayal. It is there on that Thursday evening that we can understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Christ was in the room, sharing with his disciples the Passover meal. "And the paschal lamb was a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt only."[85] Then Christ, on "the night before his passion, when he had eaten Pesah with his disciples, he said, 'I will no more eat of it henceforth, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' … But it hath yet another signification, hitherto unknown unto you, which must be fulfilled spiritually in the kingdom of God by my passion that is at hand, and blood that now shall shortly be shed. … Neither was it the lamb's blood that delivered you then: … but the blood of Christ (whom that lamb figured, and described his innocence, pureness, and obedience to his Father, and compassion to mankind-ward, …"[86]

At that Paschal meal in the Upper Room "neither the sacrifices of the old law which prophesied the sacrificing of Christ, neither yet our redemption, was fulfilled that night. For if the scriptures and prophecies were then fulfilled, and we then redeemed, Christ died on the morrow in

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[84] *Sacraments*, 1/355
[85] *Answer*, 3/65
[86] *Sacraments*, 1/355

vain."[87] Therefore Tyndale asked More, "If it were then the very sacrificing of Christ's body, ... why was he sacrificed so cruelly on the morrow?"[88] The Lord's Supper teaches us the memorial of Christ, our paschal lamb, who shed his blood for us, (1 Corinthians, 5.),[89] and Christ commanded his disciples "This do in remembrance of me."[90]

The memorial aspect of the Lord's Supper was important for Tyndale, God ordained it in order that we might remember and not forget what Christ has done for us, therefore the sacraments "can be no service to God in his person; but memorials unto men, and a remembrance of the testament, wherewith God is served in the spirit."[91] To give greater signification to it and to help us remember Christ's blood was shed for us we need "red wine, the more lovely to represent it."[92] The fact that we were to remember Christ's death on the Cross was one reason why Tyndale said the papists were wrong in calling the Lord's Supper a sacrifice, for "a sacrifice is the slaying of the body of a beast, or a man: wherefore, if it be a sacrifice, then is Christ's body there slain, and his blood there shed: but that is not so. And therefore it is properly no sacrifice, but a sacrament, and a memorial of that everlasting sacrifice once for all, which he offered upon the cross now upon a fifteen hundred years ago."[93] After quoting from 1 Corinthians 11, and Luke 22, Tyndale wrote, "Here ye see again that it was instituted to keep the death of Christ

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[87] *Sacraments,* 1/371
[88] *Answer,* 3/178
[89] *Answer,* 3/85
[90] *Obedience,* 1/252 (Luke 6:19): *Answer,* 3/177
[91] *Answer,* 3/56
[92] *Sacraments,* 1/383
[93] *Leviticus,* 1/424

in mind: and to testify wherefore he died, even to save us from sin, death and hell." As the remedy against the serpent's bite was "to go and behold the brasen serpent; … even so, if the sting of death, which is sin, have wounded the soul with the working of the law in the consciences, there is none other remedy than to run to Christ, which shed his blood … for the remission of our sins."[94]

Christ "instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, to keep us in remembrance of his body-breaking and blood-shedding for our sins."[95] Therefore, as Christ, at his Last Supper, told his disciples to pray to their loving Father, so we are able to go to him boldly, "as of a most loving and merciful father, above all the mercy of fathers"[96] and "offer for their sins the sacrifice of Christ's blood, and the fat of his mercies in the fire of their prayers; and in the confidence of that sacrifice go in boldly to God their father."[97]

The apostles[98] and Paul[99] received and passed on the Lord's Supper as Christ instituted it, and it is with this simplicity the sacrament should be celebrated. Tyndale believed that it was good "that men come to the church on the Sundays, to hear God's word, and to receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, in remembrance of his benefits, and so to strengthen thy soul for to walk in his love, and in the love of our neighbour for his sake."[100] For Tyndale believed that there were benefits for the

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[94] *Sacraments,* 1/356f
[95] *Answer,* 3/73
[96] *Answer,* 3/120
[97] *1 John,* 2/210
[98] *Answer,* 3/85
[99] *Answer,* 3/96f
[100] *1 John,* 2/188

Christian in the receiving of the sacrament because "true sacraments" "preach us God's word,"[101] teaching those who partook of the sacrament "the promises and testament" of God.[102] "And even so our sacraments … preach Christ unto us, and lead our faiths unto Christ: by which faith our sins are done away, and not by the deed or work of the sacrament. … Nevertheless the sacraments cleanse us, and absolve us of our sins, as the priests do in preaching of repentance and faith."[103]

Faith, as always in Tyndale's theology, is one of the keys to understanding the meaning of the sacraments. God delighted in the faith of his people Israel when they offered sacrifices "for a sure token and earnest of the mercy of God, certified by that sign, that God loved them. … as we should be certified by the sacrament of God with us for Christ's death that is past."[104] Although the sacrament is a visible sign for us the eating and drinking which matters is in the heart and not the mouth, for "where the heart then believeth in Christ, there dwelleth Christ in the heart; though there be no bread in the heart, neither yet in the maw."[105]

"The true worshipping of the sacrament is to believe that it is a true sign that Christ suffered death for us." But Paul, and the other apostles, "say not, Pray to it, neither put faith therein. For I may not believe in the sacrament, but I must believe the sacrament, … which is the only worshipping of the sacrament."[106] This worship must be directed to our Father in heaven, for Christ "taught not his disciples to direct the prayer to

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[101] *Answer,* 3/89
[102] *Prelates,* 2/291
[103] *Leviticus,* 1/423
[104] *Sacraments,* 1/382
[105] *Sacraments,* 1/369

the Father in him, ... neither lift he up his eyes, or prayer, to his Father in the sacrament, but to his Father in heaven."[107]

Our faith makes the sacrament effective for "the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ hath a promise annexed, ... 'this is my blood, that is shed for many, unto the forgiveness of sins."[108] This means "that the sacrament is an absolution of our sins, as often as we receive it, where it is truly taught and understood, and received aright."[109]

When we partake of the sacrament we "shew the Lord's death until he come."[110] For Paul continues, "Whosoever shall eat of this bread or drink of the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ... whoso receiveth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ with an unclean heart, not forsaking the old lusts of the flesh, nor purposing to follow Christ, and to be to his neighbour as Christ was to him, only merciful; the same sinneth against the body and blood of Christ; in that he maketh a mock of the earnest death of Christ, and as it is written Hebrews the tenth, 'treadeth Christ under foot, and counteth the blood of the testament wherewith he was sanctified as an unholy thing." This unbelief has led to many ceremonies being invented because of the "unquiet, scrupulous, and superstitious nature of man, wholly given to idolatry."[111]

The Lord's Supper has an important place within the doctrine of the Church to "keep his testament ever fresh in mind" and "to strength our

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[106] *Answer,* 3/180
[107] *Sacraments,* 1/382f
[108] *Obedience,* 1/252
[109] *Sacraments,* 1/357
[110] *Sacraments,* 1/365

faith, and to certify our conscience, that our sins were forgiven, as soon as we repented and had reconciled ourselves unto our brethren, and to arm our souls, through the continual remembrance of Christ's death." Then as a congregation "knit together in one faith and love to eat the Lord's supper," we are the body of Christ with Christ our head."[112] In the margin Tyndale proves his teaching that the congregation is the body of Christ by referring to 1 Corinthians 11; 10[17]; 12:[26,17]; and Ephesians 1:[23].[105]

Tyndale spent a lot of time showing the differences between his doctrine of the sacraments and those of others, supporting his theology by scripture, and showing that the medieval Church had lost the signification of the sacraments and that they "teach a man to trust in dumb ceremonies, and sacraments, in penance, and all manner works that come them to profit; which yet help not unto repentance, nor to faith, nor to love a man's neighbour."[113]

THE FIVE FALSE SACRAMENTS

Tyndale wrote that matrimony,[114] orders,[115] penance,[116] confirmation,[117] and anoiling, "The sacraments, which they have imagined, are all without promise, and therefore help not."[118] In fact they are not sacraments because the spiritualty "had taken away the signification and very intent of the sacrament, to establish the ear confession, their merits,

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[111] *Sacraments,* 1/366
[112] *1 John,* 2/218
[113] *Answer,* 3/194
[114] *Obedience,* 1/254
[115] *Obedience,* 1/254f
[116] *Obedience,* 1/261
[117] *Obedience,* 1/273
[118] *Obedience,* 1/275f

deservings, justifying of works, and like invention, unto their own glory and profit."[119]

All the Reformers accepted that Christ had appointed only two sacraments, but they had different views regarding the validity of the other five and of their value and of their importance as ceremonies of the Church.

Marriage

Marriage, for Luther, was one of the "holy orders and true religious institutions established by God."[120] In the same way Tyndale described it as "a state or degree ordained of God, and an office wherein the husband serveth the wife, and the wife the husband." But as it had not a promise attached to it it ought "not to be called a sacrament."[121] Luther wrote, "Neither is there any need to make sacraments out of marriage and the office of the priesthood."[122] Tyndale and Luther were in agreement over the place of marriage in the Church.

Orders

Tyndale wrote, "Subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop, cardinal, patriarch, and pope, be names of offices and service, or should be, and not sacraments."[123] Here he agrees with Luther[124]

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[119] *1 John,* 2/222
[120] *LW-37,* 364
[121] *Obedience,* 1/254
[122] *LW-37,* 370
[123] *Obedience,* 1/254f
[124] *LW-37,* 364

Confession

Tyndale differed from Luther over confession, which is one of the reasons More used to say that Tyndale was a more heretical than Luther.[125] Luther wrote, "I have a high regard for private confession, for here God's word and absolution are spoken privately and individually to each believer for the forgiveness of his sins, and as often as he desires it he may have recourse to it for this forgiveness."[126] Tyndale agreed with the statement of Wycliffe, "and it seme*th th*at it is not nedful, but brou*gh*t in late of *th*e fend."[127] Tyndale wrote, "Through confession they quench the faith of all the promises of God, and take away the effect and virtue of all the sacraments of Christ."[128]

Confirmation

Tyndale believed that, although it is not a sacrament, Confirmation has an importance. The child who was baptized needed to be taught the Christian faith by their parish priest for about five years, then, after examination by the Archdeacon, have his baptism confirmed and be admitted to the Lord's Supper.[129] Luther wrote, "It is sufficient to regard confirmation as a certain churchly rite or sacramental ceremony, similar to other ceremonies, … Still, these things cannot be called sacraments of faith, because they have no divine promise connected with them, neither

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[125] *CWM-6,* 424-6
[126] *LW-37,* 368
[127] Matthew, *Wyclif,* 328; see *Obedience,* 1/263, "Shrift in the ear is verily a work of Satan."
[128] *Obedience,* 1/337
[129] *Answer,* 3/71f; see p. 201f

do they save; but the sacraments do save those who believe the divine promise."[130]

Unction

Luther wrote, "If unction were practiced in accordance with the gospel, Mark 6[:13] and James 5[:14], I would let it pass. But to make a sacrament out of it is nonsense.[131] Tyndale points out prayer is the important thing stressed and not the ceremony attached to it; "'the prayer of faith shall heal the sick.' Where a promise is, there is faith bold to pray, and God true to give her her petition. Putting on of the hands is an indifferent thing."[132] But "the anoiling, without promise, and therefore without the Spirit, and without profit; but altogether unfruitful and superstitious."[133] Here again we find agreement between Tyndale and Luther.

SUMMARY

Tyndale was concerned that the covenantal signs should be restored to their original meaning and be purified of manmade changes and additions which destroyed and took from them their God-given purpose. He wrote of the five so-called sacraments of the unreformed Church, "The sacraments, which they have imagined, are all without promise, and therefore help not. For 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' Rom. xiv. Now

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[130] *LW-36*, 92
[131] *LW-37*, 370
[132] *Obedience*, 1/275
[133] *Obedience*, 1/275

without a promise can there be no faith."[134] The same is true of the Roman Church's doctrine of Baptism and the Lord's Supper where they have "lost the true faith in the covenant made in Christ's blood and body: which covenant is that which saveth."[135]

Tyndale believed that there were only two sacraments instituted by Christ and which proclaimed the covenant of God's love. The two true sacraments were Baptism and the Lord's Supper for they preached the promises of God which faith can take hold of and find, through them, God as a loving Father. "Then come we to the sacraments, where thou seest that the work of a sacrament saveth not; but the faith in the promise, which the sacrament signifieth, justifieth us only. There hast thou that a priest is but a servant, to teach only; and whatsoever he taketh upon him more than to preach and to minister the sacraments of Christ (which is also preaching) is falsehead."[136] Here we see that Tyndale differed from Luther, who wrote, "Thus two sacraments remain, baptism and the Lord's Supper, along with the gospel, in which the Holy Spirit richly offers, bestows, and accomplishes the forgiveness of sins."[137]

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were signs of the covenant, which had been disfigured and marred by the Church beyond all recognition; and the five so called sacraments were false inventions to deceive the people. Tyndale would have agreed with the words Peter Martyr Vermigli, published thirty years after Tyndale's martyrdom at Vilvoorde, "We have parted company with those who have soiled the sacraments and invented

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[134] *Obedience,* 1/274f. (quote, 1/275)
[135] *Sacraments,* 1/385
[136] *Obedience,* 1/342

others which were never instituted by Christ, lacerating those that he did originate and bequeath, defiling them in many and varied illicit ways."[138]

[137] *LW-37*, 370
[138] Peter Martyr Vermigli Library, volume-1, 221

XII THE COVENANT IN ACTION

INTRODUCTION

The covenant, as we have seen, was made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and the part of the covenant which is the Holy Spirit's responsibility is applying God's plan for man's salvation to the elect. It is with the work of the Holy Spirit as he brings life to God's chosen and makes them the children of God that *The Covenant in Action* is concerned. Even if Tyndale does not mention the Holy Spirit in every case, the work of the Holy Spirit underlies every aspect of the Christian's life and bears witness that he is a Child of God. The outworking of the covenant in our lives shows the truth of our Christianity, as Tyndale wrote, "The assurance that we are sons, beloved, and heirs with Christ, and have God's Spirit in us, is the consent of our hearts unto the law of God. Which law is all perfection, and the mark whereat all we ought to shoot."[1] For Tyndale the summary of the law contains all that is necessary for our perfect obedience to the commandments of God, "The kingdom of God is to love God with all thine heart, and to put thy whole trust in him according to the covenant, made in Christ: and for Christ's sake to love thy neighbour as Christ loved thee, and all this is within thee."[2]

The question of man's free-will, which exercised the Reformers, did not create a problem for Tyndale, as we will see, a man who is dead

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[1] *Obedience,* 1/300
[2] *MN-Luke 17,* NT/119

has no will, whilst a man who is alive has, and therefore he believed that our salvation depended on God, and it equally depended on us. Both statements are true and there is no contradiction between them if we follow God's word, for what seems irrational to man's reason becomes plain when we listen to God and not to the pagan philosophers, as Tyndale's gloss on Deuteronomy 4 "Ye shall put nothing unto the word which I command you …" makes clear. "No: nor yet corrupt it with false glosses to confirm Aristotle: but rebuke Aristotle's false learning therewith."[3]

Luther denied that man had free-will, he wrote, "Paul, writing to the Romans, enters upon his argument for the grace of God against 'free-will' as follows: 'The wrath of God' (he says) 'is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness' (Rom. 1.18). Do you hear this general judgement against all men, that they are under the wrath of God? What does this mean, but that they merit wrath and punishment? He assigns the reason for the wrath by saying that they do only that which merits wrath and punishment – that they are all ungodly and unrighteous, and hold down the truth in unrighteousness. Where now is the power of 'free-will' to endeavour after some good? Paul makes it merit the wrath of God, and pronounces it ungodly and unrighteous! And that which deserves wrath and is ungodly is endeavouring and availing, not for grace, but against it."[4]

After considering many scriptural passages which appear to require man to have free-will, Luther wrote, "But as 'free-will' is not proved by any of the

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[3] *MN-Deuteronomy 4*, OT/262
[4] Luther, *Bondage*, 273f

other words of mercy or promise of comfort, so neither is it proved by this: 'I desire not the death of a sinner', etc."[5]

Tyndale would have agreed with Erasmus when he wrote of those texts, (Mt. 11.28, etc) "These seem empty and vain if they all refer to necessity. The same is true of the threats in the Gospels, ..." (Mt. 7.16, etc.), "What he means by fruits are works, and he calls them ours. But they are not ours if they all happen by necessity."[6] (Although there are also places where Tyndale would have disagreed with Erasmus.)

It is when we examine the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the covenant to the elect that we see how we change from not having free-will as fallen man to having free-will as the chosen children of God. We will also see how Tyndale breaks with most theologians, and, at the same time is able to reconcile scriptures which seem to present two different theologies concerning man's free-will.

Tyndale has three areas where we can see the covenant in action. Firstly, in the salvation of God's chosen ones we see God's love and mercy at work. Secondly, in the covenant the Holy Spirit works bringing the elect from death to life, giving them the power to respond to the Father's love and, through repentance and faith, become God's children. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit enables the child of God to show the power of God in his life of love to God and to his neighbour. According to Tyndale every single step in the Christian's journey is marked by the Holy Spirit applying the blood of Christ to his heart and life so that, purified and

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[5] Luther, *Bondage*, 167
[6] Erasmus, *Freedom*, 60

cleansed, he is able to grow and develop of a child of God. The blood of Christ is all important for "this new and gentle testament, … as it is a better testament, so is it confirmed with a better blood, to make men see love, to love again, and to be a greater confirmation of the love promised.[7]

THE MERCY OF GOD

For Luther it is God's wrath rather than God's love which opens the way for man to receive God's mercy. As McGrath wrote, "God is still seen as instigating man's humiliation, even if man himself must cooperate with God if this humiliation is to be properly effected. How does God humiliate man? Through the experience of the wrath of God, the threat of hell and eternal damnation, through *Anfechtung* and suffering. It is through experiencing the wrath of God that man is humbled, and forced to concede that he cannot, by himself, stand in the presence of God – and thus he turns to God in his helplessness and hopelessness, and in doing so, is justified."[8] Tyndale believed that the law brought us to know God's wrath, but man was not humiliated by this knowledge before he could find mercy. "Lyke wyse when goodds lawe hath brought the synner into knowlege of him sylfe / and hath co*n*founded his conscience / and opened vnto him the wrath and vengeaunce of god / then co*m*meth good tydings / the Eva*n*gelion sheweth vnto him the promyses of god in Christ / and howe that Christ hath purchesed perdon for him hath satisfied the lawe for him / and peased the wrath of god / and the povre synner beleveth / laudeth and thanketh god / throwe Christ / and breaketh oute into excedi*n*ge

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[7] *Sacraments*, 1/364

inward ioy and glad nes / for that he hath escaped so greate wrath / so hevy ve*n*geaunce / so fearfull and so everlastinge a dethe."[9]

For Tyndale it is the mercy and the love of God alone which activates the covenant in the hearts and lives of those chosen to be God's children: "That is to saye / for the favoure that god hath to his sonne Christ / he geveth vnto vs his favour / and good will / as a father to his sonnes. As affirmeth Paul sayinge: whych loved vs in his beloved before the creation of the worlde. for the love that god hath to Christ / he loveth vs / and not for oure awne faith. Christ is made lorde over all / and is called in scripture godds mercy stole whosoever flyeth to Christ / can nether beare nor receave of god eny other thinge save mercy."[10]

When we come to examine Tyndale's doctrine of faith we will see he believed that salvation did not depend on "oure awne faith" but on the faith which is given to us by the Holy Spirit: a faith grounded in God's eternal covenant which is ours by God's grace. "The treasure of his mercy was laid up in Christ for all that should believe, before the world was made; *ergo,* nothing that hath happened since hath changed the purpose of the invariable God."[11]

It is, therefore, God's will which decides who is to be chosen for his mercy. "In Adam are we all, as it were, wild crab-trees, of which God chooseth whom he will, and plucketh them out of Adam, and planteth them in the garden of his mercy, and stocketh them, and grafteth the Spirit of Christ in them, which bringeth forth the fruit of the will of God; which

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[8] McGrath, *Theology,* 154
[9] *1525,* 9
[10] *1525,* 4.

fruit testifieth that God hath blessed us in Christ."[12] In his "Preface" to what is known as *The Cologne Fragment,* Tyndale wrote,

> By grace (that is to saye by favoure) we are plucked oute of Adam the grounde of all evyll / and graffed in Christ the rote of all goodnes. In Christ god loved vs his electe and chosen / before the worlde bega*n* / and reserved vs vnto the knowlege of his sonne and of hys holy gospell / and when the gospell is preached to vs he openeth oure herrts / and geveth vs grace to beleve and putteth the spirite of Christ in vs / and we knowe hime as oure father moost mercyfull." Tyndale continues, "The bloud of Christ hath obteyned all thi*ngs* for vs of god. Christ is oure satisfaction / redemer / delyverer / saveour from vengeaunce and wrath.[13]

The Holy Spirit applies the covenant to the elect, and brings God's mercy to him. He raises God's chosen ones from death to life, liberating them from bondage to the devil, and the Holy Spirit gives to the elect a repenting faith. It is to this first work of the Holy Spirit that we now turn.

THE NEW BIRTH

Man is (as we have seen)[14] nailed, glued and chained to the devil's will. He is dead in sin, separated from God and unable to do anything pleasing to God. As far as doing any good works which are pleasing to

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[11] *Tracy,* 3/275
[12] *Mammon,* 1/113
[13] *1525,* 7
[14] see *The Covenant Envisaged,* 133ff

God he is powerless and has no free-will to love and obey God's laws and, until he has been given a new life, the passages of scripture which teach that man has not free-will apply. To change man's position is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Because Luther does not stress the work of the Holy Spirit in the application of God's covenant to fallen man, Tyndale inserts a long passage regarding the work of the Holy Spirit into his *Prologue to the Romans* which totally alters Luther's doctrine at that point. After adding 85 words on the state of fallen man and the need for the Holy Spirit's action in man's salvation, Tyndale wrote,

> The Spirit must first come, and wake him out of his sleep with the thunder of the law, and fear him, and shew him his miserable estate and wretchedness; and make him abhor and hate himself, and to desire help; and then comfort him again with the pleasant rain of the gospel, that is to say, with the sweet promises of God in Christ, and stir up faith in him to believe the promises. Then, when he believeth the promises, as God was merciful to promise, so is he true to fulfil them, and will give him the Spirit and strength, both to love the will of God, and to work thereafter. So we see that God only, who, according to the scripture, worketh all in all things, worketh a man's justifying, salvation, and health; yea, and poureth faith and belief, lust to love God's will, and strength to fulfil the same, into us, even as water is poured into a vessel; and that of

> his good will and purpose, and not of our deservings and merits.[15]

There are a further 43 words before Tyndale returns to Luther. The difference between Tyndale and Luther can be seen clearly in an earlier quotation from the *(Preface) Prologue to Romans.* Luther wrote, "Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1[:12-13]. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit."[16] Tyndale's 'translation' of this passage changes Luther's theology on the work of the Holy Spirit, and also the doctrines of man's salvation and justification, it reads, "But right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us, which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature, and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God, as thou readest in the first of John; and killeth the old Adam, and maketh us altogether new in heart, mind, will, lust, and in all our affections and powers of the soul; the Holy Ghost ever accompanying her, and ruling the heart."[17]

Neither is this stress which Tyndale puts on this initial work of the Holy Spirit found in the Swiss Reformers. Their doctrine of the Fall and the state of fallen man, and also their theology of the covenant are different to Tyndale's, also they had not repudiated Greek philosophy in the way Tyndale had, and these all led to the basic differences between the Continental Reformers and Tyndale. It is only after the Holy Spirit has

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[15] *Romans,* 1/498
[16] *LW-35,* 370
[17] *Romans,* 1/493

brought the elect to life that we can find some common ground between Tyndale and the other Reformers. [18]

For Christ came "to give us a new birth, a new nature, and to sow new seed in us, that we should, by the reason of that birth, sin no more. For the seed of that birth, that is to wete the Spirit of God and the lively seed of his word sown in our hearts, keepeth our hearts, that we cannot consent to sin."[19] Again Tyndale wrote, "God of his grace only, quickened us in Christ; and raised us out of that death. … We are, in this our second birth, God's workmanship and creation in Christ; so that, as he which is yet unmade hath no life nor power to work, no more had we, till we were made again in Christ. The preaching of mercy in Christ quickened our hearts through faith wrought by the Spirit of Christ, which God poured into our hearts, ere we wist."[20] But there had to be a response on our part to God's mercy, "And thus, as the Spirit and doctrine on God's part, and repentance and faith on our part, beget us anew in Christ,"[21] but, for Tyndale, our repentance and faith is also a work of the Holy Spirit.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Once one is born again and made alive we find in Tyndale's theology that there is a co-operation between the Holy Spirit and the child of God as one's Christian life begins. Because of this working together between God and the elect, Tyndale sometimes wrote as if repentance and

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[18] Study along the lines of Trueman, Carl R. and Clark, R.S., *Protestant Scholasticism*, would be profitable comparing the early Reformers' position regarding scholasticism, humanism, Greek philosophy, and scripture from their writings.
[19] *1 John*, 2/190
[20] *1 John*, 2/199f
[21] *Pathway*, 1/27

faith were ours alone, and sometimes as if it were the work of the Holy Spirit alone, it is only in the context of Tyndale's covenant theology that both are equally true. Also we find that Tyndale often changes the order of faith and repentance because they are so entwined that it is not possible to separate repentance from faith – although faith covers every aspect of our Christian life and not just repentance.

Although it has always a deep meaning for the individual Christian, Luther also formulated the doctrine of *justification by faith* as a basis for the reformation of the Church, and this doctrine was followed by Tyndale and the other Reformers. However, we find that their underlying theologies of man's salvation gave them different understandings of the meaning of that phrase. Lau wrote, concerning the doctrine of the *two regiments*, "Other Reformers such as Melanchthon, Zwingli and Calvin have similar ideas to Luther's, but also depart from him in characteristic ways."[22] This remark is equally applicable to more or less every doctrine.

Bornkamm wrote that Luther is clearest in his explanation of *justification by faith* in his tract, *Against Latomus,*[23] where we read;

> The gospel, on the contrary, deals with sin so as to remove it, and thus most beautifully follows the law. The law introduces us to sin and overwhelms us with the knowledge of it. It does this so that we may seek to be freed and to sigh after grace, for the gospel also teaches and preaches two things, namely, the righteousness and the grace of God. Through righteousness it

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[22] Lau, 355

[23] Bornkamm, 188. "Luther did not often set forth the basics of his teaching on justification so simply and clearly."

> heals the corruption of nature. This is done by the true righteousness which is the gift of God, namely, faith in Christ.[24]

In his *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors,* Luther links faith and repentance. "While some preach about the faith by which we are to be justified, it is still not clearly enough explained how one shall attain to this faith, and almost all omit one aspect of the Christian faith without which no one can understand what faith is or means. For Christ says in the last chapter of Luke [24:47] that we are to preach in his name repentance and forgiveness of sins. … One ought to remember that repentance and law belong to the common faith. For one must of course first believe that God is the one who threatens, commands, and frightens, etc."[25] Wengert finds Melanchthon had a similar view about God although he speaks of it as "filial fear",[26] the Father envisaged by Melanchthon is far removed from Tyndale's God the Father who has "a lovely and amiable countenance."[27]

Bucer and Zwingli also had a hardness as they approached the doctrine of repentance, a hardness which can be traced back to their forensic theology where the sinner stands in the law court to face God the Judge for his sins; but for Tyndale God is a loving Father who is most merciful to his children.

Unlike Tyndale the other Reformers did not have the same emphasis on the blood of Christ. Luther usually linked repentance and faith with Christ's death on the Cross and the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is not found in Zwingli or the Swiss Reformers although

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[24] *LW-32,* 226f
[25] *LW-40,* 274f
[26] Wengert, 99

Calvin (some ten years after Tyndale's martyrdom) wrote on Hebrews 9:20:-

> This passage reminds us that the promises of God are then only profitable to us when they are confirmed by the blood of Christ. For what Paul testifies in 2 Cor. i.20, that all God's promises are yea and amen in Christ – this happens when his blood like a seal is engraven on our hearts, or when we not only hear God speaking, but also see Christ offering himself as a pledge for those things which are spoken. If this thought only came to our minds, that what we read is not written so much with ink as with the blood of Christ, that when the Gospel is preached, his sacred blood distils together with the voice, there would be far greater attention as well as reverence on our part.[28]

In his *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* there is a long passage where Tyndale told his reader to "Mark therefore, the way toward justifying, or forgiveness of sin, is the law." As the law is revealed to the sinner he would despair if God did not help him, but God "setteth his son Jesus before me, and all his passion and death." God pointed out that this has saved the sinner, and Christ has prayed for him so that the sinner's heart softens and begins to submit and love God's law. Tyndale then explains the order of these events. Out of our knowledge of the law and our sin comes repentance which is "a light that the Spirit of God hath given me. ... Then the same Spirit worketh in mine heart trust and

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[27] *Matthew*, 2/26
[28] Calvin, *Hebrews*, 212

confidence, to believe the mercy of God and his truth. … And immediately out of that trust springeth love toward the law of God again." But it is not repentance, faith or love which justify us "For we love not God first, to compel him to love again; but he loved us first, and gave his Son for us, that we might see love and love again. … Hereof ye see what faith it is that justifieth us. The faith in Christ's blood, of a repenting heart toward the law, doth justify us only."[29]

This justifying faith comes to us from the Holy Spirit, for "Faith is the work of God only, even as was the raising up of Christ."[30] It is in his *Prologue to Romans* that we find Tyndale writing of faith being both our work and also the work of the Holy Spirit. "Now is the Spirit none otherwise given, than by faith only, in that we believe the promises of God without wavering, how that God is true, and will fulfil all his good promises towards us for Christ's blood's sake, … even as we believe the glad tidings preached to us, the Holy Ghost entereth into our hearts, and looseth the bonds of the devil, … All our justifying then cometh of faith, and faith and the Spirit come of God, and not of us. When we say, faith bringeth the Spirit, it is not to be understood, that faith deserveth the Spirit, or that the Spirit is not present in us before faith: for the Spirit is ever in us, and faith is the gift and working of the Spirit."[31] What seems in that passage to be confusing can be understood as we put it in the context of Tyndale's theology and the power of the gospel. "The gospel is every where one, though it be preached of divers, and signifieth glad tidings; that

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[29] *Answer,* 3/195-197
[30] *Ephesians 1,* NT/283
[31] *Romans,* 1/488

is to wit, an open preaching of Christ, and the holy testament and gracious promises that God hath made in Christ's blood to all that repent and believe."[32]

For Tyndale the beginning of repentance is when we admit that we are sinners and that we are unable to do anything about it unless God makes a way of escape for us. To acknowledge our sins is foreign to our nature and repugnant to us[33] until our conscience is awakened by the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit empowers us to respond to the Father's love, revealed through the preaching of the gospel, as Tyndale wrote, "When a true preacher preacheth, the Spirit entereth the hearts of the elect, and maketh them feel the righteousness of the law of God, and by the law the poison of their corrupt nature; and thence leadeth them through repentance, unto the mercy that is in Christ's blood; and as an ointment healeth the body, even so the Spirit, through confidence and trust in Christ's blood, healeth the soul, and maketh her love the law of God."[34]

Tyndale believed the unwillingness of fallen man to accept his position led the Church to invent all kinds of means to allow man to find his own righteousness. Confession, the sacraments, idolatry, ceremonies, and good works are some of the ways people have sought to make God propitious to them. "All these are faithless; for they follow their own righteousness, and are disobedient unto all manner righteousness of God; both unto the righteousness of God's law, wherewith he damneth all our

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[32] *Obedience,* 1/213
[33] *1 John,* 2/168
[34] *1 John,* 2/183f

deeds ... and also unto the righteousness of the truth of God in his promises, whereby he saveth all that repent and believe them."[35]

Tyndale totally rejected all teaching which stemmed from the Greek heathen philosophers. The whole of God's plan for man's salvation is found in the scriptures alone, and man's reason cannot see that his ways can never cleanse the soul from sin but only harden the heart against God's mercy.

> And with whatsoever holiness thou wilt, save with the holiness of God's word; which only speaketh unto the heart, and sheweth the soul his filthiness and uncleanness of sin, and leadeth her by the way of repentance unto the fountain of Christ's blood, to wash it away through faith. By the reason of which false righteousness they were disobedient unto the righteousness of God, which is the forgiveness of sin in Christ's blood, and could not believe it. And so, through fleshly interpreting the law, and false imagined righteousness, their hearts were hardened, and made stony as clay in a hot furnace of fire, that they could receive neither repentance nor faith, or any manner of grace at all.[36]

Peter and the other disciples had realised the Jesus was more than a man, that he was the Christ, the Son of God, however, they did not understand what that meant. "But now it is opened throughout all the world, that, through the offering of his body and blood, that offering is a

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[35] *Mammon,* 1/122f
[36] *Jonas,* 1/462

satisfaction for the sin of all that repent, and a purchasing of whatsoever they can ask, to keep them in favour; and that they sin no more. And Christ answered, 'Upon this rock I will build my congregation:' that is, upon this faith. And against the rock of this faith can no sin, no hell, no devil, no lies, or error prevail."[37] It was only after his death and resurrection that the disciples realised the truth of Christ's life and his purpose in becoming man. "He took our nature upon him, and felt all our infirmities and sicknesses, and in feeling learned to have compassion on us, and for compassion cried mightily in prayers to God the Father for us, and was heard. And the voice of the same blood that once cried, not for vengeance as Abel's, but for mercy only, and was heard, crieth now and ever, and is heard, as oft as we call unto remembrance with repenting faith, how that it was shed for our sins."[38]

The faith which justifies us in the sight of God is not our own but is given to us by God through the working of the Holy Spirit. "Now doth the scripture ascribe both faith and works, not to us, but to God only, to whom they belong only, and to whom they are appropriate, whose gift they are, and the proper work of his Spirit."[39] Faith is not a mere belief but it is active to change us, to give us life, and motivate us to serve God. As Tyndale wrote, "Right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us, which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature, and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God, as thou readest in the first of John; and killeth the old Adam, and maketh us altogether new in the heart, mind,

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[37] *Answer*, 3/31
[38] *1 John*, 2/153
[39] *Mammon*, 1/56

will, lust, and in all our affections and powers of the soul; the Holy Ghost ever accompanying her, and ruling the heart. Faith is a lively thing, mighty in working, valiant, and strong, ever doing, ever fruitful; so that it is impossible that he who is endued therewith should not work always good works without ceasing."[40]

In this way we see God's covenant at work within our lives as the Holy Spirit gives us both repentance and the saving faith we need to begin our new life as God's children. Then we can do those good works which are pleasing to God for "the Spirit of him that hath made us safe is in us: yea, and as God, through preaching of faith, doth purge and justify the heart, even so through working of deeds doth he purge and justify the members, making us perfect both in body and soul after the likeness of Christ."[41] In fact the Holy Spirit opens the heart to receive Christ.[42]

Tyndale quotes Ephesians 3, "That he would give them his riches to be strengthened with his Spirit, that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith." He then continues, "Where the heart then believeth in Christ, there dwelleth Christ in the heart."[43]

For Tyndale the Holy Spirit changes the heart, not only in respect of our faith and as a measure of our repentance, but also he gives the Christian a love for all the laws and commandments of God, he also makes the elect righteous in God's sight. For as "the Spirit entereth the heart, and looseth the heart, and giveth lust to do the law, and maketh the law a lively

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[40] *Romans,* 1/493
[41] *Obedience,* 1/281
[42] The heart has an importance in Tyndale's theology and deserves a fuller treatment than can be given in this dissertation – see Auksi, "Reason and Feeling", 16-20.
[43] *Sacraments,* 1/369

thing in the heart. Now as soon as the heart lusteth to do the law, then are we righteous before God, and our sins forgiven."[44] However, our righteousness as Christians is not our own, but the righteousness of Christ who dwells in our hearts, for "Christ is also called our righteousness, to certify us that when we have no righteousness of our own, yet that his righteousness is given to us, to make satisfaction for our unrighteousness."[45]

LOVE TO GOD AND NEIGHBOUR

When God has attributed Christ's righteousness to us we are confirmed in our faith and the outworking of our faith in our lives can be seen; and "the assurance that we are sons, beloved, and heirs with Christ, and have God's Spirit in us, is the consent of our hearts unto the law of God." Then the law of God becomes a target for us to aim at with the whole of our being, heart, soul, power, and might.[46] And our love becomes the true love of a child to his father, and to his family. "When we love God and his law, then we love the sons of God. Which is this-wise proved: the love of God is to keep the law of God: by the text, before and after, the law of God is to love our neighbours; and therefore if we love God, in keeping his laws, we must needs love the sons of God."[47]

Therefore Tyndale wrote about the "faith in Christ's blood":

> Another conclusion is this: to believe in Christ for the remission of sins, and, of a thankfulness for that mercy, to love

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[44] *Obedience,* 1/308
[45] *Sacraments,* 1/377
[46] *Obedience,* 1/300

> the law truly: that is to say, to love God that is the Father of all and giveth all; and Jesus Christ, that is Lord of us all, and bought us all, with all our hearts, souls, power, and might; and our brethren for our Father's sake (because they be created after his image), and for our Lord and master Christ's sake, because they be the price of his blood; and to long for the life to come, because this life cannot be led without sin. These three points (I say) are the profession and religion of a christian man, and the inward baptism of the heart, signified by the outward washing of the body. And they be that spiritual character, badge, or sign, wherewith God, through his Spirit, marketh all his immediately and as soon as they be joined to Christ, and made members of his church by true faith.[48]

This passage shows Tyndale's realism in that "this life cannot be lived without sin," which is why we need continually to repent and to rely on Christ's righteousness alone. It also teaches that it is through loving God with our whole being, and loving our neighbour for God's sake we fulfil the law and show our faith. "If we felt the love of God in Christ's blood, we could not but love again, not only God and Christ, but also all that are bought with Christ's blood."[49]

It is through the Holy Spirit applying the covenant of God to our lives that we are able to do those good works which are pleasing to God. "Christ's Spirit is poured into us, to bring forth good works, and our works

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[47] *1 John*, 2/206
[48] *Matthew*, 2/11f
[49] *1 John*, 2/200

are the fruits of the Spirit; and the kingdom is the deserving of Christ's blood; and so is faith, and the Spirit, and good works also."[50] These good works are a sign of our love to God and his commandments.

> For scripture teacheth, first repentance, then faith in Christ, that for his sake sin is forgiven to them that repent; then good works, which are nothing save the commandment of God only. And the commandments are nothing else save the helping of our neighbours at their need, and the taming of our members, that they might be pure also, as the heart is pure through hate of vice and love of virtue, as God's word teacheth us: which works must proceed out of the faith, that is, I must do them for the love which I have to God for that great mercy which he hath shewed me in Christ, or else I do them not in the sight of God.[51]

Our Christian love is demonstrated by the works which we do, and Tyndale taught the true meaning of Christian works as they reflected, through us, the love of God for others.[52] "The works declare love: and love declareth that there is some benefit and kindness shewed, or else would there be no love."[53] For this reason Tyndale laid a great stress on loving our neighbour, and as we show this love in our deeds we bring glory to God. "We do our duty unto our neighbour therewith, and help

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[50] *Mammon,* 1/83
[51] *Numbers,* 1/434
[52] Mayotte, 102, Although she wrote of a 'just God' and not a 'Father'.
[53] *Mammon,* 1/59

their necessity unto our own comfort also, and draw all men unto the honouring and of praising God."[54]

Tyndale's answer to the lawyer's question in Luke 10, "And who is then my neighbour?" was as revolutionary as Christ's reply in the *Parable of the Good Samaritan.* Tyndale considered that anyone in need was a neighbour, whoever he was, the poor or other Christian: even a Turk or other person who did not believe in the blood of Christ for salvation was, for Tyndale, a neighbour who needed our help.

Loving our neighbour is not always convenient for us, and there can be many reasons we give as excuses for not loving them; or it can appear to be inappropriate for us to show a love to our neighbour because they do not believe in Christ, or they do not live in our neighbourhood. Tyndale is quite firm in his statements that it is everyone created by God who is our neighbour.[55]

Firstly, "Thy friends are the poor, which are now in thy time, and live with thee; thy poor neighbours which need thy help and succour."[56] By loving them we are showing that we are following our Saviour's example: "Christ became poor to make other men rich, and bound to make other free. He left with his disciples the law of love. Now love seeketh not her own profit, but her neighbour's: love seeketh not her own freedom, but becometh surety and bond to make her neighbour free."[57]

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[54] *Pathway,* 1/24
[55] As we will see later in this chapter. Tyndale would have been happy with our modern phrase, "Global Village."
[56] *Mammon,* 1/66f
[57] *Obedience,* 1/333

Loving one's neighbour also means that the Christian has the responsibility to witness to his neighbour of God's love and the power of Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sins and to correct our lives. "For if thou study not to amend thy neighbour, when he sinneth, so are thou partaker of his sins; and therefore, when God taketh vengeance and sendeth whatsoever plague it be, to punish open sinners, thou must perish with them."[58]

Secondly, Tyndale had a world-wide view of the neighbourhood which reached out to all in need. It was a vision which reached across all barriers which separate one man from another. He wrote about those who did not have faith in God through Christ and those who worshipped other gods, for our neighbour is not only our fellow Christian, or those we like. Tyndale wrote, "If thy neighbours which thou knowest be served, and thou yet have superfluity, and hearest necessity to be among the brethren a thousand miles off, to them art thou debtor. Yea, to the very infidels we be debtor, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ, or to blaspheme Christ."[59] "What faith receiveth of God through Christ's blood, that we must bestow on our neighbours, though they be our enemies."[60] This also means we cannot obey "any man's commandment unto the hurt of my neighbour that hath not deserved it, though he be a Turk."[61] (This did not mean that the Christian was not to oppose aggression by an enemy, but a Christian should not be an aggressor.)

Lying behind all this is the fact that "a man ought to love his neighbour

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[58] *Matthew*, 2/47
[59] *Mammon*, 1/99. See, *Background to Tyndale's Theology*, 29
[60] *Pathway*, 1/20

equally and fully as well as himself. because his neighbour (be he never so simple) is equally created of God."[62]

Loving our neighbour had, for Tyndale, an evangelistic purpose. He would not have a Christian show neighbourly love from a humanitarian point of view because that would not be to the glory of God. "I am bound to love the Turk with all my might and power; yea, and above my power, even from the ground of my heart, after the ensample that Christ loved me; neither to spare my goods, body, or life, to win him to Christ. And what can I do more for thee, if thou gavest me all the world? Where I see need, there can I not but pray, if God's Spirit be in me."[63] God makes his sun to shine on the good and the evil, and the rain to fall on the righteous and unrighteous;[64] and as God shows his love in this way it must be the same with his children who should be able to say, "Them that are good I love, because they are in Christ: and the evil, to bring them to Christ."[65] For the task of the Christian is, for Tyndale, to follow our Father's example.

Tyndale sums up what it means to love our neighbour in these words:-

> Lift up thine eyes unto thy heavenly Father, and as thy Father doth, so do thou love all thy Father's children. He ministereth sun and rain to good and bad; by which two understand all his benefits: for of the heat and dryth of the sun, and cold and moist of the rain, spring all things that are necessary to the life

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[61] *Pathway*, 1/26
[62] *Pathway*, 1/25f
[63] *Mammon*, 1/96
[64] Matthew, 5:45
[65] *Obedience*, 1/299

of man. Even so provoke thou and draw thine evil brethren to goodness, with patience, with love in word and deed; and pray for them to him that is able to make them better and to convert them. And so thou shalt be thy Father's natural son, and perfect, as he is perfect."[66]

Because there are those who want to put a terminal point to our showing love to our neighbour, Tyndale went along with their request and placed it beyond any hope of reaching it. "When thy neighbour hath shewed thee more unkindness than God hath love, then mayest thou hate him, and not before; but must love him for God's sake, till he fight against God, to destroy the name and glory of God."[67]

GOOD WORKS

All the Reformers linked the Christian's works with faith. Luther wrote, "The works of a believer are like this. Through his faith he has been restored to Paradise and created anew, has no need of works that he may become or be righteous; but that he may not be idle and may provide for and keep his body, he must do such works freely only to please God."[68] Again Luther wrote, "A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body to work for it alone, but he lives also for all men on earth; rather, he lives only for others and not for himself. ... He cannot ever in this life be idle and without works toward his neighbors, for he will necessarily speak, deal with, and exchange views with men, as Christ also, being made in the

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[66] *Matthew*, 2/71
[67] *Matthew*, 2/47
[68] *LW-31*, 360

likeness of men [Phil. 2:7], was found in form as a man and conversed with men, as Baruch 3[[:38] says."[69] Althaus wrote that for Luther loving our neighbour was seen as we imitated Christ, "For this is what Christ has done for us. Only then do we manifest that high quality of love which God demands."[70] Melanchthon wrote, "This faith in the goodwill of God permeates the whole life, all works, all physical and spiritual trials."[71]

Although Tyndale would agree with the Continental Reformers that without faith we cannot do good works he would move away from them after that. Tyndale rejected Luther's judgement on the *Epistle of James* that it was "really an epistle of straw,"[72] and gave it the same importance, regarding good works, in his writings that we find in Lollardy. Behind this disagreement lies the covenant, the forensic covenant of the Lutheran and the Swiss Reformers gave a totally different and more formal approach to good works than we find in Tyndale whose familial covenant showed that the Christian does good works naturally as a child who has been born into God's family.

Tyndale disagreed with those who considered some works to be more important than others, and in his Marginal Notes to Matthew 10, he wrote, "Compare dede too dede / so ys one greater then another: but co*m*pare them to god / so are they all lyke / a*n*d one as good as another. even as the spyrite moveth a ma*n* / & tyme & occasio*n* gevyth."[73] For it is from God's viewpoint that we have to consider the value of the works

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[69] *LW-31,* 364f
[70] Althaus, 135
[71] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes,* 96
[72] *LW-35,* 362
[73] *1525,* Matthew 10, Margin.

which a man does, but, for Tyndale, the real test of works lies in whether we are true children of God and our works are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

> Moreover, put no difference between works; but whatsoever cometh into thy hands that do, as time, place, and occasion giveth, and as God hath put thee in degree, high or low. For as touching to please God there is no work better than another. God looketh not first on thy work as the world doth, as though the beautifulness of the work pleased him as it doth the world, or as though he had need of them. But God looketh first on thy heart, what faith thou hast to his words, how thou believest him, trustest him, and how thou lovest him for his mercy that he hath shewed thee: … Set this ensample before thine eyes. Thou art a kitchen-page, and washest thy master's dishes; another is an apostle, and preacheth the word of God. Of this apostle hark what Paul saith, in the 1st Cor. ix. 'If I preach,' saith he, 'I have nought to rejoice in, for necessity is put unto me;' as who should say, God hath made me so."[74]

Tyndale continues with this theme, "Now if thou compare deed to deed, there is a difference betwixt washing of dishes, and preaching of the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all: for neither that nor this pleaseth, but so far forth as God has chosen a man, hath put his Spirit in him, and purified his heart by faith and trust in Christ."[75] For Tyndale

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[74] *Mammon*, 1/100
[75] *Mammon*, 1/102

every work which we do must be done in obedience to God's will for nothing else can be acceptable to God. We will also see that Tyndale takes this same position in his doctrine of Christian worship.

At the same time Tyndale allowed Christians to do things which he believed to be wrong, provided they were done with the right motive and in ignorance. He applied this to most of the ceremonies and objects of the worship in the Roman Church and to pilgrimages – which Tyndale condemned as false. One of the examples Tyndale gives us is, "If (for example) I take a piece of the cross of Christ, and make a little cross thereof, and bear it about me, to look thereon with a repenting heart at times when I am moved thereto, to put me in remembrance that the body of Christ was broken, and his blood shed thereon, for my sins; and believe stedfastly that the merciful truth of God shall forgive the sins of all that repent, for his death's sake, and never think on them more: then it serveth me, and I not it; and doth me the same service as if I read the testament in a book."[76] But a use (which might be acceptable in that way) easily degenerates into misuse, for "how is it possible that the people can worship images, relics, ceremonies and sacraments, save superstitiously?"[77] Tyndale believed that true teaching which would enable the people to know the right use of these aids to worship would, at the same time, make them unnecessary.[78]

As we consider Tyndale's attitude to the use of aids to worship we must always bear in mind that for Tyndale the relationship between God

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[76] *Answer*, 3/59f
[77] *Answer*, 3/62
[78] *Answer*, 3/59-64

and man is not a judicial one, but the relationship between a Father and his child. Loving parents do not punish their children who thought they were doing something good and helpful, even when it had the opposite effect, but in their acceptance of their child's actions they use it to teach their child the right way. It is in this way that God teaches Christians so that they can grow and move away from those false props of a Christian life.

Although when thinking about good works we are concerned with Christ's words, "love your neighbour," we cannot separate this from loving God with our heart, soul, strength and mind, for unless we love God with the whole of our being we cannot love our neighbour as we love ourselves, Luke 10:27 – which leads into the Parable of the Good Samaritan. As Tyndale wrote, "Neighbour is a word of love; and signifieth that a man should be ever nigh, and at hand, and ready to help in time of need."[79] After showing the falseness of interpreting the 'two pence' as *opera supererogationis,* Tyndale continued, "A greater perfection than to love God and his will, which is the commandments, with all thine heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, is there none: and to love a man's neighbour as himself, is like the same."[80]

As we will see when dealing with the errors of the Church, Tyndale had strong grounds for rejecting the view that works, especially the rites and actions of the Church, merited anything from God. Those who thought that their works merited anything or were, in themselves, righteous acts were deceived, Tyndale wrote, "Thou mayest not think that our deeds

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[79] *Mammon,* 1/85
[80] *Mammon,* 1/86

bless us first, and that we prevent God and his grace in Christ; as though we, in our natural gifts, and being as we were born in Adam, looked on the law of God, and of our own strength fulfilled it, and so became righteous, and thou with that righteousness obtained the favour of God."[81] Therefore Tyndale asked, "Are these works not against Christ? How can they do more shame unto Christ's blood?"[82]

Firstly, Tyndale pointed out that the idea of a works-righteousness stemmed from the pagan philosophy of Aristotle.[83] Secondly, that it does not recognise that the law is spiritual and demands perfection.[84] Thirdly, it trusts in self and not in God.[85] Fourthly, "It were too great a shame, rebuke, and wrong unto the faith, yea, to Christ's blood, if a man would work any thing to purchase that, wherewith faith hath endued him already."[86] Tyndale sums it all up as follows, "Now is this a plain conclusion, that both they that trust in their own works, and they also that put their confidence in their own opinions, be fallen from Christ, and err from the way of faith that is in Christ's blood, and therefore are none of Christ's church, because they be not built upon the rock of faith."[87]

Yet there are many places in the scriptures which appear to support the idea that good works are meritorious in the way the medieval Church believed. There are many places where Tyndale raises the issue, "What shall we say then to those scriptures which go so sore upon good works?

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[81] *Mammon*, 1/112
[82] *Obedience*, 1/284
[83] *1525*, 8; *Obedience*, 1/155
[84] *Pathway*, 1/15f
[85] *Pathway*, 1/22
[86] *Mammon*, 1/63
[87] *Answer*, 3/33f

As we read Matt. xxv., 'I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat,' &c. and such like. Which all sound as though we should be justified, and accepted unto the favour of God in Christ, through good works. Thiswise answer I: Many there are, which when they hear or read of faith, at once they consent thereunto, and have a certain imagination or opinion of faith: ... They think no farther than that faith is a thing which standeth in their own power to have, or do other natural works which men work; but they feel no manner working of the Spirit, neither the terrible sentence of the law, the fearful judgements of God, the horrible damnation and captivity under Satan."[88] Tyndale quotes James 2:17, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, in itself." He then expounds this, "He meaneth none other thing than all the scripture doth; how that faith, which hath no good deeds following, is a false faith, and not the faith that justifieth, or receiveth the forgiveness of sins."[89] More had quoted James as support for the medieval Church's position, and Tyndale's reply was, "And as for that he allegeth out of the epistle of James, for the justifying of works, I have answered in the mammon against which he cannot hiss, and will speak more in the fourth book."[90]

There are positive reasons behind Tyndale's doctrine of works, and, as we would expect, these all depend on Tyndale's covenant theology. We have to start with the Fatherhood of God if we are to understand what good works are. "For the favour that God hath to his Son Christ, he giveth unto us his favour and good-will, and all the gifts of his grace, as a father

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[88] *Mammon,* 1/52f
[89] *James,* 1/525
[90] *Answer,* 3/97. This is further discussed in *The Covenant Broken,* 356ff

to his sons. As affirmeth Paul, saying, 'Which loved us in his Beloved before the creation of the world.' So that Christ bringeth the love of God to us, and not our own holy works."[91] Therefore, we realise that it is "not that our works make us the sons of God, but testify only, and certify our consciences, that we are the sons of God; and that God hath chosen us, and washed us in Christ's blood; and hath put his Spirit in us."[92]

It is in obedience to God's law that the Christian does good works for, as Tyndale wrote, "T[h]e right cristen man consenteth to the lawe that hit is rightwes / and iustifieth god in the lawe / for he affyrmeth that god is rightwes and iuste / which is autor of the lawe / he beleveth the promyses of god / and so iustifieth god / iudgynge hym trewe and beleuinge that he will fulfyll hys promyses. With the lawe he conde*m*neth hym selfe and all his deds / and geveth all the prayse to god. he beleueth the promyses / and ascribeth all trouth to god / thus every where iustifieth he god and prayseth god."[93]

Although the law demands perfection, yet, Tyndale taught, the Christian is imperfect and in our works we sin "of infirmity and frailty of our flesh; which flesh not only letteth us, that our works cannot be perfect, but also now and then, through manifold occasions and temptations carrieth us clean out of the right way, spite of our hearts."[94] However, Tyndale continues, when we, as God's children, return to our Father with repenting hearts and "we call unto remembrance with repenting faith, how

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[91] *Pathway*, 1/11
[92] *Mammon*, 1/72
[93] *1525*, 6
[94] *1 John*, 2/152

that" Christ's blood "was shed for our sins,"[95] then those sins are forgiven. "So that, according unto this present text of John, if it chance us to sin of frailty, let us not despair; for we have an advocate and intercessor, a true attorney with the Father, Jesus Christ, righteous towards God and man, and [he] is the reconciling and satisfaction for our sins."[96] For Tyndale wrote, "Whatsoever is our own, is sin. Whatsoever is above that, is Christ's gift, purchase, doing and working."[97] Having got that straight we can now understand Tyndale's position regarding works.

If we are to be able to understand what God understands about good works we must turn from Aristotle and other pagan philosophers who have "brought them in belief that they shall be justified in the sight of God by the goodness of their own works,"[98] and turn to the scriptures for the answer. "They that do good are first born of God, and receive of his nature and seed; and, by the reason of that nature and seed, are first good ere they do good, by the same rule. And Christ, which is contrary to the devil, came to destroy the works of the devil in us, and to give us a new birth, a new nature, and to sow new seed in us, that we should, by the reason of that birth, sin no more. For the seed of that birth, that is to wete the Spirit of God and the lively seed of his word sown in our hearts, keepeth our hearts, that we cannot consent to sin."[99] It is from this new birth comes our love to God and to our neighbour – out of which love our good works spring.

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[95] *1 John*, 2/153
[96] *1 John*, 2/156
[97] *Pathway*, 1/23
[98] *Mammon*, 1/45f
[99] *1 John*, 2/190

The Covenant in Action

There are many different ways in which good works show themselves in the Christian's life, and the clergy should teach the laity about "alms, prayer, and fasting, which are the whole life of a christian man, and without which there is no christian man alive. And let them preach the true use of their alms, which is to help thy neighbour with counsel, with body and goods, and all that is in thy power; and the true use of prayer, which is to bring his necessity and thine own before God, with a strong faith in his promises; and the true use of fasting, which is to tame the flesh unto the spirit, that the soul may attend to the word of God and pray through faith."[100]

In the normal course of events prayer and works are combined because both spring out of our love to God and his law. However, there are times when we cannot work and we are prevented from showing our love to our neighbour, but we are still able to pray. "As love maketh thee help me in my need; so when it is past thy power to help, it maketh thee pray to God."[101] And so, for Tyndale, our faith and our love are not real if we cease to pray for our neighbour when we cannot physically help them in their need.

It did not matter who we were, what rank or position in society we held, God's command to love our neighbour as we love ourselves applied. Tyndale was aware of the continuing power of fallen human nature and of the temptations which fall upon us, especially of those who have positions of authority, and he warned that they must not exceed the authority God

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[100] *Matthew*, 2/93f
[101] *Matthew*, 2/42

has given to them. Even though "the king, in the temporal regiment, be in the room of God, and representeth God himself," yet he must love his subjects as God requires, "remembering that the people are God's, and not theirs: yea, are Christ's inheritance and possession, bought with his blood. The most despised person in his realm is the king's brother, and fellow member with him, and equal with him in the kingdom of God and of Christ."[102]

Those who have positions of authority who have to pass judgement on those who have done wrong must remember that their judgements must be true, "Moses (Deut. xvii.) warneth judges to keep them upright, and to look on no man's person, that is, that they prefer not the high before the low, the great before the small, the rich before poor, his acquaintance, friend, kinsman, countryman, or one of his own nation, before a stranger, a friend or an alien, yea, or one of their own faith before an infidel; but that they look on the cause only, to judge indifferently."[103] Here again the reason given is that they are acting on God's behalf. Even though the "Turk or Saracen" is not "under the everlasting testament of God" does not mean they can be treated differently to others, for with all mankind we are "under the law natural."[104]

Tyndale was not a pacifist, and sometimes the good works a Christian had to do involved violence, but he must never act out of hatred or lack of love. There are three levels which Tyndale recognises. Firstly, we must defend people who are being attacked; "If any man would force

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[102] *Obedience*, 1/202
[103] *Obedience*, 1/203f
[104] *Obedience*, 1/204

thy wife, thy daughter, or thy maid, it is not enough for thee to look on, and say, 'God amend you.'" Secondly, the Christian must defend property which is being attacked.[105] Thirdly, he may have to use violence in the king's service, whether it is helping the king's officer to arrest someone or to help the king defend his realm.[106] Princes are to be peacemakers and not start any war, but in defending his land and subjects against aggression he is a peacemaker,[107] and the Christian who is called up to serve the king against his enemies must "remember what thou art in the first state with them against thou must fight, how that they be thy brethren, and as deeply bought with Christ's blood as thou, and for Christ's sake to be beloved in thine heart."[108]

There are times when a Christian, as he seeks to do good works, is placed in a situation where absolute honesty would either do more harm than good, or where he has to break his word. Tyndale gives examples of both these types of actions. The law of charity must take precedence over our actions if we are being, strictly speaking, untruthful. "To bear a sick man in hand that wholesome bitter medicine is sweet, to make him drink it, it is the duty of charity, and no sin. To persuade him that pursueth his neighbour to hurt him or slay him, that his neighbour is gone another contrary way, it is the duty of every Christian man by the law of charity, and no sin; no, though I confirmed it with an oath." However, Tyndale continued that unless the law of charity dictated that we lied for our

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[105] *Matthew*, 2/67
[106] *Obedience*, 1/206
[107] *Matthew*, 2/26f.
[108] *Matthew*, 2/63

neighbour's good, we must be truthful, for "to lie for to deceive and hurt, that is damnable only."[109]

Tyndale also mentions various occasions when promises must be broken because duty or loving our neighbour requires it. "Howbeit though I vow and swear, and think on none exception, yet is the breaking of God's commandments except, and all chances that hang of God: as if I swear to be in a certain place at a certain hour, to make a love-day, without exception, yet if the king in the meantime command me another way, I must go by God's commandment, and yet break not mine oath. And in like case, if my father and mother be sick and require my presence, or if my wife, children, or household be visited, that my assistance be required, or if my neighbour's house be a fire at the same hour, and a thousand such chances; in which all I break mine oath, and am not forsworn, and so forth."[110]

For Tyndale there was only one reason for the Christian to do good works and that was the fact that we are servants of Christ. Our love to our father and mother must be because of the love Christ has shown to us. It is the same with our service to those in authority over us, and we must be able to say to them, "I serve thee, not because thou art my master, or my king, for hope of reward, or fear of pain, but for the love of Christ."[111]

Tyndale gives many examples of good works, often contrasting them with the works the Church thought were good. "Good works are things of God's commandment, wrought in faith; and to sew a shoe at the

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[109] *Matthew*, 2/57f
[110] *Numbers*, 1/440
[111] *Obedience*, 1/296f

commandment of God, to do thy neighbour service withal, with faith to be saved by Christ, as God promiseth us, is much better than to build an abbey of thine own imagination, trusting to be saved by the feigned works of hypocrites."[112]

Tyndale differed from Luther and the other Reformers about good works in one respect, and that is found in the relationship we have with our neighbours. "They are called good works not only because they are done for the welfare of our neighbors," wrote Luther, "but because *God has commanded them, and so they also are well pleasing to God.*"[113] (Italics mine.) Whilst, for Tyndale the emphasis is different, "If a king minister his kingdom in the faith of this name, *because his subjects be his brethren and the price of Christ's blood, he pleaseth God highly;* and if this faith be not there, it pleaseth him not. And if I sew a shoe truly, in the faith of his name, *to do my brother service, because he is the price of Christ's blood, it pleaseth God.*"[114] (Italics mine.) Luther's welfare of our neighbour has given place, in Tyndale, to serving our brother; and God's commandment has disappeared in Tyndale to be replaced with "the price of Christ's blood."

We have seen that behind Tyndale's concern to love our neighbour lay his evangelistic spirit, and the same is true of our good works. "Now all works done to serve man, and to bring him to this point, to put his trust in Christ, are good and acceptable to God; but done for any other purpose, they be idolatry and image-service, and make God an idol or bodily

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[112] *Genesis,* 1/407
[113] *LW-40,* 277
[114] *Matthew,* 2/126

image."[115] Here we see clearly what constantly comes through Tyndale's theology, a clear division between what is right and what is wrong without any blurring of the edges, which would make Christianity impossibly hard and cruel were there not, on the other side, the tender affectionate love of a Father towards his children, and the need to show our filial love to our brothers and sisters who are created by God.

SUMMARY

The covenant in action is the work of the Holy Spirit as he applies the blood of Christ to the hearts and lives of the elect, bringing them from death to life and enabling them to realise they are truly the children of God. Because he has been born again the Christian is responsible for his actions which spring out of love – loving God with the whole of his being and loving his neighbour as he loves himself. All this is possible through the Holy Spirit applying the blood of Christ to every action he does, both toward God and also neighbour. To the world his faith shows in love and good works, but the motive behind all this is to glorify God his Father, which leads him to desire the conversion of his neighbour (who is anyone of whatever race, creed or unbelief). Tyndale's evangelistic desire was uppermost in his thoughts, and this was an important aspect of the life of the Church and of a Christian's prayers.

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[115] *Sacraments,* 1/373

XIII THE COVENANT PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

All mankind belongs to God as part of the temporal regiment, and kings and emperors are the God appointed officers in every realm. There is also the spiritual regiment and bishops and priests are the God appointed officers in the Church.[1] Unlike the Medieval Church which subordinated the temporal regiment to the spiritual, Tyndale understood them as parallel aspects of the Christian world. Everyone who lived on the earth was part of the temporal regiment because they had all been created by God. The spiritual regiment comprised everyone (laity as well as spiritualty) who called themselves Christian – whether they were part of God's chosen people or not. The Christian, therefore, belonged to both the temporal and spiritual regiments, and the officers of one regiment were subject to the authority of officers in the other regiment in the same way as every other member of that regiment. Tyndale wrote,

> Ye must understand that there be two states or degrees in this world: the kingdom of heaven, which is the regiment of the gospel; and the kingdom of this world, which is the temporal regiment. … Now is every person a double person; and under both regiments. In the first regiment, thou art a person for thine own self, under Christ and his doctrine. … In the temporal regiment thou art a person in respect of other; thou art an

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[1] In the **Conclusion** I make certain statements regarding the Temporal Regiment being an ordinance of Creation. and the Spiritual Regiment being post Fall. (see *Appendiix-2*)

husband, father, mother, master, mistress, lord, ruler, or wife, son, daughter, servant, subject, &c. And there thou must do according to thine office.[2]

Although the doctrine of the two regiments is associated with Luther we must not assume that Tyndale (and others) were agreed on the theology lying behind it. As Franz Lau wrote, "The doctrine of the two kingdoms is not specifically a doctrine of Luther's". Other reformers such as Melanchthon, Zwingli and Calvin have ideas similar to Luther's, but also depart from him in characteristic ways."[3] We could add Tyndale to this list,[4] but to attempt to show where Tyndale agreed with, or disagreed, with Luther would extend this section considerably.[5] Cargill Thompson in his article, "The Two Regiments: The Continental Setting of William Tyndale's Political Thought", wrote, "Tyndale has been accepted simply as an extreme exponent of Luther's teaching on non-resistance and the divine right of authority, or as a precursor of the royal supremacy, without any effort being made to analyse the precise character of his views."[6] His article is based on his doctoral dissertation on "The Two Regiments ..." and although he sets out to prove Tyndale's Lutheran credentials there are many places where he finds Tyndale does not quite fit his theory. He

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[2] *Matthew,* 2/60f
[3] Lau, 155
[4] There are similarities between Tyndale's doctrine and Trevisa, *Dialogus,* 7-11, where the "first state" is the "tempo*r*alte" and the "secunde state" is the "spiritualte"; Therefore concerning the pope's rule, "*Th*is is nou*gh*t vnderstonden for *th*e first state but for *th*e secunde; for in *th*e first state C*r*ist vsed no siche power, but put hit awey fro*m* hym & vsed onlich *th*at longe*th* to *th*e gou*er*nau*n*ce of oure sauaciou*n*." 9. See *Appendix-2*
[5] See my Lambeth Diploma Thesis where the differences between Luther and Tyndale are demonstrated. Luther's writings, such as *Temporal Authority, LW-45,* pp 81-129, also other writings contain material which can usefully be consulted, e.g. – *LW-30,* 76; *LW-21,* 109.
[6] Cargill Thompson, "Two Regiments" 17

wrote, "Tyndale could well have gained his ideas from any of the French, Swiss or Rhineland reformers."[7] Again, "Nor did he ever act as a slavish disciple, but could be independently minded, as in his readiness to defend the epistle of St. James. ... Thus Tyndale's use of Luther's political ideas is selective, though probably unconsciously so."[8] "Tyndale's theory of tyranny is very similar to Luther's, though perhaps more strongly emphasised."[9] Tyndale "probably accepted the Lutheran distinction between the two regiments."[10] "There are problems in the relation of Tyndale's work to Luther's."[11] Cargill Thompson also followed Clebsch in thinking Tyndale's theology changed, at least after 1530, and wrote, "There is a sense in which Tyndale's emphasis in his later writings on the idea of covenant is non-Lutheran."[12] When those remarks, and similar, ("Where Tyndale differs from Luther ...", and "There are, indeed, passages in which Luther also seems to say this, ... by contrast, Tyndale emphasises ..."[13]) have to modify Tyndale's supposed Lutheranism, yet Cargill Thompson could end his essay, "even at the very end of his life he [Tyndale] remained very much Luther's disciple. Tyndale was in fact one of the few Englishmen to grasp the significance of Luther's teaching on the two regiments."[14]

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[7] ibid. 20
[8] ibid. 22
[9] ibid. 24f
[10] ibid. 27
[11] ibid. 27
[12] ibid. 30
[13] ibid. 32
[14] ibid. 33. I have dealt at length with the negative aspects of Cargill Thompson's valuable essay because it illustrates the problem of linking Tyndale's thinking to Luther's. There are, however, in the essay positive statements where Tyndale's views might have been modified by Luther's writings. The great division between them, as Cargill

The medieval Church had confused everything, the pope was the head of both the spiritual and temporal regiments, bishops were both officers of the Church and of the State, and there was no way of knowing if there was any difference between spiritual and secular. The spiritualty had made God's laws into directions for living; as Tyndale wrote, "They have interpreted here the words of Christ, wherewith he restoreth the law again, to be but good counsels only, but no precepts that bind the consciences. And thereto they have so ruffled and tangled the temporal and spiritual regiment together, and made thereof such confusion, that no man can know the one from the other: to the intent that they would seem to have both by the authority of Christ, which never usurped temporal regiment unto him."[15] In fact Christ "ordained rulers, both spiritual and temporal, to teach them and exhort" the people.[16] In doing this, Tyndale wrote, there was made a "clear difference between the spiritual regiment and the temporal."[17]

Lohse wrote, "Luther, in this treatise on temporal authority, spoke about the doctrine of the two kingdoms without explicitly using this concept. He asserted that all people are to be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are those who belong to the kingdom of God, that is, all true believers in Christ who are under Christ. These have no need of the secular sword and secular justice. If the world were made up only of

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Thompson realised was Tyndale's doctrine of the covenant, and this affected the whole of Tyndale`s theology.

[15] *Matthew*, 2/5f

[16] *Matthew*, 2/8

[17] *Matthew*, 2/15

Christians, temporal authority would be superfluous."[18] But for Tyndale, as we will see, the temporal regiment is a creation ordinance and predates the spiritual. Tyndale would have agreed with Luther that the temporal regiment goes back to the beginning of time, but disagree over the place of the sword, when he wrote, "The law of this temporal sword has existed from the beginning of the world,"[19] In spite of the temporal regiment having priority in time I will start with the spiritual regiment because it makes our understanding of the two regiments within the covenant easier to follow.

THE SPIRITUAL REGIMENT

The spiritual regiment was, for Tyndale, the people of God and therefore he translated *ekklesia* as congregation. Sir Thomas More accused Tyndale of mistranslating *ekklesia* in order to confuse the people. He wrote, "Nowe where he calleth the chyrche alway the congregacyon / what reason had he therin? for euery man well seeth that thoughe the chyrch be in dede a congregacyon / yet is not euery congregacyon the chyrche / but a congregacyon of crysten people / whiche congregacyon of crysten people hath ben in Englande alway called and knowen by the name of the chyrche."[20] Tyndale was, however, concerned that the meaning attached to the word 'church' should be understood, for it was used in different ways. People understood the word 'church' first of all as a building in which the congregation could meet to worship God. Secondly,

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[18] Lohse, 54
[19] *LW-45*, 86
[20] *CWM-6*, 286

The Covenant People

Tyndale wrote that the word 'Church' "is abused and mistaken for a multitude of shaven, shorn, and oiled; which we now call the spiritualty and clergy."[21] By using the word 'congregation' Tyndale was pointing out that every Christian was part of the spiritual regiment, clergy and laity alike. Thus the church was the congregation and therefore "the lay people be as well of the church as the priests."[22]

The congregation is the spiritual regiment, and like the spiritual regiment it is divided between those who are and those who are not children of God. "So now the church is double," wrote Tyndale, "a fleshly and a spiritual: the one will be, and is not; the other is, and may not be called, but must be called a Lutheran, an heretic, and such like."[23] For, as Christ and Paul taught, there are always the false mixed with the good.[24]

Tyndale picked up the biblical terms of the true church being the remnant, (Joel 2:32) or the little flock (Luke 12:32) who were faithful to God; in fact "little flock" was one of Tyndale's favourite terms for the elect. Tyndale was aware that the majority within the visible Church were not the elect children of God. "The kingdom of heaven is the preaching of the gospel, unto which come both good and bad. But the good are few. Christ calleth them therefore a 'little flock,' Luke xii. For they are ever few that come to the gospel of a true intent, seeking therein nothing but the glory and praise of God."[25] It is in the keeping of the profession of their baptism that the little flock is different from the many who nominally

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[21] *Answer*, 3/12
[22] *Answer*, 3/158
[23] *Answer*, 3/107
[24] *Answer*, 3/113f
[25] *Obedience*, 1/165

follow Christ.[26] It is in the *Prologue* to the 1525 New Testament that we find the beginning of Tyndale's teaching about the little flock who are chosen and taken out of the mass of fallen mankind. The elect are "plucked oute of Adam."[27] Then when the gospel is preached "the hertts of them which are electe and chose*n* begin to wexe softe / and to melte att the bou*n*teous mercy of God / and kyndnes shewed of Christ."[28]

However, the spiritual regiment is much wider than the little flock, and it consists of all who belong to the visible Church, and the context in Tyndale's writings always reveal whether it is the universal Church or the elect to which he is referring. The word Church, Tyndale wrote, "is sometimes taken generally for all them that embrace the name of Christ, though their faiths be naught, or though they have no faith at all. And sometimes it is taken specially for the elect only; in whose hearts God hath written his law with his holy Spirit, and given them a feeling faith of the mercy that is in Christ Jesu our Lord."[29] Tyndale does not try to separate the true from the false (although he frequently points out the difference between them), but as everyone who has received the sign of the covenant has been committed to serve God he stresses the importance of the profession of our baptism as a sign of our election as God's children.[30]

In *The Covenantal Signs* we have seen the importance and meaning of the sacraments. In the Old Testament the sign of the covenant was

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[26] see *Sacraments,* 1/363
[27] *1525,* 7
[28] *1525,* 10
[29] *Answer,* 3/13
[30] Stafford, 106. Stafford points out that the "change in the status of laypeople has many sides, a complexity amplified by the multivalence of Tyndale as a writer. His voice had

circumcision, and this has, since Christ shed his blood for us, been changed to baptism. "And instead of circumcision came our baptism, whereby we be received into the religion of Christ, and made partakers of his passion, and members of his church.[31] Tyndale quotes Romans 9:6 and Matthew 22:11,12 to prove that there is a difference between the "carnal" and the "spiritual" Christians.[32]

As we would expect from Tyndale, Christ's blood is important for the Church, and "faith in Christ's blood … is also the rock whereon Christ's church is built,"[33] so that the Christian's "rejoicing is that Christ died for him, and that he is washed in Christ's blood."[34] Having been cleansed the Christian can, therefore, go direct to God "in the confidence of Christ's blood."[35]

Contrary to the papists, Tyndale's understanding of 'the rock' was, therefore, not Peter but his confession of faith when he said, "'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God,' which art come into this world. This faith is the rock whereon Christ's church is built. For who is of Christ's church, but he only that believeth that Christ is God's Son, come into the world to save sinners? This faith is it, against which hell-gates cannot prevail. This faith is it, which saveth the congregation of Christ."[36] Tyndale turns to Peter's confession in his *Answer,* after explaining how Christ brought about man's salvation he returns to the text. "And Christ

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many undertones and overtones." He points out that different scholars have taken one or another of these voices as the full statement of Tyndale's thought.

[31] *Sacraments,* 1/350

[32] *Answer,* 3/54,69.

[33] *Matthew,* 2/13

[34] *Mammon,* 1/97

[35] *1 John,* 2/212

answered, 'Upon this rock I will build my congregation:' that is, upon this faith. And against the rock of this faith can no sin, no hell, no devil, no lies, nor error prevail." Tyndale continues, "For this knowledge maketh a man of the church. And the church is Christ's body (Col. i.); and every person of the church is a member of Christ (Eph. v.). Now it is no member of Christ that hath not Christ's Spirit in it (Rom. viii.), as it is no part of me, or member of my body, wherein my soul is not present and quickeneth it."[37]

In Tyndale's theology we can never get away from the covenant, and although the spiritual regiment has a greater emphasis on God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, yet the Fatherhood of God is important when we examine the place of God's children within the Church.[38]

The spiritual regiment is the kingdom of Christ, and in every way the rule of Christ is different from the rule of kings in the temporal regiment. Tyndale wrote that "the pope's kingdom is of the world"[39] and was like the kingdoms of the world's rulers. "But the kingdom of God is contrary. For the Spirit that bringeth them thither maketh them willing, and giveth them lust unto the law of God; and love compelleth them to work, and love maketh every man's good, and all that he can do, common unto his neighbour's need. And as every man is strong in that kingdom, so love compelleth him to take the weak by the hand, and to help him, and to take him that cannot go upon his shoulders and bear him. And so to do

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[36] *Prelates,* 2/281
[37] *Answer,* 3/31
[38] see chapters, *The Covenant Envisaged,* and *The Means to Achieve the Covenant.*
[39] *Prelates,* 2/249

service unto the weaker is to bear rule in that kingdom."[40] It is in ways like this we see "that Christ's kingdom is altogether spiritual; and the bearing of rule in it is clean contrary unto the bearing of rule temporally."[41]

Prayer and the preaching of God's word are essential marks of the spiritual regiment, or kingdom of Christ, and it is through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that the "little flock" is able to grow as children of God in Christ's kingdom.

Christ is the King who reigns and who stirs up the elect to pray and hears their prayers, and "ere they ask, he sendeth his Spirit into their hearts to move them to ask: so that it is his gift that we desire aught in his name."[42] Yet Christ's method of working is that through the preaching of the word of God the Holy Spirit comes upon God's people,[43] and does his great work in their lives, "For if the Spirit of Christ," wrote Tyndale, "with which God anointeth us and maketh us kings, and sealeth us and maketh us his sure and several kingdom, and which he giveth us in earnest (2 Cor. i.), and with which he changeth us into the image of Christ (2 Cor. iii.), dwell in our souls through faith, the same Spirit cannot but quicken our members also, and make them fruitful, (Rom. viii.)."[44] It is as Head of the Church that Christ has given authority to preach the gospel, and it is this authority which should be seen in those who have authority in the spiritual regiment. "The authority that Christ gave them was to preach; yet not what they would imagine, but what he had commanded 'Lo,' saith he, 'I am with

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[40] *Prelates*, 2/250
[41] *Prelates*, 2/249
[42] *1 John*, 2/168
[43] *Obedience*, 1/274f
[44] *1 John*, 2/187

you always, even unto the end of the world.' He said not, I go my way, and lo, here is Peter in my stead; but sent them every man to a sundry country, whithersoever the Spirit carried them, and went with them himself."[45]

Here we find Tyndale is echoing the words of Wyclif about the importance of preaching. "Crist ordeynede *th*ree *th*ingis to be fillid by hise apostlis, first *th*at *th*ei shulden go forth in *th*e world and preche his gospel, and *th*at *th*is shulde be fruytous to *th*us converte so myche peple, and si*th* *th*at *th*is fruyt dwelle, bo*th*e in *th*is worlde and in *th*e to*th*er."[46] Again, Wyclif wrote, "And herfore Jesus Crist occupyed hys mooste in *th*o werke of prechyng, and laft o*th*er werkes; and *th*us diden his apostls, and herfore God loved hom."[47]

Officers in the Spiritual Regiment

There has to be order in the spiritual regiment, and Christ has appointed officers in the Church who must be faithful to the charge he has given to them. "The apostles, following and obeying the rule, doctrine, and commandment of our Saviour Jesus Christ, their master, ordained in his kingdom and congregation two officers; one called, after the Greek word, *bishop,* in English an over-seer; which same was called *priest* after the Greek; elder in English. … Another office they chose, and called him *deacon* after the Greek, a *minister* in English., to minister the alms of the people unto the poor and needy."[48] Mayotte wrote, "Tyndale contended

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[45] *Obedience,* 1/211
[46] Arnold, 1/170f
[47] Arnold, 3/144
[48] *Prelates,* 2/253

that congregations must have publicly ordained preachers, called by the common ordinance of the congregation. The formal office of ministry does not belong to everyone."[49]

The apostles chose men who were anointed by the Holy Spirit to be bishops or priests, and their job was "to preach the word of God."[50] In his First Epistle, Peter taught how "they should love and feed Christ's flock."[51] Whilst Paul wrote to Timothy, "be an ensample to all bishops, what they should teach, and how they should teach; and how they should govern the congregation of Christ in all degrees." The bishop should also "cleave to the gospel of Christ and true doctrine."[52] The choice of bishop/priest was, therefore, important and "the apostles chose priests to preach Christ only, all other things laid apart, and chose none but learned and virtuous."[53] The deacon was chosen by the congregation "to help and assist the priest, and to gather up his duty, and to gather for the poor of the parish."[54]

The important work which the bishop or priest had to do was to preach, and we find Tyndale constantly wrote about preaching and the appointment of preachers. The appointment of a preacher lay with the congregation who knew him,[55] for "no man may yet be a common preacher, save he that is called and chosen thereto by the common ordinance of the congregation, as long as the preacher teacheth the true

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[49] Mayotte, 128
[50] *Obedience*, 1/229
[51] *1 Peter*, 1/528
[52] *1 Timothy*, 1/517f
[53] *Prelates*, 2/275
[54] *Obedience*, 1/230f
[55] *Obedience*, 1/283

word of God."[56] The preacher, therefore, has to be faithful to God's word if he is not to be rejected by both God and the congregation. Tyndale's commentary on Matthew 5:13, "If the preacher, which for his doctrine is called salt, have lost the nature of salt, that is to say, his sharpness in rebuking all unrighteousness, all natural reason, natural wit and understanding, and all trust and confidence in whatsoever it be, save in the blood of Christ; he is condemned of God, and disallowed of all them that cleave to the truth." Tyndale continued that those who do not preach God's word truly, "though they stand at the altar, yet are they excommunicate and cast out of the living church of almighty God."[57] The preacher must not just be salt, another aspect of his work, through his preaching, is that he "comforteth them, and sheweth them the testament of Christ's blood; how that for his sake all that is done is forgiven, and all their weakness shall be taken a worth, until they be stronger, only if they repent, and will submit themselves to be scholars, and learn to keep his law." Then for the true Christian "all is Christ with him, and Christ is his, and he is Christ's."[58]

It is not only through the sermon that preaching takes place, the sacraments also preach the word of God, "Now as a preacher, in preaching the word of God, saveth the hearers that believe; so doth the washing, in that it preacheth and representeth unto us the promise that God hath made unto us in Christ."[59] It is through faithful preaching of the word of God that the Holy Spirit does his work in the hearts and lives of those chosen to

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[56] *Matthew*, 2/36
[57] *Matthew*, 2/33
[58] *Answer*, 3/108f

be the children of God. "When a true preacher preacheth, the Spirit entereth the hearts of the elect, and maketh them feel the righteousness of the law of God, and by the law the poison of their corrupt nature; and thence leadeth them through repentance, unto the mercy that is in Christ's blood, and as an ointment healeth the body, even so the Spirit, through confidence and trust in Christ's blood, healeth the soul, and maketh her love the law of God."[60]

Worship

At first the Church building had a real importance for the life of the congregation, and Tyndale believed that Christians should restore the church to its true use. "First it signifieth a place or house; whither christian people were wont in the old time to resort at times convenient, for to hear the word of doctrine, the law of God, and the faith of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and how and what to pray, and whence to ask power and strength to live godly. For the officer, thereto appointed, preached the pure word of God only, and prayed in a tongue that all men understood: and the people hearkened unto his prayers, and said thereto Amen."[61] Tyndale constantly stressed that services, as well as the scriptures, should be in the mother tongue so that the people are able to understand what is being said. Tyndale turns to the scriptures to justify this position and wrote, "Paul commandeth that no man once speak in the church, that is, in the congregation, but in a tongue that all men understand, except that there

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[59] *Obedience,* 1/253
[60] *1 John,* 2/183f
[61] *Answer,* 3/11

be an interpreter by."[62] In the *Exposition of Matthew,* Tyndale brings all this together, showing the importance of the building, the task the officers have to perform, and the scope of the worship of God's people.

> For we must have a place to come together, to pray in general, to thank and to cry to God for the common necessities, as well as to preach the word of God in: where the priest ought to pray in the mother tongue, that the name of God may be hallowed, and his word faithfully taught and truly understood, and faith and godly living increased; and for the king and rulers, that God will give them his Spirit, to love the commonwealth; and for peace, that God will defend us from all enemies; for wedering and fruits, that God will keep away pestilence and all plagues.[63]

However, the building itself was not important as if God was tied to that place, for "God so loveth no church, but that the parish have liberty to take it down, and to build it in another place: yea, and if it be of timber, to make it of stone, and to alter it at their pleasure."[64] For the only importance the building has is to be a shelter for the congregation when they come together, for, wrote Tyndale, "The temple wherein God will be worshipped, is the heart of man."[65] Tyndale expresses this more fully in his *Exposition on 1 John,* where he wrote, "The true believers have the testimony of God in their hearts, and they glorify God, witnessing that he is true. They have the kingdom of God within them; and the temple of

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[62] *Obedience,* 1/219
[63] *Matthew,* 2/79
[64] *Answer,* 3/88

God within them; and God in that temple; and have the Son of God, and life through him. And in that temple they seek God, and offer for their sins the sacrifice of Christ's blood, and the fat of his mercies in the fire of their prayers; and in the confidence of that sacrifice go in boldly to God their father."[66]

"Prayer is God's commandment;" wrote Tyndale," and where faith is, there must prayer needs be, and cannot be away."[67] This link between faith and prayer is a constant theme with Tyndale, and it is one of the signs of true faith. "Faith prayeth alway. ... But blind unbelief prayeth not alway, ... Faith, when she prayeth, setteth not her good deeds before her, ... nor bargaineth with God, ... But she setteth her infirmities and her lack before her face, and God's promises, ..."[68]

Tyndale's belief that the Old and the New Testaments are one is seen clearly in his teaching on prayer. Before we start to pray we need a priest to offer a sacrifice to God, even as Aaron did for the Children of Israel. "Of that manner is Christ a priest for ever; and all we priests through him, and need no more any such priest on earth, to be a mean for us unto God. For Christ hath brought us all into the inner temple, within the veil of forehanging, and unto the mercy-stool of God, and hath coupled us unto God; where we offer, every man for himself, the desires and petitions of his heart, and sacrifice and kill the lusts and appetites of his flesh, with prayer, fasting, and all manner godly living."[69] Christ is our

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[65] *Mammon*, 1/106
[66] *1 John*, 2/210
[67] *Answer*, 3/126
[68] *Mammon*, 1/118f
[69] *Obedience*, 1/255f

advocate who has made "an atonement for sin" and shed his blood for us. "And the voice of the same blood that once cried, not for vengeance as Abel's, but for mercy only, and was heard, crieth now and ever, and is ever heard, as oft as we call unto remembrance with repenting faith, how that it was shed for our sins."[70]

Thus, for Tyndale, a Christian does not need a human intermediary between himself and God; although that did not mean there was no place for the clergy within the Church. Apart from Christ being the Mediator between God and man, there is another reason why the Christian can go directly to God without the help of a human priest – God is our Father, and we are his children.[71] Therefore, wrote Tyndale, "thou must go to him as a merciful Father; which of his own goodness and fatherly love, that he beareth to thee, is ready to do more for thee than thou canst desire, though thou have no merits, but because he is thy Father."[72]

God has promised to love all his children equally, "therefore, as every man believeth God's promises, longeth for them, and is diligent to pray unto God to fulfil them, so is his prayer heard: and as good is the prayer of a cobbler as of a cardinal, and of a butcher as of a bishop; and the blessing of a baker that knoweth the truth is as good as the blessing of our most holy father the pope."[73]

It is because God is the Almighty Creator and also our Father that Tyndale could write, "God is no vain name; but signifieth one that is almighty, all merciful, all true and good; which he that believeth will go to

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[70] *1 John*, 2/152f
[71] see "The Fatherhood of God", 159ff.
[72] *Matthew*, 2/82

God, to his promises and testament, and not follow his own imaginations"[74] When our faith grasps this and we turn to God and claim his promises, and his mercy which is given us for Christ's blood's sake, then we "feel God as a kind and merciful father,"[75] this stirs up the Christian to pray, for "where a promise is, there is faith bold to pray,"[76] because "prayer is the longing for God's promises."[77] Christ has promised to all who trust in him for their salvation that "whatsoever we ask in his name, the Father giveth us."[78] In one of his letters written to John Frith, who was in prison waiting to be burnt at the stake, Tyndale wrote, "If the pain be above your strength, remember, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you.' And pray to your Father in that name, and he shall cease your pain, or shorten it."[79] Commenting on this verse (John 16:23), Tyndale wrote, "To ask in the name of Jesus Christ, and according to his will, be both one; and are nothing else but to ask the things contained in the promises and testament of God to us-ward, that God will be our father, and care for us both in body and in soul."[80]

Even though the church building exists to bring all God's people together, the Christian is not tied to certain times, nor places in which to pray. In saying, "Whatsoever," Christ did not place any restrictions on our prayers, after quoting that verse in *The Answer,* Tyndale wrote, "he saith not in this or that place, or this or that day; but wheresoever and

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[73] *Obedience,* 1/258
[74] *Answer,* 3/125
[75] *Epistle, 1526,* 1/390
[76] *Obedience,* 1/275
[77] *Obedience,* 1/300
[78] *Obedience,* 1/295
[79] *Biographical Notice,* 1/lix

whensoever, as well in the fields as in the town, and on the Monday, as on the Sunday." For God's Spirit dwells in the "hearts of men that love his laws and trust in his promises. And wheresoever God findeth such an heart, there he heareth the prayer, in all places and times indifferently." The one proviso Tyndale adds to that statement is that we need a place "more quiet and still from the rage of worldly businesses." [81]

Although Christ spoke of Christians gathering together for prayer, Tyndale believed that God was as attentive to the prayers of one person as much as he was to the prayers of the congregation. Christ had promised "that when two or three, or more, agree together in any thing, according to the will of God, God heareth us. Notwithstanding, as God heareth many, so heareth he few, and so heareth he one, if he pray after the will of God, and desire the honour of God."[82]

We are to cast on God our earthly cares, and after quoting many biblical passages to support his argument, Tyndale wrote, "Whether, therefore, we complain of intolerable oppression and persecution that we suffer, or of the flesh that cumbreth and resisteth the Spirit, God is merciful to hear us and to help us. Seest thou not also, how Christ cureth many, and casteth out devils out of many, unspoken to? how shall he not help, if he be desired and spoken to?"[83] Christ constantly stressed the need of prayer to his disciples, and of Matthew 7:7 Tyndale wrote, this "heaping of so many words together, 'ask, seek, and knock,' signify that the prayer must be continual; and so doth the parable of the widow, that sued to the

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[80] *1 John*, 2/211
[81] *Answer*, 3/64
[82] *Mammon*, 1/94

wicked judge: and the cause is, that we are ever in continual necessity."[84] However, Tyndale gives a warning to the Christian, "As for your prayer, it must be according to God's word: ye may not desire God to take vengeance on him whom God's word teacheth you to pity and to pray for."[85] Neither when we turn to God in prayer must we prejudge the way God will answer our prayers. As we cast our cares on God, wrote Tyndale, God will fulfil his promise. "And though it seem never so un likely, or never so impossible unto natural reason, yet believe stedfastly that he will do it: and then shall he (according to his old use) change the course of the world, even in the twinkling of an eye, and come suddenly upon our giants, as a thief in the night, and compass them in their wiles and worldly wisdom."[86]

Tyndale is also concerned about the different kinds of prayer which we should make to God and that there should be a balance in the prayer life, both of the individual and of the Church.

Since sin is a reality in the Christian's life there is a need for us to confess our sins. Tyndale was opposed to auricular confession to a priest (as we will see when we examine the errors of the Church[87]), because the Christian has access to God in the same way that a child has to his father, for God "is always ready and at hand to help us, if we call, as a merciful father and a kind mother."[88] In the Lord's Prayer, Christ "teacheth us daily to repent, and to reconcile ourselves together, and daily to ask God

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[83] *Obedience,* 1/293
[84] *Matthew,* 2/116
[85] *Numbers,* 1/437
[86] *Obedience,* 1/142
[87] see *The Covenant Broken,* 343

forgiveness. Seeing he commandeth us to ask, we may be bold so to do, and to believe that he will forgive us."[89] For when we have sinned, wrote Tyndale, "there is none other salve for remedy, than to run to Christ immediately, and to the Father through him; and to say, 'Father I have sinned against thee, and thy godly, holy, and righteous law, and against my brother, whom I ought of right to love, for thy sake, as well as myself: forgive me, O Father, for thy dear son Jesus Christ's sake, according to thy most merciful promises and testament."[90] There is, however, a condition God places on his forgiving us our sins, "that a man must forgive if he will be forgiven of God."[91] Therefore the only way we can have the assurance of God's forgiveness is by being forgiving ourselves. "Christ maketh thee sure of pardon; for if thou canst forgive thy brother, God hath bound himself to forgive thee."[92] Tyndale links this with mercy, for "to be merciful is lovingly to forgive them that offended thee, as soon as they knowledge their misdoing and ask thee mercy."[93]

This leads the Christian to pray for others, for "of his own experience he feeleth other men's need, and no less commendeth to God the infirmities of other than his own, knowing that there is no strength, no help, no succour, but of God only. And as merciful as he feeleth God in his heart to himself-ward, so merciful is he to other; and as greatly as he feeleth his own misery, so great compassion hath he on other. … And whensoever he seeth occasion, he cannot but pray for his neighbour as

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[88] *Obedience,* 1/280
[89] *Matthew,* 2/83
[90] *Sacraments,* 1/357
[91] *Obedience,* 1/65
[92] *Matthew,* 2/84

well as himself."[94] It does not matter who the person is, we are "to pray for all degrees,"[95] and as we seek to help our neighbour we must "pray and trust in God that he will assist thee," then, "when it is past thy power to help, it maketh thee pray to God."[96] All this must be freely given, wrote Tyndale, for "to pray one for another are we equally bound, and to pray is a thing that we may always do, whatsoever we have in hand; and that to do may no man hire another, Christ's blood hath hired us already."[97]

Finally, as we pray for others, we must pray for those who do not know the power of Christ's blood to save them. "To be merciful is patiently to long to abide the conversion of sinners with a lusty courage, and hope that God will at the last convert them, and in the mean time to pray instantly for them," and to do what we can to witness to them.[98] And our prayers are not to be limited to those around us, "For Paul commandeth, 1 Tim. ii. 'to pray for all men and all degrees,' saying that to be 'acceptable unto our Saviour God, which will have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;' that is, some of all nations and all degrees, and not the Jews only."[99]

An important part of prayer is the praise we give to God. The Christian, "with the lawe he conde*m*neth hym sylfe and all his deds / and geveth all the prayse to god. he beleueth the promyses / and ascribeth all

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[93] *Matthew*, 2/23
[94] *Mammon*, 1/93
[95] *1 Timothy*, 1/518. This is expanded in the next paragraph.
[96] *Matthew*, 2/41f
[97] *Obedience*, 1/280
[98] *Matthew*, 2/23
[99] *1 John*, 2/154

trouth to god / thus every where iustifieth he god / and prayseth god."[100]
The grounds for our praise is because God has forgiven us, given us life and made us his people.

> He bought it of his father derely with his bloud / ye with his moost bitter death and gave his lyfe for hir. What soever good thynge is in vs / that is geven vs frely with oute oure deservyng or meretts for Christs blouds sake. That we desyre to folow the will of god / it is the gyfte of Christs bloud. That we nowe hate the devylls will (where vnto we were so fast locked / and coude nott but love hit) is also the gyfte of Christes bloud / vnto whom belongeth the preyse and honoure of oure good dedes / and nott vnto vs.[101]

We need also, wrote Tyndale, to praise God for those who are brought to faith and salvation and acknowledge they are equal to us in God's kingdom. "If I had wrought the will of God these thousand years, and another had wrought the will of the devil as long, and this day turn and be as well willing to suffer with Christ as I, he hath this day overtaken me, and is as far come as I, and shall have as much reward as I: and I envy him not, but rejoice most of all, as of lost treasure found. For if I be of God, I have these thousand years suffered to win him, for to come and praise the name of God with me. These thousand years I have prayed, sorrowed, longed, sighed, and sought for that which I have this day found; and

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[100] *1525*, 6
[101] *1525*, 14

therefore rejoice with all my might, and praise God for his grace and mercy."[102]

Closely linked with praise is thanksgiving, and there are many things for which we have cause to thank God, for "prayer is, to give God thanks for the benefits received."[103] Then when we have been through great danger, and have been in spiritual turmoil, "when the rage of thy conscience is ceased, and quieted with fast faith in the promises of mercy, then offer with Jonas the offering of praise and thanksgiving."[104]

We pray for ourselves, that God will send us help when needed.[105] For a true faithfulness, and for everything we need in our Christian life. Peter "exhorteth to fly sin, and to tame the flesh with soberness, watching, and prayer; and to love each other, and to know that all good gifts are of God; and every man to help his neighbour with such as he hath received of God."[106]

Tyndale stressed also the importance of the congregation, and so Christians come together to help and strengthen one another. "It is a good law that men come to church on the Sundays, to hear God's word, and to receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, in remembrance of his benefits, and so to strengthen thy soul for to walk in his love, and in the love of our neighbour for his sake, &c."[107] Again, Tyndale wrote, "And on the Sundays God's word should be truly preached."[108]

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[102] *Exodus,* 1/418
[103] *Matthew,* 2/78
[104] *Jonas,* 1/465
[105] *1 John,* 2/171
[106] *1 Peter,* 1/527f
[107] *1 John,,* 2/188
[108] *Answer,* 3/126

However important our Sunday worship is, (and no one should avoid going to Church if possible,) there are occasions when this commandment is over-ruled. Therefore Tyndale could write, "Likewise of the holy day: he knoweth that the day is servant to man; and therefore, when he findeth that it is done because he should not be let from hearing the word of God, he obeyeth gladly; and yet not so superstitiously, that he would not help his neighbour on the holy day, and let the sermon alone for one day."[109]

It is Scripture which tells us the way we should worship God and give him the honour due to him. "The words which the scripture useth, in the worshipping or honouring of God, are these: Love God, cleave to God, dread, serve, bow, pray, and call on God, believe and trust in God, and such like."[110] Tyndale believed that we should kneel in prayer and so he wrote, "worshipping, whether it be in the old Testament or new, understand the bowing of a man's self upon the ground: as we ofttimes, as we kneel in our prayers, bow ourselves, and lie on our arms and hands, with our face to the ground."[111]

The important thing about worship, whether as the congregation or as individuals, is the rightness of our faith and of our lives. "it is the heart, and not the place, that worshippeth God. The kitchen-page, turning the spit, may have a purer heart to God than his master at Church."[112] This is because our worship must be spiritual. "Christ is now a spiritual substance

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[109] *Answer,* 3/7
[110] *Answer,* 3/57
[111] *Exodus,* 1/420
[112] *Answer,* 3/88

with the Father, having also a spiritual body; and with the Father to be worshipped, in spirit only."[113]

Conclusion

Although Tyndale dealt with those in the spiritual regiment who were not part of God's family, I have only dealt with the positive side in this section. The negative side will be covered in the section, *The Covenant Broken.* This *Conclusion*, to a certain extent is a bridge between the spiritual and the temporal regiments.

Ideally both regiments should be perfect, the breakdown has come through man's sin.[114] As a result, Tyndale, following John, was exercised about sin and our approach to open sinners. "Whatsoever sin we see in the world, let us pray, and not despair: for God is the God of mercy. But for the sin to death, which is resisting grace, and fighting against mercy, and open blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, … I think that no christian man, if he perceive it, can otherwise pray than as Paul prayed for Alexander the coppersmith, (the 2 Tim. the last,) 'that God would reward him according unto his works.'"[115]

At the same time we must not make too quick or a wrong judgement, for "Christ commanded, Matt. v. saying, 'Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Pray for them that do you wrong and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your

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[113] *Sacraments,* 1/373
[114] There is circumstantial evidence in Tyndale's writings that the division between the temporal and spiritual is a result of the Fall, and this could do with fuller treatment.
[115] *1 John,* 2/212

heavenly Father.'"[116] Therefore Tyndale wrote to the Christian, You must "after the ensample of Christ humble thyself, forsake and deny thyself, and hate thyself, and cast thyself away, and be meek and patient, and let every man go over thee, and tread thee under foot and do thee wrong; and yet love them, and pray for them, as Christ did for his crucifiers. For love is all; and what is not love, that is damnable, and cast out of that kingdom."[117] The outworking of love in our lives is the perfection which Christ calls for. "Even so provoke thou and draw thine evil brethren to goodness, with patience, with love in word and deed; and pray for them to him that is able to make them better and to convert them. And so thou shalt be thy Father's natural son, and perfect, as he is perfect. The text saith not, Ye shall be as perfect as God; but perfect after his example."[118]

THE TEMPORAL REGIMENT

"It is a curious fact that although Tyndale's importance as the first English protestant political thinker of the sixteenth century has been widely recognised," wrote Cargill Thompson in 1979, "there has been little detailed investigation of his political thought."[119] This has largely remained true over the intervening years. Robert Bast wrote, "In 1523 Luther had defined the relationship between sacred and secular authority by differentiating between Two Kingdoms or Regiments, mutually supportive but each autonomous in its own sphere."[120] Tyndale, however,

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[116] *Obedience*, 1/273
[117] *Matthew*, 2/60
[118] *Matthew*, 2/71.
[119] Cargill Thompson, "Two Regiments", 17
[120] Bast, 79

had a different view of the two regiments, the separation was not as clear cut as it was for Luther. This means that sometimes in Tyndale's writings it is difficult to discover whether his remarks relate to the spiritual or temporal regiments – or, perhaps more likely, to both. This is not because Tyndale's thinking was confused, but because the lines between the temporal and the spiritual regiments are not clear cut. If my non-Christian neighbour has need of my help, then, (in the temporal regiment) I serve God and go to their aid because we are both created by him; and (in the spiritual regiment) I serve God and hope to win my neighbour for Christ. Every action of a Christian is done in both the temporal and the spiritual regiment and we cannot separate them into two watertight compartments.

Against those who "credit Tyndale with laying the groundwork for the Royal Supremacy," Bruce Boehrer wrote, "Here again we return to what was for Tyndale the ultimate arbiter of ethics: the word of God as revealed in scripture. Over and above all ordained authorities stood God's word, demanding ultimate obedience." He continues, "Thus we find that Tyndale's political philosophy. superficially so congenial to the Henricians, diverges from their views at four important points."[121]

In The Lord's Prayer, Tyndale expounded, *Thy kingdom come,* "That is, seeing thou art king over all, make all to know thee; and make the kings and rulers, which are but thy substitutes, to command nothing but according to thy word, and to them make all subjects obey."[122] Tyndale continues the same theme at the end of the Lord's Prayer when

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[121] Boehrer, 260,262,263
[122] *Matthew*, 2/82

commenting on *For the kingdom, and the power and the glory, is thine for ever;* "Let kings, rulers, and officers remember that God is the very king, and refer the honour that is given to them for their offices' sake to him, and humble themselves to him, and knowledge and confess in their hearts, that they be but brethren, and even no better before God, than the worst of their subjects."[123]

The fact that God is the universal king affects the whole of Tyndale's theology of the temporal regiment, and, in his thinking it brings the two regiments together, and we see them running side by side. From Tyndale's point of view God is King of the temporal regiment, and this stems from the creation of man.[124] "God therefore hath given laws unto all nations, and in all lands hath put kings, governors, and rulers in his own stead, to rule the world through them. … Such obedience … requireth God of all nations, yea, of the very Turks and infidels."[125] In considering the temporal kingdom Alfred Jepson wrote, "Luther's question was what a Christian was supposed to do, whether he had to abandon the world in order to be perfect, or whether and how he also might live out his being a Christian in the world coram deo."[126] In other words, Luther was looking at a post Fall temporal regiment.

For Tyndale both regiments are part of God's plan, the spiritual regiment is covenantal; the temporal regiment goes back to creation. As long as there were people on earth they needed to be governed and it was

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[123] *Matthew*, 2/86f; see Boehrer, 261
[124] This places the *temporal regiment* before the Fall, whilst the *spiritual regiment*, with its emphasis that our entry into it is through the blood of Christ, is therefore post Fall.
[125] *Obedience*, 1/174f
[126] Jepson, 326

"for their sakes also he [the Father] hath ordained rulers, both spiritual and temporal, to teach them, and exhort them; to warn them, and to keep occasions from them, that with custom of sin they fall not from their profession."[127] And God has given rulers an importance since they bear rule for God. "Mark, the judges are called gods in the scriptures, because they are in God's room, and execute the commandments of God."[128] But it was in the Sermon on the Mount where Tyndale found much of this theology. "Read here the words of Christ with this exposition following, and thou shalt see the law, faith, and works, restored each to his right use and true meaning; and thereto, the clear difference between the spiritual regiment and the temporal; and shalt have an entrance and open way into the rest of all the scripture."[129] It is because both regiments are part of God's covenant, and the reason behind their separate existence is to fulfil different functions, we are able to consider them separately. At the same time in a Christian commonwealth there is an overlap because men are in both regiments at the same time. Christ told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world,[130] and "because he had no temporal kingdom, even so he meant of no temporal power, but of power to save sinners."[131] We will, in this section, only consider the temporal regiment in the context of a Christian nation where both regiments are alongside each other and a Christian prince is the ruler.

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[127] *Matthew*, 2/8
[128] *Obedience*, 1/175
[129] *Matthew*, 2/15
[130] John 18:36
[131] *Prelates*, 2/282

When Christ seemed to be undermining the temporal regiment in Matthew 5:38f, Tyndale wrote, "Christ here intended not to disannul the temporal regiment, and to forbid rulers to punish evil doers, no more than he meant to destroy matrimony when he forbade to lust and to covet another man's wife in the heart. But as he there forbade that which defileth matrimony, even so he forbiddeth here that which troubleth, unquieteth, and destroyeth the temporal regiment, and that thing which to forbid the temporal regiment was ordained."[132]

Those in Authority

Apart from fathers, Tyndale writes more about the position and duties of kings than of any other officer in the temporal regiment. This is because the king has his authority directly from God and other rulers are subordinate to the king and their duties are delegated by him. No one can take any authority to oneself "till God have chosen him; that is to wit, till he be chosen by the ordinance that God hath set in the world, to rule it."[133]

The king has been given the sword as a sign of authority, and that justice might prevail. "No man shuld avenge hyme silfe / or seke wreeke / no nott by the lawe: but the ruler which hath the swearde shuld do such thyngs of hym silfe / or when the negbures off love warne hym / and requyre hym."[134] For it is the office of the king to maintain justice, for "the sword, and full power to punish evildoers indifferently, is given of God to every king for his time."[135] Tyndale quotes, to support this, Romans 13:1,

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[132] *Matthew*, 2/58
[133] *Matthew*, 2/86
[134] *1525*, 25
[135] *Prelates*, 2/280

"'Let every soul submit himself unto the authority of the higher powers.' ... The higher powers are the temporal kings and princes; unto whom God hath given the sword, to punish whosoever sinneth."[136]

The sword is also given to the king for the defence of his realm and subjects, and therefore should be honoured; for man's laws are "ordained for the furtherance of the commonwealth, to maintain peace, to punish the evil, and to defend the good. Therefore ought the good to honour the temporal sword, and to have it in reverence."[137] The king must also be obeyed in his commands; in *The Answer* More spoke of man's obedience to the bishops and prelates, Tyndale turned this about and replied, "And when he saith, Peter and Paul commanded us to obey our superiors; that is truth, they commanded us to obey the temporal sword, which the pope will not."[138] But Tyndale hedged the king's power with his responsibility to God, and the fact that those he governed were his brothers and sisters through God's creation.[139]

Tyndale draws our attention to the history of Israel in the Bible, pointing out the importance of obedience to God's commandments if we want peace and security and receive God's blessings on our nation.

> As God there warneth ere he smite, and suffereth long ere he take extreme vengeance, so shall he do with us. As they that turn are there received to mercy, and they that maliciously resist perish utterly, so shall it be with us. As they that resist the counsel of God perish through their own counsel, so shall it

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[136] *Obedience,* 1/178
[137] *Romans,* 1/506
[138] *Answer,* 3/94

> be with us until the world's end. As it went with their kings and rulers, so shall it be with ours. As it was with their common people, so shall it be with ours."[140]

As we will see when we consider the *Errors of the Spiritualty,* Tyndale accused the pope of taking possession of the temporal sword from the king.[141] This is a false possession for, as Tyndale wrote, "Though that all power were given unto Christ in heaven and in earth, yet had he no power over his Father, nor yet to reign temporally over temporal princes, but a commandment to obey them. How hath the pope then such temporal authority over king and emperor?"[142] The spiritualty are under the temporal sword of the king and neither free from it nor having power to wield it themselves. "God did not put Peter only under the temporal sword, but also Christ himself; as it appeareth in the fourth chapter to the Galatians. … If the head be then under the temporal sword, how can the members be excepted? If Peter sinned in defending Christ against the temporal sword, … who can excuse our prelates of sin, which will obey no man, neither king nor emperor?"[143] Tyndale said that we need to restore to the king his authority so that the Church might be cleansed, for "When temporal kings were in their high authority, then the general council repressed the enormities of the spiritualty."[144]

Tyndale has a lot of practical material about the ways the king should govern, and his subjects obey his rule. I can only briefly touch

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[139] see p. 281, *Matthew* 2/86f
[140] *Genesis,* 1/404
[141] see p.
[142] *Obedience,* 1/270
[143] *Obedience,* 1/188

upon some of these. As we would expect from Tyndale, the base from which good government sprang was the word of God.[145] Tyndale wrote of the law and justice,[146] warfare,[147] taxes,[148] and many other aspects of governance. Above all, the help the king needs to govern his people must come from the laity and not from those of the spiritualty, for it is impossible to serve two masters.[149] As Tyndale wrote, "Let kings take their duty of their subjects, and that that is necessary to the defence of the realm. Let them rule their realms themselves, with the help of lay-men that are sage, wise, learned, and expert."[150]

Many of Tyndale's remarks about the duty of the king also apply to the temporal officers whom the king appoints: "As a king sendeth forth his judges, and giveth them his authority, saying, 'What ye do, that do I; I give you my full power." But they are not to exceed that power.[151]

The duty of the ruler is to punish sin and correct the wrongdoer,[152] therefore, "Let, I say, the governors take heed how they let sin be unpunished, and how they bring the wrath of God upon their realms."[153] For Tyndale realised that not every ruler was good, and that there were evil rulers and tyrants, but he was against rebellion to overthrow them. It was the people who received the king they deserved and that is why God allowed the people to suffer from a tyrant's rule, Tyndale wrote, "Evil

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[144] *1 John*, 2/178
[145] *Answer*, 3/27f
[146] *Obedience*, 1/250; etc.
[147] *Matthew*, 2/63
[148] *Genesis*, 1/410
[149] *Matthew*, 2/104f
[150] *Obedience*, 1/206f
[151] *Obedience*, 1/271
[152] *Mammon*, 1/95f
[153] *Matthew*, 2/55

rulers then are a sign that God is angry and wroth with us."[154] It is for this reason that the Christian should not oppose a tyrant, for "A christian man is bound to obey tyranny, if it be not against his faith nor the law of God, until God deliver him thereof."[155] Tyndale illustrates this with the example of David, "How mighty was David when he came to fight; and how overcame he through faith! And how mightier was he when he came to suffering, as in the persecution of king Saul! Inasmuch that when he had his most mortal enemy, king Saul, … in his hands, to have done what he would with him, through faith he touched him not, nor suffered any man else to do."[156] In *Obedience,* Tyndale relates all those incidents, when David cut part of Saul's garment when he came into the cave where David was hiding; and when David and Abishai entered Saul's camp and took Saul's "spear and a cup of water from his head." Tyndale then asks, why did not David slay Saul? and answers his question, "For if he had done it, he must have sinned against God; for God hath made the king in every realm judge over all, and over him is there no judge. He that judgeth the king judgeth God; and he that layeth hands on the king layeth hand on God; and he that resisteth the king resisteth God, and damneth God's law and ordinance."[157]

Tyndale believed that relief from tyranny lay with the people and God. He showed not only the cause and the answer, but also his evangelical zeal, when he wrote, "Of all the subjects of England this I crave – that they repent; for the cause of evil rulers is the sin of the

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[154] *Obedience,* 1/195
[155] *Answer,* 3/180
[156] *1 John,* 2/209

subjects, as testifieth the Scripture. And the cause of false preachers is, that the people have no love unto the truth, saith Paul, in 1 Thess. ii. We be all sinners a hundred times greater than all that we suffer. Let us, therefore, each forgive others, remembering the greater sinners the more welcome, if we repent; according to the similitude of the riotous son. For Christ died for sinners, and is their Saviour, and his blood is their treasure, to pay for their sins," *etc.*[158]

Subjects

The king's subjects are bound to obey him, and Tyndale points out that this is taught by Peter in his First Epistle: "And first he teacheth them, in general, to obey the worldly rulers, and then in special, he teacheth the servants to obey their masters, be they good or bad, and to suffer wrong of them, as Christ suffered for us."[159] Tyndale (as is commonly found in theological writers) applied the fifth commandment to the duties of subjects to their rulers. "'Child, obey father and mother, that thou mayest long live on the earth.' And by father and mother is understood all rulers, which if thou obey, thy blessing shall be long life; and contrary, if thou disobey, short life."[160] Tyndale in his writings is very practical and he gives us other reasons for obedience and not just the fact that it is God's commandment, for us to obey those in authority over us. "And that it is right that we obey father and mother, master, lord, prince and king, and all the ordinances of the world, bodily and ghostly, by which God ruleth us,

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[157] *Obedience,* 1/176f
[158] Foxe, *A&M-5,* 131
[159] *1 Peter,* 1/527
[160] *Matthew,* 2/111

and ministereth freely his benefits unto us all: and that we love them for the benefits that we receive by them, and fear them for the power they have over us to punish us, if we trespass the law and good order."[161]

When it comes to our obedience to evil rulers we know that we have God's Spirit with us, and that our obedience is pure.[162] But God has placed a limit on our obedience to our rulers, which is true whether they are good or bad, Tyndale continues in *Pathway*, "So far yet are the worldly powers or rulers to be obeyed only, as their commandments repugn not against the commandment of God."[163] For if the king's command is against God's law, (here Tyndale's understanding of 'neighbour' in a wider sense surfaces,) civil disobedience is right. "And in like wise, against this law, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' I may obey no worldly power, to do aught at any man's commandment unto the hurt of my neighbour that hath not deserved it, though he be a Turk."[164]

Tyndale was not against people taking oaths, although no one must be put in an impossible situation, because for everyone there must be justice. Commenting on Matthew 5:33-37, Tyndale wrote,

> Howbeit all manner of swearing is not here forbidden, no more than all manner killing, when the commandment saith, 'Kill not;' for judges and rulers must kill. Even so ought they, when they put any man in office, to take an oath of him that he shall be true and faithful and diligent therein; and of their subjects it is lawful to take oaths, and of all that offer themselves to bear

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[161] *Pathway*, 1/25
[162] *Obedience*, 1/193
[163] *Pathway*, 1/25

witness. But if the superior would compel the inferior to swear that [which] should be to the dishonour of God, or hurting of an innocent, the inferior ought rather to die than to swear: neither ought a judge to compel a man to swear against himself, that he make him not sin and forswear."[165]

Apart from being a witness for or against another in a lawsuit, there were other ways in which the subject had to serve to maintain the king's laws. This did not, said Tyndale, even if it involved physical action against another person, break the command to love our neighbour as ourself. "And so hath the ruler power over thee, to send thee to use violence upon thy neighbour, to take him, to prison him, and haply to kill him too. And thou must ever love thy neighbour in thine heart, by the reason that he is thy brother in the first state; and yet obey thy ruler and go with the constable or like officer, … And look, what harm he getteth, yea, though he be slain, that be on his own head. For thine heart loved him." Tyndale wrote that it is the same when the king sends one to fight against his enemies. "And like is it, if thy lord or prince send thee a warfare into another land; thou must obey at God's commandment, and go, and avenge thy prince's quarrel, which thou knowest not but that it is right." However, there must be no hatred in our heart for we must remember that those we fight against "be thy brethren, and as deeply bought with Christ's blood as thou, and for Christ's sake to be beloved in thine heart."[166]

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[164] *Pathway*, 1/26
[165] *Matthew*, 2/56
[166] *Matthew*, 2/63

The temporal regiment is part of God's creation, and, as we have seen, within it everyone is our brother or sister whom we should love because we have all been created by God.[167] But as Christians we are doubly God's and as the covenant people we can say, "I love thee ... because of the great love that Christ hath shewed me. I serve thee, not because thou art my master, or my king, for the hope of reward, or fear of pain, but for the love of Christ."[168]

Tyndale was concerned with social justice, and his thinking was ahead of his time – as we have seen from his attitude to the Turks and others who were not Christians because they are God's children by creation. This stems from the fact that we are to be like our heavenly Father, and Tyndale tells us to "lift up thine eyes unto thy heavenly Father, and as thy Father doth, so do thou love all thy Father's children. He ministereth sun and rain to good and bad; by which two understand all his benefits."[169]

Conclusion

Unlike Luther, Tyndale did not make a separation between the temporal and the spiritual regiments as if they were in watertight compartments. Neither did Tyndale, like Roman Catholicism and Calvin, make the spiritual regiment superior to the temporal.

Tyndale did not believe the temporal regiment was, in effect, an answer to the Fall, and instituted to control sin. The temporal regiment

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[167] *Pathway*, 1/18
[168] *Obedience*, 1/296f
[169] *Matthew*, 2/71

was an ordinance of creation and was needed even if the Fall had not taken place, even though the negative aspects of the temporal regiment would not have been necessary in that case, for if man had not sinned there would be no need for punishment. Tyndale's view that the temporal regiment stems from the creation places every man in a special relationship to God as his children – a relationship affected by the Fall. Passages such as, "God hath made them after the likeness of his own image, and they are his sons as well as we, and Christ hath bought them with his blood, and made them heirs of everlasting life as well as we:"[170] has led some scholars to accuse Tyndale of being a universalist.[171] However, this passage needs placing into its context which teaches the changes which have taken place since Adam sinned.

Other misunderstandings of Tyndale's teaching about the temporal and the spiritual regiment concern the place of the king. Tyndale does not teach the divine right of kings nor the royal supremacy as it developed in Tudor England,[172] but that kings are appointed by God to govern the temporal regiment only. However, Carleton wrote, "Certainly, by the end of 1530 the King was aware of the arguments in favour of the vesting of supreme authority and jurisdiction over matters temporal and spiritual in the secular prince. William Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man,* which was known to Henry, taught the supremacy in matters both secular

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[170] *Pathway,* 1/18

[171] Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant,* 209

[172] Cargill Thompson, "This has resulted in the emergence of a stereotyped view of Tyndale as a political thinker, largely based on a few famous quotations and repetition of second-hand ideas. In so far as there is a popular view of Tyndale as a political thinker it is contained in the widespread belief that he was an exponent of royal absolutism, and also that he foreshadowed the royal supremacy." "Two Regiments", 18, see also 20.

and spiritual of the king in his realm."[173] Scarisbrick is even stronger in his claims for Tyndale's teaching (although he does not claim that Tyndale taught the king had rule over the spiritual regiment), "Tyndale's sweeping assertion of the rights and duties of princes and their claim to the undivided allegiance, body and soul, of their subjects, may well have opened up a new world for Henry:"[174] but these statements, although found in Tyndale, are only one side of the coin, for the king also had his responsibilities to his subjects which were equally far reaching. Whereas Tyndale taught, firstly, that every man, clergy or lay, was part of the temporal regiment and therefore subject to the king. "The spiritual officer ... is under the king's or temporal correction, how high soever he be."[175] Secondly, that the king, in the spiritual regiment, was subservient to the spiritual officers. "The king is as deep under the spiritual officer, to hear out of God's word what he ought to believe, and how to live, and how to rule, as is the poorest beggar in the realm."[176]

Although the temporal regiment stems from creation, it would seem that the spiritual regiment was established as a result of the Fall. More work on this is needed than can be included in this dissertation, but the reasons lying behind this statement are:-

1. God is the King of the temporal regiment, and kings are appointed to rule in his stead.
2. Through creation all men are brothers and sisters, and neighbours to each other, irrespective of race or creed.

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[173] Carleton, 9
[174] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 247
[175] *Matthew*, 2/67

3. Through creation all men are part of the temporal kingdom and belong to God and are his people.
4. The Fall meant that man was in rebellion against God – his King – and his kingdom, and was in the service of the devil.
5. Christ's blood was shed as a remedy for man's disobedience and sinful rebellion, so that all who turned back to God could be restored to their place in God's kingdom.
6. After the Fall some were elected to be brought back to obedience to their King, and be made his children and became the spiritual regiment.
7. Those who are in the spiritual regiment are doubly God's, first through creation, secondly through redemption.

[176] *Matthew*, 2/67; see Boehrer, 270

XIV THE COVENANT BROKEN

INTRODUCTION

Tyndale's criticism of the medieval Church was that it had broken God's covenant, and had replaced it with man's own ideas. The spiritualty, under the pope, had usurped power and ruled over both the temporal and the spiritual regiments instead of serving the Church. In order to consolidate their power they had altered the meaning of scripture with their own glosses, through their false interpretation of the meaning of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the addition of the five other sacraments they had invented, they had gained a hold over the lives of Christians. Through their additions and alterations they had changed the pure worship of God into idolatry. Through their lives and their covetousness they had corrupted the way God wanted his people to live. "And as damnable as it is for the poor to trust in the riches of the richest upon earth, so damnable is it also to leave the covenant made in Christ's blood, and to trust in the saints of heaven."[1] Such were the main charges Tyndale levelled against the Church of his day to prove that it had broken God's covenant for our salvation from sin and the power of the devil. As Mayotte wrote, "Tyndale believed the rationale for this corruption could only be the clergy's advantage – that they might gain more power and more money from the people."[2]

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[1] *Tracy*, 3/278
[2] Mayotte, 29

For Tyndale all these errors of the Church were in reality only one, as they all depended on each other to create antichrist's kingdom on earth. The pope had created an empire for himself and had gained power not only over the spiritual regiment, but had also taken the temporal power from kings and emperors. He had enriched himself and impoverished the people having caught them in the web of his deceit.[3]

There are large areas where Tyndale was concerned about the state of the Church which will not be covered in this chapter, although they add force to Tyndale's attack on the Roman Church, they have not immediate relevance to my main thesis. *The Covenant Broken* highlights the main reasons why Tyndale was so critical of the Church of his day. It also highlights the reason why Tyndale could never be a follower of Luther, although he agreed in principle with many of Luther's doctrines – even where he altered and modified them to a certain degree: and although he was prepared to translate large sections of Luther's writings in his own works.

The Errors of the Spiritualty goes some way in helping us understand how the spiritualty broke God's covenant through turning from God's word and listening to the devil's temptations. As the spiritualty sought their own glory they broke God's commandments, there was then no way for the covenant to remain intact.

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[3] Boehrer, 264

THE COVENANT BROKEN

Tyndale claimed that the covenant was broken when the spiritualty turned away from the word of God, and, in its place, they turned to their own imaginations and to the philosophy of Aristotle and other pagan philosophers, creating in the place of the covenant their own heathen ideas about God and salvation. Tyndale quotes (rather loosely) from More's *Dialogue, Book 3 chapter 1*,[4] that "'We believe the doctrine of the scripture without scripture, … because only that the church so teacheth, though no scripture confirmeth it.' Why so? 'Because,' saith he, 'the Holy Ghost by inspiration, if I do my endeavour, and captivate mine understanding, teacheth me to believe the church concerning God's word, taught by the church and graven in men's hearts without scripture, as well as he teacheth us to believe words written in the scripture.'"[5] Earlier, Tyndale had written that without scripture the Church's "doctrine is but the opinion of faithless people, which to confirm the devil hath wrought much subtilty." However, Tyndale does not seek to contradict More's claim that miracles prove the Church's doctrine (he only raised the question that we have to be sure the miracles are of God and points out that witches do miracles as well), but he allowed that miracles had happened "until the scripture was authentically received."[6] Mayotte wrote, "In no circumstance was Tyndale's rage more pronounced than against the

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[4] *CWM-6*, 251-255
[5] *Answer*, 3/139
[6] *Answer*, 3/128

clergy's withholding from the English the scripture in their mother tongue."[7]

In spite of the lip service the spiritualty paid to the scriptures, in reality they did not accept them, for, wrote Tyndale, "If God's word appeared any where, they agreed all against it. When they had brought that asleep, then strove they one with another about their own traditions."[8] Then, instead of the scriptures, they teach "dreams of their own making."[9] Tyndale uses the example how Cuthbert Tunstall got hold of the New Testament as it came into England, "He burnt the new Testament, calling it *Doctrinam peregrinam*, 'strange learning.' Yea, verily, look how strange his living, in whose blood that testament was made, was from the living of the pope; even so strange is that doctrine from the pope's law."[10]

It was indeed 'strange learning' for the Church because "our great pillars of holy church, which have nailed a veil of false glosses on Moses's face, to corrupt the true understanding of his law, cannot come in. And therefore they bark, and say the scripture maketh heretics, and it is not possible for them to understand it in English, because they themselves do not in Latin."[11] In fact the prelates had lost "the understanding of the plain text, and of the Greek, and Latin, and specially of the Hebrew."[12]

The vernacular Bible would uncover "their false expounding of the scripture,"[13] in fact their corruption of the scripture meant "he shall never

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[7] Mayotte, 53
[8] *Obedience*, 1/324
[9] *Genesis*, 1/398
[10] *Prelates*, 2/337
[11] *Pathway*, 1/28
[12] *Answer*, 3/75
[13] *Obedience*, 1/318

speed well that will seek in the scripture whether our prelates teach us a true faith,"[14] for then the laity would know as much as the clergy.[15] In fact Tyndale wrote that the problem the spiritualty had with his translation of the New Testament was "not that they find just causes in the translation, but because they have lost their juggling and feigned terms."[16] In fact, according to Tyndale, "the pope first hath no scripture that he dare abide by, in the light; neither careth, but blasphemeth that his word is truer than the scripture,"[17] and therefore he seeks "to quench the word of God,"[18] and so, by his corruption, "the scripture is hid, and brought into ignorance, and the true sense corrupt."[19]

Against the Church saying that the scriptures should not be in the vernacular Tyndale pointed out that God's word was given to the Israelites "in their mother tongue" for "there was Christ but figured, and described in ceremonies, …" The laity need the "old Testament, with the new also, which is the light of the old" in the vernacular. Tyndale continued, "I can imagine no cause verily, except it be that we should not see the work of antichrist and juggling of hypocrites."[20]

By denying the laity the scriptures in their mother tongue, and by the corruption of the word of God by their glosses and traditions the spiritualty had hidden God's covenant from the laity, and the truth had been buried under every kind of ceremony and superstition. This

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[14] *Answer*, 3/98 (see also n. 18)
[15] *Obedience*, 1/234
[16] *Answer*, 3/24
[17] *Answer*, 3/104
[18] *Obedience*, 1/310
[19] *Answer*, 3/114
[20] *Obedience*, 1/144f

accusation was the springboard from which Tyndale revealed the failings of the spiritualty.

FALSE FAITH

The medieval Church had turned from the scriptures and followed doctrines of its own imagination, and had deceived the laity. Tyndale wrote of many ways in which More multiplied these deceits. He complains of More's methods, and wrote, "How juggleth he, to prove that all that pertaineth unto the faith was not written; alleging John in the last [chapter], that the world could not contain the books, if all should be written. And John meaneth of the miracles which Jesus did, and not of the necessary points of the faith."[21] He then lists many of the errors More makes into articles of faith, "the perpetual virginity of Mary," "the coming of antichrist," "traditions," the various errors in the Mass, justification by works, "the Saboth" (sic), etc., and then Tyndale wrote, "And, finally, to rock us asleep withal, he saith, that he shall never speed well that will seek in the scripture whether our prelates teach us a true faith; though ten preach, each contrary to other, in one day."[22]

For the pope has left the scriptures and has joined "the spiritual doctrine of Christ and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers together; things so contrary that they cannot agree, no more than the Spirit and the flesh do in a christian man."[23] The pope, therefore, according to Tyndale, fulfils Paul's prophecy in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, "that

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[21] *Answer*, 3/96
[22] *Answer*, 3/96-98 (see also n. 10)
[23] *Answer*, 3/180f

Antichrist should set up himself in the same place as God, and deceive the unthankful world with false doctrine, and with false and lying miracles, wrought by the working of Satan."[24]

In many of his writings Tyndale shows how the pope has corrupted the true Christian doctrine and substituted his own. "O how sore differeth the doctrine of Christ and his apostles from the doctrine of the pope and his apostles!"[25] And this, says Tyndale, has an effect on all who follow the pope's teaching. "Now the sum of all that the apostles taught, and how they built us upon Christ, is the New Testament. But the bishop of Rome's doctrine is not there to be found, but improved. Confounded therefore shall he be, which, wittingly and willing, shutteth his eyes at the true light, and openeth them to believe his lies."[26] So Tyndale concluded that when we weigh up the pope's doctrines that there "are tokens good enough that he is the right antichrist, and his doctrine sprung of the devil."[27]

The Covenant

For Tyndale all God-given, true doctrine, "buildeth thee upon Christ to put thy trust and confidence in his blood." He continues, "Examine the Romish bishop by this rule, and thou shalt find that all he doth is to the destruction of this article."[28] For, under the pope, the prelates "resist his Holy Spirit, enforcing with all craft and subtlety to quench the light of the everlasting testament, promises, and appointment made

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[24] *2 Thessalonians,* 1/517
[25] *Obedience,* 1/173
[26] *1 John,* 2/184f
[27] *Answer,* 3/171
[28] *1 John,* 2/196

between God and us."[29] Because the pope has destroyed the true faith, the covenant has gone and forms no part of the preaching of the spiritualty. The result is that "we Christians have been very seldom, or never, called again to the covenant of the Lord, the law of God, and faith of Christ; but to the covenant of the pope often: as he now clucketh apace for his chickens, and will both prove all his old policies, and seek and imagine new practices."[30]

In destroying the covenant the papists have, as far as Tyndale is concerned, destroyed every doctrine which we find in the Bible. For their doctrine is based on the heathen philosophy of Aristotle whose "doctrine is, that the world was without beginning, and shall be without end; and that the first man never was, and the last shall never be, and that God doth all of necessity, neither careth what we do, neither will ask any accounts of that we do."[31]

God – Christ and Antichrist

Tyndale believed that the pope was Antichrist and that he had usurped God's power and dethroned Christ by sitting on Christ's throne. Although we can trace a possible link between Tyndale and Luther, we also find Tyndale's arguments are found in Wycliffite writings, and often these writings bridge the gaps between Tyndale and Luther.[32]

The pope has been given great power, and he has been placed above every man, and on the same level as God. This happened through

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[29] *5 Books Moses,* 1/396
[30] *Matthew,* 2/96
[31] *Obedience,* 1/154f
[32] Arnold, 3/250; *Prelates,* 2/286

the Church's teaching, Tyndale wrote, "Then came Thomas de Aquino, and he made the pope a god with his sophistry; and the pope made him a saint for his labour, and called him doctor Sanctus."[33] This was a doctrine the pope took up, and as we look at the doctrine and life of the Church "there also seest thou how the pope exalteth himself above God, and commandeth him to obey his tyranny."[34] Wycliffe wrote, "Her me *th*enki*th th*at Antecrist presume*th* above Crist and al *th*e holy Trynite, as Seynt Poul sei*th*."[35] Therefore, replying to Sir Thomas More, Tyndale wrote, that "the pope through falsehood and corrupting such poets as ye are, … leadeth in the darkness of death."[36]

Christ said there would be those claiming "that they themselves are Christ." wrote Tyndale, "That do verily the pope and our holy orders of religion. For they, under the name of Christ, preach themselves, their own word and their own traditions, and teach the people to believe in them. The pope giveth pardons of his full power, of the treasure of the church, and of the merits of saints."[37] The pope takes Christ's words about himself and claims they refer to the pope as well as to Christ. "Lo, saith the pope, Christ hath all power in heaven and earth without exception, and I am Christ's vicar; therefore all power is mine." Then, turning to Hebrews 7, Tyndale continued, "Now, saith the pope, 'The priesthood is translated

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[33] *Prelates*, 2/291
[34] *Obedience*, 1/343
[35] Arnold, 3/260
[36] *Answer*, 3/213
[37] *Obedience*, 1/227

unto me; wherefore it pertaineth unto me to make laws, and to bind every man.'"[38]

In these ways the pope takes God's power, and instead of reverencing God's word "the pope putteth it under his feet, and treadeth on it; in token that he is lord over it, that it should serve him, and he not it."[39] For the word of God was made subservient to the Church in the pope's Church, and it was only because the Church has decided certain books are scripture that they had authority. This meant that the Church had power to add to the scriptures the unwritten traditions which were part of the faith. "Judge, therefore, reader," wrote Tyndale, "whether the pope with his be the church; whether their authority be above the scripture; whether all they teach without scripture be equal with the scripture; whether they have erred, and not only whether they can."[40]

The power which the pope claims stems from the idea that there is a continuous succession from Christ, through Peter and through all the Bishops of Rome, so that the pope sits on Peter's seat. Tyndale took up this idea and wrote, "Peter's seat is now Christ's seat, Christ's gospel, on which all the apostles sat, and on which this day sit all they only that preach Christ truly. Wherefore, as antichrist preacheth not Peter's doctrine (which is Christ's gospel), so he sitteth not on Peter's seat, but on the seat of Satan, whose vicar he is, and on the seat of his own laws and

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[38] *Prelates*, 2/282
[39] *Answer*, 3/169
[40] *Answer*, 3/9 (see n. 53)

ceremonies, and false doctrine, whereunto he compelleth all men with violence of sword."[41]

How contrary is the pope's practice to God's, wrote Tyndale. "God is merciful and long-suffering, even so were all his true prophets and preachers; bearing the infirmities of their weak brethren, … until they sinned against the Holy Ghost." But the pope is opposed to that, "which in sinning against God, and to quench the truth of his Holy Spirit, is ever chief captain and trumpet-blower to set other at work, … and in his own cause is so fervent, so stiff and cruel."[42] And this, Tyndale believes, leads to "the bishop of Rome and his defenders" saying, "'Then the devil hath God in him, and is also in God:' for other faith, than such as the devil hath, felt they never any."[43]

Kingdom

Following on from that we find that the pope has usurped God's power over both the spiritual and the temporal regiments; for since he has taken God's place in the world these kingdoms must belong to him. Tyndale wrote, "Lo, saith he, in that he saith, whatsoever thou bindest in earth, he excepteth nothing; therefore I may make laws, and bind both king and emperor:' when Christ, as he had no worldly kingdom, even so he spake of no worldly binding, but the binding of sinners."[44] Wycliffe wrote that this was the work of the devil, "*th*e fend disseyue*th th*e chirche

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[41] *Prelates,* 2/286
[42] *Jonas,* 1/452f
[43] *1 John,* 2/201
[44] *Prelates,* 2/282

bi oon as opyn lesing, *tha*t crist was heere worldly lord moost hye of alle o*ther*e, & so shulde his viker be *tha*t is clepid *th*e pope of rome."[45]

Tyndale said that every Christian, be he pope, clergy or lay, is part of the temporal kingdom, and therefore is under the authority of the God-appointed rulers. For, wrote Tyndale, "Christ saith, Matt. iii. 'Thus becometh it us to fulfil all righteousness,' that is to say, all ordinances of God. If the head be then under the temporal sword, how can the members be excepted?"[46] Tyndale also refers to Romans 13, "'Let every soul obey the higher powers,' that are ordained to punish sin. The pope will not, nor let any of is."[47]

The pope had overturned the teaching of God's word and, in its place, set up his own. "The pope, contrary unto all conscience and against all the doctrine of Christ, which saith, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' (John xviii.) hath usurped the right of the emperor."[48] In *Prelates* Tyndale shows the ways used by the pope to usurp the temporal sword, and how the pope fell to the devil's temptation of worldly power, "which Christ refused, (Matt. iv.) did the devil proffer unto the pope; and he immediately fell from Christ, and worshipped the devil, and received them. … The pope, after he had received he kingdom of the world of the devil, and was become the devil's vicar. took up in like manner all Christendom on high, and brought them from the meekness of Christ unto the high hill of the pride of Lucifer, and shewed them all the kingdoms of the earth, saying:

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[45] Matthew, *Wyclif*, 461
[46] *Obedience*, 1/188
[47] *Answer*, 3/41
[48] *Obedience*, 1/186

'Fall down and worship me, and I will give you these.'"[49] The pope took over the governance of the countries, "deceiving the king of that country, and then with his sword compelled the rest."[50]

The pope prevented the laymen from temporal rule in the country "because that antichrist with the mist of his juggling hath beguiled our eyes, and hath cast a superstitious fear upon the world of christian men."[51] The pope and the spiritualty ruled, and Tyndale showed how the kings and emperor were like puppets in the hands of the spiritualty; for all the political manipulations which went on at that time, were "not without our cardinal's and bishops' counsel, thou mayest well wit."[52]

The spiritualty needed freedom to live as they wanted, freed from the restraints of the spiritual regiment, and the punishment of the temporal regiment, and so they claimed that the church had liberties to sin without restraint; and therefore "the kings, by the falsehood of the bishops and abbots, be sworn to defend such liberties."[53] The pope, to reward the king for his obedience, would confer on him a title: "So now, above seven hundred years, to be a christian king is to fight for the pope; and most christian, that most fighteth, and slayeth most men for his pleasure."[54]

Tyndale's clearest statement about the pope's workings in the temporal regiment are expressed in the Prologue to *The Obedience* ... "This seest thou, that it is the bloody doctrine of the pope which causeth disobedience, rebellion and insurrection: for he teacheth to fight and to

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[49] *Prelates,* 2/274
[50] *Answer,* 3/158
[51] *Obedience,* 1/224
[52] *Prelates,* 2/310-319 (quote 316)
[53] *Obedience,* 1/240

defend his traditions, and whatsoever he dreameth, with fire, water, and word; and to disobey father, mother, master, lord, king, and emperor; yea, and to invade whatsoever land or nation, that will not receive and admit his godhead.".[55]

The Church

The pope also reigned supreme in the spiritual kingdom as well as in the temporal one. Here, also, he reigned as a tyrant and not as a servant of Christ, and all the spiritualty followed his lead. "As soon as Nemroth, that mighty hunter, had caught his prey, that he had compelled all bishops to be under him, and to swear obedience unto him, then he began to be great in the earth; and called himself Papa, with the interpretation, Father of fathers."[56]

In answer to his question, "Judge, therefore, reader, whether the pope with his be the church?"[57] Tyndale answered very clearly "That the pope and his spirits be not the church, may this wise be proved. He that hath no faith to be saved through Christ, is not of Christ's church. The pope believeth not to be saved through Christ: for he teacheth to trust in holy works for the remission of sins and salvation." He then listed the main holy works people were expected to do before continuing, "And a thousand such superstitiousnesses setteth he before us, instead of Christ to believe in.[58]

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[54] *Prelates*, 2/264
[55] *Obedience*, 1/166f
[56] *Prelates*, 2/259
[57] *Answer*, 3/9 (see n. 36)
[58] *Answer*, 3/39f

The spiritualty have followed the pope's lead and exalted themselves in the Church, wrote Tyndale, they set themselves up to capture more men than another to their "fashions," "yet to resist Christ are they all agreed, lest they should be all compelled to deliver up their prisoners to him." They hide behind all kinds of symbols, "mitres, crosiers, hats," etc., and claim all kinds of titles, "My lord prior, my lord abbot, my lord bishop," etc., and their captives have to come to them in all humility, "if it please your fatherhood, if it please your lordship," etc. The result is we submit to them, "For both they, and whatsoever they make of their own heads, is more feared and dread than God and his commandments."[59] Although More feels that the spiritualty are good, Tyndale feels otherwise, and that their faith is no true faith. In fact he wrote, "Our defenders do right well to foam out their own shame, and to utter the secret thoughts of their hearts. For as they write, so they believe. Other feeling of the laws of God and faith of Christ have they none, than that their God the pope so saith. And therefore as the pope preacheth with his mouth only, even so believe they with their mouth only whatsoever he preacheth. without more ado, be it never so abominable."[60]

The result of all this is that the times Peter wrote about have come, "he warneth them of false teachers that should come, and through preaching confidence in false works, to satisfy their covetousness withal, should deny Christ."[61] The tragedy of all this is those "which are believed

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[59] *Obedience*, 1/246
[60] *Answer*, 3/53
[61] *2 Peter*, 1/528

to minister the true word do slay the souls with false doctrine for covetousness' sake."[62]

Salvation

Man's salvation, as we have seen, depends on repentance and faith in the blood of Christ. But, for the pope's church, these were not important. Tyndale wrote, "Wycliffe preached repentance unto our fathers not long since. They repented not, for their hearts were indurate, and their eyes blinded with their own pope-holy righteousness." Now with the coming of the Reformation, "Christ, to preach repentance, is risen yet once again out of his sepulchre, in which the pope had buried him, and kept him down with his pillars and poleaxes, and all disguisings of hypocrisy, with guile, wiles and falsehood, and with the sword of all princes."[63]

But still, wrote Tyndale, the pope's church made a man believe that he "will be justified and saved through his own works."[64] For "they had set up a righteousness of holy works to cleanse their souls withal; as the pope sanctifieth us with holy oil, holy bread, holy salt, holy candles, holy dumb ceremonies, and holy dumb blessings, and with whatsoever holiness thou wilt, save with the holiness of God's word."[65] For the pope's doctrine leads us away from the salvation which is ours in Christ's blood; for "with Pelagius, he preacheth the justifying of works; which is denying of Christ. He preacheth a false binding and loosing with ear confession, which is not in the trust and confidence of Christ's blood-shedding. He preacheth the

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[62] *Matthew*, 2/37
[63] *Jonas*, 1/458f
[64] *John's Epistles*, 1/530
[65] *Jonas*, 1/462

false penance of deeds; not to tame the flesh that we sin no more, but to make satisfaction, and to redeem the sin that is past; which what other can it be, save the denying of Christ, which is the only redemption of sin?"[66]

We will be looking at what Tyndale considered the errors of the papists regarding salvation in more detail in the next two sections.

Sacraments

Before we consider the individual sacraments there are, according to Tyndale, certain errors which relate to all the seven 'sacraments' of the unreformed Church, as the spiritualty turn scripture from its literal sense into an allegory: "As when the pope saith, Ye be justified by the works of the ceremonies and sacraments, and so forth."[67]

The unreformed Church had taken away the true meaning of the sacraments, and made them meaningless, as Tyndale wrote, "Dumb ceremonies are no sacraments, but superstitiousness. Christ's sacraments preach the faith of Christ, as his apostles did, and thereby justify. Antichrist's dumb ceremonies preach not the faith that is in Christ; as his apostles, our bishops and cardinals do not. ... And hereby mayest thou know the difference between Christ's signs or sacraments, and antichrist's signs or ceremonies; that Christ's signs speak, and antichrist's be dumb."[68] Tyndale enlarged on these dumb ceremonies and called for his readers to decide their value. "Judge whether it be possible that any good should come out of their dumb ceremonies and sacraments into thy soul. Judge

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[66] *1 John*, 2/181f
[67] *Answer*, 3/111
[68] *Obedience*, 1/283

their penance, pilgrimages, pardons, purgatory, praying to posts, dumb blessings, dumb absolutions, their dumb pattering, and howling, their dumb strange holy gestures, with all their dumb disguisings, their satisfactions and justifyings."[69] With a catalogue of errors like that to contend with it is no wonder that Sir Thomas More accused Tyndale of being more extreme than Luther.[70]

To show the people's ignorance of the true meaning of Baptism, Tyndale wrote that is was often called *volowing*, "because the priest saith, *Volo,* say ye. 'The child was well *volowed'* (say they); 'yea, and our vicar is as fair a *volower* as ever a priest within this twenty miles.'" The reason lying behind this attitude to Baptism is that "they make us believe that the work itself, without the promise, saveth us; which doctrine they learned of Aristotle."[71] And this ignorance of the people was due to the spiritualty not teaching the people the truth. Tyndale wrote, "And therefore, because we be never taught the profession of our baptism, we remain always unlearned, as well the spiritualty, for all their great clergy and high schools (as we say), as the lay people."[72]

There were many ways the Church had destroyed the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and Tyndale believed that both transubstantiation and consubstantiation were erroneous (although he never criticised Luther, for the sake of unity amongst the Reformers: he even bent over backwards for the unity in the whole Church provided the covenant was safeguarded).

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[69] *Answer,* 3/9

[70] *CWM-6,* 424-426 "For he hath not onely soowked out the most poyson that he coulde fynde thorowe all Luthers bokes or rake of hym by mouth / and all that hath spette out in these bokes / but hath also in many thynges farre passed his mayster." 424

[71] *Obedience.* 1/276

The covenant in the blood of Christ is all important, and although Tyndale could not see how the covenant could agree with either the Lutheran or the Roman doctrines of Christ's bodily presence with the elements of bread and wine, he was prepared to overlook this error for the sake of Church unity. Tyndale wrote of "the damnable idolatry which the papists have committed with the sacrament, yet, whether they affirm the body and blood present with the bread and wine, or the bread and wine to be turned and transubstantiated into the body and blood, I am therewith content (for unity's sake) if they will there cease, and let him be there only to testify and confirm the testament or covenant made in Christ's blood and body."[73]

Tyndale found many opportunities to criticise the Roman Church for its doctrinal errors in the Mass. He drew attention to their teaching which appears to contradict their own belief in transubstantiation for "the priest toucheth not Christ's natural body with his hands, by your own doctrine; nor seeth it with his eyes, nor breaketh it with his fingers, nor eateth it with his mouth, nor chammeth it with his teeth, nor drinketh his blood with his lips; for Christ is impassible."[74]

For the Mass to be called a sacrifice was also untrue, according to Tyndale, and he attacked the spiritualty for teaching that it was. "I answer, that a sacrifice is the slaying of the body of a beast, or a man; wherefore, if it be a sacrifice, then is Christ's body there slain, and his blood there shed;

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[72] *Pathway*, 1/27f
[73] *Sacraments*, 1/381
[74] *Answer*, 3/162f see p. 215

but that is not so. And therefore it is properly no sacrifice, but a sacrament."[75]

The actions of the priest in the Mass also came under Tyndale's criticism. He picked up some words from More's *Dialogue*, "holy straunge gesturys vsed in consecracyon or mynystracyon of the blessyd sacrmentys."[76] Tyndale wrote, "And when he saith, 'Holy strange gestures;' I answer, for the holiness I will not swear, but the strangeness I dare well avow: for every priest maketh them a sundry manner, and many more madly than the gestures of jack-an-apes."[77] Concerning the ceremonies used he wrote, "And of the ceremonies of the mass we have none other imagination than that they be an holy service unto God; which he receiveth of our hands, and hath great delectation in them, and that we purchase great favour of God with them, as we do of great men here in the world with gifts and presents: insomuch that if a priest said mass without those vestments, or left the other ceremonies undone, we should all quake for fear; and think that there were a sin committed, enough to sink us all, and that the priest for his labour were worthy to be put in the bishop of Rome's purgatory."[78] In fact those who believe "that all the ceremonies of the mass are a service to God by reason of their bodily works, to obtain forgiveness of sins thereby, and to deserve and merit therewith," are wrong, for they "be idolatry and image-service, and make God an idol or bodily image."[79]

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[75] *Leviticus*, 1/424
[76] *CWM-6* 56
[77] *Answer*, 3/85
[78] *1 John*, 2/221
[79] *Sacraments*, 1/373

Tyndale passes onto the five sacraments of the medieval Church which he rejected as sacraments. He challenged More, "Now, sir, in your penance, describe us which is the sign and the outward sacrament, and what is the thing that I must do or believe; and then we will ensearch whether it may be a sacrament or no."[80] Of course, Tyndale has "ensearched" it and found that it is not a sacrament, but more than that he has found it to be evil. "The sacrament of penance they thus describe: contrition, confession, and satisfaction: contrition; sorrow for thy sins: confession; not to God and them whom thou hast offended, but tell thy sins in the priest's ear: satisfaction, to do certain deeds enjoined of them, to buy out thy sins. And in their description they have clean excluded the faith in the satisfaction of Christ's blood."[81] Tyndale expanded these remarks and then continued, "And hereof ye may see how that out of this open penance came the ear-confession, satisfaction of works, purgatory and pardons. For when they had put the satisfaction of Christ's blood out of the way, then as they compelled men to confess open sins, and to take open penance, even so they compelled them to confess secret sins, and to take secret penance."[82] Tyndale's "ensearching" of the evils of penance and auricular confession led him to conclude, "Shrift in the ear is verily a work of Satan; and that the falsest that ever was wrought, and that most hath devoured the faith."[83]

Because the covenant in Christ's blood is denied, penance brings salvation through our holy works. Tyndale wrote that "Holy-work men

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[80] *Answer*, 3/171
[81] *1 John*, 2/162
[82] *1 John*, 2/163

think that God rejoiceth in the deed self, without any farther respect. They think also that God, as a cruel tyrant, rejoiceth and hath delectation in our pain-taking, without any farther respect."[84] It is through these holy works that we must look for our salvation because "the pope believeth not to be saved through Christ: for he teacheth to trust in holy works for the remission of sins and salvation; as in the works of penance, enjoined in vows," and Tyndale lists many other errors "which all are the denying of Christ's blood."[85]

Confession is also a source of wealth for the spiritualty, as Tyndale wrote, "To believe they teach not in Christ, but in them and their disguised hypocrisy. And of them compel they all men to buy redemption and forgiveness of sins. The people's sin they eat, and thereof wax fat. The more wicked the people are, the more prosperous is their commonwealth."[86] And the greed of the spiritualty can also be seen in the inventions they have conceived, wrote Tyndale, "And as for their feigned words, where findest thou in all the scripture purgatory, shrift, penance, pardon, *pœna, culpa, hyperdoulia,* and a thousand feigned terms more? And as for their merchandise, look whether they sell not all God's laws, and also their own, and all sin, and all Christ's merits, and all that a man can think. To one he selleth the fault only; and to another the fault and the pain too; and purgeth his purse of his money, and his brains of his wits, and maketh him so beastly that he can understand no godly thing."[87]

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[83] *Obedience,* 1/263
[84] *Obedience,* 1/278
[85] *Answer,* 3/39f
[86] *Obedience,* 1/249
[87] *Answer,* 3/103

Marriage also was not to be counted as a sacrament, for, wrote Tyndale, "It was ordained for a remedy, and to increase the world; and for the man to help the woman, and the woman the man, with all love and kindness; and not to signify any promise, that ever I heard or read of in the scripture. Therefore ought it not to be called a sacrament."[88]

Tyndale is rather more sceptical of Orders, "Subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop, cardinal, patriarch, and pope, be names of offices and service, or should be, and not sacraments. There is no promise coupled therewith. If they minister their office truly, it is a sign that Christ's Spirit is in them; if not, that the devil is in them." Tyndale goes on to ask what is the sacramental sign, and what promise does it signify?[89] The conclusion Tyndale makes is that "Antichrist hath deceived us with unknown and strange terms, to bring us into confusion and superstitious blindness."[90] He then in many ways proves that those who follow the pope's teaching are indeed far from the teaching of Christ.[91]

Confirmation also is not a sacrament,[92] as it was practiced in the medieval Church it was an invention of the devil, and so instead of preaching Christ's word, "antichrist's bishops preach not; and their sacraments speak not; but as the disguised bishop's mum, so are their superstitious sacraments dumb. After that the bishops had left preaching,

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[88] *Obedience,* 1/254
[89] *Obedience,* 1/254f
[90] *Obedience,* 1/255
[91] *Obedience,* 1/255-259
[92] Tyndale taught the true meaning of Confirmation as a confirming the vows of baptism after the child had been truly taught the profession and meaning of baptism. p.

then feigned they this dumb ceremony of confirmation, to have somewhat at the leastway, whereby they might reign over their dioceses."[93]

It is the same with Extreme Unction, which Tyndale calls, Anoiling, and says that it is "without promise, and therefore without Spirit, and without profit; but altogether unfruitful and superstitious."[94]

All the sacraments of the unreformed Church were valueless; the ones Christ had ordained, "them they minister in the Latin tongue. So are they also become as unfruitful as the other. Yea, they make us believe that the work itself, without the promise, saveth us; which doctrine they learned of Aristotle."[95] From all the "sacraments" the spiritualty had taken the word of God so that they did not proclaim God's promises and made them into dumb ceremonies; and Tyndale wrote, "Dumb ceremonies are no sacraments, but superstitiousness."[96] They are valueless because "the keeping of men's traditions and dumb ceremonies make us not bold before God, nor certify our conscience that our faith is unfeigned."[97] It was then that Christians "became servants unto the ceremonies; ascribing their justifying and salvation unto them, supposing that it was nothing else to be a christian man than to serve ceremonies, and him most christian that most served them; and contrariwise, him that was not popish and ceremonial, no christian man at all."[98] Therefore, Tyndale wrote that they must be thrown out and trodden under foot for "What true christian man can give honour to that that taketh all honour from Christ? Who can give honour to that

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[93] *Obedience,* 1/273f
[94] *Obedience,* 1/275
[95] *Obedience,* 1/276
[96] *Obedience,* 1/283
[97] *1 John,* 2/194

that slayeth the soul of his brother, and robbeth his heart of that trust and confidence, which he should give to his Lord that hath bought him with his blood?"[99]

Purgatory

Purgatory was, for Tyndale, perhaps the worst of the pope's inventions which has no basis of fact found in God's word, in fact purgatory "is plainly impossible, and repugnant to the scripture."[100] The true Christians are "delivered from fear of everlasting death and hell." For it is through faith in Christ that we come to God and "are as familiar and bold with him as young innocent children, which have no conscience of sin, are with their fathers and mothers, or them that nourish them." What a difference faces those who listen to the pope's doctrine, who says that God commits us to "seven years' punishment, as sharp as the pains of hell, for every trespass we do; which trespasses for the number of them were like to make purgatory almost as long as hell, seeing we have no God's word that we shall be delivered thence, until we have paid the last farthing."[101]

But even if God is not merciful, the pope is. For, according to the pope's doctrine, he will use the good deeds of those who have done more than God requires in this life to help those who are in purgatory. The "*opera supererogationis* (howbeit *superarrogantia* were a meeter term), that is to say, deeds which are more than the law requireth, deeds of perfection and of liberality, which a man is not bound to do, but of his free

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[98] *Answer*, 3/76
[99] *Matthew*, 2/34
[100] *Tracy*, 3/281
[101] *1 John*, 2/159

will, and for them he shall have an higher place in heaven, and may give to other of his merits, or of which the pope, after his death, may give pardons from the pains of purgatory."[102]

However, when the pope released a soul from purgatory, or reduced the number of years to be spent there, it was not an act of mercy freely given, there was a cost placed on it. "Whatsoever any tyrant had robbed all his life, that, or the most part thereof, must he deal among them [the spiritualty] at his death, for fear of purgatory."[103] And then "the pope's letters do certify the believers of the pope's pardons."[104] But it is not just the wealthy who have to pay dear for the pope's pardons, Tyndale wrote, "Look at the pope's false doctrine: what is the end thereof, and what seek they thereby? Wherefore serveth purgatory, but to purge thy purse, and to poll thee, and rob both thee and thy heirs of house and lands, and of all thou hast, that they may be in honour? Serve not pardons for the same purpose?"[105]

Tyndale exposes the folly of this doctrine in his *Answer to More*, "M. More feeleth in his heart by inspiration, and with his endeavouring himself and captivating his understanding to believe it, that there is a purgatory as hot as hell; wherein if a silly soul were appointed by God to lie a thousand years, to purge him withal, the pope, for the value of a groat, shall command him thence full purged in the twinkling of an eye; and by as good reason, if he were going thence, keep him there still. He feeleth

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[102] *Mammon*, 1/86
[103] *Practice*, 2/268
[104] *Matthew*, 2/90
[105] *Obedience*, 1/318

by inspiration, and in captivating his wits, that the pope can work wonders with a calf's skin."[106]

FALSE ACTIONS

The spiritualty had built a works righteousness which had no relationship with God's word and commandments, in fact, like the Pharisees Christ condemned, they turned the truth of God upside down. We should help our parents, "but to withdraw help from them at their need, for blind zeal of offering, unto the profit of the holy Pharisees, was then as meritorious, as it is now to let all thy kin choose whether they will sink or swim, while thou buildest and makest goodly foundations for holy people, which thou hast chosen to be thy Christ, for to supple thy soul with the oil of their sweet blessings; and to be thy Jesus, for to save thy soul from the purgatory of the blood that only purgeth sin, with their watching, fasting, woolward-going, and rising at midnight, &c., wherewith yet they purge not themselves from their covetousness, pride, lechery, or any vice that thou seest among the lay-people."[107]

Tyndale accuses John Fisher of being "both abominable and shameless, yea, and stark mad with pure malice, and so adased in the brain with spite," that he cannot see or care for the truth. Tyndale continues, "In the end of his first destruction, I would say *instruction,* as he calleth it, intending to prove that we are justified through holy works, allegeth half a text of Paul." Moreover, wrote Tyndale, Fisher did not even translate the half verse accurately. "Which text he thiswise Englisheth: 'Faith which is

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[106] *Answer,* 3/141

wrought by love;' and maketh a verb passive of a verb deponent. Rochester will have love to go before, and faith to spring out of love. Thus antichrist turneth the roots of the tree upward."[108]

The spiritualty believed that God had set a certain amount of work for each one of us to do, and we did not have to do more in order to be saved. It was, therefore, possible for the friars to say, "They do more than their duty when they preach, and more than they are bound to."[109] The spiritualty were only bound to take the Church services, for as Carleton wrote, "the constant teaching of the Middle Ages, that priests were ordained primarily to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, not for preaching or teaching the Word of God."[110]

Tyndale wrote of those who became martyrs because they resisted (as far as possible) being sexually abused, and it was claimed that the value of their martyrdom was "partly for ensamples; partly, God through sin healeth sin. Pride can neither be healed, nor yet appear, but through such horrible deeds." Tyndale continued, "Peradventure they were of the pope's sect, and rejoiced fleshly, thinking that heaven came by deeds, and not by Christ, and that the outward deed justified them and made them holy, and not the inward spirit received by faith, and the consent of the

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[107] *Jonas,* 1/460f
[108] *Obedience,* 1/221f. Tyndale should have said it was the "second instruction" Fisher's words are, "And fynally saynt Paule sayth resoluyng his owne sentence, *fides que per dilectionem operatur,* that is to saye, Faythe whiche is wrought by love, according to the which saynt Iames sayth, *Vides quoniam fides cooperabatur operibus illius: ex operibus fides consummata est.* That is to saye. Thou seest how that faythe helped his workes and how of the workes his faythe was made perfyt. By all the whiche testimonyes ye may playnly se that not onely faythe suffyseth but also loue and workes be requyred to *the* iustifyenge of our soules." Fisher, *English Works,* 330f
[109] *Obedience,* 1/329
[110] Carleton, 89

heart unto the laws of God."[111] The 'work' the martyrs did could not save them. Although there are some deeds which are wrong in themselves, and must be resisted, yet even good deeds are powerless to save us and bring forgiveness to us. Christ warned against putting one's trust in works, and Tyndale's comment on the first verses of Matthew 6 are, "As he rebuked their doctrine above, even so here he rebuketh their works; for out of devilish doctrine can spring no godly works. But what works rebuketh he? Verily such as God in the scripture commandeth, and without which no man can be a christian man, even prayer, fasting, and alms-deed."[112]

Baptism is considered a holy work by the papists who believe "that the Holy Ghost be present in the water, and therefore the very deed or work doth put away sin." It is similar with the Lord's Supper, and the spiritualty believe "that it is a sacrifice as well for the dead as for the quick, and therefore the very deed itself justfieth and putteth away sin." Tyndale continues, "But under the pretence of their soul-health, it is a servant unto our spiritualty's holy covetousness, and an extortioner, and a builder of abbeys, colleges, chauntries and cathedral churches; ... a pickpurse, a poller, and a bottomless bag."[113] There were many other works which the spiritualty taught were a help towards man's salvation. "When the people believe therefore, if they do so much work, or suffer so much pain, or go so much a pilgrimage, that they are safe, [it] is a false faith."[114] Tyndale condemned this, "For he that will be justified and saved

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[111] *Genesis*, 1/400
[112] *Matthew*, 2/72
[113] *Leviticus*, 1/423f
[114] *Obedience*, 1/280

through his own works, the same doth as much as he that denied Christ to be come in the flesh."[115]

FALSE WORSHIP

In his exposition of the *Sermon on the Mount,* Tyndale criticised the false prayers of the spiritualty, "their false intent in praying, that they sought praise and profit of that work." That they trusted "in the multitude of words, and in the pain and tediousness of the length of the prayer, … and have turned it into a bodily labour, to vex the tongue, lips, eyes, and throat with roaring, and to weary all the members; so that they say … that there is no greater labour in the world than prayer."[116]

The spiritualty claim that they are the ones who have access to God, and so they exclude the laity from Christ. "They compel us to hire friars, monks, nuns, canons, and priests, and to buy their abominable merits, and to hire the saints that are dead to pray for us."[117] Because the Jews thought that they could worship God better in the temple, "And therefore they could not pray but there, as ours can nowhere but at church, and before an image."[118] Against that Tyndale wrote, "The temple wherein God will be worshipped in the heart of man."[119]

Tyndale constantly criticised the spiritualty for linking churches and images with the worship of God. "But to believe that God will be sought more in one place than in another, or that God will hear thee more

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[115] *Prologue Epistles John,* 1/530
[116] *Matthew,* 2/80
[117] *Obedience,* 1/289
[118] *Answer,* 3/67
[119] *Mammon,* 1/106

in one place than in another, or more where the image is than where it is not, is a false faith, and idolatry, or image-service."[120] In spite of all the protestations of the spiritualty, the hallmark of the unreformed church was image service: for the people are not taught what true worship is, and they spend their substance on images, and Tyndale asks how the sight of images adorned with "gold and silver and of precious stones, should move a man's heart to despise such things, after the doctrine of Christ;" or how can seeing it clothed in a "rich coat help to move thy mind to follow the ensample of the saint." At the same time as they give all this wealth to the images "the poor are despised and uncared for."[121] Tyndale continues his attack on the worship of images by saying that if "such things with all other service, as sticking up candles, move not thy mind to follow the ensample of the saint, nor teach thy soul any godly learning, then the image serveth thee not, but thou the image; and so art thou an idolater."[122] If the person represented by the image could speak, "he would answer that he were a spirit, and delighted in no candle-light; but would bid thee give a candle to thy neighbour that lacketh, if thou hadst too many."[123]

Tyndale also called people to remember the words of Moses and God's commandments, "and to beware either of making imagery, or of bowing themselves unto images, saying, 'Ye saw no image when God spake unto you, but heard a voice only."[124] In reply to More when he said "that men know the image from the saint," Tyndale showed not only that

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[120] *Answer*, 3/63
[121] *Answer*, 3/62
[122] *Answer*, 3/62
[123] *1 John*, 2/169
[124] *Deuteronomy*, 1/441f

people acted as if the image were the saint; but also that "God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in his word only, which is spiritual; and will have no bodily service."[125]

Idolatry was found in the Church with the worship of images, but there was also "the damnable idolatry which the papists have committed with the sacrament."[126] In his *Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John,* Tyndale wrote, "Let us take the mass, which after the Romish bishop's abuse of it, is the most damnable image-service that ever was since it began."[127] For those who believe in the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, and that the priest makes the bread and wine turn into Christ's body and blood are "serving God with bodily service, (which is idolatry, and to make God an idol or image,) in that they trust in the goodness of their works."[128]

The idolatry of the spiritualty was not only in the outward acts of worship before the images of the saints, and the Host, they also prayed to the saints. In *A Dialogue,* More wrote, "The author proueth that yf the worsshyp of ymagys were ydolatrye than the chyrche byleuynge it to be lawfull and plesaunt to god / were in a mysse byleve and in a dedely errour."[129] Tyndale answered him, "In the nineteenth he proveth that praying to saints is good; … or else the church, saith he, doth err. It followeth indeed, or that the pope's church erreth. … And when he saith God is honoured by praying to saints, because it is done for his sake; I

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[125] *Answer,* 3/125
[126] *Sacraments,* 1/381
[127] *1 John,* 2/217f
[128] *Sacraments,* 1/374
[129] *CWM-6,* 110; Title to Book 1, Chap. 19

answer, if it sprang not out of a false faith, but of the love we have to God, then should we love God more. ... And then if our faith in God were greater than our fervent devotion to saints, we should pray to no saints at all, seeing we have promises of all things in our Saviour Jesus, and in the saints none at all."[130]

If they follow the teaching of the pope's church about saints and images, then, Tyndale asks, "How can they believe that Christ died for their sins, and that he is their only and sufficient Saviour, seeing that they seek other saviours of their own imagination."[131]

In these and many other ways the spiritualty taught the people to worship God, and they led them astray from the truth and the true faith in Christ's blood. "And yet in these works they have so great confidence, that they not only trust to be saved thereby, and to be higher in heaven than they that be saved through Christ, but also promise to all other forgiveness of their sins through the merits of the same; wherein they rest, and teach other to rest also, excluding the whole world from the rest of forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ's blood."[132]

The spiritualty teach the people that the saints, to whom they pray, are no more merciful than the pope himself. Tyndale condemns this, "How wicked a thing then is it to think that the saints trouble and plague us, because we do them not such superstitious honour, which is their dishonour and our shame? It is verily a popish imagination, and even to describe the saints after the nature of our prelates, which be meek and

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[130] *Answer*, 3/95f
[131] *Mammon*, 1/125
[132] *Numbers*, 1/431

lowly till they be where they would be; but when they be once aloft, they play the tormentors if we will not honour them, and do whatsoever they command more earnestly than that which God himself commanded, and fear them above God himself."[133] Tyndale uses the example of St White who "must have a cheese once a year, and that of the greatest sort;" and he asks, "What shall St White do for thee again for that great cheese? For I wot well it is not given for nought. Shall she give abundance of milk, to make butter or cheese?" Finally he asks, "What other thing then is thy serving of St White, than lack of faith and trust to God-ward in Christ's name; and a false faith of thy own feigning, to St White-ward, for thine image service or serving her with cheese, as though she were a bodily thing? And like disputation is it of all other saints." For everything that every saint is supposed to do for us is false, "but God hath promised, if we will keep his laws, to do so much for us at our own request, for the blood of his Son Jesus."[134]

ERRORS OF THE SPIRITUALTY

From the foregoing it is obvious that the spiritualty have erred, and they have led the laity astray. It is in *The Practice of Prelates* that Tyndale looks at the way the spiritualty turned away from the purity of the apostolic church (although he was aware, from the New Testament, that the Church was never free from those who did not keep the true faith and sought to lead it into error). But until, approximately, the eighth century the worst excesses had been held at bay.

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[133] *1 John*, 2/165f

As the Church grew, and persecutions ceased, the deacons who controlled the finances of the Church grew covetous. "And by the means of their practice and acquaintance in the world they were more subtle and worldly wise than the old bishops, and less learned in God's word."[135] They used their powers to their advantage and their wealth, and the Church turned away from Christ and the truth. "Then, while they that had the plough by the tail looked back, the plough went awry; faith waxed feeble and fainty; love waxed cold; the scriptures waxed dark; Christ was no more seen. He was in the mount with Moses; and therefore the bishops would have a god upon the earth whom they might see, and thereupon they began to dispute who should be the greatest."[136] In the whole of that passage Tyndale traced the way in which the pope climbed to power, and the papal church came into being then covetousness and a lust for power gripped the spiritualty rather than a concern to serve God and build up his people

Much of Tyndale's concern was with the pope's usurpation of the temporal regiment, and Rainer Pineas in his article, "William Tyndale's use of History as a Weapon of Religious Controversy," is only concerned with this aspect. (Pineas points out that the only Chronicle Tyndale mentions by name is Higden's *Polychronicon,* which was translated by Trevisa into English, although he does list others that Tyndale probably used.)[137]

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[134] *1 John,* 2/216f
[135] *Prelates,* 2/256
[136] *Prelates,* 2/257
[137] Pineas, "History", 122

It was the worldliness of the spiritualty which lay behind their errors. Tyndale wrote, "And if pride, covetousness, and lechery be the world, as St John saith, then turn your eyes unto the spiritualty, unto the Roman bishop, cardinals, bishops, abbots, and all other prelates, and see whether such dignities be not the world, and whether the way to them be not also the world!"[138] In fact we had been warned against this danger in the *Second Epistle to Timothy,* where Paul "sheweth before, and that notably, of the jeopardous time toward the end of the world, in which a false spiritual living should deceive the whole world with outward hypocrisy and appearance of holiness; under which all abominations should have their free passage and course, as we (alas!) have seen this prophecy of St Paul fulfilled in our spiritualty unto the uttermost jot."[139]

The General Councils, which once had helped to maintain the truth of the Gospel, are now ineffectual. Tyndale first lists the ways by which the pope had seized power over kings and the clergy, then he continues, "Moreover, the general councils of the spiritualty are of no other manner, since the pope was a god, than the general parliaments of the temporalty; where no man dare say his mind freely and liberally, for fear of some one and of his flatterers."[140]

As Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees for doing their works so that men could see them, their pomp and glory in taking the chief places in the synagogue, and being called 'Rabbi'; so Tyndale criticised the spiritualty of his day. Tyndale drew attention to all their pomp, the

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[138] *1 John,* 2/177
[139] *2 Timothy,* 1/519
[140] *Answer,* 3/158f

titles they were to be called, and the humiliating way people have to approach them. "Behold how they are esteemed, and how high they be crept up above all; not into worldly seats only, but into the seat of God, the hearts of men, where they sit above God himself."[141] Tyndale tells the laity to "look on the works of our spiritualty, which will not only be justified with works before the world, but also before God."[142] He also warns the laity to "take heed and look well about them, and see whether they walk as they have promised God, and in the steps of his Son Christ, and of his apostles, whose office they bear."[143]

This failure of the Church to keep the purity of the gospel is because "the pope, the father of all hypocrites," has "put down the kingdom of Christ, and set up the kingdom of the devil, whose vicar he is; and hath put down the ministers of Christ, and hath set up the ministers of Satan, disguised yet in names and garments like unto the angels of light and ministers of righteousness."[144] The result of this, Tyndale shows, is the spiritualty cannot even justify their actions before men, let alone God. "The pope consenteth not that God's law is good, … he hath granted unlawful whoredom unto as many as bring money." So the clergy are given licences, not to marry but to have whores, "and when the parishens go to law with them, to put away their whores, the bishop's officers mock them, poll them, and make them spend their thrifts, and the priests keep their whores still."[145] Tyndale challenges the immorality of the spiritualty

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[141] *Obedience,* 1/246
[142] *Answer,* 3/203
[143] *Matthew,* 2/54
[144] *Prelates,* 2/273
[145] *Answer,* 3/40f

and asks, "If ye profess chastity, why desire ye above all other men the company of women? What do ye with whores openly in many countries, and with secret dispensations to keep concubines? Why corrupt ye so much other men's wives? And why be there so many sodomites among you?"[146] In fact, Tyndale wrote, if a priest "keep a whore, then is he a good chaste child of their holy father the pope."[147]

At that point in the *Exposition of Matthew, v, vi, vii,* Tyndale lists many of the errors of the spiritualty who are "those captains that should so blind the great multitude that they should not find the strait gate, and lead them the broad way to perdition." They are the ones Christ warned against when he said, "There shall come many in my name, and deceive many." They preach and do miracles in Christ's name "to confirm the false doctrine which they preach in his name." "They preach to other, 'Steal not;' yet they themselves rob God of his honour, and take from him the praise and profit of all their doctrine and of all their works." They have robbed the soul of man of the bread of her life, the faith and trust in Christ's blood; and fed her with the shales and cods of hope in their merits and confidence in their good works." Their obedience is to disobey those God has given authority over us. Their poverty causes Tyndale to ask, "Should a beggar ride with three or four score horses waiting upon him?" Their charity "is merciless to the rest of the world," and is "as is the charity of thieves." Their fasting makes them "as full and as fat as your hides can hold." Their prayer "is but the pattering without all affection"

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[146] *Matthew*, 2/123f
[147] *Matthew*, 2/123

In all, wrote Tyndale, "Where they have fruit that seemeth to be good, go to and prove it, and thou shalt find it rotten, or the kernel eaten out, and that it is but a hollow nut."[148]

CONCLUSION

Tyndale concludes that the spiritualty had in their interpretation of the scriptures, in their doctrine, and in their lives, broken the covenant of God in Christ's blood. They led the laity away from Christ and prevented them from finding faith in Christ's blood for they "exclude the forgiveness that is in Christ's blood, for all that repent and believe therein, and make the people believe that their sins be never forgiven until they be shriven unto the priest.."[149] This made the spiritualty worse than infidels, as Tyndale wrote, "And they shall come thereto in sheep's clothing: ergo, they be neither the Turks nor yet Saracens."[150]

In turning from the plain literal sense of God's word the spiritualty hide the meaning from everyone with the various 'senses' of the scripture. Instead of the plain and clear meaning of God's word the pagan philosophy of Aristotle and other heathen had to be believed.[151] "Thou must therefore believe the pope, and for Christ's doctrine seek an allegory and a mystical sense: that is, that thou must leave the clear light and walk in the mist."[152]

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[148] *Matthew*, 2/ 121-125
[149] *Answer*, 3/172
[150] *Matthew*, 2/121
[151] *Obedience*, 1/155
[152] *Answer*. 3/111

The spiritualty turned everything upside down. They lived according to their sinful lusts, and called it holiness.[153] They usurped power and ruled in the spiritual and temporal kingdoms, and called themselves servants.[154] They amassed wealth and lived in luxury, and called it poverty.[155] They denied themselves marriage, and indulged themselves in every form of sexual lust and depravity and called it chastity.[156]

The spiritualty bowed and prayed to images, but denied it was idolatry, confusing man's understanding with the terms, *doulia, hyperdoulia,* and *latria,* "But the difference declareth he [More] not, nor the properties of the words, but with confused terms leadeth you blindfold in his maze."[157] They taught faith in works and not faith in Christ.[158]

Whatever way it was looked at, the pope's church had broken the covenant in Christ's blood, for the spiritualty had listened to Lucifer who had said to them, "'Fall from Christ, and preach me, and take thou that cardinalship, thou that bishoprick, thou that abbotship, and so forth; thou as many benefices as thou wilt, and a dispensation for what thou wilt.'"[159] After pointing out that our best deeds without the Spirit of God are but sin even though they were thought to be good, Tyndale wrote, "Of like pride are the moral virtues of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, … the very gods of our schoolmen. In like manner is it for the most part of our most holy

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[153] *Prelates,* 2/243
[154] *Obedience,* 1/328; *Practice,* 2/248
[155] *Obedience,* 1/236-238 Tyndale ends with, "The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner pareth; we lack but a butcher to pull off the skin."
[156] *Answer,* 3/164f
[157] *Answer,* 3/56f

religions. For they of like imagination do things which they of Bedlam may see that they are but madness. They look on the miracles which God did by the saints, ... and make an advocate, or rather a god of the saint; and of their blind imagination make a testament, or bond, between the saint and them, the testament of Christ's blood clean forgotten."[160]

The task of the true Christian is to restore Christ to his rightful place, Tyndale claimed, "Neither teach we so much as to resist your most cruel tyranny with bodily violence, save with God's word only: intending nothing but to drive you out of the temple of Christ, the hearts, consciences, and souls of men (wherein with your falsehood ye sit), and to restore again Jesus our Saviour unto his possession and inheritance bought with his blood, whence ye have driven him out with your manifold wiles and subtilty."[161]

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[158] *Answer*, 3/172f
[159] *Prelates*, 2/274f
[160] *Obedience*, 1/184
[161] *Prelates*, 2/242

XV CONCLUSION

I set out to discover the theology of William Tyndale, and whether his theology was consistent throughout the period 1525-1536, or whether, as Clebsch and others have said, his theological outlook changed at least once or twice during that period. I also needed to assess the influence of others on his thinking, how much had he been influenced by the Renaissance and Reformation movements of the early sixteenth century. The picture I was faced with was very muddied with one scholar writing one thing and another something totally different about Tyndale's theology, and the confusion could only be brought to order by examining the theology which lay behind Tyndale's various writings. Clebsch, whose theory stressed Tyndale's dependence on Luther, and then the Swiss Reformers, expressed the problem caused by looking at Tyndale's theology in this way – although he did not modify his original theory – concerning Luther's influence on Tyndale he wrote, "Extant data display abundantly the theological breach and the literary debt, but they are mute as to Tyndale's motives."[1] As I have shown, the data which speaks 'Tyndale's motives' is the uniformity of his theology from his earliest to his last writings, and that is what Clebsch missed.[2]

Had Tyndale's theology changed between 1525 and 1536? This was the first question to be answered because on it depended the viability of my thesis. If it had changed I could not write a dissertation entitled *The*

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[1] Clebsch, *England's*, 183

Theology of William Tyndale. I am greatly indebted to the work of Paul Laughlin whose dissertation, "The Brightness of Moses Face", had examined Tyndale's theology chronologically and found there was a unified theology underlying all Tyndale's writings. Judith Mayotte, in her dissertation, "William Tyndale's Contribution to the Reformation in England" added to this evidence of theological continuity in Tyndale's theology. Laughlin and Mayotte confirmed my own findings, thus enabling me to consider what the theology behind all of Tyndale's writings was.

The next question was – faced with all the various theories about Tyndale's theology – what truth was there within them? It was obvious that, behind any wrong conclusions, there was a basis of truth – Tyndale did incorporate Luther's words in his writings, but how much had he absorbed of Luther's theology? It was obvious that every possible influence on Tyndale's thinking, from whatever source, had to be compared with the whole of what Tyndale wrote (especially within the same work). Once any influence (or otherwise) of Lollardy, humanism, Luther, etc., had been ascertained, I was able to turn my efforts to the final question, What was Tyndale's theology? We can try to discover (and perhaps label) each phrase as 'Lollard' or 'Lutheran' etc., but for Tyndale his theology was a unity. The only source he recognised was the word of God. He would have admitted that he had been helped to understand God's word by many different people, but like every one of us he would

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[2] Lund, 195 "The early English Reformers … For this reason, most historians in recent times have warned against characterizing their thought under general labels, such as 'Lutheran,' 'Zwinglian,' or 'Calvinist.'"

not have been able to label each separate phrase in his thinking, "Wyclif, Luther, scripture, Erasmus, …" Like any intelligent person he learnt from others but the outcome was his own thinking and not a patchwork of other people's work strung together in some way or other.

The first part of my thesis looked at possible sources of Tyndale's theology, and chapters were given to Lollardy, Luther and humanism; other possible sources of his theology were looked at within the *Background to Tyndale's Theology*. I also looked at the claim that Tyndale was the father of Puritanism, for although it was a possible development from Tyndale's theology it might also help us to understand Tyndale's theological position. It soon became obvious that many of the claims which were made by scholars who were writing about Tyndale's theology were wrong, and they were making the facts fit into their pre-conceived ideas, what I called, *The Glass Slipper Syndrome*. I isolated six ways by which the evidence had been manipulated in order to fit into the theses being propounded.

In *Tyndale and Lollardy* I looked at the possible links between Tyndale and the Wycliffite movement in England. It was not difficult to find common ground between them which added to the evidence adduced by Smeeton. At the same time Tyndale had moved much further than the Lollards from the unreformed Church. It would appear that he probably started from the position of Wyclif and carried it forward to its logical conclusion.[3]

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[3] see *Appendix-2*

Conclusion

Tyndale was influenced by humanism, so that he translated the scriptures from Greek and Hebrew. Apart from translating his *Enchiridion,* Tyndale also recommended to his readers Erasmus' *Annotations.* There is also evidence that several of Erasmus' writings almost certainly had an influence on Tyndale. However, Tyndale departed from humanism in his total rejection of Greek philosophy and the place of reason within the pagan philosophical systems.

The case for Tyndale having Lutheran roots in his theology (at least in 1525 and the next few years) appears strong since some of his writings leant heavily on Luther's own words. Close examination of these works show that the deviations he made when 'translating' Luther changed the theology completely. These changes affected not only those places where Tyndale substituted his own theology but also the theology in the places where Tyndale had faithfully translated Luther's own words. It was obvious that Laughlin was right when he wrote, that Tyndale diverged from Luther "both terminologically and substantially from the very outset of Tyndale's literary career to its very end, reflecting a fundamental ethical orientation in his thought that found consistent expression even in the midst of, and indeed in spite of, his early adoption and continued use of the terms and categories of his German contemporary."[4]

In trying to assess Tyndale's debt to other Reformers it becomes obvious that there are difficulties which cannot be overcome. As we discovered, Tyndale's starting point is totally different to Luther's and to most of the Swiss Reformers. Luther's hidden God bears no resemblance

to Tyndale's loving Father, neither is the relationship of the Christian to God the same in their theologies.[5] Even where Tyndale used the same terminology as Luther he invariably gave it a different meaning. The same is generally true when we compare Tyndale with the Swiss Reformers. This has meant that where Tyndale has 'translated' Luther we have had to make sure his use of Luther's words have not changed their meaning because of his deviations from Luther's text. We do not find a Theology of the Cross in Tyndale, in fact he hardly ever mentions the cross in his writings, and only six times where there is a theological meaning given to Christ's death.[6]

In asking the question, Was Tyndale the father of Puritanism? we looked at where Tyndale's theology may have been taken up by later generations. Although Puritanism was not a single theological position it was possible to see some links between Tyndale and some Puritans. For apart from those who referred to Tyndale in their writings, some Puritans had theological statements reminiscent of Tyndale rather than the Continental Reformers.

The second part of my thesis concerned Tyndale's theology and an analysis of all his writings revealed that his theology was covenantal, and within the covenant the Fatherhood of God, the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit were all important. In assessing what Tyndale had

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[4] Laughlin, 187; Mayotte, 77

[5] Gerrish, 150, quotes Luther's Large Catechism and also Calvin's *Institutes* showing the God/man relationship in their theology has the emphasis on man. As I have shown for Tyndale the emphasis is on God with the relationship of a Father to a child.

[6] Cross in Tyndale's writings, theologically – 6: historically – 3: Roman Catholic usage – 29: Christian's cross – 23. Where 'cross' was written more than once in a single context I have only recorded it once unless it was used with different meanings.

written I discovered either that no one had looked at much of his theology, or had tried to link his words with the writings of other Reformers. Many scholars had tried to assess his theology from one writing only.

I stated, "My thesis is that Tyndale was a first rate theologian in that his theology was consistent over all his writings (1525-1536), more scriptural, more spiritual, more tolerant and more evangelistic than other sixteenth century Reformers." In many places I made a longer quotation rather than paraphrasing Tyndale's words in order to strengthen one or more of those points within my argument that Tyndale's theology fulfilled all those objectives. My task was made more difficult because Tyndale did not write any theological treatises and therefore the underlying theology in his writings had to be distilled from them.

Sola Scriptura was the key to Tyndale's understanding and *The Covenant Revealed* examined in detail Tyndale's doctrine of the word of God. Tyndale was more scriptural than Luther for he accepted all the canonical scriptures equally[7]. Unlike Luther and Zwingli Tyndale never referred to any of the apocryphal books as having any authority or value. Tyndale was more scriptural than Zwingli who had a high regard for pagan authors. Tyndale would have considered Calvin's need to write, "Plato, however, advanced still further, and regarded the soul as an image of God,"[8] was a denial of the sufficiency of God's word. "Tyndale meant to lead a vernacular audience *ad fontes;* the sacred text itself had the power to transform the reader."[9] The word of God is all we need to understand

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[7] Without the qualifications which we find in Luther. E.g. his comments on James.
[8] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1/xv/6
[9] Stafford, 108

God's plan for our salvation and for our way of life, we therefore do not need any help from pagan writers, or philosophers like Aristotle and the other Greek philosophers. Tyndale was also more scriptural in his reliance on the word of God over and above the Church Fathers, who he considered only a second best. "There is no certainty, however, that Tyndale was directly influenced by specific early church fathers or medieval theologians. … Precisely because Tyndale, … firmly believed that only through a thorough understanding of scripture could Christians live in a right faith, he focused on scripture as the source of influence for him."[10] Tyndale's insistence on the literal sense did not rule out figures of speech being the true meaning of the scriptures, for "the scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do," and they are "ever the literal sense."[11] Tyndale also insisted that both the Old and the New Testaments were equally the word of God, although some parts of the Old Testament had been superseded by their fulfilment in Christ; thus baptism replaced circumcision and the Lord's Supper replaced the Passover meal, there were, however, many parallels between them (e.g. infant baptism, Christ is a lamb), but the blood shed in the Old Testament was replaced by the blood of Christ.

Paul Lauchlin , "The Brightness of Moses' Face," and Judith Mayotte, "William Tyndale's Contribution to the Reformation in England" have clearly demonstrated that Tyndale's theology was consistent throughout the period of his writings. Lauchlin's careful analysis of four

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[10] Mayotte, 268
[11] *Obedience,* 1/304

doctrines in Tyndale's writings according to the date of publication established that Tyndale's theology not only was consistent but also that his theology was covenantal through all his writings.[12] The fact that in the exposition of Tyndale's doctrine I have been able to quote texts on every aspect of his theology from his writings, irrespective of when they were written, also demonstrates this consistency in Tyndale's theology.

Tyndale stated that his theology was governed solely by the scriptures,[13] and when he said that if he had written anything contrary to the word of God he wanted people to point out his error he was making a genuine request.[14] His consistency and faithfulness to the word of God has, in some places, produced statements which seem contradictory if we look at them apart from the overall picture. But these apparent contradictions are there only because he has not tried to solve seeming disagreements within the scriptures themselves. For example: the gospel is preached to all, and everyone is called by the gospel to repentance, and therefore everyone is able to respond to it. On the other hand the scriptures state that we are dead and cannot respond to the gospel until God gives us life. Tyndale, although he comes down heavily on the side of election, refuses to rule out the fact that the universal proclamation of the gospel genuinely gives all the chance of life – we may not judge God's ways or purpose, nor seek to fathom the hidden things of God for that is following Greek philosophy with its exalting of human reason.

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[12] This disproves Clebsch's theory that Tyndale's theology was not consistent, and also that his doctrine of the covenant came late into Tyndale's theology.
[13] Mayotte, 268f

Tyndale's reliance on scripture did not mean that every statement had to be proved with a proof text, but that it was in agreement with the word of God, and, in many cases, was supported by God's word. Scripture had, however, to be understood in the actual literal sense and not be forced in its interpretation to suit one's own theory.

Tyndale insisted that:-

1 the literal or true meaning of the text is the only one which should be followed – and this includes allegory or other literary forms common to languages – if warranted by the context;

2 all the canonical scriptures are to be received equally as the word of God, although parts of the Old Testament have been superseded by the New Testament;

3 the Apocrypha is not part of the scriptures;

4 the fourfold interpretation of scripture is false;

5 The Fathers of the Church have not the same authority as the scriptures, and any additions to God's revelation from the Fathers or from 'Traditions' are false;

6 the pagan philosophy of the Greek philosophers clouds a clear understanding of God's word;

these show his faithfulness to the revelation of God's word, and his faithfulness to the principle of *sola scriptura.*

Tyndale's spiritualty stems from the Christian's dependence on the Holy Spirit for every part of his life as a child of God. Throughout

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[14] Wicks, xxxi, tries to deny Tyndale's reliance on scripture by saying he was a "two source" theologian, that the scripture and the author of scripture mean two different sources for Tyndale's theology, but Tyndale never suggests this confusion.

Tyndale's writings the Holy Spirit is active in teaching, guiding, leading, etc., and the Christian has been filled with the Spirit. The strong bond which links the Father to his children gives a spirituality which could not be there if the Christian's right depended on the judgement passed in a court of law. The difference is similar to that of Roman citizenship expressed in Acts 22:28, "And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born."

Tyndale's tolerance and evangelistic zeal come out as he explains his understanding of loving our neighbour. His stress that everyone, because they are created by God, is our neighbour and we are to help them as much as we are able irrespective of nationality, faith, whether they are our friends or our enemies, whether they are Christians or heathens, whether they are near us or at the other end of the world – in this he was ahead of his time. But the reason for serving our neighbour in this way is that our fellow Christians may be strengthened in their faith; and the unbelievers, or those of other faiths, might be won to become Christians.

Chapters VIII-X, and XII and XIII open up Tyndale's central theme, the covenant and man's place in God's salvific plan for his people.[15] These chapters are not continuous, although there is a progression in them they are parallel to each other with considerable overlap between them. In *The Covenant Envisaged* we saw that the covenant was made before the foundation of the world between the Persons of the Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Fall of

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[15] Although "God" can refer to any of the Persons in the Trinity it generally refers to the Father unless the context demands otherwise.

man was foreseen and the covenant was to enable man to be restored to fellowship with God. But the emphasis for Tyndale is on God and not man; man's salvation is secondary and is the means whereby the Father can adopt, from fallen mankind, his elect to be his children and so fulfil his purpose in creation.[16] God the Son would shed his blood so that God's justice could be satisfied, and this opened the way for God the Father to adopt those he had chosen from fallen mankind to be his children. To enable the covenant to take effect God the Holy Spirit would apply the blood of Christ to the elect, so that every aspect of their lives would be made righteous with the righteousness of Christ.

The Means to Achieve the Covenant began with man who had, in Adam, used his free-will to rebel against God and to knit himself to Satan's will. Adam's disobedience to God's command, even though he had been told it would bring death, meant that fallen man was dead, he could do nothing good in God's sight, he could not keep God's law – nor could he respond to God's love for he was God's enemy and (even if it were possible) had no desire to love God. In fact any religion fallen man had was man-centred and relied on man having a greater or lesser input in that religion.

God's covenant of salvation was given to Adam and we see it repeated to Noah, Abraham, the Children of Israel, and finally with the Christian Church. As the Holy Spirit, through the blood of Christ, brings life to those who are dead to God, they are born again as children of God

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[16] Although he does not refer to Revelation 4:11 the whole of Tyndale's theology echoes the words, "For thy will's sake they are, and were created."

and are able to respond to God's love by loving God in return. We then enter a family relationship between God and those who have been born again. The Holy Spirit, through the blood of Christ gives us repentance, but our will is active so that repentance is ours. It is the same with every other aspect of our Christian life, faith, love to God and neighbour, loving God's law and obedience to it, good works, etc. Tyndale combined both ideas, that our salvation is given to us by God and that it depends on us: for example, when on the day of Pentecost the Jews asked, "What shall we do? Peter said unto them: repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus." (Acts 2:37,38) And, "Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God lift up … for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31)[17]

Because the blood of Christ has effected every aspect of the Christians relationship with God the Christian is righteous, he is righteous because he is a child of God, but this righteousness is not his own but it is the righteousness of Christ. This, together with his being a child of God, has an effect on a Christian's behaviour. The child of God sins of frailty, and it is a weakness in him: this, in one sense, makes it worse than the deliberate sin of those who are not born again, for the Christian is disobedient to his Father's love, and has not only hurt his Father but also has hurt himself.

The *Gospel* is the good news that Christ has shed his blood and opened the way back to fellowship with God, with the call to repentance and faith – which is made to everyone – that they might break free from

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[17] *Exodus*, 1/417: *Obedience*, 1/206

Satan's bondage and return to God as his children. Because they have been born again the elect freely choose to be God's children, and the Holy Spirit, through the blood of Christ, works every stage of their becoming children of God and they freely co-operate with him in the way of righteousness.

Through the blood of Christ the Holy Spirit gives them faith and the power to repent – Tyndale links faith and repentance so closely together that the order of these two gifts varies in his writings. The next gift God's children receive is God's love, as this love fills their lives, the Christian responds by loving God with the whole of his being, and loving his laws and commandments.

The *Law* affects people differently. For the unrepentant sinner the law is to be feared and brings the wrath of God upon him, although Tyndale is not so concerned with this aspect of the law. For the child of God the law is loved as it opens the way of life for the Christian. The summary of the law is found in loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbour as ourselves, and in loving the law the bonds between the Father and his child are strengthened.

This leads us on to the Christian life, and the action is found as the Christian expresses his life as a child of God in the things he does. The way we live and express our Christian faith shows that the covenant is active for the Holy Spirit "'worketh both the willing, and also bringing to pass.' And it must needs be. …"[18] Good works have no value in earning a

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[18] *Answer*, 3/192f This passage refers to the whole working of the covenant in us and not just the Christian life.

place or position in God's family because our salvation is the work of Christ, it is his blood and his righteousness which enable us to be God's children and not any goodness in us. However, they are a proof that the Holy Spirit is working in us and enabling us to show to the world that we have been born again as a child of God. And we must work to help our neighbours whether they are near to us or anywhere in the world if they are in need – to build up the faith of the Christian, and to win the unbeliever to Christ.

The Covenant People concerns the Christian as part of the temporal and also the spiritual regiments. The two regiments are separate entities. The temporal regiment includes everyone created by God, and therefore the spiritual officers are under the governance of the temporal officers within the temporal regiment as much as anyone else. The spiritual regiment bears witness to God in the world, and Christian rulers are, in the spiritual regiment, under the governance of the spiritual officers, but only in the spiritual regiment.

Along with all mankind the Christian is part of the temporal regiment, and under the God-appointed rulers to govern the whole of society. In the temporal regiment all men are brothers and sisters and kings and governors must always remember this fact so that the laws which they make are made without partiality to one or other group of people and that they administer justice fairly to all men. Also everyone is to love his neighbour as he loves himself, and so we are bound to reach out to help our neighbour in their need remembering that we are all created by God.

Conclusion

The spiritual regiment consists of those who believe in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ. God has placed those who have responsibility to rule and teach the spiritual regiment so that it can truly be the people of God. This is a greater number of people than the elect, who are the 'little flock' which is faithful to God. The spiritual regiment is seen through prayer and worship of God, and through the purity of life and obedience to God's laws of its member, and as it shows God's loving purpose to save the world to those who are in the temporal regiment.

The Covenantal Signs, have a continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. Thus Tyndale links Circumcision and Baptism as the signs of the covenant between God and man. These signs did not make the covenant efficacious in themselves, but they were signs which had an importance for us as they expressed God's promise to us and also our commitment to being God's people. The 'profession of our baptism' was important for us as it was the way in which our life expressed our position as children of God.

The Passover and the Lord's Supper were linked in the same way. The meaning of a sacrament was denied by those who taught that Christ's body and blood were present (in whatever way this was expressed) in, or under, the bread and the wine. The elements were signs for us which remind us of Christ's sacrifice for us on the Cross.

However, Tyndale did not regard them as bare signs, for that would have been useless apart from reminding us in a visible manner what God had done for us. The sign had to have 'signification.' A sacrament is a sign of the covenants and promises God has made with us "to provoke us

and to help our weak faith, and to keep his mercy in mind,"[19] and are therefore important for us. Because they had not the form or meaning of a sacrament Tyndale rejected the sacraments of the medieval church other than Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The medieval church had broken the covenant in many ways. Through covetousness the spiritualty had usurped the temporal regiment and subjugated kings to the rule of the pope. Covetousness had also caused the spiritualty to turn the spiritual regiment upside down with the spiritualty selling to the people false hope and depriving them of the salvation Christ died to give them freely. The spiritualty's covetousness had also caused them to invent purgatory and to convert the truths of God into means for their own enrichment. The covenant was broken through their false faith, false worship and false works.

Throughout the whole period of Tyndale's writings there was a consistency in his theology, and there are no signs of any shift in his doctrine. His reliance on the scriptures meant that he rejected the pagan influence of the Greek philosophers, and where he used other theologians (e.g. Luther) he only took from their writings what he considered had the weight of scripture behind it, altering and rejecting anything else. The work of the Holy Spirit is vital to the Christian's life, permeating, guiding and enabling the Christian to grow and develop as a child of God throughout his life. Tyndale's doctrine of the temporal regiment with his understanding that it goes back to God's creation brings all mankind together as brothers and sisters for we are all under the law natural. This

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[19] *Matthew* 2/91

brings with it a tolerance, as Tyndale wrote, that if we hinder even infidels from their right under the law natural is sin against God.[20] And his evangelistic zeal is seen as he tells us we must do good works to the heathen to win them to Christ.

Tyndale's theology is realistic and it has a freshness and a vitality about it. The covenant of salvation depends solely upon God – and man, dead in trespasses and sins, can contribute nothing to it. It is also for God and his glory, so that he can become our Father, and to achieve this and to satisfy God's justice Christ shed his blood on the Cross. Finally, to enable the covenant to be effective, the Holy Spirit brings life to God's elect, and works continually in their lives to enable them to be and live as God's children until, at last, he leads them into God's presence in heaven.

However, man is not a puppet in the hands of God. When Adam sinned man's will became enslaved to the devil's will, and man lost the freedom to choose those things which were good and pleasing to God. But when the Holy Spirit's power freed the elect from Satan's power and brought them from the death of sin and they were born again, then the elect were able to choose God and become one of his children. The Christian's will is free to choose to repent and believe the gospel, and to have faith and love towards God and his neighbour, and all the way through the Holy Spirit works in him and with him, purifying his thoughts and actions with the blood of Christ.

"William Tyndale's radicalism is hardly in doubt. … He abandoned the dogma of the middle ages and sought to bring religion into

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[20] *Obedience*, 1/204

life. He read the scriptures, not in the light of scholastic debates that had meaning only to scholars, but in the light of his own experience."[21] And as Greenblatt wrote, "Works like Tyndale's are, in effect, among the primary sources of self-fashioning."[22] Tyndale has left us a legacy, not only in his Bible translation but also in his other writings which need reading as Tyndale's work without dissecting them to fit any glass slipper which may be at hand for us to use, as scholasticism did in the middle ages.

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[21] Rollison, 96
[22] Greenblatt, 86

APPENDIX 1

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

Through reading and re-reading *The Supper of the Lord* I am convinced that it is the only writing attributed to Tyndale, in the Parker Society Edition, which cannot be Tyndale's work. It quickly became apparent that *The Supper of the Lord* did not have the same theology as the other writings of Tyndale, and also it contradicted what Tyndale had written elsewhere. The work of everyone who has demonstrated on other grounds that the *Supper* is not the work of Tyndale are right. It may, as some suggest, be the work of George Joye; all I can say is that it is not the work of Tyndale.

1 *The Supper of the Lord* does not have the theological emphasis on the blood of Christ which we find in Tyndale's writings.[1]

2 The author of *The Supper* based his teaching about the sacrament very largely on the sixth chapter of John. Tyndale's comment on John 6 is that "This oration is nothing to the purpose. For Christ spake to the blind and unbelieving Jews; testifying to them, that they could have no life except they should first eat his flesh and drink his blood: … And therefore must it be understood of faith

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[1] References to 'the blood of Christ' where there is a Tyndalian theological meaning, in *Sacraments* (106) is 39.6% of the phrase. In *The Supper* (66), only 4.5%, whilct 15.5% have a non Tyndalian theology. The other references in both works refer to the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

only, and not of the sacrament."[2] Tyndale also never referrred to John 6 in any passage dealing with his sacramental theology.

3 The authorship of *The Supper of the Lord* has a history attributing it to George Joye with some arguing from the English for Joye and some for Tyndale. I cannot comment on this except that reading *The Supper* quite apart from its theology, it does not feel as if it were written by Tyndale but by some other writer. Regarding the evidence of the authorship I refer to the writings, amongst others, of Anderegg, Cargill Thompson, Clebsch, Mozley, and O'Sullivan. Without looking closely at the theology of George Joye I cannot say whether it was likely that Joye wrote *The Supper of the Lord* or not.

On these three grounds I reject Tyndale's authorship and my thesis ignores *The Supper of the Lord* in assessing Tyndale's theology. The fact that in every other work Tyndale has a consistent theology which we do not find in *The Supper* reinforces this decision.

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[2] *Sacraments,* 1/368f

APPENDIX 2

Because my research has been to discover Tyndale's theology from his writings I have only been able to glance at many of questions people have asked. It is now possible to try to answer some of those questions. Other questions have been raised through my research, and these also need to be addressed. There are at least eleven areas of theological research which I think are needed, ranging from *articles* to (I believe) *doctoral dissertations.* I have already started work on the first of these.

1 The roots of Tyndale's theology, Trevisa and Lollardy: Erasmus and Christian humanism.

2 Tyndale and Puritanism: the Father of English Puritanism?

3 Tyndale and Luther.

4 The Two Regiments in Tyndale – State and Church.

5 Tyndale and the Henrican Reformers – was there any common ground between them?

6 Law and Gospel – Tyndale, Luther, Reformed and Anglican Doctrine.

7 Tyndale and the Failure of the Unreformed Church.

8 Sacramental Theology in the Sixteenth Century.

9 The Fatherhood of God.

10 The Doctrine of God in Relation to Salvation.

The omission of Zwingli and the Swiss Reformers from this list is because I consider the similarities between their theology and Tyndale's can more likely be explained through a similarity between them and

Wycliffism. Until an in depth study of Tyndale's theology with Lollardy is done we will not know if this further study is needed.

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