

Tyndale For Today

Sources

The New Testament Translated by William Tyndale 1534, Edited for the Royal Society of Literature by N. Hardy Wallis, M.A., Cambridge at the University Press, 1938.

William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses Called the Pentateuch (1530)
Centaur Press Ltd.
Fontwell Sussex
1967

Francis Fry's Facsimile of Tyndale's Translation of Jonah

Tyndale for Today

William Tyndale's Translation of the New Testament & the Pentateuch

Edited for the Modern Reader by Wyatt Reece, MDiv.

Tyndale for Today is published as a reader's edition. It is recommended to open one of the New Testament or Old Testament books and read the book through. In many aspects there is no better translation than Tyndale's work. The terms and the language that seem so archaic are characteristic of classic literature. After getting used to reading them the old forms of writing are not inferior.

Introduction

The Apocalypse, The Sign 'Thau' & 'Evil Angels'

Tyndale's Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount and How It Relates to The Seventh & Thirteenth Chapters of Revelation

And though faith in Christ's blood make the marriage between our soul and Christ, and is properly the marriage garment, yea, and the sign Thau, that defendeth us from the smiting and power of the evil angels... (from The Prologue to the Sermon on the Mount, W. Tyndale)

I start to read Tyndale's Prologue and notice this mysterious phrase: "and the sign Thau," (a Hebrew alphabet character,) along with the striking combination, "evil angels." I'm intrigued by the obscure phrases and wonder what he could mean. Then I run across some references to make a connection and research. The references are Ps. 78.49 & Ezekiel 9. These fill me in on what Tyndale means.

The connection these things have with Revelation is twofold. The evil angels relates to what happens in Revelation seven, "the four angels (to whom power was given to hurt the earth and the sea)" and in the margin notes by Tyndale, "The good angels here in this book are the true bishops and preachers, and the evil angels are the heretics and false preachers". Then too, the sign Thau is like the sign on the forehead mentioned in Revelation

seven, where the angel with God's seal sealed the servants of God in their foreheads. "Hurt not the earth neither the sea, neither the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." And, similarly in chapter thirteen, "And he made all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads."

Here, is a picture like one that comes from the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel, the prophet, has a vision of angels approaching ancient Jerusalem just before its fall. In his vision most of the angels concern evil coming upon the unfaithful people there. The destruction is coming because those ancient people denied the Almighty God of their nation and turned to lesser gods of their own making. Not everyone has turned away from God though. Ezekiel sees another angel coming who is a scribe. With ancient instruments of writing he places his initial on the foreheads of those who are faithful to Almighty God.

This angel takes his ancient pen and ink and places his signature, a sign (a thau תו) on their foreheads. It is a sign that they claim God and the God of Heaven claims them. Thus, it follows that their lives are spared from the coming destruction.

Like this earlier vision of Ezekiel's, John in Revelation speaks of an angel's seal. There are ones in chapter seven upon whose foreheads God has placed his own signature by means of an angel from heaven because of their love for him and identification with him and who God will save. Strikingly, but in an opposite way, there is a signature

that chapter thirteen speaks of that is from the Beast. This is the best-known sign while the more significant one is completely overlooked. In John's vision the people there give their lives over to the claims of evil. John tells us that the signature of the Beast is six hundred three score and six, the number of man. What this means is that where someone or some group of people have displaced the Almighty God by discrediting him and taken up the holy things of God for himself or themselves, either worshipping idols (made with his own hands or making a creature of God into an idol,) or himself with self-worship there is the sign of the claim of evil. It is the intense displacing of God and the things of God and putting there instead the things of man. Essentially, it is man making himself and his world both God and heaven.

The sign of the signature of the forehead is woven together with the events concerning evil angels.

"And he had power to give a spirit unto the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak, and should cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed. And he made all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that has wit count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred, three score and six." (Revelation 13)

And an angel tells the four angels to wait and not to harm the earth and seas nor the trees. The destruction to the world that they will bring is not stopped, only pending. From this Tyndale mentions evil angels who are messengers to the church, like preachers and leaders, who bring heresy. Psalms 78 tells of angels that bring destruction.

"He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, Wrath, and indignation, and trouble, A band of angels of evil."

Seven Days of Creation

The First Chapter of Genesis

I would like to discuss the first chapter of Genesis. What we should notice is not so much that creation took six days but rather that the six days of creation is anchored in the faith and religion of ancient Israel. It's an anchor for their faith and also fits a strong pattern of godliness. For instance, right

off we see how in a day's work God executes a task of creation then names what he has just created. Adam's godliness takes a form of expression in his task to give names to the beasts. He also names woman as the corresponding creature to man. The name woman is the feminine form of the name for man in biblical Hebrew. Also, in their godliness, the ancient Israelites did a full day's work starting in the morning and ending in the evening. They worked like this for six days then rested for a day.

This follows God's pattern of creation. When God began creation, he created light and darkness first and then named them. And then there was a day; the first day of his work. It's a day because it's described as the work that is followed by an evening and a morning. It's also significant that the sun, moon, and stars did not appear until the fourth day. The evening and morning we are familiar with does not happen until then. We should not picture the first evening and morning in the same terms as we apply to them now. They simply mean on that first day that God accomplished a day's work of a kind of work that only God can do. This continues until all of creation is accomplished and God rests and sanctifies the seventh day.

Surely Die

The second chapter of Genesis.

"And the LORD God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it: and the LORD God commanded Adam saying: of all the trees of the garden see thou eat. But of the tree of knowledge of good and bad see that you eat not: for even the same day you eat of it, you shall surely die."

You shall surely die:

The dying here that is spoken of is intensive. The casual reader who thinks similar to how I would, might think something like this: "They will be struck down by lightning immediately!" But this is not what it means and this is not what happened. For a long time, I have pondered what this 'surely die' means. In my studies, I put something together like this.

Well, it's something that refers to the heavy weight of guilt they had to bear as a penalty of their transgression. More things that were similar came into my thoughts. 'Surely die,' the first death of all was a homicide. It was not a gentle, peaceful, natural death after a long productive life. Among the first brothers, ever, the one brother, out of envy and hatred, murdered his own brother whom God

blessed so completely. That horror must have something to do with 'surely die.'

Then death finally came to all people. Only Noah and his family were spared from drowning in the flood from the rain of forty days and forty nights. Here certainly is 'surely die.'

Also, I thought of the civil war in ancient Israel with the death in families and the dilemmas they were brought to face. In modern times there was the Jewish holocaust. And, nearly a century before, in our own country, there was the civil war that some called 'the bloody brother war.' All of these instances are death at its worst. But not the very worst.

Yes, all these ideas are related but I think there is something more that is at the center of what this term, 'surely die,' means. There are several things that it doesn't mean.

It doesn't mean that God lost control; that he is not Almighty God; that he isn't Lord of all. It doesn't mean that he was caught by surprise or that his creation was not exceedingly good as he concluded at first after he finished creating it. For there is the wise correction he gave from the disobedience of Adam and Eve that must have resulted in the example of Abel's worthy and pleasing sacrifice of his best; the appearance of beauty in God's eyes that Noah conducted his life with; Abraham's faith and many more examples. And there are other ways that God was wise in this matter of instruction and its penalty concerning the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The truly horrible meaning of 'surely die' may be seen in the form of a picture, a death scene; and comes from Christ's bringing to bear the words of the prophets upon some of the people of his own day who had sorely transgressed against God and were not able to let go of their own good for the sake of embracing God's good.

TFT Publishing Roots

The year was about 1980. While I was taking a Hebrew class, and thinking about all the tedious memorization, I wished that I could load a dictionary/lexicon onto a computer. It would be so much faster and easier. It was expensive for a student in those days, but I had the necessary incentive to buy

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter nine, there are these words written in the scripture: "It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, go into hell, into fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dies not, and the fire never goes out. Likewise if your foot offend you, cut him off. For it is better for you to go halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dies not, and the fire never goes out. Even so if your eye offend you, pluck him out. It is better for you to go into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dies not, and the fire never goes out."

These words picture a dead body forever subject to decomposing by worms and of tormenting flames with a pain that never relents. They are taken from Isaiah, the sixty sixth chapter: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the dead bodies of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Here is truly what 'surely die' means.

In all this everything is not lost. The gospel message in Christ is that he can deliver a sinner even from such a death. The point in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dry bones is that God's complete power to save overcomes certain death. By Christ's painful death and suffering at the malicious hand of evil (though he himself was perfectly innocent and righteous,) God breaks both sin and death. God brings life by resurrection and by faith in Christ to save. Christ saves not just for new life but, moreover, saves from hell.

a small computer, a very small one. It was a handheld TRS 80. I think it had about 1.5k RAM and an interface for a cassette tape player. It had one line to program with. I succeeded in programming a very small lookup tool for Hebrew. I realized that computers work well with numbers. I put

the Hebrew alphabet in a number system and used multiplication to devise words. So, it worked something like a number character multiplied by 10,000 took the first place, then times a thousand took the second, and the number itself took the third-place position. (Hebrew stems have three place characters.) I could load somewhere between 50 and 100 words and do a lookup. Thus, I learned programming in a very simple way.

A while later I heard my Hebrew professor say (I respected him very much) that he got a personal computer, an Apple. So, I also spent way too much money and bought an Apple IIe. Personal computing required a small fortune in those days but it was an exciting investment for many interested people. I remember reading, when this was happening about how it was as if all one had to do was to announce a new product in hardware or software and interested people would as much as throw money at them.

When I brought my new computer home I began programming. Once again, expenses were so high I couldn't afford software and programmed my own applications. On the new home computer, as I sat down to work I was overwhelmed with having 24 lines on the screen to program with. One line is simple and a good teacher. After getting used to a bigger display I discovered that programming gave me a good sensation. I would try something and would receive an immediate response from the compiler with details of what was wrong. This intense feedback satisfied me, and I could program and learn to program for hours and hours. I learned basic. Tried machine language. Learned Paschal. And learned C. The man who owned the computer store I shopped at said that he had only heard the words C and Apple II together once. This was because I had a C compiler for my Apple II that I had upgraded to a II GS.

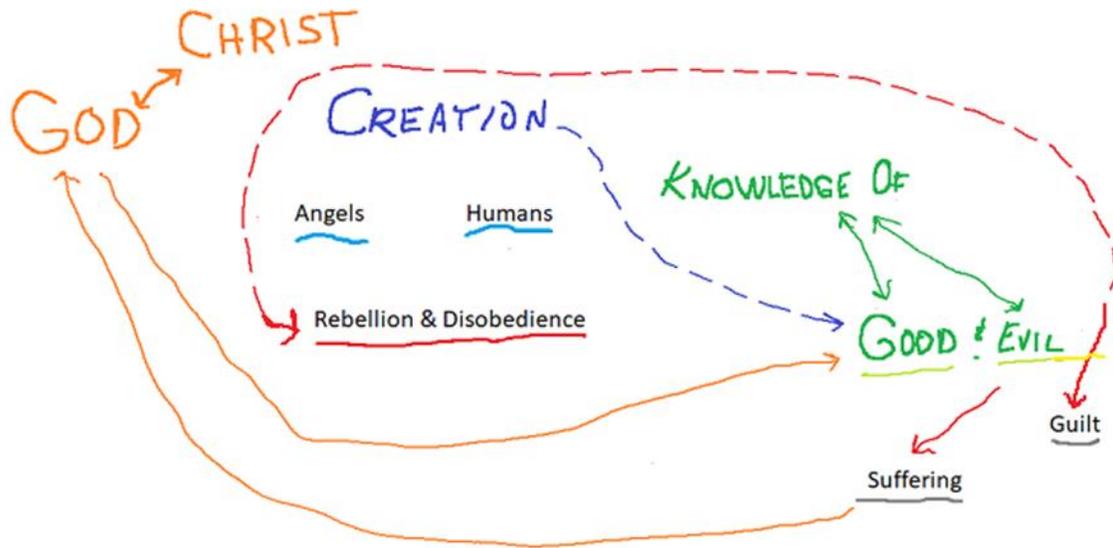
In those days I was sitting in the library at seminary. I loved what I heard about the martyr William Tyndale who translated the Greek New Testament (and much of the Hebrew Old Testament) into English. I was reading his New Testament translation and I thought how more people should be reading this. And thought then that I could do

that, make a publication and edit it for modern reading. The New Testament I read there was out of print. I copied the entire volume, page for page, on a copier (except for the introductory material). That work alone required much time. Later I did the same for the Pentateuch. Then I typed them into my computer's word processor. I typed every word, starting on the Apple II, then migrating to an IBM PC clone. Over the years I hand typed these two volumes at a rate of about a chapter per day. Also, in my secular work as a layman, I finally gained a position as a database programmer. Then at home, after many laptop upgrades for my personal computer over the years, and then after being laid off from work, I devoted myself to the publications. I wrote and rewrote applications to work with Tyndale's text and the ancient biblical languages. That work is now in the finishing process.

Northern Mockingbird, outside, in front of the picture window, almost posing close by for my small camera.



Good and Evil in Genesis Three



How Evil Happened

The serpent tempts Eve. She eats of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and gives it also to Adam and he eats. God's confrontation with Adam and Eve discloses an often-overlooked aspect of how evil is related to God.

- After creation is complete with the crowning event of creating mankind in the image of God, God sees that creation is exceedingly good.
- The Garden of Eden has two trees that Adam and Eve are not to eat of. Eve is tempted and eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Afterwards, God probes Adam's response. God's probing Adam and Eve eventually indicates how God is disassociated from evil. When Adam passes his guilt to Eve and Eve to the serpent this transfer is not necessarily passing the buck but is, more decisively, removing the event of evil from the primary aspect of God's work and person. Evil is a secondary or tertiary occurrence in respect to creation.
- God is wholly good. Evil can only be considered as an occurrence that is remote from God.

God and the knowledge of good and evil

When the serpent tempts Eve, he promises that she will become like God.

Then said the serpent to the woman: Tush! you shall not die: But God does know, that whensoever you should eat of it, your eyes should be opened and you should be as God and know both good and evil.

The serpent's promise is false but part of what he says is true. Death does come to creation in the most overpowering and devastating ways. But God does know both good and Evil.

	Good	Evil
Creation — Adam & Eve	Their lives have a pattern of godliness, from the first.	They become guilty of disobeying God. Sin comes with the overpowering aid of temptation and a false promise.
Creation — the Angels	They are good from the time that God created them and are his messengers even still.	Evil comes with the spiritual rebellion against God's Sovereignty. The angels who rebel also know evil by doing evil. This evil is in a spiritual realm only and not yet in a temporal setting.
God	God is wholly good and evil is both remote concerning him and removed from his primary working.	God knows evil not in the same way as creation. The only way God knows evil is by the suffering inflicted upon him by the evil done by his creatures. This is true as well for Christ, who is God Incarnate. Christ is sinless yet suffered tremendously: rejected, despised and crucified.

*An Excerpt from Demaus' Biography of Tyndale**Revision of the Testament / Joye's Attack on Tyndale*

The great work of the year 1534, however, was the entire revision of his New Testament, and the issue of a second edition, which has been, not inappropriately, styled 'Tyndale's noblest monument' Since the first printing of the work at Worms it had been frequently reproduced, but never under Tyndale's superintendence. The original edition had been reprinted, but without any attempt to introduce any of those corrections which Tyndale had promised in his 'Preface to the Reader,' in his first issue; indeed, so far from being improved in these subsequent reprints, innumerable errors had been permitted to creep in from the ignorance of the foreign printers.

The history of the English Bible between the years 1526 and 1534 is still so badly ascertained that it cannot be given in detail; but on the whole we may accept, as probably coming near to the truth, the abstract given by one who has already been several times mentioned, and who will occupy a prominent place in this chapter —George Joye.

'Thou shalt know that Tyndale, about eight or nine years ago [Joye is writing in December, 1534, or January, 1535], translated and printed the New Testament in a mean great volume [he means the octavo at Worms], but yet without Kalendar, Concordances in the margin, and Table in the end. And anon after, the Dutchmen got a copy, and printed it again in a small volume, adding the Kalendar in the beginning, Concordances [i.e. Parallel passages] in the margin, and the Table in the end. But yet for that they had no Englishman to correct the setting, they themselves, having not the knowledge of our tongue, were compelled to make many more faults than were in the copy, and so corrupted the book that the simple reader might oftentimes be tarried and stick. After this they printed it again, also without a corrector, in a greater letter and volume, with the figures [woodcuts] in the Apocalypse, which was therefore much falsier than their first. When these two prints (there were of them both about five thousand books printed), were all sold more than a twelvemonth ago, Tyndale was pricked forth to take the Testament in hand, to print it and correct it as he professeth and promiseth to do in the later end of his first translation. But Tyndale prolonged and deferred so necessary a thing and so just

desires of many men: in so much that in the mean season the Dutchmen printed it again the third time in a small volume like their first print, but much more false than ever it was before. And yet was Tyndale here called upon again, seeing there were so many false printed books still put forth, and bought up so fast; for now was there given, thanked be God, a little space to breathe and rest unto Christ's Church, after so long and grievous persecution for reading the books [i.e. probably after the legislation of March, 1534]. But yet before this third time of printing the book, the printer desired me to correct it; and I said, "It were well done, if ye printed them again, to make them truer, and not to deceive our nation with any more false books; nevertheless, I suppose that Tyndale himself will put it forth more perfect and newly corrected, which if he do, yours shall be nought set by, nor never sold." This notwithstanding yet they printed them, and that most false, and about two thousand books, and had shortly sold them all. All this long while Tyndale slept, for nothing came from him, as far as I could perceive. Then the Dutch began to print them the fourth time, because they saw no man else going about them; and after they had printed the first leaf, which copy another Englishman had corrected to them, they came to me and desired me to correct them their copies; when I answered as before, that, "if Tyndale amend it, with so great diligence as he promiseth yours will be never sold." "Yes," quod they, "for if he print two thousand, and we as many, what is so little a number for all England? And we will sell ours better cheap, and therefore we doubt not of the sale." So that I perceived well and was sure that whether I had corrected their copy or not, they had gone forth with their work, and had given us two thousand more books falselier printed than ever we had before. Then I thus considered with myself, England hath enough and too many false Testaments, and is now likely to have many more; yea, and that whether Tyndale correct his or no, yet shall these, now in hand, go forth uncorrected too, except somebody correct them; and what Tyndale doth I wot not, he maketh me nothing of his counsel; I see nothing come from him all this long while, wherein, with the help that he hath, that is to say, one both to write it and to correct it in the press, he might have done it thrice since he was moved to do it. For Tyndale I know well was not able to do it without such an helper, which he hath ever had hitherto.'

In short, Joye, at the urgent request of the printer, who was the widow of Christopher of Endhoven, undertook to correct the press for the extremely moderate remuneration of fourpence-halfpenny sterling for every sheet of sixteen leaves. It is probable, it is in fact certain, that Joye has omitted, through ignorance, some of the early surreptitious reprints of Tindale's New Testament; but from his statement it is evident that besides Tindale's own editions, four others had been issued previous to that which Tindale himself revised in November, 1534. Unfortunately, these surreptitious editions have not been identified; but we are probably not exaggerating when we suppose that on the average, every year since its first issue, a new edition had been printed and circulated in England. And it must be remembered that these editions were all reprints of the octavo of Worms, and that they were therefore without note or comment, containing simply the text of Holy Scripture in English, with references in the margin to parallel passages.

Some writers, anxious to find excuses for the authorities who prohibited the Bible and punished those that read it, allege that it contained offensive notes, which no authority, lay or clerical, could be expected to tolerate; but this is a total delusion, a defence of ancient bigotry by modern ignorance. It must not be forgotten, that what was prohibited, what was condemned, what was burnt, was the simple text of Holy Scripture, without any note, or comment, or prologue of any kind whatsoever. The Bible-burners of the sixteenth century would have repudiated with indignation the motives which candid moderns have been kind enough to invent for them. In their judgement the whole question was entirely free from those complications which modern refinement has introduced; and they pronounce their opinion with a plainness which at once supersedes all doubt.

'The New Testament translated into the vulgar tongue,' says one of the chief opponents of the Reformers, 'is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the veil of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!' That men who cherished such sentiments as these should proscribe and burn the Bible in the native

tongue, was as natural as that men who dread contagion should burn all infected garments.

The narrative of Joye, which we have just quoted, was intended as a sort of explanation and defence of his conduct in issuing a revised reprint of Tindale's New Testament, although he was well aware that Tindale himself had for some time been occupied in a careful revision and correction of his own work. Joye, indeed, took care not to connect Tindale's name with his edition; but it was undeniably little more than a reprint of Tindale's, with a few changes introduced. These, moreover, were made without any attempt to confer the translation with the original Greek, a task for which Joye's scholarship was wholly inadequate. He himself acknowledges that he merely 'mended' any words that he found falsely printed, and that when he 'came to some dark sentences that no reason could be gathered of them, whether it was by the ignorance of the first translator or of the printers,' he had 'the Latin text' by him, and 'made it plain.' In fact, the work had no pretension whatever to be considered an original production, and was simply such a plagiarism as any modern laws of copyright would interdict or punish. It was ushered into the world with a pompous and affected title; 'The New Testament as it was written and caused to be written by them which heard it, whom also our Saviour Christ Jesus commanded that they should preach it unto all creatures'; and the colophon paraded it as 'diligently over-seen and corrected.' Not much diligence, however, could be expected for fourpence-halfpenny a sheet; and although the printers did their part well (for the work is got up with remarkable neatness), Joye's diligence seems to have been in proportion to the smallness of his remuneration.

The changes which he has introduced are few in number, of the very smallest possible consequence, never in any case suggested by the original Greek, and probably not in a single instance effecting any improvement either in the accuracy or the clearness of the version which he thus presumed to correct. In the three chapters of St. Matthew, for example, which contain the Sermon on the Mount, he only ventures to make eight changes: in two of them he is certainly wrong; in a third he has mistaken the meaning of Tindale; in a fourth he has misunderstood the sense of the original; a fifth is a permissible variation in the rendering of a participle; and the remaining three are grammatical trifles, such as the substitution of shall for will, into for to. This may probably be taken as a fair specimen of Joye's work, which scarcely aspires beyond

the province of an ordinary corrector of the press, and, except in one respect, was, with all its pretensions, simply a barefaced reprint of Tindale's Testament.

One change, however, and that not unimportant, Joye did venture with most intolerable arrogance to introduce. In his intercourse with Tindale there had been frequent discussions on an abstruse doctrinal question much controverted in the Christian Church, — the condition of the souls of the dead between death and judgement. In his controversy with Sir Thomas More, Tindale had asserted, or, at least, had admitted, that 'the souls of the dead lie and sleep till Doomsday,' whereas Joye maintained, in common perhaps with most members of the Church, Reformed or un-Reformed, that at death the souls passed not into sleep, but into a higher and better life. On this point, according to Joye's own narrative, he and Tindale had frequently been engaged in rather sharp discussions; and he complains that Tindale had repeatedly treated him in a somewhat abrupt and uncourteous fashion, upbraiding him with his want of scholarship, and ridiculing his arguments, 'filliping them forth,' as he alleges, 'between his finger and his thumb after his wonted disdainful manner.' Full of this doctrinal controversy, Joye believed that Tindale had obscured the meaning of Scripture in several passages by the use of the term resurrection, where it was not the resurrection of the body that was really intended; and he therefore in his revision struck out the term, and substituted for it the phrase, 'life after this,' which was more in accordance with his own opinions.

A single specimen will show more clearly than any description the nature of the change thus effected; and the matter is of so much consequence in the personal history of Tindale, that it is necessary to understand it accurately. The words of our Lord (St. Matthew xxii. 30, 31, rendered in our Authorized Version, after Tindale, 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read?' &c, are translated by Joye, 'in the life after this they neither marry' — and 'as touching the life of them that be dead,' &c. Joye did not, as has been sometimes said, discard the word resurrection altogether, neither did he intend to express any doubt as to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; but he confined the use of the word to those instances in which it was unquestionably the resurrection of the body that was intended (e.g. Acts i. 22); and in all other cases, in order, as he supposed,

to avoid instilling prejudices into the minds of the unwary readers, he employed such circumlocutions as 'the life after this' or 'the very life.'

The doctrinal controversy thus raised does not fall within the province of our biography; but some knowledge of the facts involved is indispensable at this period of Tindale's life, all the more so, as they have been very considerably misrepresented by some previous writers.

From what has just been written the reader will be prepared to anticipate the indignation which Joye's proceedings excited in the mind of Tindale. For many months he had been engaged in a most elaborate revision of his New Testament, which must have cost nearly as much labour as the original translation; and now, just as his work was ready for the press, Joye's edition appeared. Not only was the real author of the translation thereby threatened with the loss of the fruit of his long and weary labours; not only was he dishonestly defrauded by the employment of his own previous toil against himself; but, to add insult to injury, he saw his translation tampered with by Joye, so as to give countenance to what he had often condemned as the mere 'curious speculation' of a stupid and ignorant man. Beyond all question Joye had acted dishonourably he had injured and insulted Tindale; and no human patience could have submitted unmoved to his proceedings. Tindale felt keenly the injury that had been done; he gave vent to his indignation in bitter and reproachful terms; and a personal controversy was thus excited, which was not appeased even at the time of his apprehension.

But before entering upon the narrative of this personal dispute, the work of Tindale deserves a more detailed notice. Tindale's first version had been made under considerable difficulties, as we have formerly seen; and he was himself aware that it was susceptible of many improvements. Not only might the text be improved by more accurate, more clear, or more concise, renderings; but, in his own estimation, it was desirable to give the work completeness by separate introductions to each of the books, and by greater attention to the marginal glosses, with which, as with a brief commentary, it was equipped. All this was accomplished with great pains in the edition of 1534. He had diligently gone over the whole of his translation, not only comparing it once again with the Greek text of Erasmus, but bringing to bear upon it that enlarged experience of Hebrew which he had acquired in his translation of the Old Testament, and which he now saw to be of no small service in illustrating the

Hellenistic of the New. In his 'Epistle to the Reader,' he states the general principles on which he proceeded, and they are not unworthy of consideration.

'Here hast thou, most dear reader, the New Testament or covenant made with us of God in Christ's blood, which I have looked over again, now at the last, with all diligence, and compared it unto the Greek, and have weeded out of it many faults, which lack of help at the beginning, and oversight, did sow therein. If aught seem changed, or not altogether agreeing with the Greek, let the finder of the fault consider the Hebrew phrase or manner of speech left in the Greek words; whose preterperfect tense and present tense is often both one, and the future tense is the optative mood also, and the future tense oft the imperative mood in the active voice, and in the passive ever. Likewise person for person, number for number, and an interrogation for a conditional, and such like, is with the Hebrews a common usage. I have also in many places set light in the margin to understand the text by. If any man find faults either with the translation or aught beside (*which is easier for many to do than so well to have translated it themselves of their own pregnant wits at the beginning, without an ensample*), to the same it shall be lawful to translate it themselves, and to put what they lust thereto. If I shall perceive, either by myself or by the information of other, that aught be escaped me, or might more plainly be translated, I will shortly after cause it to be mended. Howbeit, in many places methinketh it better to put a declaration in the margin, than to run too far from the text. And in many places, where the text seemeth at the first chop hard to be understood, yet the circumstances before and after, and often reading together, make it plain enough.'

The diligent correction promised in these words was faithfully and laboriously carried out, in such a manner as amply to justify the declaration of the title-page, that it was 'corrected and compared with the Greek.' The corrections introduced may be reckoned by thousands, and in the great majority of cases their obvious tendency is to bring the English version into closer correspondence with the Greek original. Tindale's scholarship comes out in very marked contrast with the carelessness and ignorance of his rival. In the Sermon on the Mount, as we have just seen, Joye introduced eight changes in all, half of them mistakes, and none of them improvements; Tindale has made no fewer than fifty-one changes in the same chapters, the merit of which is sufficiently indicated by the fact that, after

several subsequent revisions, many of them still exist in our Authorized Version.

A specimen of Tindale's 'revision and correction' will make palpable to the reader the enormous difference between his well-considered alterations and Joye's trifling and heedless changes. In St. Matthew v. 13, the original version of 1525 had run as follows: — 'Ye are the salt of the earth, but and if the salt be once unsavoury, what can be salted therewith? It is therefore good for nothing but to be cast out at the doors, and that men tread it under feet.'

In Tindale's revision of 1534, it is thus amended, and brought nearer to the Greek: — 'Ye are the salt of the earth, but and if the salt have lost her saltness, what can be salted therewith? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.'

Again, in verse 16, the previous reading, 'See that your light so shine before men,' is changed into the more literal and more beautiful, 'Let your light so shine before men.' And similarly in the succeeding verse the incorrect rendering, 'Ye shall not think that I am come to destroy the law,' is more accurately translated, 'Think not that I am come'; and the phrase, 'Heavenly Father,' in verses 45 and 48 of the old rendering, is replaced by the more euphonious as well as more accurate, 'Father which is in heaven.'

In the sixth chapter, the first translation had omitted the Doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer; the revised version, founding upon a collation of other printed texts, has inserted it; and several minor improvements are also introduced; thus, e.g., 'Consider the lilies' for 'behold the lilies'; 'what ye shall put on' for 'what raiment ye shall wear.' And in the seventh chapter, among other alterations, he effected a considerable improvement in the force of the last words of the sermon, by bringing the English into closer approximation to the Greek: 'It was overthrown, and great was the fall of it,' had been the version of 1525; for which Tindale now substituted the simple rendering which we now use, and which retains the rhetorical figure of the original: 'and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.'

These changes may be taken as a specimen of the revision to which Tindale submitted his former translation; and only those who have some slight acquaintance with the difficulties that beset the revision of a finished work can fully appreciate the amount of care and labour which Tindale must have bestowed upon his task. In the vast majority of instances his changes are obvious improvements;

Introduction

they give clearness to what was previously obscure, or force to what was formerly weak and pointless; they improve the melody and rhythm of the sentence; or, above all, they bring the English into more exact grammatical and verbal conformity with the original. Revision is a difficult and delicate task; seldom undertaken by the writers to whom we owe the original, and seldom ably performed by any other. Tindale is great in both capacities; he translated with unequalled felicity; he revised with unrivalled success; he has shown his countrymen both the true spirit in which the Holy Scriptures may be worthily rendered into English, and the true method by which that translation may be gradually improved and perfected.