ESTABLISHING AN ENGLISH BIBLE IN HENRY VIII'S ENGLAND:
TRANSLATION, VERNACULAR THEOLOGY, AND WILLIAM TYNDALE

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ABSTRACT

In the 1520s, thanks to the infiltration into England of Martin Luther's books, the English government began a dedicated campaign to protect the country from heresy. Their efforts, though substantial, failed to stem the tide of heresy. Though he was living in exile in the Low Countries, William Tyndale was the leading vernacular spokesman of the first generation of English religious reformers. He was also England's most talented early sixteenth-century Bible translator. Tyndale's opponents perceived him to be the greatest threat to the preservation of the traditional faith in England.

This thesis argues that Tyndale's position in modern historiography does not accurately reflect the one he held in his own day and that the erroneous portrayal is due to an inadequate examination of important aspects of the coming forth of the first printed editions of the English Bible. The areas of neglect include: the extent of the Biblical content of orthodox vernacular religious books published prior to 1526, English authorities' perceptions of the social and political impact of an English Bible, Tyndale's motivations for translating the Bible, the English government's rejection of Tyndale's English New Testament, and Tyndale's theological influence on later translations of the English Bible.

Drawing on all of Tyndale's published works, the body of vernacular religious writings printed between 1500 and 1525, and on the six cardinal English Bible translations between 1535 and 1611, this thesis demonstrates Tyndale's significant contributions to the English Reformation. It shows that Tyndale's 1526 English New Testament filled lay desire for an English Bible, that Tyndale was a formidable theologian who developed a distinct theology and a unique Bible-based social structure, and that Tyndale exerted considerable influence over English vernacular theology as well as on the theology of the English Bibles that followed his own translations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since this is a thesis about English scripture, it is fitting to begin my acknowledgements with a favourite passage from Alma 37:37: 'Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good'. Though it may go against academic tradition to acknowledge a divine source of help in completing one's thesis, my conscience requires it of me. Therefore, I gratefully and humbly acknowledge God's help, direction, support, and encouragement as I have laboured to complete this project. His assistance has been crucial and I could not have completed this thesis without it. He has unfailingly answered my prayers at each stage of my work and has inspired me in all of my thoughts and ideas. I give all the credit for succeeding in this project to Him.

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I come to my family and friends last, though they are not last in my thoughts. I am especially grateful for the support of my parents, Morris and Coleen James. They have believed in me and have supported me in countless ways. Extra special acknowledgments go to my two closest friends, Elizabeth Feil and Ann Bryner. They have been my long-distance lifelines during all of the years working to complete my MA and my PhD. Though words on a page cannot convey how important their presence in my life has been, I could not have survived without them. I am so grateful for the many hours of conversation we've had, for the much needed laughter and distraction that they have provided, and for their continual encouragement and support. They have truly been living versions of the Lord's tender mercies.

INTRODUCTION

In 1516, against considerable opposition by some contemporary theologians, Desiderius Erasmus published a bilingual edition of the New Testament.[1] It contained a corrected text of the Latin Vulgate facing a Greek text from which the corrections to the Latin had been made.[2] In response to theologian Maarten van Dorp's objections to his intended work on the Vulgate, Erasmus explained his rationale:

> There are often passages [in the Latin Vulgate] where the Greek has been badly translated because of the inexperience or carelessness of the translator, and often a true and faithful reading has been corrupted by uneducated copyists . . . or sometimes even altered by half-educated scribes not thinking what they do. Then who is giving his support . . . the man who corrects and restores these texts or the man who would rather accept an error than remove it?[3]

Staying true to his belief that the Vulgate was defective as a translation, Erasmus 'revised the whole New Testament . . . against the standard of the Greek original,' the language in which the New Testament had initially been written, and insisted that where the two texts differed, the Greek text should have the greater authority.[4] When the *Novum Instrumentum* was published, it created enormous shock waves throughout Europe. The Vulgate Bible had enjoyed unrivalled authority in the western Christian church for more than eight hundred years, and a number of church doctrines and practices, such as the doctrine of the Trinity or the practice of doing penance, had been established and upheld on the basis of the Vulgate's wording.[5] Erasmus' *ad fontes* approach to scripture challenged the authority of the Vulgate as well as the authority of the church. Religious reformers, including Martin Luther himself, were inspired by Erasmus' work and used it as support for rejecting traditional church practices and beliefs.[6]

William Tyndale, a graduate of Oxford University and a reform-minded priest, was among those inspired by Erasmus' ideas and publications. He was particularly

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[1] Erika Rummel, *Erasmus* (London: Contiuum, 2004), 76.

[2] Anne M. O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, eds., *An Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), xxi.

[3] *CWE*, vol. 71, Ep. 337:804, 384:222-23.

[4] *Ibid*, Ep. 384:226.

[5] Allan Jenkins and Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 59, 93.

[6] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, ix-xi.

moved by Erasmus' insistence that there should be universal access to the Bible through vernacular translation. According to John Foxe, author of *Acts and Monuments*, Tyndale's resolution to make the first English translation of the Bible from the original languages had been formed by 1523. By this time, Tyndale had graduated from Oxford and was living in Gloucestershire where he worked as a private tutor for Sir John and Lady Walsh of Little Sodbury Manor.[7] Because translation of the Bible into English without the approval of a Bishop had been illegal since 1409, Tyndale sought permission to translate from the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, in the summer of 1523.[8] Though his petition was denied, Tyndale remained undaunted and went into self-imposed exile in the Low Countries in 1524.[9] From there he published the first complete printed English New Testament in 1526 and a revised edition in 1534. Tyndale also published an English translation of the Pentateuch in 1530 and a translation of the book of Jonah in 1531. Because Tyndale was executed in 1536, his translation of the Old Testament books of Joshua through 2 Chronicles was published posthumously in 1537.[10] Tyndale's literary activities were not limited to Bible translation. He also published many polemical and exegetical works, such as the *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528), *The Practyse of Prelates* (1530), and *An Answere unto sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (1531).

Tyndale's biblical, polemical, and exegetical books made him the 'leading vernacular spokesman of the first generation' of English religious reformers.[11] Andrew Hope argues that Thomas More, England's primary lay defender of the established church, perceived Tyndale 'as the greatest of threats to Catholic Christianity' in England.[12] Paul Arblaster believes that, in the sixteenth century, Tyndale was 'seen by friend and foe alike as the intellectual father of English

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[7] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous dayes* (1563), STC (2nd ed.) / 11222, EEBO, 514, image 297L.

[8] David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 83-86.

[9] Gergely Juhasz & Paul Arblaster, 'Can Translating the Bible Be Bad for Your Health? William Tyndale and the Falsification of Memory' in *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity,* ed. Johan Leemans (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 316.

[10] O'Donnell, *Answere*, xxi.

[11] Juhasz & Arblaster, 'Bad for Your Health', 317.

[12] Andrew Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God: Tyndale between More and Joye' in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England*, ed. Paulina Kewes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 103.

Protestantism'.[13] The English government certainly believed that Tyndale and his written works were dangerous. Beginning in October 1526, Tyndale's Bible translations and other books were banned, burned, and repeatedly included in royal proclamations that prohibited heretical English books throughout the next decade.[14] Moreover, beginning in the late 1530s when the Henry VIII's government allowed English Bibles to circulate among the people and insisted that an English Bible be placed in every parish church, Tyndale's name was thought to be too dangerous a reminder of heresy to be mentioned in association with those Bibles, even though the six cardinal English translations between 1535 and 1611 were all heavily based on Tyndale's work.[15] Hope has described this unacknowledged use of Tyndale's translations as 'the greatest single act of plagiarism of the sixteenth century'.[16]

In spite of Tyndale's prominent position as England's leading reformer and most talented early sixteenth-century Bible translator, modern historiography admits that Tyndale has not been given the scholarly attention he deserves. Arblaster writes that Tyndale was 'a man whose lasting influence has been so profound that it is easy to miss it entirely.'[17] The first biographical information about Tyndale was published in the 1563 edition of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe's account supplied everything that was known about Tyndale's life until 1845 when Christopher Anderson published the *Annals of the English Bible;* a book that was originally designed to be a life of Tyndale but was extended beyond that purpose.[18] Subsequent biographers, Robert Demaus (1886), J.F. Mozley (1937), and David Daniell (1994) have continued to rely on Foxe's account, but with their differing styles and areas of emphasis, have attempted to use the available sources to bring Tyndale out of obscurity and to clear his historical reputation of what they have felt

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[13] Paul Arblaster, 'Tyndale's Posthumous Reputation' in *Tyndale's Testament,* eds. Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, & Guido Latré (Turnhout: Brepolis Publishers, 2002), 55.

[14] Paul L. Hughes & James F. Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol.1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 177, 191; Alfred W. Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 241.

[15] Pollard, *Records*, 200-232, 240; Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

[16] Hope, 'Plagiarizing the Word of God', 105.

[17] Arblaster, 'Tyndale's Posthumous Reputation', 55.

[18] Robert Demaus, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1886), 10.

to be ignorance, partisanship, and error.[19] Daniell remarks that Tyndale has been 'unfairly neglected' in the tide of scholarly books and articles concerning English history, literature, theology, and language. In his opinion, 'very little has yet been done on [Tyndale]' even though there is room for study in 'every aspect of his life', particularly in the area of Bible translation.[20]

Daniell's assessment of the work that still remains to be done concerning Tyndale is a legitimate one, though since making that assessment in 1994, the amount of scholarship pertaining to Tyndale has increased considerably. In preparation for the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *King James Bible* (KJB) in 2011, many books and articles on the translation of the Bible into English have recently been published.   Given Tyndale's pioneering work in rendering the original Biblical languages into English, he has figured prominently in that scholarship; mostly receiving credit for significantly shaping the English language as a whole and for influencing societal perceptions and behaviours as a result.

For instance, Naomi Tadmor's study on the English language of the Old Testament acknowledges that the English Bible was formed over time in a cumulative process that was influenced largely by the cardinal translations made between 1526 and 1611.[21] Tadmor argues that Tyndale's 1530 translation of the Pentateuch had a 'major influence on subsequent English biblical versions' because of how he chose to transpose, mould, and render the Hebrew language into terms that 'made sense to the people at that time and invoked certain notions and ideas'. Tyndale, therefore, not only had an impact on individual words of the English Old Testament, but he influenced the 'construction' of the social universe portrayed in the English Bible which provided proof for the social and cultural values and norms of contemporary society.[22]

Tadmor's study is an important one, not only because it successfully illuminates the significant effect Tyndale had on English Bible translation, but because it demonstrates how the language of the early English Bibles affected society as a whole; a critical point in rectifying what Daniell has described as scholarly 'Bible-blindness', or the deliberate exclusion of the Bible from 'discussions

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[19] Demaus, *William Tyndale*, 12; J. F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), v; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 4.

[20] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 4.

[21] Tadmor, *Social Universe*, 8.

[22] *Ibid*, 17, 20.

of events and experiences in British and American history'.[23] Tadmor is not the only scholar to notice Tyndale's influence on the English language in general and on the English Bible in particular. David Crystal's study of the *King James Bible's* contribution to English idiomatic expressions demonstrates that even though the *King James Bible* did 'more to fix' particular expressions in the minds of English-speakers than any other source, a significant amount of 'the memorable distinctiveness of the KJB . . . originated in Tyndale'.[24] Clearly, Tyndale is starting to be given his due, at least as far as his contribution to the English language is concerned.[25]

Closely connected with the scholarship pertaining to Tyndale and the translation of the English Bible is the research related to the written debate that was conducted between Thomas More and Tyndale between 1529 and 1532. A portion of that debate was about the English language and centred on the particular English words, 'congregation', 'elder', and 'love', that Tyndale used in rendering the theologically charged Greek words *ekklēsia, presbuteros*, and *agapē*.   The most recent research on the More/Tyndale debate, however, has not focused on their disagreements over the language of translation, but has covered many of their other major arguments including: how to interpret the Biblical text, authority of the church versus authority of scripture, and historical faith versus feeling faith.[26] Gregory explains that the 'continuing fascination with the clash between Tyndale and More' shows 'no signs of letting up' and admits that the critical editions of Tyndale's works, soon to be published, 'will almost certainly spur further scholarship'.[27]

In spite of this recent research, the historiography pertinent to Tyndale and his efforts to provide England with a vernacular Bible has not adequately addressed some important and often glaringly basic questions that are crucial for understanding the early years of the English Reformation. These questions are: first, how much written Biblical content was available to lay people prior to Tyndale's 1526 English

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[23] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), xiii, xv.

[24] David Crystal, *The King James Bible and the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7, 262.

[25] Arblaster, 'Tyndale's Posthumous Reputation', 55.

[26] See Gregory, 'Tyndale and More', 177-191; Tibor Fabiny, 'Church Paradigm versus Scripture Paradigm in the Debate of Sir Thomas More and William Tyndale,' in *Representing Religious Pluralization in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andreas Höfele (London: Lit, 2007), 15-43; David Weil Baker, 'The Historical Faith of William Tyndale: Non-Salvific Reading of Scripture at the Outset of the Reformation,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 62 (2009): 661-92.

[27] Brad Gregory, 'Tyndale and More, In Life and In Death,' *Reformation* 8, (2003): 173, 174.

translation of the New Testament? Second, why did the English government resist translating the Bible into English? Third, what motivated Tyndale to make an English translation of the Bible? Fourth, why was Tyndale's translation rejected by the English government? And fifth, how did the language Tyndale used in his translations of the English New Testament compare with the language of the popular vernacular religious texts of the early sixteenth century, and what impact did Tyndale have on the vernacular theology of later translations of the English Bible?

Chapter one seeks to answer the first question by examining the Biblical content in non-heretical printed vernacular religious works published between 1500 and 1525. In the early stages of the English Reformation, lay access to the Bible was a matter of significant polemical debate. Tyndale, John Frith, and William Barlow are among the early sixteenth-century authors who vociferously accused the traditional church of purposefully withholding the Bible from lay people. However, in modern historiography, this subject is lightly passed over or incorporated into arguments about whether or not there was a need for an English translation of the Bible, and whether or not religious and secular leaders would have provided one had English reformers not forced the issue.

Eamon Duffy is one revisionist author who insists that English lay people were satisfied with the religious texts that they had, such as Books of Hours or gospel harmonies, and that the English clergy would have eventually provided lay people with a vernacular Bible.[28] Daniell, on the other hand, declares that the Books of Hours and gospel harmonies did nothing to satiate lay hunger for an English Bible, and that the church leaders in England would 'never' have permitted a 'complete printed New Testament in English'.[29] Interestingly, neither Duffy nor Daniell provide very extensive textual evidence to support their arguments. They do little directly to analyse how much and what kind of Biblical content lay people had access to prior to Tyndale's New Testament and because of that cannot adequately argue what the effects of that exposure might have been or how interested lay people were in having an English translation of the Bible. Clearly, a thorough examination of the scriptural content in the early sixteenth-century printed religious books is long overdue.

Therefore, chapter one presents a detailed analysis of the Biblical content in five early sixteenth-century printed religious books. These texts were chosen for

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[28] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* 2nd edition, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 4, 79.

[29] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 100.

their popularity and because they represent the different types of non-heretical vernacular religious publications that were available in the early sixteenth century: printed sermons, gospel harmonies, and devotional aids. The analysis examines every reference to the Bible that can be found in these texts and will demonstrate that these books contain considerably more scriptural content than has generally been recognized by scholars, including Duffy and Daniell, and that the content is theologically clear and profound. Moreover, nearly all of the authors of these texts encouraged their readers to study the Bible for themselves because they felt that personal scripture study was a spiritual necessity. The chapter concludes by arguing that the scriptural content in early sixteenth-century vernacular religious texts, along with their authors' encouragement to study the Bible, contributed to lay demand for a complete English translation of the Bible.

Chapter two seeks to answer the question about why the English government resisted translating the Bible into English. Modern scholarship accounts for England's lack of a vernacular Bible by concluding that sixteenth-century religious and secular leaders were afraid that a vernacular Bible would spark heresy and rebellion among the people. Glyn Redworth and Gillian Brennan are among the scholars who argue that these fears were founded on England's experience with Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.[30] In spite of this accepted connection, however, historiographers have overlooked the fact that Wycliffe's name figures prominently in the early sixteenth-century discourse about heresy and have failed to investigate its significance. This chapter seeks to rectify that oversight and explores how Wycliffe's name was used by English authorities in the early days of the English Reformation to create an 'historical heresy', a chain of heretics stretching back to the primitive church. It will demonstrate that English authorities used this 'historical heresy' to undermine the reformers, justify England's lack of a vernacular Bible, and bolster their own position.

Chapter two will also show that English authorities were afraid that the traditional social hierarchy would be destroyed if a vernacular Bible was made available to all. As discussed above, modern scholarship generally explains England's lack of a vernacular Bible by focusing on fears of rebellion and heresy, but this practice glosses over the equally important concerns about the social structure.

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[30] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 11; Henry Wansbrough, 'Tyndale' in *The Bible in the Renaissance,* ed. Richard Griffiths (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 119; Richard Griffiths, 'Introduction', in Griffiths, *The Bible in the Renaissance,* 4; Glyn Redworth, 'Whatever happened to the English Reformation?' *History Today,* 37 (1987): 32; Gillian Brennan, 'Patriotism, Language and Power: English Translations of the Bible, 1520-1580,' *History Workshop Journal*, 27 (1989): 27.

Though some authors, such as Gergely Juhász, acknowledge that English authorities perceived the English Bible to be a 'threat' to the 'social' order, there has been little exploration into the details of the subject.[31] A detailed analysis of More's *Dyaloge concerning heresies* and Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christen Man* will demonstrate that there was a debate between the two authors about how to obtain and maintain social harmony, and that both of them were acutely aware that a vernacular Bible could be used to alter the traditional social structure. The analysis will also show that Tyndale developed a unique Bible-based social structure that he hoped would supplant the traditional one. This discovery lends itself to a later argument that Tyndale was a capable theologian who developed and taught his own unique brand of theology and that he deserves to be acknowledged for his intellectual achievements.

The most obvious of Tyndale's accomplishments was his pioneering English translation of the New Testament. Brian Cummings has stated that 'the creation of the English Bible' was 'the most significant literary event by far of the sixteenth century (Shakespeare included).'[32] If this is true, it would be important to understand why Tyndale was motivated to make the first ever printed English translation of the New Testament from the original languages. After all, the 1526 and 1534 editions of his translation later became the foundation of all other English Bibles that came thereafter.

Unfortunately, modern historiography's explanations for Tyndale's motivations are woefully inadequate. Anthony Levi and John King assert that Tyndale was inspired by Erasmus' *Paraclesis* while Daniell simply claims that Tyndale was 'inspired by God'.[33] Yet, a fuller explanation is possible if all of Tyndale's writings are taken into account and are gleaned for what they reveal about his sources of inspiration. Chapter three will show that Tyndale's motivations for translating the Bible centred on what he learned from Erasmus. We will find that Tyndale was thoroughly acquainted with Erasmus' written works and that Erasmus had a greater impact on him than any other person; even Martin Luther. A detailed

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[31] Gergely Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible Translations in the King James Bible' in *The KJB after 400 years: Literacy, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences,* eds. Hannibal Hamlin & Norman W. Jones, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 101.

[32] Brian Cummings, 'Reformed Literature and Literature Reformed' in *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 824.

[33] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 59, 61, 79, 83, 92–93; Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The intellectual genesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 339; John N. King, *English Reformation literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 46.

examination of Erasmus' humanist training programme for theology students, the *Methodus verae theologiae*, combined with a thorough textual analysis of all of Tyndale's published works, will reveal that Erasmus' *Methodus* provided Tyndale with the five humanist principles that became the foundation of all of his work. These principles helped Tyndale develop into an Erasmian theologian and as such, he translated the Bible into English to fulfil his responsibilities.

Chapter three also shows that scholars, such as Diarmaid MacCulloch and Richard Rex, who denigrate Tyndale to the level of a follower, either of Luther or of Erasmus, are mistaken.[34] When all of Tyndale's written works are taken into account, they show that even though he obtained many of his ideas from Luther and Erasmus, Tyndale also boldly disagreed with them on many significant points, such as justification by faith or the doctrine of free will. Tyndale, therefore, was not a follower, but was an intelligent man who effectively used the work of those he admired in the development of his own distinctive theology. His unique doctrinal position contributed to making the English Reformation distinct from the reform movements on the Continent.

Tyndale's 1526 New Testament was not received by the English authorities with anything like enthusiasm. Chapter four explores why the volume was adamantly rejected by the English government. It seeks to adjust modern historiographers' views that the translation was burned because of textual error, as some scholars, such as Charles Sturge and John King, have asserted.[35] By focusing on the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, who presided over and preached at the first official burning of Tyndale's New Testament in October 1526, and on Thomas More, who wrote, in English, against the translation in 1528, chapter four will reveal that government authorities burned Tyndale's New Testament because Tyndale was a malicious heretic, not because of textual error in the translation. The textual errors in Tyndale's New Testament, though objectionable, were ultimately considered to be the tokens, or evidence, of Tyndale's incurable malice. The English authorities perceived malice to be an infectious disease that could be spread through the written and spoken word and they desired to prevent the innocent and /or ignorant from contracting it through Tyndale's New Testament.

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[34] See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 2003), 580–81; King, *English Reformation*, 46; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113.

[35] Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, 1938), 23; John N. King, 'The Printing of Religious Propaganda' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485—1603*, eds. Mike Pincombe & Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 107; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 193.

The chapter focuses on the three most objectionable tokens of malice: the English words 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'. It covers the debate between Tyndale and More over these three words, demonstrating that malice has been passed over by scholars in their assessments of the debate. The detailed analysis will show that notwithstanding their other linguistic and theological arguments about 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love', More and Tyndale repeatedly returned to accusations of malice; illustrating that their debate was ultimately an exercise in exposing the opponent's corrupted will.

The textual errors discussed in the More/Tyndale debate bring up another important aspect of the English Reformation. Cummings has described the Reformation in England as a 'literary event in the sense that it was a textual process which redefined the uses and the meanings of the English vernacular.'[36] There is much to be agreed with in this description, since Richard Jones has demonstrated that English was a developing language in the early 1500s and that it was lacking in vocabulary and not accustomed to expressions of theology.[37] However, as far as Tyndale's contribution to redefining the uses and meanings of particular English words is concerned, there is much still to be explored.

Chapter five seeks to answer the question of how the language Tyndale used in his translations of the English New Testament compared with the language of the popular vernacular religious texts of the day. As discussed above, the More/Tyndale debate continuously draws scholarly attention; however, in spite of that, there has been no investigation of More's and Tyndale's claims about the contemporary usage and understanding of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'— three of the most controversial words Tyndale used in his English translations of the New Testament. Chapter five will demonstrate that there was a vernacular theology and a vernacular theological language before Tyndale's New Testament was published in 1526, a fact not adequately acknowledged by scholars like Cummings, and that a significant portion of it was orthodox. It will also show that 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were already part of that vernacular theological language, and that Tyndale used those words in his New Testament in harmony with the way that the other authors of orthodox religious books had used them.

Chapter five will also address the impact Tyndale had on the vernacular theology of later translations of the English Bible. As discussed above, modern

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[36] Cummings, 'Reformed Literature', 824.

[37] Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), 68-69; Brian Cummings, *Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 188.

historiographers like Tadmor, Crystal, and Daniell, though quick to credit Tyndale with influencing the vocabulary, rhythms and phrasing of later translations of the Bible, are less ready to acknowledge his theological impact.[38]   This chapter will demonstrate that Tyndale's translations of the Greek *presbuteros* and *agapē* into 'elder' and 'love' were repeatedly and consistently incorporated into every English translation of the Bible between 1526 and 1611 and that Tyndale's translation of the Greek *ekklēsia* into 'congregation' held sway until 1557 when 'church' was substituted and prevailed in subsequent versions. By the time of the *King James Bible*, Tyndale's 'elder' and 'love' had triumphed over More's 'priest' and 'charity' in Biblical translation. Even though More's 'church' replaced Tyndale's 'congregation' in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it is clear that Tyndale had a significant theological impact on the language of English theology, particularly on later translations of the English Bible.

William Tyndale, perceived by English authorities as the chief menace to the religious, social, and political stability of early sixteenth-century England, needs to be restored to an equal, if not identical, prominence in the scholarship of the early English Reformation. Though the specific implications of this thesis will be discussed more fully in the conclusion, there is one broad repercussion for this research that should be mentioned here. This thesis will bring Tyndale more fully out of the persistent historiographical obscurity that he has suffered from since the early 1600s. It will do so by examining, or re-examining, some of the fundamental questions related to the translation of the Bible into English. Because the research questions outlined above are basic, they can often be taken for granted and passed over with only superficial treatment, as has happened in the past.

By massaging the basic questions, however, and looking very closely at the primary sources related to them, this thesis will open up Tyndale's reputation; exposing areas of his thought, motivation, and abilities that have gone unappreciated before. It will also re-connect Tyndale to the linguistic context in which he lived and wrote; destroying the historiographical void that has been artificially created by those who insist that vernacular theology did not exist prior to 1521. Though Tyndale is now receiving much academic praise for his talent with, and influence over, the language of the English Bible, Tyndale was much more than a linguist. Hopefully, this thesis will demonstrate that Tyndale was also a talented

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[38] Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God', 105; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 134, 448; Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible translations', 107, 111; Tadmor, *The Social Universe,* 97; Crystal, *Begat,* 7; Mozely, *William Tyndale*, 98.

theologian and a man intelligent enough to engage with the leading minds of his day and hold his own.

CHAPTER ONE

Crumbs from the Master's Table:
Biblical Content in Printed English Religious Books 1500-1525

In 1530, a book entitled *A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scripture in Englysshe* was published in Antwerp and soon made its way into England. The title page contains a poem, written from the perspective of a lay person, accusing the English clergy of refusing to allow English lay people to have a vernacular translation of the Bible:

> Though I am olde / clothed in barbarors wede
> Nothynge garnysshed with gaye eloquency
> Yet I tell the trouth / yf ye lyst to take hede
> Agaynst theyr frowarde / furious frenesy
> Which recken it for a great heresy
> And unto laye people grevous outrage
> To have goddes worde in their natyfe langage.
>
> Enemyes I shall have / many a shoren crowne
> With forked cappes and gaye croosys of golde
> Which to maynteyne ther ambicions renowne
> Are glad laye people in ignorance to holde
> Yet to shewe the verite / one maye be bolde
> All though it be a proverbe daylye spoken
> Who that tellyth trouth / his head shalbe broken.[1]

These strongly anti-clerical sentiments effectively paint a picture of an early sixteenth-century England where lay people were forcefully and unjustly kept by the clergy from reading the Bible; a book they were acutely and innocently desiring to study. The author insists that this tragic picture is true and attempts to strengthen his veracity by acknowledging that even though he will acquire enemies and receive physical abuse for his words, he is willing to suffer for the truth's sake.

  A compendious olde treatyse's negative assertions about the clergy are hardly surprising given the situation in England in the 1530s for which they were published. The English authorities, both secular and religious, had been waging an active battle against vernacular scripture since 1526 when William Tyndale's first English translation of the New Testament began to be smuggled into the country

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[1] Richard Ullerston, *A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scripture in Englysshe* (Antwerp: J. Hoochstraten, 1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 3021, EEBO, recto folio Ai, image 1R.

aboard merchant ships.[2] Authorities first discovered copies of Tyndale's translation some time in October of 1526 and responded by immediately banning it. The Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, also officially warned London booksellers against selling it and stipulated that current owners turn any copies of the translation into authorities within thirty days.[3]

Unfortunately for government leaders, book smuggling was extremely effective, efficient, and nearly impossible to control.[4] Barrels of wine or oil could conceal water-tight boxes holding forbidden material or wooden chests might have false sides, bases, or other secret compartments which could contain dangerous propaganda. The most common smuggling method was to hide the flat printed sheets inside bales of cloth which bore secret marks for later identification.[5] These smuggling practices made the official ban on the New Testaments overwhelmingly ineffective.

English authorities also tried to get rid of Tyndale's translation by burning it.[6] The earliest ceremony, which will be more fully examined in chapter four, was held by Bishop Tunstal at St. Paul's Cross near the end of October 1526. By 1530, an unknown number of the volumes had been consigned to the flames at several other burnings.   One of these had even been held in Antwerp in 1527 for the benefit of a large number of resident English merchants and artisans, many of whom were sympathetic to evangelical doctrines and may have been involved in printing and exporting heretical books into England.[7]

Antwerp was the ideal location for such activities, since it was the hub of intense and varied trade between England and the Netherlands as well as the home of a large and well-capitalized publishing industry with an established tradition of

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[2] Mary Jane Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation: Lollards, Lutherans, and an Economy of Circulation,' *Renaissance Papers* (1996): 7; Cecilia A. Hatt, ed., *English Works of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester 1469-1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 57.

[3] Alfred W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible: The Documents relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English 1525-1611* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 131-132.

[4] Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation', 6.

[5] F. C. Avis, 'Book Smuggling into England during the Sixteenth Century,' *Leathwell monograph*, issue 22 (1972): 180-187.

[6] David Cressy, 'Book Burning in Tudor and Stuart England,' *Sixteenth Century Journal,* vol. 36, no. 2 (2005): 362.

[7] J. F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 117-118.

printing vernacular Bibles.[8] In fact, the first pirated reprint of Tyndale's New Testament was made in Antwerp and by 1528 Tyndale had permanently moved his operations there.[9] Beginning with *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (May 1528) all of Tyndale's subsequent books were published in Antwerp.[10]

A compendious olde treatyse* was also printed in Antwerp and is an unidentified sixteenth-century editor's version of a 'mid-fifteenth-century English redaction by an unidentifiable Lollard of a Latin text'.[11] Scholars have attempted to identify the sixteenth-century editor and have suggested that apostate friar Jerome Barlow or translators William Tyndale or William Roy might be responsible for the work.[12] The original Latin text was composed by Oxford theologian Richard Ullerston in 1401. Ullerston's original was his contribution to the early fifteenth-century Oxford debate concerning translation of the Bible into English, which will be discussed more fully in chapter five. Ullerston argued from philosophical, religious, and historical precedent that the Bible should be translated into the vernacular.[13] Unfortunately, the conclusions of the debate did not go Ullerston's way because of the influence of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Arundel was concerned about the continuing problems with the Wycliffite heresy at the university. It had originally been introduced at Oxford by the theologian John Wycliffe in the 1370s and Arundel felt that comprehensive measures needed to be taken to suppress it. In 1407, the Archbishop enacted a set of thirteen constitutions which remained operative at Oxford for one year. They were then promulgated at St Paul's on 14 January 1409. Copies of the constitutions

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[8] Gergely Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible Translations in the King James Bible,' in *The KJB after 400 years: Literacy, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences,* eds. Hannibal Hamlin & Norman W. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 102; Andrew Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation: the English exception in the English Reformation,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism,* eds. Peter Marshall & Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 168.

[9] Andrew Hope, 'Plagiarizing the Word of God: Tyndale between More and Joye,' in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England*, ed. Pauline Kewes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 96.

[10] Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible Translations', 103.

[11] Anne Hudson, 'The Debate on Bible Translation, Oxford 1401,' *English Historical Review*, 90 (1975): 17.

[12] ESTC, *A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to haue ye scripture in Englysshe*, Citation No. S104619, General Note.

[13] ODNB, 'Richard Ullerston'.

were forwarded to all bishops and were published in every diocese in England.[14] Among other things, the Constitutions of Oxford made translation of the Bible into English illegal for the next one hundred years.

In the preface of *A compendious olde treatyse*, the editor expands the arguments from the introductory poem and insists that the clergy so 'furiously barke' against Tyndale's New Testament and condemn it for being 'sore corrupt' because they cannot 'admytte any translation to the laye people' for fear that they and their 'myschevous lyvynge' will be exposed in the light of God's true word.[15] Similar descriptions of lay ignorance of the Bible and accusations that the clergy were maliciously withholding it from lay people can also be found in other early sixteenth-century publications.

The Ordynarye of Crystyanyte or of Crysten Men (1502)*,* translated from the French *L'ordinaire des chrestiens* by Andrew Chertsey*,* describes lay ignorance of God's word as a 'horryble famyne' that 'invadeth all moost all the worlde for the defaute of brede spyrytuell that is for to understande of holy doctryne'.[16] William Barlow, canon of St. Osyth's Abbey in Essex, expressed his views of the situation in *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thynge but trothe* (1528). Barlow's two fictional characters, Watkyn and Jeffraye, servants to a fictional priest, hold a dialogue over their master's concerns in which Watkyn says,

> They saye scripture is so diffuse
> That laye people on it to muse
> Shulde be never the better.
> It is no medlynge for foles
> But for soche as have bene at scoles
> As doctours that be graduate.

Jeffraye responds with,

> Had thou studied an whoale yere
> Thou couldest not have gone no nere
> To hit their crafty suttelnes.
> For yf the gospell were soffered
> Of laye people frely to be red
> In their owne moders langage.

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[14] ODNB, 'Thomas Arundel'.

[15] Ullerston, *A compendious olde treatyse,* recto folio Ai, image 2L.

[16] Andrew Chertsey, Ordynarye of crystyanyte or of crysten men (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1502), STC (2nd ed.) / 5198, EEBO, recto folio Pvi, image 95R.

<blockquote>
They shulde se at their fyngers endes
The abhominacions of these fendes[17]
</blockquote>

Watkyn and Jeffraye effectively present Barlow's beliefs that the clergy, unwilling to risk exposure for non-Biblical practices, designedly keep the Bible from lay people and justify the prohibition under the pretence of lay stupidity.

Tyndale, perhaps expressing himself more passionately than anyone else, wrote in the Prologue to *The Pentateuch* (1530) that the clergy are unanimous in their desire to drive all lay people from the knowledge of the scriptures and they do this,

> to kepe the world styll in darkenesse to the [i]ntent they might sirt in the consciences of the people thorow vayne superstition and false doctrine to satisfye their fylthy lustes their proude ambition and unsatiable covetuousnes and to exalte their awne honoure above kinge & emperoure yee & above god him silfe.[18]

Because the arguments that lay people had no access to scripture and were purposefully kept from it for selfish and deceitful reasons are polemical, they are emotionally compelling. Alec Ryrie explains that religious reformers 'used such gloomy depictions of their circumstances as a polemical weapon, in order to stir their audiences to action.'[19] This might be one reason why modern historiography has not sufficiently explored the subject of lay access to scripture in England prior to 1526 and has tended to rely more on emotional assumption than textual analysis. Eamon Duffy argues one side of the issue by insisting that English lay people were satisfied with the religious books that they had, such as Books of Hours or gospel harmonies, and that they were not clamouring for an English Bible.[20] David Daniell, on the other hand, declares that lay people found little that was spiritually inspiring or useful in the Books of Hours and gospel harmonies and were zealously 'hungry' for

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[17] William Barlow, *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thynge but trothe* (Strasbourg: Johann Schott, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 1462.7, EEBO, recto folio Hvi-verso folio Hvi, images 62R-63L.

[18] William Tyndale, *The Pentateuch* (Antwerp: Johann Hoochstraten, 1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 2350, EEBO, no printer marks in this section, image 2R; OEDO defines *sirt* as a sandbar or other dangerous obstacle out at sea. As far as I understand Tyndale's usage of the word in this context he seems to be suggesting that superstition and false doctrines serve as a dangerous barrier to people's consciences.

[19] Alec Ryrie, 'Counting Sheep, Counting Shepherds: The Problem of Allegiance in the English Reformaion,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, eds. Peter Marshall & Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89.

[20] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 4, 79;

an English Bible.[21] Interestingly, neither Duffy nor Daniell support their arguments with much textual evidence. Because of this, neither can accurately argue how much and what kind of vernacular Biblical content lay people had access to prior to Tyndale's New Testament. Nor can they sufficiently explain what effects that exposure might have had on readers or how interested lay people were in having an English translation of the Bible. Clearly, a thorough examination of the scriptural content in the early sixteenth-century printed religious books is long overdue. Therefore, the questions that this chapter seeks to address are: Did sixteenth-century English lay people really lack access to a vernacular Bible? How much exposure did lay readers have to the Bible through the vernacular religious publications that were available prior to 1526? And, what effect would that exposure have had on lay desire for a complete vernacular Bible?

The first question will be answered by examining the earliest complete English translation of the Bible, the Wycliffite Bible (1384), and assessing sixteenth-century lay access to it. The evidence will show that between 1450 and 1526 the Wycliffite Bibles were owned and used by the wealthy lay elite and not by the average lay person. Therefore, contemporary complaints that lay people did not have access to an English Bible were accurate.

The second and third questions will be answered by analysing the Biblical content in five of the most popular early sixteenth-century printed religious books: Bishop John Fisher's *This treatyse concernynge the fruytfull sayenges of Davyd the kynge and prophete in the seven penytencyall psalms* (1504), John Alcock's *Mons perfectionis, otherwise in Englysshe, the hylle of perfeccyon* (1496), John Mirk's *Festial* (c.1380), Nicholas Love's *Mirrour of the Life of Christ* (c. 1410)*,* and Thomas á Kempis' (*d.*1471) *Imitatio Christi*. The first three books represent sermons that were given orally and were subsequently printed so that they might be enjoyed by a wider audience. The last two books represent gospel harmonies and devotional aids which were designed to assist the pious in their spiritual growth and development. An analysis of these books will show that they contain a significant amount and a wide variety of Latin and English scripture and that the scripture passages are not obscured by incomprehensible clerical expositions. Those who studied these texts would obtain useful, meaningful, and substantial exposure to the Bible. Therefore, contemporary accusations that lay people were only occasionally given small 'crumbs' of scripture by the clergy and were unable to comprehend those 'crumbs' were exaggerated.

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[21] David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 100.

Though lay people did not have access to a complete English Bible, they did have access to significant portions of it through other religious texts. Therefore, the 'famine' of God's word was not as extensive as many contemporaries claimed. Significantly, the analysis of the religious texts will also demonstrate that most of the authors encouraged individual study of the Bible and they did so in inspiring and profound ways. Therefore, the portions of the Bible contained in popular religious texts, combined with the authors' encouragement for individual Bible study, contributed to lay interest in and demand for a complete English Bible.

Lay Access to English Translations of the Bible

The arguments that the English clergy were purposefully refusing to provide English lay people with a vernacular translation of the Bible, and that the few portions of the Biblical text that were available to lay people in English were obscured by confusing exposition may appear to be the sole property of the reform-minded evangelicals introduced above. That picture changes, however, with the addition of Sir Thomas More's writings. Thomas More, counsellor to Henry VIII and commissioned in 1528 by Bishop Tunstal to write against the religious heresies infiltrating England from the continent, published his first ferocious assault on the ideas of Luther and Tyndale in *A dyaloge concerning heresies* (June 1529). *A dyaloge* will be discussed in greater detail in chapters two and four. By the time *A dyaloge* was published, More was serving as the Lord Chancellor of England. In the book, he created a fictional character, the Messenger, a hopeful and sincerely inquisitive young student interested in the new learning. The Messenger is sent to the Chancellor by a friend to obtain enlightenment and guidance about matters which 'great spech and rumour' made troubling to him. One of these was the burning of Tyndale's New Testament. In his lengthy discussion with the Chancellor, the Messenger vehemently insisted that Tyndale's New Testament was burned,

> to kepe owt of the peples handis all knowlege of Cristis gospell & of goddis law excepte so mych only as the clargye themself lyste now & than to tell us. And that lytle as it is & seldom shewed yet as it ys fered not well & truly tolde but watered with false gloses & altered from the trouthe of the very wordis & sentence of scriptur only for the mayntenauns of theyr authoryte.[22]

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[22] Sir Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte* (London: J. Rastell, 1529), STC (2nd ed.) / 18084, EEBO, verso folio iiii, image 10L.

Modern scholars have suggested that the Messenger's character and arguments, as designed and stated by More, represented the average, orthodox layman.[23] In other words, More purposely ascribed to the Messenger the ideas he believed were held by many who belonged to the *non-heretical* majority. Therefore, negative feelings against the clergy for withholding the body of scripture, for only occasionally allowing select portions of it to fall into lay hands, and for confusing lay people with incomprehensible expositions were experienced and expressed by a wider segment of the population than those few who had reform-minded agendas.

This realization lends weight to the need to consider lay isolation from the Bible and to question whether it was as absolute as contemporary opinion portrayed it. After all, public opinion and perception, though fervent and numerically overwhelming, may be erroneous and founded in misunderstanding or ignorance. The *Dyaloge's* Chancellor aptly teaches the Messenger this important point when he explains that the laws regulating the translation of scripture, the Constitutions of Oxford (1409) *did* prohibit *unapproved* English translations and *did not* prohibit translation of the Bible in general as the public believed.[24] Lori Ferrell has argued that 'the Bible was never the exclusive property of any institution or any one social class', even in the ages leading up to the sixteenth century. She insists that the 'vast majority of medieval folk were both illiterate *and* deeply familiar with Holy Writ' because people did not have to own or read a Bible in order to take it into their minds and hearts. Ferrell demonstrates that lay people had access to the Bible through the preaching of mendicant monks, who had pocket-sized Bibles from which to preach, through decorative Psalm books that were first published in the 1300s, and through the street-staging of Bible stories, sometimes called 'mystery plays', by tradespeople or merchants.[25] Though Ferrell is right in suggesting that medieval people did have access to the Bible through these means, by the late fourteenth century, there arose an opportunity for them to have direct textual access to the Bible.

The first complete English translation of the Bible was made by the followers of the fourteenth-century Oxford theologian and heretic John Wycliffe in the 1380s.

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[23] Thomas Lawler, 'General View' in *CWM,* vol. 6, part II, 440, 441, 448; Germain P. Marc'hadour, 'The World of the Dialogue' in *CWM*, vol. 6, part II, 480; Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and Other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 4.

[24] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio cviii, image 123R.

[25] Lori Ferrell, *The Bible and the People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 27-28,

The Wycliffite Bible was made from the Latin Vulgate Bible and was in manuscript form. Though the translation had been expressly declared illegal by Arundel's constitutions, it was still in use in the early part of the sixteenth century.[26] More claimed to have seen these Bibles himself, though, as Deanesly points out, he erroneously thought they were pre-Wycliffite orthodox translations when in reality, they were certainly Wycliffite Bibles that had had their heretical prologues removed.[27]

More's mistaken assumption that there were pre-Wycliffite English translations of the Bible in circulation is the basis for the Chancellor's argument that the English clergy were not opposed to English Bibles in general and only wanted to prevent vernacular Bibles from falling into the wrong hands. He insists that the clergy had left many pre-Wycliffite orthodox vernacular translations of the Bible 'in ley mennys handys & womens' as long as the owners were 'good & Catholyke folke' and used the text devoutly and soberly.[28] In spite of his identification error, More's claims of existent English Bibles suggest that the clergy ignored respectable lay people who owned English manuscript Bibles and used them for non-heretical private piety. This policy may account for the more than 200 copies of Wycliffite Bibles that have survived today.[29] Modern research shows that no complete English translations of the Bible were made before the Wycliffite version (1384) and that between 1450 and 1526 wealthy lay people were most likely to have owned and used the Wycliffite Bibles.[30]

The Chancellor's argument that the Church was more worried about the Bible falling into hands of heretical translators than about preventing all scripture translation was quickly challenged by the Messenger. He easily recognized the obvious weakness in the Chancellor's assertions and wondered why the church did not provide an orthodox translation of the Bible when so many people were clamouring for one. In this instance, the Chancellor did not have a wordy or detailed answer to give and could only say, '. . . thys can no thynge tell'. The Messenger

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[26] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 80.

[27] Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, 12-15; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), 85-86.

[28] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio 111, image 123R.

[29] Christopher De Hamel, *The Book: The History of the Bible* (New York: Phaidon, 2001), 168, 185.

[30] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 42-66; DeHamel, *The Book*, 176; Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, 15, 131-155, 206, 320.

was left to conclude that since the Constitutions did allow *authorized* translations of the Bible, the English clergy were indeed purposefully keeping it to themselves by stubbornly refusing to provide one.[31] Thus far, the sixteenth-century lay complaint about having *no* access to a *complete* English Bible appears to be justified.

This leads us to the accusation that lay people were only occasionally given a few 'crumbs' of scripture by the clergy. Modern sixteenth-century historians like Pettegree and Duffy have between them painted a lively and blooming lay devotional scene centred on printed religious books. Pettegree's research on sixteenth-century book sales indicates that, 'Books were bought in vast quantities, and religious books dominated the market at all levels: at both ends of the spectrum and almost all points in between.'[32] By this time books were sufficiently common and more affordable. The cheapest books were made of one sheet of paper that was folded into eight pages to make a quarto size book or into sixteen pages to make an octavo size book. Octavos cost about one or two pence in most currencies and they brought books well within the range of most people with any level of disposable income.[33] Martin Luther made particular use of these small pamphlets in spreading his religious ideas.[34] Modern scholars estimate that there were approximately 10,000 pamphlet editions printed in the German-speaking lands between 1500 and 1530 and that Martin Luther was responsible for roughly 20 per cent.[35]

Duffy asserts that in England there was a 'voracious lay appetite for religious literature' which only increased as illustrious persons such as Erasmus, More, and the Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, emphasized the centrality of the Bible in religious devotion.[36] Duffy believes that lay desire for devotional literature was created in part by the church's requirement, established at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, for each parishioner to confess to the local parish priest once each year. Since the penitent needed to know 'how, what, and when to confess' and the

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[31] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio cxiiii, image 129L.

[32] Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 156.

[33] *Ibid,* 159.

[34] Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stewart Realms 1485-1603* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), 90.

[35] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1994), 17.

[36] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 4 & 80.

priest needed to 'be able to distinguish between serious and trivial confessional matters' as well as be able to impose the appropriate penances and remedies on the penitent, literature emerged to aid both priest and parishioner in the fulfilment of their responsibilities.[37] John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* (*c.* 1380s) and the English translation of the French pastoral manual *Ordynarye of Crysten Men* (1502), mentioned above, are examples of literature that was designed to aid priests with confessional duties.

Books such as the *Imitatio Christi* (translated into English in 1502)*,* discussed in more detail below, and *The Dyenge Creature* (1507) helped lay people understand confession. Significantly, by the late fifteenth century many pious lay people were confessing more regularly and not only for absolution from sin. Confession became a way for the pious to obtain individual spiritual direction. In addition, the devout often meditated on significant events, such as Christ's Passion or the Sacrament, and they also actively sought for a more elaborate prayer-life. As these practices expanded, so, unsurprisingly, did the supportive literature.[38] *The vii shedynges of the blode of Jhesu Chryste* (1500) and *The passion of our lorde christe wythe the contemplations* (1508) are examples of some of these.

If Pettegree and Duffy are right about vigorous religious book sales and insatiable lay consumption of them it would be important to consider the religious material within the books and to determine how much of it, if any, was Biblical. Doing so will not only help asses the accuracy of the contemporary public perceptions and opinions about lay access to God's word, but it will also provide a litmus test for modern historians who may have accepted contemporary opinion at face value.

One modern historian who appears to have done so is Daniell. He writes, 'In the great Christian tradition of the Word and the Church the centuries before the 1520s, the Word [the Bible] had almost disappeared'.[39] Daniell argues that the average lay person would hear little that was Biblical in the sermons of the day and that if a literate lay person turned to the popular religious literature, he or she would only find a few Bible 'scraps' lost in what he believes to be an enormous sea of fictional recitations of saints' lives.[40] Daniell rejects the sixteenth-century religious

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[37] *Ibid*, 56.

[38] *Ibid*, 68.

[39] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 135.

[40] *Ibid*, 107.

literature as completely inadequate for readers who wanted to understand the details of Christ's life, his teachings, or the theology of Christianity.[41] He concludes that there was a Biblical famine and that 'Christian men and women were hungry to have [the Bible] fully back again.'[42] Though Daniell may be right, his arguments could have been spoken by the Messenger himself since they so neatly coincide with the sixteenth-century perceptions and accusations presented above.

Daniell's unqualified dismissal of the devotional literature because it only contains Biblical 'scraps' is troubling. He appears to have based his arguments on the examination of only one of the more popular gospel harmonies, Nicholas Love's *Mirrour of the Life of Christ.* Love's *Mirrour,* a translation of the extremely popular Latin *Meditationes vitae Christi* attributed to Cardinal Bonaventura, was printed in England at least eight times under its Latin and English titles between 1484 and 1525, and yet it is only one of nearly 100 different vernacular religious books published in the first twenty-six years of the sixteenth century.[43] The *Mirrour* also represents only one type of religious book—a gospel harmony—and though harmonies were designed to provide an overview of Christ's life and teachings and would have been a logical choice for Bible-hungry readers, they were not the only place a reader might be exposed to scripture.

Alongside gospel harmonies there were printed sermons, aids to spiritual meditation, stories and legends about exceptional individuals, and religious poetry; all in the vernacular. Moreover, people typically 'hunger' for that which they have previously tasted even if the quantity they sample is miniscule. An individual might 'wish' to read the Bible because he or she has heard of it in passing or might even be 'curious' about its contents because of what others have said about it, but 'hungering' after the Bible implies that an individual has had some degree of prior personal experience from which the hunger is created.

Therefore it is unwise to assume that because the majority of the sixteenth-century lay English did not have a complete vernacular Bible to read that the 'scraps' they did have were useless, trivial, or powerlessly overwhelmed by other non-scriptural material. Furthermore, the Constitutions of Oxford were still in force until the early-1530s. These laws prohibited the translation of 'any text of Holy Scripture' into English and forbade the reading of any work containing unapproved translated

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[41] Daniell, *William Tyndale,* 100.

[42] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 135.

[43] The calculations are mine based on the ESTC listings for 1500-1525.

scripture.[44] An analysis of the Biblical content in printed vernacular religious works is needed to clarify exactly what quantity of scripture made it through the tight security and how valuable such scripture would be to readers.

William Tyndale, translator of the heretical New Testament under discussion by *A dyaloge's* Chancellor and Messenger, was born right on the cusp of the sixteenth century in 1494.[45] Tyndale grew up right alongside the English printing industry, which was only eighteen years older than himself and according to Pettegree growing slowly.[46] The first English book printed from the first English press, owned and operated by William Caxton, was an edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1476). After this maiden printing voyage, English printing caught on, though structural difficulties limited its market. A small number of English speakers outside England, a low rate of urbanization and literacy rates within England, an industry overwhelmingly concentrated in London, and the presence of only two universities which were already adequately supplied with Latin books from Europe all contributed to the sluggish development of English printing.[47] Pettegree and others have established that the English contribution to the incunabula age of printing was 'extraordinarily modest' with English printers only contributing about 3 per cent to the total number of printed works published throughout Europe.[48]

An examination of the first twenty-six years of sixteenth-century printed materials in England reveals an interesting, if circumscribed landscape. I have followed the example of Pettegree, who did a detailed analysis of printed books published in England between 1468 and 1499, and used the electronic version of the *English Short-Title Catalogue* to examine materials printed in England between 1500 and 1525.[49] My calculations show that nearly fifteen hundred editions of Latin and English books, broadsides, and official proclamations were published during that time. Of this total, nearly 220 volumes, largely Latin Books of Hours and other small devotional works used by church parishioners, were published abroad.

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[44] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 80.

[45] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 10; Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*: *Tyndale the Translator*, vol. 18 (London: The Olive Tree, 1986), 10.

[46] Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation'*,* 162.

[47] *Ibid*, 162.

[48] Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation'*,* 163-164; Maureen Bell and John Barnard, 'Provisional Count of STC Titles 1475—1640,' *Publishing History* 31 (1992): 48-64.

[49] Pettegree, 'Printing and Reformation', 163-164.

Another 161 of the titles were one-sheet broadsides containing ecclesiastical or royal proclamations of various sorts. This leaves just over 1100 Latin and English books printed in England between 1500 and 1525.[50] Curiously, in spite of the fact that English readers generally obtained their Latin books abroad, English printers published slightly more Latin books (*c.* 600) than vernacular books (*c.* 510).[51] Pettegree has asserted that religious books were the dominant force in sixteenth-century printing, but this assertion is only true in England between 1500 and 1525 when the Latin *and* English religious publications are combined.

A scrutiny of the vernacular books indicates that 67% of them were secular in subject matter. Latin/English Grammar books were the most repeatedly printed secular item followed by poetry, legends and tales, and Parliamentary statutes published by the government. One reason that vernacular secular works were printed more often could have been the lingering effects of the Constitutions of Oxford; what Nicholas Watson has termed the 'most draconian' piece of censorship in English history'.[52] As will be discussed more fully in chapter five, Watson argues that an inadvertent side effect of the Constitutions was the sealing up of the vernacular religious canon. He believes that beginning in 1410 and continuing until the 1500s there was a sharp decline in both the quantity of large vernacular theological works and their scope and originality. The Constitutions prevented fifteenth-century theological writers from building upon the innovative and original vernacular theology of fourteenth-century writers such as Richard Rolle, William Langland, Julian of Norwich, and Walter Hilton. Thus most of what was written between 1410 and 1500 were translations of Latin, Anglo-French, or other Continental languages or compilations of pre-1410 English material.[53]

If we examine the printed vernacular books between 1476 and 1500 we see evidence of Watson's conclusions. John Lydgate's poem *The lyf of our Lady* (1483) is the only original vernacular religious work longer than one page published until John Alcock's sermon *Mons perfectionis* in 1496. Popular translations, such as *The Golden Legende* (the most widely copied and translated work in medieval Europe)

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[50] These are my calculations obtained from the ESTC.

[51] Lotte Hellinga, 'Importation of Books printed on the Continent into England and Scotland before c. 1520,' in *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450—1520*, ed. Sandra Hindman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 205-24.

[52] Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409,' *Speculum*, LXX (1995): 826.

[53] Watson, 'Censorship', 832-833.

and the *Imitatio Christi*, or early English works such as John Mirk's *Festial*, continued to lead the way among printed vernacular religious books until later in the first decade of the sixteenth century. This is when the Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, published his sermons on the penitential Psalms. These were entitled *This treatyse concernyng the fruytful saynges of Davyd the kynge . . .* (1508) and proved extremely popular. They were reprinted seven times in the next seventeen years.

Unfortunately, self-censorship and silent compliance to the Constitutions were still the order of the day among authors. Fisher's sermons had no real rival among original, contemporary, vernacular religious writings until after Tyndale's New Testament was published in 1525. Until then Fisher's sermons (292 pages of text) eclipsed the other original vernacular religious materials in length and depth of subject matter. Short and anonymous aids to religious devotion, such as *The dyenge creature* in 1506 (32 pages), or *The dyetary of ghostly helth* in 1520 (32 pages), or poetry with religious themes such as *Thystorye of Jacob and his twelve sons* (1510, 28 pages) are Fisher's only competition until Tyndale's *Obedience of a christen man* (334 pages) enters the arena in 1528.

Scriptural Content in English Religious Publications

Fisher's penitential Psalms sermons are a good place to begin examining Biblical content in printed materials published prior to Tyndale's New Testament. The title page of the book explains that Fisher was exhorted and stirred to print the sermons by Henry VII's mother Lady Margaret Beaufort. Fisher was recruited to her service in the mid-1490s and eventually became her spiritual director. Richard Rex believes that the sermons were delivered to Lady Margaret's own household, which was made up of a high number of sophisticated clergy and educated laymen, in 1504, the same year Fisher was appointed Bishop of Rochester.[54] The prologue explains that Lady Margaret was delighted with the sermons and that she commanded Fisher to put them in writing so that all those who either read them or heard them would be stirred to walk in the way of eternal salvation.[55] The length of

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[54] Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 32.

[55] John Fisher, *This treatyse concernynge the fruytfull sayenges of Davyd the kynge* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1508), STC (2nd ed.) / 10902, EEBO, recto folio aai, verso folio aai, images 1R & 2L.

the sermons indicates that Fisher delivered them to his audience after services such as the Mass.[56]

Studies of the late-medieval preaching tradition stress that sermons were largely separate from routine worship.[57] Both Rex and Pettegree assert that demand for preaching increased during the fifteenth century and that by the time Fisher arrived at Cambridge in the mid-1480s the provision of preachers was becoming a major aim of the university.[58] Fisher became widely known for his own dedicated activity as a preacher and for his talent at the pulpit. He also had an enormous academic interest in preaching. The statutes he drew up for St. John's College, Cambridge when it was founded in 1511 made the training of priests for effective preaching one of the college's top priorities.[59]

This treatyse concernynge the . . . seven penytencyall psalms is exactly what the title announces it to be. It is Fisher's exposition of seven of King David's Psalms: numbers 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129 and 142. These Psalms were traditionally combined under the term 'penitential' because they are heart-felt pleas for forgiveness from sin and error. It was Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) who ordered that the penitential Psalms be prayed during the days of Lent when Christians traditionally engage in forty days of spiritual reflection and repentance in anticipation of Easter. Whether or not Fisher gave these sermons during Lent is not known, but in the medieval preaching tradition sermons were more likely to be given during Lent than at any other time of the year.[60] It would be plausible, therefore, especially given the subject matter of the sermons that Fisher delivered them during that time.

Scholars have also noted that most pre-Reformation sermons emphasized the doctrine of penitence and that skilful preachers tried to move their audiences to a consciousness of sin and a desire for a righteous transformation of life. At the same time, parishioners expected to be 'dazzled, entertained, informed, [and] even transformed, on a regular basis by preaching.'[61] True to this form, Fisher wrote that he hoped his sermons on the penitential Psalms would bring 'holsome conforte unto

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[56] Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, 6, 32.

[57] Corrie Norman, 'The Social History of Preaching: Italy,' in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Boston: Leiden and Brill, 2001), 125.

[58] Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, 30; Pettegree, *Culture of Persuasion*, 14.

[59] ODNB, 'John Fisher, St.'
[60] Pettegree, *Culture of Persuasion*, 16.

[61] *Ibid*, 16.

all synners which be repentaunt for theyr synnes and hath turned themselfe with all theyr hole herte and mynde unto god the waye of wyckednes and synne utterly forsaken'.[62]

Throughout the sermons, Fisher followed a consistent format. He focused on each Psalm, one by one, in order, and he expounded one line or a partial line of the text of each Psalm at a time. Fisher's preferred method for exposing his readers to scripture was to give the Latin words or phrases as they appear in the Vulgate and then to immediately translate the Latin into English. For example, in his exposition of Psalm 6 Fisher turned to a passage from Matthew 25: 'Almyghty god sayth. *Preparatus est diabolo et angelis eius*.' Fisher rendered the Latin segment as: 'That fyre is prepared for the devyl & his aungelles.'[63] Rex argues that Fisher 'loosely' translated Latin scripture into English but does not define what he means by 'loosely'. If we compare Fisher's translation of Matthew 25 (as cited above) with the Wycliffe and Tyndale translations we find that the Wycliffe Bible has 'everlastynge fijr, that is maad redi to the devel and hise aungels' and the Tyndale translation reads, 'everlastinge fire which is prepared for the devyll and his angels'.[64] In this instance, Fisher's translation coincides with the other two and does not appear to be 'loose' in any remarkable way.

In the exposition of Psalm 31, however, we see what Rex means. Fisher translated what is generally known in modern Bibles as Psalm 31:10. He took '*Intellectum tibi dabo et instruam te in via hac, qua gradieris; firmabo super te oculos meos*' and rendered it 'I shall gyve the understandynge . . . I shall gyve the lernynge . . . I shall guyde & directe the from thyn enemyes with my grace & mercy ever to have contynuaunce in doing good werkes.'[65] The Wycliffe translation has 'Y schal gyve understondyng to thee, and Y schal teche thee; in this weie in which thou schalt go, Y schal make stidefast myn iyen on thee'.[66] Tyndale was martyred before he could translate the Psalms, therefore we must turn to the Coverdale translation for a second comparison. Coverdale rendered it 'I wyll enforme the, and shew the

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[62] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, recto folio aai, image 2R.

[63] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, recto folio aavi, image 6R.

[64] Wesley Center Online, 'John Wycliffe's Translation of the Bible,' 'http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/wycliffe/Mat.txt' [accessed 15 September 2009], Matt 25:41; Wesley Center Online, 'William Tyndale's Translation of the Bible,' Matt 25:41.

[65] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms,* recto folio ccviii, image 20R.

[66] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Psalm 31:10.

the way wherin thou shalt go: I wyll fasten myne eyes upon the.'[67] This comparison shows that in the second portion of the scripture Fisher added quite a bit about grace, mercy, and good works that do not appear in the Wycliffe or Coverdale versions and this may be what Rex means by 'loosely translated'.

I have carefully examined and compared all of Fisher's scripture translations in a similar way and have found that he 'loosely' translated around two dozen passages.[68] His greatest and most consistent liberties were to add 'purgatory' or 'penance' to passages where they are not found in the Latin. One example of this is in Psalm 6 where the Latin reads, '*Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me, neque in ira tua corripias me. Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum*'. Fisher translated it as 'Good lorde correcte me not in the everlastynge payne of hell neyther punysshe me in the paynes of purgatory have mercy on me good lorde for I am feble and weyke'.[69] In contrast, the Wycliffe translation reads, 'Lord, repreve thou not me in thi stronge venjaunce; nether chastice thou me in thin ire. Lord, have thou merci on me, for Y am sijk' and the Coverdale has 'Oh Lorde, rebuke me not in thyn anger: Oh chasten me not in thy hevy displeasure. Have mercy upon me O Lorde for I am weake'.[70] Clearly, Fisher added purgatory and hell into his English translation.

At the time Fisher composed these sermons, purgatory had not become the doctrinal hot-spot that it would later become after evangelicals, such as Martin Luther, began to question church doctrine and church practice. Evangelical authors and preachers felt that purgatory was a sham maintained by the clergy to line their pockets and to distract faithful Christians from giving to the poor.[71] Tyndale was one who argued as much, 'Wherfore serveth purgatory? but to purge thy purse and to polle the and robbe both the and thy hyeres of house and landes and of all thou hast / that they maye be in honoure. He felt that the church 'created them a purgatory' so that they could increase their dominion over the quick and the dead.[72]

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[67] Miles Coverdale, *Biblia the Bible, that is, the holy Scrypture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated in to Englyshe* (Southwark: J. Nycolson, 1535), STC (2nd ed.) / 2063.3, EEBO, Psalm 32, verso folio xviii, image 246.

[68] These were: Psalm 6:2-3, 6:6, 6:11, 31:12, 37:1, 37:18, 101:10-11, 101:12, 147:18; Job 41:24; Ecclesiastes 2:12-13, 23; Matt 11:28; Luke 9:55; Hebrews 9:11.

[69] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, Psalm 6, verso folio aav, image 6L.
[70] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Psalm 6:2-3; Coverdale, *Biblia*, Psalm 6, verso folio xiii, image 241.

[71] Ryrie, 'Counting Sheep', 103.

[72] William Tyndale, *The obedience of a christen man* (Antwerp, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 24446, EEBO, recto folios cxlii & lxxv, images 142R & 75R.

Whether Fisher was justified in adding purgatory and penance to his translations is a significant question with a very complicated answer. Brian Cummings summarizes some of the difficulties: 'The issues of control over scripture and theology, and the ideological superstructure of each, are bound up with every question in the linguistic programme, whether of semantic analysis, or literary interpretation, or vernacular textuality.'[73] In other words, translation invariably involves interpretation on a number of linguistic and theological levels.

Those involved in the sixteenth-century controversies over translation of the Bible into other languages understood these issues well. More said, 'it is daungerous to translate the texte of scrypture out of one tonge in to another. . . for as moche as in translacyon it is harde alwaye to kepe the same sentence hole'.[74] Martin Luther defended the methods of vernacular textuality that he used in his German translation of the New Testament by stating,

> We do not have to inquire of the literal Latin, how we are to speak German, as these asses do. Rather we must inquire about this of the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly. That way they will understand it and recognize that we are speaking German to them.[75]

Tyndale felt that the 'textes of logycke / of naturall philautia [self-love] / of methaphisick and morall philosophy and of all maner bokes of Aristotle and of all maner doctours' then in use at the universities corrupted student's ability to interpret scripture correctly. He argued that 'what so ever opinions every man fyndeth with his doctoure / that is his Gospell' and 'every man to mayntene his doctoure with all / corrupteth the scripture & facioneth it after his awne imaginacion as a Potter doeth his claye'.[76]

We do not know if Tyndale ever read Fisher's penitential Psalms sermons, but he did read the sermon Bishop Fisher made 'agayn [the] p[er]nicious doctryn of Martin luther' in 1521 and he was extremely unappreciative of Fisher's translations or expositions of scripture. Tyndale censured Fisher for 'his juggelinge his conveyenge / his foxy wilenes / his bopepe / his wrestynge / rentinge and shamfull

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[73] Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 26.

[74] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio cviii, image 123L.

[75] E.T. Bachmann, ed., 'An Open Letter,' in *LW,* vol. 35, 189.

[76] The OEDO defines *philautia* as 'self-love'; Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xix, image 19R.

abusinge of the scripture' and accused him of being maliciously blind.[77] Therefore it
is safe to assume that Tyndale would not have condoned Fisher's translations in the
sermons on the penitential Psalms and may have included Fisher's expositions
among those which confused the laity.

Fisher was not completely unsupported, however. As will be discussed more
fully in chapter four, Fisher had at least one staunch champion in Thomas More.
More vehemently defended the sermon Fisher wrote against Martin Luther in *The
co[n]futacyon of Tyndales answere* written in 1532.[78] More attacked Tyndale's
opinion that all of God's words had been written down in scripture by stating that he
would refute the idea with 'the same mater' that 'my lorde of Rochester hath
gathered . . . togyther, and rehersed . . . in hys boke agaynst Luther.'[79] More
believed that the church he and Fisher belonged to was Christ's church and that it
had continued without intermission since the time of Peter. He claimed that the
church 'of Cryst hath always and never fayleth / the right understanding of scripture'
and 'that no part of scrypture maybe be mysse taken / but all must be understanden
ryght'.[80] Based on these assertions, it is easy to presume that More would have
endorsed Fisher's scripture translations in the penitential Psalms sermons.

What might have been Fisher's own justifications for his scripture
translations? In addition to the linguistic challenges that always accompany
translation, translators in the sixteenth century also had to worry about authority and
inspiration. Fisher revealed his views on the latter two in the prologue of his
sermons by immediately calling to mind the 'excellent doctors' of the past who also
translated scripture. According to him, these men were 'grounded on scripture by
hye auctoryte the which syngulerly not themself applyed dayly to pronounce the
wordes of our blyssed Savyour Jesu'.[81] This statement is difficult to understand
because it is not punctuated. However, careful analysis of it reveals Fisher's
meaning. Fisher asserted that the doctors of the past were 'grounded on scripture'
by a 'hye auctoryte'. This authority was applied by the doctors every day as they

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[77] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio clix, image 159R.

[78] Sir Thomas More, *The co[n]futacyon of Tyndales answere made by syr Thomas More
knyght lorde chau[n]cellour of Englonde* (London: William Rastell, 1532), STC (2nd
ed.), 18079, EEBO, folios cclxx-cccxi, images 156L-177R.

[79] *Ibid*, recto folio. cccxi, image 177R.

[80] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio xxxvi, image 45L.

[81] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, verso folio aai, image 2L.

translated so that the words of Christ were rendered accurately. Fisher distinctly states that it was this 'hye auctoryte' and not 'themself' (or the doctors) who did the translating. Further on Fisher explains that the 'hye auctoryte' is the 'grace of the holy ghoost' which 'spirytually enlumyned' their minds.[82]

Clearly, Fisher was of the opinion that scripture translation and interpretation were accomplished by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and not by the personal linguistic talents or knowledge of the translator. Fisher linked himself with his predecessors so that he could claim the same 'hye auctoryte' for his translations that they had. Presumably, the high authority of the Holy Ghost inspired him to translate and to interpret the Latin scripture the way he did (such as in Psalm 6) and that same authority would also bring an unassailable legitimacy to his work.

Fisher returned to this same argument nearly twenty years later when he debated the authority of the Greek Septuagint, a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, with Richard Pace, dean of St. Paul's in 1527. In that instance, Fisher maintained the traditional belief that the Septuagint had been divinely translated by the power of the Holy Ghost and if it differed in spots from the Hebrew original those differences were inspired. Inspiration gave the Septuagint as much authority as the original Hebrew text.[83] More, ultimately a martyr like Fisher, shared these same beliefs about authority to translate. In his debate with Tyndale over Tyndale's New Testament More insisted that the only way a person could be sure to translate and interpret scripture correctly was through God's own power. He wrote,

> we saye boldely that [God's] worde unwryten is egall and as stronge as hys worde wryten and that he is as well to be byleved wythout wrytyng as wyth wrytyng & that hym selfe and hys holy spyryte, understondeth hys owne wrytyng better than all the creatures of the hole worlde.[84]

For More and Fisher, there was a traditional church. In *The second parte of the co[n]futacion of Tyndals answere* (1533), More explains that the traditional church is the 'catholyke knowen chyrch' and it 'is that mystycall body be it never so syke, whereof the pryncypall hed is Cryste. Of whyche body whyther the successour of saynt Peter be his vycar generall and hed under hym, as all crysten nacyons.'[85]

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[82] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, verso folio aai, image 2L.

[83] ODNB, 'John Fisher'.

[84] More, *Confutacyon*, lxxxv, image 63R.

[85] Sir Thomas More, *The second parte of the co[n]futacion of Tyndals answere in whyche is also confuted the chyrche that Tyndale devyseth* (London: William Rastell,1533), STC (2nd ed.), 18080, EEBO, xii, image 8L.

More also explained that it is possible to have absolute confidence in the traditional church because the faith has been passed from 'hande to hande' and 'hath ben taken & kepte from Crystes dayes and hys apostles hytherto.' The faith of the traditional church could not fail because Christ had promised his 'apostles, as teachers of hys chyrche . . . the fayth that saynte Peter professed shulde not fayle, and that god wolde be wyth them all dayes vnto the ende of the worlde.' More adds that the faith he professes 'is the same fayth whyche the holy doctours of Crystes chyrche in every age have beleved and taught'. The support of so many faithful people through all the ages since the time of Christ was irrefutable evidence that the 'catholyke chyrch' was true.[86] This traditional church was the only place where the gift of the Holy Ghost resided; naturally bringing with it the authority to translate and interpret scripture.[87]

Eight years from the publication of Fisher's sermons, Erasmus, the great continental humanist, would challenge the belief in inspired scripture translation with the publication of the *Novum Instrumentum* in 1516. Erasmus and humanism will be discussed in greater depth in chapter three. For now, it is only important to note that Erasmus' humanist beliefs as well as his admiration of the late-fourth-century scholar, Jerome, led him to adopt that scholar's *ad fontes* method of Biblical translation and interpretation. Using Greek texts as his exemplars, Erasmus re-examined the Latin Vulgate Bible. Whenever the Greek language and its meaning differed from the Latin, he changed the Latin words accordingly. Erasmus' changes, nearly four hundred in all, undermined many of the teachings and doctrines of the church which relied on the specific wording of the Latin Vulgate for support.[88]

One of the most famous and disputed changes was in Matthew 3:2 where John the Baptist calls his audience to repentance. In the Greek version, John is recorded as using the word *metanoeite,* which means to experience a change of heart. The Latin Vulgate had the words *penitentiam agite*, meaning 'do penance'. Erasmus' solution to the enormous difference in meaning between the two texts was to change the Vulgate word to *Resipiscite*, meaning 'be penitent'. Martin Luther used the Greek meaning of Matthew 3:2 to substantiate his claim that Christians

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[86] *Ibid*, iiii, image 4L.

[87] More, *Confutacyon*, lxxxvi, image 64L; Tibor Fabiny, 'Church Paradigm versus Scripture Paradigm in the Debate of Sir Thomas More and William Tyndale,' in *Representing Religious Pluralization in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andreas Höfele (London: Lit, 2007), 24.

[88] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 117; Allan K. Jenkins & Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 27; De Hamel, *The Book*, 226.

needed to experience an inward spiritual turning to God, not the outward physical activities associated with doing penance.[89]

On what authority did Erasmus make these changes? His reply to one critic who suggested that 'a private person without authorization cannot make a new translation or correct an old one' was 'The business in hand calls not for a mitre or a red hat, but for skill in tongues'.[90] Tyndale had similar beliefs about translation and when accused by More of following Luther and maliciously using the word 'repent' instead of the traditional Church's 'penance' throughout his New Testament, Tyndale defended himself by showing his knowledge of languages and illustrating his use of the original Greek texts:

> And as for their penaunce the scripture knoweth not of. The greke hath Metanoia and metanoite / repentaunce and repente . . . As we saye in english. . . I repent or yt repenteth me and I am sory that I dyd yt. So now the scripture sayeth repent . . .[91]

Whether or not Fisher's translations of scripture were influenced by his own personal skill and beliefs, he filled his sermons with a wide variety of scripture passages. Fisher's sermons do *not* fall under Daniell's censure that religious sermons of the day had little scriptural content. Nor are the Biblical 'scraps' they contain overwhelmed in a sea of recitations of saints' lives. In fact, Fisher's format of continuously expounding scripture using vernacular translations of the relevant text was extremely unusual for the time and this format would have only added to their popularity and impact. Fisher accorded a very high place for both scripture and the vernacular in these sermons. Rex believes that this is evidence of a growing demand for a 'simple and scriptural style of devotion' among the better educated laity and clergy brought on by late medieval spirituality and its focus on the inner life.[92]

Fisher translated completely or in part 228 different scripture passages from the Bible. This number does not include the citations from the penitential Psalms themselves, which are the subject matter of the sermons and are referred to in detail nearly 200 times. In his exposition of the penitential Psalms, Fisher often turned to

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[89] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 93; De Hamel, *The Book*, 226;

[90] Quoted in Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 55.

[91] William Tyndale, *An Answere Unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Antwerp, 1531), STC (2nd ed.) / 24437, EEBO, recto folio xii, image 12R.

[92] Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, 48.

the New Testament and chose 153 different references from eighteen of the twenty-seven books; most selections are from Matthew, Luke, and John. Fisher also referred to 75 different Old Testament passages; most of them are from Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the non-penitential Psalms.[93]

Those who peruse these sermons receive an in depth exposition of the penitential Psalms and instruction about the importance of penance and how it should be done. But a reader also receives significant exposure to other scripture and other doctrine. For instance, Fisher used multiple scripture passages about the divine nature of God. A translation from James 1 teaches that 'God is without mutabylyte or change / he is alway one'; another from Zechariah 1 shows a welcoming God 'Be ye turned to me and I shall be turned unto you'; a verse from 1 Samuel 15 explains that in God's eyes 'Obedience is better than folysshe sacrefyce'; another from Matthew 19 reveals that God rewards those who 'forsaketh theyr father & mother / sister & brother & the possessions of this worlde'; and one from Hebrews 4 states that 'No creature is invysyble in the sight of god / all thynges be naked and open in his eyen.[94]

Additional translations discuss that God is the same God for all people and that He is no respecter of persons, that he is a powerful ally and cannot be overcome, and that God is the only one who can forgive sin.[95] A reader also finds scripture passages about the importance of praying always, not swearing oaths, fleeing sin in all its forms, and that a man is defiled by what is in his heart. One even receives instruction about Adam and Eve and learns about the creation of the world.

Significantly, Fisher included scripture passages that taught his audience the importance of personal scripture study. Fisher explained that the soul of an individual is nourished with a certain meat and if the meat is refused, the soul will wax dry and become withered. He translated a verse from Matthew 4 and rendered it 'Man hath a body & a soule & as the body is refresshed with materyall brede / so the soule is nourysshed with spirytuall fode which is the worde of god.'[96] This is another instance where Fisher's translation differs noticeably from the Wycliffe

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[93] These figures are mine.

[94] Fisher's translations of James 1:17, Zechariah 1:3, 1 Samuel 15:22, Matthew 19:29, and Hebrews 4:13 in Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, recto folio aav, verso folio aavii, recto folio ccii, recto folio ddi, images 5R, 8L, 14R, 21R.

[95] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, verso folio ggii, recto folio iii, recto folio iiiii, images 39L, 49R, 52R.

[96] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, verso folio nnviii, image 81L.

translation, which reads 'It is writun, Not oonli in breed luyeth man, but in ech word that cometh of Goddis mouth' and Tyndale's version 'yt is wrytten man shall not lyve by brede onlye but by every worde that proceadeth out of the mouth of God'.[97]

Fisher, knowing that these words were spoken by Christ to Satan during Christ's temptations, may have opted to interpret and expound Christ's words, so that his audience could more easily see how to apply them, rather than translating them literally. Fisher used a passage from Psalm 101 to illustrate how dry a person's soul becomes and how the heart deteriorates into a state of emaciation without nourishment from the word of God.[98] Fisher advocated regular exposure to scripture as a necessary element for the maintenance of a vibrant, fervent devotion.

If Fisher's position on lay access to the Bible isn't already self-evident by the continual vernacular scriptural exposition of the sermons, his teachings on scripture study offer a preliminary glimmer of his true feelings about translation of scripture into English. Rex argues that in the debate with Pace over the Septuagint Fisher clearly showed himself to be a staunch advocate of vernacular scripture translation by unequivocally stating in the treatise against Pace 'who can scrutinise the scriptures if they do not have them written in some language they understand?'[99] Fisher's use of the word 'scrutinise' indicates that he supported making the scriptural *text* available to laity and clergy alike; though of course he stood firm on orthodox interpretation of it.[100]

Fisher's views shed important light on English theology on the eve of the Reformation by illustrating that some bishops were in favour of translating the Bible into English even when they were assiduously acting to suppress Tyndale's New Testament. Rex argues that Fisher's penitential Psalms sermons and his treatise against Pace add substantial support to the assertions that More's fictional Chancellor makes in *A dyaloge;* that the English clergy were *not* opposed to translation in general only to theological distortions within translated scripture. Rex feels that historians have erroneously brushed aside these arguments as insincere

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[97] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Matheu 4:4; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Matthew 4:4.

[98] Fisher, *Penitential Psalms*, recto folio ooi, image 81R.

[99] Quoted in Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, 159.

[100] *Ibid*, 149-158.

and that Fisher is irrefutable evidence that bishops felt the way the Chancellor said they did.[101]

Though Fisher's sermons are certainly not a substitute for a complete English Bible, it is evident that readers would receive not only substantial exposure to scripture and to various doctrines of the Christian faith, but they would also be encouraged to study the Bible for themselves. Deanesly has shown that neither lay people nor clergy were encouraged to study the Bible until the last quarter of the fifteenth century when humanistic ideas were spreading.[102] Therefore, Fisher's assertions that Bible study was a vital part of spiritual health were still new.

As mentioned above, Fisher's sermons on the penitential Psalms had no real rival among sixteenth-century original vernacular religious texts until after 1525. However, there were original vernacular religious sermons from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries printed in the early sixteenth century and these make for an interesting comparison with Fisher's sermons. The two we will consider are *Mons perfectionis* (1496) by John Alcock and the *Festial* (c.1380) by John Mirk. Like Fisher's sermons, both books attained some degree of popularity and this is the reason they have been chosen for examination. *Mons perfectionis* was published four times between 1496 and 1502 while the *Festial* was published twenty-three times between 1483 and 1519.

John Alcock, Bishop of Ely (translated in 1486), was a man of a very similar stamp to Fisher. Oddly enough, Alcock and Fisher were both born in Beverley, Yorkshire, though about thirty-nine years apart; Alcock in 1430 and Fisher in 1469. Beverley is the home of an enormous Gothic Cathedral that was built around the tomb of St. John of Beverly (d. 721) in the eleventh-century. St. John was canonized in 1037 and the cathedral became a popular and important centre for sanctuary and pilgrimage. By 1377 Beverley was one of the twelve largest towns in England.[103] Growing up in such an environment, it is easy to imagine Alcock and Fisher having a mind for spiritual things. Like Fisher, Alcock founded a college at Cambridge (Jesus College in 1496), was known for his learning and piety, and was one of the best-known preachers of his day.[104] John Mirk was an Augustinian canon

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[101] *Ibid,* 159-160.

[102] Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, 319-348.

[103] Beverly Minister Official Website. http://www.beverleyminster.org [accessed 7 December 2009].

[104] ODNB, 'John Alcock'; Rex, *Theology of John Fisher,* 29.

who became the prior of Lilleshalle in Shropshire some time in the early fifteenth century.[105] Not much else is known about Mirk. Susan Powell believes that Mirk's writings reveal a strong personal commitment to pastoral work and to improving the capacity of ignorant or errant priests, something Fisher could probably have related to given his pastoral and preaching interests.[106]

Beginning with *Mons perfectionis* we find that like Fisher, Alcock transcribed Latin passages of scripture into his sermon. But unlike Fisher, he rarely provided a direct English translation. Alcock transcribed 57 different Old and New Testament Latin passages into the text but only six of those have an English translation following the transcription.[107] In these six instances Alcock followed a specific pattern: he transcribed a portion of the Latin Vulgate, paraphrased the context of the Latin passage in English and included the English translation of the Latin passage somewhere in the paraphrased context. For example, on the opening page of the book a reader is confronted by an immediate Latin scripture passage followed by an explanation:

> *In monte te salvum fac* (Gen. xxivi capto). Thyse wordes were sayd unto Loth by an angel by the comaundement of almighty god / whan the cytees of Sodome & Gomor edyfyed in the vale sholde be destroyed for theyr synne & demerytes / that he sholde ascende & go up to the mount & there save himselfe fro the wretchedness & the persecucon of them that were in the vale.[108]

The Latin phrase *In monte te salvum fac* would mean nothing to a person unfamiliar with Latin. Alcock translated the phrase into English, 'that he sholde ascende & go up to the mount & there save himself' but the translation is hard to detect since it is surrounded by a paragraph of paraphrasing and context. Alcock's translation coincides with the Wycliffe and Tyndale versions which render the phrase 'but make thee saaf in the hil' and 'but save thy selfe in the mountayne'.[109] The trouble here is not with the translation but with the difficulty in recognizing which portions are

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[105] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 10.

[106] ODNB, 'John Mirk'.

[107] These figures are mine.

[108] John Alcock, *Mons perfectionis, otherwyse in Englysshe, the hylle of perfeccyon* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 1496), STC (2nd ed.) / 278, EEBO, recto folio aii, image 2R.

[109] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Genesis 19:17; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Genesis 19:17.

paraphrased scripture and which are translated scripture. This is an important distinction if one desires exposure to God's word and not a filtered summary of it; a sticky subject under debate by sixteenth-century evangelicals and those of the traditional faith.

The debate centred on what exactly the 'word of God' was. For Luther, the 'word of God' was that which was written in the Bible, or *sola scriptura*. He believed that the Bible was the highest source of authority, independent and above the authority of the church and asserted that everything else was subordinate and should conform to what it said; including church leaders and traditional church practices.[110] Tyndale believed the same and in his *Answere Unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (1531), Tyndale invited readers not only to recognize the definitive authority of scripture but to judge for themselves 'whether [the church's] auctorite be a bove the scripture: whether all they teach with out scripture be equalle with the scripture: whether they have erred and not onlye whether they can.'[111]

Defending the traditional church Sir Thomas More argued:

> that though the chyrch be not above the scripture and holy wryt: yet yt is so taught by the spyryte of god and his holy secrete inwarde word unwrytten, that yt can not be dampnably deceyved in the understandynge of his holy scrypture wryten.[112]

For More, the church's traditional interpretation of scripture through the divine inspiration of the Holy Ghost took precedence over scripture itself. Unlike Tyndale and Luther, More believed that 'of godde's words they wrote not all but dyvers thynges were by god to them and by them to other taughte by mouth, and by tradycyon from hande to hande delyvered, and from age to age hytherto contynued in Crystes chyrch'. He realized that 'wrytynge taketh not away all the doubtes but as many ryse thereuppon, and many mo than uppon those thynges that we byleve unwryten' and therefore 'God's word' must include more than just what was written in the Bible.[113] This meant that traditional interpretations of scripture were just as important as scripture itself and should be adhered to with the same devotion and respect.

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[110] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 30.

[111] William Tyndale, *Answere*, recto folio iiii, image 4R.

[112] More, *Confutacyon*, lxxxvi, image 64L.

[113] *Ibid*, ciiii & cvii, images 73L & 74R.

Returning to Alcock's sermon we find, unfortunately for English speakers, that the remaining fifty-one Latin scripture passages in his sermon are not translated at all. A good illustration of this is found on the second page. Alcock explains the significance of mountains and how often Jesus and other religious figures had momentous spiritual experiences atop them. He states,

> This mount is in figure & signefyeth relygyon which is as Davyd saith *Mons pinguis mons coagulatous mons in quo unpacitum et deo.* And in the viii chapitre of Zacharie *Mons domini excercituum mons sanctificatous.* For a place of religion may be wel called *monspinguis* for in it regneth al perfeccion & sholde fede mannes soule.[114]

Alcock carries on with his explanation of the symbolic nature of mountains without making it clear what the transcribed Latin scripture phrases mean. He did not translate them in this instance, nor did he paraphrase or expound upon them and a vernacular reader is left to suffer through a bit of a bumpy textual ride. An individual with knowledge of Latin would know that David was talking about God's mountain being a 'fat mountain' and that Zechariah said God's mountain was 'sanctified', but those who only spoke English would be lost.

It is possible that Alcock intended his sermon to be read by those who already understood Latin and therefore felt it unnecessary to expound or translate the Latin portions. But if that was the case, why not print the whole sermon in Latin? After all, in England and elsewhere sermons delivered in the vernacular were usually printed in Latin.[115] Perhaps Alcock was of the late medieval persuasion that the laity only needed to hear the word of God in Latin, as they did in the Mass, and that as they heard it God would grant them His grace so that they could benefit from it even without intellectual comprehension.[116] The non-translated Latin phrases may also reflect his obedience to the Constitutions of Oxford, which prohibited translation of any portion of scripture into English without approval from a Bishop. Alcock was not a bishop and unlike Fisher did not have the authority to authorise his own translations. He may have found it easier and safer to leave the Latin transcriptions in Latin and to make his English translations more difficult to detect.

It is also possible that Alcock intended his sermon for an audience composed of men serving in the various religious orders. In the opening pages of the book,

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[114] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, verso folio aii, image 3L.

[115] Rex, *Theology of John Fisher*, 48.

[116] Deanesly, *Lollard Bible*, 213.

Alcock refers to 'a man entrynge into religion . . .' and he repeatedly does so thereafter.[117] The themes Alcock addressed are of prime importance to religious men. He instructed his listeners on individual willingness to enter Christ's service, the importance of scripture study, daily prayer, humility, and obedience. He also covered sacrifice of worldly possessions and the spiritual power of virginity. He may have presented his sermon with a mixture of Latin and English to accommodate the varying degrees of literacy among the men. The subjects in the sermon, however, could also have been very useful to a lay reader interested in improving his or her religious devotion.

Another way that Alcock liked to include scripture in his sermon was by referring to a story or doctrine in passing. He sometimes provided the Biblical book and chapter where the story or doctrine could be found. He did this during a discussion about the spiritual power of scripture when he pointed out that 'Our Savyour Chryste Jehsu confounded our adversary the devyll . . . [with scripture passages] as it is redde Math iiii.'[118] In addition, Alcock referred to Biblical stories or doctrines with an underlying assumption that the reader was already familiar with them. For instance, while encouraging meekness and humility Alcock mentioned Adam and Eve in the garden, Cain and Abel, King Saul and David, and Joseph in Egypt. Among the twenty-two different scripture references of this type, he mentioned: Abraham, Jacob, and Lot and their visitations by angels; Moses and his trip up Mt. Sinai; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's experience in the fiery furnace. New Testament story references include Christ's temptations, the Sermon on the Mount, the Bread of Life Sermon, the Mount of Transfiguration, and Judas' betrayal of Christ. There is even a discussion of Annias and Sapphira's deaths for withholding tithing money from the church.

Readers probably were familiar with all of these stories. Parish churches of early Tudor England were richly decorated with paintings, carvings, and statues that constituted the visual 'laymen's books' and which taught them the stories and history of the Bible. Roger Rosewell argues that out of ten thousand medieval churches, 'fewer than ten percent retain significant remains of their original painting schemes.' One of the English churches that preserved its wall paintings can be found in the tiny Northamptonshire village of Slapton. Among other things, its walls depict the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel and the suicide of the treacherous Judas

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[117] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, verso folio aiiii, image 5L.

[118] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, verso folio bii, image 9L.

Iscariot.[119] Religious instruction was also given through miracle and morality plays which were performed by travelling players who made circuits around the countryside and assisted in passing on religious understanding and values.[120]

Interestingly and most significantly, Alcock also fed his readers translated scripture in a subtle way. In a discussion of how Christ fulfilled the Law of Moses Alcock wrote, 'A suppreme & a synguler mayster to teche you all thynge necessary to your helthe (ipsum audite) whom I have made to be the judge of al quycke & deed'.[121] In this passage the non-translated Latin words come from either Luke 9 or Matthew 17 when God's voice introduces Jesus. They mean 'Hear him'. Following the Latin transcription, Alcock quotes a different scripture passage from Acts 10: 'I have made to be the judge of al quycke & deed'. The Wycliffe Bible renders this same phrase as 'that is ordeyned of God domesman of the quyk and of deede' while the Tyndale version has 'that is ordened of God a judge of quycke and deed'.[122] Because these vernacular translations are not preceded by a Latin transcription or accompanied by a scriptural reference it is easy to overlook them as translated scripture. This is a useful tactic if one is concerned about staying out of trouble for unauthorized scripture translations.

There is one topic which Bible-hungry readers would have been delighted to find in Alcock's sermon and that is his instruction about scripture study. Alcock chose to liken the word of God to a tree which yields all medicines against mortal sickness or sin. He referenced the Bread of Life sermon in John 6 and transcribed and paraphrased Peter's statement that Christ alone has the words of eternal life. He believed that there was nothing more powerful for influencing right action than studying and reading scripture.[123] Alcock even taught that one can establish open communication with God using the Bible. This is accomplished by:

> pray[ing] unto hym devoutely / thenne thou spekest to hym . . . Whan thou
> redest the law of god / god speketh to the . . . he techeth the by thy redynge

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[119] Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 4-5.

[120] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 61.

[121] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, recto folio bviii, image 14R.

[122] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Acts 10:42; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Acts 10:42.

[123] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, verso folio av, image 6L.

in his scripture his wyll / his commaundementes / & how thou shal fulfyll theym. And so fyrste thou must praye & thenne rede.[124]

These ideas may not appear to be anything dangerous or radical until we consider that Alcock emphasized and advocated individual interpretation of scripture in a society that put strict limitations on that practice.   If Alcock's sermon was intended solely for groups of religious men, and that seems likely, then his ideas were safely and appropriately ensconced in the contemporary social structure. As will be more fully discussed in chapter two, that structure placed the laity at the bottom of the social totem-pole with limited rights and opportunities. The laity depended upon those above them in rank; the clergy for religion and the nobility for government.[125] The clergy accepted this structure and taught that it was part of God's divine method of government. Not only were the clergy higher in rank, but they were also uniquely endowed with grace from God which provided them with special spiritual insight into scripture.[126] Lay people were completely without this gift and would only be led into heresy if they attempted to read or understand the Bible without the help of a priest.[127]

As discussed above, John Fisher and Thomas More had no problem with individual interpretation of scripture as long as the interpretation was kept within the accepted orthodoxy of the church. It was the inevitable unorthodox interpretation of scripture by lay individuals that was unacceptable and dangerous. If, therefore, lay people absorbed and adopted Alcock's ideas about individual interpretation of scripture, which would be entirely possible after the sermon was printed and made available to educated lay people, then his ideas could have been used to challenge clerical rights to scripture and to justify lay demand for access to the Bible. Thirty years later, when Tyndale advocated individual interpretation of scripture by lay people, his description of the communication between God and the individual is very similar to Alcock's. Tyndale explained that,

> For as moch then as the scripture is no thinge els but that which the spirite of God hath spoken bi the Prophetes & Apostles / and can not be understande but of the same spirite: Let every man pray to God to send hym his spirite to

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[124] Alcock, *Mons perfectionis*, verso folio av- recto folio avi, images 6L-7R.

[125] Anne Hudson, *The Lollards and their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1938), 155.

[126] David Ginsberg, 'Ploughboys versus Prelates: Tyndale and More and the politics of Biblical Translation,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 51.

[127] E.H. Robertson, *The Makers of the English Bible* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1990), 29.

loose us from our naturall blindnes and ignorance / and to geve us understonding and fealinge of the thinges of God and of the speakinge of the spirite of God.[128]

Whether or not Tyndale read Alcock's *Mons perfectionis* is not known, but the two men do have similar beliefs about of God's ability to make scripture understandable to the devout seeker of truth and they both feel that individuals ought to engage in the revelation process.

If we combine all of Alcock's scripture references together we find that *Mons perfectionis* has nearly two Biblical references per page. Like Fisher's sermons, *Mons perfectionis* is certainly no substitute for a vernacular Bible, but it is sufficiently full of scripture to be helpful and meaningful to those seeking access to God's word. Obviously those who could understand Latin would receive the most exposure to scripture from Alcock's sermon, but the Bible is certainly not overwhelmingly 'lost' among a sea of other non-scriptural information even for non-Latin speakers. Readers were also sincerely encouraged to study the Bible for themselves, which was possibly more important in sparking interest in the Bible itself than all of the scripture passages contained within it.

When we compare John Mirk's *Festial* (*c.*1380s) with Fisher's and Alcock's sermons we find a slightly different scriptural experience. Mirk's sermons have more in common with Nicholas Love's *Mirrour of the blessed lyfe of Jesu Christ* (c. 1410) and Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legende* (1260s) than Fisher's and Alcock's sermons. Mirk admitted in the prologue that he compiled the sermons for priests who were not educated enough to compose their own and he acknowledged that he took much of his subject matter from the *Legend Aurea* (*The Golden Legende)* as he worked.[129]

Judy Ann Ford argues that Mirk had a two-fold audience which included not only the poorer and less educated priests but the lay people who would listen to them and that these lay people were probably rural, uneducated, and largely illiterate.[130] Powell states that the *Festial* was 'intended to be preached by the most

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[128] William Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of all good workes iustifieth us* (Antwerp: J Hoochstraten, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 24454, EEBO, verso folio xxxiii, image 40R.

[129] John Mirk, *Festyvall* (Fleetstreet: Wynkyn de Worde, 1519), STC (2nd ed.) / 17973.5, EEBO, folio ii, image 2R.

[130] Ford, *John Mirk's Festial*, 12.

ignorant of priests to the most ignorant of people.'[131] Duffy suggests that the average parish priest in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was still ill-equipped for preaching, though Marshall asserts that the number of graduate priests accepting church livings had been rising since the fifteenth century. Marshall argues that about 20-25 percent of all church living appointments were filled by graduates and believes that the educational opportunities for non-graduates was improving due to the expansion of grammar and elementary schooling.[132] Whatever their education level, the *Festial* and *The Golden Legende* provided a ready-made sermon or supplied the basic foundational material on which priests could build their own.

The number of editions of the *Festial* after its first printing in 1483 shows the collection to have been very popular with a broader audience than just poorly educated priests. Its popularity, as well as its subject matter and format, place it alongside *The Golden Legende* and *The Mirrour. The Legende* was the most widely copied and translated work in medieval Europe, aside from the Bible itself, and it boasted hundreds of printed editions.[133] *The Mirrour* has been touted as the most popular English book of the fifteenth century.[134] If Duffy is to be believed that late medieval Christianity was vibrant, meaningful, pliable, and had an enormous and vigorous hold over a people who enthusiastically sought greater piety through printed devotional aids then the *Festial* is an excellent place to study late-medieval Christianity 'as it was expounded to the ordinary, rural men and women who comprised the majority of the English population'.[135] Since Fisher's sermons were designed for an upper class, educated audience and Alcock's were intended for men in religious orders, the *Festial* brings greater understanding of how much scripture the general populace would have been exposed to.

The *Festial* contains seventy-four sermons which, like the sermons in its prototype the *Legende*, coincide with the nearly seventy fast days and between forty

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[131] Susan Powell, *The Medieval Church in the Sixteenth Century: The Post-Reformation History of a Fourteenth-Century Sermon Collection* (University of Salford: European Studies Research Institute, 1998), 1.

[132] Peter Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 96-97.

[133] Aviad Kleinberg, *Flesh made Word: saints' stories and the Western imagination*, translated by Jane Marie Todd (London: Belknap Press, 2009), 239.

[134] Eamon Duffy, 'The spirituality of John Fisher,' in *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, eds. Brendan Bradshaw & Eamon Duffy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 213.

[135] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 4; Ford, *John Mirk's Festial*, 13.

and fifty feast days of the traditional church's liturgical cycle. Each sermon focuses on *exempla*, or illustrative stories with a moral to be learned.[136] Most of the material is hagiographical and comes from the legends of the saints but there is a substantial amount of translated scripture. Mirk's primary method of including scripture in the *Fesital* parallels Fisher's; he transcribed Latin passages from the Vulgate and immediately translated them into English. There are nearly 150 of these scattered throughout the book; most of the New Testament transcriptions come from Matthew, Luke, and John and most of the Old Testament passages were taken from Genesis, Exodus, and the Psalms.

Mirk also paraphrased scripture stories or reminded his readers of them in passing more than fifty times. He also occasionally included scripture in a more subtle fashion, like Alcock, by translating a passage into English without providing a preliminary Latin transcription. In comparison, out of the 148 scripture references in Love's *Mirrour* only twenty-three of them have preceding Latin transcriptions. The remaining 125 are English translations with no Latin preliminaries. Love wanted the *Mirrour* to have a wide audience and he believed that Latin phrases were 'tedyouse / both to the rederes and the herers' and he felt that the vernacular was the best way to feed lay people 'with mylke of lygte [light] doctrine' and not overwhelm them with 'sadde mete of grete clergie and of hige contemplacioun.'[137] For a collection of sermons designed for the most ignorant of priests and people, it is surprising that Mirk did not feel the same way as Love and leave out the Latin altogether. Perhaps his reliance on *The Legende* as a model for his sermons influenced his decision to leave the Latin transcriptions in or maybe he had another reason, such as a desire to help the uneducated priests familiarize themselves with portions of Latin scripture.

If we examine Mirk's translations we find him to be a competent and faithful translator. What someone like Tyndale would have said about his translations is hard to say but Mirk's renditions can be very close to Tyndale's. In a discussion about the forty days of fasting required during Lent, Mirk transcribed '*non in solo pane bruit homo / sed et de omni verbo quod procedit de ore dei*' and rendered it 'Many lyveth not onely by breed / but by every worde that cometh fro the mouthe of god.'[138] As seen above, when Fisher translated this same scripture, he added a few concepts to it. But Mirk's rendering accords very well with Tyndale's version 'yt is

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[136] Ford, *John Mirk's Festial*, 13.

[137] James Hogg, ed., *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ:Nicholas Love* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistic Universität Salsburg, 1989), 8, 100.

[138] Mirk, *Festial*, xvi, image 16R.

wrytten man shall not lyve by brede onlye but by every worde that proceadeth out of the mouth of God'.[139] I have carefully examined all of Mirk's translations and found that he 'loosely' translated less than half-a-dozen.

One of Mirk's more noticeable changes is found in his use of a passage from Acts 7. While narrating the stoning of Stephen by an angry Jewish crowd, Mirk included Latin transcriptions of what he claims are Stephen's final two statements. According to Mirk, the first comment Stephen makes is '*Domine Jhesu accipe spiritum meum'*, which is rendered into English as 'O thou lorde take my spyryte.'[140] The Wycliffe translation of this same passage has 'Lord Jhesu, resseyve my spirit' and the Tyndale version has 'Lorde Jesu receave my sprete' which, except for the spelling, are nearly identical to Mirk's.[141] The problem shows up with what Mirk records as Stephen's second statement. Mirk transcribed '*Pater ignosce illis: quia nesciunt quid faciunt'* and rendered it 'Father forgyve them for they wote not what they do'.[142] Mirk's translation of the transcription compares nicely with Wycliffe's 'Fadir, foryyve hem, for thei witen not what thei doon' and Tyndale's 'father forgeve them for they woot not what they do'.[143] The trouble is that Mirk has attributed to Stephen a statement that Stephen did not make. 'Father forgyve them for they wote not what they do' was said by Christ during his agony on the cross and is recorded in Luke 23. It was not said by Stephen in Acts 7. What Stephen really said in Acts 7 was, '*Domine ne statuas illis hoc peccatum'* and that is rendered 'Lord, sette not to hem this synne' in the Wycliffe translation and 'Lorde laye not this synne to their charge' in the Tyndale version.[144] Interestingly, the English translation of *The Legende* reports Stephen's second statement correctly as 'Lorde establysshe not to theym thys synne'. But it also includes Christ's words, translated as 'Fader for geve it theym', as a comparison *with* Stephen's second comment and not as a

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[139] WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Matthew 4:4; see page 29 for the previous discussion.

[140] Mirk, *Festial,* verso folio lxx, image 71L.

[141] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Acts 7:59; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Acts 7:59.

[142] Mirk, *Festial*, verso folio lxx, image 71L.

[143] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Luke 23:34; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Luke 23:34.

[144] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', Acts 7:60; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Acts 7:60.

replacement.[145] The Latin *Legende* compares Stephen's second statement with Christ's as well.[146] Why did Mirk substitute Christ's statement for Stephen's rather than following *The Legende* and including both?

The most obvious answer is that Mirk just made a mistake. However, it is possible that the substitution was purposefull. Both authors' commentary on the scripture passages emphasize the enormous love Stephen showed for his enemies. In the English *Legende* Stephen has 'merveyllous love' while Mirk describes it as the 'brennynge love . . . that prayed more devoutely for his enemies than for hymselfe'. Mirk even holds Stephen up as a wonderful example of 'charyte', which *The Legende* does not do.[147] Perhaps Mirk felt that though Christ's and Stephen's sentiments were similar, Christ's 'forgive' was a more accurate expression of the type of heart-felt love Mirk wanted to convey. Forgiving someone of a trespass acknowledges that a wrong has been perpetrated, injury felt, and love extended in spite of the damage that has been inflicted. Stephen's refusal to even press charges, though an action both gracious and loving, leaves out some of the acknowledgment of wrong-doing, the admission of individual suffering, and of the amount of love needed to overlook the offence. Therefore, Mirk may have preferred Christ's words as a more obvious depiction of Stephen as a man full of a burning love for his fellowmen. One wonders what Tyndale would have thought of the substitution.

One of Daniell's criticisms of texts like the *Festial*, *The Legende*, and *The Mirrour* is that they were useless if one wanted to understand the doctrine of Christianity. As we have seen, there are more Biblical passages in these texts than Daniell gives them credit for and upon closer inspection they yield significant gospel doctrine as well. Daniell is particularly hard on *The Mirrour* and writes that 'There is nothing in the *Mirror* of the Gospel doctrines, and of course no hint of the writing of Paul and others in the epistles, all the very bedrock of Christian theology.'[148] Though it is true to say that many of Paul's teachings are not mentioned in these types of gospel harmonies, the books are not completely void of Pauline doctrines as Daniell claims. It is easy to assume when one sees chapter after chapter about

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[145] Jacobus, de Voragine, *The Golden Legende* (London, 1498), STC (2nd ed.) / 24876, EEBO, verso folio Iiii, image 115.

[146] William Granger Ryan, ed., *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6-10.

[147] Mirk, *Festial*, recto folio lxxi, image 71R.

[148] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 100.

various saints that there are no profound theological teachings lurking in the textual depths. But this is a mistake. It requires more than a cursory examination of the texts to discover what they really offer.

For example, in the chapter about the circumcision of the baby Jesus, Love writes '[Christ's name] reasonably is above alle names for as the apostle Petre seith / there is none othere name under hevene in the whiche we owen to be saved.'[149] In the theology of Christianity this doctrine that salvation comes *only* through Jesus Christ is *the* foundation stone of every other Christian doctrine. The passage quoted by Love is not only a doctrine taught by Peter, it also 'hints' at the teachings of Paul who testified to the Romans that he was not ashamed of the 'Gospell of Christ because it is the power of God unto salvacio[n]'.[150]

In a chapter about the type of life Christ led Love quotes Matthew 25 'As longe as ye didde almes dedes to these my leest bretheren / ye didden to me.'[151] This doctrine of serving Christ by serving others was taught by the Saviour himself in a private moment of instruction on the Mount of Olives a few days before his crucifixion. It 'hints' at the teachings of James who explained that 'Pure devocion and undefiled before God the father is this: to vysit the frendlesse and widdowes in their adversite' and of Paul who instructed Timothy that church members 'do good and be ryche in good workes and redy to geve and to distribute'.[152]

Later on, in a recitation of the events at the Last Supper, Love shares even more 'gospel doctrine' through several of his rare Latin transcriptions/English translations. He transcribed passages from John 13 and 14 and explained that Christ's disciples are to love one another as he has loved them. They are to show their love for him by keeping his commandments and if they do these things the Father will also love them and dwell with them.[153] Again, these teachings are significant 'gospel doctrines' and they 'hint' at the teachings of Paul who wrote to the Romans that they were to 'Love thyne neghbour as thy selfe. Love hurteth not his neghbour. Therfore is love the fulfillynge of the lawe.'[154] It may be because of content like this that Duffy is led to assert that *The Mirrour* 'went a long way towards

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[149] Hogg, *The Mirrour*, 51.

[150] WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Romans 1:16.

[151] Hogg, *The Mirrour*, 82.

[152] WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', James 1:27 & 1 Timothy 6:18.

[153] Hogg, *The Mirrour*, 211-12.

[154] WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', Romans 13:9-10.

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satisfying lay eagerness for knowledge of the Gospels'.[155] Duffy and Daniell appear to have taken opposing positions on the value of *The Mirrour*; one giving it too much credit and the other none at all. Perhaps the more accurate assessment is that *The Mirrour* provided *some* theological instruction and because of what it *did* and did *not* have it created a desire for more.

The *Festial* also has its hidden coral reefs that are teeming with vibrantly colourful Biblical passages and beautiful doctrine. One of these is in a chapter entitled *De nomine Jesu* (The name of Jesus). The chapter itself is ten pages long and is one of the *Festial's* most scripturally saturated sections. There are twenty-five different Latin Vulgate transcriptions of Bible passages followed by their English translations. There are also six other English translations and paraphrases of scripture passages scattered throughout the ten pages. The doctrine Mirk expounds in this chapter is surprisingly deep for sermons designed for the unlearned. He teaches of the ancient prophecies that were made about Christ before he was born, expounding not only the importance of his name but that the name was chosen 'Before the worldes creacyon / predestynate and ordeyned in the hye wysdome of the godhead.'[156] Predestination and the omniscience of the godhead are complicated theological subjects readily dealt with by the Apostle Paul in his epistles, but Mirk does not shy away from them here nor does he dilute them. He goes on to discuss the creation of the world, another challenging doctrine, and boldly teaches from Proverbs and the Gospel of John that Christ not only existed before the creation of the heavens, the earth, and everything in them, but that he was the 'fourmer / the maker / the shaper of all these thynges before sayd.'[157] These doctrines are also subjects Paul addressed in his letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and belong to Daniell's 'bedrock of Christianity'.[158]

Mirk also tackled other theological concepts such as the need to rejoice in tribulation, the power of Christ to lift individual burdens, and apostolic power to work miracles.[159] These are all subjects that were discussed by Paul and his brethren in

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[155] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 79.

[156] Mirk, *Festial*, verso folio cxxii, image 123.

[157] See Ephesians 1:4-5, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 1:19; Mirk, *Festial*, recto folio cxxiiii, image 124.

[158] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 100; See Ephesians 1:4-5, 3:9; Colossians 1:16.

[159] Mirk, *Festial,* folios cxxv-cxxvii, images 125-127.

their epistles.[160] Clearly, Daniell's criticisms that texts like the *Festial* were useless if one wanted to understand the theology of Christianity are unfounded.

It is worth noting that the English version of *The Legende* does not have a chapter devoted to expounding Christ's name. Instead, Christ's name is discussed at the beginning of a chapter about the circumcision of Christ and it does not have anywhere near the doctrinal depth of Mirk's.[161] *The Legend* emphasizes that Christ's name comforts, nourishes, is a fountain that brings wisdom and righteousness, is a medicine that heals physical and spiritual ills, and is sweet to those who follow him. It also explains the names 'Jesus' and 'Christ' to mean 'Son of God', 'Saviour', and 'anointed one' and it describes Christ as, 'A prophete techyng the doctrine dyvyne / a champion in the batayle again the devyll . . . a preest in reconciling thumaine lygnage to god the fader / and a kyng in dystributynge and rewarding every man' but there are no references to predestination, the creation, the omniscience of God, or Christ's role as creator.[162]

Mirk's ability to branch away from *The Legende* and include some of the more complex Christian doctrines in his sermons is impressive and invigorating. It also means that the *Festial* cannot be dismissed as useless or theologically anemic. As we found with Fisher's and Alcock's sermons, Mirk's sermons are not a substitute for the Bible, but they do provide a considerable amount of exposure to scripture as well as some profound teaching on the bedrock Christian doctrines. If these sermons were used by ignorant priests to teach ignorant people then this portion of the population was getting some scriptural and doctrinal meat even if they were unable fully to comprehend it. The *Festial* does not contain any instructions or encouragement for individuals to study the Bible. However, as mentioned above, encouragement for personal Bible study did not appear in religious writings until the last quarter of the fifteenth century; long after the *Festial* was compiled.

Among the printed vernacular sermons and gospel harmonies an educated lay person would also find aids to use in personal spiritual meditation. Duffy argues that by the fifteenth century it was acceptable for lay people, as well as for those in the religious orders, to meditate on the Passion or the life of Christ and to participate

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[160] See 1 Peter 1-5 & 2 Corinthians 11-12 for examples of teachings about rejoicing in tribulation; see 1 John & 1 Corinthians 12-13 for examples of teachings about the lifting of individual burdens; see 2 Corinthians 1-4 & 10 for examples of Paul defending his authority as an Apostle; Acts has numerous examples of miracles performed by the Apostles.

[161] Jacobus, *The Golden Legende*, folios 7-8, images 10-11.

[162] Jacobus, *The Golden Legende*, recto folio 7, image 10L.

in affective devotion to Christ's sufferings or to the Sacrament. He asserts that lay people 'wanted books which would provide them with illustrations, indulgences, and other spiritual benefits.'[163] One of the more popular aids to spiritual meditation was the *Imitatio Christi* attributed to Thomas á Kempis (1339/40-1471), canon regular of the monastery of St. Agnietenberg in the Netherlands. Kempis' authorship is contested, but as one scholar asserts 'it is probably fair to say that the attribution to Thomas á Kempis is that most favoured today.'[164] The *Imitatio* was translated into English by William Atkinson at the request of Lady Margaret Beaufort.[165] It attained some degree of popularity and was printed at least six times between 1502 and 1519. Lady Margaret even translated the fourth book in the volume into English herself.[166] Atkinson was one of the original fellows of Jesus College, Cambridge, founded by John Alcock. It is interesting to consider the potential connections that Alcock, Fisher, and Atkinson may have had through Lady Margaret and Cambridge and the possible influence they exerted upon each other.

The *Imitatio* declares its purpose on the first page. Kempis wrote that 'It is more expedyent to fele the inly compunccion of hert than to know the diffinycion thereof.'[167] In other words, no amount of intellectual knowledge about scriptural things can compare with feeling spiritual yearnings in one's heart. Love's *Mirrour* took a similar stance and also encouraged readers to experience the inward, contemplative religious life. Since these texts were designed to encourage the late medieval devotional emphasis on contemplation and meditation, this is hardly surprising. Love repeatedly reminded his readers to exercise 'devoute ymaginacioun' so that individuals could spiritually enter Christ's world and be 'present to his wordes and dedes'.[168] Love even used this technique to narrate non-scriptural events, such as the resurrected Christ's appearance to Peter. Love

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[163] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 234-265.

[164] B.J.H. Biggs, ed., *The Imitation of Christ: The first 'English Translation of the Imitatio Christi'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxxi.

[165] ODNB, 'William Atkinson'.

[166] ODNB, 'Margaret Beaufort'.

[167] Thomas á Kempis, *Imitatio Christi* (London: Richard Pynson, 1517), STC (2nd ed.) / 23958, EEBO, recto folio Aii, image 2R.

[168] Hogg, *Mirrour*, 285.

explained, 'Of this processe of apperynge to Petre is nogt [not] expresse in the gospelle / but thus by devoute ymaginacioun I have sette it here'.[169]

The *Imitatio* continuously transports the reader into the inner realms by repeatedly referring to feelings and to the heart. Scripture passages, such as 'man beholdeth the outwarde [per]te of the / but god beholdeth the hert' from 1 Samuel 16, 'The kyngdome of god is within you' from Luke 17, and a reminder from Psalm 44 that God knoweth the secrets of the heart are used to spark the spiritual emotions necessary for an inner conversion to Christ.[170] As will be discussed more fully in chapter four, one of Tyndale's strongest arguments in favour of giving lay men and women access to the word of God was his hope for a heart-felt conversion through that word. In his *An Answere Unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* he described how hearing or reading the word of God was the 'outward instrument' by which truth could be written in a person's heart by the Holy Spirit. He used the example of 'the Samaritanes' who were touched by 'the wordes of the woman [at the well]' and how through her words the Holy Spirit was able to write certain knowledge of the truth in all of their hearts. One of the differences between Tyndale and traditional believers, such as Kempis, was that Tyndale thought that true conversion could only happen when one was willing to side-step the unwritten customs and ceremonies of the traditional Church and completely rely on the Bible for truth instead.[171]

There are thirty-two different scripture passages scattered throughout the *Imitatio*. Just over half of them are from the New Testament with most references coming from Matthew, Luke, John, and the Psalms. The *Imitatio* does not have any Latin transcriptions of scripture passages and in almost all of the cases the scriptures are solidly translated. For example, three lines into the text of the first page a reader finds: 'Who so folo with me saith crist our saviour walketh nat in derkenes'. This passages comes from John 8 and compares favourably with the Wycliffe translation 'he that sueth me, walkith not in derknessis' and the Tyndale version 'He that foloweth me shall not walke in darcknes'.[172] The *Imitatio* also teaches some of the basic doctrines of Christianity: the need constantly to prepare for the second coming of Christ, the need to overcome temptation, and the eternal

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[169] *Ibid*, 272.

[170] Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, recto folio Eiiii, image 32R.

[171] Tyndale, *Answere,* recto folio E, image 33R.

[172] WCO, 'John Wycliffe's Translation', John 8:12; WCO, 'William Tyndale's Translation', John 8:12.

rewards for the faithful.[173] And while teaching about the need for adversity there is even a 'hint' of the rather obscure Pauline doctrine of the 'thyrde heven' found in 2 Corinthians 12.[174]

The most profound and potentially troublesome use of a couple of scripture passages is found in the second chapter of the third book. Kempis quotes a passage from 1 Samuel 3 when the boy-prophet Samuel learns to recognize the voice of his Lord. After a bit of confusion, Samuel finally realizes that God is speaking to him and he replies 'Speke good lorde for thy servaunt is redy to here the'. This passage is then compared with one from Exodus 20 where the children of Israel tell Moses that they do not want to personally hear God speaking to them. Atkinson's translation of their comments to Moses is 'Speke thou to us & we shall here the gladly: let nat our lorde speke to us lyste we dye for drede.' Kempis then pleads with the reader not to be like the children of Israel but to be like Samuel and to devoutly and earnestly desire God's personal communication. He structured his teachings in the form of a beautiful, sincere prayer that is worth quoting at length:

> Let nother Moises ne none other prophet but thou good lord the inwarde inspirour of al prophetes speke to me & in me For thou only without them maist perfitly teche me . . . [Prophets] may well profer & utter thi wordes: but they can nat gyve the spirite of understandynge . . . thou alone openest theyr sense . . . They crie & speke to us in outwarde wordes / but thou givest understandinge of that we here wherefore I besech the that I may here the speke to me.[175]

This concept of receiving personal revelation from deity coincides perfectly with the teachings in Alcock's sermon on the same subject. As in that instance, Kempis' views, when applied to lay people, go against the social structure of the time and they negate the exclusive and priestly right to communicate with and receive revelation from God. When this sort of ideology is combined with appetizing portions of scripture and heart-felt encouragement such as Kempis', it is little wonder that devout lay people would desire uninhibited and unfiltered access to the Bible.

Kempis, Alcock, Mirk, Fisher and Love, the authors of all of the works we have examined, were faithful to the traditional church. It is significant that in their 'orthodox' books they not only provide tantalizing 'crumbs' of English scripture, but also encourage lay people to come and partake of the rest of the feast that was

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[173] Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, verso folio Bii, recto folio Bvii, verso folio Eiiii, images 11L, 15R, 33L.

[174] *Ibid*, recto folio Gi, image 41R.

[175] Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, verso folio Gii, image 43L.

available in the Bible. In a time when the Wycliffite Bible was the only English translation of that book that existed and when most copies of it were owned and used by the wealthy lay elite, the call to feast upon the word of God could not have been heeded by very many until Tyndale's New Testament was published.

As we have seen, scriptural scrutiny of the vernacular religious texts that were available to educated lay people sheds greater light on the amount, the type, and the quality of the Biblical 'crumbs' lay people were receiving. Though the 'crumbs' were in no way a substitute for the entire feast, lay access to portions of the Bible was much more extensive and useful than contemporary opinion, evangelical or traditional, or modern scholarship, have portrayed it. The 'crumbs' falling from the clerical table were valuable, instructive, and inspiring and, along with the encouragement for personal Bible study, contributed to lay desire for access to a complete English Bible.

CHAPTER TWO

A Famine of Hearing the Words of the Lord: England's lack of a Printed Vernacular Bible

Condemned as a heretic in August 1536, William Tyndale was executed on an early day the following October. English martyrologist, John Foxe, reported in his book *Acts and Monuments* (1563) that in the town of Vilvorde (Low Countries), Tyndale was, brought forth to the place of execution, was there tied to the stake, and then strangled first by the hangman, and afterwards with fire consumed . . . crying thus at the stake with a fervent zeal, and a loud voice, "Lord! Open the king of England's eyes".[1]

As we will discuss more fully below, *Acts and Monuments* was Foxe's attempt to create for English religious reformers and their followers a historically legitimizing narrative of persecution that was traceable back to the primitive Christian church. His narrative was purposely designed to demonstrate that the 'true church' could be identified by its martyrs and because of this Foxe presented Tyndale as a shining example of an English martyr who died defending the 'true faith'.[2] In spite of his packaging, David Loades argues that Foxe's facts were accurate; the men and women Foxe wrote about 'had died, pretty much as and when described, and for the reasons stated.'[3]

In Foxe's account, Tyndale's final plea to God was for Henry VIII to allow a legal English translation of the Bible to circulate among the English people. His execution came at the end of twelve years of exile on the Continent. Tyndale had largely spent those years translating the New Testament and portions of the Old Testament into English. His tragic death, brought about by the betrayal of fellow Englishman Henry Phillips, could be perceived as the fulfilment of an almost prophetic offer Tyndale made to Henry VIII just five years earlier.

While living in Antwerp in 1531, Tyndale met with a man named Stephen Vaughan on three separate occasions. Vaughan was an emissary of Thomas Cromwell, who, at that time, was Henry VIII's increasingly influential councillor and

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[1] *AM*, vol. 5, 127.

[2] Patrick Collinson, 'John Foxe and the National Consciousness' in *John Foxe and His World*, eds. Christopher Highley & John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 16; David Loades, 'Afterword: John Foxe in the Twenty-First Century' in Highley & King, *John Foxe,* 277.

[3] Loades, 'Foxe in the Twenty-First Century', 281.

legal advisor. Cromwell went on to become the king's principal secretary, chief minister, and Vicegerent of spiritual causes (January 1535–June 1540).[4] Vaughan's purpose was to attempt to negotiate Tyndale's return to England. Cromwell, possibly under the direction of Henry VIII, wished to persuade Tyndale to retract what he had written against Henry's divorce in *Practyse of Prelates* (1530) and to enlist Tyndale to write in the King's behalf instead.[5]

In a letter to Cromwell, Vaughan reported part of his second conversation with Tyndale and quoted the exile as saying,

> . . . if it wolde stande withe the kinges most gracious pleas[ure] to graunte only a bare text of the scriptures to be put forthe emonge h[is] people, [. . .] be it of the translation of what perso[n] soever shall please his magestie, I shall ymedyatly make faithful[l] promise, never to wryte more, [. . .] but ymedyatly to repayre into his realme, and there most humbly submytt my self at the fete of his roiall magestie, offerynge my bodye, to suffer what payne or torture, ye, what dethe his grac[e] will, so this be obteyned . . .[6]

Henry VIII did eventually allow an English Bible to 'be put forthe' among his people, but the event did not happen in quite the way Tyndale envisioned. However, two of the things Tyndale offered Henry were a strangely accurate part of later events: Tyndale did end up supporting someone else's Bible translation, though not intentionally, and he did sacrifice his life for his work.

Unbeknownst to Tyndale at the time of his execution, his Bible translations made up a large proportion of the complete English Bible that began circulating in England early in 1536. This Bible was translated by Miles Coverdale, a friend and a former translation assistant, who relied heavily on Tyndale's work.[7] Though the Coverdale Bible was not formally licensed or printed in England until 1537, the publication of the first edition of the unlicensed Bible was not actively hindered by Henry VIII's government.[8] The Coverdale Bible will be more fully discussed in chapter five.

If Tyndale had known about the Coverdale Bible as he stood tied to the stake in Vilvorde, surely he would have rejoiced. Uninhibited lay access to a complete

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[4] F. Donald Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals,' *English Historical Review*, vol. 103, no. 408 (July 1988): 658, 667.

[5] David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 211.

[6] Allfred W. Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 170-71.

[7] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 199.

[8] J.F. Mozley, *Coverdale and his Bibles* (London: Lutterworth, 1953), 115.

printed English Bible was a unique event in England's history. When Tyndale left his native land to pursue Bible translation on the Continent in 1524, England was already two generations behind Europe in the area of printed vernacular Bibles. Between 1466 and 1522 twenty-two editions of the Bible in High or Low German had been published; an Italian version appeared in 1471, abridged French versions in 1473, a Dutch Bible in 1477, Spanish and Czech Bibles in 1478, and a Catalan version in 1492.[9]

Modern scholarship argues that England did not have a printed vernacular Bible because secular and religious leaders were afraid it would cause people to become heretics and rebels.[10] Glyn Redworth, states, 'Owing to the fear of the native heresy, Lollardy, England had till [1536] been the only major European country without a fairly accessible vernacular translation [of the Bible]'.[11] Similarly, in an article addressing translation of the Bible into English, Gillian Brennan asserts that England did not have a vernacular Bible because, 'Since Lollard times [it] had been a symbol of opposition to authority.'[12] Though there is much truth to these claims and sufficient historical evidence to support them, there are other aspects of the subject that warrant further investigation.

For instance, the scholarly assertions that sixteenth-century secular and religious leaders were afraid of Lollardy seem to have obscured any notice of their attitudes towards John Wycliffe (c.1320s-1384), the Oxford theologian and heretic who originally inspired the Lollards. By the early 1520s Wycliffe had been dead for more than a century, but his name appears repeatedly in the official discourse about heresy. In spite of its frequent and prominent use, modern scholars have regarded what was said about Wycliffe only to track the progress of the erroneous historical reputation they claim Wycliffe has acquired since the sixteenth century. But early sixteenth-century perceptions of Wycliffe can tell us more than this. Chapter two will

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[9] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 73.

[10] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 11; Henry Wansbrough, 'Tyndale,' in *The Bible in the Renaissance,* ed. Richard Griffiths (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 119; Richard Griffiths, 'Introduction', in Griffiths, *The Bible in the Renaissance,* 4; Alec Ryrie, 'Counting sheep, counting shepherds: the problem of allegiance in the English Reformation,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall & Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 99.

[11] Glyn Redworth, 'Whatever happened to the English Reformation?' *History Today,* 37 (1987): 32.

[12] Gillian Brennan, 'Patriotism, Language and Power: English Translations of the Bible, 1520-1580,' *History Workshop Journal*, 27 (1989): 27.

begin with a review of the historiography pertaining to Wycliffe's historical reputation and will demonstrate, using a detailed examination and comparison of early sixteenth-century perceptions of Wycliffe, that scholars have erroneously concluded that early English reformers perceived Wycliffe to be an inspired forefather.

A scrutiny of letters and other writings by religious and secular leaders, who supported the traditional faith at the time the documents were written, including Henry VIII and Thomas More, will show that Wycliffe's name was used to create an 'historical heresy'; a chain of heretics that extended from Luther and Tyndale back to the time of Christ. Moreover, an examination of the writings of contemporary reformers, including William Tyndale, John Bale, and John Foxe, will demonstrate that these men did not create their own version of an historical chain of reformers, which included Wycliffe, until nearly thirty years after the religious conservatives had created their historical chain of heretics. We will see that it was the later English reformers who perceived Wycliff as an inspired forefather of their cause and not the early English reformers.

Because Wycliffe inspired his followers, the Lollards, to make the first manuscript English translation of the Bible, from the Latin Vulgate, heresy began to be associated with vernacular scripture.[13] It wasn't long before heresy, English Bibles, and rebellion were connected and by the sixteenth century, the three were inseparable in the minds of the English government.[14] How this connection came about will be discussed more fully in chapters four and five. However, the second part of this chapter will discuss why the sixteenth-century secular and religious authorities did not want an English Bible to be available in England. We will find that in addition to fears of heresy and rebellion, the government was concerned that an English Bible could be used to destroy the traditional social hierarchy. A close scrutiny of *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte* (1529) and of William Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) will demonstrate the acuteness of the issue and how both men recognised that the traditional social hierarchy could be altered if an English Bible was made freely available to all.

In *A dyaloge,* we will see that Thomas More staunchly defended the clergy's traditional position in society. More wanted the clergy to retain their traditional power and privileges because he believed that this was the only way that a peaceful and harmonious society could be maintained. The clergy traditionally held the

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[13] Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 241.

[14] Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2002), 52.

exclusive right to seek for spiritual knowledge, to obtain access to restricted spiritual information, and most importantly, to understand and interpret scripture. Though More was theoretically in favour of translating the Bible into English and felt that lay people would benefit from vernacular scripture, he did not want the special clerical privileges to be usurped by lay people, nor did he want a rise in heresy or in sedition. For More, sedition always followed heresy. He recommended a regulated system of vernacular Bible distribution, administered by the clergy, which would at once maintain clerical privilege and power, minimize the chance of heresy, and prevent social chaos.

Tyndale, on the other hand, supported a completely different social hierarchy; one that he felt was contained in the Bible and one that was not centred on the clergy. It was made up of children, parents, servants, and rulers. All power was allocated to fathers, husbands, masters, and kings. Individual access to a vernacular Bible was essential reading for those in positions of power because it would teach them to exercise their authority righteously. In Tyndale's eyes, the vernacular Bible was the source of a divine social structure and the instrument by which social harmony was maintained. Inspired by Luther's political theories, Tyndale's social structure was unique and one that was closely linked to his distinct theology; a subject that will be addressed more fully in chapter three. Tyndale hoped that the *Obedience of a Christian Man* would cause Henry VIII to reclaim the temporal power that had been wrongly usurped by spiritual leaders and that the king would then implement his distinct Bible-based social hierarchy in England.

Sixteenth-Century perceptions of John Wycliffe

Nearly forty-five years ago, Margaret Aston and James Crompton examined the historical reputation of John Wycliffe. In separate articles, published within one year of each other, both scholars argued that Wycliffe's historical reputation had been seriously distorted by 'too many interested parties' who warped the man either by 'party feelings', by 'prejudice', or by covering him with multiple layers of varnish.[15] The purpose of Crompton's article was to trace the errors and misrepresentations of Wycliffe from 1525 into the twentieth-century. Aston, however, focused exclusively

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[15] James Crompton, 'John Wyclif: A Study in Mythology,' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 42 (1966-67): 28; Margaret Aston, 'John Wycliffe's Reformation Reputation,' *Past and Present* 30 (1965): 23.

on sixteenth-century reformers because she felt that they created many of the misrepresentations and errors that were carried into later generations.[16]

In spite of their differing purposes, both authors agreed that sixteenth-century English reformers, eager to bolster their religious cause, transformed Wycliffe into their inspired spiritual ancestor.[17] Crompton suggested that the early reformers' minimization of the traditional church's apostolic succession required them to create a replacement; what he termed an 'apostolic succession of heretics'. Wycliffe was an important link in the reformers' chain of succession that stretched back to the primitive church.[18] Aston added that sixteenth-century religious conservatives may have perceived Wycliffe more accurately, but they contributed to the development of his erroneous historical reputation with their 'criticism and polemic'.[19]

Twenty years after Aston and Crompton, Anthony Kenny wrote a complementary essay. Kenny wished to outline 'the history of Wyclif's reputation among Catholics from the middle of the fifteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century.' Kenny hypothesized that 'official condemnations of Wyclif', especially the one pronounced at the Council of Constance in May 1415, were the single most important source of 'misinformation' about Wyclif 'before, during, and after the Reformation'. Kenny argued that Catholic writers created a picture of Wycliffe that was only 'distantly related to his actual life and work' because very few of them had ever read Wycliffe's written works.[20] He was particularly disgruntled that the church leaders, who placed Wycliffe's teachings under a global anathema in 1415, classed all 260 of the offending articles, supposedly taken from Wycliffe's writings, as equally heretical. Kenny felt that many of the offending passages fell well short of heresy and that many of them are not traceable to Wycliffe's writings at all.[21] In this way, Catholics created a 'partly fictional aura' around Wycliffe's doctrines and teachings.

Because Aston, Crompton, and Kenny were more concerned about the impact early sixteenth-century representations of Wycliffe had on later estimations and assessments of him, they failed to notice that the reformers' 'succession of

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[16] Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reputation', 30-42.

[17] Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reputation', 23; Crompton, 'A Study in Mythology', 11.

[18] Crompton, 'A Study in Mythology', 9 &11.

[19] Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reputation', 49.

[20] Anthony Kenny, 'The Accursed Memory,' in *Wyclif in His Times*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 147.

[21] *Ibid*, 155.

heretics', most clearly championed by John Bale and John Foxe in the 1550s and 60s, was actually created by the conservatives in the early 1520s. Some scholars, including Kenny, have elsewhere argued that Wycliffe's contribution to sixteenth-century religious thought has been constantly underestimated, and it appears that sixteenth-century perceptions of Wycliffe have received a similar treatment.[22] Therefore, there is a need to examine the sixteenth-century perceptions of Wycliffe and to consider the possible effects those perceptions may have had at the time.

Following the example of Aston and Crompton, we will begin our discussion by examining the earliest printed evangelical eulogy of Wycliffe. This eulogy is in the prologue of the first printed edition of Wycliffe's *Trialogus* (Worms, 1525). Hudson and Kenny assert that someone 'in the circle of Luther' was responsible for printing the book.[23] Crompton believes that the *Trialogus* was printed because 'it was thought that Wyclif had greatly influenced Hus' and because Luther himself was 'interested in the works of Hus'.[24] Jan Hus (*c.* 1371-1415) was the leader of the fifteenth-century Bohemian Hussite religious movement and had been influenced by Wycliffe's writings.[25]

The prologue of the *Trialogus* modestly lauds Wycliffe as a 'true and pious witness of Christ' who preached the truth undaunted by his enemies. Readers are admonished to behold Wycliffe now 'that the sun is shining' and 'driving back the darkness'.[26] Aston and Kenny both assert that this passage shows an evangelical belief that Wycliffe was a forerunner of their cause.[27] However, this interpretation stretches the meaning of the passages beyond their intent. Though the author certainly praises Wycliffe, he does not describe him as a precursor to contemporary evangelicals. Rather, he depicts Wycliffe as a good man, who preached the truth bravely and whose life and efforts were obscured in darkness for a time. Though the author credits the sixteenth-century reformers for bringing Wycliffe's reputation out of obscurity, there is no claim that Wycliffe paved the way for later reformers. Therefore, this passage is not good evidence that, by 1525, reformers were defining

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[22] ODNB, 'John Wycliffe'.

[23] ODNB, 'John Wycliffe'.

[24] Crompton, 'A Study in Mythology', 12.

[25] Matthew Spinka, *Jan Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 31.

[26] Gotthard Lechler, ed., *Trialogus: Cum supplement Trialogi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1869), 13-14.

[27] Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reputation', 24; Kenny, 'The Accursed Memory', 160.

Wycliffe as the forerunner of their cause. Rather, it indicates that Wycliffe's influence on the reformers was more of a consequence of their own actions, rather than a cause of them.[28]

In contrast, those of the traditional faith boldly claimed, earlier even than 1525, that sixteenth-century religious reformers were only repeating the heresies Wycliffe had previously taught. For example, in a letter Pope Leo X (1475–1521) wrote to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in 1521, expressing gratitude for Henry VIII's zeal against Martin Luther, he asserted that Luther had only newly revised the Hussite heresy.[29] Similarly, Pope Adrian VI (1459–1523), Leo X's successor, described Luther as a 'reviver of worn-out heresies' when he wrote to the German princes in 1522.[30] And in 1524, Henry VIII stated, in a letter to the Dukes of Saxony, that Luther's doctrine was like that of Wycliffe's and that he hoped Luther's teachings would be confined to a small area, just as the Hussite heresy had been confined to Bohemia.[31]

These examples illustrate how quickly authorities created a chain of heretics between Wycliffe, Hus, and Luther. It didn't take Henry VIII very long to add links to this chain. He did so in *A copy of the letters, wherin the most redouted [and] mighty pri[n]ce, our souerayne lorde kyng Henry the eight* [. . .] *made answere vnto a certayne letter of Martyn Luther, sent vnto hym by the same.* This book, thought to be published in 1527, was an English translation of what was originally written and published in Latin between 1525 and 1527. It came on the tail end of the famous controversy between Henry VIII and Martin Luther that began when Henry, aided by his councillors, wrote *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martin Lutheru[m]* (1521).[32]

The *Assertio* was essentially a defence of the Seven Sacraments which Luther had attacked and reduced down to three in his *De Captivitate Babylonica* (1520). J.J. Scarisbrick has described the *Assertio* as 'one of the most successful pieces of Catholic polemics produced by the first generation of anti-Protestant

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[28] Crompton, 'A Study in Mythology', 11.

[29] SPO. 'Leo X to Cardinal Wolsey, 16 March 1521', SP 1/21 f.228.

[30] SPO. 'Adrian VI to Princes of Germany, 25 November 1522', Calendar Entry Number: 2686.

[31] SPO. 'Henry VIII to Frederick, John, and George, Dukes of Saxony, 20 January 1524', Calendar Entry Number: 40.

[32] Richard Marius, 'Henry VIII, Thomas More, and the Bishop of Rome,' *Albion: Quincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More,* vol. 10 (1978): 90.

writers'.[33] The *Assertio* was something of a best seller; it went through twenty editions and translations across Europe. It even inspired Pope Leo X to endow Henry with the title *Fidei Defensor* (Defender of the Faith).[34] In spite of its apparent success, modern scholarship has concluded that the *Assertio's* main strength lay solely in the name of its author because its contents are ambiguous, conventional, and lacking in theological understanding.[35]

Luther responded to the *Assertio* by writing *Contra Henricum regem Angliae Martinus Luther* (1522). He was anything but complimentary to Henry, calling him, among other things, a 'fool', a 'disciple of idle monsters', and a 'viper'.[36] Luther later claimed to regret these insults. *A copy of the letters* contains the apology Luther wrote to Henry in 1525. But the prologue to *A copy of the letters* insists that Luther only apologized because he had been informed that Henry had been 'tourned to the favour of his secte' and wanted to discuss 'the mater and cause of the gospel.'[37]

Henry was not impressed with Luther's apology and showed no signs of 'favour' towards him. His prologue states that princes of the past have 'done their effectuall devoyre to withstande and represse from tyme to tyme / the pernicious errours and heresyes / that els had of lykelyhode / as well as by Wyclyffe / as other abhomynable heretikes / ben deeply roted in this realme'.[38] Because of his predecessors' examples, Henry felt bound, given the 'grefe, displeasure, and heviness' of the present heresy, to 'passe' his progenitors' efforts in eradicating it.[39] Henry's admission that Wycliffe was one of many English heretics, and his assertion that heresy was a deeply rooted problem within the country, creates a powerful sense of historical precedence and continuity. Henry sharpened the details by stating,

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[33] J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1968), 110-113.

[34] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 113; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 23.

[35] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 111; Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York: Knoph, 1984), 277-79; ODNB, 'Henry VIII'.

[36] Project Canterbury. 'Contra Henricum regem Angliae Martinus Luther*'* http://www.anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/against_henry.html [accessed 23 March 2010].

[37] Henry VIII, *A copy of the letters, wherin the most redouted [and] mighty pri[n]ce, our souerayne lorde kyng Henry the eight, kyng of Englande* (London: Richrd Pynson, 1527), STC (2nd ed.), 13086, EEBO, recto folio Av, verso folio Av, images 5R-6L.

[38] Henry VIII, *A copy of the letters,* verso folio Aiii, image 4L; OEDO defines *devoyre* as 'to endeavor'.

[39] Henry VIII, *A copy of the letters,* image 4R.

for we doute nat / but it is well knowen to you all / that Martyn Luther [. . .] hath nat only scraped out of the ashen / and kyndeled agayne / almost all the embers of those olde errours and heresyes / that ever heretyke helde sythe Christ was borne bytherto: but hath also added some so poisoned pointes of his owne.[40]

Henry extended the chain linking Wycliffe, Luther, and Hus, back to the time of Christ. Its links were every heretic that had existed since the primitive church. Luther's heresies, no longer just the heresies of Wycliffe, became the heresies of all previous heretics, with, perhaps, a few new false doctrines thrown in for variety's sake.

Interestingly, Henry's comments accurately reflect the views of Thomas More, who was then serving as a member of the king's council. John Guy and Germain Marc'hadour have both argued that *A copy of the letters* was written personally by Henry with the assistance of More.[41] More's involvement with this book is hardly surprising given the fact that he had already served as the editor of the *Assertio* and had written the *Responsio ad Lutherum* to refute Luther's *Contra Henricum*.[42] Both Marius and Guy believe that More's involvement with these publications is evidence that More was serving as the 'linchpin' in the king's fight against Luther.[43] Marius has also argued that by asking More to respond to Luther, Henry was able to maintain his royal dignity by not lowering himself into a debate with a heretical friar and yet answer the blatant challenges to his authority.[44]

More repeatedly and consistently connected contemporary heretics with earlier heretics. In a *Dyaloge concerning heresies*, More asserted that Wycliffe 'began agayn the old heresyes of those auncyent heretyques' and that Luther had taken all of his doctrines from Wycliffe, adding a few new ones 'leste he sholde seme to say nothynge of hys own'.[45] As discussed in chapter one, a *Dyaloge* was written to refute heretical books that were coming into England from the Continent. Interestingly, when the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, petitioned More to write English refutations of these books, he had to grant More a licence to read them

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[40] *Ibid*, image 4R.

[41] John Guy, *Thomas More* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 116; Germain P. Marc'hadour, 'The Historical Context,' in *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 458.

[42] William Roper, *The Lyfe of Syr Thomas More:1626* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), 112.

[43] Marius, *Henry VIII,* 90; Marius, *Thomas More*, 325–50; Guy, *Thomas More*, 114–116.

[44] Richard Marius, 'The Contemporary Scene,' in *CWM* vol. 6, Part II, 535.

[45] Sir Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte* (London: J. Rastell, 1529), STC (2nd ed.) / 18084, EEBO, recto folio lxxxix, image 89R.

because the books had been officially banned. In the licence, Tunstal explained that he wanted More to write against the heretical books because 'children of iniquity' were endeavouring to bring into England 'the old and accursed Wycliffian heresy, and along with it the Lutheran heresy, foster–daughter of Wycliffe's'.[46]

Three years after publishing the *Dyaloge*, in an attempt to refute the young English reformer John Frith's (1503–1533) views on the sacrament, More described heresy as a canker that 'lyeth lurkynge styll in some olde roten tymber under cellers & celynges, that yf it be not wel wayted on and marked, wyll not fayle at lengthe to fall on an open fyre agayne'.[47] This description, highly reminiscent of the one in *A copy of the letters*, implied that Frith was the combustible material upon which the long-lived cankerous heresies had descended and once again burst into flame. In More's multi-publication debate with Tyndale (1529-1533), he reached as far back as the third century to argue that 'Arrius Pelagius, Donatus, wyclyff, and Husse, & such other and now Luther, and Tyndall, and frere Huskyn, [John Oecolampadius] and theyr felowes' all belonged together and were all stirred up by the devil.[48] More also argued that Wycliffe was 'the fyrst founder here [in England] of that abominable heresye, that blasphemeth the blessed sacrament'; again insinuating that the heresy had existed previously elsewhere.[49]

All of these examples are evidence that More believed heresy was heresy and that it consistently reappeared, essentially unchanged, from age to age. The heretics themselves might be different people, but the doctrines they espoused remained the same. Though these sentiments may have intended to downplay the significance of contemporary reformers, Marius believes that as More witnessed the spread of the heresy and saw that in some places the heretics outnumbered traditional believers, 'it must have seemed to him that the heretical tide was well-

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[46] Latin original in D. Wilkins, ed., *Concilia magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, iii (London, 1737), 711; English translation in Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, 1938), 362-63.

[47] Sir Thomas More, *A letter of syr Tho. More knyght impugnynge the erronyouse wrytyng of John Fryth agaynst the blessed sacrament of the aultare* (London: William Rastell,1533), STC (2nd ed.), 18090, EEBO, recto folio aiiii—recto folio B, images 4R-5R.

[48] Sir Thomas More, *The co[n]futacyon of Tyndales answere made by syr Thomas More knyght lorde chau[n]cellour of Englonde* (London: William Rastell,1532), STC (2nd ed.), 18079, EEBO, v, image 23R; Sir Thomas More, *The second parte of the co[n]futacion of Tyndals answere in whyche is also confuted the chyrche that Tyndale deuyseth* (London: William Rastell, 1533), STC (2nd ed.), 18080, EEBO, xcii, xciiii, clxxi, clxxxvi, & ccxcviii, images 48L, 49L, 89R, 98L, 155L; John Oecolampadius was a religious reformer in Basle in the 1520s. He died in 1531.

[49] More, *The second parte of the co[n]futacion,* cxciiii and cccxi, images 102L & 161R.

nigh irresistible and that it was going to lap up to engulf the world.'[50] Marc'hadour and Schuster agree that the letter More wrote to Erasmus in March 1528, pleading with his friend to complete his answer to Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), reveals that More felt he was living on the 'verge of a widespread religious revolution.'[51] The debate between Erasmus and Luther over free will is discussed more fully in chapter three.

The historical chain of heretics was not just an idea argued in official publications. It even appeared in the ecclesiastical proceedings against those who were accused of preaching heretical doctrines. In 1531, when Nicholas Shaxton (*c.*1485–1556), a university of Cambridge preacher and the future almoner to Queen Anne Boleyn, got in trouble with Richard Nix (*c.*1447–1535), Bishop of Norwich, for preaching against purgatory and in favour of clerical marriage, Nix ordered Shaxton to take an oath renouncing the errors of Wycliffe, Hus, and Luther.[52]

Surprisingly, it is not until the early 1530s that we find an English reformer mentioning Wycliffe. The printed version of Wycliffe's *Trialogus,* discussed above, was printed in Latin and on the Continent. Only a few copies of it were imported into England.[53] Tyndale, therefore, appears to be the first English reformer to mention Wycliffe in his English publications. Guy has described Tyndale as 'England's earliest Reformation publicist' and perhaps this is the reason Tyndale is the first.[54] But Tyndale's first reference to Wycliffe in the *Practyse of Prelates* (1530) comes at the end of nearly ten years of conservative writings that repeatedly and consistently referred to Wycliffe.

This lengthy gap was not discussed in Aston's, Crompton's, or Kenny's research. Modern scholars consistently notice only one of Tyndale's references to Wycliffe. That one is contained in his translation of the book of Jonah (1531). Scholars use this reference to support their claim that the early English reformers believed Wycliffe was their inspired forefather. Hudson argues that the Jonah reference to Wycliffe is evidence that Tyndale inwardly agreed with the accusations

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[50] Richard Marius, 'Thomas More's View of the Church,' in *CWM*, vol. 8, Part III, 1339.

[51] Marc'hadour, 'The Historical Context,' 459; Louis A. Schuster, 'Thomas More's Polemical Career,' in *CWM*, vol.8, Part III, 1173.

[52] SPO. 'Richard Nixe, Bishop of Norwich to Merivale, 16 June 1531', Calendar Entry Number 297.

[53] Crompton, 'A Study in Mythology', 12.

[54] John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 121.

of More that his doctrines originated with Wycliffe.[55] A close examination of this reference, as well as of two others, will show that Hudson's claim is unlikely.

In the prologue to his translation of the book of Jonah, Tyndale wrote that Wycliffe was a man sent by God to England, just as Jonah had been sent to wicked Nineveh, to call the country to repentance from its 'Pope holy rightwesness'. Tyndale argued that it was because England rejected Wycliffe's call to repentance and chose to remain entrenched in its own wickedness, that the nobility put to death their rightful king, Richard II, allowed three 'wrong kings' to follow in succession, and then let the kingdom decay while they quarrelled among themselves during the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487). Tyndale believed that the rise of another generation of reformers was God's way of mercifully giving England another chance to repent and put aside popery. [56] Interestingly, Tyndale portrayed Wycliffe only as man sent by God to declare repentance. He made no reference to, or connection with, any of Wycliffe's specific doctrines or other theological assertions.

This view is substantiated if we examine the paragraph preceding the one referring to Wycliffe. Tyndale wrote, 'Gyldas preached repentaunce un to the olde Britaynes that inhabited englond: they repented not / & therfore God sent in theyr enimies uppon them on every side & destroyed them upp & gave the lond un to other nacions'.[57] Gildas (*fl.* 5th–6th centuries) was an orthodox cleric who wrote *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* (On the ruin and conquest of Britain). In the work he admonished kings and clerics alike for their moral and spiritual laxity and urged them to repent.[58] Tyndale referred to Gildas only to demonstrate that God had repeatedly called England to repentance in the past, not because he saw Gildas, who was faithful to the traditional church, as a forefather. Tyndale's emphasis is not on the messengers, but on England's unwillingness to repent. Gildas, like Wycliffe, was a divine tool, not an inspired forefather.

Two other references to Wycliffe, one earlier than the Jonah reference and one later, confirm Tyndale's consistency on this point. In the *Practyse of Prelates* (1530)*,* Tyndale reviewed the history of England in an attempt to demonstrate that the clergy were 'sworne together one to help another' so that they could 'rule both in

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[55] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 505.

[56] William Tyndale, *The prophete Jonas* (Antwerp: M. de Keyser, 1531), STC (2nd ed.) 2788, EEBO, verso folio Biii, image 12L.

[57] Tyndale, *The prophete Jonas,* verso folio Biii, image 12L.

[58] ODNB, 'Gildas'.

the courte & also in the consciences of all men' in every generation.[59] Tyndale described the frustration experienced by the prelates of Richard II's day because of their inability to 'slee the poore wretches' who had been 'converted unto repentaunce' and had 'put their trust in Christe's deeth & bloudeshedinge for the remission of their sins by the preaching of Jhonn Wyclefe.'[60] Again, Tyndale focused on Wycliffe's role as a declarer of repentance. Similarly, in his *Answer to Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (1531), Tyndale stated that though the English clergy had already been 'rebuked by the preaching of wicleffe' for their secret immoral activities with women, they had not changed and were still engaged in the same abominable practices.[61] In both of these references, Tyndale portrayed Wycliffe as a comrade in the service of God, not as a predecessor in a chain of reformers. One reason for Tyndale's consistency on this point would be that he wanted his own call for religious reform not to be perceived as heresy. The portrayal of Wycliffe as a fellow-servant who was sent to cry repentance was an attempt to take the focus off heresy and heretics and to direct it towards a reformation of life instead.

Notably, there are no other references to Wycliffe in any of the rest of Tyndale's writings. Hudson has cited the preface to Tyndale's '*The exposition of the fyrst epistle of seynt Jhon*' (1531) as evidence that Tyndale connected himself with Wycliffe as a translator of scripture. But Wycliffe's name does not appear anywhere in the text. In one passage, Tyndale mentioned Bible translators and claimed that they were,

> [faithe]full servaunts of Christ & faithefull ministr[es] and dispensars of his doctrine/ and trewe hertyd toward their brethrern / which have given themselves up in to the hande of God / and put them selves in jeopardy of all persecution / their very lyf dispised / and have translated the scripture purely and with good conscience / submittynge them selves / and desiringe them that can to amend their translation / or (if it pleise them) to translate it theirselves / after their best manner . . .[62]

Though Tyndale expresses himself in the plural tense, this is not a veiled reference to Wycliffe. We find very similar statements in the *Letter to the Reader* at end of the

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[59] William Tyndale, *The Practyse of Prelates* (Antwerp: Johannes Hoochstraten, 1530), STC / 24465, EEBO, recto folio Fiiii, image 44R.

[60] *Ibid*, recto folio Fiiii, image 44R.

[61] William Tyndale, *An answere unto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (Antwerp, 1531), STC (2nd ed.) / 24437, EEBO, recto folio xxiii, image 23R.

[62] William Tyndale, *The exposition of I John* (Antwerp, 1531), STC / 24443, EEBO, recto folio Aviii, image 7R.

New Testament (1526) and in the prologue to *The Pentateuch* (1530).[63] Such

passages are Tyndale's way of refuting accusations of purposeful mistranslation.

Anyone who was willing to risk his life to translate, like himself, and who was open to

criticism and correction, like himself, could not be guilty of purposeful mistranslation.

Moreover, a statement in the explanatory letter at the end of his 1526

translation of the New Testament also weakens Hudson's claim. In that letter

Tyndale apologized for the 'rudnes' of his first translation and explained that it was

because 'I had no man to counterfeit, nether was holpe with englysshe of eny that

had intetpreted the same, or soch lyke thinge in the scripture before tyme.' If

Tyndale was going to connect himself with Wycliffe through translation, surely this

would have been the moment to do so. For Tyndale, therefore, Wycliffe was neither

predecessor nor mentor.

John Frith appears to be the second English reformer who referred to

Wycliffe in one of his publications. In 1533, in response to More's criticisms on his

views on the sacrament, Frith wrote from the Tower of London that Wycliffe was a

man of 'very sencere lyff & conversacyon'.[64] In commending Wycliff's personal

worthiness, Frith did not make any particular historical or spiritual connection with

him or his teachings. In fact, he adamantly rejected any doctrinal connection with

other reformers and asserted that he did not believe in salvation by faith alone

because 'Wyclyffe / Oecolampadius Tendale & Zwinglius so saye' but because, in

his opinion, 'the scrypture of God doth so conclude & determene'.[65]

Frith's insistence that the Bible established the legitimacy of his beliefs is

consistent with Tyndale's claims. In the prologue to *The Pentateuch*, Tyndale

explained that the reason he wanted to translate the Bible into English was because

it was the only way to 'establish the laye people in any truth'. He also insisted that

the traditional church was full of error because its leaders had substituted their own

'sophistrye . . . argumentes of philosophye . . . wordly symylitudes and apparent

reasons of naturall wisdom' in place of God's word. He described parish priests as

'a full ignorant sorte' and suggested that had they had access to a vernacular Bible,

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[63] See W.R. Cooper, ed., *William Tyndale:The New Testament 1526* (London: The British Library, 2000), 555; William Tyndale, *The Pentateuch* (Antwerp: Johann Hoochstraten, 1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 2350, EEBO, verso folio Aiiii, image 5L.

[64] John Frith, *A boke made by John Frith prisoner in the tower of London answeringe vnto M mores lettur which he wrote agenst the first litle treatyse that John Frith made* (Antwerp, 1533), STC (2nd ed.), 11381, EEBO, recto folio Bv, image 16R.

[65] *Ibid*, recto folio Biiii, image 15L.

they would not 'afferme that my sainges are heresy'.[66] At this stage, therefore, the early English reformers felt that the Bible itself gave them sufficient legitimacy and authority. They did not see a need to obtain either by connecting themselves with previous reformers.

Margaret Aston has argued that in the early stages of the English Reformation, reformers demonstrated an interest in Lollardy by publishing Lollard literature. She notes that in the early 1530s, there were four Lollard texts in circulation: the *ABC ayenst the Clergye*, *A boke of Thorpe or of John Oldecastelle*, *The Lanterne of lyght*, and *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman unto Christe*. She writes that 'All of these works, and others which appeared later, were edited and adapted . . . for modern purposes and modern readers.' In her opinion, the Lollard tracts were presented to readers so that the reformers could add vernacular arguments to their own armoury and to demonstrate that previous generations had been occupied with religious problems that were similar to the ones reformers were facing in their own day.[67] These purposes support our argument that the early reformers saw Wycliffe as a comrade and had not yet transformed him into a spiritual forefather.

It wasn't until 1548 that Wycliffe's reputation gained grandeur and importance among the evangelicals. The ex-Carmelite John Bale (1495–1563), in his catalogue of British writers, *Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorum* [. . .] *summarium,* decisively and yet eloquently placed Wycliffe among celestial spheres.[68] Bale wrote that '[Wycliffe] shone like the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and remained for many days as the faithful witness in the church.' Like Tyndale, Bale made an analogy between Wycliffe and a Biblical character. But Bale chose Elias, meaning one who goes before and prepares the way, to describe Wycliffe. [69]   This analogy made the spiritual and historical continuity between Wycliffe and the sixteenth-century reformers absolutely explicit. Bale then applied Ecclesiasticus' 'morning star', *stella matutina,* to Wycliffe, a description that would repeatedly be used by later evangelicals to assert that Wycliffe was their spiritual forefather.

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[66] Tyndale, *The Pentateuch*, verso folio Aiii—recto folio Aiiii, images 3L–4R.

[67] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and reformers: images and literacy in late medieval religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 220-222.

[68] Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reformation', 25.

[69] An English translation of Bale's description is in Aston, 'Wycliffe's Reformation', 25.

The *Summarium* was written during Bale's first exile on the Continent. Bale fled England after Henry VIII began to show less commitment to evangelical ecclesiastical reform in 1539, with the passage of the Act of Six Articles, and executed two important friends: Thomas Cromwell in June 1540 and Robert Barnes a month later.[70] Leslie Fairfield argues that Bale published the *Summarium* to 'inform his countrymen' about the history of English writers, but that he also desired to 'teach them the truth about Rome and the English past.'[71] She demonstrates that the seven seals from the Biblical book of Revelation served as Bale's touchstone for interpreting history and that the bibliographic information in the *Summarium* illustrated what Bale felt the Book of Revelation predicted.[72] What is significant about Bale's high opinion of Wycliffe in 1548 is that it was something he developed over time. Fairfield notes that in 1536, Bale demonstrated 'lack of sympathy for Wyclif and the early Lollards' and 'wrote of Wyclife as a benighted heretic, not as the "morning star of the Reformation".'[73] By the 1540s, however, she believes that Bale's careful annotation of the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum,* a Carmelite collection of documents relating to Wycliffe and the early Lollards which Bale obtained in 1538, caused him to 'discover Wyclif as a kindred spirit . . . for the first time'.[74] After this point, Bale consistently praised Wycliffe in his works. For example, in 1546 he wrote in the preface to *The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe*:

> God wyll so gloryfye that twentye tymes condempned here / tyke, execrated, cursed, spytted, and spat led at, that all your popysh writers before hys tyme and after, wyll be reckened but vyle swyneheardes to hym, for the good faver he bare to Christes holye Gospell.[75]

In 1557, Bale published a 'much expanded' version of the *Summarium*, entitled *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie . . . Catalogus.*[76] The *Catalogus* was written during Bale's second exile on the Contient after Mary Tudor's accession to the throne in 1553. Herbert Grabes believes that Bale was concerned about the role

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[70] ODNB, 'John Bale'.

[71] Leslie Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1976), 90, 97.

[72] *Ibid*, 97.

[73] *Ibid, 51.*

[74] *Ibid,* 71, spelling of 'Wyclif' is Fairfields'.

[75] John Bale, *The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe* (Wesel: D. van der Straten, 1546), STC STC (2nd ed.) / 848, EEBO, 6 recto, image 6R.

[76] Fairfield, 99.

of his country within 'the field of cultural competition between the rising early modern European nation-states' and understood that the domains of the competition were learning, writing, and 'right religion'. Thus, his *Catalogus* was at once a history of British writing and a history of British religion and its purpose was to prove that 'Britain had a long and glorious tradition' in both.[77] Loades argues that Bale wanted to refute the criticism of the 'contemporary Catholic polemic' which insisted that the evangelicals believed in a religion that was invented by Luther. Bale answered these criticisms by demonstrating a spiritual and theological continuity between contemporary reformers and the primitive church.[78] Grabes also suggests that the *Catalogus* was Bale's contribution to resisting Mary Tudor's efforts to re-Catholicize England because, throughout the book, Bale repeatedly illustrated that 'England had been chosen as the elect country for the survival and reestablishment of the true faith'.[79]

John Foxe (1516/17–1587) not only adopted Bale's description of Wycliffe as the 'morning star' and included it in his extremely popular *Acts and Monuments* (1563 and later editions), but he took Bale's idea of historical continuity to a level on par with More.[80] Foxe succeeded in creating for the reformers and their followers an historical narrative of persecution that stretched back to the primitive church. His narrative absorbed European heretics throughout the ages and named Wycliffe as the leading English example of resistance to the corrupt Roman Church.

Foxe used this narrative to argue that the 'true' church Christ established anciently was still on the earth and that even though 'princes, kings, monarchs, governors, and rulers of this world, with their subjects, publicly and privately, with all their strength and cunning, have bent themselves against this Church' it had endured and would continue to endure. In the first chapter of the *Acts and Monuments,* Foxe explained that he wrote the book to spiritually edify evangelical believers and to increase their knowledge of the true church's history.[81] Loades

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[77] Herbert Grabes, 'British Cultural History and Church History for the Continent: John Bale's *Summarium* (1548) and *Catalogus* (1557-9),' in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andreas Höfele & Werner von Koppenfels (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 139-40.

[78] David Loades, 'Introduction,' in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 2.

[79] Grabes, *British Cultural History*, 147-48.

[80] *AM*, vol. 2, 792.

[81] *Ibid*, Chapter I.

argues that Foxe not only wished to provide England with an historical narrative, but that he wanted to provide a martyrology of the 'Western Church' that learned people could study.[82]

As for the mid-sixteenth-century conservatives, they continued to rely on the chain of heretics forged earlier in the century and repeatedly asserted that this had all happened before. John Christopherson (d. 1558), author of *An exhortation to all menne to take hede and beware of rebellion . . .* (1554), wrote that the evangelical heresies troubling the kingdom were nothing new since 'Wyclyffe hadde in corners taught the same in kinge Edward the thirdes dayes'.[83] Christopherson, Bishop of Chichester and chaplain to Mary Tudor, had been commissioned by the Queen to defend Catholicism as she attempted to restore the traditional religious practices and beliefs in England.[84]

Roger Edgeworth (*c.*1488–1559/60), a conservative theologian and preacher, boldly stated in 1557 that heretics such as Arrius, Wycliffe, and Luther, not only taught the same things, but were all driven to do so by personal disappointment and envy of others' carnal possessions and position.[85] In the 1560s, Thomas Harding (1516–1572), a Hebrew scholar, theologian, and religious controversialist, wrote in his lively religious debate with John Jewel (1522–1571), the Bishop of Salisbury, that Wycliffe was the great grandfather of the Protestants he was then refuting.[86] Harding was then a leading member of the community of exiled English conservatives who moved to Louvain after the accession of Elizabeth I. He was also party to a petition sent to Rome asking for an official English translation of the Bible.[87]

Duffy has recently re-examined the Marian regime's use of the printing press. He has argued that the regime was 'fully alive' to the importance of printing and,

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[82] Loades, 'Introduction,' 2.

[83] John Christopherson, *An exhortation to all menne to take hede and beware of rebellion . . .* (London: John Cawood, 1554), STC (2nd ed.), 5207, EEBO, recto folio Di, image 169R.

[84] Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 63.

[85] Roger Edgeworth, *Sermons very fruitfull, godly, and learned, preached and sette foorth by Maister Roger Edgeworth* (1557), STC (2nd ed.), 12762, EEBO, verso folio xix, image 35L.

[86] Thomas Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England, by Thomas Harding Doctor of Diuinitie*, (Antwerp, 1565), STC (2nd ed.) / 12762, EEBO, verso folio 263, image 276L.

[87] ODNB, 'Thomas Harding'.

contrary to current scholarly opinion, made effective and positive use of it.[88] Duffy states that one of the most common themes addressed by the Marian Catholic polemic was 'the changeability and destructive power of protestantism'. Duffy demonstrates that Christopherson, Edgeworth, and others were quick to identify the 'instability and doctrinal chaos of the new religion' and that in their eyes, this instability was irrefutable evidence that the new religion was inspired by the devil.[89] When these arguments are combined with the conservatives' repeated references to the chain of heretics, it is evident that in the midst of all the accusations of instability, conservatives found one element of evangelical stability; the stability of an 'historical heresy'.

As we have seen, sixteenth-century conservatives perceived Wycliffe to be a part of a chain of heretics that extended back until the time of Christ. This chain of heretics was created in the early 1520s, thirty years before the one mid-sixteenth-century reformers devised to give themselves historical legitimacy. The early English reformers did not perceive Wycliffe as a spiritual forefather. They were much more ambivalent; portraying Wycliffe as a good man, a faithful witness, and a comrade in the declaration of repentance. Rather than relying on predecessors to give them legitimacy, the early reformers maintained distance from previous heretics and relied on the Bible itself for legitimacy and authority. The English reformers' version of the 'apostolic succession of heretics' didn't come about until mid-way through the sixteenth century. Bale, motivated by a desire to give his country both religious and historical importance, and to respond to conservative criticism, claimed that England had a long history of preserving the true religion and established Wycliffe as a forefather of contemporary reformers. Foxe carried Bale's idea further, creating a legitimizing history of the 'true church', centred on persecution, and in which English reformers played an important part.

Fears of Heresy, Rebellion, and the Destruction of the Traditional Social Structure

We have just seen that the early sixteenth-century secular and religious leaders were occupied with the historical nature of religious heresy and interpreted contemporary heretics, such as Luther and Tyndale, in that context. But heresy was not the only thing English authorities were anxious about. Two royal proclamations issued by Henry VIII, one on 6 March 1529 and the other on 22 June 1530, suggest

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[88] Duffy, *Fires of Faith,* 57-78.

[89] *Ibid*, 71, 73.

that there was another concern. The earlier of the two proclamations was issued to prohibit unlicensed preaching and the possession of heretical books that were being imported into England from the Continent. It claims that 'heretics and Lollards . . . by perversion of Holy Scripture do induce errouneous opinions, soweth sedition among Christian people, and finally do disturb the peace and tranquillity of Christian realms.'[90] The second proclamation prohibited the possession of any English translations of the Old or New Testaments or 'any other book of Holy Scripture so translated'. The reason for the prohibition was that English translations,

> pervert and withdraw the people from the Catholic and true faith of Christ, as also to stir and incense them to sedition, and disobedience against their princes, sovereigns, and heads, as also to cause them to contemn and neglect all good laws, customs, and virtuous manners, to the final subversion and desolation of this noble realm. . .[91]

Both of these examples clearly acknowledge authorities' concerns about heresy and rebellion and the role vernacular scripture played in them. The second proclamation demonstrates that authorities had *three* distinct apprehensions, which, if left unchecked, would lead to the extremely serious 'final subversion and desolation' of England. Alongside heresy and rebellion we find the condemnation and neglect of 'all good laws, customs, and virtuous manners'.

It is significant that authorities separated perversion of the true Catholic faith (heresy), disobedience against princes (rebellion), and the condemnation and neglect of 'all good laws, customs, and virtuous manners' from each other. The separation of the last two, in particular, indicates that rebelling against princes and condemning good laws were different things in the minds of authorities. It will be argued here that 'good laws, customs, and virtuous manners' referred to the traditional social hierarchy with all of the degrees, privileges, and restrictions that required individuals to act in specified ways. Therefore, in addition to anxiety about heresy and rebellion, English authorities were equally afraid that if people read an English Bible they would become contemptuous of, and unwilling to uphold, the traditional social order.

Apprehensions about the social hierarchy are evident in other writings of the same time period. Thomas More, William Tyndale, and Thomas Elyot are only a few examples of early sixteenth-century English authors who expressed their opinions on the subject. More's and Tyndale's books, in particular, reveal that both men had

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[90] Paul L. Hughes & James F. Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 182.

[91] *Ibid,* 194.

an acute awareness of social structure and social harmony and the ways in which those might be altered if the Bible was made available in the vernacular. Unsurprisingly, though More and Tyndale both preferred a structured society and wanted social harmony, they differed in their beliefs about how to obtain and maintain them.

More's *Dyaloge concerning heresies* provides a detailed and insightful discussion of why authorities were reluctant to allow the Bible to be translated into English. As discussed in chapter one, the *Dyaloge* is a conversation between the Messenger*,* an inquisitive young man seeking answers to his religious concerns, and the Chancellor of England. Well into their conversation, the Messenger confronts the Chancellor with 'every roten reason' the clergy have given for the lack of an English Bible. The Messenger passionately states that 'fyve of those reasons be not worth a fygge'.[92] These five reasons were: 1) that it was sinful for lay people to covet additional scriptural knowledge, 2) that God taught many things, including scripture, to his chosen religious leaders that were not meant for the general public, 3) that it was difficult and dangerous to translate from one tongue into another, 4) that English was a 'vulgare and barbarous' tongue that could not express complex spiritual concepts, and 5) that unlearned lay people could only comprehend simple spiritual doctrines and would stumble on the difficult or complex Bible passages, unless those passages were interpreted for them.[93]

The Messenger's list shows several important things. First, it indicates, in detail, many of the clergy's explanations for why the Bible should not be available in English. Secondly, it illustrates which of the concerns the clergy were most anxious about. Though fears of heresy and rebellion were real concerns for religious and secular authorities, it is significant that those fears are not evident in this list. As we can see, religious heresy is only hinted at in reason five and rebellion is not included in the list at all; though the idea of lay people 'stumbling', due to their misinterpretation of difficult Biblical passages, may infer rebellion. But the fact that rebellion is not stated directly is important.

Moreover, justifications one, two, and five are all issues that directly relate to the privileges that traditionally belonged to the clergy. These privileges were: the opportunity to seek for spiritual knowledge, legitimate access to restricted spiritual information, and the right to understand and interpret scripture. Justifications three

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[92] Sir Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte* London: J. Rastell, 1529), STC (2nd ed.) / 18084, EEBO, verso folio xciiii, image 95L.

[93] More, *Dyaloge*, verso folio xciiii – recto folio xcv, image 95L—95R.

and four are philological issues that are not, in and of themselves, directly related to lay behaviour. Therefore, this list of explanations portrays an early-sixteenth-century clergy that was extremely anxious about preserving their traditional place and privileges in society.

It is unsurprising that the clergy would be worried about loss of degree and privilege. They had enjoyed a high rank in society and exclusive privileges within that rank for a long time. William Caxton's translation of *Hier begynneth the book callid the myrrour of the worlde . . .* (1481) contains a good description of one type of social hierarchy that originated in the Middle Ages and which accorded the clergy significant status. Caxton, the man who brought the printing industry to England (*c.*1475), translated and published many French books that had been popular in Flanders. He sold these translations to English buyers who wanted to keep up with what was popular at the fashionable Burgundian court, where Margaret of York was the third wife to Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.[94] *The myrrour* is one of these translations.

In *The myrrour of the worlde* we learn that there are 'but thre maner of peple in the world . . . & that were clerkes [clergy] knyghtes & labourers'. The knights (or noblemen) were responsible for defending and protecting the clergy and the labourers. The clergy were supposed to 'enseigne [instruct] & teche these ii maner of peple' and to make sure 'that none doo thinge by whiche he sholde displese god'. The laity was supposed to provide for the clergy and noblemen 'suche thinges as were nedeful for them to lyve by in the world honestly.' We are also informed that 'no man myght sette his corage [heart] in that he myght be wise a right in ii maners or thre'. In other words, no one should set his heart on becoming knowledgeable in more than one of the designated social orders. The author concludes 'he that wold lerne byhoveth hym only to lerne one of the thre.'[95] Clearly, individuals in each of the three social ranks were expected to remain in their own station and not meddle in either of the other two.

Fifty years later, in *The boke named the Governour* (1531) written by Sir Thomas Elyot, humanist scholar and one time senior clerk in Henry VIII's council (1523-1529), we find similar assertions that there was an ordained social structure and that the clergy had status and privilege within it.[96] Elyot states that,

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[94] ODNB, 'William Caxton'.

[95] Gossuin, of Metz, *Hier begynneth the book callid the myrrour of the worlde* (1481), STC (2nd ed.) / 24762, translated by William Caxton, EEBO, recto folio Cii, image 17R.

[96] ODNB, 'Sir Thomas Elyot'.

> god ordeyned a diversitie or preeminence in degrees to be among men, for the necessary derection and preservation of them in conformitie of lyvynge.[97]

He explains that there are three main degrees: the 'hevenly ministers' (clergy), those 'in preeminence of lyuynge, understandynge, labour, and policie' (nobility), and the 'vulgare people or communaltie'.[98] He believed that without these degrees society 'nedes muste be [in] perpetuall conflycte.'[99]

A century earlier, Henry Knighton recorded in his chronicle (1378-1396) two of the specific special privileges accorded to the clergy. Knighton wrote that the gospel had been given by Christ to the 'clergy and the doctors of the church, that they might administer it to the laity and to weaker brethren'.[100] Knighton was extremely irritated with Wycliffe because he believed, erroneously, that Wycliffe was responsible for translating the Bible into English in the 1380s. Modern scholarship has since shown that it was Wycliffe's followers who did the translating.[101] Nevertheless, Knighton felt that Wycliffe had made,

> that common and open to the laity, and to women who were able to read, which used to be for literate and perceptive clerks, and spread the Evangelists' pearls to be trampled by swine. And thus that which was dear to the clergy and the laity alike became as it were a jest common to both, and the clerks' jewels became the playthings of laymen, that the laity might enjoy now forever what had once been the clergy's talent from on high.[102]

Clearly, Knighton passionately believed that the clergy had a God-given right and 'talent' with scripture and he was extremely unhappy that the laity had been given access to those things that were once enjoyed by the clergy alone.

Upon comparison, Knighton's views are very similar to the arguments against Bible translation in More's *Dyaloge.* As we have seen, three of the five clerical justifications mentioned by the Messenger assert that the clergy had special rights, talents, and privileges with scripture that the laity did not have. More's Chancellor even states that the most important quality the clergy posses, above intelligence and above diligence in and depth of learning, is to have 'the lyght and

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[97] Sir Thomas Elyot, *The boke named the Governour*, (London, 1531), STC (2nd ed.), 7635, EEBO, recto folio 166, image 172R.

[98] *Ibid*, verso folio 2, image 10L, recto folio 5, image 13R, verso folio 5, image 14L.

[99] *Ibid,* verso folio 2, image 10L.

[100] G.H. Martin, ed., *Knighton's Chronicle 1378-1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 243.
[101] Daniell, *The Bible in English,* 66; John Stacy, *John Wyclif and Reform* (London, 1964), 77.

[102] Martin, *Knighton's Chronicle,* 243.

clerenes of [God's] especyall grace / by whych they [are] inwardly taught of hys only spyryt to {per}ceyve' the correct meaning and application of scripture.[103]

As the *Dyaloge's* Messenger delineates the clergy's five reasons for withholding scripture, he interjects personal comments about them. These comments suggest that More, their author, was conscious of, and perhaps troubled about, lay dissatisfaction with the traditional clerical privileges. According to Marshall, modern historians have long asserted that, on the eve of the Reformation, there was a significant amount of anti-clericalism in England; 'priests and their privileges' supposedly provoking 'widespread resentment among the laity'.[104] However, Christopher Haigh and Scarisbrick have contended that this picture of wide-spread anticlericalism is erroneous. They argue that English laypeople were generally happy with their priests, made few complaints about clerical learning, morals, or commitment, dutifully paid their tithes without protest, and found a swift, flexible justice in church courts.[105]

But this is not to suggest that there was no dissatisfaction with the church at all. Haigh admits that though complaints against the clergy may have been few, there were enough of them to indicate that some lay people were aware of problems and were discontented.[106] Fox states that More himself knew that the church was 'in desperate need of reform' and that his lengthy attempts to disprove clerical corruption in his polemical writings attest to the depth of his awareness.[107] Marshall suggests that whenever priests were negligent of their duties, while at the same time demanding status, rights, and privileges, that laypeople probably did voice a 'violent antipathy' towards them. He also feels that animosity towards English priests

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[103] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio vii, image 7R.

[104] Peter Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 211; See G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509–1558*, (London: Arnold, 1977), 53–56 and A.G. Dickens, 'The Shape of Anticlericalism and the English Reformation', in *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe*, eds. E. I. Kouri and T. Scott (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987) for more information about this position.

[105] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 41–51; J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1984), 42–60.

[106] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 48.

[107] Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press, 1982), 168; for More's attempts to disprove clerical corruption see his *Dyaloge*, verso folio xci–verso folio xciii, images 91L–94L and 'Supplicacion of Soules,' in *The Workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght, Sometyme Lorde Chauncellor of England, Wrytten by Him in the English Tonge*, edited by William Rastell (London: 1557), STC (2nd ed.) / 18076, EEBO, 297–99, images 166R–167R.

became a more marked feature of parish life from the 1540s on because 'the spectacle of official proceedings being taken by King and Parliament [in the early 1530s] against the clergy as a whole must have made a deep impression on the English laity'.[108]

The conversation between the Messenger and the Chancellor about why the clergy were reluctant to translate the Bible into English is evidence that laypeople *were* feeling some resentment against the clergy in the late 1520s, that More was aware of it and that he understood its nature. Significantly, the Messenger protests only against the first justification and the fifth—both of which concern lay intelligence and lay opportunity for further spiritual education. He vehemently attacks the assertion that it is sinful for lay people to seek further scriptural knowledge. He derides the claim that lay people are 'infantys that must be fedde with mylke and pappe' and denies the need for scripture to be 'chammed [interpreted] afore by the nurse and so put into the babys mouth.' The Messenger insists that there are 'many a shrewde brayne among us', that lay people can 'cham [scripture] our selfe as well as they' and that an 'old knave is no chylde.'[109] The second, third, and fourth justifications for not translating the Bible into English receive no reaction from the Messenger whatsoever.

If the Messenger really does represent the average man in the street, then in More's estimation at least, lay people were particularly outspoken against clerical assertions that they were not intelligent enough to understand the Bible and that Bible study and interpretation were the province of the clergy alone. More's depiction of lay dissatisfaction with traditional clerical privilege supports Richard Deurden's assertions that 'Official discourse on translation [of the Bible] in the early sixteenth century focused on the ways in which English scripture might affect the balance of power or, perhaps, how it might upset the desired imbalance of power among monarchy, church, and people.'[110] More certainly recognized that the English Bible was a tool which could be used by lay people to threaten, and potentially destroy, traditional clerical status and privilege. In More's mind, this would inevitably lead to social chaos.

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[108] See Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 25-6; Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People; Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 126-44; Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood*, 219, 223.

[109] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio xciiii, image 95L.

[110] Richard Duerden, 'Equivalence or Power: Authority and Reformation Bible Translation,' in *The Bible as Book: The Reformation,* ed. Orlaith O'Sullivan (London: The British Library, 2000), 13.

The Chancellor's response to the Messenger's concerns is most illuminating. The Chancellor begins addressing the five 'roten' reasons by astutely uniting justifications one, two and five (lay people should not seek after additional spiritual knowledge, certain sections of the Bible are not appropriate for lay people, and lay people should not interpret scripture) and discussing them simultaneously. Significantly, he spends nearly four pages explaining and elaborating these three justifications and only half as many pages considering the remaining two combined; a further testimony that the threat to clerical privilege was a main concern. (The other two were: the difficulties of translating from one language to another, and whether or not English was a sophisticated enough language to convey Biblical concepts.)

The Chancellor states that in his understanding there is 'not one thing that more putteth good men of the clergy in doubte' about allowing the Bible to be translated into English than perceiving that 'the worse sorte [are] more fervent in the callyng for it / than them whom we fynde far better.' More defines the 'worse sort' as people who are possessed with an 'inordynate appetyte of knowledge', such as Eve had in the Garden of Eden and which caused her to be driven out. The Chancellor explains that 'unlerned' lay people who are 'busy to enserch [scrutinize] and dispute the grete secrete mysteryes of scrypture', though they do not have the capacity 'to perceyve' them, demonstrate an inordinate appetite for knowledge and are engaging in activities that are 'playnly forboden' to those who are 'not appointed nor instructed thereto.'[111]

These comments echo those expressed in *The myrrour of the worlde* when that author insisted that a man should restrict himself to gaining knowledge applicable to his own station in life. They also reflect those offered by Knighton regarding the clergy's special appointment with scripture. More's Chancellor insists that there are portions of scripture that unlearned men cannot comprehend and that 'yt were more than madness for theym to medle' with those passages. The Chancellor insists that it 'is the prechours parte' to interpret scripture and also those 'that after longe study are admitted to rede and expowne it' and that no one else should do so.[112]

The Chancellor supports his assertions by citing the reproofs of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (*c*.325—389) and Saint Jerome (*c*.340—420), the translator of

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[111] More, *Dyaloge*, verso folio xciiii, image 95L.

[112] *Ibid*, recto folio xcvi, image 96R.

the Latin Vulgate Bible, upon all such 'busy meddlers in the scrypture'. He quotes Saint Paul and states that 'god hath by his holy spyryte so institute & ordeyned his chyrch / that he wyl have some reders and some herers / some techers & som lerners' and argues that the right order of Christ's church is turned completely upside down when 'the one parte medleth with the others offyce.' He even quotes Plato's assertions that those who were not appointed to the study of temporal law should be forbidden from 'reasonyng and dysputynge' upon that law, arguing that 'yf Plato', who was 'so wyse a man' thought this way about 'temporall lawes / thynges of mennys makynge / how much is it lesse mete for every man boldely to medle with the exposycyon of holy scrypture'.[113] The Chancellor also explains that Moses' ascent up Mount Sinai to speak with God, while the people tarried below, signifies 'that the people be forboden to presume to medle with the high mysteryes of holy scripture / but ought to be content to tary beynethe & medle none higher than is mete for them'.[114] He concludes by telling the Messenger 'I saye forsothe I can in noo wyse agree with you that it were mete for men unlerned to be busy with the chammynge of holy scripture/ but to have yt chammed unto them.'[115]

More's references to Gregory and Plato are particularly insightful. Gregory, also known as Gregory the Theologian because of the immense influence his doctrines had throughout Europe, became the Archbishop of Constantinople in 380. He is credited with hand-picking the missionaries that brought Christianity to England in the fourth century. Because of this, More felt, as he would later state to his judges during his trial, that Gregory claimed a special debt of filial devotion from the English.[116] The reference to Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician, demonstrates More's knowledge of Greek texts, and perhaps his humanist beliefs. Edward Sturtz suggests that More especially read Plato because he felt that Plato's teachings were most useful in government and the preservation of civic order.[117]

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[113] *Ibid*, recto folio xcv, image 95R.

[114] *Ibid*, verso folio xciiii, image 95L.

[115] *Ibid*, recto folio xcvi, image 96R.

[116] Roper, *Lyfe of Thomas More*, 155; Germain P Marc'hadour, 'Fathers and Doctors of the Church' in *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 531.

[117] Edward Sturtz, 'Utopia as a Work of Literary Art: Sources, Parallels, and Influences' in *CWM*, vol. 4, clvii.

Marius reminds us that 'More hated tyranny more than he feared death' and that for him, social order was founded on individual Christian faith.[118] Alistair Fox believes that 'As early as 1523 [More] had discerned a potential threat to social and political order on the Continent and made a dire prophecy in the *Responsio* that heretical subversion of the clergy would lead to anarchy'.[119] In More's mind, therefore, wherever there was heresy, there would inevitably be rebellion and social chaos. More's references to Gregory and Plato illustrate his belief that social order and harmony was founded in religious orthodoxy and respect for the clergy.

In spite of the Chancellor's refusal to allow lay interpretation of scripture, he is not opposed to translation of the Bible into English. As discussed in chapter one, there may have been a number English Bishops who felt this same way. The Chancellor admits that though there are some 'blynde bayardys' who will insist on interpreting scripture for themselves and will come to great harm because of it, this is not a 'suffycent cause to exclude the translacyon and to put other folke from the benefyte thereof'.[120] He argues that if lay people will refrain from wrestling with those Biblical texts that might bring them into doubt and will not wrest the traditional articles of the church, then 'no man nor woman [can] take hurte in holy scrypture.'[121] He believes that 'provysyon must be made / that as moch good maye grow / and as lytell harme come as can be devysed'.[122] Five years later, More stated in *The apologye of Sir Thomas More, knyght* that even though there were other 'well lerned bothe, & very vertuouse folke' who 'bothe have bene and yet be in a farre other myndehe' about vernacular Bibles, he was 'also of the same opynyon styll' as he had in his 'dyaloge declared'.[123]

The Chancellor's 'provysyon' includes the translation of the Bible into English by 'some good catholyque and well lerned manne'. The translation would then be approved 'by the ordynaryes / and by theyr authorytees'. The volume would be printed and all of the copies given 'unto the byshoppys' who would use their own

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[118] Marius, 'More's View of the Church,' 1333–1336.

[119] Fox, *Thomas More*, 138.

[120] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio xcvi, image 96R; The OEDO defines 'bayard' as one who suffers from reckless blindness or has the self-confidence of ignorance.

[121] More, *Dyaloge,* verso folio xcv, image 96L.

[122] *Ibid,* verso folio xcvi, image 97L.

[123] Sir Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knyght* (London: William Rastell, 1533), STC / 137:17, EEBO, 21, image 21R.

'dyscrecyon and wysedome' in distributing them to parishioners. The bishops would give a copy to those they felt were 'honest sad virtuous' and who would only use it 'reverently with humble hart & lowly mynde' and not for disputation.[124] Under this regulated system, impractical though it might be, heresy would be kept to a minimum, the clergy would retain their station and privileges, devout lay people would receive the benefits of access to an English Bible, and ultimately, society itself would be orderly and orthodox.

A Dyaloge's portrayal of a clergy that was focused on maintaining their traditional privileges and status becomes especially important when we remember why A Dyaloge was written. More had been commissioned by the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, to write English refutations of the religious heresies infiltrating England from the Continent. This will be more fully discussed in chapter four. Fox suggests that in the early 1520s More had been reluctant to take up his pen to engage in religious polemic and had only done so by order of the king. But in 1525, outraged by the Peasants' Revolt, discussed below, and by Luther's marriage with the former nun, Katherine von Bora, More was no longer hesitant.[125] Additionally, Marius believes that More, out of frustration at being unable to enlist Erasmus to write in defence of the traditional church, asked for the job.[126] A Dyaloge was the first of such publications.

Schuster states that the Dyaloge is the most comprehensive of More's polemical writings and that it is mainly a response to Tyndale's New Testament translation.[127] As we have seen, More's discussion of clerical reluctance to translate the Bible into English indicates that religious leaders were anxious about the deterioration of their traditional status and privileges and the effect that deterioration would have on social harmony. But the Chancellor's comments are more than this. They are also a direct refutation of Tyndale's ideas about obtaining and maintaining social order, published just six months before in his Obedience of a Christian Man. As we shall see, Tyndale's proposals eliminated clerical privilege and status altogether and centred social harmony and order on lay access to a vernacular Bible.

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[124] More, Dyaloge, recto folio xcvii, image 97R.

[125] Fox, Thomas More, 128–144.

[126] Marius, Thomas More, 338.

[127] Louis A. Schuster, 'Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523–1533' in CWM, vol. 8, Part III, 1142.

<u>William Tyndale's Bible-based Social Structure</u>

The obedience of a Christen man and how Christe[n] rulers ought to governe, where in also (if thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyance of all iugglers was published on 2 October 1528. It was the second of Tyndale's extended treatises, coming hard on the heels of the first, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon,* published five months earlier. The *Obedience's* title identifies the subject matter as twofold: the obedience of Christian men, and how Christian rulers should govern. The title also claims to give diligent readers the necessary insight to detect the deception that has been practiced by 'jugglers'.

The word 'juggler' was often used by sixteenth-century authors to mean one who purposely misrepresented the truth.[128] Tyndale frequently accused leaders of the traditional church of 'juggling', or misrepresenting, Biblical passages and other doctrine.[129] More and Tyndale happily indicted each other for 'juggling' in their controversy over the translation of the Bible into English.[130] Tyndale believed that the traditional church had long been engaged in a great deception in its relationship to, and involvement with, the secular powers and that it had advocated specific clerical rights and privileges for its own self-aggrandizing and greedy purposes. Tyndale's *Obedience* was written, in part, to expose the deception. Using the Bible, Tyndale suggested a social hierarchy that he felt was originally ordained by God and had been obscured by the clergy for centuries.

James Cargill Thompson has stated that 'Few charges levelled by their catholic opponents raised more indignation among sixteenth-century protestants than the accusation that the reformers' teaching encouraged insurrection and rebellion.'[131] This statement seems to be true of Tyndale, who explained in the opening paragraph of the *Obedience's* prologue, that he wanted to refute the charges that vernacular scripture 'causeth insurrection and teacheth the people to disobeye their heedes and governers / and moveth them to ryse agenst their

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[128] OEDO, 'juggler'.

[129] See William Tyndale, *The obedience of a christen man* (Antwerp, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 24446, EEBO, recto folio lxii, recto folio cxix, images 62R and 119R; Tyndale, *The Pentateuch*', verso folio Aiii & verso folio Aiiii, images 3L & 5L; Tyndale, *The prophete Jonas*, verso folio Av, image 6L.

[130] More, *The confutacyon*, recto folio clxxvii, recto folio cclx, images 109R, 151R; Tyndale, *Answere*, verso folio xii, images 4R & 13L.

[131] W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984), 91.

princes.'[132] Though Marc'hadour believes that the *Obedience's* 'express goal was to remove the stigma of sedition from the Reformers' image', Tyndale also wished to show that it was 'the bloudy doctrine of the Pope which causeth disobedience / rebelion and insurreccion' and more importantly that church leaders had deviously put kings and emperors 'out of their rowmes & have gott their auctorites from them & raygne also in their stede: so that the emperoure & kinges are but vayne names and shadowes'.[133]

Martin Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone was the foundation upon which conservatives built their accusations of insurrection and rebellion. Opponents argued that if faith in Christ was taught as the sole principle of salvation it would lead lay people to completely neglect all good works and become licentious, lawless, ungovernable, and immoral.[134] The outbreak of the Peasants' War (1524-1526), in the southern, western, and central portions of Germany, justified these concerns in the eyes of Luther's enemies. An estimated 300,000 rebels united against authorities, demanding ecclesiastical reform, the abolition of serfdom, and the alleviation of other forms of economic oppression they were then suffering under.[135] This war was one of the greatest popular uprisings in European history and it left an enormous impression upon contemporaries.[136]

The responsibility for the Peasants' War was laid firmly at Luther's door by many of the traditional church.[137] More dedicated an entire chapter in *A Dyaloge* to the subject. The Chancellor explained to the Messenger that because Luther taught lay people to neglect 'fastynge / prayer / and such other thyngeys' and that they were 'in a full fredome and lybartye discharged of all governours and all maner lawys spyrytuall or temporall / except the gospel onely' that lay revolt was inevitable. He described to the Messenger how Luther's doctrines led lay people to rebel first against their ecclesiastical leaders and then against their temporal lords. As

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[132] Tyndale, O*bedience*, recto folio xxi, image 12R.

[133] Marc'hadour, 'Historical Context,' 470; Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xxiii, recto folio lx, images 24L & 50R.

[134] The Voice Institute. 'Edict of Worms', edited by Dennis Bratcher, http://www.cresourcei.org/creededictworms.html [accessed 19 February 2010]; W.A. Lambert, ed., 'Treatise on Good Works,' in *LW,* vol. 44, Part I, 21.

[135] Tom Scott & Bob Scribner, eds., *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1991), 251-276.

[136] Tom Scott & Bob Scribner, 'Introduction,' in Scott and Scribner, *The German Peasants' War*, 1.

[137] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 100.

discussed above, More felt that social order was maintained by religious orthodoxy and respect for the traditional privileges and position of the clergy. The Chancellor claimed that Tyndale taught the same doctrines as Luther and that he was purposefully trying, with 'hys holy boke of disobedience', to instigate rebellion against the spiritual authorities in England that would ultimately lead to rebellion against the temporal authorities, just like Luther had done in Saxony.[138]

Throughout the *Obedience,* Tyndale insists that he is *not* an instigator of rebellion. He explains that he is 'throwly persuaded that it were not lawfull to resist his kynge / though he wolde wrongfully take awaye lyfe and goodes'.[139] The philosophy of enduring patiently whatever the temporal authority inflicted can be traced back to Luther, who revived two late-medieval Imperialist theories: non-resistance to kings and the need to maintain a sharp distinction between the spiritual and temporal authorities.[140] Luther repeatedly taught in tracts such as *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed* (1523), *Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants* (May 1525)*, and *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (June 1525), that God had ordained two separate governments: a spiritual government through the word of God, administered by priests, and a temporal government through the sword, administered by kings.

These two kingdoms, loosely based in Augustine's theories of a kingdom of God and a kingdom of the devil, existed side-by-side, not hierarchically, as in the eleventh and twelfth-century papalist theory which, among other things, claimed that temporal authority originated in the pope.[141] Those who administered in the spiritual kingdom did not have authority in the temporal kingdom and should not meddle with its concerns, and vice-versa.[142] Luther felt that unless the distinction between the two kingdoms was preserved, chaos would result.[143] He also believed that temporal leaders obtained their authority directly from God, not through the pope, and that

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[138] More, *Dyaloge*, verso folio cv, image 106L.

[139] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xxiii, image 24L.

[140] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 8; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978),16.

[141] Skinner, *Foundations*, vol. I, 15; Thompson, *Political Thought*, 2.

[142] J.J. Schindel, ed., 'Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed' in *LW,* vol. 45, Part II, 92, 105, 109, 114.

[143] Schindel, 'Temporal Authority', 92-109; Charles M. Jacobs, ed., 'Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia,' in *LW*, vol. 46, Part III, 18-19.

because of this, rebellion against them was always wrong.[144] It has been asserted
that these last two doctrines were Luther's 'most important contribution to the
development of political thought in the sixteenth century' because they broke from
two important late medieval political traditions: first, that temporal rulers were given
their authority by the pope and second, that rulers could lose their authority by
abusing it and, as tyrants, could be legitimately deposed.[145]

Tyndale, while clearly advocating Luther's doctrines of non-resistance to
divinely appointed temporal rulers, felt that it *was* 'lawfull to resist the ypocrites and
to ryse / not agenst his kynge: but with his kynge to delyver his kynge out of
bondage & captivite'. The hypocrites were religious leaders who unjustly stepped
outside of their spiritual kingdom and usurped the temporal authority. Tyndale
presented himself as a faithful, obedient subject; a restorer, not a rebel, a truth teller,
not a heretic. He sincerely wished to release Henry VIII from the bondage in which
'the ypocrites holde him with wyles and falsheed'. So complete was that bondage
'that no man maye be sofered to come at [Henry VIII]/ to tell him the trouth.'[146]

Though Tyndale's statements that it is 'lawfull to resist the ypocrites' and that
he wanted to 'ryse / not agenst his kynge: but with his kynge' may appear, at first
glance, to undermine his argument that he was not an instigator of rebellion, this is
not the case.[147] These two comments are the key to a more accurate understanding
of the purpose of the *Obedience* and of Tyndale's assertions that he was not
encouraging rebellion. As we shall see, Tyndale adopted more of Luther's political
teachings than just the doctrine of non-resistance to kings, and it is these political
beliefs that provide the context for both of Tydnale's assertions. Luther's own
experiences helped him to develop his political position. Luther spent the latter of
half of 1521 safely ensconced in Wartburg Castle at Eisenach. The castle belonged
to Frederick III, Elector of Saxony. Luther had been secretly taken there on his way
home from the Diet of Worms, where he had defended his views and his writings
before the secular leaders of the Holy Roman Empire. The Diet announced their

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[144] Schindel, 'Temporal Authority*,'* 112, 124; Jacobs, 'Admonition to Peace,' 25-26.

[145] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 91; Skinner, *Foundations*, vol. I, 15.

[146] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xxiii, image 24L.

[147] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. II (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1978), 70.

conclusions about Luther in the Edict of Worms (1521), which, among other things, required Luther to be arrested and punished for his obstinate heresy.[148]

In December of that year, Luther made an undercover visit to Wittenburg. Disguised as a knight in grey garb, complete with a red beret, curly hair, and a beard, Luther went to investigate rumours he had heard about tensions that were building between religious conservatives and those who were hungry for religious reform.[149] The day before he arrived, some students and townsfolk, supposedly with drawn knives, had prevented Catholic priests from entering the church to read mass, stolen the missals, and had thrown stones at worshippers. The next day, a group of students tried to intimidate some Franciscan monks with jeering and mocking. Luther was not pleased and on his return to Wartburg he wrote *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion* (1522).[150] This title is a bit misleading because this tract concerns rebellion against the *spiritual* leadership, not the temporal, and it instructs individuals how to act when *religious* authorities have become heretical and corrupt.

A Sincere Admonition claims that the 'papacy and the clerical estate' were no longer fulfilling their God-given mandate to teach the word of God and, in usurping temporal power, had also over-stepped their authority. Luther asserted that it was pointless to rise in insurrection against the papacy or 'kill the priests' in order to rectify the situation.[151] He believed that there were *two* lawful and appropriate activities that would help. First, individuals should 'spread among the people a knowledge of the rascality and deceit of the pope and the papists until they are exposed, recognized, and brought into disrepute throughout the world. For [the pope] must first be slain with words'.[152] Luther repeatedly advocated, in this and later writings, that heresy could only be overcome by the word of God, not by force or by the sword.[153] Thus, he encouraged people to actively write, publish, speak,

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[148] Voice Institute, 'Edict of Worms,' 7.

[149] Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 29.

[150] Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 37-38.

[151] W.A. Lambert, ed., 'A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion,' in *LW,* vol. 45, Part II, 61-62.

[152] Lambert, 'A Sincere Admonition,' 67-68.

[153] Charles M. Jacobs, 'To the Christian Nobility,' in *LW*, vol. 44, Part I, 136; Schindel, 'Temporal Authority,' 114; Lambert, 'A Sincere Admonition,' 67-68.

and preach against the traditional church and did *not* consider those activities to be instigating insurrection or rebellion.

The second activity that Luther advocated for those who were disgruntled with the traditional church was, to 'keep your eye on the [temporal] authorities; so long as they make no move and issue no instructions, you just keep your hand, mouth, and heart quiet, and assume no responsibility'.[154] Luther argued that whenever spiritual leaders were doing things 'beyond and contrary to the gospel' that temporal authorities should 'take action, each prince and lord in his own territory, by virtue of the obligations incumbent upon such duly constituted authority; for what is done by duly constituted authority cannot be regarded as insurrection.'[155]

Luther, in an earlier tract, *To the Christian Nobility* (June 1520), after discussing the many aspects of the church that required reform, appealed to the princes to take the lead in summoning General Councils of spiritual leaders whenever religious reform was needed, and especially when the pope failed to call for such councils. Thompson explains that, for Luther, it was 'only in the event of a council failing to meet or act that princes and estates should take action on their own initiative to remedy certain [religious] abuses that lie within their power.'[156] In *A Sincere Admonition,* Luther suggested, that if lay people 'can stir up the [temporal] authorities to do something' (such as call a General Council) or 'to give commands' (when the General Council has failed), '[they] may do so.'[157]

Tyndale's opening statements, that it is 'lawfull to resist the ypocrites' and that he desired to 'ryse / not agenst his kynge: but with his kynge', indicate that he had adopted both of Luther's teachings on the appropriate methods for dealing with corrupt religious leaders. Daniell has noted the enormous Biblical content in the *Obedience*. He states that 'The steady beat of Scripture sounds throughout Tyndale's book. Scripture phrases and echoes are everywhere, and there is hardly a page without two or three quotations at least.'[158] This has caused Daniell to conclude that the purpose of the *Obedience* was to illustrate the neglect and distortion of the Bible by the traditional church.[159]

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[154] Lambert, 'A Sincere Admonition,' 63.

[155] *Ibid*, 61.

[156] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 138.

[157] Lambert, 'A Sincere Admonition,' 63.

[158] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 226.

[159] *Ibid*, 243.

Daniell's conclusion is understandable since Tyndale, along with his frequent references to scripture, aggressively attacks the scriptural interpretation of the church in general and the Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, in particular.[160] But Daniell's theory fails to recognize that the *Obedience* is full of scripture passages because writing and publishing 'God's word' was the most effective, and legitimate, way to destroy the pope. Moreover, by writing a book saturated with God's word, Tyndale hoped to help Henry VIII recognize that his temporal authority had been usurped by religious leaders. He wanted to dutifully, and appropriately, 'stir up' Henry to regain his lost authority and inspire him to 'do something' to rectify clerical abuses and heresy.

Once we recognize Tyndale's position, we can justly appreciate why he insists that he is not an instigator of rebellion and why he would be irritated at those, such as More, who made those accusations. This understanding also allows us to see the second main purpose of Tyndale's *Obedience*. The *Obedience* contains an outline, examined in detail below, of what Tyndale believed to be God's divinely sanctioned social hierarchy. This hierarchy, unique to Tyndale, is an excellent demonstration of his intelligence, understanding of the Bible, and his distinctiveness as a theologian, which will be discussed in detail in chapter three. Tyndale hoped that Henry VIII would implement this hierarchy once he had been stirred up to rightfully and legitimately regain his proper temporal authority. The third purpose for 'this litle treatyse that folweth' naturally becomes the exposition of 'all obedience that is of God'. Tyndale wished to demonstrate that access to a vernacular Bible would allow all of the king's subjects to learn 'what obedience God requyreth of us' thereby increasing, not decreasing, social harmony among all the people of England.[161]

The social hierarchy that Tyndale advocated in the *Obedience* is founded on Luther's two parallel kingdoms: the spiritual and the temporal. As discussed above, Luther obtained these ideas from St. Augustine. However, Thompson argues that though Luther's political thought would rightly be labelled 'Augustinian', Luther's theories were much more subtle, complex, and practical than anything Augustine devised.[162] Luther taught that in the spiritual kingdom there was 'no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes, and bishops, between religious and

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[160] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio lxxxix – verso folio cl, images 89R-151L.

[161] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xxi & verso folio xvii, images 21R & 18L.

[162] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 2-3.

secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status.'[163]
Every baptised person became a consecrated priest/bishop/pope and held the same
authority as any other baptized person. Luther argued that 'because we are all
priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward, and take it upon
himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal
authority.'[164]

Luther recommended that communities choose their own bishops and
priests, recognizing that 'a priest in Christendom is nothing else but an office holder'
who can be deposed and replaced if he performs his office unsatisfactorily.[165] In
Luther's spiritual kingdom the clergy had no special privileges or status even when it
came to scripture. Luther felt that the traditional church's insistence that 'only the
pope may interpret Scripture' was 'an outrageous fancied fable' because they
'cannot produce a single letter [of Scripture] to maintain that the interpretation of
Scripture or the confirmation of its interpretation belongs to the pope alone.'[166]

In the *Obedience,* Tyndale argued similarly and stated that 'In Christe we are
all one thinge / none better then other / all brethern'.[167] He, too, allowed for no
special status in the spiritual kingdom, eloquently explaining that 'as good is the
prayer of a cobler / as of a Cardinall / and of a bocher / as of a Bisshope / and the
blessinge of a baker that knoweth the trouth / is as good as the blessinge of oure
most holy father the Pope.'[168] In a discussion of the order of the spiritual kingdom,
Tyndale stated that 'Subdeacon / deacon / prest / Bisshope / Cardinall / Patriarch
and Pope / be names of offices' within the spiritual kingdom and that as Christ is a
priest and 'we [are] prestes thorow him' there is no need for 'any soch preste on erth
to be a meane for us unto God.'[169]

Like Luther, Tyndale suggested that offices in the church be filled by
congregations who would 'chose an able person and then to reherse him his dutie

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[163] Jacobs, 'To the Christian Nobility,' 129.

[164] *Ibid*, 129.

[165] *Ibid*, 128, 129.

[166] *Ibid*, 133-34.

[167] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio lxix, image 50L.

[168] *Ibid,* verso folio xcii, image 93L.

[169] *Ibid*, recto folio xci, image 91R.

and geve hym his charge and so to put hym in his rowme.'[170] He also rejected the idea that the clergy had a special talent with scripture and were the only ones authorized to interpret it. Tyndale taught that out of the 'iiii senses' (literal, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical) 'the scripture hath but one sence which is the literall sence. And 'that literall sence is the rote and grounde of all & the an[s]ere that never fayleth where unto yf thou cleve thou canst never erre or goo out of the waye.'[171] He told his readers that if they 'have eyes of God to se the ryght meanynge of the texte' there would be 'no story nor gest [in scripture] / seme it never so symple or so vile unto the worlde / but that thou shalte fynde therin spirite and life and edifienge in the litterall sense.[172]

Luther believed that God designed the temporal kingdom to bring about external peace and to prevent evil deeds. The spiritual kingdom could not flourish unless the temporal kingdom provided a peaceful and orderly environment for it.[173] He felt that the temporal government had 'laws which extend no further than to life and property and external affairs on earth' because 'God cannot and will not permit anyone but himself to rule over the soul.'[174] Luther admitted that this kingdom could not exist 'without an inequality of persons, some being free, some imprisoned, some lords, some subjects', but he did not go any further in determining a specific social hierarchy for the temporal kingdom.[175]

Tyndale followed Luther in acknowledging that there needed to be different ranks in secular society. But unlike Luther, he had strong ideas about what the social ranks should be. Unsurprisingly, he derived his social divisions from particular teachings in the New Testament and they did not include nobility, lay people, or clergy.[176] Based most heavily on the teachings of the Apostle Paul, Tyndale argued that 'Father / mother / sonne / doghter / master / servaunte / kynge and subjecte / be names in the worldly regimente.' These were boiled down into 'iiii.

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[170] *Ibid*, recto folio xciiii, image 94R.

[171] *Ibid*, recto folio cxxix, image 129R.

[172] *Ibid,* recto folio cxxxv, image 135R.

[173] Thompson, *Political Thought*, 132.

[174] Schindel, 'Temporal Authority*,'* 92, 105.

[175] Jacobs, 'Admonition to Peace,' 39.

[176] See Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 6:1-9; Colossians 3:18-22; 1 Peter 2:18-20, 3:1-7.

orders . . . of Gods makynge': children, wives, servants and subjects, all to be governed by 'Gods worde'.[177]

Tyndale devoted one chapter apiece to each of the four orders and outlined how children were to be obedient to parents, wives to husbands, servants to masters, and subjects to kings. Interestingly, his instructions state that parents, husbands, masters, and kings represented God's authority and resistance to them was sin. When children displeased their parents they displeased God, when their parents were 'angre' with them God was 'angre' with them. A husband's 'commaundmentes' were 'gods commaundmentes' and if wives 'grudge[d] agaynst' them 'or resiste[d]' them, they 'grudgeth agenste God and resisteth God'. Similarly, a master's 'commaundementes' were 'Gods commaundmentes' and servants were 'to obeye him as God'. And, of course, all the kings' subjects were taught that 'Who so ever therfore resisteth [kings] resisteth God'.[178]

At this point, Tyndale's portrait of secular society gives absolute power to fathers, husbands, masters, and kings and no power to children, wives, servants, or subjects. Perhaps this picture caused Henry VIII, reportedly, after reading the *Obedience* to exclaim 'this is a book for me and all kings to read.'[179] The extreme disproportion of power naturally raises the question of what children, wives, servants, and subjects were supposed to do if the fathers, husbands, masters, and kings abused their power. Subordinates were not allowed to resist or rebel. Tyndale's solution was, of course, the power of the word of God.

Tyndale devoted one chapter each to fathers, husbands, masters, and kings in which he instructed them on how to use their power. Beginning with fathers, Tyndale explained that they should teach their children to 'know Christe' and 'set Gods ordinaunce before them'. He counselled that 'fathers & mothers' should not 'always take the utte most of their auctorite of their childern' but should be careful to 'sofre with them & beare their weakenesses as Christe doeth oures.' Fathers were admonished to 'Seek Christe' in their 'childern . . . wives / servauntes and subjects.'[180] The emphasis on Christ and the effort to be like Him was supposed to prevent fathers from abusing their authority.

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[177] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xlix, recto folio cli, images 50L & 151R.

[178] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xxv, recto folio xxviii, verso folio xxviii, recto folio xxx, images 26L, 28L, 29L, & 30R.

[179] Quoted in J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937),143.

[180] Tyndale, *Obedience,* verso folio xlviii, recto folio xlix, verso folio xlix, images 49L, 49R, 50L.

Similarly, husbands were told to 'Be curtes' to their wives and to 'winne them unto Christe' by overcoming them with 'kyndnes'. Husbands who did this would help their wives 'obeye the ordinaunce that God hath made between man & wife' out of 'love'. Husbands were supposed to 'deale with' their wives 'accordinge to the ensample and doctrine of Christe'.[181] So too, masters were admonished to 'nurtoure' their servants with '[Christ's] nurtoure' as if they were their 'awn sonnes' so 'that they maye se in Christe a cause why they ought lovingly to obeye'. Masters were also supposed to remember that 'Nether is there any respecte of parsons with [Christ]' because Christ 'is indifferente and not perciall: as greate in his sight is a servaunte as a master.'[182] In every case, those in authority were to use the Bible as their guide.

Tyndale's advice to kings begins by reminding them that though the 'kynge in the temporall regimente be in the rowme of God and representeth God him selfe & is without all comparison better then his subiectes', the king was supposed to 'putt of that and become a brother / doinge and levinge un done all thinges in respecte of the commune wealth / that all men maye se that he seketh no thinge / but the profit of his subiectes.'[183] Like Luther, Tyndale felt that temporal kings had no authority in the spiritual kingdom; they did not 'minister in the kyngdome of Christe' nor did they preach the 'Gospell'. Preaching God's word was too much 'for half a man' and ministering a 'temporall kingdome' was too 'moch for half a man also. Ether other requireth an hole man. One therfore can not well doo both.' Kings were appointed to a temporal kingdom wherein they were to 'judge' righteously, both the 'small as well as the greate' because 'judgemente', or the exercise of temporal justice, is the [king's] Deute.'[184]

Tyndale felt that every person on earth, whether Christian or not, was 'under the testamente of the lawe naturall', which he defined as 'the lawes of every londe made for the comen wealth there and for peace and unite that one maye lyve by a nother.' Though the 'law naturall' was not the same thing as the gospel, it was still God's law and kings had been appointed to uphold it and to punish those who did not obey it.[185] Tyndale also believed that kings were supposed to defend their

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[181] *Ibid*, recto folio l, image 50R.

[182] *Ibid*, recto folio l, verso folio l, images 50R and 51L.

[183] *Ibid*, verso folio li, image 52L.

[184] *Ibid*, recto folio lii, verso folio lv, images 52R & 56L.

[185] *Ibid,* recto folio liii, recto folio lxxxix, images 53R & 79R.

people against other kingdoms, refrain from seeking quarrels with other realms, and that they should keep all oaths and promises.[186] He suggested that kings 'rule their Realmes them selves with the helpe of laye men that are sage wise / lerned & experte.' He felt that it was 'a shame obove all shames and a monstrous thinge that no man shulde be founde able to governe a worldly kingdome save Bisshopes and prelates that have forsaken the worlde and are taken oute of the worlde and apoynted to preach the kyngdome of God'.[187]

Tyndale concluded these instructions with a passionate plea that 'the temporall power to whom God hath geven the swerde to take vengeaunce / loke or ever that they lepe / and se what they do.' This is because the 'powers to whom God hath committed the swerde shall geve a countes for every droppe of bloud that is shed on the erth.' Each king, therefore, 'ought to loke in the scripture' and check that he is judging rightly before he carries out his judgments.[188] At all levels of authority, Tyndale's solution to abuse of power was the word of God. Like Luther, Tyndale felt that God would deal with a wicked or tyrannical king and he admonished all fathers, husbands, and masters to 'doo youre duties agayne and sofre no man to doo them wronge / save the kynge only. Yf he do wronge / then must they [the king] abyde Gods judgemente.'[189]

Tyndale's *Obedience* outlined a social structure that was completely different and totally unique from the one contemporary people were then living by. It removed all clerical claims to privilege, status, or temporal power. It modified the social classes considerably and, most importantly, expected those Christians with authority to read and interpret the Bible so that they could righteously apply it in the discharge of their responsibilities.[190] This is one of the reasons why Tyndale was so fervent in his desire that the Bible be translated into English and why he devoted an entire chapter of the *Obedience* to the interpretation of scripture. The word of God was the fulcrum upon which Tyndale's temporal society balanced. Tyndale borrowed from Luther's belief that Christians in God's spiritual kingdom, 'need no temporal law or sword' hanging over them because the 'righteous man of his own

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[186] *Ibid*, recto folio lv, image 55R.

[187] *Ibid,* recto folio lv, image 55R.

[188] *Ibid*, recto folio lxxxvii, image 87R.

[189] *Ibid*, recto folio li, image 51R.

[190] *Ibid*, verso folio xlix, image 50L.

accord does all and more than the law demands.'[191] In other words, living according
to God's word in *both* kingdoms would ultimately bring spiritual and temporal
harmony to society.

In contrast, Thomas More strongly believed that social harmony and order
depended upon the maintenance of the traditional clerical privileges and status. He
felt that the clergy should retain the sole right to disseminate and interpret scripture
and that this was the only way to minimize heresy and prevent social chaos within
England. More was not theoretically opposed to translation of the Bible into English
and believed that lay people would benefit by having access to scripture, but he
wanted vernacular Bibles to be distributed under the careful direction of the clergy.
Only those lay people who were judged to be humble, pious, and unlikely to misuse
or misinterpret Bible passages would be allowed to have an English Bible.

The different methods for obtaining and maintaining social order advocated
by Tyndale and More in the *Obedience* and the *Dyaloge* demonstrate that sixteenth-
century secular and religious leaders were significantly concerned about a
vernacular Bible's impact on the contemporary social structure and that this was one
of the main reasons why government authorities resisted an English translation of
the Bible. Unfortunately, Tyndale's attempt to provide an alternative social structure
has not received a lot of scholarly attention, but it is an important witness to
Tyndale's understanding of the Bible and of his desire for that Bible to improve the
lives of Englishmen. His social structure also testifies of the uniqueness of
Tyndale's theology.

Earlier in this chapter we discovered that sixteenth-century secular and
religious leaders frequently and repeatedly included John Wycliffe, the fourteenth-
century Oxford theologian and heretic, in their discourses about heresy. We found
that they used Wycliffe to create an 'historical heresy'; a chain of heretics that
stretched back to the time of Christ. Though modern scholars have discussed the
erroneous historical reputation Wycliffe has acquired over time, and have
demonstrated how sixteenth-century English reformers contributed to it, scholars
have overlooked the perceptions of the early sixteenth-century religious
conservatives. Our examination of those perceptions revealed that it was the
religious conservatives who first created a chain linking Wycliffe with other heretics
and that they created this chain nearly thirty years before the English reformers.

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[191] Schindel, 'Temporal Authority,' 89.

CHAPTER THREE

Ten Thousand Words in an Unknown Tongue:
Translation of the Bible into English

In 1522, William Tyndale lived at Little Sodbury Manor in Gloucestershire. He was the private tutor of the two young sons of Sir John Walsh, a distinguished man who, when a teenager, had been at court with the young Henry VIII and had since served as the Crown Steward of the Berkeley estates, Steward of Tewkesbury Abbey, and High Sheriff of Gloucestershire.[1] According to John Foxe, Tyndale was in 'good favour with his maister' and regularly sat with him at the dinner table when Sir John was entertaining guests.[2] Foxe reports that many of Walsh's visitors were 'Abbots, Deanes, Archedeacons', 'diverse doctors', and 'learned men'. Their dinner conversations often revolved around 'learning', 'Luther & Erasmus', and 'opinions in the scripture.'[3] These were relevant topics since Martin Luther's books had been banned from importation into England by the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey, only the previous year (1521). Moreover, Erasmus' third edition of his Greek New Testament and the first edition of Luther's German translation of the New Testament were published in 1522.

Foxe relates that Tyndale confidently participated in these discussions, revealing 'his mynde and learning'. Whenever his opinions differed from the others', he would 'shew them' with 'open and manifest scripture', why he felt himself to be right. These dinners 'continued for a certaine season, diverse and sundry tymes' until 'those great beneficed doctors waxed weary and bare a secret grudge in their harts against maister Tyndall.'[4]

Unfortunately for Tyndale, the secret grudge did not remain secret. Fanned by the noticeable cooling of Sir John and Lady Walsh's attentions and by Tyndale's preaching 'about the town of Bristol', the grudge soon became an official

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[1] David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 54.

[2] J.F. Mozley and David Daniell, Tyndale's most recent biographers both claim that Foxe's source for this story was Richard Webb of Chipping Sodbury, a former servant of Hugh Latimer, see Daniell, *William Tyndale,* 61–62 and J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 26.

[3] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous dayes* (London: John Day, 1563), STC (2nd ed.) / 11222, EEBO, 514, image 297L.

[4] *Ibid*, 514, image 297L.

accusation.[5] Tyndale was 'warned' to appear at the sitting of the bishop's chancellor, John Bell. As chancellor, Bell acted for the bishop and had the power to decide in cases of ecclesiastical law.[6] Tyndale later wrote that 'all the prestes of the contre were that same daye there', though none were identified as his accusers. He also related that the chancellor 'thretened me grevously / and revyled me and rated me as though I had bene a dogge'.[7]

Foxe reports that Tyndale was accused of being 'an heretike in Sophistry', 'in Logike' and 'in his divinite'. In other words, Tyndale's reasoning, arguments, and theology were all found to be unorthodox.[8] He had also offended by bearing himself 'boldely' among the gentleman of the country. Probably due to his position as a private tutor in a powerful family, no further action was taken. Tyndale 'departed and went home to his maister agayne.'[9] This incident was notorious enough that Thomas More knew of it; mentioning it several years later in *A Dyaloge concerning heresies* (1529).[10]

Shortly after this experience, Foxe reports that Tyndale entered into a discussion with an unidentified 'learned man'. The two were 'communing and disputing', presumably about religious doctrine, and Tyndale's skill caused the other man to doggedly respond that it was better to be 'without Gods lawe then the Popes'. Tyndale replied 'I defie the Pope and all his lawes . . . if God spare my lyfe ere many yeares, I wyl cause a boye that dryveth the plough, shall knowe more of the scripture then thou doest.'[11] If Foxe's chronology is correct, this conversation happened some time before Tyndale went to London in 1523 and it demonstrates

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[5] *Ibid*, 514, image 297L.

[6] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 76.

[7] William Tyndale, *The Pentateuch* (Antwerp: Johann Hoochstraten, 1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 2350, EEBO, verso folio Aiii, image 4L.

[8] In the sixteenth century the term 'sophistry' sometimes meant the practice of reasoning, see John Bale, *A comedye concernynge thre lawes* (Wesel: Dirik van der Straten, 1548), STC / 23:05, EEBO, recto folio Diii, image 22R; The term 'logic' refers to the *Trivium* portion of a traditional Arts course at university where students were taught how to effectively argue or dispute a point, see Charles E. Mallett, *A History of the University of Oxford* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1924), 182.

[9] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 514, image 297.

[10] Sir Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte* (London: J. Rastell, 1529), STC (2nd ed.) / 18084, EEBO, verso folio cxxii, image 123L.

[11] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 514, image 297.

that, at least by this point in his life, he fully intended to translate the Bible into English.

The question that naturally follows is why did a man, not even thirty years old, want to translate the Bible into English? He would need more than the average motivation because, as discussed in chapters one and two, there were numerous formidable obstacles in his path. First, the Constitutions of Oxford (1409) were still in force in the 1520s. These laws prohibited both the translation of any portion of the Bible into English without authority from a Bishop and the reading of any book that contained unauthorized translated scripture. Second, bishops were unlikely to give authorization because of their fears that a vernacular Bible would cause people to become heretics, rebels, and unwilling to uphold the traditional social hierarchy. And third, the English printing industry, undeveloped and overwhelmingly concentrated in London, was close-knit and highly regulated, making it impossible for Tyndale to publish an illegal vernacular Bible within England.[12]

Tyndale's own explanations for why he wanted to translate the Bible into English are varied, and sometimes guarded, making it difficult to understand his motives. For instance, in the prologue to the aborted Cologne New Testament of 1525, Tyndale's first published work and first translation, he wrote,

> The causes that moved me to translate / y thought better that other shulde ymagion / then that y shulde rehearce them. More over y supposed yt superfluous / for who ys so blynde to axe why lyght shulde be shewed to them that walke in dercknes/ where they cannot but stumble / and where to stumble ys the daunger of eternall dammacion[13]

In this passage, Tyndale's initial reluctance to explain 'the causes' yields to an admission that he intended his translation to bring light to those he felt were in danger of damnation. In a subsequent paragraph, Tyndale claimed 'hit had pleasyd god to put in my mynde / and also to gi[v]e me grace to translate'.[14] This explanation gives God the responsibility for instigating the translation and makes Tyndale the instrument by which the work was accomplished.

Tyndale's later writings supply even more motives. In 1528 he stated, 'in translatinge the new testamente I did my dutye'; implying that he felt a responsibility

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[12] Andrew Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation: the English exception in The English Reformation,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism,* eds. Peter Marshall & Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 167.

[13] William Tyndale, 'The Prologge,' in *The Beginning of the New Testament Translated by William Tyndale 1525: facsimilie of the unique fragment of the uncompleted Cologne Edition,* ed. Alfred W. Pollard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), recto folio Aii.

[14] *Ibid*, verso folio Aii.

to provide an English translation.[15] In 1530, he declared, 'Which thinge only moved me to translate the new testament'.[16] The problem with this assertion is determining exactly what the 'which thinge' is. The paragraph preceding this statement reviews the behaviour of the traditional clergy and accuses them of darkening the 'right way with the miste of their sophistrye'. The paragraph following discusses the difficulty of establishing lay people in any truth 'excepte the scripture were playnly layde before their eyes in their mother tonge'.[17] Therefore, by his own account, Tyndale made his translation either to help lay people clear away doctrinal confusion or to establish lay people in the truth, or both. And finally, in the revised version of his New Testament (1534) he asked 'all men to reade it for that purpose I wrote it: even to bringe them to the knowledge of the scripture.'[18]

Thomas More credited Tyndale with multiple reasons for translating the New Testament. In his opinion, Tyndale made the translation because: it allowed him to 'set forthe Luthers heresyes and his owne thereby'; it gave him the power to destroy essential 'artycles of our faythe' by making it appear that they were not supported in scripture; and it enabled him to convince the people that they had been led 'purposely out of the ryght way' by the traditional clergy.[19] In More's opinion only a 'good and faithful' man, meaning an orthodox follower of the traditional church, could accurately translate the scriptures or have a pure motive for doing so.[20] Foxe's explanation is that '[Tyndale] was moved (and no doubt stirred up of God) to translate the Scripture into his mother tongue, for the public utility and profit of the simple vulgar people of his country'.[21]

Modern scholars' assessments of why Tyndale translated the Bible are equally varied, but they are also woefully over-simplified. Anthony Levi insists that Tyndale translated the Bible to 'fulfil Erasmus's desire to see [it] disseminated in the vernacular' while John King believes that Erasmus' *Paraclesis* inspired Tyndale to

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[15] William Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (Antwerp: J. Hoochstraten, 1528), STC / 156:11, EEBO, verso folio Av, image 5R.

[16] Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, recto folio Aiii, image 3R.

[17] *Ibid*, recto folio Aiii, image 3R.

[18] William Tyndale, *The Newe Testament dylygently corrected* (Antwerp, 1534), STC (2nd ed.) / 2826, EEBO, verso folio **vii, image 15R.

[19] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio lxxxi, image 81R.

[20] Sir Thomas More, *The co[n]futacyon of Tyndales answere made by syr Thomas More knight* (London: William Rastell, 1532), STC (2nd ed.) / 18079, EEBO, xcvi, clxxx–clxxi, images 69L & R, 111L & R.

[21] *AM*, vol. 5, 119.

translate the Bible into English.[22] These scholars are correct in recognizing Erasmus' influence on Tyndale, but they are mistaken in limiting that influence to one idea, to one printed work, or in portraying Tyndale as a man who tried to serve Erasmus' ends. Daniell argues that Tyndale was motivated by England's need for a vernacular Bible and because Tyndale felt that he was 'called' to devote his life to translation.[23] Daniell's arguments accurately represent only two of Tyndale's own claims and they neglect Erasmus entirely.

A fuller explanation would be that Tyndale translated the Bible into English because he was an Erasmian theologian and because making scripture accessible and understandable was what an Erasmian theologian was supposed to do. Unlike the others, this explanation acknowledges all of Tyndale's personal admissions about duty, responsibility, need, and concern for lay people. It also does ample justice to Erasmus' influence and fleshes out that which Tyndale left to the imagination.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of Erasmus' influence on Tyndale. A detailed comparison of Erasmus' and Tyndale's writings will demonstrate that Tyndale was thoroughly acquainted with Erasmus' written works and that Erasmus had a greater impact on him than any other person; even Martin Luther. This will be followed by a consideration of Tyndale's relationship with humanism. This section will demonstrate that even though humanism was not the philosophy of Tyndale's life, it served as a set of tools which he used to develop into a theologian, create his own unique theology, and disseminate his message to the people.

Moreover, a thorough examination of Erasmus' humanist training programme for theology students, the *Methodus verae theologiae*, and of all of Tyndale's published works will reveal that Erasmus' *Methodus* provided Tyndale with the five humanist principles that he consistently followed and which became the foundation of all of his work. These principles were: a need for an inward conversion and a reformation of life; language training in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; education in rhetoric, history, and natural philosophy; immersion in divine literature; and devotion to serving the people. We will find that Tyndale learned to be a theologian from Erasmus and that he should be considered as one of the earliest fruits of Erasmus' efforts to educate theologians according to humanist principles.

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[22] Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The intellectual genesis* (New Haven: Yale University, 2002), 339; John N. King, *English Reformation literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 46.

[23] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 59, 61, 79, 83, 92–93.

It will also be evident that scholars who denigrate Tyndale to the level of a follower, either of Luther or of Erasmus, are mistaken. When all of Tyndale's written works are taken into account, they show that even though he obtained many of his ideas from Luther and Erasmus, Tyndale also boldly disagreed with them on many significant points. Some of these were: justification by faith, man's free-will, the value of the literal sense of scripture, and the appropriate degree of pacifism that Christians should exercise in threatening situations. Tyndale was not a follower. He was an intelligent man who effectively used the work of those he admired in the development of his own unique theology. His originality made the English Reformation distinct from the reform movements on the Continent.

Tyndale, Erasmus, and Humanism

In the introduction, we learned from Foxe of a conversation that Tyndale had in which he reportedly said, '. . . if God spare my lyfe ere many yeares, I wyl cause a boye that dryveth the plough, shall knowe more of the scripture then thou doest.' These words are a paraphrase of the following portion of Erasmus' *Paraclesis* (1516):

> I would that even the lowliest women read the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. And I would that they were translated into all languages so that they could be read and understood not only by Scots and Irish but also by Turks and Saracens. [. . .] Would that as a result, the farmer sing some portion of them at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveller lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind! [24]

Some scholars have concluded from the similarities in these two passages that the *Paraclesis* inspired Tyndale to translate the Bible into English. King has rightly cautioned, however, 'At this distance, it is impossible to determine whether Tyndale actually uttered those words, or whether they were added by Foxe or [Foxe's] source for [information about Tyndale's] Gloucestershire years.'[25] Because King believes that Foxe was a disciple of Erasmus and that the *Acts and Monuments* was a declaration of his advocacy of humanism, he argues that Foxe

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[24] Desiderius Erasmus, 'The Paraclesis,' in *Christian Humanism and The Reformation: select writings,* ed. John C. Olin (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 96.

[25] John N. King, 'John Foxe and Tudor Humanism,' in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism,* ed. Jonathan Woolfson (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), 182.

purposefully permeated his narration of Tyndale's life with humanistic principles and perhaps placed words in Tyndale's mouth.[26]

As discussed in chapter two, one of the reasons Foxe intentionally repackaged past events was to create historical legitimacy for English evangelicals. Though scholars believe that Foxe's facts are usually accurate, the specific material that makes up conversations may not be.[27] King argues that there was an additional motive for Foxe to 'artfully' shape his biographical narrative of Tyndale and to infuse it with Erasmus' words. Foxe did it to support his belief that humanism prepared the way for religious reform.[28]

In spite of the problems attending Tyndale's plough boy quotation, there is other, purer, evidence that Tyndale was very familiar with Erasmus' writings and that they had an enormous impact upon him. In the preface to the *Obedience of a Christen Man* (1528), Tyndale wrote at the end of his defence of vernacular scripture translation that, 'A thousande reasons moo myght be made (as thou maist se in paraclesis Erasmi & in his preface to that paraphasis of Mathew)'.[29] Erasmus delineated his beliefs about lay access to the Bible through vernacular translation most distinctly in these two works. The *Paraphrases of Matthew* was one part of the larger *Paraphrases on the New Testament,* begun in 1517. They served as a continuous commentary on the gospels and the epistles and according to Hilmar Pabel they 'constitute the practical, pastoral application of Erasmus's scholarship in the service of promoting piety.'[30] The *Paraclesis* was one of the prefaces of Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* (1516)*.* Tyndale's confident reference to the *Paraclesis* and the *Paraphrases* in defence of his own writings suggests that he had an in-depth knowledge of them and could have quoted from them in conversation. Tyndale also seems to expect that those who read his writings would already have been familiar with Erasmus' works.

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[26] *Ibid*, 182.

[27] *Ibid*, p. 182; David Loades, 'Afterword: John Foxe in the Twenty-First Century,' in *John Foxe and His World,* eds. Christopher Highley & John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 277.

[28] King, 'John Foxe and Tudor Humanism'*,* 175, 183.

[29] William Tyndale, *The obedience of a christen man* (Antwerp, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 24446, EEBO, recto folio xx, image 20R.

[30] Hilmar Pabel, 'Retelling the History of the Early Church: Erasmus's Paraphrase on Acts,' *Church History*, vol. 69, no. 1 (March 2000): 64.

Tyndale's publications also demonstrate that he was thoroughly familiar with Erasmus' *Annotations.* In the *Obedience,* Tyndale recommended that his audience 'reade also Erasmusis annotations'. In the prologue to the *Penateuch*, Tyndale described how the *Annotations* are full of the extravagant praise Erasmus regularly gave to learned men, such as Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London.[31] The *Annotations* were more than three hundred pages of notes, printed in the *Novum Instrumentum*, explaining Erasmus' understanding of the Greek text and explicating the nearly four hundred changes he consequently made to the Vulgate text.[32] In later editions of his Greek New Testament, Erasmus lengthened the notes with quotations from patristic writers and medieval exegetes in an effort to defend himself from critics.[33] As a talented translator, Tyndale would have been very interested in the *Annotations*, but his acquaintance with Erasmus' writings extends even further.

Anne Richardson asserts that Tyndale's first encounter with Erasmus may have been through the *Praise of Folly* (1511). This instantly popular, satirical book conveyed Erasmus' ideas of religious piety, while simultaneously ridiculing the human foibles manifest in the various social ranks and professions. Richardson feels that Tyndale's own written mockery of scholastic theology imitated and improvised upon many passages from the *Folly*, showing its early impact upon his thought.[34] One such passage from the *Folly* states: '[scholastic theologians] claim that they can see ideas, universals, separate forms, prime matter, quiddities, ecceities—things so fine-spun that no one, however "eagle-eyed," would be able, I think, to perceive them.'[35] It is followed by a description of the questions scholastic theologians discuss with each other:

> Whether there is any instant in the generation of divine persons? Whether there is more than one filial relationship in Christ? Whether the following proposition is possible: God the Father hates the Son. Whether God could have taken on the nature of a woman, of the devil, of an ass, of a cucumber,

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[31] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio cxl, image 141L; Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, verso folio Aiii, image 4L.

[32] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 116.

[33] Erika Rummell, *Erasmus* (London: Continuum, 2004), 15, 79.

[34] Anne Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel with Erasmus: A Chapter in the History of the English Reformation,' *Fides Et Historia*, vol. 25 (1993): 47.

[35] Clarence H. Miller, ed., *The praise of folie. Moriae encomium, a book made in Latin by that great clerke Erasmus Roterdame. Englisshed by Sir Thomas Chaloner, Knight, etc.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 86.

of a piece of flint? And then how the cucumber would have preached, performed miracles, and been nailed to the cross?[36]

In the *Obedience*, Tyndale closely mimicked Erasmus' criticisms of scholastic theologians: 'What wonderfull dreames have they of their predicamentes / universales / seconde intencions / quidities hecseities & relatives.' He also mocked their theological concerns:

> . . . whether species fundata in chimera [the outward forms of an illusion] be vera species [true forms]. And whether this proposicion be true non ens est aliquid [not existing is existing to a degree]. Whether ens [existing] be equivocum [ambiguous] or univocum [singular in meaning]. Ens is a voyce [expression] only saye some. Ens is univocum saith a nother and descendeth in to ens creatum [existing through birth] and in to ens increatum per modos intrinsecos [coming into existence by means of internal processes].[37]

The similarities between Tyndale and Erasmus are unmistakable and have led Richardson to believe that Erasmus' writings 'transformed Tyndale from an obscure country tutor with grievances against the establishment into a writer in his own right.'[38]

According to Foxe, Tyndale was well acquainted with Erasmus' *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (1503). He reports that one evening, after Sir John and Lady Walsh had returned from a banquet, given by 'beneficed doctors', they informed Tyndale of their dinner conversation. Tyndale 'made answere agreeable to the truthe of gods worde' and reproved 'their false opinions.' Lady Walsh, described as a 'stoute woman', boldly asked Tyndale why they should believe him rather than the 'great learned and beneficed men'. Tyndale's answer came in the form of a book. Foxe claims that Tyndale translated 'into Englyshe a booke called [. . .] Enchiridion militis Christiani' and gave it to the couple. After they 'hadde read that booke, those great prelates were no more so often called to the house'.[39] As with Foxe's other recitals, it is difficult to know how much of this story is accurate without support from additional evidence.

Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy London merchant and benefactor to Tyndale during his year in London, seems to corroborate Foxe's story. Monmouth related, in a 1528 petition to Cardinal Wolsey, that Tyndale had given him a copy of

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[36] *Ibid*, 88-89.

[37] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xviii, image 19L.

[38] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 47.

[39] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 514, image 297L.

'an English book, called *Enchiridion*' four and a half years earlier, but he had sent it 'to the abbess of Dennye at her request'. Monmouth also admitted that he had 'another copy of the same book, which a friar of Greenwich asked for', but he thought that the 'bishop of Rochester' had acquired that one.[40]

Even with Monmouth's and Foxe's information, Tyndale's translation of the *Enchiridion* has been a matter of scholarly debate.[41] One reason is because the only surviving English editions of the *Enchiridion* date from 1533 and there is no other record of an English version before that time.[42] Anne O'Donnell stylistically compared the scriptural references in the 1533 English *Enchiridion* with those in Tyndale's other writings and concluded, 'The internal evidence for Tyndale's authorship of the 1533 *Enchiridion* is no more conclusive than the external evidence.'[43] Richardson's analysis of the non-biblical prose found that Tyndale could not be the translator of the 1533 English *Enchiridion* because 'The sentence rhythm . . . lacks Tyndale's art of varying long with short clauses' and the prose is 'far too phlegmatic' to attain to Tyndale's normally light and resilient style.[44] In spite of these conclusions, Marius admits that most scholars accept the idea that Tyndale translated the *Enchiridion* even though it hasn't been 'conclusively proven'.[45]

Erasmus originally wrote the *Enchiridion* in 1501, supposedly at the request of a 'lady of singular piety' who wished for something to give to her irreligious, openly adulterous husband. Erasmus 'consented' and put down some observations suitable to the occasion'.[46] The book was published in 1503 and sold reasonably

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[40] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials,* vol. 1 (London, 1721), Eighteenth Century Collections Online. http://find.galegroup.com/ecco [accessed 28 September 2011], 246–47, images 676, 677.

[41] For scholars asserting that Tyndale did translate the *Enchiridion* see: J.A. Gee, 'Tyndale and the 1533 *Enchiridion* of Erasmus,' *Publication of the Modern Language Assocaition of America* 49, No. 2 (1934): 460–71; J. F. Mozley, 'The English *Enchiridion* of Erasmus,' *RES* 20 (1944): 97–107; James K. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics* (Oxford,: Clarendon Press, 1965), 145–46; A.G. Dickens & Whitney R. Jones, *Erasmus the Reformer* (London: Melthuen, 2000), 197–98; For those asserting uncertainty in addition to O'Donnell and Richardson see: Robert Demaus, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1925), 15; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 70–74.

[42] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 70.

[43] Anne M. O'Donnell, ed., *Enchiridion Militis Christiani: an English version* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), liii.

[44] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 51.

[45] Marius, *Erasmus*, 198.

[46] Richard L. DeMolen, ed., *Essays on the Works of Erasmus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 13.

well until 1518, when it was revised and dedicated to Abbot Volz of the Benedictine community near Schlettstadt. In the dedicatory letter, Erasmus stated that the book's purpose was to make the philosophy of Christ 'as easy and as open to all men' as possible.[47] The revision sold extremely well in the 1520s, running into 36 Latin, 3 German, 3 French, 3 Spanish, and 2 Dutch editions. Its success was probably due to the religious controversy stirred up by Luther in 1517.[48] Because of its popularity, Daniell asserts that 'Tyndale would have been hard put to it to miss it.'[49]

Whether or not Tyndale did translate the *Enchiridion*, his writings reveal that he was significantly influenced by it. For instance, in the *Enchiridion* Erasmus wrote,

> All sacred Scripture is divinely inspired and has proceeded from God, its author. . . Search out the spiritual meaning, and you will find nothing more sweet or succulent. Finally, 'manna' in Hebrew means 'What is this?' which fits divine Scripture perfectly, since it contains nothing superfluous, not the smallest point that is not worthy of study and wonder and not worthy of the question 'What is this?[50]

Tyndale taught nearly identical ideas in the *Obedience*. He stated,

> All the scripture is ether the promyses and testamente of God in Christ and storyes perteyninge there unto / to strength thy fayth . . . There is no story nor gest / seme it never so symple or so vile unto the worlde / but that thou shalte fynde therin spirite and life and edifienge.[51]

Tyndale believed, as did Erasmus, that all scripture came from God and that there were no portions of it, no matter how obscure or difficult, that weren't worth studying.

Further on in the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus declared, 'Therefore, if you dedicate yourself entirely to the study of the Scriptures, if you meditate day and night on the law of the Lord, you will have no fear . . . but you will be protected and trained against any attack of the enemy.'[52] Similarly, in his prologue to the book of Genesis Tyndale instructed his readers: 'As thou readest therefore thinke that every sillable pertayneth to thyne awne silf and sucke out the pithe of the scripture, and arme

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[47] Charles Fantazzi, ed., 'Enchiridion Militis Christiani,' in *Collected* Works of Erasmus, vol. 66, eds. R.A.B. Mynors, D.F.S. Thompson, J.K. Sowards & Charles Fantazzi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 9.

[48] O'Donnell, *Enchiridion Militis Christiani,* xxii–xxiii.

[49] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 65.

[50] Fantazzi, *Enchiridion*, 32.

[51] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio cxxxv, image 135R.

[52] Fantazzi, *Enchiridion,* 33.

thyself ageinst all assaultes'.[53] On another occasion, Tyndale wrote that those who studied scripture were protected and if they went 'abroade and walke[d] by the feldes and medowes of all maner doctours and philosophers they coulde catch no harme.' This was because 'They shulde dyscerne the poyson from the hony and bringe [home] no thinge but that which is holsome.'[54]

The most influential idea in the *Enchiridion*, however, was this: 'Be assured that there is nothing so true, nothing so certain and beyond all doubt . . . than what you read in [scripture].' Erasmus felt that the word of God held the central position and that the truthfulness of all other writers or philosophers should be judged by it.[55] So powerful and consistent is this message, that Daniell's assessment of the *Enchiridion* is that it 'is a theological book in the special sense that all the theology emanated from Scripture and from nowhere else.'[56] James McConica states that in the *Enchiridion,* 'At all times, the reading of Scripture . . . is put forward as a sovereign remedy.[57]

Tyndale embraced this idea so completely that it became the foundation for his own theology. He too, felt that scripture was *the* touchstone of all truth and, like Erasmus, admonished everyone to use it as such:

> So yet if thou haddest but of every auctor [scholastic doctors] one boke thou coudest not pyle them up in any ware house in london / and every auctor is one contrary unto a nother. In so great diversite of sprites how shall I know who lyeth and who saith trouth? Whereby shall I trye them & iudge them? Verely by gods worde which only is true.[58]

Tyndale's knowledge and use of Erasmus' published writings was considerable. Because Erasmus was a prolific writer, described by Marius as a man who used the printing press more effectively than any contemporary save Martin Luther, we have only scratched the surface of those writings that left their mark on Tyndale, but there are more.[59] Two additional examples, which will be discussed later, are Erasmus' influential manual of Latin style, *De Copia Verborum,* published

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[53] Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, verso folio Avi, image 7L.

[54] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xviii, image 18R.

[55] Fantazzi, *Enchiridion*, 36, 55.

[56] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 67.

[57] McConica, *English Humanists,* 22.

[58] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xvi, image 16R.

[59] Dickens, *Erasmus*, 3.

in 1512, and the *Methodus verae theologiae* of 1516. Other scholars have suggested that Tyndale was also familiar with Erasmus' *Colloquies*, a teaching aid for learning Latin, and the *Adages*, a collection of Erasmus' favourite extracts drawn from classical sources.[60]

Erasmus' name also appears frequently in Tyndale's writings. Tyndale generally referred to the great humanist by name when he was defending himself, his translations, or his views from attack; particularly from the attacks of Thomas More.[61] Rainer Pineas has humorously described these references as 'Tyndale using Erasmus against Erasmus' friends.[62] These references have caused Brian Cummings to insist that, 'Tyndale refers to Erasmus more than any other writer (including Luther)' and Daniell to state that 'Erasmus was a figure never far from Tyndale's mind'.[63] Erasmus, however, was more than a figure in Tyndale's mind and much more than a name to drop when attacked. Erasmus was the closest thing Tyndale had to a mentor because he was the man who taught Tyndale how to be a theologian.[64]

Erasmus' influence on Tyndale naturally leads to a consideration of Tyndale's relationship with humanism. After all, Erasmus was the 'supreme humanist scholar' and Tyndale could not learn from Erasmus or utilize his work without coming into contact with humanism.[65] Unfortunately, most modern historiography portrays Tyndale's relationship with humanism negatively. King feels that Tyndale had a 'conflicted' relationship it. Alan Stewart describes it as 'problematic' because Tyndale harshly criticized Erasmus and More for being

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[60] Craig R. Thompson, ed., *The Colloquies of Erasmus* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965), 68; Margaret Mann Phillips, ed., *The Adages of Erasmus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 331.

[61] See Anne M. O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, eds., *An Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 14, 135, 214; William Tyndale, *The Practyse of Prelates* (Antwerp: Johannes Hoochstraten, 1530), STC / 24465, EEBO, recto folio Fvii, image 47R.

[62] Rainer Pineas, 'William Tyndale and More's 1529 Dialogue,' *Moreana* nos. 75–76 (November 1982): 57–58.

[63] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 43; Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 197.

[64] Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stewart Realms 1485-1603* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), 98.

[65] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided: 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 2003), 97.

mercenary writers who were part of an elite, corrupt, self-serving group of Latinists.[66] Some scholars feel that Tyndale was 'anti-humanist'.[67] Even those who admit a more positive connection between the two display bewilderment that Tyndale exhibits thought independent from humanism.[68] None of these arguments does justice to Tyndale.

Discussing Tyndale's relationship with humanism is like opening Pandora's Box. A study of the term 'humanism' itself means wading through deep scholarly controversy and that is only the beginning of the treacherous landscape. Diarmaid MacCulloch has rightly explained that the term 'humanism' was not used by those of the 'first age of humanism'. The term was coined by nineteenth-century historians from words that were used in the late fifteen century to describe the liberal arts subjects in a university, such as rhetoric, oratory, and the study of classical literature. These 'non-theological' subjects were described by contemporaries as '*humanae litterae*' and the scholars who were devoted to them as '*humanista*'.[69] Because of its nineteenth-century origin, some scholars have concluded that 'humanism' should be entirely 'banished from accounts of early modern thought'.[70]

The term has survived, however, and scholars have fiercely debated how to correctly define it. Peter Burke feels that 'humanism' is a challenging term because it 'does not lend itself to precise definition' and is often used in two very different ways; one strict and narrow, the other wide and vague. Humanism in its broad sense refers to a belief in the dignity of man and to human or secular values, rather than divine or religious ones.[71] Humanism in its narrower sense is a 'broad cultural, educational, and literary movement between 1300 and 1600, in which adherents encouraged the study of classical literature and the cultivation of an eloquent writing

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[66] King, *Tudor* Humanism, 181; Alan Stewart, 'The Trouble with English Humanism: Tyndale, More and Darling Erasmus,' in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism,* ed. Jonathan Woolfson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 78, 91; Accusations against Erasmus and More for mercenary writing are found in O'Donnell, *Answere,* 140, 170.

[67] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 198–99.

[68] Ralph S. Werrell, *The Theology of William Tyndale* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2006), 11, 20; Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 55.

[69] MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 76.

[70] Alistair Fox, 'Facts and Fallacies: Interpreting English Humanism,' in *Reassessing the Henrician Age: Humanism, Politics & Reform 1500–1600,* eds. Alistair Fox & John Guy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press, 1986), 11.

[71] Peter Burke, 'The Spread of Italian Humanism,' in *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe,* eds. Anthony Goodman & Angus MacKay (London: Longman Group, 1990), 1.

style'.[72] A definition that falls in between the other two states that humanism was a 'movement to recover, interpret and assimilate the language, literature, learning and values of ancient Greece and Rome'.[73]

The debates about the appropriateness of the term 'humanism' and how 'humanism' should be defined may seem to have little relevance to Tyndale's relationship with the movement. However, if we enter the battlefield over how to identify 'humanists' the importance of these other debates becomes evident. The practice of defining 'humanism' as an identifiable, coherent movement has caused some scholars to assume that individuals within that movement adhered to the same principles to the same degree and that these individuals displayed consistent, identifiable characteristics throughout their lives. This assumption has driven the creation of extensive definitive lists of external identifiers which scholars have eagerly used to classify some individuals as 'humanists' and to reject others.

For example, Geoffrey Elton asserts that it is possible to recognize those who were actively involved with humanism by 'their principles as students and teachers'. He believes that: humanists were philologists rather than philosophers; they insisted on the purification of Latin in addition to a mastery of Greek and Hebrew; they preferred rhetoric over logic; and they believed in the 'human ability to control human fate.' In Elton's opinion, this last characteristic is the most important because:

> What no one properly to be called a humanist could adhere to was an Augustinian belief in the total and helpless depravity of fallen man, or to Lutheran solafideism, or to a clericalist view by which a priesthood acted as the sole channel of grace, or to a total denial of free enquiry.[74]

This list of external identifiers leads Elton to conclude that Erasmus fulfilled all of the conditions necessary to be considered a humanist and that he is rightly identified as the prototype and leader of humanists.[75] Other examinees are not so fortunate. Elton rejects John Colet, Bishop John Fisher, and Thomas More as English humanists because they do not completely or continuously manifest the

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[72] Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 7; Paul O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper, 1961), 5-23.

[73] Burke, 'Italian Humanism,' 2.

[74] Geoffrey Elton, 'Humanism in England', in *The Impact of Humanism,* eds. Anthony Goodman & Angus MacKay (London: Longman Group, 1990), 271–72.

[75] *Ibid*, 277.

characteristics on his list.[76] Elton insists that Colet's low opinion of fallen mankind, belief in the full submission to canon law, and desire to educate nobody but clergymen make it difficult to call Colet a humanist. He finds similar problems with More and Fisher; feeling that More's humanism ended with the onset of the Reformation and that Fisher's was intermittent at best and towards the end of his life, invisible.[77]

The most obvious challenge with this approach is the difficulty in determining what the 'correct' set of humanist identifiers ought to be. Alistair Fox argues that scholars have often relied on the 'wrong type' of external evidence to classify humanists.[78] These include attendance at a university; enjoyment of royal patronage; skill in rhetoric or translation; enthusiasm for reform; or involvement in 'civic concern'. In his opinion, the use of incorrect external identifiers obscures the important differences between those who really were humanists and classifies some individuals as humanists who were not. Fox asserts that: 'no Tudor figure should be considered a "humanist"' unless that individual had a specific commitment to classical learning.[79]

It is in this war zone that Tyndale and his relationship with humanism comes under attack. Scholars have been led to conclude that Tyndale's relationship with humanism was conflicted because of two assumptions: first, that there was coherency within the movement, and second, that individuals within it comprehensively adopted all of the humanist principles. It is more accurate to argue that humanism provided intelligent men with a set of principles they could use to explore and develop other philosophies; such as religion. Fox states that 'Humanism was not a dye with which men were indelibly stained for life; it was a practice and set of assumptions that could be repudiated or neglected at will.'[80] Tyndale related to humanism in this way. He did not adopt all of the principles

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[76] For descriptions of these men as humanists see McConica, *English Humanists,* pp. 44-75; Kalyan K. Chatterjee, *In Praise of Learning: John Colet and Literary Humanism in Education* (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press, 1974); Robert P. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor: More, Colet, and Vives, on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496–1535* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962); R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (London: J. Cape, 1935).

[77] Elton, 'Humanism in England,' 272–73, 277.

[78] See Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965); McConica, *English Humanists*; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[79] Fox, 'Facts and Fallacies,' 9–33.

[80] *Ibid,* 27.

humanism offered him, but he was inspired by some; particularly those that were advocated by Erasmus. Tyndale applied the select humanist principles to the Bible and this enabled him to develop his own theology. Tyndale's theology was the overriding philosophy of his life, not humanism. However, humanism supplied him with the tools he needed and recognizing this annihilates the supposed conflict Tyndale had with it.

There is a less obvious, though perhaps more important, value for the external identifiers that scholars use to classify individuals as humanists. In Tyndale's case the identifiers serve as a tool to effectively debunk two other scholarly fallacies about him. First, that Tyndale wasn't intelligent enough to be more than a follower of the men he admired, and second, that he advocated the same doctrine as Luther. As we saw above, one of Elton's external identifiers was that no true humanist could adhere 'to Lutheran solafideism'. Because of its assumptions, this identifier is perfectly poised to set off Tyndale's intelligence and originality. Its first assumption is that 'solafideism' must be 'Lutheran' and the second is that anyone who advocated 'solafideism' advocated Luther's version of it. An examination of Tyndale's theology will reveal that neither of these assumptions is true.

Scholars have often described Tyndale as a follower of Luther who espoused exactly the same doctrines, including justification by faith alone.[81] But a close examination of Tyndale's theology reveals that Tyndale differed from Luther in most doctrines, including and especially the doctrine of justification. Luther believed that justification was an 'imputation of righteousness' through one's faith in Christ. More specifically, justification was God's act of crediting, imputing, or recognizing as righteous one who was unrighteous; it was righteousness 'outside of' man.[82] Luther stated, 'You are righteous through mercy and pity. That is not my own condition or a quality of my heart but something outside myself, that is, divine mercy.'[83]

In contrast, Tyndale understood justification to be a process of 'making righteous', in Christ, through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit; it was righteousness 'inside of' man.[84] Like Luther, Tyndale disagreed with the traditional

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[81] See MacCulloch, *Reformation,* 580–81; King, *English Reformation*, 46; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113.

[82] Paul Althaus*, The Theology of Martin Luther*, (Philadelphia, 1966), 229.

[83] James Atkinson, ed., *L W*, vol. 12, 328.

[84] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 9-10, 15-16; MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 119.

view that righteous works made a man righteous. But unlike Luther, he insisted that a man could be *made* righteous by the power of Christ. Tyndale taught that 'We must be also good yer we doo good' and insisted that, 'The workes declare that the man is righteous . . . but the man was first made righteous in Christ'.[85] Tyndale instructed that the justification process was initiated by God only in those who had repentant hearts, not in those who had earned it by their good works.[86]

Being *made* righteous is a significantly different concept than an *imputation* of righteousness. Therefore, Tyndale did *not* subscribe to 'Lutheran solafideism'. He subscribed to 'Tyndalian solafideism'.   This also means that Luther's doctrine of 'solafideism' was not the only interpretation available during the Reformation. It is curious, therefore, that scholars write about 'solafideism' as if Luther's version was the only one in existence. It is also troubling that scholars denigrate Tyndale to the level of a 'follower' when he clearly developed and taught his own idea. 'Solafideism' is not the only doctrine where Tyndale's theological distinctiveness stands out.

Elton's list of external identifiers also asserted that humanists believed that man could and would, of his own free will, choose a better life. The ability of man to make his own choices, termed 'man's free-will', was a matter of significant controversy between Erasmus and Luther. Beginning in 1524, with Erasmus' *De Libero Arbitrio* (*A Discourse on Free Will*), the polemic continued for some years and, as Léon Halkin stated, 'separated for ever these two men who were united by a common will to reform [the church].'[87]

In *De Libero,* Erasmus defined 'free choice' as 'a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them.'[88] He argued that man had the ability to achieve good 'by his natural intelligence and free choice', but insisted that man should acknowledge God as the source of these powers and attribute all the good that he did to the same. Erasmus concluded:

> to those who maintain that man can do nothing without the help of the grace of God, and conclude that therefore no works of men are good—to these we

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[85] William Tyndale, 'Prologge', recto folio Biv; William Tyndale, *Exposition of I John* (Antwerp: M. de Keyser, 1531), STC / 24443, EEBO, verso folio Eiii, image 37L.

[86] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 59; The clearest explanation of Tyndale's beliefs on this subject is in *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, though it is a theme that appears repeatedly in all of his published works.

[87] Léon E. Halkin*, Erasmus: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1993), 157.

[88] E. Gordon Rupp, ed., 'De Libero Arbitrio,' in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (London: SMC, 1969), 47.

shall oppose a thesis to me much more probable, that there is nothing that man cannot do with the help of the grace of God, and that therefore all the works of man can be good.[89]

Luther responded with *De Servo Arbitrio* (*On the Bondage of the Will*). He found fault with Erasmus' definition of 'free choice' and asserted, 'You might perhaps rightly attribute some measure of choice to man, but to attribute free choice to him in relation to divine things is too much'. Luther insisted that scripture plainly taught man's lack of will and likened the human will to a beast of burden. It was placed between the will of God and the will of Satan. 'If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills . . . If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills; nor can it choose to run to either of the two riders or to seek him out, but the riders themselves contend for the possession and control of it.'[90] Luther concluded that man was not able, on his own, to correct his life. He believed that those foreordained by God, 'the elect and the godly', would be 'corrected by the Holy Spirit', while the rest would 'perish uncorrected.'[91]

Tyndale's doctrine on free will differs from Erasmus and Luther, though there are elements of both in his position. Like Luther, Tyndale believed that Adam's original sin resulted in man's complete powerlessness to either desire or choose spiritual freedom. Fallen man was 'stone deed and without life or powre to do or consent to good'. He was 'as wicked as the devel' and 'consentid unto sinne / with soule & body & hated the laws of God.' Man continued in this state, choosing only evil and wickedness, until God had poured the Spirit of Christ's grace into his heart and made him 'ageyne in Christe'.[92] Tyndale taught that 'a man must be first reconsyled un to god by Christ and in gods favoure / yer his werkes can be good & pleasaunt in the sight of god.'[93] After this reconciliation, man *was* able to do God's will, keep his law and correct his life; a significant deviation from Luther while simultaneously reflecting Erasmus.[94]

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[89] *Ibid*, 84-85.

[90] Philip S. Watson, ed., 'De Servo Arbitrio,' in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (London: SMC, 1969), 140, 170.

[91] *Ibid*, 136.

[92] Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, verso folio Fv, recto folio Fvi, images 47L & R.

[93] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 174.

[94] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theoogy*, 41-44; Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xciii, image 97R; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 174; Tyndale, 'Prologge,' recto folio Aii.

As with 'solafideism', Tyndale's doctrine of man's free-will testifies of his intelligence and demonstrates that he was not a copy-cat follower of either Luther or Erasmus. It is true that his conclusions about man's free will are not entirely congruent with the humanist belief that man could and would choose a better life, though Tyndale's doctrine is closer than Luther's. It is also true that Tyndale's view of 'solafideism' is 'theo-centric'; meaning that the process is initiated by God rather than by the creature as is required in humanism's 'humano-centric' position. This incongruence with humanist principles has led some scholars to conclude that Tyndale was not a humanist or that he was in conflict with humanism. However, MacCulloch reminds us that humanists were also 'lovers and connoisseurs of words' and 'editor[s] of texts'.[95] Tyndale was such a man and developed his own doctrines of 'solafideism' and free-will by applying the philological skills of the humanists to the Biblical text. Therefore, his relationship with humanism was not conflicted, it was selective.

How selective will be evident in an examination of Erasmus' humanist programme for the training of theology students. Matthew DeCoursey has claimed that 'In common with other reformers, William Tyndale learned to read the Bible from Erasmus', but it would also be correct to say that Tyndale learned to be a theologian from Erasmus.[96] As an Erasmian theologian, Tyndale translated the Bible into English, developed his own theology, and published his ideas in the vernacular so that they could be of benefit to English lay people.

Tyndale and Erasmus' Theology Programme

Werrell has rightly written that 'As a theologian Tyndale is still unrecognised.'[97] Unsurprisingly, Tyndale's *development* as a theologian has also gone unnoticed. One reason for this oversight is the enormous shadow of Martin Luther. Beginning with the title of More's *Dyaloge Concerning Heresies* (1529), in which More portrayed Tyndale as a follower of Luther, Tyndale has been depicted as a Lutheran ever since.[98] On one end of the spectrum are those who claim that

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[95] MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 77, 78.

[96] Matthew DeCoursey, *Erasmus and Tyndale on Bible-reading*, Catholic University of America, 'http://www.tyndale.org/Reformation/1/decoursey.html' [accessed 19 July 2010].

[97] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 9.

[98] The *Dyaloge's* title reads at the end 'Wyth many other thyngys touching the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale / by the tone bygone in Saxony / & by the tother laboryd to be brought in

'Tyndale . . . is a follower of Luther's teaching, without much originality' and on the other are those who assert that: 'Among the early enthusiasts for Luther was a rare Oxford man . . . William Tyndale'.[99] In spite of Tyndale's own claims that he was not 'confederatt with Luther', he has always been overshadowed by him.[100]

Tyndale's reputation as a Lutheran seems to have originated with the prologue to, and the marginal glosses within, the 1525 Cologne New Testament. This was Tyndale's first attempt to publish his English translation, but only the book of Matthew and first portion of Mark were printed before Tyndale and his assistant, William Roye, were interrupted.[101] The Cologne authorities, following a lead, tried to arrest the two men and impound the translation. But Tyndale and Roye escaped up the Rhine, taking their work with them. This exciting story will be discussed more fully in chapter four. The only surviving representative of this endeavour is a single copy, extending only to Matthew 22, in the British Library.[102] The prologue to the Cologne translation was based on Luther's *Vorrhede* to his 1522 German New Testament. Tyndale also included many marginal notes, which he had taken from Luther, in the Cologne edition. However, of the ninety notes in the surviving fragment, thirty are exclusively Tyndale's.[103]

Tyndale's second attempt at printing a complete English New Testament was successful and, as discussed in chapter one, the volumes began arriving in England early in 1526. Shortly afterwards, Tyndale published *A compendious* [. . .] *preface un to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns* (1526). This was based on Luther's 1522 *Vorrhede* to the book of Romans and it confirmed the idea that Tyndale was a Lutheran. The Cologne prologue and the preface to Romans are the two

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to England'; For modern depictions of Tyndale as a Lutheran see, Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'England,' in *The Early Reformation in Europe,* ed. Andrew Pettegree, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 171; Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 49; Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 314f.

[99] E. Flesseman-Van Leer, 'The Controversy about Ecclesiology Between Thomas More and William Tyndale,' in *Nederlands Archief voor kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. 44, no. 1, (1962): 65; MacCulloch, 'England,' 171.

[100] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 148.

[101] Evidence that the printing went through Mark can be found in Johann Dobneck, 'Commentaria Joannis Cochlaei, de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri Saxonis chronographice ex ordine ab anno ad Domini 1517 usque annum 1546 inclusive, fideliter conscripta' in *Records of the English Bible,* ed. Alfred W. Pollard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 107; Robert Ridley, 'Letter to Henry Gold' in Pollard, *Records*, 122.

[102] Daniell, *William Tyndale,* 109–10.

[103] *Ibid*, 118.

publications generally cited as proof that Tyndale was a Lutheran. But scholars are now recognizing that 'Tyndale used Luther rather than agreed with Luther'. Leonard Trinterud has discovered that 'About one eighth of Tyndale's [Cologne] prologue consists of a good translation of roughly half of Luther's *Vorrhede*'.[104] Of the *Compendious Preface to the Romans,* Daniell states that Tyndale weaves in and out of Luther, 'freely adding phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs' and leaving out just as much, or more, as he put in.[105]

These discoveries add weight to Ralph Werrell's assertion that, 'We do an injustice to both Luther and Tyndale if we try to make Tyndale a Lutheran at any time. But we also do an injustice to them if we try to exaggerate or diminish Luther's work or the use Tyndale made of Luther's writings'.[106] We have just seen critical similarities and differences between Luther and Tyndale on justification and free will. In chapter two we learned that Tyndale based his *Obedience* on many of Luther's political teachings (non-resistance to kings, overcoming heresy with the word of God alone, and stirring up temporal leaders to assist in the settling of religious controversy), but we also discovered that Tyndale left Luther behind and asserted his own ideas in the creation of a new Bible-based social structure.

If Tyndale was not an absolute Lutheran and did not simply regurgitate Luther's doctrines with his own pen, there is room to consider other sources of influence for his theological development. Trinterud has noticed that Tyndale often took a theological stand which he claims 'stemmed from biblical humanism'.[107] This is unsurprising given the enormous influence Erasmus had on Tyndale's thought. It is curious, therefore, that scholars haven't explored Erasmus' detailed programme for the training of theologians to determine if that programme had any effect on Tyndale's theological development. Anne O'Donnell and Jared Wicks believe that Tyndale used the third edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament (1522) to make his first complete English translation in 1526.[108] Unfortunately, scholars have disregarded the fact that Erasmus' *Methodus verae theologiae* (Method for True Theology) was printed as one of the three prefaces of the first edition of the *Novum*

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[104] Leonard J. Trinterud, 'A Reappraisal of William Tyndale's Debt to Martin Luther,' *Church History*, vol 31 (1962): 26.

[105] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 149-151.

[106] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 10.

[107] Trinterud, 'Reappraisal,' 26.

[108] O'Donnell, *Answere*, xxi.

Instrumentum, along with the *Paraclesis* and *Annotationes.* In later editions Erasmus expanded it, renaming it *Ratio ad veram theologiam perveniendi* (Systematic Way to True Theology).[109]

We already know that Tyndale was very familiar with the *Paraclesis* and the *Annotationes* and modern scholarship readily acknowledges their influence on Tyndale's thought. However, the fact that Tyndale would have perused the *Methodus*, along with the other two prefaces, has been overlooked. For example, in his entire biography of Tyndale, Daniell's one reference to the *Methodus* states that it displays 'something of [Erasmus'] philological methods'.[110] Unfortunately, this isn't a particularly accurate description of it. Werrell's book on Tyndale's theology, though acknowledging Erasmus' influence on Tyndale's theological background, doesn't mention the *Methodus* at all. This is a significant oversight because the *Methodus* has everything to do with the type of theologian Tyndale was and why he wanted to translate the Bible into English. The *Methodus* also provides substantial evidence that Tyndale's relationship with humanism was selective, rather than conflicted.

Tyndale is not the only one who has had trouble being recognized as a theologian in his own right. The author of the *Methodus,* Erasmus, suffered similarly in his own day. In 1504, he wrote in a letter to his English friend John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, that he was ready to go 'full sail, full gallop' into 'the Scriptures and to spend all the rest of [his] life upon them.'[111] Erasmus wanted to revise the Vulgate text of the New Testament using Greek texts, but he also had a larger plan:

> To reform the Church from within by a renewal of biblical theology, based on philological study of the New Testament text, and supported by a knowledge of patristics, itself renewed by the same methods. The final object was to nourish that chiefly moral and spiritual reform already quite clearly conceived in the *Enchiridion militis Christiani,* published at Antwerp in February 1504.[112]

When word about his New Testament project got out it unleashed criticism from contemporary theologians. Maarten van Dorp and his colleagues at the University of Leuven quickly reacted negatively to the project. After the publication of the *Novum Instrumentum,* their continued criticisms were joined by those from the

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[109] Rummel, *Erasmus*, 79.

[110] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 116.

[111] Erasmus, 'Letter to John Colet, December 1504,' in *CWE*, vol. 2, Ep: 181: 86.

[112] F. Louis Bouyer, 'Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, II: *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.W.H Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 496–7.

faculty of theology at the University of Paris, led by Noël Béda, the executive officer. Under Beda's direction, the translation was officially censured on 22 August 1523, with the conclusion that 'new translations of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin . . . posed dangers to the faith of Christians and must be withdrawn from circulation.'[113]

Dorp's objections to Erasmus' project, representative of the Leuven faculty of theology, were written in an open letter that was published in 1514.[114] Dorp was offended by Erasmus' satirical portrayal of theologians in the *Praise of Folly* and was worried that Erasmus' New Testament would 'define a new type of theology and a new type of theologian.'[115] Erasmus, unabashedly admitting that he *did* want a different type of theology and theologian, confidently responded:

> . . . what have [scholastic theologians] learned that is not utter nonsense and utter confusion? . . .so little sound learning is there in [scholastic theology], that I would rather be a humble cobbler than the best of their tribe, if they can acquire nothing in the way of a liberal education.[116]

Thomas More came to Erasmus' defence, astutely pointing out Dorp's rejection of Erasmus as a legitimate theologian:

> In the letter to Erasmus more than once you ride roughshod over our theologians, over Erasmus, and over your grammarians, as if, while occupying a throne high up among the ranks of the theologians, you were shoving him down among the poor grammarians. You take your place among the theologians, and rightly so, and not just a place, but the first place. Still he should not be shoved from the throne of the theologians down to the benches of the grammarians. . . He does belong to the group of grammarians . . . and to the group of theologians such as yourself, my dear Dorp, and that is to the very best.[117]

Noël Béda was particularly outspoken against the humanist practice of submitting the Bible to philological probing and of replacing scholastic doctors with church fathers. He felt that humanists were not qualified to interpret and teach the scriptures because they were lacking in formal theological training and had no apostolic mandate authorizing them to teach publicly or to publish books on theology

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[113] James K. Farge, 'Noel Beda and the Defense of the Tradition,' in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus,* ed. Erika Rummel (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 154.

[114] Rummel, *Erasmus*, 76.

[115] Cecilia Asso, 'Martin Dorp and Edward Lee' in Rummel, *Biblical Humanism*, 168 & 171.

[116] *CWE*, vol. 71, Ep. 337:804, 27.

[117] Elizabeth Francis Rogers, ed., *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 13.

and the Bible.[118] Like Dorp and his colleagues, Béda and his faculty did not consider Erasmus to be a theologian; a point addressed by Erasmus in a letter he wrote to Béda in 1525:

> Often in your letter I am your "beloved brother," but you never acknowledge me as your colleague: I am your fellow priest, but not your fellow theologian, although neither Leo nor Clement hesitated to give me that title, nor Adrian either, and he was indisputably a great theologian himself.[119]

Erasmus' rejection as a theologian partly stemmed from the type of doctorate he had obtained. Between 1506 and 1516, Erasmus travelled in Italy. Not much is known about his activities there, but the few surviving letters indicate that he obtained a doctorate in theology from the University of Turin. Erika Rummel explains that Erasmus received the doctorate without fulfilling the normal residence requirements or passing the necessary examinations. Because of this, many theologians refused to accept him among their ranks.[120]

Earlier in his life, while living in Paris (1495–1499), Erasmus attended theology lectures at the University of Paris but he left without obtaining a degree and with disdain for the scholastic brand of theology taught there.[121] His disdain never abated. In a self-caricature, written in 1499, he sarcastically quipped, 'I am trying with might and main to say nothing in good Latin, or elegantly, or wittily; and I seem to be making progress; so there is some hope that, eventually, they will acknowledge me [as a theologian].[122] Erasmus' satirical representations of scholastic theologians and his repeated criticisms of their theological methods were not helpful in promoting his acceptance among them.

In spite of the rejection and the criticism he received from his peers, Erasmus remained undeterred in his efforts to create a different type of theology and theologian. McConica has rightly emphasized the importance of understanding 'what Erasmus meant' by the term 'theology' and explains that for Erasmus it was 'the study of Scripture according to his own critical canons.' Erasmus felt that the medieval application of philosophy to Christian doctrine had been a disaster and he

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[118] Farge, 'Noel Beda,' 147, 152.

[119] *CWE* vol. 11, Ep. 1581:131.

[120] Rummel, *Erasmus*, 11.

[121] Erika Rummel, *Erasmus and his Catholic Critics*, vol. II (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1989), 149.

[122] *CWE* vol. 1, Ep. 64:82-90.

wanted to return to the system he felt had been used by the early Church Fathers.[123] Jenkins remarks that in the *Methodus*, 'The foil for Erasmus' educational programme for a Christian theologian was, as ever, scholasticism' and he was not afraid to make scathing comparisons between his programme and the scholastic one.[124]

Part way into the *Methodus*, Erasmus explains that he 'specifically' wrote his theological training programme for young students. He was not, however, opposed to older, scholastically trained theologians applying his suggestions because he believed that there was 'nothing which the human mind [could not] do' if one had 'the will and the desire.'[125] Erasmus frequently criticized experienced theologians for their 'arrogance' and for supposing 'themselves to hold the citadel of all wisdom'; there was 'nothing they [did] not know.'[126] Though 'age should not despair' of gaining new knowledge and skills, Erasmus felt that youth had 'the better prospects' and that they were the ones to benefit most from his program.

When the *Methodus* was published in 1516, Tyndale was at Oxford where Daniell believes he was teaching as a Master of Arts. In 1531, Tyndale related one of his experiences as a student. He wrote that one of the doctors 'checked me ones / bycause I redde the Byble / havyng nat redde before my Philosophye / with the whiche they bringe oute of the right course all them that be newly planted in the faythe in all universyties in christendome.'[127] A description in a later edition of the *Acts and Monuments* reveals:

> [Tyndale], by long continuance [at the University of Oxford] . . . increased as well in the knowledge of tongues, and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted; insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen college, some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures.[128]

As with Foxe's other biographical information about Tyndale, this passage requires consideration. Foxe describes Tyndale 'lying in Magdalen Hall' and reading the Bible to 'students and fellows of Magdalen College'. Magdalen Hall was the

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[123] McConica, *English Humanists*, 24.

[124] Allan Jenkins & Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 46.

[125] Jenkins & Preston, *Biblical Scholarship,* 251.

[126] *CWE* vol. 71, Ep. 337:319, 15.

[127] William Tyndale, *A path way i[n]to the holy scripture* (London, 1536), STC (2nd ed.) / 24463, EEBO, verso folio Giii, image 52L.

[128] *AM*, vol. 5, 115.

name of a set of rooms, next to Magdalen College, that were given to student boarders. It grew to have an independent standing from the college and was recognized as a community of undergraduates overseen by a principal. The early principals of Magdalen Hall appear to have been Fellows of Madgalen College, appointed by it to supervise the boarders.[129]   Magdalen Hall eventually became Hertford College in 1874. The University of Oxford registers list Tyndale as obtaining his BA and MA degrees from Magdalen Hall, which supports Foxe's description.[130]

It appears, therefore, that Tyndale boarded in Magdalen Hall while he finished his education and was a member of that community of students. He would have associated with the students in Magdalen College and could have provided them with private Bible study sessions. Staines believes that Tyndale indulged in the private Bible readings as a BA, having obtained that degree in 1512 at the age of 18, though there is no evidence to support this. Daniell states that after March 1516, Tyndale would have read and taught from Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum*.[131] If this is the case, Tyndale would have become acquainted with the *Methodus* when he was twenty-two years old. Perhaps twenty-two was a bit older than Erasmus would have liked, but Tyndale did have the advantage of being mature enough to follow Erasmus' programme on his own and young enough not to be set in the ways of scholastic theology.

Tyndale would have been interested in a different type of theology programme because he never appreciated the one he experienced as an MA student. Tyndale's published writings are consistently full of scorn for the scholastic approach to theology. In the *Practyse of Prelates* (1530) he wrote,

> And in the universytes they have ordened that no man shall lok on the scripture untyll he be noseled [nursed] in hethen learning. viii. or nyne yere and armed with false principles . . . when the[y] be admitted unto studye divinyte/ because the scripture is locked upp with such false exposicyons and with false principles of naturall philosphye that they can not entre in / they goo aboute the outside and dispute all their lives aboute wordes and vayne opinions pertayninge as moch unto the healinge of a mannes bele as helth of his soule.[132]

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[129] R.S. Stainer, *Magdalen School: A history of Magdalen College School Oxford* (Oxford, 1958), 10–22.

[130] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 22.

[131] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 40.

[132] Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Eviii, recto folio Fi, images 41L–R.

On another occasion, he made similar complaints about the number of years a student had to study 'textes of logycke / of naturall philautia / of methaphisick and morall philosophy and of all maner bokes of Aristotle and of all maner doctours' before he could come to the scriptures. When MA students did finally 'beginne their Devinite' they did not commence 'at the scripture: but every man taketh a sondry doctoure' and 'what so ever opinions every man fyndeth with his doctoure / that is his Gospell'. The students do all they can to 'mayntene' their 'doctoure', even to the point of corrupting scripture, and they continue to uphold that doctor all their 'lyfe longe.'[133]

Tyndale was also contemptuous of how scholastic theologians interpreted scripture. He stated that twenty doctors could 'expounde one texte .xx. wayes' and even provided a mocking example of what they could argue from the same passage of scripture: 'Of what texte thou provest hell / will a nother prove purgatory / a nother lymbo patrum / and a nother the assumpcion of oure ladi: And a nother shall prove of the same texte that an Ape hath a tayle.'[134] These arguments are reminiscent of Erasmus' *Folly.* Tyndale did not want to be a theologian who wasted his 'braynes aboute questions and strifte of wordes'; activities he considered to be nothing more than 'mans foolish wisdom'.[135]

Because the reformed religion of the sixteenth century ultimately rejected the teachings of the humanists, Elton has argued that the humanists' only victory was in education. He asserts that 'From the 1550s onwards, no Englishman who passed through the hands of teachers escaped a system built on the return to ancient authors and a training of the mind in the techniques of rhetoric and literature.'[136] Tyndale's formal education was complete long before the 1550s, but he should be considered as one of the earliest fruits of Erasmus' efforts to educate theologians according to humanist principles. Erasmus' theology training programme suited Tyndale perfectly; its principles can be found in all of his published works.

After recommending that theology students begin when they were young, Erasmus' first principle was for students to have the right aim. A budding theologian was to 'Make this one vow to be changed, to be seized, to be inspired, to be

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[133] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xviii – recto folio xix, image 19L-R, verso folio cxxxiii, image 134L.

[134] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio cxxxiii, image 133R, recto folio xix, image 19R; A similar description can be found in Tyndale, *Exposition of I John,* verso folio Av, image 5L.

[135] Tyndale, Obedience, verso folio cxxxix, image 139L, recto folio xix, image 19R.

[136] Elton, 'Humanism in England,' 278.

transformed' in those things they were learning. Erasmus' emphasis on an inward transformation may have originated in the *Devotio Moderna.* This was a religious movement associated with the lay religious order, the Brethren of the Common Life, founded by Gerard Groote in late fourteenth-century Gelderland. The movement's underlying message was that lay people could attain the high personal standards that were normally reserved for the clergy.[137] Early in his education (1478–1483), Erasmus attended a school at Deventer, founded by Groote, in which he was nurtured in the *Devotio Moderna* and encouraged to seek inward piety and a personal relationship with God.[138]

True to this early training, Erasmus wanted a theologian to have more than a theoretical understanding of his subject; the subject needed to become part of the 'passions and the inmost parts of the mind'. The student should 'become another person' and 'express what he professes in life rather than in syllogisms.[139] Erasmus explained that students would recognize when they had truly set out in their theological development, not when they had gained enough knowledge to dispute with other theologians 'more bitterly', but when they felt themselves 'to have become another person'.[140] In his rebuttal of one critic Erasmus wrote:

> I deny the title of "theologian" to those whose understanding of the Holy Scriptures goes no deeper than the intellect – and I have seen too many of them. It belongs to the person who feels within himself what he reads in those sacred books and who is affected by it to the very core of his being.[141]

Tyndale whole-heartedly adopted this principle. His published writings are full of passages where he describes this same type of inward feeling and profound change.[142] In one example, he wrote that 'the power of god loeseth the hert from the captivite & bondage under sinne . . . altereth hym and chaungeth hym clene /

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[137] MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 23.

[138] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship,* 28.

[139] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 246-50 & 257.

[140] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 250.

[141] *CWE* vol. 71, Ep. LB IX 93D, 61.

[142] There are too many to list individually, but the work that repeats this message most consistently is William Tyndale, *A compendious introduccion, prologe or preface vn to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns* (Worms: P. Schoeffer, 1526), STC (2nd ed.) / 24438, EEBO; Other examples include Tyndale, *Mammon,* verso folio Biv, image 13L; Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, verso folio Avi, image 7L; Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Aviii, recto folio B, images 9L-R.

facyoneth and forgeth hym a new'.[143] Like Erasmus, Tyndale was completely

dissatisfied with a theology programme that only developed an intellectual

understanding of the scriptures. He boldly criticized scholastically trained

theologians and clergy who 'synge & saye and patter all daye / with the lyppes only /

that which the herte understondeth not' and who interpreted scripture with their

'owne blynd reason and folysh phantasies and not of any fealinge' that they had in

their hearts. He described such as only being able to rehearse 'a tale of an other

manes mouth' without knowing for themselves 'wether it be soe or noe' because

they have had no personal 'experyence of the thinge'.[144] Tyndale also wanted

theologians to practice what they preached.[145]

Tyndale understood for himself what it meant to be changed because he

experienced it. In 1530, he described that crucial moment:

> But well I wott [know] / I never deserved it ner prepared my selfe un to it / but
> ran a nother waye cleane contrary in my blyndenesse / and sought not that
> waye / but he [Christ] sought me and found me out and shewed it me and
> therwith drew me to him.[146]

He gives no indication at what point in his life this change occurred, but if we

combine this sketch with the one we noted above, where he had been 'newly

planted in the faythe' while he was at university, it is likely that this experience took

place at Oxford. Whether he discovered Erasmus' *Methodus* before or after his

inward change is impossible to say. But either way, it is clear that he personally

identified with this portion of Erasmus' programme and made it a crucial stone in the

foundation of his own theology.

A second principle in Erasmus' plan was for theology students to obtain an

in-depth knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. This was because 'all the mystery

of scripture is made known by them' since 'understanding what is written is

impossible if we do not know the language in which it is written.' Once a theologian

knew the original languages, he could then approach Biblical interpretation

philologically; skilfully wrestling with the 'linguistic peculiarities' that are associated

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[143] Tyndale, *Mammon*, recto folio Bv, image 13R.

[144] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xiii, image 14R; *Mammon*, recto folio ix, images 14L, 17R
& 63R; For similar references see also Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Aviii, recto folio B,
images 9L-R, 41L & 53L; William Tyndale, *The souper of the Lorde* (Antwerp, 1533), STC
(2nd ed.) / 24468, EEBO, recto folio 12, image 12R.

[145] Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Aviii, image 9L.

[146] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 192-193.

with understanding original texts and their translations.[147] Critics of this approach were answered thus:

> I never wrote that a man who knows his languages has an immediate understanding of the mysteries of Holy Scripture. I only wrote that languages are a great help in reaching that knowledge to which . . . many factors besides language must also contribute.[148]

Tyndale adopted Erasmus' philological approach to the Bible. Not only do we have his translation of the New Testament into English, from the original Greek, and his translation of the Pentateuch, from the original Hebrew, as evidence; his other writings provide his own thoughts on the subject. Tyndale wrote that 'Greke Latine and specially of the Hebrue which is most of nede to be knowen' were necessary for the right understanding of scriptural stories, doctrines, and practices.[149]

Moreover, Tyndale's writings clearly demonstrate his use of philological techniques in interpreting the Bible and expounding his theology. In 1531, Tyndale wrote that Christ is the satisfaction of all sin. He then explained the philology behind the word 'satisfaction':

> That I cal satisfaction the Greke callithe Jlasmos / and the Hebrewe Copar. And it is first taken for the swagynge of woundes / sores / and swellings / and the takinge away of payne and smart of them. And thence is borowyd for the pacifieng and swaging of wrath and angre / and for an amendes makyng / and contentyng / satisfaction / a raunsome / and makynge at one / as it is to se aboundatlie in the Bible.[150]

On another occasion, when expounding Christ's parable of the unjust steward, Tyndale clarified additional words:

> Fyrst Mammon ys an Ebrewe worde and signifyeth riches or temporall goodes / and namelye all superfluyte / and all that ys above necessyte and that which is requyred unto our necessarie uses . . . For hamon in the Ebrewe speach signifieth a multytude or abundaunce or many. And therehence commeth mahamon or mammon aboundaunce or plenteousnes of goodes or riches[151]

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[147] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship,* 252.

[148] *CWE* vol. 71, Ep. LB IX 89B, 54.

[149] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 75.

[150] Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, verso folio Bv, image 14L.

[151] Tyndale, *Mammon*, recto folio xix, image 24R. Other examples of his philological techniques can be found in Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, recto folio Cv, Ev, & verso folio Hi, images 21R, 38R, 58L; Tyndale, *Souper*, verso folio Av—recto folio Aviii, images 6-8; Tyndale, *Path way,* recto folio Aiiii, image 3R.

Exactly where or when Tyndale became proficient in Greek and Hebrew is unknown. Students at Oxford could find masters to teach them Greek beginning in about 1462, but it wasn't until 1517 when Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, founded Corpus Christi College that the teaching of Greek was officially provided for.[152] Daniell presumes that Tyndale learned his Greek while a student at Oxford and his Hebrew while on the Continent.[153] Tyndale was quite talented with languages and gained a reputation for this ability. The German humanist Hermann von dem Busche, after meeting the adult Tyndale, described him as 'so skilled in seven tongues, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he speaks, you would think it his native tongue.'[154] Modern scholars are quick to add German as Tyndale's eighth fluent language.[155]

A third principle in Erasmus' theology programme was to obtain a thorough education in 'dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, astrology' and 'in the forms and figures of speech of the grammarians and rhetoricians'. Erasmus also wanted students to gain 'the knowledge of natural things—living beings, trees, precious stones—and in addition of places, especially those which the scriptures call to mind'. Students should learn from 'historical literature not only the situation but also the origin, customs, laws, religion and character of the peoples about whom the action is narrated'. He felt that 'light' and 'life' would come from those who read the apostles' writings with such a background.[156] When the Paris faculty of theology criticized this point, Erasmus responded:

> It seems to me . . . that your profession would gain in dignity and distinction if theology, the queen of sciences, graciously accepted its old retainers back into its service. What our critic[s] claim to be new is in fact old, this mating of the practice of theology with the study of languages and polite letters.[157]

Though Tyndale was scornful of the theological training he received at Oxford, Daniell believes that part of his education was very beneficial to him. This part was the *trivium*, or his study of grammar, logic and rhetoric; rhetoric being the

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[152] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 292; J.I. Catto and T.A.R. Evans, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford, II: Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 780.

[153] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 30, 291.

[154] Quoted in Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 67.

[155] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 2; Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*: *Tyndale the Translator*, vol. 18 (London: The Olive Tree, 1986), 96.

[156] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 252.

[157] *CWE* vol.12, Ep. 1664:30.

most valuable.[158] Rhetoric is the art of using language eloquently and persuasively and it involves the careful choosing and placing of words.[159] As an undergraduate student at Oxford, Tyndale would have learned rhetoric from works such as Cicero's *De inventione* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.[160]

Unfortunately, Tyndale would have finished studying rhetoric too early to have benefited from Erasmus' *De utraque verborum ac rerum copia*, published in 1512. Known as *De copia*, the first portion of the book concerns methods for varying forms of expression in Latin and its purpose was to encourage 'copiousness' or variety, abundance and versatility. The second half of the book was intended to teach students how to invent and vary their arguments so that they could apply their discourse to specific audiences and/or occasions.[161] *De copia* sold very well and was highly influential in reviving classical rhetoric and making it 'palatable to schoolboys'.[162] Emrys Jones has remarked that without the 'intensive new study of language and literature', brought about by humanist books such as *De copia,* there 'could have been no Elizabethan literature'; in other words, 'Without Erasmus, no Shakespeare'.[163] Daniell believes that Tyndale 'could hardly have missed' *De copia.* After analyzing only one small fragment of the *Obedience*, he found a 'kaleidoscope of technical, rhetorical devices' showing that Tyndale was highly skilled in using the principles Erasmus advocated in it. Daniell concludes that though much more research needs to be done in analysing Tyndale's 'rhetorical skills as expositor', it is time to recognise in Tyndale's writings 'a confident technical craftsmanship'.[164]

In addition to his rhetorical skills, Tyndale's writings also demonstrate a background in history, natural things, and of the customs and practices of the people mentioned in the Bible and that he used them to bring 'life' and 'light' to his readers, just as Erasmus advocated. In his discussion of Tyndale's undergraduate education, Daniell dismisses the *quadrivium*, the study of arithmetic, music,

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[158] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 40.

[159] Mallet, *History of Oxford,* vol. I, 184; OEDO, 'rhetoric'.

[160] R.J. Schoeck, 'Rhetoric and Law in Sixteenth Century England,' *Studies in Philology,* vol. 50, No. 2 (April 1953): 110–11; Mallet, *History of Oxford,* vol. I, 184; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 40.

[161] Thomas O. Sloane, 'Schoolbooks and Rhetoric: Erasmus's *Copia,' Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1991), 116.

[162] Sloane, *Schoolbooks*, 113.

[163] Emyrs Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 13.

[164] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 247–49.

geometry and astronomy, as 'not suggestive for Tyndale's later work'.[165]   However, Tyndale did creatively use these subjects to illustrate his doctrinal points.

For example, Tyndale frequently referred to historical figures and events. *The practyse of prelates* (1530) is essentially Tyndale's own historical narrative of the how the clergy have stirred up trouble in the past.   At the end of that book he warns any that are 'confederatte with the cardenall and with the bisshopes' to study 'tymes past' and to recognize what 'troubles' the clergy 'have brought on them that were quyet.'[166] In his other writings Kings of England, such as Athelstan, King John, Henry II, Henry V, and Henry VI all make appearances.[167] Prominent Englishmen, such as Thomas Becket, Simon Sudbury, and John Oldcastle are also mentioned.[168] As discussed in chapter two, Tyndale referred to John Wycliffe and to Gildas, the fifth-century cleric. Historical events such as the Wars of the Roses, the Schism of the Roman Catholic Popes, and the expulsion of the Jews from England are also covered.[169] Tyndale even goes back to the time of the early Christian church and the Roman Empire to obtain illustrations.[170] He also demonstrated knowledge of English folklore by making references to Merlyn's prophesies, tales of Robin Hood, and to Robin Goodfellow, a mischievous mythical sprite.[171]

History is not the only subject Tyndale used to strengthen his arguments. He also relied on natural things. He turned to the placement of the sun, moon, and earth in their various positions in the heavens, to flowing spring-time rivers and their deposit of winter debris, to snakes, adders, toads, and even crab apples to help readers understand his meaning.[172]   In a beautiful passage about the effect that the love of God has on a person, Tyndale used the approaching summer season to

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[165] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 41.

[166] Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Kvii, image 80L.

[167] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xv, image 16L; William Tyndale, *Exposition on V, VI, VII Matthew* (1533), STC (2nd ed.) / 24440, EEBO, recto folio xv, image 15R; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 213.

[168] Tyndale, *Practyse*, recto folio Fi, verso folio Fi & verso folio Gv, images 41R-42L, & 53L; *Souper*, recto volio Bviii, image 15R.

[169] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xi, image 12L; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 68, 99, 213.

[170] Tyndale, *Practyse*, recto folio Bv, image 13R; Tyndale, *Path way*, recto folio Gviiii, image 56L.

[171] Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, recto folio Av, image 5R; Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xx & recto folio cxlv, images 20R, 145R.

[172] Tyndale, *Mammon*, verso folio xi and verso folio xxxv, images 17L & 36L; Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, recto folio Avi, image 6R; Tyndale, *Prologge*, recto folio B; Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, no folios given in this section, image 96R.

represent God's love and blossoms on a tree to represent the human response to that love. He explained, 'Now is the blosominge of the treys nor the cause that somer draweth nye / but the drawynge nye of somer cause of the blosomes / and the blosomes put us in remembraunce that somer ys at hand.'[173]

Along with history and nature, Tyndale utilized tradition and culture. He often stopped to instruct readers on the 'customs' and the 'manner of speaking among the Jews'. In an effort to help readers understand the meaning of rituals and ceremonies in the Old Testament he explained,

> We reade in the histories that when . . . a truse was made between man and man the covenauntes were rehersid: and upon that / they slewe bestes in a memorial and remembraunce of thappoyntement only. And so were the sacrifices signes and memorialles only / that God was at one with us.'[174]

On another occasion, he taught, 'As now / if some when they reade in the new testament of Christes brethren / wold thynke that they were oure ladies children aftir the birth of christe / because they know not the use of speakynge of the scripture or of the hebrues / how that nye kinsmen becalled brethren'.[175] Not only did he use this technique himself, but he admonished other teachers of God's word to do the same, 'I wolde have you to teach them also the propirties and maner of speakinges of the scripture / and how to expounde proverbes and similitudes.'[176]

A fourth principle necessary for becoming a true theologian was to study the 'divine literature'. Erasmus wanted the 'young man destined for theology' to observe the 'whole world of Christ' and to,

> dwell in continuous meditation on the divine literature; dwell on it day and night; have it always in his hands and in his heart; something from it should always be sounding in his ears, or striking his sight, or coming into his mind.[177]

He wanted students to know how to quote 'the evidence of the Holy Scriptures . . . from the sources themselves' and not out of 'paltry *summae'* or 'collections six hundred times mixed up one with another and poured back by I know not whom'. Divine literature was the one place where 'the only real theology—gushes forth'.[178]

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[173] Tyndale, *Mammon,* verso folio xxxv, image 36L.

[174] Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, recto folio Hi—verso folio Hii, images 58R–59L.

[175] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 31.

[176] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xviii, image 18R.

[177] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 256.

[178] *Ibid*, 255, 256.

Theologians should be able to examine 'where what is said originated; to whom it is said; when; on what occasion; in which words; what went before it; and what came after' because this allowed the student to 'grasp the exact meaning' of the passages.[179]

Erasmus also felt that theologians could use scripture commentaries, but he wanted the 'best' of them to be consulted with judgment and discrimination. In his opinion, the best were: 'Origen . . . Basil; Gregory of Nazianzen; Athanasius; Cyril; Chrisostom; Jerome; Ambrose; Hilary; and Augustine'. He was not opposed to turning to pagan books, such as Aristotle, for additional help, but only as a last resort.[180] When critics complained that he was ignoring the traditional scholastic methods and doctors, Erasmus responded,

> We certainly find nothing to criticize in turning the philosophy of Aristotle to the needs of our study of theology. What we resent is rather setting the whole corpus of Aristotle's works at the very core of theology, and giving almost as much, if not more weight to his authority than to that of the Gospels.[181]

Tyndale's application of this part of the theological programme is undeniable. As we saw above, Tyndale repeatedly ridiculed the fact that theology students were not allowed to study scripture and that they were exposed to all the 'false exposicyons' of men first.[182] Tyndale's encouragement to his readers to 'Studye in [the scriptures] daye & nyght / and in all places goynge and commynge / let that never slyde out of your hert nor mynd all your studye to rede & understande these holye wordes in all humylytie of hert' comes right out of the *Methodus*.[183] Tyndale agreed with Erasmus that the scriptures, not Aristotle, should be the core of theological studies. He wrote that whatever the doctors and students 'reade in Aristo. that must be firste true' and he wanted it the other way around.[184] They should 'iudge all mens exposicion and all mens doctrine' by the scriptures.[185]

Next to his assertion that scriptures held the central place in theology, Tyndale's most frequent claim, also made by Erasmus in the *Methodus*, was that

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[179] *Ibid*, 255.

[180] *Ibid*, 254–57.

[181] *CWE* vol. 71, Ep. LB IX 102B, 77.

[182] Tyndale, *Practyse*, verso folio Eviii, image 41L.

[183] Tyndale, *Path way*, recto folio Giv, image 52R.

[184] Tyndale, *Mammon*, recto folio Avii, image 7R.

[185] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xviii, image 18R.

scriptures were understandable if readers would look at the 'processe / ordre and meaninge of the texte'.[186] In the *Mammon,* while expounding 1 Corinthians 2, he could be quoting the *Methodus:* 'The circumstance of the same Chapter / that is to [say] / that which goeth before & that which foloweth / declareth playnly what is mente.[187] Tyndale also believed that scripture expounded and interpreted itself, so that if one passage was obscure, another passage would explain it. In 1526, he wrote to the readers of his New Testament, 'Marke the playne and manyfest places of the scriptures, and in doutfull places, se thou adde no interpretacion contrary to them [the plain places]'.[188]

Tyndale's opinions about the church fathers also coincide with those in the *Methodus*. There are references to Jerome, Chrysostom, Origin, Ambrose, Cyprian, Prosper of Aquitaine, and Gregory the Great in his writings.[189] At one point, Tyndale declared that 'saint Augustine' was 'the best or one of the best that ever wrot apon the scripture'. Because Tyndale obtained most of his secondary support from Augustine, perhaps we could argue that he was Tyndale's favourite.[190] In his debate with More, Tyndale accused those in favour of the traditional church of ignoring the church fathers. He wrote, 'And as for the old doctors [early church fathers] ye wyll heare as litle / save where it pleaseth you / for all youre crienge / old holy fathers.' He then asks, 'For tel me this / whi have ye in englonde condemned the union of doctors but because ye wold not have youre falshed disclosed by the doctrine of them.'[191]

The 'union of doctors' was the *Unio Dissidentium Tripartita*, a Latin handbook published some time in the 1520s. The earliest surviving edition (1527) gives the name of Hermannus Bodius as the editor, but O'Donnell and Wicks believe this to be a pseudonym. The *Unio* contained passages from the church fathers, in favour of the reformers, on the main topics of religious controversy, including original sin,

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[186] Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, verso folio Aii, image 3L.

[187] Tyndale, *Mammon*, verso folio lv, image 60L.

[188] W. R. Cooper, ed., *William Tyndale: The New Testament* (London: British Library, 2000), 553.

[189] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xvi, verso folio xxxvi, & recto folio cxxxiii, images 17L, 37L & 133R; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 183–84, 213; Tyndale, *Souper*, verso folio Diii, image 28L.

[190] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio xvi, image 17L; For additional references to Augustine see, O'Donnell, *Answere,* 74; Tyndale, *Path way*, recto folio Giii, image 51R; Tyndale, *Souper*, recto folio Avi, verso folio Ciii & verso folio Dii, image 6R, 20L, 27L.

[191] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 187–88.

infant baptism, justification, the law, grace, and faith and works. In 1526, the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, included the *Unio* on his list of banned books.[192] It was Tunstall's prohibition of the book that led Tyndale to state 'And as for the holy doctours as Augustine / Hierom / Cipriane / Chresostomus and Bede / will they not heare.'[193]

Though Erasmus is generally an enthusiastic fan of classical literature, he does not laud it in the *Methodus*. As noted above, Erasmus said that 'pagan books' could be used by theologians, but only as a last resort. Tyndale seems to have adopted this view, though scholars appear to have misunderstood this. Werrell and Richardson have both stated that Tyndale did not show a rigorous 'devotion to the classics'.[194] Noting the prominent position that classical literature held in Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, Richardson declared, 'It is unlikely that Tyndale could, in 1522 or ever, have endorsed Erasmus' enthusiasm for pagan literature.'[195] In her opinion, Tyndale must have had an 'anti-classicist attitude' because, in all his works, he only ever made 'one positive remark' about the classics. In this remark, made in 1531, Tyndale defended Terence and Virgil against the 'crabbed tastes of the schoolmen'.[196] Tyndale's lack of Erasmian-like enthusiasm seems to have biased Richardson against him, leading her to incorrectly interpret the classical references in his works and to declare that it was only 'Tyndale's commitment to intellectual freedom' that prevented him from declaring 'the pagan writers off limits'.[197] In Werrell's opinion, Tyndale doesn't refer to the classics because he completely rejected 'any Greek philosophical influence' in his translation of scripture and in his theology.[198]

Richardson's and Werrell's arguments are two very different things and they need to remain distinct. Tyndale was *not* 'anti-classicist', but he *was* opposed to the use of Greek philosophy when it came to interpreting scripture. As discussed above, Tyndale believed that scripture was *the* touchstone and should be used to

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[192] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 404; SPO. 'Heretical Books, 23 October 1526 ' & 'Translation of the New Testament, 3 November 1526', Henry VIII, Entry Numbers: 2582, 2607.

[193] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio cxxxxlvii, image 148R.

[194] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 55; Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 11, 20.

[195] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 54.

[196] O'Donnell, *Answer*, 75; Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 54.

[197] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 54–55.

[198] Werrell, *Tyndale's Theology*, 47.

assess the truthfulness of all other philosophies and ideas. In the *Mammon* Tyndale explained why he rejected the use of classical literature as an aid for scripture interpretation: 'The sprite of the worlde understondeth not the speakinge of God / nether the sprite of the wise of this worlde / nether the sprite of Philophers nether the sprite of Soerates / of Plato or of Aristoles Ethikes'. The only way to understand scripture was 'goostlye & spirituallie'. In other words, 'the spryte of God only understondeth them / and where he is not there is not the understondinge of the scripture.'[199]

It is true that Tyndale did not fill his published works with enthusiastic endorsements of pagan literature. But his references do not, as Richardson argues, indicate outright rejection of the genre. Richardson, though astutely noting the absence of Erasmian-like enthusiasm for the classics, overlooks the total absence of statements rejecting them. Tyndale openly and candidly rejected religious practices he did not agree with, such as devotion to the saints, pilgrimages, indulgences, and clerical celibacy, even when he put his life in danger for doing so. Surely he would have denounced pagan literature as openly, especially when it came without a death sentence, had he truly been 'anti-classicist'.

What can be determined from Tyndale's references to the classics is that he was familiar with them himself and had no qualms about using portions of them to illustrate a point. In the prologue to his translation of the book of Jonah, Tyndale attempted to explain the conflicting feelings Jonah had about his call to preach in Ninevah using a story from Greek Mythology. He wrote that Jonah was torn between his desire to fulfil God's commandments and his desire to avoid a difficult assignment in the same way that 'the mother of Meliager' was torn 'betwene divers affeccions / while to advenge hir brothers deeth / she sought to sle hir awne sonne.'[200] On another occasion, when defending his views on the need for priests to live righteously he stated, 'if there were but one [priest] in the worlde as men saye of

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[199] Tyndale, *Mammon*, recto folio xxxviii & verso folio xlvii, images 38R & 53L.

[200] William Tyndale, *The prophete Jonas* (Antwerp: M. De Keyser, 1531), STC (2nd ed.) / 2788, Early English Books Online. http://www.eebo.chadwyck.com [accessed 28 September 2011], recto folio Bi, image 9R; Meleager was the son of Oeneus and Althaea, king and queen of Calydon. When he was born, the three Fates announced to his mother that Meleager would live only so long as a brand burning upon the hearth remained unconsumed. Althaea snatched the brand from the fire and kept it in a safe place. Later, in a hunting expedition, Meleager killed his maternal uncles, Toxeus and Plexippus. When Althaea heard the news of her brothers' deaths, she put the half-burnt brand back on the fire and Meleager was consumed.

the fenix / yet if he lyved abhominably / he could not but be dispised.'[201] Classical
literature clearly had its uses and Tyndale utilized it whenever it was necessary.

It is evident from other references to pagan literature, however, that Tyndale
felt it contained morals that contradicted what he believed to be true. When this
happened, Tyndale rejected those morals. For instance, in the *Obedience* Tyndale
used the story of the legendary Roman woman Lucretia to illustrate the difference
between doing good things for God's glory and doing them for worldly glory:

> Lucrece beleved yf she were a good huswife and chast / that she shulde be
> most glorious / & that all the world wolde geve her honoure / and prayse her.
> She soughte her awne glory in her chastite and not Gods. When she had lost
> her chastite / then counted she her selfe most abhominable in the sighte of
> all men / and for very payne & thought which she had / not that she had
> displeased god / but that she had lost her honoure / slew her selfe.[202]

Tyndale concluded that pride is at the root of doing well for the praise of the
world and then declared, 'Of like pride are all the morall vertues of Aristotell / Plato
and Socrates / and all the doctrine of the philosophers the very Gods of our scole
men.'[203] This isn't a rejection of the pagan literature itself but a repudiation of its
morals. Tyndale never suggested that people refrain from reading the classics; he
only recommended that they 'judge all mens exposicion and all mens doctrine' by
the scriptures, and proposed that people 'receave the best and refuse the worst'
from those other sources.[204]

A final principle in the *Methodus*, one that was very dear to Tyndale, was that
Erasmus's programme was designed to 'educate a theologian of the people.' This
type of theologian did not waste his time disputing with and conquering other
theologians; Erasmus was not preparing 'a fighter'. He wanted a 'great teacher' who
could teach 'Christ without spot' and who, with the living teachings from his own
breast, could vividly penetrate into the minds of his listeners and inspire them to
change. Erasmus stated that theologians who used the 'simple epistles of the
ancients could renew the people of the whole world within a few years.'[205]

As with Erasmus' other principles, Tyndale took this message to heart. His
unrelenting desire and efforts to place an English Bible into the hands of lay people

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[201] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 151; The phoenix is a mythical fire-bird that can be found in the
mythologies of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and other ancient civilizations.

[202] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio xxxvi, image 36R.

[203] *Ibid*, verso folio xxxvi, image 37L.

[204] *Ibid*, recto folio xviii, image 18R.

[205] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 253, 256–58.

might be sufficient verification that he was, indeed, a 'theologian of the people'. However, there is evidence within his writings that he saw himself as such. The best of these, for there are several, comes from the *Exposition of I John* (1531) and could be the early-modern equivalent of a personal mission statement. Because of its length, it will be examined in two parts.

As noted above, Tyndale repudiated the pride of the scholastic theologians, who, in his opinion, only did good works to obtain the praise of the world. Tyndale explained,

> Even so no man that hath the profession of his bapt[s]ym writen in his harte can stomble in the scripture / and fal unto heresies or become a maker of division and sects and a defender of wylde and vayne opinions. For the hole and only cause of heresies and sects is Pride. Now the lawe of God truly interpreted robbeth al them in whose hartes it is written / and makyth them as bare as Job of al thinges wherof a man can be movyd to pryde.[206]

This description is autobiographical, suggesting once again that Tyndale experienced a profound and purifying change of heart; one that resulted in the complete removal of that which engendered pride. He then declared:

> And on the other side they have utterly forsaken themselves with all their hie lerninge and wisdome and are become the servauntes of Christe only . . . and have promised in theire hertes unfaynedly to folowe hym and to take hym only for the auctor of their religion & his doctrine only for their wisdome and lernynge / and to mayntene it in worde and dede / and to kepe it pure and to builde no straunge Doctrine thereupon / and to be at the heist never but felowe with their brethren / & in that felowshippe to wax ever lower and lower / every day more servant then other / unto his weaker brethren after the ensample and ymage of Christe'[207]

This self-portrait contains all the elements of Erasmus' theology training programme. Tyndale admits that he had been profoundly changed, that he used his philological and other educational skills to uphold the doctrine of Christ, and that he was willing to immerse himself in the divine literature and do all he could to keep it pure. But the main message is that Tyndale did all of these things so that he could humbly serve humanity.

Our detailed examination of all of Tyndale's writings has demonstrated that Tyndale was an Erasmian theologian. However, this is not to say that Tyndale agreed with everything Erasmus ever wrote or that Tyndale was merely a blind follower of the great humanist. This would be making the same mistake as those scholars who have claimed that Tyndale was a Lutheran. In our previous discussion

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[206] Tyndale, *Exposition of I John*, verso folio Aiv, image 5L.

[207] *Ibid*, recto folio Av, image 5R.

of man's free will, Tyndale followed neither Luther nor Erasmus. There were plenty of differences between Erasmus and Tyndale and Tyndale was not afraid to speak his own mind.

For instance, Erasmus recommended that students of the Bible not 'linger over the sterile literal sense' but wanted them 'to hasten on to more profound mysteries' and 'ferret out the spiritual sense'. If readers needed assistance, Erasmus suggested that they turn to the church fathers 'who depart as much as possible from the literal sense, such as, after Paul, Origin, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine'. He counselled that 'if you cannot grasp the mystery, remember none the less that it is there under the surface, and that it is preferable to have hope of understanding what is unknown than to be content with "the letter that kills"'.[208] Tyndale, on the other hand, argued that 'the scripture hath but one sence which is the literall sence. And that literall sence is the rote and grounde of all & the ancre that never fayleth where unto yf thou cleve thou canst never erre or goo out of the waye.' He realized that scripture 'useth proverbes / similitudes / redels or allegories as all other speaches doo' but he wanted readers to understand 'that which the proverbe / similitude / redell or allegory signifieth is ever the literall sence which thou must seke out dilgently.' He strongly cautioned, 'if thou leve the litterall sence thou canst not but goe out of the waye'.[209]

Other differences between Erasmus and Tyndale are evident in the value they gave to an allegorical reading of the scriptures, the value of paraphrasing scripture, and the appropriate degree of pacifism that Christians should have in threatening situations.[210] Some of these differences have led scholars to claim that Tyndale parted 'company with his powerful inspiration' part way through his career and that he was no longer 'inclined to believe what Erasmus had to say' by the end of his life.[211] These arguments are taking their differences too far and are rooted in the unfortunate and misguided need to make Tyndale a follower of somebody; rather than a man who intelligently utilized the work of those he admired in the development of his own ideas.

Tyndale was undoubtedly thoroughly acquainted with a number of Erasmus' written works and he was considerably influenced by them. Unlike Erasmus,

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[208] Fantazzi, *Enchiridion*, 34, 36, 68, 69.

[209] Tyndale, *Obedience*, verso folio cxxix–recto folio cxxx, images 130L & R.

[210] Tyndale, *Obedience*, recto folio cxxx–recto folio cxxxiii, images 130–133; *Pentateuch*, recto folio Avi, image 6R; *Exposition of Matthew*, recto folio lvii, image 52R;

[211] Richardson, 'Tyndale's Quarrel', 46; Stewart, 'Trouble with English Humanism,' 91.

however, Tyndale did not embrace all the principles of humanism, as his doctrines on justification and free will show. Tyndale's writings indicate that his relationship to humanism was selective. He embraced and effectively used the humanist principles outlined in Erasmus' *Methodus* to become a theologian in his own right. As an Erasmian theologian, Tyndale translated the Bible into English, developed his own unique theology, expounded and interpreted scripture, and made all of his writings available in the vernacular for the benefit of the English lay people. Though he did not agree with everything Erasmus wrote, Tyndale should be considered as one of the first fruits of Erasmus' theology training programme. Tyndale should also be given credit for developing a theology distinct from Luther's and recognized for making the English reformation unique from that taking place on the Continent.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cast into the Midst of a Burning Fiery Furnace:
Official reactions to Tyndale's 1526 English New Testament

Early in December 1525, Edward Lee (1481/2–1544) passed through France on the way to assume his new post as English Ambassador to the Imperial Court in Spain. Lee, a royal chaplain and the king's almoner, already had one successful embassy under his belt; a trip to Nuremberg in 1523 to confer the Order of the Garter upon Archduke Ferdinand.[1] Cardinal Wolsey had appointed Lee to this second assignment and Lee dutifully communicated with him as he travelled to Spain. On 2 December he wrote,

> I ame certainlie enformed as I passed in this contree, that an Englishman your subject at the sollicitacion and instaunce of Luther, with whome he is, hathe translated the newe testament in to Englishe, and within four dayes entendethe to arrive with the same emprinted in England. I nede not to advertise your grace, what infection and daunger maye ensue heerbie, if it bee not withstonded.[2]

Lee's letter was not the first warning received by the English government about an English New Testament. Johann Dobneck (1479–1552), a German humanist and religious controversialist, provided the first. Dobneck, more commonly known as Cochlaeus, was a prolific pamphleteer who wrote against reformers including Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Bullinger, Bucer, and Calivn. Over the course of 28 years, Cochlaeus published, on average, one pamphlet every three months.[3]

In the summer of 1525, Cochlaeus lived as an exile in Cologne. He had been driven out of Frankfurt, where he had been the dean of the *Liebenfrauenkirche,* by the German Peasants' War. Shortly after his arrival, Cochlaeus went to Peter Quentel, the chief printer, to transact some business.[4] He later wrote of his growing intimacy with the printers and how he 'sometimes heard them confidently boast, when in their cups, that whether the King and Cardinal of England would or not, all England would in short time be Lutheran.' Cochlaeus learned that this extensive religious conversion was to be brought about by 'means of the New Testament of

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[1] ODNB, 'Edward Lee'.

[2] SPO. 'Edward Lee to Cardinal Wolsey, 2 December 1525,' Cotton Vespasian C/111 f. 211r.

[3] Christopher Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible*, vol. I (London: William Pickering, 1845), 54.

[4] J. F. Mozley*, William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 59.

Luther' which had just been translated into English. Three thousand copies were then being printed by Quentel; the finished product was to be smuggled into England by merchants who would also assist in its distribution. Cochlaeus even discovered that two 'learned Englishmen', who were responsible for the translation, were 'lurking' in Cologne.[5]

This information filled Cochlaeus with 'fear and wonder'. Recognizing the 'magnitude of the grievous danger', he swiftly and secretly went to Herman Rinck, a senator of Cologne and a friend to Henry VIII, and 'disclosed to him the whole affair'. Rinck verified Cochlaeus' story, obtained permission from the Senate to intervene, and within a few days interrupted the printing process. The printers had advanced as far as the signature 'letter K'.[6] Since printed books in this period varied in size according to how the paper, the chief determinant of price, was folded, the signature letter becomes important information.

Folio books had sheets of paper that were folded once (creating four pages), quartos had sheets that were folded twice (creating eight pages), and octavos had sheets that were folded three times (creating sixteen pages). The folded sections were then interleaved in order of the signature letter, which was placed in the bottom margin of the first page of each section, and sewn together.[7] The sheets of the Cologne translation were folded twice (quarto) and if Quentel had printed through the letter 'K', Matthew and a portion of Mark were complete. All that remains of this edition today, however, is a single set of finished sheets up to signature letter 'H', or the middle of Matthew 22.[8]

In spite of Cochlaeus' efforts to catch the English translators, William Tyndale and William Roy, off guard he did not succeed. The two 'English apostates' snatched away the finished quarto sheets and fled up the Rhine to Worms. This was not the end of Cochlaeus' efforts, however. He and Rinck wrote to 'the King, the Cardinal, and the Bishop of Rochester' so that they could prevent 'that most pernicious article of merchandise' from entering all 'the ports of England.'[9]

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[5] Cochlaeus' full account of this story is in his history *De Actis et Scriptis martini Lutheri* (1549). The account given here was translated by Anderson in *Annals*, 57–59.

[6] Anderson, *Annals*, 58.

[7] John N. King, 'The Printing of Religious Propaganda,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485—1603,* eds. Mike Pincombe & Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 108.

[8] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 143.

[9] Anderson, *Annals*, 58–59.

These informative letters have not survived. However, if Cochlaeus' story is correct, the English government was made aware of the English New Testament two months before receiving Lee's warning in December 1525. J. F. Mozley has estimated that after his desperate flight from Cologne, Tyndale would have reached Worms late in September 1525. Cochlaeus' letters of warning would have been dispatched around that same time.[10]

The English government responded immediately to these warnings and went to significant lengths to prevent the translation from reaching the people. As discussed in chapter one, 'every effort was made to suppress and destroy the perfidious work'.[11] The book was officially banned, preached against, written against, made the subject of surprise raids, and burned. These measures were taken because, as explored in chapter two, the English government was afraid that an English New Testament would cause the people to become rebellious, heretical, and unwilling to uphold the traditional social structure.

The question that naturally follows these discussions concerns the New Testament itself. What was it about Tyndale's translation that made it unacceptable to English authorities? Why was the volume, the first printed English translation of the New Testament in history, tossed so readily into flaming bonfires? These questions will be answered by focusing on Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal, who presided over and preached at the first official burning of Tyndale's New Testament in October 1526, and Sir Thomas More, who officially wrote against the translation in 1528.

The relationship between Tunstal and More will be scrutinized and shown to be an important setting in which to understand why Tunstal burned Tyndale's translation, a question that has not been adequately answered by modern scholars. We will find that More and Tunstal were confidential friends and that they were united in their views about heresy, in their plans for eradicating it, and in their conclusions about Tyndale's New Testament. An analysis of Tunstal's official commission for More to write against heresy, passages from More's *Dyaloge concerning heresies*, and Tunstal's October 1526 prohibition against heretical books will reveal that Tunstal burned Tyndale's New Testament, not because of textual error, as scholars, including Charles Sturge and David Daniell, claim, but because Tyndale was a mischievous heretic who had written a book filled with a highly

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[10] Mozley, *William Tyndale,* 66.

[11] W. R. Cooper, 'Introduction,' in *William Tyndale: The New Testament 1526* (London: The British Library, 2000), ix.

contagious malice.[12] We will learn that Tunstal's sermon against the translation and his burning of it was his way of exposing Tyndale's malice and preventing the people from being infected with a similar malevolence.

The second half of the chapter will concentrate on malice itself and why More and Tunstal were determined to expose it. A discussion of the perceptions of heresy in the early sixteenth century will demonstrate that religious and secular leaders distinguished between heretics and *malicious* heretics; an important differentiation that has gone unnoticed by modern scholars. The concept of 'malice' will be defined and explored in the context of Tyndale's and More's debate about the Greek words, *ekklēsia*, *presbuteros*, and *agapē,* which Tyndale had rendered into English as 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'. More and Tunstal both felt that these English renderings were unmistakable tokens of Tyndale's malice.[13]

Moreover, the written exchange between Tyndale and More, found in More's *Dyaloge Concerning Heresies, The confutacyon of Tyndales Answere* and in Tyndale's *Answere unto sir Thomas Mores dialoge*, will show that issues of translation, interpretation, philology, and theology were not the main battleground of the debate, as some scholars, including Allan Jenkins and Patrick Preston, believe.[14] These things were actually the evidence More and Tyndale marshalled to prove that the opposition was infected with malice and to exculpate themselves from the charge. Their debate, therefore, was essentially an exercise in exposing malice.

Burning the English New Testament

At the end of October 1526, the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, held a book burning ceremony at St. Paul's Cross. There, he preached against Tyndale's New Testament, reportedly claiming that it was 'noughtilie translated. He burned all the confiscated copies he had.[15] This was not the first official book burning

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[12] Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, 1938), 23; David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 193.

[13] Sir Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte . . .* (London: J. Rastell, 1529), STC (2nd ed.) / 18084, EEBO, verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

[14] Allan K. Jenkins & Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 81–108.

[15] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials,* vol. 1 (London, 1721), Eighteenth Century Collections Online. http://find.galegroup.com/ecco [accessed 28 September 2011], Appendix, 247, image 677.

ceremony to be held at St. Paul's. There had already been two previous burnings, one on 12 May 1521 and a second on 11 February 1526. These had been held to burn confiscated copies of Luther's books, which had been banned by Cardinal Wolsey early in 1521.[16]

As discussed in chapter one, the English government's efforts to prevent heretical books from being smuggled into England were ineffective. David Cressy argues that book burning in early sixteenth-century England, though intended to display the government's wrath and power, represented the breakdown and failure of the government's normal means of control. Book burning ceremonies did little to annihilate heretical books because they drew greater attention to them. Mary Jane Barnett observes that the English bishops, in their fervent desire to suppress heretical texts, misunderstood 'the social, economic, and hermeneutic mechanisms that promoted the circulation of unauthorized texts' and because of this made 'strategic mistakes that actually helped in their dissemination'.[17] Cressy has shown that the large majority of books that were burned in Tudor England endured and re-emerged in later editions.[18]

Though book burning may not have been effective in destroying heretical books, the ceremonies involved 'dialogue and discourse, speaker and audience, spectacle and spectators'; assisting in 'the making and transmission of meaning', though spectators may have received a different message than the one authorities intended.[19] John Lambert (*d.* 1538), a reform-minded eye-witness, who was later examined by Henry VIII on charges of holding heretical views of the sacrament and was burned at the stake, shared what he learned from attending the book burning ceremony Tunstal held in October 1526:

> I was at Paul's Cross, when the New Testament, imprinted of late beyond the sea, was first forefended; and truly my heart lamented greatly to hear a great man preaching against it, who showed forth certain things that he noted for hideous errors to be in it, that I, yea, and not only I, but likewise did many others, think verily to be none.[20]

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[16] Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Barrie & Jenkins 1990), 482.

[17] Mary Jane Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation: Lollards, Lutherans, and an Economy of Circulation,' *Renaissance Papers* (1996): 8.

[18] David Cressy, 'Book Burning in Tudor and Stuart England,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 36, no. 2 (2005): 374.

[19] Cressy, 'Book Burning', 361.

[20] *AM*, vol. 5, 213.

Lambert indicates that many in the crowd were displeased that Tyndale's translation was rejected and refused to accept Tunstal's explanations for doing so. For some, the book burning ceremony increased the positive appeal of the translation which was not the intended purpose.[21]

Other contemporary accounts of the burning give additional information about the message that was transmitted to the crowd. One account states that Tunstal burned Tyndale's translation because he found two thousand corruptions in the text.[22] A second report states that Tunstal found three thousand errors in the text and burned it because the translation destroyed the Mass.[23] A third claims that Tunstal found one thousand errors in the text and burned it to keep lay people from the knowledge of Christ's gospel.[24] In all of these reports, the consistent message is that Tyndale's New Testament was full of textual error. It was a message that was even transmitted to Tyndale on the Continent. He later wrote of the 'many thousande heresyes' that his opponents claimed to have found in his translation. Tyndale explained that his critics had 'so narowlye loked' on the translation 'that there is not so moch as one I therin if it lack a tytle over his hed / but they have noted it / and nombre it unto the ignorant people for anheresy.'[25] Unfortunately, the sermon Tunstal gave at the burning has not survived. Because of this, we cannot confirm the exact number of errors Tunstal said he found, nor can we know which of the many corruptions in the text Tunstal chose to expound in detail to his audience; he couldn't have addressed them all. But perhaps the most important information we are unable to verify is exactly why Tunstal felt the translation should be burned.

This is an important point because scholars struggle to explain why Tunstal, a man with a reputation for outstanding scholarship in Greek and Latin, one who had assisted Erasmus on the second edition of his Greek New Testament, and one who could fully appreciate Tyndale's translation skills, would burn the first printed English

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[21] David Ginsberg, 'Ploughboys versus Prelates: Tyndale and More and the Politics of Bible Translation,'*The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 46.

[22] Gregory Martin, *The New Testament of Iesus Christ faithfully translated into English, out of the authentical Latin[. . .] by the English College then resident in Rhemes, 2nd edition* (Antwerp: Daniel Vervliet, 1600), STC / 875:01, EEBO, verso folio diii, image 16L.

[23] William Barlow, *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thynge but trothe* (Strasbourg: John Schott, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 1462.7, EEBO, verso folio cii, image 19L.

[24] More, *A dyaloge* verso folio lxxix, verso folio iii, images 80L & 4L.

[25] William Tyndale, *The Pentateuch* (Antwerp: Johannes Hoochstraten, 1530), EEBO, recto folio Aiii, image 3R.

translation of the New Testament.[26] As we have seen, the contemporary reports of the sermon are imprecise, conflicting, and possibly exaggerated, making it difficult to obtain an accurate understanding of Tunstal's words or motives, though some scholars have done so. Sturge has concluded from the reports that Tunstal opposed Tyndale's New Testament because of the numerous incorrect renderings he discovered in the text.[27] Daniell has taken a similar view on similar grounds, stating that: 'Tunstall's attack can only have been on Tyndale's rendering of the New Testament text itself'.[28]

This, however, may not have been the case. As Cressy argues, the subject of a book burning 'sometimes subverted the ceremony' allowing spectators to supply their own glosses and interpretations on the meaning of the burning.[29] Even though the contemporary reports of the burning consistently repeat that Tyndale's testament had a large number of textual errors, the conclusions about why the testament was burned differ significantly. This suggests that the spectators did indeed supply their own interpretations of why the translation was burned. Moreover, Marius has described Tunstal's preaching as 'never inspiring' which contributes to the likelihood that many of Tunstal's listeners grasped a different message than the one he intended them to receive.[30] Therefore, contemporary reports of the sermon should be approached with caution and other evidences for Tunstal's opinions about the translation should be sought.

An important place to obtain additional evidence of Tunstal's real opinions about Tyndale's translation is in his relationship with Thomas More. As we will see, Tunstal and More were close friends and confidants; they were united in their views about heresy and in their plans for eradicating it. But most importantly, a close analysis of Tunstal's commission for More to write against heresy, More's *Dyaloge concerning heresies* (1529)*,* and Tunstal's October 1526 prohibition against heretical books will demonstrate that the two men had the same opinions about why Tyndale's translation should be burned. In the absence of the text of Tunstal's sermon, these documents provide a more accurate indication of the message

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[26] King, 'The Printing of Religious Propaganda', 107; ODNB, 'Cuthbert Tunstal'.

[27] Sturge, *Tunstal*, 23.

[28] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 193; spelling of 'Tunstall' is Daniell's.

[29] Cressy, 'Book Burning', 374.

[30] Richard Marius, *Thomas More: a Biography* (New York: Knopf: 1984), 323.

Tunstal intended to convey to his spectators at the book burning than do the contemporary lay reports of the sermon.

Thomas Lawler has stated that 'In the late 1520s three men formed the central bulwark against the rising tide of Protestantism in England: John Fisher . . . Cuthbert Tunstal . . . and Thomas More.'[31] Lawler's assessment does not exclude others, such as Henry VIII or Cardinal Wolsey, from participating in the efforts to protect England from heresy, but it is generally acknowledged that the lion's share of the campaign belonged to Fisher, Tunstal, and More.

As Bishop of London, Tunstal held an important position in England's fight against heresy. Since heretical books were smuggled into and centrally distributed from London, he was largely responsible for Episcopal reaction. But there is more. It was his report from the Diet of Worms on 21 January 1521, recommending that Luther's books be kept out of England, which led to Cardinal Wolsey's official ban a short time later. In 1524, Tunstal also served as an official censor of the book trade.[32] But Tunstal's close connection with the two other key figures in the fight, Thomas More and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, gave him even more opportunities to exercise his influence.

Though modern scholars readily acknowledge that Tunstal, More, and Fisher were friends, these same scholars seem content with *describing* their relationships and less interested in considering what important evidence those relationships might supply. Tunstal and More's relationship has long been described in printed materials as close and intimate. In 1588, the famous and erudite Catholic controversialist, Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598), published the first printed *Life of Sir Thomas More (Vita Thomae Mori)*.[33] It was the last and longest section of his *Tres Thomae*, a book containing biographical sketches of three saintly patrons who bore his same name: Thomas the Apostle, Thomas Becket, and Thomas More.[34] Stapleton's claim that 'More's most intimate friendship was with Tunstal' holds some weight.[35] Stapleton had the advantage of being in personal contact with members of

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[31] Thomas M. C. Lawler, 'General View,' in *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 439.

[32] Richard Rex, 'The English Campaign against Luther in the 1520s,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 39 (1989): 86-96.

[33] William Sheils, 'Polemic as Piety: Thomas Stapleton's Tre Thomae and Catholic Controversy in the 1580s,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 60, no. 1 (January 2009): 74.

[34] ODNB, 'Thomas Stapleton'.

[35] E.E. Reynolds, ed., *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (London: Catholic Book Club, 1966), 44.

More's household and with many of More's other associates. He also had access to letters that have since disappeared.[36]

One of these letters contained rich detail about More's perception of his friendship with Tunstal. In the letter, dated 1517, More described a gift Tunstal sent him:

> The amber which you sent me, a precious sepulchre for flies, was most acceptable on many counts. For the material in color and brilliance can challenge any gem, and the form is all the more excellent in that it represents a heart, a sort of symbol of your love for me. For thus do I interpret your meaning: as the fly, winged like Cupid and as fickle, is so shut up and entangled in the substance of the amber that it cannot fly away, so embalmed in the aromatic juice that it cannot perish, so your love will never fly away and always remain unchanged.[37]

Stapleton's conclusions about the friendship have been perpetuated by modern scholars. Marius claims that Tunstal was More's 'closest intellectual confidant', Peter Gwyn writes of the pair as 'the two old chums', and D. G. Newcombe asserts that More relied on both the scholarship and judgement of Tunstal.[38] Lawler concurs with all of these but particularly emphasizes the substantial trust More had in Tunstal.[39] Sturge recognizes, however, that none of Tunstal's letters to More have survived and because of this admits that Tunstal's feelings about More have to be ascertained from less direct evidence. But he also argues that More clearly believed Tunstal to return the same love, appreciation, and trust and that there is no indication that More was mistaken in his beliefs.[40]

Tunstal and More appear to have met at Oxford where they associated with a circle of men that, among others, included John Colet, Thomas Linacre, and William Grocyn. These three men, to one degree or another, were interested in classical learning, the study of Latin and Greek, and were known for their influential scholarship.[41] Tunstal and More shared these same interests and, like them, eventually obtained their own reputations. Tunstal went on to establish himself as an outstanding scholar, excelling in Greek, Latin, and mathematics, while More's

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[36] Sheils, 'Polemic as Piety', 81; Sturge, *Tunstal*, 23.

[37] Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed. *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 91.

[38] Marius, *Thomas More*, 62; Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 491; ODNB, 'Cuthbert Tunstal'.

[39] Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 460.

[40] Sturge, *Tunstal*, 25.

[41] Sturge, *Tunstal*, 8, 25; ODNB, 'Thomas More'.

'quintessential humanist dialogue', *Utopia,* made him internationally famous.[42] Erasmus, a friend to both, wrote to More in 1516, stating: 'To-day I have dined with Tunstall; to sum up his character in two words, he is just like you'.[43]

One of the more unusual manifestations of the closeness between Tunstal and More was Henry VIII's appointment of both men, on 19 November 1526, to a prebend in the royal chapel of St. Stephen's, Westminster Palace. This meant that the two would receive a share in the revenues of the chapel, a 'most unusual procedure' according to Lawler, but one that supplies further evidence of the trust they had in one another and that others connected the two men together.[44]

Recognizing that More and Tunstal enjoyed similar interests, associated with the same men, had analogous characters, and even shared some ecclesiastical income may allow us to declare, as William Turner (1509/10–1568), religious reformer and controversialist, did: 'byrdes of on[e] kynde and color flok and flye allwayes together'.[45] However, we need more evidence to argue that the two men held the same opinions about specific topics, such the eradication of heresy or Tyndale's New Testament.

One important source that supplies this kind of evidence is the letters Tunstal and More wrote to their mutual friend Erasmus in the mid-1520s. At the time, the international controversy over Luther's teachings was in full swing and More and Tunstal were attempting to persuade Erasmus to write against Luther. In 1523, Tunstal wrote to Erasmus, encouraging him to 'undertake the duty' of grappling 'with the hydra-headed monster' Luther. He argued that all Erasmus' friends wanted to see 'a confrontation' between them because they felt that Erasmus was 'supremely fitted' for the task and were confident that he would win. Tunstal referred to Luther's doctrine on the 'freedom of the human will'; perhaps hoping that Erasmus would begin with that subject.[46] He exhorted Erasmus to be courageous, not to worry about persecution, and to expend his life's energy drawing 'the sword of the Spirit' to

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[42] ODNB, 'Cuthbert Tunstal' & 'Thomas More'.

[43] Francis Morgan Nichols, ed., *The Epistles of Erasmus* (London: Longmans, 1904), 266; spelling of Tunstall is Nichols'.

[44] Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 371–72; Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 446.

[45] William Turner, *The rescuynge of the romishe fox* (Bonn: Laurenz von der Meulen, 1545), STC / 155:13, EEBO, recto folio Bviii, image 16R.

[46] *CWE*, vol.10, Ep. 1367, 25.

'drive back into his lair that Cerberus whose hideous yelping' attacked every order in the church.[47]

As discussed in chapter three, Erasmus eventually entered into the fray, tackling Luther's doctrine on free will with his *De Libero Arbitrio* (1524). Luther responded aggressively, and somewhat belligerently, with *De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), causing Erasmus to reply with the lengthy, two-part *Hyperaspistes diatribae adversus servum arbitrium Martini Lutheri* (A warrior shielding a discussion of free will against the enslaved will of Martin Luther, 1526–1527).[48] Tunstal's success at persuading Erasmus to write against Luther was not his only achievement of this kind. Rex observes that 'Tunstall seems to have been keener to persuade others to write against the Protestants than to do so himself. In their different ways, Henry VIII, Fisher, Erasmus and More were all inspired to write [against the heretics] by him.'[49]

In 1526, after the first volume of Erasmus' *Hyperaspistes* had been published, but before the second volume was finished, More also wrote a letter of encouragement to Erasmus. More lamented that illness had interrupted Erasmus' 'brilliant' work but exhorted him to complete 'the remaining volume'.[50] Like Tunstal, More tried to influence Erasmus to exertion by reminding him of his friends' great anticipation for more of his work. He expressed the same confidence of victory as Tunstal; asserting that Erasmus had conquered his enemies already with the first volume. More's compliments about Erasmus' unique abilities to 'buttress the faith' echo Tunstal's as do his exhortations to Erasmus not to 'be crushed by fear' of the consequences. More even resorted to the same analogy of Cerberus that Tunstal used; stating that Erasmus had already successfully exposed Luther as the 'flaming fiend from hell . . . dragged up from the underworld'. Like Tunstal, More encouraged Erasmus to expend his remaining physical energies defending 'the work of God'.[51]

More's arguments are nearly identical to Tunstal's and they demonstrate that Tunstal and More were 'in full accord' with each other about enlisting Erasmus' aid

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[47] *Ibid*, vol. 10, Ep. 1367, 24–28.

[48] ODNB, 'Desiderius Erasmus'.

[49] Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 83; spelling of 'Tunstall' is Rex's.

[50] *CWE* vol.10, Ep. 1770, 415.

[51] *Ibid*, vol. 10, Ep. 1170, 416.

in the fight against heresy.[52] It is likely that More and Tunstal discussed the matter between themselves before writing to Erasmus and there is also evidence that they were privy to the letters each had written. More admits at the beginning of his 1526 letter that he had read Erasmus' latest epistle to Tunstal, now lost; indicating that at least some of the correspondence between the three was openly shared.[53] Marc'hadour states that the 'reading of each other's correspondence [was] no new practice in the circle of Erasmus' English friends.'[54]

In contrast to his relationship with More, Tunstal's relationship with Fisher, though recognized under the term 'friendship', has not been the subject of much scholarly research. Sturge admits that the two were friends, but does not elaborate. Rex says that the two worked together on Fisher's polemical publications; indicating that they related well as colleagues.[55] Perhaps the lack of interest in the Tunstal/Fisher relationship stems from a combination of Fisher's reputation as a 'friendless, coldly pious intellectual' and someone who was stuck in medieval scholasticism.[56]

To obtain a clearer impression of Fisher, we must scrutinize his relationship with More. Stapleton insisted that Fisher was More's 'very intimate friend for many years'.[57] But Sturtz contradicts this; believing that even though More and Fisher were acquaintances of long standing, the basis of their relationship was only mutual respect. Sturtz based his conclusions on an assessment of More's and Fisher's written commendations of each other, claiming that More and Fisher only ever professed professional admiration and never any warmth of friendship.[58] For example, More wrote that Fisher was 'a man illustrious not only by the vastness of his erudition, but much more so by the purity of his life'. In turn, Fisher lauded

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[52] Sturge, *Tunstal*, 123.

[53] *CWE* vol. 10, Ep.1770, 415.

[54] Germain P. Marc'hadour, 'The World of the Dialogue,' in *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 461.

[55] Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, 82.

[56] Maria Dowling, *Fisher of Men: A Life of John Fisher 1469–1535* (New York: Macmillian Press Ltd., 1999), 46; Richard Rex, 'The Polemical Theologian,' in *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, eds. Brendan Bradshaw & Eamon Duffy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 126.

[57] Reynolds, *Life of More*, 43.

[58] Edward Sturtz, 'Thomas More's Friendship with John Fisher,' *Moreana*, no. 15 (1967), http://www.apostles.com/fishmore.html [accessed 7 February 2011]; Dowling, *Fisher of Men,* 46.

More's writings against the reformers and his clever, distinguished knowledge and instruction.[59]

Maria Dowling has argued that all contemporary tributes made about Fisher united his outstanding learning with his unusual holiness and this may have given rise to the erroneous impression that Fisher was uninterested in friendships and was purely a pious academic. She states that this is a mistaken view because Fisher was 'far from indifferent to the charms of friendship with congenial men of learning.'[60] Whatever the warmth of the associations between Fisher and Tunstal and Fisher and More, we shall see that the three were undoubtedly united and supportive of each other in the common cause of religion.

If we return our attention back to the larger context, we find that in spite of Erasmus' efforts in the controversy with Luther, heresy was still spreading on the Continent. Furthermore, in spite of the English government's considerable exertions, England continued to be infiltrated by heretical books and new tactics were needed. In 1528, Tunstal wrote to More requesting that More write in English against heretical authors like Tyndale. As discussed in chapter two, More may have asked for this commission, rather than having it thrust upon him. But given Tunstal and More's combined efforts to persuade Erasmus to join the fight, it is also possible that the plan for More to write against the heretics was a mutual decision. Marius believes that this plan came 'after long discussions between the friends' while Peter Ackroyd argues that the official commission Tunstal sent to More was a mere formality; meaning that the decision had been mutually made some time before.[61]

There were many reasons why More was a good candidate for writing against heretics in the vernacular. Scholars generally focus on More's substantial literary and language skills, but Marius believes that More had something else to offer; the affection of the London populace.[62] Between 1510 and 1518 More was an undersheriff of London. Guy describes the position as a 'minor but useful public office' in which More advised the sheriffs and sat as judge in the Sheriff's Court. This court's jurisdiction covered 'almost all matters except the recognized pleas of the Crown', including: ordinary assaults, violence, minor wrongdoing, debt,

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[59] Quoted in Sturtz, 'More's friendship with Fisher'.

[60] Dowling, *Fisher of Men*, 47–48.

[61] Marius, *Thomas More*, 338; Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (London: Vintage, 1998), 240.

[62] Marius, *Thomas More*, 54.

defamation, and disputes over bonds.[63] More's refusal to accept the three shilling
fee that each defendant and plaintiff was expected to pay as hearing costs gained
him the gratitude and love of the city.[64] Erasmus believed that 'no judge ever
disposed of more cases, or showed greater integrity'.[65] This kind of popular
reputation would have greatly enhanced the likelihood that More's English
publications against the heretics would be well received. Furthermore, More's
experience maintaining social order as a judge would naturally incline him to assist
in protecting London's citizens from the social and spiritual upheavals associated
with heresy.[66]

Even with the considerable talents and experience of Tunstal and More, it is
important to remember that they were not the only ones actively fighting heresy.[67]
As discussed in chapter two, Henry VIII led the way with his collaborative *Assertio
septem sacramentorum* (1521). Rex has argued that Bishop Fisher played 'the
most prominent' part in the Continental polemical battle against the evangelicals.[68]
Not only did Fisher assist More with the composition of Henry's *Assertio,* but in the
1520s, he was himself a dedicated controversialist and published many Latin books
against Luther.[69] One of these was the influential *Assertionis Lutheranae confutatio*
(1523). The *Assertionis* was a 200,000 word refutation of Luther's *Assertio Omnium
Articulorum* (1520), a vigorous affirmation of the forty-one articles condemned in
Pope Leo X's *Exsurge domine.* At the time, Fisher's *Confutatio* was the closest
thing to a complete critique of Luther's doctrine that existed. It was very popular,
running into several editions in Antwerp, Cologne, Paris, and Venice, and it shaped
the Catholic understanding of Luther for years afterwards.[70]

Cardinal Wolsey is sometimes portrayed by scholars as uninterested in
heresy, but Gwyn argues that this is inaccurate. Wolsey publicly opened the

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[63] John Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 6.

[64] Marius, *Thomas More,* 54.

[65] Quoted in Guy, *The Public Career*, 6.

[66] Karl F. Morrison,'"Know Thyself" and Christian Art: The Dispute Between William Tyndale and Thomas More,' in *Medieval Paradigms*, vol. I, ed. Stephanie Hayes-Healy (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 252.

[67] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 490–91.

[68] Rex, *Fisher's Theology*, 83.

[69] King, 'The Printing of Religious Propaganda'*,* p. 106.

[70] Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, 80; ODNB, 'John Fisher'.

campaign against Luther on 12 May 1521 by presiding over a burning of Lutheran books at St. Paul's Cross; inviting Fisher to give the sermon.[71] As soon as Wolsey was informed of the imminent arrival in England of Tyndale's New Testament, he launched a major government initiative that included surprise raids, another official book burning, and formal prohibitions. Gwyn believes that Tunstal may have been prompted by Cardinal Wolsey, after consultation with other bishops, to initiate the plan to utilize More's language and writing skills. Though that is debatable, it is clearly a mistake to portray More and Tunstal 'getting together to do something' to eradicate heresy because 'no one else was making an effort'.[72] More and Tunstal were working closely together, in conjunction with others, to combat heresy.

The official commission Tunstal sent to More in 1528 reveals important harmony between himself, More, and Fisher. In the commission, Tunstal explained that one of the purposes for More's English refutations of heresy was to increase the knowledge of those who were 'unskilled in sacred lore' so that they could 'discern the truth for themselves'.[73] There was a difference between one who *ignorantly fell* into heretical doctrines and one who *knowingly persisted* in heretical doctrines. More and Tunstal wanted to educate the ignorant so that they could knowledgeably recognize heresy for themselves.

Interestingly, Tunstal's desire that lay people 'discern the truth for themselves' is a direct reference to Fisher. The ability to discern, or to see, the truth was the subject of the second sermon Fisher preached against Luther at St. Paul's Cross on 11 February 1526. On this occasion, Fisher had been invited to preach by Henry VIII. Fisher built his sermon on a passage from the end of Luke 18 in which a blind man was miraculously healed by Christ and told: 'Open thyn eies/ thy faith hath made the safe'.[74]

In four 'collections', Fisher patiently dissected two of Luther's key heretical doctrines: justification by faith alone and scripture as the sole repository and source of truth. He addressed the disunity, disobedience, and schism among the heretics and contrasted it with the unity, obedience, and unbroken line of succession in the

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[71] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 480; Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, 80.

[72] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 491.

[73] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal*, 363.

[74] John Fisher, 'A sermon had a Paulis by the commandment of the most reverend father in god my lorde legate/ and sayd by Johan the bishop of Rochester [. . .],' in *English Works of John Bisher, Bishop of Rochester (1469–1535),* ed. Cecilia A. Hatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 149; Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, 82.

traditional church. He condemned Luther's doctrine on clerical marriage; declaring it to be a 'detestable sacrilege before the eies of God'.[75] Fisher concluded with the expressed hope that his sermon brought a greater understanding that would then lead his audience to have faith in the true doctrine of Christ's church. That faith would allow those who had been blinded by heresy to 'be restored to the clerenes of [their] sight'; just as the blind man received his sight from Christ through his faith.[76]

If Tunstal was in agreement with Fisher's words and included a reference to them in his official commission to More, that suggests that More felt the same way too.[77] That More did so, is evident in his first English publication against the heretics, *A Dyaloge concerning heresies* (1529). More wrote that the world was in a 'mervelouse blyndnesse' because it could not see that Luther's poor example of living and his detestable doctrines were evidence enough that he was inspired by the devil. More insisted, 'Wherby every man that eny fayth hath & eny maner of knowledge of crysten bylyefe / may well and surely perceyve that Luther and all hys ofsprynge [. . .] be very lymmes of the devyll'.[78] This is exactly what Fisher taught in his second St. Paul's sermon; that faith and knowledge brought clear sight and the ability to discern truth from error. Therefore, we should recognize that Fisher, More, and Tunstal were not only united in the fight against heresy in a general sense, but they confirmed and supported each other by directly quoting each other's written and spoken words.

Tunstal's commission to More is saturated with passages that indicate the special trust he had in More. Unfortunately, when scholars discuss Tunstal's commission, they typically highlight the passage where Tunstal expressed confidence in More's skills with English and Latin; using it to explain why More was chosen for the job.[79] For example, Gwyn writes that 'it was not More's fervour but his literary skills that Tunstall wished to mobilize'.[80]

However, the written commission shows much more than Tunstal's acknowledgement of More's language skills. In the same sentence where More's

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[75] Fisher, 'A sermon', 148–173.

[76] *Ibid*, 173.

[77] Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 440.

[78] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio cviii, image 108R.

[79] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship*, 82; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 261; Marius, *Thomas More*, 338.

[80] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 490.

talent with Latin and English are extolled, Tunstal also stated, 'you are wont in every fight to be a most keen champion of catholic truth'.[81] Tunstal was clearly well acquainted with More's opinions on the religious controversies. As discussed in chapter two, by 1528 More had already shown his polemical skill in Henry VIII's controversy with Luther: assisting with the *Assertio septem sacramentorum* (1521), *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523), and *A copy of the letters* (1527). Tunstal would have been familiar with all of these.

Later on in the commission, when Tunstal explained that he was sending More copies of the reformers' books, he wrote, 'When you have carefully studied these you will the more readily understand in what lurking places these twisting snakes hide themselves, and by what wrigglings they seek to slip away again when they are caught.'[82] Tunstal's confidence in More's abilities to comprehend the many subtleties of the reformers' doctrines is plain. This confidence could only come from previous experience.

The most important statement of unity, however, is Tunstal's encouragement to 'Go forth then boldly to so holy a work'. In this statement, Tunstal is essentially giving More a *carte blanche* and admitting that he could and would unequivocally support whatever More wrote against the reformers. Clearly Tunstal trusted More, but even with that trust it seems unlikely that Tunstal would wash his hands of the matter after the commission was issued. As a close friend, Tunstal must have known that he would have some input into what More wrote. Given their relationship, it is a mistake to assume that once More began writing against heresy that he would do so without any further consultations with Tunstal.

That More did consult with his friends over *A dyaloge* is evident in its preface. More admits that he would never have put forth any book 'wherein were treated any suche thynges as touche our fayth' without the approbation of those 'better lerned' than himself.[83] In a passage explaining the 'busynes of publyshynge and puttynge my boke in prynte' he stated,

> And this have I done not all of myne owne heed / but after the counsayle of other mo than one: whose advyse and counsayle for theyr wysdome and lernyng I asked in that behalfe / and whiche have at my request vouchesaufed to rede over the boke ere I dyd put it forth.[84]

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[81] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal,* 363.

[82] *Ibid,* 363*.*

[83] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio ii, image 2R.

[84] *Ibid*, recto folio ii, image 2R.

More also admitted in the *Confutacyon* that he had been guided in what to include in the *Dyaloge* 'by the counsayle of other men'.[85]

Lest we think that More was feigning humility or pretending that he obtained counsel when he did not, it is important to note that Fisher also refrained from publishing his theological controversies until he had exposed them to the criticism of his friends and colleagues. Rex argues that Fisher had several editors but owed the greatest debt to Tunstal, who contributed in some way to at least four of Fisher's five major anti-Protestant polemics.[86] Fisher freely acknowledged Tunstal's help in the *Confutatio,* in the later *Sacri sacerdotii defensio* (1525), a vindication of the Catholic understanding of the priesthood, and in *De veritate corporis et sanguinis Christi in eucharistia* (1527), an extensive defence of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist.[87]

Therefore, More's assertions that he submitted his work to his friends for review are probable since this was not an unusual practice in that circle of associates or even among learned men in general. As we have already seen, Henry VIII's *Assertio* was a collaborative work to which More and Fisher contributed. Lawler also points out that More's *Dyaloge* was a licensed book, an official statement, and that this was reason enough for More to submit the manuscript for critique.[88]

More, like Fisher, had multiple advisors; at least three men. More never identified them by name, but he described them by referring to their wisdom, learning, wit, erudition, judgment, and prudence. It is likely that Tunstal and Fisher were two of these advisors. Both of them had reputations for such qualities, as More, and others, frequently acknowledged.[89] For example, in 1528, Nicholas Leonico Tomeo, Professor of Philosophy and Greek at the University of Padua, wrote a letter to Tunstal, his former pupil, stating: 'Your prudence, uprightness, and benevolence are attested by all'.[90] Reginald Pole, who also studied under Tomeo in

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[85] Sir Thomas More, *The co[n]futacyon of Tyndales answere made by syr Thomas More knyght lorde chau[n]cellour of Englonde* (London: William Rastell, 1532), STC (2nd ed.), 18079, EEBO, cxxix, image 85R.

[86] Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher*, 82.

[87] *Ibid*, 82.

[88] Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 450.

[89] More, *A dyaloge,* recto folio ii – verso folio ii, images 2R–3L; Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 450.

[90] Quoted in Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal*, 12.

the early 1520s at the expense of Henry VIII, and who later went on to become a Cardinal in the Catholic Church (1536), wrote to Henry VIII in his *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* (Defence of the unity of the church, 1529):

> What have you, or have you had for centuries, to compare with Rochester [Fisher] in holiness, in learning, in Prudence and in Episcopal zeal? You may be, indeed, proud of him, for were you to search through all the nations of Christendom in our days, you would not easily find one who was such a model of Episcopal virtues.[91]

In the *Dyaloge's* preface, More reveals his advisors' two most important roles, though they were probably not restricted to these duties. First, they reviewed the Messenger's words, which More felt were often 'homly' and irreverent 'agaynst goddes holy halowes', passing judgment on them and making suggestions. Second, they ascertained the appropriateness of the merry tales and jests More interjected into the serious dialogue. More was conscious that his humour might not be palatable to the more serious minded of his readers and he did not want to offend them.[92]

More also described how disagreements were worked out between them. Sometimes, 'one wyse and well lernyd man wolde have [a passage] out' while 'twayne of lyke wysdome and lernyng specially wolde have [it] in'. When this happened, More said he 'could no ferther goo but lene to the more parte.' In other words, he followed the advice of the majority and let 'nothyng stand in this boke / but such as twayne advysyd me specyally to lette stand / agaynst eny one'.[93] It appears, therefore, that there was considerable discussion and debate about the *Dyaloge* between the four men. In this process Tunstal and Fisher influenced the final product. Given their role in critiquing and editing the *Dyaloge*, we can argue that Tunstal and Fisher approved of the book, agreed with the contents, and were willing to support it after publication. This also means that the *Dyaloge's* contents represent more than the ideas and opinions of Thomas More.

As discussed in chapters one and two, *A dyaloge* is a staged conversation designed to show the orthodox layman or priest how effectively to counsel those who were flirting with heresy.[94] The Messenger, one of the two fictional characters

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[91] Quoted in Edward Sturtz, *The Works and Days of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 385-86.

[92] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio ii, image 2R.

[93] More, *A dyaloge,* recto folio ii – verso folio ii, images 2R–3L.

[94] Lawler, *CWM,* vol. 6, Part II, 440.

in the *Dyaloge*, represents the average, orthodox layman; the Chancellor is a dramatized version of More himself.[95] The first edition of the *Dyaloge* was printed by John Rastell, More's brother-in law, in two columns on over 150 folio pages; making the book larger in size and more expensive to buy than Tyndale's compact and inexpensive octavo books. King argues that the 'large-folio format would have impressed upon readers the establishmentarian character of a propagandistic text written by the highest-ranking civil official in the land.'[96]

Some scholars have indicated that More's personal experience counselling William Roper, his son-in-law, during Roper's brief flirtation with heresy in the early 1520s, is reflected in the *Dyaloge's* structure and content. Marc'hadour believes that 'the More circle itself read the *Dialogue* with the parallel between Roper and the Messenger in mind.'[97] This is likely, but Roper may not have been More's only influence. It is also possible that Fisher's and Tunstal's behaviour and opinions had some effect. After all, neither demonstrated eagerness to prosecute or burn heretics and preferred patient counsel and education rather than immediate condemnation.[98]

Tunstal's mildness in dealing with heretics is evident in his generous proceedings with Thomas Bilney (*c.*1495–1531), one of the early reformers at Cambridge who was arrested in 1527 for heretical preaching. Though Fisher was also involved, Tunstal presided over Bilney's trial. He repeatedly suspended the proceedings and postponed sentencing to give Bilney ample time for thought and for consultation with friends.[99] Tunstal also engaged in a lengthy correspondence with him, though refusing to grant Bilney's request for a private interview.[100] Bilney recanted, but relapsed into evangelical beliefs in 1531. After another bout of heretical preaching he was arrested and burnt at the stake on 19 August.[101]

In the months preceding the composition of the *Dyaloge*, More attended Bilney's trial each day, showing what Guy describes as a 'keen interest.'[102] More

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[95] *Ibid,* 440.

[96] King, 'The Printing of Religious Propaganda,' 112.

[97] Marc'hadour, *CWM,* vol. 6, Part II, 491–93; the spelling of Dialogue is Marc'hadour's.

[98] Sturge, *Tunstal,* 118; E.E. Reynolds, *St. John Fisher* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1955), 61–65, 119–123.

[99] ODNB, 'Thomas Bilney'.

[100] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal,* 138.

[101] ODNB, 'Thomas Bilney'.

[102] John Guy, *Thomas More* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 119.

would have witnessed Tunstal's patient attempts to understand and reason with Bilney.[103] Lawler observes that there were two objectives for reasoning with heretics: first, to ascertain how knowledgeable the person was, and second, to determine how hardened the individual was.[104] Reynolds declares that there was an important difference between 'an illiterate labourer who repeated in a muddle-headed way notions that he had picked up at random' and one who spread heretical teaching and literature.[105] The former could usually be cured by the natural means of dialogue while the latter might be beyond remedy. As we will discuss below, those beyond help were *malicious* heretics.

Tunstal clearly understood all of this and patiently reasoned, not only with Bilney, but with all heretics throughout his life; something that gained him a reputation. Tunstal took no lethal action against those accused of heresy while serving as the Bishop of London (1522–1530) and none when he became Bishop of Durham (1530–1550, 1554–1558).[106] Even John Foxe admitted that 'B. Tonstall i [n] Q Maryes tyme was no great bloudy persecutour.'[107] Perhaps More thought of Tunstal's efforts with Bilney, in addition to his own experience with Roper, as he composed the dialogue between the Messenger and the Chancellor. As we will see below, More also understood that there was a difference between an ignorant heretic and one who knowledgeably spread heretical ideas to others.

Though Fisher's part in Bilney's trial is unknown, he too showed leniency and patience in his dealings with heretics; reconciliation was always his aim.[108] The registers of Rochester during Fisher's episcopate show no record of anyone in that diocese being handed over to the secular authorities for heresy. Dowling asserts that Fisher would not have shrunk from handing heretics over to the secular arm, but his skill in persuading heretics to recant made this unnecessary.[109] Reynolds notes that 'appearing in the church as a penitent was the least an abjurer could expect'

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[103] Marc'hadour, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 443.

[104] Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 444.

[105] Reynolds, *St. John Fisher*, 123.

[106] ODNB, 'Cuthbert Tunstal'.

[107] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happenyng in the Church* (London: John Day, 1583), STC (2nd ed.) / 11225, EEBO, 2102, marginal note (*), image 413.

[108] Stephen Thompson, 'The bishop in his diocese,' in Bradshaw & Duffy, *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation*, 75.

[109] Dowling, *Fisher of Men*, 63.

and even though some were also forbidden to leave the diocese for a time, none of them could 'complain of undue harshness' from Fisher.[110]

Fisher's willingness to counsel with heretics coincides with his view that a bishop was primarily a pastor and teacher, not a judge or ruler.[111] The introduction to the printed version of his second sermon against Luther encourages confidential dialogue between pastor and parishioner. He wrote,

> if it may lyke [any disciple of Luther] to come unto me secretely / and breake his mynde at more length / I bynde me by these presentes / both to kepe his secreasy / and also to spare a leysoure for hym to here the bottom of his mynde / and he shal here myne agayne / if it so please hym.[112]

Like Tunstal, Fisher recognized that there were varying degrees of heresy and that it was important to thoroughly examine every heretic in hopes of finding a cure.

More was probably in attendance when Fisher gave this sermon, but, more importantly, since the above passage was added to the printed version, Marc'hadour's words are significant: 'we have every reason to believe that [More] read—and with his exceptional memory, remembered—the sermons of the bishop who was considered England's best preacher.[113] Therefore, Fisher may have had some influence on More's decision to structure the *Dyaloge* as he did. It is also possible that the fictional Chancellor is more than a dramatized version of More. The character may represent a melding of the personalities and duties of More, Tunstal and Fisher.

As discussed in chapter two, the Messenger is sent to the Chancellor to deliberate over his religious concerns; two of which were the burning of Tyndale's New Testament and the criticisms Tunstal made about it in his sermon. Given the especially close relationship between Tunstal and More and More's particular reliance on Tunstal's opinions and judgment in the writing of the *Dyaloge,* this portion of the book is a valuable source for understanding why Tunstal burned Tyndale's translation. It is even possible that More's discussion of Tyndale's most grievous textual errors is a repetition, or a partial repetition, of the corruptions Tunstal spoke about in his sermon.

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[110] Reynolds, *St. John Fisher*, 121.

[111] Dowling, *Fisher of Men*, 67.

[112] Fisher, 'A sermon had a Paulis', 147.

[113] Germain Marc'hadour, 'Fisher and More: a note,' in Bradshaw & Duffy, *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation*, 103.

The *Dyaloge's* Messenger begins the discussion about Tyndale's New Testament by describing to the Chancellor how 'men moche mervayll of the burning' and 'mutter amonge them selfe that the boke was not onely fawtlesse / but also very well traunslatyd.' He believes that the translation was burned to cover up the fact that 'such fawtys as were at Poules crosse declared to have ben founden in it were never founden ther in dede / but untruly surmised.'[114]

The Chancellor calmly responds that there were indeed numerous errors in the translation. He states that so many words were 'wronge & falsly translated' in Tyndale's book that it cannot rightly be called the 'newe testament'. It did not contain 'the good and holsom doctrine of Cryste'; it was 'clene a contrary thyng', a counterfeit. The counterfeit was made so 'craftely' that the Chancellor was unsurprised that 'folke unlernyd' were unable to detect any errors in it.[115] As Debora Shuger has argued: 'The danger posed by . . . heretical books, their power to seduce and mislead, lies in their interweaving of truth and error.'[116]

When the Messenger, not having read the translation, asks for specific details about its faults, the Chancellor states: 'there were founded and noted wronge & falsly translated above a thousande textys by tale.'[117] This passage is a direct reference to Tunstal's denunciations of the translation at St. Paul's Cross and demonstrates that More had Tunstal's sermon in mind. But the Chancellor's reliance on rumour for the number of wrong and falsely translated texts is puzzling. Was More, the author of this conversation and close friend to Tunstal, ignorant of exactly what Tunstal said in his sermon?

We gain further insight into this enigma when the Messenger expresses his desire to hear even one of the many errors. The Chancellor replies, 'He that sholde . . . study for that / sholde study where to fynde water in the see.'[118] The Chancellor's obvious carelessness as to the exact number of errors in Tyndale's translation, combined with the assertion that every part of the translation was wrong, make it clear that there was more to the burning of the book than numerous textual mistakes. Moreover, when the Messenger, not yet understanding the Chancellor's

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[114] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxxix, image 80L & verso folio iii, image 4L.

[115] *Ibid*, verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

[116] Debora Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 58.

[117] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

[118] *Ibid,* verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

meaning, suggests that the offending words be 'amendyd' by 'some good men' so that the translation could be 'prynted agayne', the Chancellor reiterates that the whole book had been poisoned and that it would be impossible to make it clean.[119]

Though, as we shall see below, More's Chancellor did delineate a handful of the most objectionable English renderings, such as 'love', 'senior', and 'congregation', they were not the reason the book was rejected. Tyndale's testament was burned because 'an heretyque' made it and in 'the makynge . . . the devyll [was] of counsayll and [gave] therewith a breth of his assystence'; filling the book with a malice so potent that readers who meddled with it could become corrupted likewise.[120] This is why the Chancellor believed that it was easier to make a completely new translation than to 'mende' Tyndale's.'[121] Changing a few mistranslated words would not purify the volume of its evil spirit.

If the *Dyaloge* doesn't provide a clear enough explanation for why Tyndale's translation was burned, More later wrote, no longer under the guise of a fictional character, that the translation errors in Tyndale's New Testament were nothing but 'tokens of Tyndales evyll entent'. He stated that 'another man translating the testament and being good and faithful' could have used exactly the same English renderings as Tyndale, with the same frequency, 'without evil meaning or any suspicion thereof'.[122] The difference between Tyndale and the 'good and faithful' man was not in their choice of words, but in their acceptance or rejection of the traditional faith.[123] Rejecting orthodox beliefs made an individual a servant of the devil and all the works of that person would then be evil in their very nature.

More sticks to this argument when Tyndale, in his *An Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (1531), challenged him about why he didn't contend with Erasmus over Erasmus' decision to translate the Greek *ekklēsia* into the Latin *congregatio* in the *Novum Instrumentum* (1516).[124] More stated, 'I have not contended with Erasmus . . . bycause I found no suche malycyouse entent with

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[119] *Ibid*, verso folio lxxxi, image 82L.

[120] *Ibid*, verso folio xcix, recto folio c, images 100L & 100R.

[121] *Ibid*, recto folio xcvii, image 97R.

[122] More, *Confutacyon*, xcvi, image 69L.

[123] Brad S. Gregory, 'Tyndale and More in Life and Death,' *Reformation*, vol. 8 (2003): 188.

[124] Anne M. O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, eds., *Answere unto Sir Thomas More's Dialoge,* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 14.

Erasmus . . . as I fynde with Tyndale.[125] Again, More insists that the fault with Tyndale was an evil motive and that he had infected all of his writings with that same evil, no matter what words he may have chosen to use.

Tunstal's involvement with, and support of, More's *Dyaloge* is only part of the evidence that he had the same opinion about Tyndale's translation as More. The prohibition he issued on 24 October 1526, just four days before he gave his sermon at St. Paul's Cross, also substantiates this view. Writing to the Archdeacons of his diocese, Tunstal demanded that all copies of the English New Testament be turned in within thirty days 'under payne of excommunication, and incurring the suspicion of heresie'. His choice of words to describe the translators is revealing. They are 'children of iniquitie', 'mainteiners of Luthers sect', 'blinded through extreame wickedness' and have wandered 'from the way of truth and the catholike faith'.[126] In other words, the translators were full of the evil intent described by More.

Tunstal then goes on to declare that the 'most holy word of God' had been 'craftely' abused and 'craftely' translated into English.[127] He explains that the purpose of such craft was to disperse the heretics' 'moste pernicious' and 'most deadly poyson' throughout all the dioceses of London.[128] These were not ignorant heretics, but heretics who maliciously intended on leading others into heresy. As we saw above, More used nearly identical expressions two years later in the *Dyaloge*, stating that the translation was 'craftely devysed', and was like bread that had been completely 'poysoned'.[129] Tunstal's order that all of the translations be turned in, so they could be destroyed, not amended of their textual errors, agrees with the Chancellor's explanations in the *Dyaloge* and unequivocally declares Tunstal's position; the translation was worthy of destruction because it was made by a malicious heretic.

Tunstal's sermon against Tyndale's translation and his willingness to burn it, therefore, must be seen in this light. Tunstal's assertion that there were numerous textual errors in Tyndale's translation was not an attempt to quantify the mistakes, nor justify why the book was burned. Instead, Tunstal was trying, like More did two

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[125] More, *Confutacyon*, page cxxvii, image 84R.

[126] Alfred W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 133.

[127] *Ibid*, 133–34.

[128] *Ibid*, 134.

[129] More, *Dyaloge*, verso folio lxxix, verso folio lxxxi, images 80L & 82L.

years later, to illustrate to the people that the *entire* translation was poisoned because the translator was unorthodox. Like he requested More to do in the official commission, Tunstal's sermon was an attempt to 'reveal to the simple and uneducated the crafty *malice* of the heretics'.[130] He hoped to help the people understand that the textual errors in Tyndale's translation were the overwhelming and obvious *signs* of that malice. Tunstal wanted to help people learn to recognize malice and to steer clear of anything, even a New Testament, if that would infect them with it.

The Tokens of the Malice of a Heretic

In the official commission to More, Tunstal indicated that the main objective of the government's English publication campaign was to *withstand* and *expose* the crafty *malice* of the heretics. This important statement effectively declares that, in the eyes of religious and secular leaders, malice was perceived as a distinct and serious threat. Tunstal and More desired to do more than educate the general populace about orthodox doctrine; they were intent on exposing malice and teaching laypeople how to recognize and avoid it. More stated in the *Confutacyon* that, as chancellor, it was his part and duty to open to 'hys people the malyce and poyson of those pernycyous bokes'.[131]

As discussed above, heretics varied in their degree of understanding and commitment. Tunstal and More believed that Tyndale was the worst kind of heretic, a *malicious* one, and that the textual errors in his New Testament were overwhelming evidence of that. In light of this, we will first explore early sixteenth-century perceptions of heresy so that we can understand what made Tyndale a heretic. We will then examine the meaning of the word malice, how the term was used, and why Tyndale was considered to be a malicious heretic. In a close analysis of the debate between Tyndale and More over Tyndale's textual renderings, we will discover that malice was their main battleground and that the two men made every effort to prove that the other was malicious.

Scholars assert that England knew little heresy before John Wycliffe

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[130] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal*, 363; italics added.

[131] More, *Confutacyon*, Part I, recto folio Ddii, image 14R.

stirred it up in the late fourteenth century.[132] Guy argues that it was England's lack

of heresy that allowed the English bishops to retain the authority to denounce,

investigate, and prosecute heretics according to the canon law of the ecclesiastical

courts.[133] It wasn't until 1382, the year after the Peasants' Revolt, that a secular law

was passed requiring the 'Sheriffs and other Ministers' of the king to assist the

bishops in arresting and imprisoning suspected heretics.[134] This law, and others

enacted afterwards, provide important evidence about how authorities perceived and

described heretics once heresy began to be a problem in England.

The Peasants' Revolt (June 1381) was 'the largest and most serious

outbreak of popular unrest in England in the Middle Ages' and an 'altogether unique'

event because it was the first time the country had experienced a general rebellion

against the king's government.[135] Contemporaries who chronicled the revolt, such

as Thomas Walsingham (*c.*1340–*c.*1422) and Henry Knighton (*d. c.*1396),

consistently linked Wycliffe's heretical doctrines with the uprising and blamed him

and his followers, the Lollards, for causing the revolt.[136] Modern scholarship has

found no evidence that Wycliffe's teachings influenced the rebellion.[137] Instead, it is

argued that religious leaders designedly attached the Lollard heresy to the revolt

because that 'was the most powerful weapon' they could use to secure 'the

assistance of the temporal arm against their enemies'.[138] The law of 1382 describes

as 'evil Persons' all those who went about the realm preaching 'Heresies and

notorious Errors', putting a blemish on the 'Christian Faith' and the 'Estate of Holy

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[132] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy, and the Common People in Fourteenth Century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 5; Richard Rex, *The Lollards*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11.

[133] John Guy, 'Perceptions of Heresy, 1200–1550,' in *Reformation, humanism, and "revolution": papers resented at the Folger Institute Seminar,* ed. Gordon Schochet (Washington D.C: Folger Institute, 1990), 41.

[134] Great Britain, Record Commission, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. II (London: Dawsons, 1963), 5 Richard II, Statute 2, c. 5, 26.

[135] Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 56.

[136] David Preest, ed., *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham: 1376-1422* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 149; G. H. Martin, ed., *Knighton's Chronicle* 1378-1396 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 210 & 243.

[137] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 7; Helen Barr, 'Wycliffite Representations of the Third Estate,' in *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*, eds., Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, & Derrick G. Pitard (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 197, 214.

[138] Rex, *The Lollards*, 52.

Church', and imperilling the 'Souls of the People'.[139] Orthodoxy, therefore, was the measuring rod by which heretics were perceived.

Once the secular government became involved in the issue of heresy, legislation against it continued. In 1401, the Act *De Heretico Comburendo* was instituted by Parliament to suppress Lollardy.[140] This act required those individuals who were convicted in an ecclesiastical court of heresy (or of relapsed heresy) and who refused to abjure, to 'be left to the secular court' which would, 'before the people' and 'in a high place' cause the person 'to be burnt'. This punishment was intended to 'strike fear to the minds of others' so that 'no such wicked doctrine and heretical and erroneous opinions' would continue in the realm.[141] This law described heretics as individuals who held opinions that were 'contrary to the same faith and blessed determinations of the Holy Church.'[142] Again, heresy was discovered because an individual's beliefs were judged against that which was considered orthodox.

At about this same time, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, was troubled by continuing problems with Wycliffe's doctrines at Oxford. As discussed in chapter two, he enacted a set of thirteen constitutions in 1407 which made, among other things, the unapproved translation of the Bible into English illegal. The Constitutions of Oxford were promulgated at St Paul's on 14 January 1409; making every diocese in England subject to them.[143] Though these constitutions were not made by the secular branch of the law, any person violating them would be 'punished in like manner as a supporter of heresy and error.'[144] An unapproved English translation of the Bible was dangerous because it could effectively spread heretical translations and/or interpretations.

An additional piece of secular legislation was enacted in 1414 in response to Sir John Oldcastle's unsuccessful rebellion against Henry V. Oldcastle was a known Lollard who had previously been tried and imprisoned for heresy in 1413. He planned to 'wholly annul the royal estate as well as the estate and office of prelates

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[139] Great Britain, *Statutes*, 5 Richard II, Statute 2, c. 5, 25-26.

[140] Guy, 'Perceptions of Heresy', 42.

[141] Henry Gee & William John Hardy, eds., *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1966), 135.

[142] *Ibid*, 134.

[143] ODNB, 'Thomas Arundel'.

[144] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible,* 80–81.

and religious orders in England' and to be appointed regent of the country, assisted by other, unspecified, men.[145] Unfortunately for Oldcastle, he was betrayed. When the rebels marched on London (January 1414), they walked into a trap and were easily overcome by the king's forces. Oldcastle escaped and lived as an outlaw until 1417 when he was apprehended, taken to Westminster, and executed for heresy and treason on 14 December.[146]

Oldcastle's revolt helped to strengthen government leaders' beliefs that heresy, sedition, and treason were linked.[147] Consequently another law was passed. It was designed to 'provide a more open Remedy and Punishment' than had been used in cases 'heretofore' in the hope that heresy would completely 'cease in time to come'. It required all the secular officers, from the Chancellor down to the bailiffs, to swear an oath that they would 'put their whole Power and Diligence' into destroying heresy and that they would assist the clergy in their efforts to do the same. The law also gave the Justices 'Power to enquire of all them which hold any Errors or Heresies' and to issue warrants of arrest for those they indicted for heresy.[148] This statute described heretics as those who were seeking to 'subvert the Christian Faith' and 'the Law of God and Holy Church'.[149]

The acts of 1382, 1401, and 1414 comprised the secular laws against heresy in fifteenth and early sixteenth-century England. Guy's examination of the records of heresy trials between 1423 and 1522 show that even though these laws were enforced in the century before the Reformation, heresy was not a serious threat before 1522.[150] These laws demonstrate that heretics were perceived in the light of orthodoxy. More's own description of a heretic coincides with those in the heresy laws. In his opinion, a heretic was anyone who 'folowed there owne wyttys and lefte the commen faythe of the catholyke chyrche / preferrynge theyre own gay glosys bifore the ryght catholyke fayth of all Christis chirch'. He also believed readers of the Bible must be willing to 'take the poyntes of the catholyque fayth as a rule of interpretacyon' if heresy was to be avoided.[151] Similarly, Bishop Fisher insisted that

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[145] Quoted in Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 19.

[146] ODNB, 'John Oldcastle'; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 29.

[147] Guy, 'Perceptions of Heresy', 43.

[148] Great Britain, *Statutes,* 2 Henry V, Statute 1, c.7, 181-182.

[149] *Ibid*, 181.

[150] Guy, 'Perceptions of Heresy', 43.

[151] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio xxxviii, image 38R.

'Whan a man studieth to be singular in his opinion / and wyl nat conforme hym selfe unto the multitude of good persones [the church] / than falleth he into heresies.'[152]

If orthodoxy determines what is heretical then any change in orthodoxy will cause a change in the perceptions of heresy. For example, when a new heresy law was passed by Parliament in 1534, replacing the previous heresy laws described above, the denial of papal authority, a previously heretical practice, became non-heretical. With Henry VIII as the supreme head of the church in England, it was no longer unacceptable to deny the Pope's authority. As Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I each took the throne with their different views of religious orthodoxy, perceptions of heresy continued to change in a similar way.[153] Tyndale, therefore, was a heretic because he had rejected the accepted beliefs and scriptural interpretations of the traditional church in favour of his own and placed himself above the authority of the clergy. Why he was a malicious heretic is another story that will be examined with the assistance of the written debate between him and More.

Interestingly, in the scholarly discussions of this debate malice is strangely absent.[154] In Allan Jenkins and Patrick Preston's meticulous treatment of the subject they argue that, 'the main battleground in the war of words of the two Englishmen was that of scripture, its translation and interpretation.' They insist that More attacked Tyndale on the grounds of Greek philology, English usage, and theological motive and conclude by declaring that theology 'lay at the core of the differences between them' and that in the end More and Tyndale 'let their theology guide their interpretation.'[155] Brad Gregory argues that the root of the controversy was the 'question of whether the bible requires an authoritative interpreter.'[156] It is true that More and Tyndale debated scripture, translation, and the right of interpretation and

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[152] John Fisher, *A sermon had at Paulis by the co[m]mandment of most reverend father in god my lorde legate* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1526), STC (2nd ed.) / 10892, EEBO, verso folio Bii, image 7L.

[153] Guy, 'Perceptions of Heresy', 53–54.

[154] The most recent treatments of the subject are: Brad Gregory, 'Saints and Martyrs in Tyndale and More,' in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England c. 1400—1700,* eds. Thomas S. Freeman & Thomas F. Mayer*; Morrison (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007); Morrison, 'Know Thyself'; Gregory, 'Tyndale and More'; Jamey Hecht, 'Limitations of textuality in Thomas More's Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,' *The Sixteenth century Journal*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Winter 1995).

[155] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, 104-106.

[156] Gregory, 'Tyndale and More', 173.

that they did so in terms of philology and tradition. It is also true that theology guided their choice of words.

However, the main battle ground was not scripture, translation, and interpretative authority. These were actually the weapons More and Tyndale used for attack and defence; while Greek philology, English usage, and theology were the offensive and defensive strategies they utilized in wielding their weapons. What scholars have missed is that the weapons and weapons tactics were the evidence, or *tokens*, that More and Tyndale used to establish that their opponent was malicious and that they themselves were not. Malice, therefore, was the main battleground and the contest was about proving which of the two opponents was actually infected with it.

Perhaps malice has been left out of scholarly discussions of the More/Tyndale debate because the word itself has not been properly noticed or understood. Why it hasn't received attention is puzzling because More relished the words 'malice', 'malicious' and 'maliciously'. In the *Dyaloge* and the *Confutacyon* combined he used them nearly two hundred times. One of his most repeated phrases is 'malyce and envye', but he also consistently stated that anything the heretics did was motivated by a 'malycyous purpose'.[157] His other writings show a similar pattern. Between *The Supplication of Souls* (1529), *The apologye of syr Thomas More knight* (1533), and *The debellacyon of Salem and Bizance* (1533), 'malice', 'malicious', and 'maliciously' appear nearly one hundred times.[158] Tyndale also used 'malice', 'malicious', and 'maliciously' in his writings, but he utilized a wider variety of expression to indicate the same phenomenon. This is why 'malice', 'malicious' and 'maliciously' only appear thirteen times in the *Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge*. When Tyndale wrote that a person had a 'corrupt judgment', or resisted the 'truth against conscience', or 'purposefully' misled another, or had 'no power to repent' he meant malice.[159]

Not only has the frequency of the word 'malice' been overlooked, but its meaning has been misunderstood. Lawler has argued that 'malice is the word More used to describe a person so possessed with diabolical pride and envy that no

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[157] *A dyaloge* has 47 citations, both parts of the *Confutacyon* have 141; See More, *A dyaloge*, verso folios iii & iv, recto folios vi & lxxx, images 4L, 5L, 6R, 80R; all calculations done by author.

[158] *Supplication* has 31 citations, *Apology* has 27, *Debellation* has 34; all calculations done by author.

[159] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 5, 23, 77, 171.

natural means, such as dialogue or persuasion, can cure him'.[160] As discussed above, religious and secular leaders differentiated between ignorant heretics and those who were knowledgeable. Therefore, Lawler's understanding is partially correct. However, he does not capture the full contemporary meaning of the word. For those involved in the religious controversies of the Reformation, malice was much more than an identifying label, descriptor, or insult.

The *OED* defines 'malice' as 'the intention or desire to do evil or cause injury to another person; active ill will or hatred'. The earliest reference for this definition is 1325.[161] Interestingly, in the heresy statute of 1414, described above, it states that the law was enacted 'against the malice' of the heretics; indicating that the word was used early in England's first major confrontation with heresy.[162] A close analysis of More's usage of 'malice' in *A Dyaloge* and the *Confutacyon* shows that he believed a person had malice when that individual 'wyttyngly' took a wrong way, sinned purposefully or willingly, or had an 'evyll wyll'; a definition similar to the OED's.[163]

However, in *The debellacyon of Salem and Bizance*, written to refute Christopher St. German's efforts to persuade the English people to accept the Reformation statutes, More added another idea. Malice was 'the lacke of goodnesse in the wyl to the kepyng of goddes commaundementes'.[164] One who had malice, therefore, not only operated under the influence of a corrupted will, but that individual was incapable of doing anything good. More felt that malice was so powerful that it could totally blind an individual's 'wit and learning', be it ever so great, and even more importantly, it could cause that person to disbelieve 'holy scrypture . . . and take it all for fantasyes.'[165]

This is significant since More believed that the Bible was infused with God's nature and spirit, which made it 'apte to purge and amende the reder' of evil and was 'of it selfe ordeyned to do all men good'. If Tyndale could read and translate the

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[160] Lawler, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 444.

[161] OEDO, 'malice'.

[162] Great Britain, *Statutes,* 2 Henry V Satute 1, c. 7, 181.

[163] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio cviii, image 108R; More, *Confutacyon,* Part I, recto folio. Aaii, image 2R; Sir Thomas More, *The second parte of the co[n]futacion of Tyndals answere* (London: William Rastell, 1533), STC (2nd ed.) / 18080, EEBO, xxxix, ccccxvi, images 21R, 215L.

[164] Sir Thomas More, *The debellacyon of Salem and Bizance* (London: William Rastell, 1533), STC (2nd ed.) / 18081, EEBO, recto folio lxxxiii, image 87R.

[165] More, *Confutacyon*, Part I, cliiii, cvii, verso folio BB, images 98L, 84L, and 6L.

Bible and still maintain unorthodox beliefs, More concluded that he must have an 'invincible' malice because there was nothing else powerful enough to withstand and reject the grace of God.[166] Such power could only have one source; the devil. Satan had a corrupted will and his only desire was to destroy souls. According to More, Satan could 'prick' the wills of those who were proud, envious, or full of hatred; infecting their wills with his malice and causing them to assist in the destruction of souls by spreading the infection to others.[167]

Tyndale understood More's definition and use of malice. He too believed that malice was a corrupted will and had the power to captivate and blind one's learning and wit. He said of More: 'Verelye it is like that his wittes be in captivity' and stated that it was the devil who was encouraging him to 'captivatt [his] understondynge' to false doctrine.[168] In contrast to More, however, Tyndale felt that those who were covetous of worldly wealth and honour were the most susceptible to malice. He accused the clergy of covetousness and believed that this was how they had become infected with it.[169]

Like More, Tyndale also believed that the word of God had the power to purge people of evil. He taught that 'soules be purged only by the worde of god and doctrine of christe / as it is written'.[170] He felt that one who read the Bible would recognize the truth and if that person would not consent to follow the 'waye of trueth' after having read it, that individual was motivated by 'malice'.[171] In Tyndale's opinion, the clergy maliciously kept the Bible out of the hands of the laypeople because of its power to purge and inspire and because they did not want people to know that they had been teaching false doctrine for centuries.[172]

Therefore, the debate between More and Tyndale over Tyndale's choice of English words was ultimately an exercise in exposing a corrupted will. More attempted to reveal Tyndale's malice to the people by focusing on Tyndale's choice of English words and Tyndale, in turn, tried to disclose More's malice in his

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[166] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio xciiii, verso folio xcix, images 94R, 100L.

[167] More, *Confutacyon*, lxx, xxii, recto folio Ddii, images 37L, 14R & 15L; More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio Cii, image 103L.

[168] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 22, 31, 212.

[169] *Ibid*, 14. 22, 23, 31, 41, 46–47, 61, 92, 100–101, 104, 114, 144, 187, 197, 204.

[170] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 141.

[171] *Ibid*, 171.

[172] *Ibid*, 46, 73, 77, 82.

refutations of More's accusations. Though Jenkins and Preston are right in emphasizing that theology motivated word choice, there was another layer underneath. More and Tyndale understood that layer to be malice and believed that malice motivated the other's theology.

This is evident throughout the written debate. The debate began with the publication of More's *Dyaloge.* In the *Dyaloge*, the Chancellor states that Tyndale 'mysse translated thre wordes of grete weyght' which 'corrupted and chaunged' the New Testament 'frome the good and holsome doctrine of Cryste' into a completely 'contrary thyng'. Tyndale rendered the Greek words *ekklēsia*, *presbuteros*, and *agapē,* into the English 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'. The Chancellor's initial reaction was to exclaim that these words didn't 'expresse the thynges that be ment by them'. But his real problem was that he believed Tyndale had 'a myschevous mynde' in selecting those words. [173] In this instance, the Chancellor used 'myschevous' as a synonym for 'malicious'.

The *Dyaloge's* discussion of these three words begins with 'prest'.[174] In the 1526 edition of Tyndale's New Testament, Tyndale translated the Greek *presbuteros* (literally meaning 'an older man') into 'senior'.[175] More's Chancellor scornfully mocked this word on the basis that it 'sygnyfieth nothig at al' in English. But his more serious accusation was that Tyndale purposefully avoided calling 'a priest by the name of a priest' and chose any other word, 'he neither wist nor cared what', instead.[176] Tyndale later claimed in the *Answer* that, independent of the *Dyaloge's* criticisms, he realized that 'senior' was not the best English word and changed it to 'elder' in subsequent publications.[177] Tyndale's reasons for making this change will be discussed more fully in chapter five.

Tyndale's use of 'elder' gave More further cause for ridicule. In the *Confutacyon*, More stated that Tyndale's 'elder' had made things worse and insultingly wrote that 'a blokhed were he, that wold translate *presbyteros* an elder in stede of a preste.'[178] More believed that *presbuteros* indicated more than just age

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[173] More, *Dyaloge,* verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

[174] More, *Dyaloge*, verso folio lxxix, image 80L.

[175] Cooper, *William Tyndale: The New Testament:* see Matt. 15:2; 16:21; 21:23 for a few examples.

[176] More, *Dyaloge*, recto folio lxxx, image 80R.

[177] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 15.

[178] More, *Confutacyon*, cxxxiiii, image 88L.

and that in the New Testament church it signified an office.[179] More maintained that a priest was 'an enoynted person and with holy orders consecrated unto god' and that the consecration set the priest apart from the rest of the congregation.[180] He felt that Tyndale chose both 'senior' and 'elder' because, in English, neither signified ' the offyce' of a priest but only 'the age' of the man in question. More believed that whenever the New Testament spoke about the Jewish priests, Tyndale used the English word 'priest' but 'where so ever the scrypture speketh of the prestys of Crystes chyrche / there dothe he put away the name of preste in his translacyon.'[181]

Tyndale responded by asking More why the Greek writers of the New Testament used the word *hieries* (literally meaning 'sacred ones') when referring to Jewish priests and the word *presbuteros* whenever leaders in Christ's church were mentioned.[182] Based on the different meaning of these two words, Tyndale concluded that there was no scriptural basis for ordained priesthood in Christ's church. He felt that 'elders' were laymen who were chosen by their congregations for 'their age / gravite and sadnesse' and because they were 'learned and virtuous' and had progressed further in their spiritual knowledge and development than other lay members.[183] These men were not anointed with holy oil or set apart from the people as 'priests' because Christ and his apostles 'used no soch ceremonyes.'[184]

Both Tyndale and More accepted the philological principle of determining the meaning of a word based on the original language. Therefore, Jenkins rightly asserts that the disagreement between Tyndale and More over *presbuteros* 'did not arise from different principles of philology, nor did it primarily stem from different methods of translation. It arose primarily from their different understandings of ministerial office within the church.'[185] Though true, this argument needs to be taken one step further.

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[179] *Ibid,* cxxxv, image 88R.

[180] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxxx, recto folio lxxxi, images 81L & R.

[181] *Ibid*, verso folio lxxx, image 81L.

[182] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 19.

[183] William Tyndale, *The Practyse of Prelates* (Antwerp: Johnannes Hoochstraten, 1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 24465, EEBO, recto folio Avii–verso folio Aviii, images 7R–9L.

[184] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 17.

[185] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, 98.

More felt that Tyndale's understanding of the ministerial office within the church had been taught to him by the devil through his association with Luther.[186] Tyndale had been infected with a 'very cankered malyce' and sought to destroy souls by making 'it seme that the scrypture dyd never speke of any prestes different from ley men amonge crysten people.'[187] In his turn, Tyndale believed that More thoroughly understood the finer points of the Greek language and even acknowledged that More had done so much longer than himself. Therefore, Tyndale insisted that More could only maintain a belief in a consecrated body of priests by blatantly resisting the 'the open truth of god' and doing so against his own knowledge and conscience. In Tyndale's phrasing, this meant More was acting out of malice; a malice inspired by the devil and that infected him because of his own 'covetousenesse and dronken desire of honoure'.[188]

It is evident in their discussion over *presbuteros*, that More and Tyndale were fighting about who was the malicious individual. The word *presbuteros*, along with its interpretation and translation, was a weapon to be used to attack and defend. But more importantly, it was a *token* that represented the depth of the other's malice and they each tried to reveal that depth to their readers. Why? So that their readers could recognize which one was the actual servant of the devil and could then refuse to follow him to certain spiritual damnation. For More and Tyndale the fight to expose malice was a serious life and death struggle to save English souls.

The second round of this contest concerned the English word 'congregation'. In the 1526 edition of his New Testament, Tyndale translated the Greek *ekklēsia* (literally meaning 'called-out ones') as 'congregation'.[189] More's Chancellor jumped on this choice and asked:

> Nowe where he calleth the chyrche alway the congregacyon / what reason had he therein? For every man well seeth that thoughe the chyrch be in dede a congregacyon / yet is not every congregacyon the chyrche but a congregacyon of chrysten people / whiche congregacyon of crysten people hath ben in Englande alway called and knowen by the name of the chyrche . . .[190]

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[186] More, *Confutacyon*, clv, image 98R; More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxxx, image 81L.

[187] More, *Confutacyon*, cxxxix, image 90R; More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxxx, image 81L.

[188] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 22–23, 212.

[189] Cooper, *William Tyndale: New Testament*, see Matt 16:18, 18:17, Acts 2:47 for examples.

[190] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio lxx, image 80R.

More was upset by Tyndale's use of 'congregation' because it was an English word 'wythoute any sygnyfycacyon of crystendome' and because the English people had never used congregation to mean a 'number of crysten people'. He argued that Tyndale, as an individual, was free to call 'a chyrche' by whatever name 'hym lyste' but that as a translator, he must regard the common usage of words and choose those English words that actually signified the meaning of the Greek word. More's emphasis on the common usage of English words reflects his belief in the authority of the unwritten tradition of the church.[191] As discussed in chapter one, More believed in the truthfulness of that which had been established throughout the centuries by the common consent of the body of the church. Because of this More felt that the only appropriate English word for *ekklēsia* was the common word 'church'.[192]

Tyndale defended 'congregation' by following More's argument that he should respect the popular definitions and perceptions of the English word 'church'. Tyndale explained that 'church' had many meanings: first, 'a place or housse' where Christians went to hear the word of God, second, the body of the clergy, and third, 'a congregation' of all degrees of people. It was this third option that Tyndale believed was the true definition of 'the church of god or christ taken in the scripture'. Though Tyndale acknowledged that this definition was not as well known to the people, he felt it was appropriate because it represented the whole 'multytude of all them that receave the name of christe to beleve in him / and not for the clergye onlye.'[193]

As with their argument over *presbuteros,* More and Tyndale's opposing theological understanding of the nature of the Christian church and its membership was the key to their differences over *ekklēsia.*'[194] For Tyndale, the membership of the visible congregation of Christ was made up of those who professed a belief in Him. Within that congregation, however, was a division between those who kept the profession of their baptism and those who did not. Tyndale believed that there was 'a carnall Israel and a spirituall' and that only those who repented, felt that God's law was good, and had 'the law of god written in their hertes' were of Christ's church; the invisible, spiritual church of the elect. He taught that those who remained in the

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[191] Andrew Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God: Tyndale between More and Joye,' in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England,* ed. Paulina Kewes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 104.

[192] More, *Confutacyon,* cxviii –cxix, images 80L & R.

[193] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 10–12.

[194] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church,* 105.

visible, carnal congregation would, in the end, 'leppe shorte of the rest whych oure savioure Jesus is rysen unto.'[195]

Tyndale also understood 'church' to be a place of worship where those who professed a belief in Christ could come to 'heare the worde of doctrine / the lawe of God and the faith of oure savioure Jhesus christ / and how and what to praye and whence to axe power and strength to lyve goodly.' 'Church' was a place where people went to hear 'the pure worde of god onlye and prayed in a tongue that all men understode'.[196]

Interestingly, More's Chancellor defined the membership of Christ's 'church' as 'the hole congregacyon of crysten people professynge his name and his fayth / and abydynge in the body of the same'.[197] This is nearly identical to Tyndale's definition, but More subsequently headed in a different direction. He believed that Christ made Peter his 'universall vicare / & under hym hed of his chyrche.' More felt that Christ's church was led by an ordained body of consecrated men, but he also believed that these men had been unerringly directing the body of the church, with the aid of common consent, in an unbroken line of succession since the time of Christ. The true church of Christ was visible and recognizable because of its never failing faith, knowledge of the truths necessary for salvation, and most importantly, for the 'doinge of good workys & avoydyng of evyls'.[198]

More also differed from Tyndale in believing that 'church' was a place where the sacraments necessary for devotion and subduing of the flesh were administered:

> good folke fynd thys in dede / that when they be at the dyvyne servyce in the chyrche, the more devowtely that they se suche godly ceremonyes observed, & the more solempnite that they se therin / the more devocyon fele they themself therwith in theyr owne soulys, and theyr flesshe the more tame and lesse rebellyouse, and far better in temper / so that all though they were at other tymes and places in ryght great rage, yet in the chyrche at the voyces of Chrystes mynysters in the quere / wyth organys and all to gether, & beholdyng the solempne godly sacramentes, and ceremonyes in theyr syghte, they fele theyr passyons appeased. . .[199]

Church was not necessarily a place to hear the word of God, it was a place to witness the sacred sacraments and to be spiritually inspired and changed.

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[195] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 12, 52, 53.

[196] *Ibid*, 10.

[197] More, *A dylaoge*, verso folio xxiiii, image 25L.

[198] *Ibid*, verso folio xxiiii–verso folio xxv, images 25L–26L.

[199] More, *Confutacyon*, cxii, image 77L.

In spite of the philological arguments and the theological differences supporting them, the debate about 'congregation' ended in accusations of malice. More's Chancellor stated that Tyndale 'can not abyde the name of the chyrche' and that he purposefully translated it 'in to the name of congregacyon' because he wanted it to seem that Christ 'had never spoken of the chyrche'.[200] In the *Confutacyon* More wrote that his biggest concern in the matter was that Tyndale had an 'evyll entent'. He lamented that Tyndale brought 'such a hepe of harme to chrysten people' in England 'by his untrue translatynge, and more untrew construyng of the holy scrypture of god'. More insisted that Tyndale maliciously made 'the blessed worde of God' serve as 'an instrument to dryve men to the devyll.'[201]

Tyndale attempted to expose the opposition's malice by stating that the clergy had purposefully appropriated the word 'church' 'un to them selves'. In so doing, they had 'begyled and mocked the people', making them ignorant of the true meaning of the word and causing them to understand it as 'nothinge but the shavenflocke'. Tyndale insisted that haggling over the English and Greek words was only a cover for the 'other thynge that payneth [the clergy] and byteth them by the brestes.' He stated that the 'sekeness that maketh [the clergy] so impacyent is / that they have lost theyr juglinge terms' which allowed them to creep 'upp in to the sete of Christ and of his apostles / by succession: not to doo the dedes of Christ and his appostles / but for lucre only'.[202] As discussed in chapter two, sixteenth-century controversialists frequently accused their opponents of misrepresenting the truth by abusing, or juggling, the meaning of words. In Tyndale's opinion, More belonged with the clerical jugglers because he had been 'hired' by them to prove with his 'sophistrie' that Tyndale was a malicious heretic.[203]

The third round in the battle to expose a corrupted will was over the Greek word *agapē* (literally meaning 'love') which Tyndale translated in English as 'love'.[204] In the Greek New Testament, *agapē* is used exclusively for the love of God, God's love towards humans, and the love Christians had for others.[205] Therefore, *agapē*

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[200] More, *A dyaloge,* verso folio lxx, image 81L.

[201] More, *Confutacyon*, cxxvii, image 84R.

[202] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 21.

[203] *Ibid,* 13, 21, 41, 125.

[204] Cooper, *William Tyndale: New Testament*, see 1 Corinthians 13:1–13 for example.

[205] Jenkins, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, 101.

was understood to mean a 'godly' type of love. Marc'hadour and Lawler have argued that from the medieval period, 'charity' had been used in England to convey the New Testament sense of *agapē* as 'godly love', but as we shall see in chapter five, 'love' was the more popular word.[206] Georgi Vasilev believes that William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, written in the late 1300s, is a 'valuable source of information about public and spiritual life in that age.'[207] Ben Smith has shown how *Piers Plowman* conveyed the meaning of charity with multiple images. The poem declares that charity must be manifest in daily life, is linked to chastity, and is inseparable from truth.[208] English people were taught these same concepts from the pulpit. Fisher repeatedly used the word 'charyte' to represent the love of God in his 1521 sermon against Luther. In his 1526 sermon, he discoursed extensively on chastity and how it represented a special love and devotion to God.[209]

More's Chancellor criticized 'love' by focusing on the English usage. He stated, 'charyte sygnyfyeth in englysh mennys erys / not every comon love / but a good virtuous and well ordred love'.[210] More wrote in the *Confutacyon* that 'every love is not cheryte, but onely suche love as is good and ordynate.' More felt there was doubt about whether 'love' meant something 'good or evyll' and he recognized that 'love' had sexual overtones while 'charity' was traditionally linked to chastity.[211] More insisted that in making an English translation, Tyndale should 'take hys englysshe words as they sygnyfye in englyshe' and not 'as the words sygnyfye in the tonge, out of whyche they were taken'. Therefore, More could not comprehend why Tyndale used the more general and confusing 'love' when the 'undowted good worde cheryte' was available and should be used 'where it might well stand.'[212] In addition, More's Chancellor felt that the distinction between 'the lewde love that is

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[206] Germain P. Marc'hadour & Thomas Lawler, 'Scripture in the *Dialogue*,' in *CWM*, vol. 6, Part II, 514.

[207] Georgi Vasilev, *Heresy and the English Reformation: Bobomil-Cathar Influence on Wycliffe, Langland, Tyndale and Milton* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008), 102.

[208] Ben H. Smith, Jr., *Traditional Imagery of Charity in Piers Plowman* (The Hague, 1966), 98.

[209] John Fisher, *The sermon of Ioh[a]n the bysshop of Rochester made agayn the p[er]nicious doctryn of Martin luther* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), STC (2nd ed.) / 10894, EEBO, recto folio Bvii–verso folio Bviii , images 9R–10L; Fisher, 'A sermon had at Paulis', 167–73.

[210] More, *A dyaloge*, recto folio lxx, image 80R.

[211] Smith, *Traditional Imagery*, 68–69.

[212] More, *Confutacyon*, cxlix, cli, images 95R & 96R.

bytwene flecke & his make' and the 'vertuous love that man bereth to god' should be maintained.[213]

In response to More's philological objections, Tyndale explained that he believed 'love' was the best representative of the Greek *agapē* because it had the same 'sens which agape requireth.'[214] Tyndale disagreed with More over the common understanding of 'charity', claiming that it had more meanings than just 'godly love'. Tyndale argued that 'charity' could mean the giving of alms, patience, and mercy as well as a love towards God. He also insisted that 'every love ys not charyte' and that people did not say 'charite god or charite youre neyboure' when they were exhorting each other to 'love God and love youre neyboure'. He also minimized More's concern over 'love's' lewd connotation by stating 'though we say a man ought to love hys neyboures wife and his doughter / a christen man doeth not understand / that he ys commanded to defile his neyboures wife or hys doughter.'[215]

Once again, More and Tyndale differed in their theological views. The debate over 'charity' and 'love' echoed the wider controversy over whether good works had any place in salvation.[216] More defended the traditional belief that outwardly serving God through good works was necessary for salvation and he felt that good works went hand in hand with 'wyth charyte', or with an inner feeling of 'godly love'. In the *Confutacyon*, he taught that it was lawful for people to show their love for God by serving him; especially if they wanted to express gratitude for blessings God had already bestowed upon them. Based on this, he insisted that it was also lawful for people to serve God for those blessings which they 'longe & hope to receyve'. He declared that if Christians could serve God in order to receive future benefits, they could rightfully serve God with 'thentent therewith to gete heven' since heaven was 'of all benefytys the greateste'.[217]

In More's opinion, good works, such as 'fastyng, prayer, or almose dede', were legitimate ways to 'please god the better or the rather come to heven'. Religious reformers often criticized the traditional church for suggesting that its members could earn salvation by their works. Reformers also accused the

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[213] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lxx, image 81L; OEDO, states that the proverbial phrase 'fleck and his make' is a contemptuous reference to a man and his paramour.

[214] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 19.

[215] *Ibid*, 20.

[216] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2003), 130.

[217] More, *Confutacyon*, xi, image 26R.

traditional church of denying that salvation came through the atoning blood of Christ. Therefore, More's admission that none of the good works performed could be done 'wythout the specyall grace & helpe of god' and that no good work was 'rewardable with hevyn' because of 'the nature or goodness of the worke it selfe' was important. He testified that 'god wolde not rewarde our works . . . were it not for the shedynge of hys sonnes blood / and so we finally referre all the thanke and rewarde of our good workes, bothe the begynnynge, the progresse, and the ende, effectually to god and the merytes of Crystes passyon'.[218] For More, 'charity', or godly love, demonstrated through outward expression of good works, was an essential part of salvation and was not a denial of Christ's atonement. No wonder he bristled at Tyndale for leaving 'charity' out of his New Testament and falling back on 'lusty love' instead.

Tyndale, on the other hand, represented those who felt that salvation was a free gift of Christ to all those who had faith in Him and that good works were not necessary to obtain salvation. Tyndale focused on what happened within an individual's heart. He wrote:

> Take an ensample / in the greate commaundement / love god with all thyne herte / the spiritual sercheth the cause and loketh on the benefites of god and so conceaveth love in his herte . . . And when he is commaunded to love his neyghboure as him silf / he sercheth that his neyghboure is created of god and bought with Christes bloude and so forth / and therefore he loveth him out of his harte.[219]

Tyndale felt that every outward action should be motivated by the love of God and not by a selfish desire for personal reward.[220] Moreover, a person who was motivated by the pure love of God 'sercheth' for the spiritual 'significations' of all 'ceremonyes and sacramentes' and 'wil not serve the visible thinges.'[221] Tyndale's emphasis on 'love' being conceived in, and coming from, the heart is part of an important process that he believed took place in the heart: 'Gods mercy maketh my fayth and my fayth my love and my love my works.' Salvation, therefore, was a passionate matter of the heart and good works sprung naturally from a heart that was filled with love.[222]

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[218] More, *Confutacyon*, xi–xiii, images 26R–27R.

[219] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 5.

[220] *Ibid,* 205.

[221] *Ibid,* 7.

[222] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 200; Marius, *Thomas More*, 322.

Tyndale's emphasis on inward spirituality was a direct criticism of the church's emphasis on the outward performance of sacraments and good works; a criticism that was common among religious reformers. Tyndale believed that 'lay people had lost the meaning of the ceremonies' and outward sacraments. He felt that people were superficially performing the sacraments with no internal understanding or inward transformation and, worse, with no acknowledgement that salvation came through the atoning blood of Christ.[223] It is unsurprising that Tyndale wanted the text of the Bible to reflect an inward experience of the heart and why he preferred 'love' over 'charity'.

Predictably, the philological and theological debate over 'love/charity' ended in accusations of malice. More's Chancellor stated that Tyndale was labouring 'of purpose to mynysshe the reverent mynde that men bere to charyte' and to forward his own doctrine that salvation had nothing to do with good works.[224] More wrote that Tyndale wore 'brytell spectacles of pryde and malice' and that the 'devyll' had stricken him 'starke blynde and set hym in a corner wyth a chayne and a clogge, & made hym hys ape to syt there and serve hym' by attacking sacraments and good works. In More's opinion, everything Tyndale wrote was 'powdered with malice toward all good men'.[225]

In like manner, Tyndale replied that More's doctrine was 'aftir his awne felynge and as the profession of his herte'.[226] Interestingly, Tyndale believed that More was a religious turncoat. In the *Answere*, Tyndale stated that if Erasmus' book, *Praise of Folly* (1511), was translated into English 'then shulde every man se / how that he [More] then was ferre other wise minded than he nowe writeth.'[227] Tyndale brazenly asserted that More was someone who 'at the begynnynge [took] christes parte' but when he recognized that there was 'ether losse or no vauntage' he turned to 'the contrary part' and became one of the most 'cruelle ennimies & sotellest persecuters of the trouth.'[228]

As discussed in chapter three, Tyndale was greatly influenced by Erasmus' *Folly*, but why he felt that it was an accurate representation of More's religious

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[223] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 65–75.

[224] More, *Dyaloge,* verso folio lxxx, image 81L.

[225] More, *Confutacyon*, lxxx, cccxxvi, images 61L & 185R.

[226] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 212.

[227] *Ibid*, 14.

[228] *Ibid*, 114.

opinions is puzzling. Erasmus had written *Folly* from More's house in London and perhaps Tyndale believed that the book was a collaborative work between Erasmus and More. As we have already discussed, collaboration in the writing of books was a common practice among the learned men of that time. Therefore, Tyndale's assumption that More influenced Erasmus during the writing process is legitimate in theory if not in practice.

In the *Confutacyon,* More stated that even though Erasmus was his close friend and had written *Folly* in More's home, More felt that here was nothing 'in Moria' that could give readers the idea that he was in favour of evangelical doctrines. More rather weakly dodged the accusation of collaboration by stating that 'the boke' had been 'made by' Erasmus and that Erasmus should receive full credit for the contents.[229] Coming from a man who repeatedly acknowledged that his *Dyaloge* was influenced by other men, it is understandable why Tyndale was not convinced. In 1533, the year following the publication of the *Confutacyon,* Tyndale again insisted that:

> . . . covetousness maketh manye (whome the truth pleaseth at the beginning) to cast it up agayne and to be afterward the moost cruell ennemyes therof . . . after the ensample of Sir Thomas More. K. which knew the trouth and for covetousness forsoke it'.[230]

In Tyndale's eyes More was 'voyde and empte' on the inside, had forsaken the truth, and was only debating with the reformers 'for lucre and vauntage'; the sure signs of one infected with malice.[231]

Perhaps it is unnecessary to mention that Tyndale and More vehemently denied the other's allegations of malice. Tyndale began and ended the *Answere* with assertions that he did not have 'any mischevouse minde or purpose' and that he 'never ment or yet meaneth any other harme'. His avowed purpose was to 'brynge his brothern un to the light of our saviour Jhesus'.[232] In the *Confutacyon* More sometimes chose to refute Tyndale's accusations by jesting. He wrote, 'For when he speketh of my lucre / in good fayth he maketh me laugh . . . I have not so mych lucre therby, that I stande in so grete parell of chokynge wyth lucre'. On other

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[229] More, *Confutacyon*, cxxix, image 85R.

[230] William Tyndale, An e*xposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Mathew* (Antwerp, 1533), STC (2nd ed.) / 24440, EEBO, verso folio lxxxvi, image 87L.

[231] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 92, 140, 170.

[232] *Ibid*, 13, 214.

occasions, More quickly turned all of the accusations of malice back on Tyndale and, in an almost school-boy fashion, re-accused him of the same.[233]

If More and Tyndale had been engaged in a physical contest using real weapons and that duel had been held inside an arena, spectators may have been successfully entertained by the passion, variety, skill, dedication and ruthlessness with which More and Tyndale fought each other in the attempt to prove who was the most malicious. But it might have become clear, after the first few rounds, that More and Tyndale were not able to gain ground against each other. As Jamey Hecht has stated, 'what is both noteworthy and conspicuous is the way the debate announces its own futility in spite of itself.'[234] Their fight would yield no clear winner because the spectators themselves had to decide who was malicious and who was not.

In spite of this, both men expressed a willingness to die for their beliefs. More wrote that if God gave him 'the grace to suffer for sayeng' that 'Tyndales trewthes be starke develyshe heresyes' he would 'never in [his] right wyt wysh to dye better.'[235] Tyndale stated that he intended to spend his life being perfected by 'the crosse of christe' and hoped 'that deeth wyll ende and fynish' that process. Until that time he meant to 'take no thought therefore' and to stand by what he believed to be true.[236] Oddly enough, a few years later More, on 6 July 1535, and Tyndale, on 6 October 1536, would both be led from their places on the battlefield to die for the theology they each were committed to; an act which they both believed to be the ultimate testimony that they were not motivated by malice.[237] Gregory believes that the unresolved disagreements between More and Tyndale were only deepened by their deaths.[238]

As we have seen, malice was an important concept to those caught up in the religious controversies of the early sixteenth century. As soon as English authorities became aware of the imminent arrival into England of an English translation of the Bible, they went into action to protect England from it. Tunstal, More, and Fisher were leaders in the English government's efforts to eradicate heresy. Though Tunstal is given credit for his considerable influence in the battle over heretical

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[233] More, *Confutacyon*, cxxx, clxix, images 84L & 105R.

[234] Hecht, 'Limitations of textuality', 823.

[235] More, *Confutacyon,* clxx, image 106R.

[236] O'Donnell, *Answere,* 214.

[237] More, *A dyaloge*, verso folio lii, image 53L; O'Donnell, *Answer,* 112.

[238] Gregory, 'Saints and Martyrs in Tyndale and More', 108.

books, scholars struggle to explain why he burned history's first printed English edition of the New Testament. Some have argued, from contemporary reports, that Tunstal burned the volume because of textual error. We found, however, that this was not the case.

A thorough consideration of Tunstal's relationship with More and a detailed examination of Tunstal's 1526 prohibition of Tyndale's New Testament, his 1528 commission to More to write against the heretics, and More's *Dyaloge concerning heresies* demonstrated that Tunstal burned Tyndale's New Testament because he believed it was infected with malice. Tunstal and More desired to expose Tyndale's malice so that the uneducated and ignorant people of England could be protected from infection.

More willingly shouldered the responsibility extended to him by Tunstal to write against the reformers in English so that he could expose their malice. Though modern scholars have repeatedly examined More's debate with Tyndale over Tyndale's English translations of the Greek *ekklēsia, presbuteros,* and *agapē*, they have overlooked Tyndale and More's focus on malice. We found that Tyndale and More understood the term to mean a thoroughly corrupted will and that the debate between them was an exercise designed to expose the other's corrupted will. In each of the separate arguments over 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love', all philological and theological issues were subsumed in accusations of malice.

CHAPTER FIVE

What doctrine is this? Vernacular Theology and William Tyndale

At the end of August 1535, Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's newly appointed Vicegerent of ecclesiastical matters, received a letter from the Southwark printer James Nicolson. Nicolson wanted Cromwell, a powerful man who favoured translation of the Bible into English, to apply his 'helpynge handes that the hole byble may come forth'. Nicolson requested that Cromwell peruse an enclosed 'copie of the epistle dedicatorie . . . to the kynge' and as much of the English translation of the Bible as had 'yet come into englonde'. He hoped Cromwell would 'promote that the pure worde of god' could 'go forth unther the kynges prevelege' and believed that if Cromwell could obtain an official licence for this Bible that 'the whole realme of englonde' would hold his 'acte in more hye remembrance' than Augustine, the man that 'brought the [Christian] faith fyrst unto englonde'.[1]

The sample portions of the translation that Nicolson sent to Cromwell were from the first complete printed English Bible. The translation was made by Miles Coverdale (1488–1569) while he was living in Antwerp in 1534.[2] Coverdale had been an Augustinian friar, but he had thrown off his habit in the late 1520s to preach against the mass, image-worship, and auricular confession as a secular priest.[3] John Hooker, the evangelically-minded author of *A catalog of the bishops of Excester* (1584) and one of the editors of Raphael Holinshed's *The chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1586–7), described Coverdale as 'one of the first which professed the Gospell' in England. Hooker wrote that Coverdale's teachings were 'verie new and strange in those daies', and that Coverdale was 'verie straightlie pursued by the Bishops' and was forced to make 'his escape' to the Continent.[4]

Coverdale's movements on the Continent are hard to track, but it is believed that he was in Antwerp by 1530 where he assisted Tyndale in the translation of the Pentateuch (1530) and also published an English version of Campensis' Latin

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[1] SPO. 'James Nycolson, Glaiser, to Cromwell, 1535', SP 1/96 f.33.

[2] Guido Latré, 'The 1535 Coverdale Bible and its Antwerp Origins,' in *The Bible as Book: The Reformation,* ed. Orlaith O'Sullivan (London: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 89.

[3] J. F. Mozely, *Coverdale and His Bibles* (London: Lutterworth, 1953), 2.

[4] John Hooker, *A catalog of the bishops of Excester* (London: Henrie Denham, 1584), STC (2nd ed.) / 24885, EEBO, recto folio Ii, image 16R.

paraphrase on the Psalms (1534).[5] Towards the end of 1534, though 'lothe to medle' with such work, Coverdale was approached by a prosperous and well-connected merchant, Jacob van Meteren, and asked to make a complete English translation of the Bible.[6] Coverdale reluctantly agreed. His translation was 'fynished the fourth daye of October 1535'.[7] Martin de Keyser of Antwerp, the same man who published many of Tyndale's works, printed the first edition.[8]

Because of a law passed by parliament in 1534 prohibiting the sale of any printed books that had not been bound in England, de Keyser had to sell the unbound sheets of the Coverdale Bible to an English printer.[9] Nicolson, an English citizen, purchased the sheets from de Keyser, had them bound, and began selling the book early in 1536.[10] Nicolson's petition for the royal licence was not granted until 1537, but even without it, the Bible circulated unmolested by the government during its first year. In the Bible's prologue, Coverdale revealed that he was grieved 'that other nacyons shulde be more plenteously provyded for with the scripture in theyr mother tongue' than England. His grief motivated him to overcome his reluctance to translate. Coverdale admitted that, 'though I coulde not do so well as I wolde, I thought it yet my dewtye to do my best, and that with a good wyll.[11]

Coverdale had no expertise in Hebrew. His modest assessments of his own skill as a translator have been echoed by modern scholars. C. S. Lewis compared Coverdale with other translators, including Erasmus and Tyndale, and described him as a row boat 'among battleships'. Lewis felt that even though Coverdale was unable knowledgably to 'judge between rival interpretations', his admirable taste

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[5] Latré, 'The 1535 Coverdale Bible', 91.

[6] David Daniell, *William Tyndale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 50, 179, 283; Mozley, *Coverdale and His Bibles*, 110.

[7] Miles Coverdale, *Biblia the Byble, that is, the holy Scrypture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated in to Englyshe* (Southwark: J. Nycolson, 1535), STC (2nd ed.) / 2063.3, EEBO, verso folio cxiii, image 590L.

[8] Latré, 'The 1535 Coverdale Bible', 98; John N. King & Aaron T. Pratt, 'The materiality of English printed Bibles,' in *The King James Bible after 400 years: Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences,* eds. Hannibal Hamlin & Norman W. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 66.

[9] Great Britain, Record Commission, *Statutes of the Realm,* vol. III (London: Dawsons, 1963), 456.

[10] Mozely, *Coverdale*, 110.

[11] Coverdale, *Biblia the Bible*, verso folio iiii, image 5L.

helped him successfully 'select and combine' the best from each.[12] Coverdale also demonstrated 'a knack for capturing, at secondhand, the distinctive parallelistic patterns that define ancient Hebrew poetry.'[13] Coverdale's Psalms were eventually incorporated into the English Book of Common Prayer and became the best known version of the Psalms for the next five hundred years.[14]

Daniell has rightly stated that the Coverdale Bible 'stands at the head of the different complete Bible versions in English in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and all those that came thereafter'.[15] It would be a mistake, however, to exclude Tyndale's Bible translations from their rightful place in front of the Coverdale Bible. Though Tyndale did not live long enough to translate the entire Bible, he did complete two editions of the New Testament (1526 & 1534), the Pentateuch (1530), the book of Jonah (1531), and the nine historical books between Joshua and 2 Chronicles before his death.[16] Andrew Hope asserts that the 'vernacular bibles used by the English Church up to and including the . . . King James were all, in some substantial measure, based silently' upon Tyndale's translations.[17]

Furthermore, Tyndale was the first person to translate the New Testament into English from the original Greek and to translate the Old Testament into English from the original Hebrew.[18] Because of this, Tyndale's English word choices 'had a major influence on subsequent English biblical versions'.[19] Scholars have recognized and readily given Tyndale credit for the impact he had on the language of later translations of the English Bible; particularly the vocabulary, rhythms, and

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[12] C. S. Lewis, *The Literary Impact of the Authorised Version* (London: The Athlone Press, 1950), 11.

[13] Hannibal Hamlin and Norman W. Jones, 'Introduction: The King James Bible and its reception history,' in Hamlin & Jones, *The King James Bible after 400 years*, 3.

[14] *Ibid*, 4.

[15] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 174.

[16] Hannibal, 'Introduction', 3.

[17] Andrew Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God: Tyndale between More and Joye,' in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England,* ed. Paulina Kewes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 105.

[18] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 134; Gergely Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible translations in the King James Bible,' in Hamlin and Jones, *The King James Bible*, 111.

[19] Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97.

phrasing of the *King James Bible* (KJB), published in 1611.[20] Much of what is 'exquisite and direct' in the language of the KJB is rooted in the genius of Tyndale.[21]

The latest statistical study demonstrated that about eighty-three per cent of Tyndale's New Testament was transmitted into the KJB New Testament and that seventy-five per cent of the portions of the Old Testament that Tyndale translated were incorporated into the KJB Old Testament.[22] As we will discuss more fully below, these numbers must be approached with caution because they are based on a very limited sampling of the Biblical texts and fail to distinguish between theologically critical words, such as 'priest' or 'congregation' and non-theological words, such as 'chariot' or 'sun'.[23] They do, however, give a general impression of Tyndale's influence on the language of later translations of the Bible. Moreover, David Norton and Robert Alter admit that the scholars who worked to create the KJB followed Tyndale's example of seeking to combine accuracy to the original languages with clarity of expression in English; preferring a 'homespun English diction'.[24] Catholic theologian Gergely Juhász concludes that 'no other individual has shaped the KJB as much as William Tyndale did.'[25]

What is less readily acknowledged, however, is the influence Tyndale had on vernacular theology; including the vernacular theology of later translations of the Bible. Cummings explains that the 'creation of a vernacular translation [of the Bible] embodies within it the creation of a vernacular theology.'[26] The connection between language and theology is something that both More and Tyndale understood and

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[20] Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible translations', 107.

[21] David Crystal, *Begat: The King James Bible & the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 448; J. F. Mozely, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 98; Jon Nielson & Royal Skousen, 'How Much of the King James Bible is William Tyndale's,' *Reformation*, III (1998): 73; J.R. Dore, *Old Bibles; An Account of the Early Versions of the English Bible* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1888).

[22] Nielson & Skousen, 'How Much', 49-74;

[23] Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible Translations', 115, note 3.

[24] David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 87; Robert Alter, 'The glories and glitches of the KJB' in Hamlin and Jones, *The King James Bible*, 47.

[25] Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible translations', 113.

[26] Brian Cummings, 'The Theology of Translation: Tyndale's Grammar,' in *Word, Church, and State*: *Tyndale Quincentenary Essays,* eds. John T. Day, Eric Lund, & Anne M. O'Donnell (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 57.

this connection was a significant element in their debate over Tyndale's translation of the New Testament. As discussed in chapter four, Cuthbert Tunstal and Thomas More felt that Tyndale's New Testament was full of a highly infectious malice. Three of the most objectionable tokens of Tyndale's malice were his English renderings of the Greek words *presbuteros*, *ekklēsia*, and *agapē* as 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love'. For More, these English renderings were of 'grete weyght' because they undermined many of the key concepts of catholic ecclesiology.[27] More felt that errors of language and errors of theology were synonymous and he insisted that Tyndale 'untrewely translated' many Greek words in order to obtain scriptural support for his false theology.[28] Tyndale, while denying More's accusations of purposeful mistranslation, agreed that theology and language were inseparable. He wrote:

> God is not mans imaginacion / but that only which he saith of hym selfe . . .
> God is but his worde . . . God is that only which he testifieth of hym selfe.[29]

Chapter four demonstrated that there is an abundance of scholarship surrounding the debate between More and Tyndale over 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love'. What is lacking in the historiography, however, is an equally lively interest in the theological development of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'. In their debate, More insisted that Tyndale maliciously used 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love', to 'expresse' meaning that the words did not have.[30] More mockingly stated that Tyndale needed to 'devyse' his own 'englysh vocabularye' to accompany his English New Testament and that 'all Englande' would have to 'go to schole wyth Tyndale to lerne engliyshe'.[31]

Modern scholarship acknowledges that English was a developing language in the sixteenth century and that in the early 1500s it was a tongue lacking in vocabulary and unaccustomed to expressions of theology.[32] But it has failed to investigate More's and Tyndale's claims about the contemporary usage and

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[27] Sir Thomas More, 'A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte', in *CWM,* vol. 6, Part I, 285; Cummings, *Literary Culture,* 192.

[28] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 192; More, *CWM,* vol. 6*,* Part I, 290.

[29] William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (Antwerp, 1528), STC (2nd ed.) / 24446, EEBO, verso folio xix, image 20L.

[30] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 286.

[31] Sir Thomas More, 'The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,' in *CWE*, vol. 8, Part I, 187.

[32] Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), 68-69; Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 188.

understanding of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'; an oversight that this chapter seeks to remedy. Like all polemical assertions, More's and Tyndale's arguments concerning 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' cannot be taken at face value. There is a need to examine how these words were used and understood prior to the translation of Tyndale's English New Testament and how they were handled by the translators of the English Bibles that followed Tyndale's.

Therefore, the first part of this chapter will address the state of vernacular theology in England prior to 1525. Because the Bible was generally unavailable in English before Tyndale's first New Testament was published in 1526, sixteenth-century scholars are apt to dismiss or overlook the orthodox vernacular religious writings that were available to the people. Scholars such as David Daniell, John King, and Brian Cummings suggest, in one way or another, that theology in English and a theological language in which to express it was non-existent prior to the mid-1520s.[33] However, this chapter will demonstrate that there was both a vernacular theology and a vernacular theological language before Tyndale's 1526 New Testament and that it can be found in the orthodox vernacular religious books printed between 1476 and 1526.

The second part of this chapter will place Tyndale in the vernacular theological context of his time. It will analyse if and how 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were used to express theological ideas in the printed religious books published between 1500 and 1525. Because of their popularity, significant scriptural content, and theological teaching, which were discovered and discussed in detail in chapter one, Bishop John Fisher's sermons on the S*even penytencyall psalms* (1504), John Alcock's *Mons perfectionis* (1496), John Mirk's *Festial* (*c.*1380), Nicholas Love's *Mirrour of the Life of Christ* (*c.* 1410)*,* and Thomas á Kempis' (*d.*1471) *Imitatio Christi* have been chosen for analysis. These will be joined by Walter Hilton's *Scala Perfectionis* because More recommended it as appropriate reading for the uneducated lay person. Other early English religious texts will be included as needed.

The detailed analysis of these books will show that 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were an integral part of the vernacular theological language that existed before Tyndale's New Testament was published in 1525. It will also demonstrate that Tyndale's use of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' in his New Testament wasn't as radical as More wanted people to believe. In fact,

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[33] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 100; John King, *English Reformation Literature: the Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 38; Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 6;

Tyndale used the terms in the same way that the other authors of orthodox religious books had done. Rather than misusing or redefining 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love', as More claimed, Tyndale gave the words greater theological authority and power by using them in his New Testament.

The second part of the chapter will also discuss Tyndale's influence on the language of English Bibles subsequent to the publication of his New Testaments. We will follow 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' from Tyndale's first English translation of the New Testament (Worms, 1526) into his second edition (Antwerp, 1534) and then on into the New Testaments of the *Matthew Bible* (1537), the *Coverdale Bible* (1535), the *Great Bible* (1540), the *Geneva Bible* (1560/1587) the *Bishop's Bible* (1568), and the *King James Bible* (1611). We will demonstrate that Tyndale's translations of the Greek *presbuteros*, and *agapē* into 'elder' and 'love' were repeatedly and consistently incorporated into every English translation of the Bible between 1526 and 1611. Tyndale's translation of the Greek *ekklēsia* into 'congregation' held sway until 1557 when 'church' was substituted and prevailed in subsequent versions. By the time of the *King James Bible*, it will be evident that in the contest with More over 'senior/elder' and 'love', Tyndale's language and theology triumphed. It will also be apparent that Tyndale had a significant theological impact on the language of English theology and on later translations of the Bible.

Vernacular Theology in England prior to the 1520s

In 1532, the first half of the *Confutacyon of Tyndale's answere made by syr Thomas More knight lord chauncellour of England* was published. The second half followed a year later, though by that time More had resigned as Chancellor because of the increasing difficulty he had in supporting Henry VIII's religious policies.[34] The *Confutacyon,* comprising half a million words, was More's second publication in a written debate with Tyndale that began in 1529 when More published *A Dyaloge concerning heresies*. In the *Dyaloge,* More 'treatyd dyvers maters / as of the veneracyon & worshyp of ymagys & relyques / prayng to saynts / & goynge on pylgrymage'. He also addressed 'many other thyngys touching the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale', particularly Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament.[35] Tyndale responded to the *Dyaloge* with *An Answere unto Sir Thomas More* in 1531.

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[34] ODNB, 'Sir Thomas More'; Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (London: Vintage, 1998), 187.

[35] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 4.

In the *Answere,* Tyndale defended his New Testament and his theology. The *Confutacyon* was More's response to Tyndale's *Answere.*

With some irony, considering the length of the *Confutacyon* and its purpose, More wrote 'I wolde in good faythe wysshe that never man sholde nede to rede any worde [of the *Confutacyon*].' He went on to say that the 'very best waye' was for people to avoid reading anything associated with religious polemics. In his opinion, it was better 'not to be syk [with heresy] at all / then of a grete syknesse to be very well heled.'[36] What More really desired was for 'the people unlerned to occupye them selfe . . . in prayour, good medytacyon, and redynge of suche englysshe books as moste may norysshe and encrease devocyon.' In the *Confutacyon,* he suggested that lay people read three books: 'Bonaventure of the lyfe of Cryste', 'Gerson of the folowynge of Cryste', and 'the devoute contemplatyve booke of Scala perfectionis'. More hoped that if lay people were occupied with these books they would stand 'fermely by the catholyke faith' and would not need to 'rede these heretykes bokes nor myne'.[37] When we understand what these books were and what they were designed to do, More's recommendation of them comes as no surprise.

More's first suggestion, the 'lyfe of Cryste', which he attributed to Cardinal Bonaventura (*c.* 1217-1274), must be a reference to Nicholas Love's English translation of Bonaventura's *Meditationes Vitae Christi*; a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century Latin life of Christ covering events from the early life of Mary to the day when Jesus' disciples received the Holy Ghost. [38] More could hardly recommend a Latin book to uneducated English speaking lay people. But Love's *Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* (1411), was not only a good translation of the Latin original, but Love's additional explanations, exhortations to righteousness, and spiritual direction made it 'the most important of all the vernacular translations of the *Meditationes.*'[39] Little is known about Love except that he was an Augustinian friar who was appointed to be the prior of Mount Grace Priory, Yorkshire in 1410. However, his *Myrrour* was one of the most popular devotional works in England in

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[36] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 37.

[37] *Ibid*, 38.

[38] Elizabeth Salter, *Nicholas Love's Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* (Salzburg: James Hogg, 1974), 39-42.

[39] Salter, *Nicholas Love's Myrrour*, 46.

the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Fifty-six complete manuscripts of the *Myrrour* survive and the work was printed nine times between 1484 and 1530.[40]

Because the Constitutions of Oxford had gone into effect in 1409, Love sent the *Myrrour* to Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, for approval. The Constitutions not only prohibited the translation of scripture into English, but in Hudson's opinion, they also required any book that dealt with matters of theology or church affairs to be approved by ecclesiastical authority.[41] Arundel examined the *Myrrour* 'for several days', 'commended and approved it personally, and further decreed and commanded by his metropolitan authority' that it be 'published universally for the edification of the faithful'.[42] Thus, the *Myrrour* served as a dispenser of endorsed, orthodox, meditative and doctrinal comment on the Bible. Some scholars have argued that the *Myrrour* was Arundel's answer to the Lollard Bible and was intended to be an orthodox substitute.[43]

Either way, the *Myrrour* also served as a remedy for heresy. Love filled the *Myrrour* with teaching that was aimed at correcting the Lollard heresies that were troubling England in the early part of the fifteenth century and this caused Arundel to recommend the book for 'the confutation of heretics or lollards'.[44] As we can see, Lollard teachings and writings produced a printed vernacular orthodox response. Rex argues that the English authorities of the early sixteenth century were 'swift to detect a connection' between Lollardy and the heresy of their own day. '"Lollardy" remained a generic term for heretical deviation even when the heresy demonstrated distinctly Lutheran or evangelical characteristics'.[45] On the surface, many of the Lollard heresies appear to be similar to those More was trying to eradicate, such as the questions of: *sola scriptura*, vernacular translation of scripture, unlicensed preaching, the nature of the church, the priesthood of all believers, predestination,

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[40] ODNB, 'Nicholas Love'.

[41] Anne Hudson, 'Lollardy: The English Heresy?' *Studies in Church History*, vol. 18 (1982): 269; Salter, *Nicholas Love's Myrrour*, 47.

[42] Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 148.

[43] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University, 2005), 79; Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1988), 244; Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, 152.

[44] Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, 148.

[45] Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 114.

images, and pilgrimages.[46] As discussed in detail in chapter two, More repeatedly linked the Lutheran heresies with the Wycliffite heresies so he could demonstrate that all heretics were inspired by the devil. More may have recommended the *Myrrour* because he felt it contained exactly the right mix of the devotional and doctrinal that would prevent the faithful from being infected with heresy.

More's second recommendation, the 'folowynge of Cryste', which he attributed to Jean Gerson (1363-1429), was actually a translation of the very popular *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas á Kempis (1339/40-1471). Over eight hundred manuscript copies of the Latin version survive; a convincing testimony of the book's popularity.[47] The first English translation of the *Imitatio*, datable to the mid-fifteenth century, was made by an anonymous translator and survives in four manuscripts.[48] In 1502, the first printed translation of the first three books of the *Imitatio* was made by William Atkinson, a fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, at the request of Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII.[49]

Atkinson's translation was known as '*A full devout and gostely treatyse of the imytacion and folowynge the blessed lyfe of oure moste mercyfull savyoure criste*' and was attributed to Gerson. (This is why More referred to it as 'the folowynge of Cryste'.) In 1504, Lady Margaret translated the fourth book of the *Imitatio* and added it to Atkinson's translation of the other three.[50] Atkinson's translation was popular. Between 1502 and 1518, Richard Pynson printed eight editions while Wynkyn de Worde added a ninth in 1519. As discussed in chapter one, most modern scholars accept Kempis, rather than Gerson, as the rightful author of the original *Imitatio.* The background on Kempis, as well as an in-depth discussion of the content of the *Imitatio,* is given in the same chapter*.* The *Imitatio* encouraged individual contemplation and meditation on the events of Christ's life. It was

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[46] Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 504.

[47] J. H. Biggs, ed., *The Imitation of Christ: The first English translation of the Imitatio Christi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxxv.

[48] *Ibid*, viii.

[49] *Ibid*, vii.

[50] ODNB, 'William Atkinson'.

designed to spark the spiritual emotions necessary for an inward conversion to Christ.[51]

The third book More recommended, though without naming its author, was 'The devoute contemplatyve booke of Scala perfectionis' by Walter Hilton (*c.*1343–1396). It is a book that scholars count 'among the masterpieces that constitute the great efflorescence of English mystical writing of the fourteenth century' and it was 'one of the most popular religious texts of late medieval England.' Forty two manuscript copies survive and it was the first English mystical work to appear in print in 1494, followed by three more editions between 1507 and 1525.[52] Not much is known about Hilton's early life, though there is reason to believe that he was educated at Cambridge in civil law. Hilton appears to have renounced his promising legal career in favour of a religious life. About 1386, he joined the priory of Augustinian canons at Thurgarton, Nottinghamshire and remained there until his death ten years later.[53]

Scala perfectionis, written in two parts and begun shortly after Hilton joined the priory, defends orthodox belief and gives practical advice on meditation, prayer, humility, charity, and conquering the seven deadly sins.[54] *Scala* encourages individual contemplation in the hope that people's faith (what is believed) and feelings (what is desired) will be reformed. Hilton felt that both were necessary for a person to reach to the limits of human perfection and encounter God; the ultimate focal point of late medieval mystical writing.[55] Like other writers of mystical texts, such as Margery Kemp or Julian of Norwich, Hilton felt that contemplation could cause an individual to experience the presence of God 'in the present moment'.[56]

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[51] Thomas á Kempis, *Imitatio Christi* (London, 1517), STC (2nd ed.) / 23958, EEBO, recto folio Eiiii, image 32R.

[52] Thomas H. Bestul, ed., *Walter Hilton*: *The Scale of Perfection* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 2, 7.

[53] ODNB, 'Walter Hilton'; Ad Putter, 'Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and *The Cloud of Unknowing,*' in *A Guide to Middle English Prose*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 34.

[54] Walter Hilton, *Scala perfecc[i]onis* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 1494), STC (2nd ed.) / 14042, EEBO, 7, 13, 16, 24, 38, 62, images 4R, 11R, 13R, 19R, 27R, 62R.

[55] Bestul, *The Scale of Perfection*, 4; Santha Bhattacharji, 'Medieval Contemplation and Mystical Experience,' in *Approaching Achoritic and Mystical Texts,* eds. Dee Dyas, Valerie Edden and Roger Ellis (New York: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 53.

[56] Valerie Edden, 'The Devotional Life of the Laity in the Late Middle Ages,' in Dyas, Edden, and Ellis, *Approaching Medieval English Achoritic and Mystical Texts,* 43

But this required extensive spiritual preparation of both the mind and the whole inner man; something the *Scala* was designed to provide.[57]

Based on their content and purpose, it is easy to understand why More would suggest that lay people devote their energies to these books rather than reading heretical works or in 'lernynge what may well be answered unto heretykes.'[58] But even with his confidence that these books could help the faithful to refrain from giving 'herynge to any false enchauntors', More recognized that 'some stumbyng blokkys wyll allway be by malycyouse folke layed in good peoples way'. There would always be 'playne & symple' folk who could be led astray unless they had 'at hande suche books as may well arme them' and help them 'to resyste and confute' the heretics.[59] As discussed in chapter four, More desired, through his writings, to expose the heretics' malice and hoped that doing so would prevent others from being infected with what he felt was a highly infectious, spiritually deadly disease.

More's faith in the *Myrrour*, *Imitatio,* and *Scala* encompassed more than the devotional practices the books recommended or the spiritual results they could bring. More also trusted the *theology* they espoused and the *language* in which that theology was expressed. This is an important point, because the theological content of these early English religious books, along with their language of expression, is not always acknowledged or considered by historiographers of the sixteenth-century.

Nicholas Watson is one medievalist who recognizes that early English religious texts make 'heavy use' of scriptural quotation and cover an 'array of theological subjects'; Kimberly Van Kampen is another.[60] Watson is particularly laudatory about books coming from the period between 1340 and 1410, stating that 'In terms not only of quantity but of innovation' it should 'be considered a "golden age" of vernacular religious writing'. He argues that 'in the decades before 1410, theology in English was as innovative as that in any vernacular during a comparable period of the Middle Ages'.[61] For example, Hilton's *Scala* teaches that 'everi man

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[57] Bhattacharji, 'Medieval Contemplation', 52.

[58] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 37.

[59] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 36, 39-40.

[60] Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409,' *Speculum* vol. 70, no. 4 (1995): 829; Kimberly Van Kampen, 'Biblical Books and the Circulation of the Psalms in Late-Medieval England,' in *The Bible as Book: The First Printed Editions,* eds. Paul Saenger & Kimberly Van Kampen (London: The British Library, 1999), 83.

[61] Watson, 'Censorship', 823, 831.

mai be saved bi the passioun of Crist, be he never so wrecchid'. Hilton explains that love of Christ is a requirement for salvation but acknowledges that there are differing degrees of charity, or love. If an individual cannot love Christ with 'perfight [perfect] charite' that person can still be saved by being in the 'lowest degree of charite'. The lowest degree of charity meant that a person was willing to keep 'Goddis comaundementis'. However, in the after life, people who attained this lowest degree of charity would not have 'the highest mede in the blisse of hevene' but would have the 'lowere meede in the blisse of hevene.'[62]

This is deep doctrine and could raise numerous questions in a reader's mind about the relationship between an individual's love of God and ultimate degree of happiness in the next life. These teachings, influenced by Thomas Aquinas, come from Book I of the *Scala,* which, according to Ad Putter, is an introduction to the contemplative life and served as a religious handbook for laymen.[63] If this is true, this 'introduction' contains some challenging theology; providing a good example of the type of theology that can be found in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century religious writings. Chapter one's detailed scriptural analysis of Love's *Myrrour* (1410) and John Mirk's *Festial* (1380s), both from the same time period as the *Scala*, demonstrated that they not only taught the basic doctrines of Christianity but also addressed some of the deeper doctrines, such as predestination or the creation of the world.

Sixteenth-century scholarship, however, is not so appreciative of these early vernacular religious texts. Oddly enough, this is particularly true of those who study English or English literature. John King, historian of English Reformation literature, has mistakenly written: 'the only vernacular form in which English laymen could approach the Bible prior to Edward VI's reign was Caxton's translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend'.*[64] As discussed in depth in chapter one, David Daniell, a professor of English, unequivocally dismisses the theological value and content of gospel harmonies and aids to meditation like the *Legende,* the *Myrrour* and the *Scala*.[65] Brian Cummings, another professor of English, has also under-rated the theological content of early English religious books, though he completely overlooks their theological content rather than rejecting it. Cummings' neglect of the

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[62] Bestul, *The Scale of Perfection*, 81.

[63] Putter, 'Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection', 37.

[64] King, *English Reformation*, 38.

[65] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 100.

early English religious books stems from his failure to engage with the historiography of the early sixteenth century.[66] This is particularly unfortunate because of his important and influential study of the literary culture of the Reformation. In his work, Cummings rightly acknowledges that religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'cannot be separated from writing' because early modern religion is a religion of books. However, he writes as if the emergence of vernacular theology in England was exclusive to the 1520s, which, as we shall see, it was not.[67]

Cummings' examination of the history of English theology starts with England's fight against Luther's heresies. He explains that the English campaign against Luther was inaugurated on 12 May 1521 when Cardinal Wolsey publicly declaimed *Exsurge Domine*, the papal bull issued against Luther by Pope Leo X, in the churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral and burned Luther's books. This important event was concluded with a sermon by Bishop John Fisher. Cummings believes that Fisher's sermon launched a 'literary campaign of orthodoxy against the forces of unorthodoxy'. He insists that the battle was just 'as much about the English language as it was about the new theology'. This is because the theological issues involved controversy over translation and meaning and the reception of the doctrines into the vernacular. He concludes that the 'story of the English reformation is the story of the politics of the vernacular, and at the same time, of what we may call vernacular theology.'[68]

In his discussion of Fisher's first sermon against Luther, Cummings rightly asserts that the sermon 'has a prime place in the history of religious controversy in England' because it clearly identified Luther's three principal theological arguments (the denial of papal supremacy, the sole authority of scripture in determining doctrine, and justification by faith alone) and it did so in English. To dispute with Luther in front of a lay English audience, Fisher had to venture into 'new territory' and translate his opponent's tenets, as well as his own refutations, into the vernacular.[69] Cummings argues that one of the reasons Fisher was on unstable

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[66] It is important to note that in Cummings' discussion of vernacular theology in English he only cites one secondary source in support of his arguments. That source is Jones, *Triumph of the English Language,* which is a general treatment of sixteenth-century perceptions that English was not an eloquent language. See Chapter 5 of *Literary Culture,* 187-223.

[67] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 6.

[68] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 188.

[69] *Ibid*, 188.

ground in preaching a sermon against Luther in English was because Latin was the traditional language of the church and of scholarship. He also maintains that Fisher had difficulties because English lacked 'technical terms of established usage', because contemporaries felt that English was difficult to speak eloquently and, most importantly, because the language had no doctrinal tradition. In other words, throughout his sermon Fisher had to 'define' particular theological meanings with English words that were 'not yet coined' for that purpose and he had no vernacular tradition to back him up. Fisher had to 'develop a theological language' because, ever since 1410, 'theological writing in English had been associated with dissidence. . . Lollards, not bishops, spoke religion in English.'[70]

As compelling as this argument is, it only holds up if the early orthodox English religious texts that preceded Fisher's first sermon are disregarded. Not all theological writing in English was associated with heresy. Some of it had nothing to do with heresy and some of it was written to serve as orthodox responses to heresy. Even though Fisher may have had to coin some new words in disputing religious doctrines in English, he certainly did not have to create an entire vernacular theology because one already existed. Though it is true that by the 1520s, expressing theological ideas in English was an activity that was controversial and closely associated with heresy, this had not always been the case. Up until the middle of the fourteenth century, English was a 'vulgar' language; a language that was spoken only by the common people and not by the elite or the clergy. But in the 1360s, English 'began to be accepted as an appropriate medium for government, law, and literature.'[71]

In 1362, Parliament passed the Statute of Pleading, which acknowledged the 'great Mischiefs which had happened to diverse of the Realm' because the 'Laws, Customs, and Statutes' were 'in the French Tongue' and the people had no knowledge of 'that which [was] said for them or against them' in a court of law. Therefore, Edward III ordered that anything 'pleaded, shewed, defended, answered, debated, [or] judged' in any court 'whatsoever' should be done in English.[72] In 1363,

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[70] *Ibid*, 188-189.

[71] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy, and the Common People in Fourteenth Century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 117.

[72] Great Britain, *Statutes*, 36 Edward III, c. 15 (1362), 375.

Lord Chancellor Simon Langham (*d.* 1376), opened Parliament by delivering his formal address in English; the first time anyone had done so.[73]

The wider use of the vernacular sparked a mid-fourteenth century debate about the language's suitability for scripture and theology.[74] Watson explains that prior to 1350, the majority of religious works in English were written primarily for the professionally religious, such as monks or nuns.[75] For example, Richard Rolle (*d.* 1349), the sometimes controversial hermit, mystic, and religious writer, made the first English translation of the book of Psalms for one of his disciples, Margery Kirkby (*d.* 1391), the anchoress of Richmondshire. Rolle's final work, *The Form of Living,* the first vernacular guide for recluses since the thirteenth century, was also written for Kirkby.[76] Those who composed religious writings in English in the early fourteenth century, therefore, did so for a very small and particular audience.

Beginning in the 1350s, however, as the use of English increased, writing religious works in English came to mean writing for an indeterminate or socially mixed group of people who were not necessarily *literati*. Putter explains that Hilton, the author of *Scala,* switched from writing theological treatises in Latin to writing them in English because of a 'demand for guidance from lay and religious folk, particularly women, whose literacy did not extend to Latin'.[77] Watson observes that in the religious texts written after 1350, such as the *Cloud of Unknowing* (post-1370), *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* (pre-1380), *Scala* (1380s), *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* (1390s), *Chastising of God's Children* (1390s), and *Dives and Pauper* (1405) there is an 'increasingly overt sense' that 'presenting an ever wider array of theological concerns to an ever larger and less clearly defined group of readers needed justifying'.[78]

A good example of this can be found in the *Cloud of Unknowing*, written in English by an unknown author, perhaps a Carthusian monk, sometime between 1370 and 1390.[79] At the beginning of the prologue, the author acknowledges that

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[73] ODNB, 'Simon Langham'.

[74] Ford, *Mirk's Festial,* 117.

[75] Watson, 'Censorship', 837.

[76] ODNB, 'Richard Rolle'; R. Hanna, 'Rolle and Related Works' in Edwards, *Middle English Prose*, 20.

[77] Putter, 'Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection', 34.

[78] Watson, 'Censorship', 838.

[79] Putter, 'Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection', 43.

the book hasn't been written for a specific audience. The reader is addressed as: 'whatsoever thou be that this book schalt have in possession'. Further on, however, the author admits that the *Cloud* was not for: 'Fleschely janglers . . . tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales, and alle maner of pinchers'.[80] The author insists that the *Cloud* was designed for those who were experiencing an 'inward stering after the prive sperit of God'.[81] In the last chapter of the book, the author again acknowledges the potentially wide readership of the *Cloud* but repeats the assertion that the book was not for 'corious lettrid ne lewid men'.[82]

The *Cloud* author, therefore is non-elitist in the sense of welcoming any reader and yet maintains elitism by excluding those who approach his book without feeling the right spiritual promptings.[83] In Watson's opinion, the authors of these mid- and late fourteenth- century religious texts, in acknowledging a wider, indistinct readership and at the same time expressing concerns about the wrong sort of reader, laid the foundation for the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century debate over the vernacular as a suitable vehicle for theology.[84]

These early authors' inchoate and contradictory assertions about appropriate and inappropriate readers became clarified and polarised arguments in the early fifteenth century. This is particularly evident in the debate held at Oxford (*c.*1401-*c.*1407) over translation of the Bible into English.[85] The conservative theologians, such as Thomas Palmer (*fl.* 1371–1415), the prior of the Dominican convent in London, and William Butler (*d.* after 1416), Franciscan friar and regent master (a practising teacher) at Oxford, argued that the content and circulation of vernacular religious writings, especially the Bible, needed to be carefully restricted. They felt that lay people should continue to be dependent on the clergy for religious instruction.[86] The more evangelically-minded theologians, such as Richard Ullerston

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[80] Patrick J. Gallacher, ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 21-22; Gallacher defines 'fleschely janglers as 'babblers', 'tithing tellers' as 'newsmongers', 'rouners' as 'gossips', 'tutilers of tales' as 'scandal-mongers', and 'pinchers' as 'detractors'.

[81] *Ibid,* 21-22; Gallacher defines 'inward stering' as 'prompting' and 'privie' as 'mysterious'.

[82] *Ibid*, 100; Gallacher defines 'corious lettrid ne lewid men' as 'inquisitive people, educated or uneducated'.

[83] Putter, 'Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection', 45.

[84] Watson, 'Censorship', 838-839.

[85] *Ibid*, 838-839.

[86] Hudson, 'Lollardy', 275; Watson, 'Censorship', 840-846.

(*d.* 1423), fellow of Queen's College, argued that the laity needed and were fit to have the 'truth' in their own tongue and that religious texts, especially the Bible, should be made available to everyone.[87]

This seemingly irreconcilable, polarised divide was a result of John Wycliffe (*b.* mid-1320s - *d.* 1384), the Oxford theologian and heretic, and his followers the Lollards, who advocated and practised preaching and writing religious doctrines in the vernacular, including translation of the Bible into English.[88] Their use of English played an important role in the development of English theology, but Wycliffe had a particular impact because he was the instigator of the movement and because he was the first to transmit significant Latin theological terminology into the English language.[89]

At first, Wycliffe's notoriety was due to his academic prowess at Oxford University. He first attended Oxford in 1350 and received his Doctorate of Theology in 1372. By the time he received his degree, Wycliffe had been lecturing and writing on logic and philosophy and had gained considerable popularity and prestige among his peers. He was described as 'being second to none in philosophy and incomparable in scholastic learning'.[90] By the early 1370s, he was writing Latin treatises about the nature and dominion of the church. He soon demanded church reform and challenged official church doctrines, particularly the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine of the Eucharist into the body and blood of Christ. Modern scholars have demonstrated that nearly all of Wycliffe's doctrinal beliefs are traceable to earlier scholars and theologians, such as: Marsilius of Padua (*c.*1275 – *c.*1342), Thomas Bradwardine (1300–1349), and Richard FitzRalph (*c.*1300-1360).[91] Because of this, Hudson contends that Wycliffe's opponents perceived his doctrines as dangerous, not because they were original or even heretical, but because he took them outside of the university and began involving the laity.[92]

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[87] ODNB 'Richard Ullerston'; Watson, 'Censorship', 840-846.

[88] Watson, 'Censorship', 838-839.

[89] Anne Hudson, 'Wyclif and the English Language,' in *Wyclif in His Times,* ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 91.

[90] Michael Wilks, *Wyclif: Political Ideas and Practice* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), 1-2; G.H. Martin, ed., *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 243.

[91] Maurice Keen, 'Wyclif, the Bible, and Transubstantiation,' in Kenny, *Wyclif in His Times,* 2-4; Hudson, 'Lollardy', 262.

[92] Hudson, 'Lollardy'*,* 262; ODNB, 'John Wyclif'.

There is evidence that Wycliffe may have been preaching his 'unorthodox' ideas outside of Oxford and in English to mixed companies of priests and lay people as early as 1376 and that his followers were preaching them to lay people at least by 1382, if not earlier.[93] Because Wycliffe took his ideas outside the 'precincts of a university debating hall' and because English was being used to discuss matters that had been protected from the general populace for centuries 'under the thick veil of Latin', Wycliffe became a serious problem.[94] As Aston puts it: in the minds of English authorities 'the deviations of academic theologians were one thing; those of the people another'.[95]

It was later in the development of his doctrinal ideas that Wycliffe came to believe that vernacular scripture was essential for every Christian to 'learn the faith of the Church'. Wycliffe wanted all Christians to be theologians and to study the word of God for themselves and he called for lay access to the Bible through vernacular translation.[96] Wycliffe's emphasis on the supremacy of God's word earned him the nickname Dr. *Evangelicus*.[97]   His teachings seem to have inspired Wycliffe's followers to translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into English; the first complete English translation of the Bible in history.[98] Manuscript copies of the Bible began to be available in the 1380s.[99] As discussed in chapter one, in spite of the prohibition against them, copies of the Wycliffite Bible were still in use in the sixteenth century; mainly by wealthy individuals who used them for private piety.[100] Over two hundred and fifty manuscript copies of the Wycliffite Bible survive today;

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[93] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation,* 64-66; Hudson, 'Lollardy'*,* 270-271; Margaret Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular,' in *Studies in Church History: From Ockham to Wyclif,* eds. Anne Hudson & Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 286; Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, 240.

[94] Hudson, 'Lollardy'*,* 262.

[95] Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular'*,* 290.

[96] I.C. Levy, ed., *On the Truth of Holy Scripture* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), 5, 300.

[97] Levy, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, 5; S. Parkes Cadman, *The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford and Their Movements* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 144.

[98] Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, 241; Christopher De Hamel, *The Book: The History of the Bible* (New York: Phaidon, 2001), 170.

[99] Hudson, *Premature Reformation,* 231.

[100] Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, 292-297.

the largest number of any other medieval English text.[101] Daniell has argued that 'no educated and religiously alert young man', such as William Tyndale, brought up in Gloucestershire, a county where Lollardy took strong root, 'could fail to have heard, and most likely read, a Wyclif Bible.'[102] He also believes that one of the effects of reading the Wycliffite Bibles was the creation of 'a common pool of English Bible phrases and passages that lingered in people's memories' and which may have influenced Tyndale as he translated his New Testament more than one hundred years later.[103]

Wycliffe's audacious use of English seriously challenged the medieval traditions of clerical domination in theology, ecclesiastical theory, and even scholasticism; threatening the culture and power maintained by those who used Latin.[104] As discussed in detail in chapter four, ecclesiastical leaders blamed the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 on Wycliffe and his followers. They did so in order to secure the assistance of the secular arm in the prosecution of heretics. An overview of the secular legislation that was passed against heretics, beginning in 1382, was also given in chapter four. Significantly, it wasn't until March 1388 that the first Royal commissions to search out and confiscate Wycliffe's *writings*, English or Latin, were issued.[105]

Aston argues that English authorities were slow to pass legislation against the vernacular textual activity of the Wycliffites because the use of English was a novelty that caught ecclesiastical leaders off guard.[106] By the turn of the fifteenth century, however, the shock and confusion were over and countermeasures to control vernacular textual activity were in place. In 1401, *De Heretico Comburendo* was passed, allowing those convicted of heresy in ecclesiastical courts to be burned by the secular courts, and in 1410, the Constitutions of Oxford were promulgated to every diocese in England, which, according to Watson, disrupted and stunted the

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[101] De Hamel, *The Book*, 168, 185.

[102] Daniell, *Bible in English*, 88; The spelling of 'Wyclif' is Daniell's.

[103] *Ibid*, 89.

[104] Hudson, 'Wyclif and the English Language', 90.

[105] Great Britain, Court of Chancery, *Calendar of Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office . . . Richard II*, vol. 3 (1385—1389) (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1900), 448, 536.

[106] Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular', 289.

growth of the developing vernacular theology and annihilated any further debate about the subject until the sixteenth century.[107]

Clearly, the Wycliffite efforts to promote religious writing and instruction in the vernacular had a significant impact on the attitudes of the elite towards vernacular theology, but Wycliffe also played a role in broadening English theology and in adding to the vernacular theological language.[108] The best example of this is evident in Wycliffe's attack on the traditional beliefs of the Eucharist. Wycliffe's personal study of the Bible led him to conclude that the miraculous changing of the substance of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ by the priest, termed *transsubstantiatio* in Latin, was a novelty not supported by scripture and was a doctrine fraudulently maintained by a corrupt church.[109] Wycliffe believed that the physical 'substance' of the bread and wine, not just the appearance, or 'accidents' of the physical substance, remained after consecration and that the miracle of the mass was the presence of the spiritual body of Christ *along with* the physical substance of the bread and wine.[110] Wycliffe wrote that the Eucharist was 'the body of Christ in the form of bread and wine'.[111]

Because this concept, very near to the later evangelical doctrine of consubstantiation, was a denial of the central mystery of the Eucharist it horrified many of Wycliffe's contemporaries. But when Wycliffe shared his blasphemous ideas in English, which required an injection of a 'range of new [English] words', he added fuel to the fire.[112] It was 'wrong and a complete break with accepted convention' to involve the laity in the mysteries of the most sacred and venerated part of Catholic ecclesiology.[113] Aston explains that words 'such as *transsubstanciacio, accidens, substancia, subjectare, quidditas,* belonged to quite another sphere of discussion and explication from that of popular preaching. They

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[107] Watson, 'Censorship', 847, 859.

[108] Georgi Vasilev, *Heresy and the English Reformation: Bogomil-Cathar Influence on Wycliffe, Langland, Tyndale, and Milton* (London: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2008), 81-82.

[109] Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular'*,* 300.

[110] Keen, 'Wyclif, the Bible, and Transubstantiation', 12-15; Gordon Leff, 'Wycliff and Hus: A Doctrinal Comparison,' in Kenny, *Wyclif in his Times*, 117.

[111] Gotthard Lechler, ed., *Trialogus*: *Cum supplemento Trialogi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1869), 249.

[112] Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular'*,* 292.

[113] *Ibid,* 292.

were alien to vernacular religious instruction up [to that time].'[114] But, by 1400, 'subject', 'substance', 'accident', 'transubstantiate', and 'transubstantiation', along with their theological meaning, had become a permanent part of the English language.

For example, in the *Cloud* the author encouraged the reader to recognize that feelings of love for God are 'the substaunce of alle good levyng'. He goes on to say that love for God is nothing else 'bot a good and an accordyng wil unto God' where the individual feels 'a gladnes' in the 'wille of alle that [God] doth.' In his opinion, 'Soche a good wille is the substaunce of alle perfeccion. Alle swetnes and counfortes, bodily or goostly, ben to this bot as it were accydentes'.[115] 'Substance' and 'accidents' in this passage retain their allusion to the Eucharist, but the *Cloud* author has easily adapted the words for his treatment of perfection. It did not take long for controversial terms that were first published by the Wycliffites in their vernacular discussion of the Eucharist to become a comfortable and versatile part of English theology.[116]

However, use of these sacramental words was not limited to religious books. Authors of non-religious works of the same period found a use for them. In Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, they appear in the Pardoner's Tale when the Pardoner, lamenting over the sins of drunkenness and gluttony, says:

> How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde
> Thise cokes [cooks], how they stampe, and streyne, and grynde,
> And turnen substaunce in to accident.[117]

They are also present in the prose Tale of Melibeus which is told by Chaucer himself. Melibeus, a 'myghty and riche' man has been wronged at the hands of three of his enemies. Melibeus' wife, Prudence, explains to her husband that the wrongs 'hath certeyne causes . . . The fer [distant] cause is almighty god that is cause of alle thynges / The neer cause is thy thre enemys / The cause accidental was hate'.[118] In this case, 'accidental' refers to the observable, or outward, reason that Melibius' enemies attacked him, which is congruent with its theological meaning.

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[114] *Ibid,* 301, 303.

[115] Gallacher, *Cloud of Unknowing*, 76-77.

[116] Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular', 304.

[117] John M. Manly & Edith Rickert, eds., *The Text of The Canterbury Tales*, vol. 4, Part II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940), 91.

[118] Manly, *The Canterbury Tales*, 186.

John Trevisa (*c.* 1342- *c.* 1402), fellow of Queen's College, Oxford and the vicar of Berkeley, Gloucestershire repeatedly used the terms 'substance', 'subject', and 'accident' in his English translations of Latin encyclopaedic works. Trevisa translated Latin books because he desired to bring to the laity knowledge that had been previously exclusively available to ecclesiastics. In his English rendition of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum* (1399) he wrote: 'But everyche fourme accidental nedith a fourme substancyal that is cause of fourme accidentalis.' He also wrote, 'Thanne the Cene Day is day of reconciliation, of transubstanciacioun, of consacracioun and of sacringe'.[119] Though Trevisa was in residence at Oxford during some of the time that Wycliffe was there, there is no evidence that he associated with him or assisted with the translation of the Wycliffite Bible that was then taking place.[120]

Use of the English terms 'accident', 'substance', and 'transubstantiation' was unacceptable to many of the clergy and Arundel's Constitutions were designed to put an end to the practice. The Constitutions forbad preachers, schoolmasters, and teachers from preaching or teaching anything 'concerning the sacrament of the altar' that hadn't been traditionally 'discussed by the holy mother church'. This included the pronouncing of 'blasphemous words concerning the same'; meaning that the English versions of the Latin terms used to describe the miracle of the Eucharist were not to be used. [121]

In Love's *Myrrour* there is evidence that Arundel's prohibitions created at least some unwillingness to use 'accident', 'substance' and 'transubstantiation'. In a discussion of the Last Supper, Love refuted the Lollards by insisting that the sacrament of the altar is, by the power of Christ's words, 'goddus flesh & blode in substance' and that the 'accidentes of brede & wyne' have been wonderfully and miraculously, and even against man's reason, retained without their 'kyndely subjecte'. Love then apologises for using 'these terms' and explains that he only did

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[119] M. C. Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum: a critical text*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 548, 554.

[120] ODNB, 'John Trevisa'.

[121] John Cumming, ed., *Acts and Monuments,* vol. 6 (1851) http://www.exclassics.com/foxe/foxe91.htm [accessed 13 June 2011].

so 'bycause of the lewede lollardes' who use them to argue falsely against the faith.[122]

Love's incorporation of the prohibited words into his ecclesiastically approved book is an example of what Barnett describes as a 'strategic mistake' by those who sought to suppress heretical texts or terms. She writes that it was difficult 'for ecclesiastical authorities to suppress any particular text without . . . staging a reading of that text'.[123] In this case, it was difficult for Love to refute the Wycliffite doctrines of the Eucharist without using the very same words Wycliffe coined. Love's *Myrrour*, therefore, served as an authorised mode of transmission for the very words Arundel wished to eradicate. That they were transmitted into the fifteenth century is demonstrated by Thomas Norton (d.1513). He was an alchemist and Sherriff of Gloucestershire from 1475—76 and wrote in his *Ordinal of Alchemy* (1477), 'For Criste is love, then seid he, teche me wherof the substance of our stone shuld be'. Later in the book he stated, 'Wherebie of metallis is made transmutacion not only in colour, but transubstanciacion'.[124]

The Constitutions, moreover, rather than eradicating innovative vernacular theology, seem to have aided in the preservation of it even while they limited its development.[125] While the laws made it difficult for fifteenth-century religious authors to compose and publish anything theologically challenging, prevented the translation of the Bible into English, and attempted to suppress the use of certain theological terms, they caused the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century texts to become a canon of vernacular theological writing. Watson has found that, 'In the fifteenth century . . . it was fourteenth and not fifteenth-century works' that were the most widely copied, circulated, and read.[126] Thus, the theological ideas these books contained and the language in which the ideas were expressed were actively circulated and passed on to later generations and were not, in fact, suppressed by Arundel's Constitutions.

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[122] Michael G. Sargent, ed., *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: a reading text* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 151-152.

[123] Mary Jane Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation: Lollards, Lutherans, and an Economy of Circulation,' *Renaissance Papers* (1996): 8.

[124] John Reidy, ed., *Thomas Norton's Ordinal of Alchemy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 35, 78; ODNB, 'Thomas Norton'.

[125] Van Kampen, 'Biblical Books', 84.

[126] Watson, 'Censorship', 835-835.

A scrutiny of the vernacular religious books that were printed after 1476, when William Caxton first began printing in London, shows that many of the religious texts from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were among the first English books to be printed.[127] *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* was printed in three editions between 1496 and 1500, the *Festial* in 16 editions between 1483 and 1525, *Scala* had 4 editions between 1484 and 1525, *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* in 2 editions between 1506 and 1519, *Chastising of God's Children* in 1493, and the *Dives and Pauper* had 2 editions between 1493 and 1496.[128] That most of these books had multiple editions indicates their popularity, though that varies in degree. There can be no doubt, however, that these books were eagerly studied by readers who were, thanks to the printing press, coming to enjoy an 'expanding array of choice' in vernacular religious texts.[129]

When we combine the printed versions of the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century religious books with the vernacular religious texts that were composed and printed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, such as Alcock's *Mons perfectionis* (1496) and Fisher's *Seven penytencyall psalms* (1504), we have a body of orthodox English theological writing. As discussed in chapter one, these books made up, and were the centre of, the lively and blooming lay devotional scene of the early sixteenth century.[130] That these books were repeatedly printed indicates not only that they were popular among lay readers, but that they were tolerated, if not officially approved, by the secular and religious authorities.[131] More's commendation of three of them, as Lord Chancellor, speaks volumes about how these books were perceived by those in positions of authority.

Therefore, Fisher's first sermon against Luther in 1521 must be considered as a contribution to the already existing body of English theological writing. When Cummings asks, 'On what authority could Fisher claim tradition in English, in which that tradition was as yet unwritten?' we must acknowledge that there was a written tradition.[132] Perhaps it was lacking an approved vernacular text of the Bible,

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[127] Van Kampen, 'Biblical Books', 83.

[128] Editions calculated by the author from the ESTC.

[129] Watson, 'Censorship', 835.

[130] Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 156; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 4, 80.

[131] Van Kampen argues that *Dives and Pauper* was not censored by the ecclesiastical authorities because it promoted traditional orthodoxy, 'Biblical Books', 83.

[132] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 189.

perhaps it was circumscribed and only popular among the educated lay people, and perhaps it was generally unattended to by scholastically trained clergy and theologians like Fisher, but there was a vernacular tradition and it was the foundation for the religious writings that came thereafter.

This small body of vernacular religious writings is particularly important for our discussion of Tyndale because it supplies the foil by which we might compare and contrast Tyndale's use of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' in his 1526 translation of the New Testament and discover whether or not he used those words differently than the religious writers who came before him. As we discovered in chapter four, More's sustained attack on Tyndale's choice of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' was carried on, not from the territory of philological scholarship, but from the territory of the 'common faith' of the whole church and the 'common usage' of the English language.[133] As we will demonstrate below, 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were already a part of the developing vernacular theological language and Tyndale's use of the those terms was congruent with that language.

'Congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'

As discussed in detail in chapter four, the main problem More found with Tyndale's New Testament was his rendering of the Greek words *presbuteros*, *ekklēsia*, and *agapē* into 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love'. More argued that Tyndale maliciously went against the common tradition of the English tongue and used 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' to 'expresse . . . thynges' that they did not mean so that he could obtain scriptural support for his false theology.[134] For More, errors of language and errors of theology were synonymous.[135] He insisted that the unwritten theological tradition of the church had been established throughout the centuries by common consent. Similarly, More believed that it was the 'comen custume of us englyshe peple' that gave English words their meaning.[136] In the *Confutacyon* he insisted 'that this comen custume and usage of speche is the onely thynge, by whyche we knowe the right and proper sygnifycacyon of any

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[133] Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God', 104.

[134] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 285-286.

[135] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 192; More, *CWM,* vol. 6*,* Part I, 290.

[136] Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God'. 104; More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 167-169.

worde' and that the common custom was established by those who 'now do use these words in our langage, or that have used byfore oure dayes.'[137] More felt that 'to make a chaung of the englyshe worde' and expect 'that all Englande sholde go to scole wyth Tyndale to lerne englyshe' was a very 'frantyque foly'.[138] It was, however, more than folly. In More's eyes, Tyndale's malicious rejection of the common tradition of the English language was synonymous with his rejection of the unwritten theological tradition of the church.

Tyndale's response to More's objections, covered in detail in chapter four, boil down to his insistence that a translator should follow the meaning of the original language when choosing corresponding words in the language of translation.[139] Cummings states that Tyndale 'laboured under the necessity of combining faith to the original linguistically with faith to the original doctrinally' and that doing so was an 'incredible undertaking'. For Tyndale, 'neologism was . . . a necessity poised on the edge of solecism even as his neo-theological statements constantly risked heresy.'[140] Though Cummings is right about the challenges Tyndale faced in translating the Bible into English, Tyndale felt that his choices of 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love' accurately represented the Greek words doctrinally and linguistically. But he also insisted that he used them in a way that was faithful to the traditional English meanings of the words. In the *Answere* he tersely defended his use of 'senior/elder', 'congregation' and 'love' by brief explanations of how he thought a particular English word was used or understood by contemporaries.[141] Tyndale insisted that if he used any less familiar English words the 'mater and circumstances' of the surrounding text would provide all the clarification necessary for readers to understand.[142]

As we can see, there is contention between More and Tyndale over how English words were and ought to be used to express theological ideas. In other words, the two men disputed with each other over *traditional* vernacular theology; which they could not have done had there been no tradition. Cummings' insistence,

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[137] More, *CWM*, vol. 8. Part II, 167.

[138] More, *CWM,* vol. 8, Part II, 212.

[139] Anne O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, eds., *An Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Washington D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 13, 15-16, 19, 21-22.

[140] Cummings, *Literary Culture,* 214.

[141] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 13, 15, 19-20, 21-22.

[142] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 20.

therefore, that Fisher and Tyndale had to 'invent' a 'new language' to accommodate the expression of religious doctrine in English needs to be broadened to recognize and include the already existing theological language and traditional meanings of words.[143] If we compare how Tyndale used 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love' with the way the authors of earlier religious texts used them, we find that Tyndale did nothing drastic or innovative with the terms. Though, while translating the Bible, he may have had to coin new words or phrases or enlarge the meaning of already existing English words, this was not the case with 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love'. Tyndale's use of these words was congruent with the authors who came before him. This is an important discovery that sheds additional light on the debate between More and Tyndale.

Six early English religious texts have been chosen to serve as a comparison for Tyndale's use of 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love'. The first five, discussed in detail in chapter one, were selected because of their popularity, significant scriptural content, and theological teaching. These texts are: Bishop John Fisher's sermons on the S*even penytencyall psalms* (1504), John Alcock's *Mons perfectionis* (1496), John Mirk's *Festial* (*c.*1380), Nicholas Love's *Mirrour* (*c.* 1410)*,* and Thomas á Kempis' (*d.*1471) *Imitatio.* Hilton's *Scala* will also be included because of its popularity and because it is the third book that More recommended as appropriate reading for lay people. Other early English religious texts will be referred to as needed.

To stay true to the order of the More/Tyndale debate, we will begin by examining 'senior/elder'. Because chapter four contains a detailed discussion of the disagreement between More and Tyndale over how the Greek word *presbuteros* should be translated, the essentials of the quarrel do not need to be repeated. Our purpose is to examine More's and Tyndale's claims about the common usage of the words 'senior' and 'elder'. In his 1526 New Testament, Tyndale rendered *presbuteros* as 'senior'. But deciding that 'senior' was 'no very good english', he subsequently changed it to 'elder'.[144] In the *Dyaloge,* More claimed that 'in our englysshe tonge this worde senyor sygnyfyeth no thynge at all / but is a frenche worde used in englysshe more than halfe in mockage / whan one wyll call another my lorde in scorne'.[145] He then admits that Tyndale, rather than using the French

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[143] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 188, 214.

[144] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 15.

[145] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 286.

word, may have borrowed, or 'englished', the Latin Vulgate term for *presbuteros* which was *senior*. More acknowledged that 'among the latines *senior* sygnyfyed' nothing but an elder man, but then insisted that 'an elder man' in English plainly signified the 'alderman of the cytees'.[146] In his opinion, neither the French 'senior' nor the Latin *senior* was an appropriate choice if Tyndale was looking for an English word that meant 'older man'. In the *Confutacyon,* More gave Tyndale no credit for substituting 'elder' for 'senior' because he felt that the 'worde elder' was 'so straunge and so lytell knowen'.[147]

What is interesting about these arguments is that each one has to do with a word's signification and common usage. More was perfectly aware that some English words were borrowed from other languages and, in trying to understand Tyndale's thought processes, acknowledged that there was a 'senior' that was borrowed from French and another one, with a different meaning, that could be borrowed from Latin. Richard Jones has demonstrated that the most 'popular, natural, and important' way the English vocabulary was increased in the sixteenth century, was by 'borrowing from the ancient and modern languages, particularly the former.' However, he also admits that by More's day, there were some who were opposed to borrowing words to enrich the English vocabulary because they felt that English was 'sufficient to express all ideas.'[148]

In the *Dyaloge,* More's Chancellor admitted that English was 'barayne of wordys' but insisted that it had a sufficient vocabulary for people to express themselves on any subject without difficulty. He also believed that English could support a vernacular translation of the Bible.[149] In Jones' opinion, the 'earliest expressions of confidence in the mother tongue originated in More's circle'.[150] It appears, therefore, that in the case of 'senior' and 'elder', More was not opposed to borrowed words as long as they were widely known and had a widely accepted meaning. However, he rejected 'senior' and 'elder' because the former lacked the proper signification and the latter was unknown. More contended that Tyndale 'must in englysshe let englysshe words stande in hys englysshe translacyon'.[151]

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[146] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 286; More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 185.

[147] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 182.

[148] Jones, *Triumph*, 75-76, 89.

[149] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 337.

[150] Jones, *Triumph,* 89.

[151] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 187.

Tyndale's comments about the common usage of 'senior' and 'elder' are brief. He stated that 'senior and junior' were used in the universities and admitted that the university terms are what came to his 'mynde' as he wrestled to translate *presbuteros*. After his New Testament was published, he decided to reject 'senior' because he felt that it was 'no veri good english'. This statement presumably means that Tyndale felt that 'senior', as used in the universities, was not the best equivalent for *presbuteros*. His repeated references to the Latin Vulgate's equivalent of *presbuteros*, *senior* ('an elder man'), indicate that Tyndale preferred the meaning of the Latin *senior* but wanted to find a suitable English equivalent that would not be confused with the unsuitable university 'senior'.[152] More accused Tyndale of having to ride 'many myle[s]' to discover the little known word 'elder', but Tyndale insisted that 'elder' had the same meaning in English that the Latin *senior* had in Latin.[153]

Fortunately, the polarisation of the More/Tyndale debate over 'senior' and 'elder' can be softened by the evidence contained in other vernacular religious texts of the period. In spite of what More said about 'elder' being the strange and little known word, a close analysis of the six religious texts chosen for comparison demonstrates that 'senior' is the least used of the two. There were no instances of 'senior' in the *Imitatio,* the *Myrrour*, the *Scala*, *Mons perfectionis*, the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, or the *Festial*. However, 'senior' is used frequently in one very popular book, *The Golden Legende*. Introduced briefly in chapter one, the *Legende,* compiled by the Dominincan Jacobus de Voragine (1230-1296) in the 1260s, was the most widely copied and translated work in medieval Europe, excepting the Bible. The *Legende*, written in Latin, was translated into all the western European languages, reaching an enormous audience. It has been preserved in more than a thousand manuscripts.[154] Moreover, the printing press enabled hundreds of additional editions to be published. In England there were ten between 1483 and 1527. The first English translation of the *Legende* is attributed to William Caxton who based his version on a French translation by Jean de Vignay.[155]

The *Legende* was a narrative of significant portions of the Bible and of saints' lives. It was designed as preaching material for less educated clergymen who

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[152] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 15-16.

[153] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 182; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 15-16.

[154] Aviad Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word* (London: The Belknap Press, 2008), 239.

[155] Online ESTC.

needed assistance in composing sermons for feast days.[156] As discussed in chapter one, the *Legende* was the model for Mirk's *Festial*. Van Kampen explains that Caxton's version of the *Legende* was 'much more than its ancestor'. This is because Caxton added many of his own personal experiences and observations and purposefully added a separate chapter entitled 'Bible Stories'. This section included passages from the Old Testament that are remarkably faithful to the Latin Vulgate text of the Bible and which contain Latin transcriptions of Bible passages followed by English translations.[157]

It is significant that in the Bible story section, Caxton always used the word 'senyor' to refer to the men who counselled and assisted Israel's prophets and kings, such as Moses and King David. For example, in the recitation of the Israelite exodus from Egyptian slavery, Caxton translated God's words to Moses, from Exodus chapter three, as: 'Go and gather together the senyors and aged men of Israell'.[158] The corresponding passage (Exodus 3:16) in the Latin Vulgate Bible also uses the word 'seniores'. However, in other passages where the Vulgate refers to the leaders of Israel it sometimes has a form of *venerabilis* (meaning venerable), but Caxton renders all of those as 'senyores'.[159] As far as I am aware, Caxton's use of 'senior' has not been noticed by other scholars.

Considering the popularity of the *Legende* and that it was used as preaching material by less educated priests, it seems that the word 'senyore', as understood to mean an 'elder man in a position of leadership', would have been well-known. Clearly, Caxton borrowed, or 'englished', the Latin word *senior* for his English translation of the *Legende*. That Tyndale was familiar with the *Legende* is evident in the *Answere* where he accused the heads of the traditional church not only of corrupting scripture, but of putting 'the stories that shuld in many thynges helpe us / cleane out of the waye.' He asserted, 'They have corrupte[d] the legend and lives all most of all sayntes'.[160]

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[156] Kleinberg, *Flesh*, 241-242.

[157] Van Kampen, 'Biblical Books', 83; Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legende* (Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, 1493), STC (2nd ed.) / 24875, EEBO, verso folio xiv-recto folio xxv, images 18L – 21R.

[158] Jacobus, *Golden Legende,* verso folio xxii, image 26L.

[159] Jacobus, *Golden Legende*, verso folio xxvi and verso folio xxxvii, images 30L & 40L; Latin Vulgate.Com. 'Latin Vulgate Bible' http:// www.latinvulgate.com [accessed 14 July 2011], Exodus 18:12; 2 Samuel 5:3.

[160] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 46; O'Donnell & Wicks believe that this is a reference to *The Golden Legende* by Jacobus de Voragine, 277.

Interestingly, the *Legende* also makes use of the word 'elder'. The word appears most often when an individual in the narrative is designated as the oldest child among his or her siblings.[161] However, 'elder' is also used in reference to older men in positions of authority. In the section devoted to the feast of St. Peter, there is a story of a monk who is visited by devils who appear to him in the shape of his good and bad deeds. One devil introduces himself as 'I am obedience / which thou dydest to thyne elders and soveraynes'.[162] There is another reference to 'elder' in the narrative of the life of St. Katharine when she refuses to follow the counsel of the nobles and get married. Her mother, with some exasperation, says: 'doughter leve thys foly / and doo as your noble elders doon tofore you'.[163]

We gain further insight into the meaning of both 'elder' and 'senior' in the *Legende's* narrative of Saint James the Less. The author explains that though Saint James the Less was older in age than Saint James the More, he was called 'the lasse' because he entered the apostleship after Saint James the More and, as was tradition in religious houses, seniority was designated by length of service, not physical age.[164] This claim is substantiated in the printed version of *The rule of seynt Benet,* the rule book for the Benedictine religious orders. It was printed by Richard Pynson in 1517 at the request of Richard Fox (1447/8–1528), Bishop of Winchester, who wanted to encourage the nuns in his diocese to remain as much as possible inside their monasteries.[165] *The rule* explains exactly what the *Legende* says about seniority in the religious orders. Those who were in the order longer were called 'elders' and those who were newer were called 'juniors'.[166] The word 'elder' is used repeatedly, but in some places the word 'senior' is used as a synonym for 'elder'. In a passage instructing the sisters to show obedience 'each to the other', the juniors are told that they 'shall obey' their seniors with all 'cheryte and

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[161] Jacobus, *The Golden Legende*, verso folio xlii, verso folio Clxv, recto folio Clxxxxv, images 50L, 172R, 202R.

[162] Jacobus, *Golden Legende*, recto folio Ccxxxvi, image 242R.

[163] *Ibid*, recto folio Ccclxxv, image 396R.

[164] *Ibid*, verso folio Clxv, image 172L.

[165] ODNB, 'Richard Fox'.

[166] Saint Benedict, *Here begynneth the rule of seynt Benet* (London: Richard Pynson, 1517), STC (2nd ed.) / 1859, EEBO, recto folio Giii, image 38R.

diligence'.[167] Later in the book the juniors are admonished to 'have in remembrance your seniors and elders'.[168]

The way 'senior' and 'elder' are used in *The rule* to designate seniority based on experience and length of service may have been how 'senior' was understood at the universities in Tyndale's day and this would explain why he felt that it wasn't a good equivalent for '*presbuteros'*. The OED states that at schools or colleges, senior refers 'to a pupil or student who has been longer under tuition than another' and at certain universities the term is 'used in designations connoting a specific standing'. However, the earliest date the OED gives for both of these definitions is 1651.[169] In spite of this, the *Legende* and *The Rule* demonstrate that 'senior' and 'elder' were not unknown terms in English and that they had multiple meanings in the early sixteenth century.

Tyndale's understanding of 'elder' as 'an older man' is further vindicated when other religious texts are consulted. Mirk's *Festial* uses 'elder' to indicate age as well as responsibility. In a description of the saints, it states: 'The holy sayntes the whiche ben in heven were sometime as we be now / bothe in flesshe / blode / body / and bone / and were our elder fathers'.[170] Fisher used 'elder' in his first sermon against Luther when he stated, 'First almighty god the father instructed our elders by his prophetes'.[171] Love's *Myrrour* goes even further and uses 'aldere men' whenever the leaders of the Jews are described. For example, in a passage from Matthew 26, the *Myrrour* reads: 'when the princes of preestes with the aldere men & scribes were gathered in caiphas hows the bishop, console how they miht by sleyght take Jesu & sle him'.[172] Tyndale's 1526 translation of the same passage reads:

[167] *Ibid*, recto folio Gvii, image 43R.

[168] *Ibid*, verso folio Bv, image 12L.

[169] OEDO, 'senior'.

[170] John Mirk, *Festyvall* (Fletestreet: Wynkyn de Worde, 1519), STC (2nd ed.) / 17973.5, EEBO, image 152R.

[171] John Fisher, 'The sermon of Johan the bysshop of Rochester made agayn the pernicious doctryn of Martin luuther,' in *The English Works of John Fisher,* ed. John E. B. Mayor (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1973), 332.

[172] Sargent, *The Mirror,* 143; other places where Love uses 'aldere men' can be found on 166, 170.

> 'Then assembled togedder the chefe prestes and scrybes and seniours of the people into the palice off the hye preste, which was called Cayphas: and heelde a counsel, howe they mygt take Jesus by suttelte, and kyll him'.[173]

Clearly, Love and Tyndale were on the same page even though Love would have followed the Latin Vulgate Bible in making his translation and Tyndale used the Greek. In the place where Love and Tyndale put 'aldere men' and 'senior' the Greek New Testament has *presbuteros* and the Latin Vulgate has *senior*.[174] Love's use of 'aldere men' demonstrates his understanding that 'aldere men' was an acceptable English equivalent for the Latin *senior* and that it meant 'elder men'. Therefore, More's claim that 'an elder man' in English plainly signified the 'alderman of the cytees' does not hold up.

As we can see, Tyndale's choices of 'senior' and 'elder' were not out of the ordinary as far as the English language was concerned. Other authors of religious texts, who were all considered orthodox in their beliefs, had used these words in identical or nearly identical ways; suggesting that 'senior' and 'elder' were more widely known and used than More knew, or more probably, was willing to acknowledge. In using 'senior' and 'elder' in his translation of the New Testament, Tyndale did not coin any new words or create any new meanings, but instead attached greater authority to the words and meanings that were already in use and placed those words in a position where their theological meaning could undermine the theology associated with the traditional word 'priest'.

As discussed in chapter four, the contemporary reports of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal's public denunciation of the textual errors in Tyndale's New Testament at St. Paul's Cross indicate that the lay people had no objection to Tyndale's English renderings and thought the translation a good one. Perhaps lay acceptance of Tyndale's translation had less to do with lay ignorance of, or inability to comprehend, the philological and theological issues involved with the Greek words and more to do with their thorough understanding of the meaning of the English equivalents that Tyndale chose. After all, Watson has argued that there were big gaps between academics who argued about vernacular religious texts and the laity who read and used them.[175] Tyndale, a translator who was faithful to the 'rough everyday Greek'

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[173] W. R. Cooper, ed., *William Tyndale*: *The New Testament 1526* (London: The British Library, 2000), 62.

[174] Latin Vulgate.Com, Matt. 26:3; Scripture 4 All. 'Greek Interlinear Bible' http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek [accessed 28 June 2011], Matt. 26:3.

[175] Watson, 'Censorship', 851.

and used a form of English 'only a notch above ordinary speech' seems to have had his thumb on the pulse of the language of the common people in a way that More did not want to allow.[176]

Unfortunately, due to their executions in the mid-1530s, neither More nor Tyndale witnessed the coming forth of the many English translations of the Bible after 1536 and did not see how subsequent translators rendered *presbuteros* into English. More may have been chagrined to discover that all of the cardinal translations of the English Bible that came after Tyndale's New Testament followed Tyndale and used the word 'elder' as a suitable English equivalent for *presbuteros*. The translators of the *Coverdale Bible* (1535), the *Matthew Bible* (1537), the *Great Bible* (1540), the *Geneva Bible* (1560/1587), the *Bishop's Bible* (1568), and the *King James Bible* (1611) rendered *presbuteros*, which appears sixty-seven times in the Greek New Testament, as 'elder' in sixty-four of the sixty-seven instances. The three remaining instances of *presbuteros* were translated into single instances of 'old', 'eldest', and 'old men' in all of the Bible versions.[177] Therefore, none of the translators followed More's wishes that *presbuteros* be translated as 'priest'. This is true even in the passages where *presbuteros* is used to designate the leaders of the primitive Christian church.[178] Theologically this means that Bible translators agreed with Tyndale's assertions that the leaders of the primitive Christian church were learned, spiritually experienced, older, and most importantly, *un-anointed* laymen. Therefore, in the case of *presbuteros*, Tyndale's 'elder' not only triumphed philologically over More's 'priest', but theologically.

As Gerald Bray observes, until '1582 it had been almost taken for granted that the English Bible was a Protestant enterprise' so perhaps the consistent rendering of *presbuteros* as 'elder' is unsurprising given the theological standpoint of the reformers.[179] However, the *Douai-Rheims Bible* (1582/1609), the first Catholic English translation, didn't even handle the matter the way More wanted. The Rheims translators pointedly declared in the preface that they desired to precisely and religiously follow the 'old vulgar approved Latin' even if it meant introducing

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[176] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 138.

[177] Analysis done by author using on-line versions of all of these Bibles which are available at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 28 June 2011].

[178] See: Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4, 20:17, 18; 1 Tim. 5:1,17,19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1,5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; Revelation 4:4,10; 5:5,6,8,10,11,14; 17:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4.

[179] Gerald Bray, ed., *Translating the Bible: From William Tyndale to King James* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2010), 22.

awkward or unfamiliar English words into their translation.[180] This devotion to Latin vocabulary, as well as the attempt to make the English language as much like Latin as possible, made the translation unintelligible in places and doomed the wider success of Rheims New Testament from the start.[181]

The Rheims translators rendered *senior*, the Latin equivalent of the Greek *presbuteros*, into the archaic sounding English word 'ancient' in all fifty-nine instances where *senior* appears in the Latin text. The Vulgate text adopts *presbyteros* on six occasions, rather than using *senior,* and the Rheims translators rendered *presbyteros* as 'priest'.[182] More would certainly have been happy with that decision, but in the *Confutacyon*, he explained that he would have been happier had the Latin Vulgate not used the Latin *senior* at all. Citing Erasmus as support, he argued that Jerome should have used the Latinized *presbyteros* as the Latin equivalent for the Greek *presbuteros* throughout his translation of the New Testament rather than the Latin *senior.* This was because *presbuteros* 'sygnyfyeth authoryte with the grekes / where *seniors* in latine sygnygyeth but theyr age'.[183]

Though More would have been unhappy with the way *presbuteros* was translated by reformers and Catholics alike, the second objectionable word, 'congregation', has a different story. The details of the debate over 'congregation' and 'church' can be found in chapter four, but the main issues of the controversy centred on the common usages of 'congregation' and 'church'. More insisted that 'congregation' was not a suitable English equivalent for the Greek *ekklēsia* because it was an English word 'wythoute any sygnyfycacyon of crystendome' and because the English people had never used 'congregation' to mean a 'number of crysten people'.[184] Linguistically, Tyndale shied away from translating *ekklēsia* as 'church' because he felt that the common people understood 'church' to mean the body of the clergy. Tyndale wanted a word that more accurately reflected the scriptural meaning of the church of Christ as 'a congregation' of all degrees of people. While acknowledging that 'congregation' was 'a moore general terme', he argued that 'the

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[180] Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 178, 163.

[181] *Ibid,* 19.

[182] Analysis done by the author using on-line versions of the Douai-Rheims and the Latin Vulgate Bibles available at Latin Vulgate.Com, http://www.latinvulgate.com [accessed 29 June 2011].

[183] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 185.

[184] More, *CWM,* vol. 8, Part II, 167-168, 170, 172.

circumstaunce doeth ever tell what congregacyon ys ment', and that the generality of the term 'hurteth not'.[185]

More's and Tyndale's assertions about 'congregation' have long been in need of assessment. Early sixteenth-century religious texts provide ample evidence that More was right in arguing that 'congregation' did not necessarily represent a body of Christian people, but wrong in suggesting that English people never used 'congregation' to refer to a body of Christian people. Three of the six comparison texts have instances where 'congregation' is used to refer to a body of Christian people. For example, in his sermons on the S*even penytencyall psalms*, Fisher explained how the gospel of Christ needed to be taught throughout the entire world. He felt that God's angels were interested in the earth and wanted to bless and help those upon it. He stated: 'thyn aungelles shall . . . praye to thy hyghnes for the hole congregacyon of al crysten people.'[186] Later on, Fisher interpreted a Latin passage of scripture from Psalm 102 as:

> We may be superedyfycate upon cryst the very foundacyon of thapostles & prophetes Joyned unto hym the moost hygh corner stone, in whome & by whome began & encreaseth every edyficacion & congregacyon of crysten people in our lorde.[187]

It is interesting that in both passages, Fisher chose 'congregation' to refer to a body of Christian people instead of 'church'. It is also very clear that Fisher meant a body of Christian people because the word 'crysten' is present. Tyndale was correct, therefore, in arguing that if 'congregation' was used instead of 'church', the circumstances of the text would indicate what group of people was meant. Ironically, some authors including More, defined 'church' using the word 'congregation'. In the *Myrrour* Love states, 'For in the baptisme bene soules weddet to crist, & the congregacion of christen soules is cleped holi chirch'.[188] In the *Dyaloge*, More's Chancellor twice defined 'the hole chyrch' as 'the hole congregacyon of crysten people professynge his name and his fayth / and abydynge in the body of the same'.[189]

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[185] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 13.

[186] John Fisher, 'Treatise concernynge . . . the Seven Penytencyall Psalmes' in Mayor, *English Works*, 178.

[187] *Ibid*, 180.

[188] Sargent, *Mirror*, 44.

[189] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 107, 118.

Significantly, the word 'congregation' is commonly used in religious texts to refer to monasteries and other companies of those who chose a religious lifestyle. In the *Imitatio* it states, 'Hit is no litel thinge [for] a man to dwelle in monasteries and congregacions'.[190] Love's *Myrrour* has similar descriptions of those that dwell 'in religiouse congregations' and live in 'comune congregacion' with one another.[191] The *Rule of Seynt Benet* explains to its readers that 'rules/doctrines/and instruccions' were given to increase the 'stableness and stedfastnes of religiose conversacion in the convent and congregacion'. There are also repeated references to the times when the sisters in a monastery meet in 'congregation' for prayer, meals, and for instruction.[192] Since monasteries were made up of Christian people, the word 'congregation' was, in certain contexts, specifically associated with Christians, as More insisted it was not.

Tyndale, therefore, in choosing 'congregation' as the English equivalent of the Greek *ekklēsia* did not step out of the common usage or understanding of the word. As with 'elder', Tyndale's use of 'congregation' in his New Testament gave the word greater authority than it may have had previously and placed it in a position to undermine the traditional Catholic theology that attended the word 'church'. Translators of the Bible who came after Tyndale agreed with him and consistently translated *ekklēsia* as 'congregation' until the late 1550s. The Greek New Testament uses the word *ekklēsia* 112 times throughout the twenty-seven different books. Up until the *Geneva New Testament* of 1557, all English Bible translations after 1526 rendered *ekklēsia* as 'congregation' in every instance and also used 'congregation' as an equivalent for *sunhedron* and *synagogue*.[193] Therefore, Tyndale's philological understanding of 'congregation' and the theology attending it long held sway in English Bible translation.

However, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the pendulum swung back in favour of 'church' and its accompanying theology. Beginning with the *Geneva New Testament*, which is generally attributed to William Whittingham, an Oxford scholar who was living in exile in Geneva during the reign of Mary I, 'church'

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[190] Biggs, *The Imitation of Christ*, 20.

[191] Sargent, *Mirror*, 47, 70, 71.

[192] Benedict, *The rule of Seynt Benet*, verso folio Bv, recto folio Diii, verso folio Ci, verso folio Gii, verso folio Giii, images 12L, 21R, 26L, 38L, 39L.

[193] Calculations made by the author using Tyndale's 1526 & 1534 New Testaments, the *Coverdale Bible*, the *Matthew Bible*, and the *Great Bible*.

replaced 'congregation' as the favoured English equivalent for the Greek *ekklēsia*.[194] Breaking with more than thirty years of English Bible translation tradition, Whittingham rendered *ekklēsia* as 'church' ninety-seven of the 112 instances and used 'congregation' for *ekklēsia* only twelve times.[195]

Whittingham's choice to use 'church' rather than 'congregation' is as curious as it is abrupt. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to thoroughly explore and explain it, the change does, however, seem to be linked to the political and cultural circumstances of the 1550s. Geneva, at the time Whittingham lived and worked there, was the home of John Calvin, the French Protestant theologian, Biblical scholar, and author of the influential *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536). It was a haven for the evangelical English exiles that fled to the Continent shortly after Mary I became Queen of England in 1553.[196]

But even more importantly, Geneva was a centre of Biblical scholarship and printing. In 1551, Robert Estienne, also known as *Robertus Stephanus* in Latin, published a new edition of his Greek New Testament which divided the Biblical text into verses for the first time. Italian and Spanish Bibles were published in Geneva in the mid-1550s and at least twenty-two editions of French Bibles were published between 1550 and 1560.[197] At the heart of Geneva's Biblical scholarship was the new university, the Academy of Geneva, which was formally inaugurated on 5 June 1555 with Theodore de Bèza (1518-1605) as its first rector. The Academy's most important work was 'the making of vernacular Bibles from the best Hebrew and Greek texts.'[198] Beza, as he is known in English, was an accomplished Latin and Greek scholar and in 1556 published a new Latin translation of the New Testament. He would later publish a Greek New Testament in 1565. Whittingham's English translation of the New Testament, the first to adopt Estienne's numbered verses, was modelled after Beza's Latin translation and it would go on to become the base for the New Testament of the complete *Geneva Bible* published in 1560.[199]

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[194] Lloyd E. Berry, 'Introduction,' in *The Geneva Bible: a Facsimile of the 1560 edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007), 9; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 279.

[195] Calculated by the author using Whittigham's New Testament of 1557 at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 7 July 2011].

[196] Berry, *The Geneva Bible,* 4.

[197] *Ibid,* 7.

[198] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 279.

[199] Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 12; Berry, *The Geneva Bible*, 11.

The *Geneva Bible*, described by Daniell as a 'masterpiece of Renaissance scholarship and printing and Reformation Bible thoroughness' quickly became the most popular Bible in England and continued to be so until the 1660s when it was forced out of public view by the political and commercial interests of the English government.[200] Lloyd Berry argues that the *Geneva Bible's* popularity was due to the 'aids' that the Geneva translators added.[201] The *Geneva Bible* was designed to be a study Bible for lay people and it came complete with copious marginal notes to aid the reader in understanding difficult parts of the text, numbered verses, and italicized words to indicate where English additions had been made to the original text.[202] The translators, including Whittingham, Miles Coverdale, and John Knox, furthered the 1557 New Testament's use of 'church' by rendering *ekklēsia* as 'church' 107 of the 112 instances and only using 'congregation' to signify *ekklēsia* twice.[203]

The *Bishop's Bible* of 1568, a translation instigated and promoted by Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an effort to provide a translation that would replace the objectionable *Geneva Bible* (its marginal notes were considered too Calvinistic by Parker and other Bishops), followed the *Geneva Bible* exactly and rendered *ekklēsia* as 'church' 107 of the 112 times. 'Congregation' was used only twice to represent *ekklēsia*. The *King James Bible* of 1611, a revision of the 1572 *Bishop's Bible*, rendered *ekklēsia* as 'church' 109 of the 112 times. 'Congregation' was used only once to represent the Greek *sunagoge*.[204] As we can see, by the time of the KJB, 'congregation' was no longer used as an equivalent for the Greek *ekklēsia* in English Bibles.

Clearly, Whittingham's New Testament is the starting point where 'congregation' began its rapid voyage out of the Biblical text. Bray has argued that Whittingham and his associates benefitted enormously from the critical editions of the original Hebrew and Greek texts that had been published in the early 1550s and

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[200] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 291, 294; Lori Anne Ferrrell, *The Bible and the People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 83.

[201] Berry, *The Geneva Bible*, 13.

[202] Berry, *The Geneva Bible*, 12; Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 12.

[203] Calculations made by the author using the *Geneva Bible* of 1560 at Geneva Bible 1560/1599 at http://www.genevabible.org and the Geneva Bible of 1587 at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 7 July 2011].

[204] Calculations made by the author using the Bishop's Bible of 1568 and the King James Bible of 1611 at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 7 July 2011].

from the great strides that had been made in Biblical scholarship by the time work on the *Geneva New Testament* and the *Geneva Bible* began.[205] Perhaps Whittingham's decision to change from 'congregation' to 'church' was related to the improvements in source texts and scholarship.

However, it is worth noting that during the time the *Geneva New Testament* was being translated, the competition between the rising early modern European nation-states in the areas of learning, writing, and right religion was underway. As discussed more fully in chapter two, the English ex-Carmelite John Bale (1495–1563) wanted England to lead the way in the competition and, while living in exile in Basel in 1557, published his *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytannie* [. . .]*Catalogus*. The *Catalogus* was a history of British writing and a history of British religion. Its purpose was to prove that Britain had a long and glorious tradition in history and religion and to refute the persistent Catholic argument that the evangelicals believed in a religion that was invented by Luther.[206] Bale's *Catalogus* demonstrated a spiritual and theological continuity between contemporary reformers and the primitive church and it portrayed England as an elect country chosen for the reestablishment of the true faith.[207]

Bale's ideas were not only influential, but they were published in the same year that Mary Tudor began her reign as Queen of England. Tom Furniss explains that the concept of the chosen people of God being 'marked out by a history of exile, martyrdom and the struggle to survive as a persecuted minority' was a 'compelling interpretive paradigm for the experience of English Protestants under Mary Tudor.' Bale's link between English national identity and reformed religion was strengthened by perceiving Mary as a '"foreign" tyrant, promoting antichristian idolatry and persecuting those who held to the true faith'.[208] As we saw in chapter two, it wasn't until the 1550s that English evangelicals needed to look to previous reformers, such as Wycliffe, and to claim them as their spiritual forefathers.

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[205] Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 12.

[206] Herbert Grabes, 'British Cultural History and Church History for the Continent: John Bale's *Summarium* (1548) and *Catalogus* (1557-9),' in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe,* eds. Andreas Höfele & Werner von Koppenfels, (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 139-40.

[207] David Loades, 'Introduction,' in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997), 2; Grabes, 'British Cultural History', 147-48.

[208] Tom Furniss, 'Reading the Geneva Bible: Notes toward an English Revolution?' *Prose Studies*, vol.31, issue 1, (2009): 2.

Perhaps the change from 'congregation' to 'church' in the *Geneva New Testament* of 1557 was a reflection of Bale's ideas about England and its divine election as the home of Christ's true 'church'. Theologically, 'congregation', as Tyndale knew, does not carry the same weight and authority as the word 'church', which is one of the reasons that Tyndale selected it.[209] In the 1550s, with a very Catholic Queen Mary on the throne and with religious 'persecution sharp and furious', English evangelicals would have needed a stronger word than 'congregation' to assert their position as members of the true 'church' and to further their belief in England's divine election as the home of the true church.[210] Though Thomas More may not have agreed with the reasons why Whittingham changed from 'congregation' to 'church', he did finally have his day in the battle with Tyndale over the two words.

The third round in the More/Tyndale debate was over the Greek word *agapē* and whether or not it should be translated as 'charity', which More favoured, or 'love', which Tyndale favoured. The details of the debate can be found in chapter four, but the essentials of the argument centred on the common usage and understanding of 'charity' and 'love'. More insisted that since the Greek *agapē* represented a 'godly' type of love, 'charity' was the best English equivalent because it signified 'in englysh mennys erys / not every comon love / but a good virtuous and well ordred love'.[211] More felt that 'love', because it was a more general term, could mean something 'good or evyll' but that 'charity' unquestionably signified 'no love but a good godly love' and should be used in the New Testament text whenever it would 'convenyently stande'.[212]

Tyndale disagreed with More over the interpretation of *agapē*; arguing that it had a wider sense than a godly type of love and that it was 'comen unto all loves'. He felt that 'love' was a better English equivalent for *agapē* than 'charity' because it had the same wide 'sens' as the Greek word.[213] Tyndale not only insisted that 'charite' was not known in 'Englesh in that sens which agape requireth' but that most people who used the word had no idea what it meant. He sarcastically quipped, 'For when we saye / geve youre almes in the worshepe of God and swete saint charite /

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[209] Juhász, 'Antwerp Bible translations', 108.

[210] Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 110.

[211] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 288.

[212] More, *CWM*, vol. 8, Part II, 199-299,

[213] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 19-20.

and when the father teacheth his sonne to saye blissing father for saint charite / what meane they? In good faith they wot not.'[214] The confusion with the word 'charity' was exacerbated, in Tyndale's opinion, by the fact that people used it to mean alms giving, patience, and mercy as well as 'godly love'. This led him, while translating, to use 'this general terme love / in spite of mine herte often tymes', suggesting that he may have wanted to use 'charity' in certain places, but thought better of it. [215] In the 1526 and 1534 translations of his New Testament, Tyndale rendered *agapē* as 'love' 242 of the 252 instances where *agapē* appears in the Greek text. He used 'charity' as an equivalent for *agapē* only once, in a passage from Romans 14, as well as six instances of 'beloved' and single instances of 'favour', 'kindness', and 'dear'.[216]

As with 'senior/elder' and 'congregation', Tyndale's and More's arguments about the common usage of 'love' and 'charity' need to be assessed. I have carefully noted and studied every instance of 'love' and 'charity' in the S*even penytencyall psalms, Mons perfectionis*, the *Festial,* the *Myrrour,* the *Imitatio* and the *Scala* and have found that in every book except the *Scala*, 'love' is used more than twice as often as 'charity'. In the *Scala*, 'love' is used only slightly more often than 'charity'.

One of the reasons for 'love's' greater frequency is because 'love' in English can function as a noun, a verb, and an adjective while 'charity' only functions as a noun or an adjective. As Tyndale rightly said to More, one does not say in English 'charite god or charite your neyboure but love God and love youre neyboure'.[217] Because the word 'charity' cannot be used as a verb, 'charity' is partially dependent upon 'love' for its active tense while 'love', with its wider grammatical versatility is not dependent upon 'charity' at all. This one-sided grammatical relationship complicates the use of 'love' and 'charity'. [218]

The meaning of the two words only adds to the grammatical complications. The OED lists the first English instances of 'charity' beginning in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and defines it as 'Christian love: a word representing

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[214] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 19.

[215] Tyndale, *Answere*, 20.

[216] Calculations done by the author by using the British Library's facsimile of Tyndale's 1526 New Testament and Tyndales 1534 New Testament at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 7 July 2011].

[217] O'Donnell, *Answere*, 20.

[218] Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 23, 206-213.

caritas of the Vulgate'. The OED indicates that 'charity' has various applications. 'Charity' can mean 'God's love to man, man's love to God, and man's love to his fellow-human beings'. These definitions quickly reveal that 'charity' is defined using the word 'love'; linking one's understanding of 'charity' to one's understanding of 'love'. Again, this is a one-way relationship because one does not understand 'love' in terms of 'charity'.[219]

Contemporaries of More and Tyndale understood all of this very well, if not in theory, at least in practice. In the *Festial*, Mirk explained that 'charyte' is 'the ende and perfeccyon of all the commaundementes of God. And understand in this / that thou love God above all thynge[s]'. Later on he stated, 'charyte stondethe in the love of god and love of thy neyghboure . . . This is charyte the fulfyllynge of goddis love'.[220] In these two examples, 'charity' is associated with God and with His command to 'love' others in a godly way, but Mirk, in trying to explain the meaning of 'charity', had to resort to the more general word 'love'.

In the *Myrrour*, Love tends to favour 'love' rather than 'charity' when discussing the relationship between God and Christ and between God and man. He wrote, 'there is sovereyn love by twix the fathere [God] and the sone [Christ]'. A few pages later, Love explained that it was Christ's 'great love to man' that made Him 'do the grete dedes of penance' involved in the Atonement.[221] Love's use of 'love', rather than 'charity', to describe the sacred relationship between God and Christ and the sacred, sacrificial relationship between Christ and man is significant. 'Love' is a noun in both places and Love might have chosen to use 'charity' instead. More accused Tyndale of failing to use 'charitie where it might well stand' in the New Testament text, but, as we can see, in electing to use 'love' rather than 'charity', Tyndale did not do anything drastic.

This is further substantiated by the *Imitatio*. The *Imitatio* has significantly more references to 'love' than any of the other texts analysed. Its nearest neighbour was Love's *Myrrour* which was behind by nearly one-hundred references.[222] In a beautifully descriptive passage, we learn:

> Nothynge is more sweet than is love / no thinge ys more stronge than love. no thynge hygher / larger / metyer / fuller / ne better in heven/ or erth. For love cometh of god . . . Love knoweth no measure. Love makethe man to

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[219] OED Online, 'charity', [accessed 14 July 2011].

[220] Mirk, *Festyvall*, verso folio Clxxvi, verso folio Clxxiii, images 177L & 181L.

[221] Sargent, *Mirror*, 57, 64.

[222] Calculations done by the author.

fele no hardnes ne other burden layde upon hym . . . Love therefore doethe and may do great thynges.[223]

This passage is reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 13 in the New Testament. With such elevating descriptions of the power and divinity of 'love', 'charity' could have been used as well, but was not. The *Imitatio* also describes 'love' as 'a great thinge & an excellent vertue' and insists that the 'love of jesu perfyghtly imptrynted in mannes soule maketh a man to do great thynges'. It also teaches that 'perfyte love hath sure passage to owre Lorde'.[224]

In contrast, however, Fisher's sermons on the S*even penytencyall psalms* frequently has 'charity' in places where More would have wanted it to be. Fisher wrote, '[Christ] offered hymselfe of very grete & fervent charyte unto his fader almighty god as a sacrefyce'. He also taught that the 'more that any prayer is grounded in charyte, the sooner it shall be herde of hym whose commaundement is all charyte'. Fisher even described Christ's apostles as 'shynynge in fayth, stedfast in hope, & brennynge in charyte'.[225] Mirk's *Festial* also repeatedly uses the word 'charity' to represent the highest and most godly type of 'love'. He wrote that there was one thing that brought a soul to heaven the soonest and that was 'charyte'. Echoing 1 Corinthians 13, he stated 'For what virtue that ever a man have & he lacketh charyte it avayleth not to heven wardes'.[226]

Interestingly, many of these authors, rather than differentiating between 'love' and 'charity', habitually named them as a unit. This practice indicates that 'love' and 'charity' were used and understood as synonyms. For example, Hilton insisted in his *Scala* that an active life 'lieth in love and charite schewyd outward in good bodily werkes'. Similarly, he claimed that a 'contemplatif life is in prefight [perfect] love and charite feelid [felt] inwardly bi goostli vertues'.[227] Alcock's *Mons perfectionis* teaches that [Christ] is graunter of lyfe and deth . . . in his fayth / in his love & charyte'. It also explains that 'desyre is the voice of love in charite to almighty god'.[228] The

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[223] Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, verso folio Gv, image 46L.

[224] Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, recto folio Gv, recto folio Eiii, verso folio Cvi, images 45R, 31R, & 23L.

[225] Fisher, *Seven Penitential Psalms*, 110, 170.

[226] Mirk, *Festyvall*, verso folio xiii, image 14L.

[227] Bestul, *Scala*, 32, 33.

[228] John Alcock, *Mons perfectionis, otherwyse in Englysshe, the hylle of perfeccyon* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 1496), STC (2nd ed.) / 278, EEBO, recto folio Ci, verso folio Bii, images 15R and 11L.

Festial also has numerous instances where 'love and charyte' are united. One example instructs that people should fast so that they can 'get grace of the holy ghoost' and 'be in love & charyte to god & to all the worlde'.[229]

As we have seen, Tyndale's use of 'love' to represent 'godly love' was nothing out of the ordinary. Other authors of religious texts used 'love' in that same way and did so more often than they used 'charity'. Therefore, More's insistence that Tyndale use 'charity' in the New Testament wherever it would fit is representative of his own personal preferences and is not a good indication of traditional English theology. It is also evident, that 'charity', no matter what other meanings it might have had, meant 'godly love' and was consistently used in that way by authors of religious texts. Therefore, Tyndale's arguments about the confusing meaning of 'charity' should not be taken too seriously.

The later translators of English Bibles, however, lent their support wholeheartedly to Tyndale's side of the argument and overwhelmingly preferred 'love' over 'charity'. The *Coverdale Bible* (243/252), the *Matthew Bible* (242/252), and the *Great Bible* (242/252) followed Tyndale almost exactly in their renderings of the 252 instances of *agapē* into 'love'. They also followed Tyndale in rendering *agapē* into the other instances of 'beloved' and 'dear'. The *Geneva Bible* (242/252) rendered *agapē* as 'love' with the same frequency as Tyndale; only differing by adding a second 'charity' and a single 'embrace' to the six 'beloveds' and solitary 'dear'. The *Bishop's Bible* (241/252) also rendered *agapē* into 'love' with a frequency only slightly off of Tyndale's but added three additional instances of 'charity' to the six 'beloveds' and single 'dear'. The KJB translators, however, rendered *agapē* as 'love' 216 of the 252 instances and rendered *agapē* as 'charity' twenty-nine times. They maintained the six 'beloveds' and the solitary 'dear'.[230]

Though 'charity' has more of a presence in the KJB than it has in the earlier English translations of the Bible, 'love' certainly dwarfs it. Interestingly, nearly half of the twenty-nine 'charity' renderings in the KJB come from the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians where 'charity' is described as an essential quality for all Christians to possess, never failing, and being the greatest of all the gifts of God.[231] But this is

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[229] Mirk, *Festyvall*, verso folio Cxlu, image 145R; other examples can be found on verso folio xiv, verso folio lxxxiii, and recto folio Clvii, images 47L, 87L, 145R.

[230] Calculations made by the author using the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Matthew Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1540), the Geneva Bible (1560/1587), the Bishop's Bible (1568, and the King James Bible (1611) at Look Higher! http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles [accessed 7 July 2011].

[231] See KJB 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

the only place in the KJB New Testament where 'charity' is the subject of a theologically dense discourse. Whereas 'love' is the subject of many important treatises throughout the KJB, such as in Matthew 5, John 3, John 15, John 21, 1 John 3 and 1 John 4.

The prevalence of 'love' over 'charity' in all of the cardinal English Bible translations is theologically significant because it reflects Tyndale's doctrines on 'love'. Tyndale originally chose 'love' rather than 'charity', because of his belief that salvation was a free gift of Christ to all those who had faith in Him and that good works were not necessary to obtain salvation. As discussed in more detail in chapter four, Tyndale's doctrine focused on what happened within an individual's heart and on his belief that salvation was a passionate matter of the heart. It is unsurprising therefore, that Tyndale wanted the text of the Bible to reflect an inward experience of the heart and why he preferred 'love' over 'charity'. Unfortunately for More, in the battle with Tyndale over 'love' and 'charity', More came up with the short end of the stick linguistically and theologically.

Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter was to fill a large gap in the scholarship surrounding English theology and the language of English theology in the 1520s. Daniell, King, and Cummings are scholars who, for one reason or another, insist that English did not have a theological language or much of a theology prior to the 1520s. This has caused them to portray English theology as beginning when Luther's doctrines were becoming a problem in England. Though there is some truth to the idea that combating Luther's theological interpretations necessitated the creation of new theological English words and caused growth in vernacular theological concepts, it is a mistake to suggest that there was no English theology or theological language before 1521. Detaching the vernacular religious writing of the 1520s from its own past, as these scholars have done, is like replacing a legitimate historical context with an artificial void. This chapter sought to dispel the void and to reconnect the vernacular theology of the mid 1520s with the vernacular theology that came before.

The first half of this chapter demonstrated that there was a vernacular theology before the 1520s. We found that it was in circulation among the educated laity in the form of orthodox vernacular religious texts. These texts were not associated with heresy or censored by the government. Though small in number,

the texts were very popular and contained challenging theology, some of which originated before Arundel's Constitutions were put into effect in 1409.

The second part of this chapter placed the Tyndale/More debate over 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love' into the vernacular theological context established in the first part of the chapter. In all of the scholarship dedicated to the More/Tyndale debate, no one has yet considered it in this light. We analysed how 'senior/elder', 'congregation', and 'love' were used to express theological ideas in printed religious books published between 1500 and 1525 and compared that understanding and usage to More's and Tyndale's arguments about the common usage of those words.

The detailed comparison showed that 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were already part of the vernacular theological language that existed before Tyndale's New Testament was published in 1525. We also found that Tyndale's use of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' in his New Testament was in harmony with the way that the other authors of the orthodox religious books had used the terms. Tyndale did not violate the common and traditional usage of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love', as More claimed; a very important discovery. Instead, by using the words in his New Testament, Tyndale gave them greater authority and placed them in a position to undermine Catholic theology and religious practice.

During the second part of the chapter, we also analysed Tyndale's influence on the language and theology of the six cardinal English Bible translations that were published after his New Testaments. We showed that Tyndale's translations of the Greek *presbuteros* and *agapē* into 'elder' and 'love' were repeatedly and consistently used in every English translation of the Bible between 1526 and 1611. Tyndale's translation of the Greek *ekklēsia* into 'congregation' dominated until 1557 when 'church' was substituted and prevailed in subsequent Bible versions. By the time of the *King James Bible*, Tyndale came out the winner in the contest with More over 'senior/elder' and 'love' while, in the end, More's 'church' triumphed over Tyndale's 'congregation'. Because of his word choices, Tyndale had a significant theological impact on the language of English theology and on later translations of the Bible; something he is not given credit for.

CONCLUSION

In a *Dyaloge concerning heresies*, Thomas More assessed William Tyndale's position as a heretic and concluded that 'Luther as mad as he is was never yet as mad as tyndall is'.[1] More believed Tyndale to be an English emissary of Luther and accused him of soaking 'out the most poyson that he coulde fynde thorowe all Luthers bokes' and other teachings, whether written or by word of mouth, and spreading them into England.[2] Barnett has supported this view, arguing that 'there is no doubt that Tyndale in exile acted as an exporter of Lutheran ideas into his own country.'[3] However, More was theologically astute enough to recognize that many of Tyndale's doctrines were different from Luther's and this was what allowed Tyndale, in More's opinion, to pass 'his master Luther' and to run so much further into malicious madness.[4] Because the *Dyaloge* was commissioned by the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal, perhaps at the instigation of Cardinal Wolsey and the other bishops, More's comments can be taken represent the attitudes of the English government towards Tyndale.[5] These attitudes are substantiated by the government's dedicated efforts to ban, confiscate, and burn Tyndale's books as soon as they were detected in England in the late 1520s.[6] In the eyes of those in positions of authority, Tyndale was the leading English reformer and heretic in the late 1520s and early 1530s.

Unfortunately, modern historiography has not done justice to Tyndale. Daniell has stated that there 'have always been [scholars] who unfashionably recognised something of [Tyndale's] worth', but insists that these are limited to a few specialists in Hebrew, Greek, or to historians of the Bible.[7] Juhász agrees, stating

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[1] Thomas More, 'A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte,' in *CWM,* vol. 6, Part I, 425.

[2] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part I, 424.

[3] Mary Jane Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation: Lollards, Lutherans, and an Economy of Circulation,' *Renaissance Papers* (1996): 1.

[4] More, *CWM*, vol. 6, Part 1, 350, 424-425.

[5] Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, 1938), 363; Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1990), 491.

[6] Barnett, 'Tyndale's Heretical Translation, 7; David Cressy, 'Book Burning in Tudor and Stuart England,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 36, no. 2 (2005): 362.

[7] David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 4.

that the 'scholarly assessment of Tyndale's life and work has lagged behind . . . interest in his biblical translations.'[8] However, Arblaster remarks that 'in recent years awareness of [Tyndale's] contribution to the English language has grown greatly'. He also acknowledges that Tyndale's 'significance as a founding figure of modern English Bible translation and of the Anglo-American Evangelical tradition' is coming to be recognized.[9] Though these acknowledgements are an improvement on the many years of inattention, there is much more research to be done.[10] This thesis has attempted to bring Tyndale's unique theology, intellectual talents, and theological influence more fully into the light so that his contribution to the English Reformation will be more easily recognized and acknowledged. In addition, there are specific implications for the particular arguments that were made in each chapter.

First, our discovery that the most popular vernacular religious texts printed between 1500 and 1525 contained significant portions of scripture that were important, doctrinally informative, and inspiring to readers brings moderation to the polarised claims of Daniell and Duffy. As we have seen, Duffy has given too much credit to the content of the vernacular religious texts, claiming that lay people were satisfied with the books they had and were not demanding access to a vernacular Bible, while Daniell has unfairly dismissed the vernacular religious publications as completely useless for anything save perpetuation of the miraculous stories of Saints' lives.[11] Pettegree's argument that there was growing lay interest in and a lively lay demand for religious literature in English is not only substantiated by our findings, but more fully explained by them. This is because we have exposed the many Biblical passages lay readers had access to in five of the most popular vernacular religious texts printed between 1500 and 1525. We demonstrated the passages' doctrinal depth of meaning and intrinsic potential to create lay desire for

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[8] Gergely Juhász & Paul Arblaster, 'Can Translating the Bible Be Bad for Your Health? William Tyndale and the Falsification of Memory,' in *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*, ed. Johan Leemans (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 337.

[9] Paul Arblaster, 'Tyndale's Posthumous Reputation,' in *Tyndale's Testament,* eds. Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász &Guido Latré (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 55.

[10] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 4.

[11] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous dayes* (1563), STC (2nd ed.) / 11222, EEBO, 514, image 297; Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 156; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 4 & 80; Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 95-100.

further exposure to the Bible. Additionally, chapter one's textual analysis of the Biblical content of the vernacular religious books provides an example of what might be done to assess the Biblical content of other texts of the same time period and how that knowledge will broaden our understanding of lay exposure to, and demand for, a complete English Bible.

Second, this thesis has demonstrated that as the Reformation gained momentum in England, secular and religious leaders began to fight it, in part, by creating connections between the sixteenth-century heretics and those of previous ages. These connections helped those who supported the traditional faith to minimize and dismiss the efforts of the religious reformers. John Wycliffe's name played a prominent role in the connections because he was the first Englishman to stir up significant heresy in England in the late fourteenth century.[12] This important use of Wycliffe's name within the 'chain of heretics' that was created by the secular and religious leaders in England shows that it was the conservatives who first portrayed Wycliffe as the reformers' spiritual ancestor and not the early reformers themselves.

Tyndale and Frith, for example, believed that their doctrines were easily discernible in the Bible and that nothing but the Bible was needed to establish the legitimacy of their claims.[13] They also wished to distance themselves from association with previous heretics and because of this did not utilize Wycliffe as a spiritual forefather.[14] It wasn't until the mid-sixteenth century that religious reformers felt that they needed to establish links to the primitive church in order to give themselves a proper foundation and sense of historical continuity.[15] These important findings contradict Aston's, Crompton's, and in some ways, Kenny's conclusions about the early English reformers' perceptions of themselves and, at the

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[12] Glyn Redworth, 'Whatever happened to the English Reformation?' *History Today,* 37 (1987): 32; Gillian Brennan, 'Patriotism, Language and Power: English Translations of the Bible, 1520-1580,' *History Workshop Journal*, 27 (1989): 27.

[13] William Tyndale, *The Pentateuch* (1530), STC (2nd ed.) / 2350, EEBO, images 3L & 6R; John Frith, *A boke made by John Frith prisoner in the tower of London answeringe vnto M mores lettur which he wrote agenst the first litle treatyse that John Frith made . .* (1533), STC (2nd ed.), 11381, EEBO, image 16R.

[14] William Tyndale, *The prophete Ionas with an introduccio[n] before teachinge to vndersto[n]de*r . . . (1531), STC (2nd ed.) 2788, EEBO, verso folio Biii, image 12L.

[15] Herbert Grabes, 'British Cultural History and Church History for the Continent: John Bale's *Summarium* (1548) and *Catalogus* (1557-9),' in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andreas Höfele & Werner von Koppenfels (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 139-40; David Loades, 'Introduction,' in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 2.

same time, illuminate the neglected religious conservatives' understanding of heresy and its origins. Chapter two suggests that the early English reformers' perceptions of themselves, as well as those of the conservatives, need to be re-examined and that more care should be bestowed on understanding how those perceptions changed as the Reformation progressed.

One of the reasons that secular and religious leaders in England were keen to downplay the position of the reformers was because they were afraid that the reformers' doctrines would stir up heresy and rebellion among the people. [16] This is particularly true when it came to the subject of an English Bible. Though it is correct to say that religious and secular leaders associated vernacular scripture with heresy and rebellion, we found that they were also afraid that an English Bible would destroy the traditional social hierarchy. Tyndale and More were acutely aware that an English Bible had the power to influence change in the traditional social structure and the subject was discussed by both in their published works. We found that Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* contained a unique social hierarchy that was based completely on the Bible. Tyndale hoped his structure would replace the traditional one and that it would eliminate abuse of power on every level. Unfortunately, Tyndale's unique social hierarchy has not received much scholarly attention, but it is one of the strongest witnesses that Tyndale was aware of the concerns about the social structure and was prepared to provide a unique solution to it using his particular brand of theology. More importantly, however, in drawing attention to Tyndale's Bible-based social structure, chapter two proposes that more work could be done on the English Bible's relationship to the traditional social hierarchy and how much of an impact it had on generating change.

Tyndale's ability to create a unique social structure is indicative of his creativity and intellect. But it also represents his belief that the Bible should be the focus of society. In the historiography concerning Tyndale, it is only recently that Tyndale is being given credit for having a distinct theology. Ralph Werrell's work has been instrumental in uncovering the theological uniqueness of Tyndale. He argues that too many scholars have approached Tyndale with preconceived notions and have ignored the body of Tyndale's own writings in their discussions of his

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[16] David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 11; Henry Wansbrough, 'Tyndale,' in *The Bible in the Renaissance,* ed. Richard Griffiths (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 119; Richard Griffiths, 'Introduction,' in Griffiths, *The Bible in the Renaissance,* 4.

theological position.[17] The third implication for this thesis, therefore, is that in following the advice of Werrell and conducting a thorough examination of all of Tyndale's written works, we found that Tyndale, though happy to utilize the work of Luther and Erasmus, did indeed develop his own theology. We saw that he was not afraid to expound his doctrinal interpretations and to disagree with those he admired or borrowed from. Because of this, Tyndale made the English Reformation different from the one taking place on the Continent.

Closely connected with the failure of scholars to credit Tyndale with developing a distinct theology, is their superficial approach to understanding why Tyndale was motivated to translate the Bible into English. Since Tyndale is not perceived as a serious theologian by many scholars, it is easy to dismiss the body of his written works. However, by carefully scrutinising all of Tyndale's publications, we have found that Tyndale was inspired to become a theologian by, and according to, Erasmus' *Methodus verae theologiae.* As an Erasmian theologian, Tyndale desired to make the Bible accessible to English people by translating it into the vernacular. These findings not only provide a more adequate explanation for why Tyndale translated the Bible, but they clarify Tyndale's relationship with Erasmus and with humanism; two subjects that have generated some scholarly controversy and erroneous conclusions about Tyndale's relationship with each.[18] By demonstrating that Tyndale was not a mimic of either Erasmus or Luther and that he, like other men of his day, was not a slave of humanism, but a selective utilizer of it, we have altered the historical portrait of Tyndale and freed him from much unjust and unfounded denigration.

Along with the inadequate account for why Tyndale translated the Bible, modern historiography has not sufficiently explained why Tyndale's first English translation of the New Testament was rejected by religious and secular leaders. The translation was certainly a success among the lay people. Hope has explained that even before the end of 1526, the year that the first edition reached England, Antwerp printers, acutely aware of English markets, were already shipping over

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[17] Ralph Werrell, *The Theology of William Tyndale* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2006), 9-10.

[18] See John N. King, 'John Foxe and Tudor Humanism,' in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism,* ed. Jonathan Woolfson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 181; Alan Stewart, 'The Trouble with English Humanism: Tyndale, More and Darling Erasmus,' in Woolfson, *Reassessing,* 78, 91; Brian Cummings, *Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 198-199; Accusations against Erasmus and More for mercenary writing are found in Anne M. O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, eds., *An Answere unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 140, 170.

pirated editions.[19] By approaching the question of rejection from the primary sources that explain the reasons why the English authorities detested the translation, this thesis found that the translation was burned because authorities believed it was full of an infectious malice. Tyndale's New Testament was not burned because of textual error, as some scholars have argued.[20]

We also found that within the plentiful scholarship surrounding the debate between More and Tyndale over the three most objectionable English words, 'congregation', senior/elder', and 'love', the constant accusations of malice that run throughout the exchange have been overlooked. Therefore, chapter four has shown that malice was an important subject to More and Tyndale and was used to explain why people refused to submit to 'obvious' truth. Tyndale relied on malice to explain why More was hardened against the reformers, and More relied on it to explain why Tyndale was an incurable heretic. Chapter four has illustrated that malice is a subject that should be examined in more detail and on a wider spectrum than just the More/Tyndale debate because it has everything to do with how heretics in the sixteenth century were perceived and dealt with and why some felt that burning them at the stake was the only solution.

Another aspect of the debate between More and Tyndale that has been insufficiently addressed in modern scholarship is the subject of the common usage of the theologically-charged words Tyndale used: 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love'. In their debate, both Tyndale and More supported their positions by referring to the 'common custom' of the English people and how those words were used and understood by the general populace.[21] Their claims have long needed assessment and this thesis has attempted to provide it. In order to make that assessment, chapter five established that there was an orthodox vernacular theological tradition prior to Tyndale's New Testament and that it was contained in the early sixteenth-century vernacular religious books. Interestingly, we noticed that scholars who study the sixteenth century tend to overlook or dismiss this body of religious writing and fail to connect it to the publications that were made by the early English reformers, such as Tyndale. Our examination of half-a-dozen of these texts demonstrated that 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' were already part of the vernacular theology prior to Tyndale's New Testament and that Tyndale used these

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[19] Andrew Hope, 'Plagiarising the Word of God: Tyndale between More and Joye,' in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England,* ed. Paulina Kewes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 96.

[20] Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal,* 23; Daniell, *William Tyndale,* 193.

[21] More, *CWM*, vol. 8. 167; O'Donnell, *Answere*, 13, 15, 19-20, 21-22.

words harmoniously with the way previous authors had used them. Though this thesis only touches the surface of the subject of vernacular theology in the early sixteenth century, it illustrates that the history of language and the ways in which individual words were understood and used is an important part of the English Reformation that needs to be more fully explored.

Though Tyndale's use of 'congregation', 'senior/elder', and 'love' in his New Testament was congruent with the way other religious authors used the words, by placing them in his New Testament, Tyndale put the words in a position of greater authority and where they could be used to undermine many of the Catholic doctrines and beliefs. As scholars have acknowledged, Tyndale's choice of English words in his translation had a significant influence on the vocabulary and language of subsequent English Bible translations.[22] Though Tyndale is recognized for his linguistic influence on later Bibles, he is not given credit for his impact on the theology of those Bibles.

As we have seen above, this oversight is partly due to historiographers' failure to understand Tyndale's theology and to credit him for being a theologian, but the oversight can also be attributed to approaching the Bible as literature rather than as a theological work. As C.S. Lewis rightly said, those who 'read the Bible as literature do not read the Bible'.[23] Leaving out the theological implications of the words used in each translation of the English Bible is to miss the main point of what sixteenth-century translators were interested in. Chapter five demonstrated that translators who followed Tyndale adopted his use of 'congregation', 'elder', and 'love' in their versions of the Bible. By doing so, they perpetuated the theology Tyndale believed those words conveyed. Naturally, these findings generate additional questions about the theology attending 'congregation', 'elder', and 'love' and why later translators of the Bible chose to stick with 'elder' and 'love' and abandon 'congregation'. Exploring the theology behind each of these key words and why translators chose them, would provide substance for an enormous amount of additional research. As we saw in chapter five, the significant switch from 'congregation' to 'church' in English Bibles was extremely abrupt and that change has not been examined or explained by historiographers. The brief discussion of

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[22] Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97; David Crystal, *Begat: The King James Bible & the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 448; J. F. Mozely, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 98.

[23] C.S. Lewis, *The Literary Impact of the Authorised Version* (London: The Athlone Press, 1950), 22.

that event in this thesis only serves to demonstrate that the subject could provide much in the way of new and important research about the language and theology of early English Bibles.

At the conclusion of the *Confutacyon's* refutation of Tyndale's arguments, More wrote that Tyndale could 'never get out of' the net that his heretical doctrines had 'wrapped hym' in 'whyle he leveth'. He pointed out that Tyndale's singularity in that he refused to align himself with the doctrines of the 'catholyke chyrche of Cryste' and with those 'of his owne mayster Martyne antecryste also'.[24] This is an ironic statement because Tyndale, as an distinct theologian with a recognisably unique theology never did get himself out of that net of 'individuality' that More ascribed to him while he was alive. However, modern historiography has prevented him from getting back into that net after his death and has consistently portrayed him as a follower of men believed to be greater and more intelligent than himself. The purpose of this thesis has been to assist in restoring Tyndale to his sixteenth-century reputation as England's leading religious reformer by highlighting his intellectual abilities, his awareness of and desire to meet the spiritual and social needs of English lay people, and his distinct theology. This thesis also intended to clarify many of the basic questions associated with the coming forth of the first printed editions of the English Bible, particularly issues of lay access to scripture, why Tyndale's New Testament was rejected by those in positions of authority, and the development of vernacular theology. Hopefully it has opened up many areas of additional research associated with the early English Reformation.

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[24] Thomas More, 'The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,' in *CWM,* vol. 8, Part II, 824.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM	*The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*. Edited by Josiah Pratt, 8 vols. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1877.
CWE	*The Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969--.
CWM	*The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961--.
EEBO	Early English Books Online. http://www.eebo.chadwyck.com [accessed 28 September 2011].
Ep	Epistle
ESTC	English Short Title Catalogue Online. http://www.estc.bl.uk [accessed 16 June 2011].
L	Left hand side of a digital image
LW	*Luther's Works*. Philadelphia: Fortress Printing, 1955-1975.
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. http://www.oxforddnb.com [accessed 28 September 2011].
OEDO	Oxford English Dictionary Online. http://www.dictionary.oed.com [accessed 28 September 2011].
R	Right hand side of a digital image
SPO	State Papers Online. http://gale.cengage.co.uk/state-papers-online [accessed 28 September 2011].
STC	Short Title Catalogue
WCO	Wesley Center Online

NOTE ON ONLINE SOURCES

Due to the increasing availability of primary sources on the internet, the archival system of notating folios in footnotes is impractical for those wishing to access the online digital source referenced. Individual pages of books that have been scanned and made into digital images are identified by their image number and not by a folio number or a page number. Therefore, I have included both page numbers/folio numbers and image numbers in my footnotes on each digital source. For the sake of clarity, I have designated the left side of the digital image by an 'L' and the right side of the digital image by an 'R'.

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