

Foreword

This book follows on from my first book, *The Theology of William Tyndale*. It looks at the background of William Tyndale's life, and what led him towards his fully Reformed theology. This entailed very close examination of all the autobiographical details Tyndale has given us that may have had an effect on his life and his theology. Frequently this led to further research into what Tyndale's statement meant to his life.

Tyndale's statement that 'as a boy' he had read the 'English chronicle', which would be John Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, suggests that Tyndale read this at Berkeley Castle whilst still at school. Research into Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, as well as other works of Trevisa, reveal that Trevisa had a strong influence on William Tyndale's theology.

Another clue Tyndale gives us in his writings led to an influence from John Wyclif on Tyndale's theology. Research into Wyclif's writings and those of some of his followers pointed to Tyndale having a Wycliffite root in his theology that reached back into his childhood.

Over-ruling everything was Tyndale's unshakeable adherence to *sola scriptura*. Trevisa's 'Preface', *Dialogue between a knight and a clerk on the translation of the Bible in English*, would make the schoolboy William Tyndale decide to translate the Bible into English, and it is possible to detect Trevisa's influence in Tyndale's translation.

Tyndale's choice of Erasmus' *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, as a book to translate into English, was inspired because of its emphasis on the importance of Scripture. He presented his translation as a gift to the Walsh family, and he incorporated many of Erasmus' illustrations into his early writings; I believe to help Sir John and Lady Walsh change to a Reformed Christianity. Tyndale read many works of Erasmus, some he mentions in his writings, others supply Tyndale with illustrations he can use. However, Erasmus never influenced Tyndale's theology.

I have not been able to avoid a certain amount of repetition, partly because the logical structure of the chapters does not always allow a complete isolation of one from another, but I have tried to minimise this overlap.

Also, Tyndale did not write different things in watertight compartments, and I may have used one quotation to prove more than one point (although I have always tried to find another quotation rather than re-using one I have already quoted).

I owe a great debt to Sophie Bateson for her hard work in reading my draft and her innumerable suggestions for improving it. The easy changes to make were where she made my writing more readable. Other places made me think; 'What does that mean?' What had been clear to me, I had to make clear to my readers. In places it led me to passages she had not queried, but I realised could do with being tweaked, to make my meaning clearer.

The strength of the humanist movement lay in its principle of *ad fontes*, a going back to the original. I believe in the importance of that belief. As a result there are many quotations from the source material; and fewer from academic writings on what the Reformers thought. These, mainly refer to the Continental Reformers. I hope that those places where I have made deductions about Tyndale's background, he would say my deductions were true.

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