

# STRAIGHTWAY

*And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].*

## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College  
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, North Carolina 28335

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## **The Ministry of the English Bible — Part Two —**

Dr. H. T. Spence

Last month's issue of Straightway gave a preliminary background concerning the beginnings of our English Bible, viewing the rise of the Latin language as the sacred language for the Western Church or the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of the Greek language for the Eastern Church or the Greek Orthodox Church. However, with the contribution of John Wyclif's English Bible, it was becoming clearer that God had ordained that the English language play an important part in the battle against the powers of apostasy.

About one hundred years after the death of Wyclif, God sovereignly raised up another man William Tyndale. He was a

brilliant scholar, both at Oxford and at Cambridge, who had accepted the great doctrines of the Reformation early in his life. Tyndale once remarked to a Romanist, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough in England to know more of the Scriptures than thou doest." Around 1523 a merchant named Humphrey Monmouth hospitably received Tyndale into his London home for about a year financially aiding him in his translation work. The prohibition of English translations forced Tyndale in 1524 to flee his homeland forever and imprisoned his friend Monmouth in the Tower of London for assisting him.

Fleeing to Germany, Tyndale visited Martin Luther at Wittenberg. Translating from Erasmus' Greek text, Tyndale completed his English New Testament and presented it to Peter Quentel, a printer. Quentel published three thousand copies in a small quarto edition so that friends could easily smuggle them into England. Immediately satanic opposition arose. The Romanists tried to capture the pages before they were put together, but Tyndale providentially learning of their plan hastened to the printers and escaped with the precious sheets. He made his way up the Rhine by boat to the city of Worms and secretly finished publishing his Bible. When friends smuggled them into England, ecclesiastical authorities bought them and burned them; however, Tyndale simply used the much-needed money to print more Bibles. The God of heaven made the wrath of man to praise Him. An old English chronicler named Edward Halle relates

that the Bishop of London thought he "had God by the toe, when indeed he had the devil by the fist."

During these years God had been moving through events in England with King Henry VIII so that the political climate in England was changing in favor of an English Bible. Although so much more could be said about William Tyndale and his translation, one thing is certain: the hand of God was upon him. Even when he was in prison he continued to work on completing the final books for translation, passing the manuscripts on to John Rogers who incorporated them into the Matthew Bible after Tyndale's death. Eventually the Roman Catholic Church found William Tyndale guilty of heresy and handed him over to the secular powers for execution. On October 6, 1536, governmental authorities led him to the stake and strangled and burned him in the prison yard. In a loud voice, his dying words rang out, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." God answered the martyr's prayer. Even before Tyndale's death, German printers had published the Coverdale Bible, the first complete Bible translated into English, which was based largely upon Tyndale's work. William Tyndale's translations of the New Testament and a large part of the Old Testament, not only formed the basis in phrasing, vocabulary, and musical rhythm for the same books in the King James Bible (1611), but

## STRAIGHTWAY

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also actually constitute over four-fifths of the King James translation.

It was clearly evident at this point in its history that the ministry of the English Bible was born in the crucible of facing the apostasy, the confrontation with Rome. Who would have thought that of all the countries in Europe, God would deign to use the mongrel, carnal, worldly country of England and its language? But God found some hearts there that were willing to step forth boldly to meet the harlot of Rome, men to face the whole apostate system, yet men armed with the Word of God.

Time will not allow us to deal with other godly men and their hope for the English Bible. But we mention in passing Miles Coverdale, an assistant of Tyndale, who gave us the first complete English Bible ever printed. He openly dedicated it to the King of England in 1535, hoping it would help its acceptance. The title page of the Coverdale Bible depicts King Henry seated and crowned, the royal arms of England at his feet. His right hand holds a drawn sword; with his left hand, Henry dispenses the Bible. A humble dedicatory epistle praises the king as the true defender of the faith. Further, the epistle denounces the errors of the "blind bishop of Rome." By this simple picture, Coverdale demonstrated how the Bible could aid Henry as King of England and head of the Church in England.

Other English Bibles came forth. There was the Matthew Bible by John Rogers. The Great Bible, which Thomas Cromwell, King Henry VIII's vicar general, entrusted to Miles Coverdale, was a revision of the Matthew Bible. The Great Bible was the first Bible to be specifically authorized for *public* use in English churches. The Geneva Bible must also be mentioned, for it came from the womb of a blood bath of Satan. In 1553 King Edward VI's half-sister Mary succeeded him to the English throne and restored papal authority in England. "Bloody Mary" prohibited the reading of the English Bible, and in 1554-55 she burned at the stake the Protestant bishops Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and John Hooper. In 1556 Mary proceeded to burn Thomas Cranmer at the stake; three hundred others, including John Rogers, followed this execution.

At the beginning of Mary's reign, approximately eight hundred Protestants left England. The most learned of these exiles went to Geneva, which had become the holy city of the Alps, a sanctuary for a multitude of great Protestant men. Miles Coverdale was there, seventy years old now, and assisted in the refugees' new translation, the Geneva Bible. This Bible was the first English version to be translated entirely from the original languages. It was the first English version to have numbered verses. Chapter divisions and verse divisions had

been used in other language translations, but this was the first in English. Several additions of the Geneva Bible came forth. It became the English household Bible, the Bible of Shakespeare, and the Puritan Bible. The Pilgrims brought a Geneva Bible to the New World on the Mayflower.

But we acknowledge to God and the memory of these centuries of translation that the Holy Scriptures were translated and written in English with the blood of martyrs. Such martyrdom became the crown of glory for that translation. And even when they were imprisoned their testimony was bright and filled with God's joy and peace. Even Tyndale, while imprisoned, spoke to the jailer and his daughter of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. He led the jailer, his wife, his daughter, and the entire household to receive justification by faith in Christ alone.

### **The King James Version**

But we dare not fail to mention the great, God-honoring work of the King James Version. James VI of Scotland, being a Stuart on the Scottish throne, was also related to the Tudor family of the English throne. He was the only relative left when Elizabeth I died in 1603. He thus inherited the throne of England in 1603. Caring not for the Geneva Bible, he announced in July 1604 his desire for a new translation. He appointed fifty-four learned men to undertake the task, which formally

commenced in 1607.

Of the fifty-four men, only forty-seven continued to its completion. These were the best biblical scholars and linguists of their day, men of profound piety, truly men of divinity. They were divided into three companies, each consisting of two groups. One company was at Westminster in London, another at Oxford, and another at Cambridge. Each group within the company was given a section of Scripture to translate. Each translator worked, first of all, individually on an assigned chapter; he then submitted his work to his colleagues for review and necessary revision. Nothing was left to individual fancy, but was meticulously viewed by all in the group, and then a copy was sent to the other five groups. Carelessness found no place in this project. Each company was under the direction of an eminent churchman: the dean professors of Hebrew and Greek at Oxford University directed the two groups there; their counterparts at Cambridge directed the work there; and the Dean of Westminster, along with the Dean of Chester supervised the two Westminster groups. Eventually twelve delegates, two from each of the six groups, met together daily for nine months at Stationers' Hall, London, as a revision committee. The only remuneration these forty-seven to fifty-four men received was room and board at the universities. No controversial notes were to be added, as the previous

versions had included. No sectarian bias was to be evident. It was printed in 1611 and authorized by King James I thus giving it its other name, the Authorized Version. In 1612 and 1613 a smaller edition was published. Within fifty years it had outdistanced the Geneva Bible.

Since that time English translations have come and gone: the Revised Version of 1881 and 1885, the American Standard Version of 1901, and the one of 1946 and 1952, paraphrases, revisions, new translations, with a multitude of them flooding the consumer market. Within the past thirty years, English versions and revisions have quadrupled, with the New International Version passing in numbers sold of the King James Version for the past four years. But it is evident God has honored the King James Bible more than any other version, giving acknowledgment that God is the preserver of His Word and not man. My dear deceased father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, wrote the following amidst the great controversy concerning the English versions of the Bible:

It is in my heart to readily declare that I know of no way to be scholarly in this matter: I know of nothing else to do but remain grateful that God did reveal, inspire, and preserve His own word through all the years. And because of this I continue to publicly teach and preach from the King James Version. We should be very careful to

remember the many, many Christians around the world whose devotion has been attached to the King James Version during many years in which the scholars, so called, defended no other English version. It could wound the faith of many of these "little ones" if we become radical for another viewpoint now. Is it possible to leave an implication which we do not really mean by contending unduly for another English version?

## Conclusion

The English Bible has encompassed the globe in its influence. Many translations into other languages have come through missionaries by using the English Bible. For some reason God has drawn from the English-speaking world to bring about the break with Latin Rome and bring forth more books written on the subject of the Bible and its Christ than in any other language. But as Latin was the language medium for Romanist heresy, in the 1970s English was established as the ecumenical church language in the World Council of Churches. Latin was used by the Romanists to present the heresies of old Rome into the Church. Now the English will be the medium to bring about the global Christian apostasy. For the English world is at the forefront of the Neo-Christian delusion and the Cult delusion. At one time this language birthed cries of freedom and liberty; a country was founded under God based upon the English Bible; no

other country can boast of its birth in such a womb! But now we lead in freedom's destruction; we publish to the world on the printed page the very weapons to destroy what we published to the world years ago that brought freedom's hope and peace through God's Word.

What good the English world did in Spain, France, Mexico, South America, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, China, Africa (and many others), we are now destroying by the washing ashore in these lands of the words of the world end-time apostasy. Oh, how are the mighty fallen! The language used of God to confront the plague of error now is used to promulgate the error.

Just as God moved upon the reformers to write in the Latin to confront the heresy of Latin Rome, God must raise up in the English-speaking world men with words of truth to combat the error transmitted through its language. God gave language for one reason: the communication of truth. If it is used for a lie, it is transgressing the law of language.

God has used the English language to preach deeper truth and insight for the Christian life throughout the world than any other language. There were many in the 1300s through the 1600s that studied the English language in order to understand the work and teaching of men like Wyclif, Tyndale, and Coverdale. Basel Maloff came to

London from Russia in order to study at Spurgeon College. He learned the English language so fluently in three months that he became an interpreter for Parliament. He finally went back to his country, and before he was exiled by Russia to America, built the largest church (at that time) in Russia.

More books on the subject of God and related subjects have been written in English than in any other language; more versions of the Bible will be found in English than in any other language; more college and university teaching will be found in English than any other language. We take it as no small providence that Foundations Bible College was birthed in the English-speaking world.

May the Lord raise up men in these last days in the English-speaking world to write and preach against the error, heresies, and the global apostasy that has now come through the medium of the English language.

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# GETTING BACK TO THE SCRIPTURES

Dr. H. T. Spence

Church of God, Awake! We must rise up!  
Rid ourselves of our modern ways!  
Cease to drink the wine from the world's cup!  
Cease to give its "methods" praise!

Schools of Christian name, heed the warning!  
Intellect alone will not do!  
Compromise of Truth is alarming!  
All the "Right" it will undo!

Christians, do not heed cries for "Neo"!  
Nor the cries for "Love" without Truth!  
Leaving the old paths will bring sorrow,  
And destroy our sons of youth!

Now's the time to look to the OLD Cross!  
Leave the NEW; it will not withstand  
All the hordes of hell that confront us!  
Heed the Scriptures! They will stand!

We need to get back to God's Holy Scriptures!  
We need to pursue the Truth of God's Word!  
We need to maintain our journey t'ward Heaven!  
And commit our lives to the Lord!



# Thirty-first Annual Bible Conference

Foundations Bible College & Theological Seminary

## “Prophesies Surrounding Christ’s Final Days”

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### **Palm Sunday: March 20th**

9:30 AM – Film

10:30 AM – Preaching: “The Testimony of Jesus: the Spirit of Prophecy”  
— Dr. H. T. Spence

6:00 PM – Preaching: “Christ’s Final Days: Fulfilled Prophecy”  
— Dr. H. T. Spence

### **Monday: March 21st**

8:30 AM – Film

10:00 AM – Preaching: “Christ: the Stone of Stumbling”  
— Rev. Christopher Nighswonger

7:00 PM – Preaching: “Betrayed by a Friend”  
— Dr. Dennis Lowry

### **Tuesday: March 22nd**

8:30 AM – Film

10:00 AM – Preaching: “The 30 Pieces of Silver”  
— Dr. Douglas Wilson

7:00 PM – Preaching: “Accused by False Witnesses”  
— Dr. Douglas Wilson

### **Wednesday: March 23rd**

8:30 AM – Preaching: “Forsaken by His Disciples”  
— Dr. Dennis Lowry

10:00 AM – Preaching: “The Woundings of Christ”  
— Dr. Mark Cowles

7:00 PM – Preaching: “Christ: Smitten and Mocked”  
— Dr. Mark Cowles



### **Thursday: March 24th**

8:30 AM – Preaching: “Christ: Hated without a Cause”

— Dr. Dennis Lowry

10:00 AM – Preaching: “The Reactions of the People”

— Dr. Mark Cowles

7:00 PM – Preaching: “The Thirsting of Christ”

— Dr. David DeBose

### **Friday: March 25th**

8:30 AM – Preaching: “His Forsaken Cry and Darkness”

— Dr. David DeBose

10:00 AM – Preaching: “What Will Man Do with Such a Christ?”

— Dr. H. T. Spence

7:00 PM – Oratorio - *The Cry of the Reformation*

### **Sunday: March 27th**

6:30 AM – Sunrise Service: “The Prophecy of the Resurrection”

— Rev. Bradford Lowry

9:30 AM – Film

10:30 AM – Preaching: “The Prophecy of the Ascension”

— Dr. H. T. Spence

6:00 PM – Preaching: “A Light to Lighten the Gentiles”

— Dr. H. T. Spence



## **SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Dr. Mark Cowles**

Pastor, Highway Bible Church, Placerville, California

**Dr. David DeBose**

Pastor, Church of the Holy Scripture, Hamilton, Virginia

While we are writing this very discourse, we are well aware of the fact that much is missing in the search of all the explained details needed for either one of these kinds of Christian scholars we have proposed. Neither side has the critical resources absolutely necessary to finalize all the argument needed. God has left all of us in a bind because of our lack of the availability of the original manuscripts, and much more in-between. That is another reason we have accepted God as the Scholar Who is necessarily the One Who must preserve His own Word. This brings us, each one, down to the motive of our presupposition of why we follow the manuscripts the way we follow them. That matter of motive keeps coming up as it does for everything we do and think in the Christian life in our relationship with the Lord. Our own motive, personally, is that we are motivated by the personal claim of desiring to be scholarly, while at the same time believing that the academic scholarship is necessary in order to be honest and honorable. However, with the best of all our studies, we were not dedicated to preserving scholarship, but rather defending that God must preserve His Word. Yet we believe the problem we are dealing with is too large, with too many missing connecting links to solve. This is not only true because of the absence of the original manuscripts, but compounded because there is a broken chain with an incomplete collection of all the manuscripts needed to fill in all the gaps of the known branches of texts—the Byzantine, Alexandrinus, etc. There are scholars who follow both of these or others. They are scholars, too. We must not take the position that only those who follow our own position are scholars. A scholar is simply one who studies in research of resources, most earnestly, being qualified by his studies. Once again, it is imperative that God preserve the Text.

The need before us now as evangelical Fundamentalists, since there is a controversy raging all around us concerning the King James Version, is not to hurt the good and reliable while thinking that we have found the better. The earlier Greek manuscripts and the Textus Receptus manuscripts were not born so late as to be discovered in the late eighteenth century; they were preserved by God's providence through centuries.

— Excerpt from *Preserving the Preserved Word*  
by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence

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