

St. Andrew's (JKP) Monthly Newsletter
October, 2011

Edification: Well all the signs of the holiday are evident, aren't they? Strings of orange lights, carved pumpkins, mock graveyards in front yards. Nothing says "Reformation Day" more than these few-of-my-favorite-things! Regardless of the complete ignoring of the Day, Reformation Day is truly a Day to remember. More than a Day though, really it's a lifestyle - a mindset. However, it's good to look back and consider specific events and specific individuals that were instrumental in recovering that lifestyle and mindset when these had been all but lost. In medieval Europe Status Quo was the word of the day, except this word had continued far more than a day. Through the oligarchy of the Roman hierarchy true learning was stifled and smothered. The knowledge of the Universe, of the Bible and of God was the provenance of the clergy, and a few nobles. The unwashed, uneducated (enslaved) masses would only pollute and misuse such knowledge. So they must be kept in the dark. Leave them to superstition and blind ritual. That's how much of the Roman Clergy saw it. But a few devout, courageous souls saw it differently. One such devout, courageous soul was William Tyndale (or Tyndall). The exact date of Tyndale's birth is not known. He was born about 1495 in Wales. He received his degrees from Magdalene College, Oxford. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1521. Almost immediately upon ordination he began to advocate for translating the scriptures into English from the original languages. This was to become the hallmark of his life. So intent was he upon this course that he soon ran afoul with other priests and high-ranking clergy. This did not move him in the least. Once, while at a dinner engagement with other clergy he disputed heatedly with one prominent clergyman. This prominent clergyman opposed Tyndale's vision of translating the scriptures into English. Tyndale famously remarked to this man: *"If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."* How to win friends and influence people by William Tyndale! His life was devoted to keeping that declaration. He set his hand to the work of translation and never looked back. He was a genius of the first order and he set that genius to work in translating the scriptures from Greek and Hebrew into English, just as Luther had done for the German language. William Tyndale is the father of all subsequent English translations, including the best known Authorized Version (a.k.a. the King James). For his labors and bold assertions he was named an outlaw and was forced to stay one step ahead of the law for the remainder of his life. In 1535 Tyndale was betrayed by a close associate, Henry Phillips. He was tried as a heretic and executed in 1536. His final words were *"Lord, open the eyes of the King of England"*. He was then impaled on a stake and burned. Yet being dead he still speaks! And the words he speaks are the words of God that have shaped western culture for close to 500 years. This is our Reformation heritage!

"Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse."
Nehemiah 13:12

Encourage: In 2Thessalonians 3:1 Paul exhorts the church; *"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you."* The word of the Lord cannot be stopped. Not in Paul's life, not in Tyndale's life and not in our lives. Tyndale was a faithful man, but it is owing to the power of the word of God that reformation came. The word of God ran swiftly across Europe and spread reform. This will be the cause of reform in our own lives, if we would see the word run swiftly and be glorified in our lives. We must pray to that end. We must open the word, read it and act on what we read. This is our heritage from the Reformation. This is our heritage in the Lord.