

A Remarkable Collection of Rare Scriptures in a Small University

Setting

by Teresa Cardin Ellis

ABSTRACT: Hardin-Simmons University was given two remarkable collections of rare Bibles and a Sefer Torah with the expressed desire of the donors for the collections to be shared with students, faculty, and other constituencies of the university's Richardson Library. The library has tried to fulfill this request while attempting to preserve these treasures for future generations. As a small university, without a trained archivist or preservationist, we have utilized resources outside our library and continue to pursue sources to assist us in the maintenance of these special collections while still engaging them in the educational process.

INTRODUCTION

*Holy words of our faith
 Handed down to this age
 Came to us through sacrifice
 O heed the faithful words of Christ
 Holy words long preserved
 For our walk in this world
 They resound with God's own heart
 O let the ancient words impart¹*

Scripture manuscripts often pass from generation to generation, becoming a part of family history and identity. The history of the English Bible reflects the ecclesial, political, and even social history of western civilization. Hardin-Simmons University, a small, Baptist, liberal arts university, owns a number of early English Bibles along with a seventeenth-century Torah scroll. We consider these scriptures to be educational tools to help bring a tangible reminder of the development of the English Bible as we know it today, as well as a reminder of those who sacrificed so much to bring the scripture to people in their own language. We are grateful to all the people who came before us, those who sacrificed to provide, preserve, and pass along these great tomes through the generations. As the caretaker of these early manuscripts, the responsibility of the university's library is both to preserve and impart these ancient words to others.

¹Lynn DeShazo, "Ancient Words." Quoted from *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: Lifeway Worship, 2008), 344.

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THE DONORS AND THEIR COLLECTIONS

THE TANDY BIBLE COLLECTION

Charles and Roena Tandy gave to Hardin-Simmons University a remarkable collection of Bibles, primarily from the early English era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tandy, an anesthesiologist from Dallas, first became interested in the history of the English Bible when his Sunday School teacher, Charles Ryrie, at First Baptist Church, Dallas, told the story about the “Wicked Bible.” Ryrie, a well-known Bible scholar, related the story of the Bible printer, in an attempt to discredit his boss, who intentionally erred by translating Exodus 20:14 as “Thou shalt commit adultery.” This infamous mistranslation piqued Tandy’s interest in ancient versions of the scripture. Realizing that he knew very little about the history of the English Bible, Tandy began a journey of researching and collecting some of the most historically significant English Bible translations, as well as a number of early German Bibles. Tandy, an alumnus of Hardin-Simmons University, along with his wife, donated their Bible collection to HSU in 2009.

The collection comprises over seventy-six pieces, including complete Bibles, leaves from a number of translations, musical manuscripts, and limited editions of important facsimiles, as well as secondary books related to the history of the English Bible. The centerpiece of the collection is a first edition King James Bible (1611), sometimes referred to as the “Great He Bible,” as well as a 1611/1613 King James “Great She Bible” (see below).

The Tandy Bible Collection contains rare Bibles that preceded the King James Version, including a 1550 edition of the Coverdale Bible, a 1549 Matthew’s Bible, a 1541 edition of the Great Bible, and a first edition of the Geneva Bible (1560). First editions of the first English Bibles translated for Catholics — the Rheims New Testament (1582) and the Douai Old Testament (1609/1610) — are part of the collection. Combined, these major editions form a rare collection that traces the English Bible through the sixteenth century prior to the publication of the King James Version. Two beautifully bound copies of the Baskerville Bible (1763, 1772) are also part of the collection.

The Tandy collection also includes editions of the English Bible printed in North America, including the Noah Webster Bible (1833), the John Brown Bible (1816), and an edition of the first English Bible printed in the United States, the Isaac Collins Bible (1793).

In addition to the English Bibles found in the Tandy Bible Collection, there is the Sacon Bible of 1521, printed in Lyons, France, and the oldest Bible in the collection. This Latin Bible includes two-color printing, a wealth of woodcut illustrations, and an early sixteenth-century binding. The Tandy collection includes a number of German Bibles, three of which have particular significance in the history of early America. The Germantown, Pennsylvania, press founded by Christopher Sower (sometimes spelled Saur or Sauer, 1693-1758) produced three quarto Bibles (1743, 1763, and 1776). Each of these publications brought something unique to the printing process in the New World. The 1743 quarto Bible was the first Bible printed in America in a European language. The second edition in the collection was the first Bible printed on paper manufactured in America. The third and final edition in the collection was the first Bible printed with American type. This 1776 edition was also called the “Gun Wad Bible” because the invading British soldiers allegedly used the leaves as filler for their cartridges and as litter for their horses.

THE KELLEY BIBLE COLLECTION AND SEFER TORAH

Doyle and Inez Kelley, both alumni of Hardin-Simmons University, gave a late seventeenth century Sefer Torah (“scroll of Torah”) to Hardin-Simmons University in 2007. Two years later, following Doyle Kelley’s death, his wife presented the university with thirteen rare English Bibles from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in fulfillment of her late husband’s wishes. Kelley began collecting the ancient scriptures because of a fascination with the English Bible and how the word of God traveled through the centuries to arrive in the form we know today. For years Kelley’s Bibles were housed in a case with glass doors in his office in downtown Houston, where Kelley would pull them out from time to time and share them with visitors to his office. Though the collecting of these rare Bibles brought great joy to Kelley, he considered himself to be a temporary caretaker.

Dr. Kelley acquired the Sefer Torah as a bonus when purchasing one of the Bibles in his collection. In his negotiations over the price for the book, the dealer offered to “throw-in” one of several scrolls that he had. Kelley chose the largest scroll in the group, thinking it might be the most valuable. That scroll is now on display on the first floor of HSU’s library. The scroll is exceptionally tall, at approximately 27 inches. Such scrolls were typically created for reading in synagogue worship or occasionally for use by a wealthy individual. This Sefer Torah likely originated in an ancient Yemenite scriptorium and probably dates to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. It contains the full text of the Torah of the Hebrew Bible, which is equivalent to the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy in English Bibles.

In addition to the Sefer Torah, the Kelley Bible Collection has a rare edition of the Tyndale and Erasmus Diglot New Testament printed in 1538 and the 1537 edition of the Coverdale Bible. The collection also includes a 1549 copy of the Matthew’s Bible, a 1566 edition of the Great Bible, two editions of the Geneva Bible (1576 and 1599), a 1600/1635 edition of the Douai-Rheims Roman Catholic Bible, and a 1602 edition of the Bishop’s Bible, which was used as the basis for the King James Version.

The capstones of the collection are two first edition copies of the 1611/1613 King James Version, “Great She Bible” (see below). A 1708 copy of the King James Version, containing the more radical marginal notes found in the Geneva Bible, and a 1751 Irish quarto edition of the King James Version complete the collection.

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT ENGLISH BIBLES IN THE COLLECTIONS²

TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT, 450TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (1976, TANDY BIBLE COLLECTION)

In 1526, William Tyndale became the first person to translate the New Testament into English from the original Greek, providing both the catalyst and the basis for all subsequent English translations in the sixteenth century. The copy owned by Hardin-Simmons University is a facsimile reprint in color by David Paradine in London of Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament (Figure 1). It is a limited edition, #7 of 250 copies printed. At the end of the New Testament is a description of the reprint stating in part, “It has been taken from the only known complete copy of the text (which lacks a title page) in the library of the Baptist College, Bristol.”³

²The photographs appearing in Figures 1-11 were taken by Kristen Harris, and those appearing in Figures 12-14 were taken by Scott Burkhalter. These photographs are used by permission of Hardin-Simmons University.

³*Tyndale New Testament, 450 Anniversary Edition* (London: David Paradine, 1976), back material.

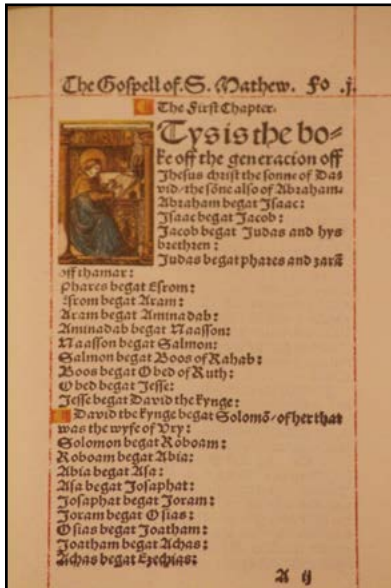


Figure 1: Tyndale New Testament facsimile, first page of Matthew's Gospel⁴

to bear the Royal License granted on behalf of King Henry VIII, ironically coming less than twelve months after Tyndale's execution.

THE "MATTHEW'S" BIBLE (1549, TANDY BIBLE COLLECTION AND KELLEY BIBLE COLLECTION)

John Rogers, chaplain to the English House, was likely the person who rescued and hid the Joshua to 2 Chronicles manuscripts of Tyndale once Tyndale had been arrested.⁵ In 1537, Rogers put together a folio containing, for the first time as part of a large complete Bible, all of Tyndale's translations. These included Tyndale's 1534 New Testament, the Pentateuch, and now the nine historical books Tyndale translated from the Hebrew before his execution. For those parts of the Bible not translated by Tyndale, Rogers used Coverdale's version. Since the new Bible could not be called "Tyndale's Bible," the title page states:

This rare edition remained at Baptist College, Bristol, until 1994, when it was purchased by the British Library.

THE COVERDALE BIBLE (1537, KELLEY BIBLE COLLECTION)

Nine years later, in 1535, Miles Coverdale, an acquaintance of Tyndale, was the first to translate and print a complete English Bible. Coverdale used Tyndale's translations of the New Testament, the Pentateuch and Jonah, but, not being a Hebrew scholar himself, he relied on the Latin and German translations for the remaining books of the Old Testament. Coverdale was the first to place the apocryphal books at the end of the Old Testament and the first to introduce chapter summaries. The Kelley Collection, 1537, quarto edition is exceptionally rare and important as the first English Bible intended for private ownership and use in the home. The binding on this volume includes very old calfskin over wooden boards with metal bosses and remains of old clasps, along with an additional suede spine cover (Figure 2). This edition has the distinction of being the first English Bible



Figure 2: Cover of 1537 Coverdale Bible

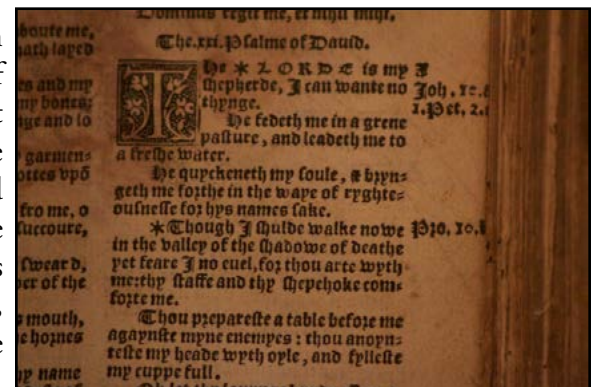


Figure 3: 1537 Coverdale Bible, Psalm 23

⁴ All reasonable efforts have been made, including assistance from British colleagues, to obtain permission from the original copyright holder for publication of the photograph in Figure 1, but without success. Apologies are offered of any unintentional infringement that may have occurred.

⁵ David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 190.

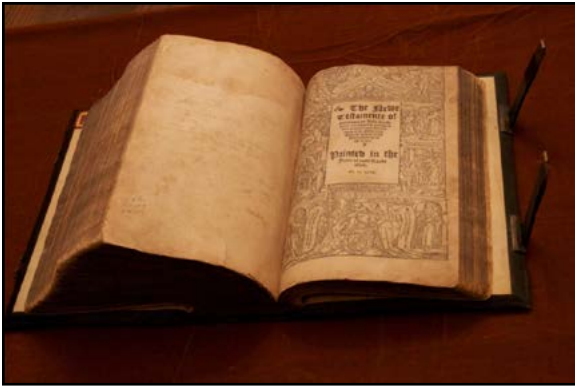


Figure 4: 1549 “Matthew’s” Bible, New Testament title page (Tandy Bible Collection)



Figure 5: The Great Bible New Testament, title page



Figure 6: Enlarged view of a portion of the Great Bible New Testament title page, showing King Henry VIII handing out Bibles to Cranmer and Cromwell

The Byble, whych is all the holy Scripture: In whych are containyd the Olde and Newe Testament, truly and purely translated into Englishe By Thomas Mattheewe.

Thus, this newest translation became known as the “Matthew’s” Bible. HSU owns the 1549 second edition, third printing of this Bible (Figure 4). By 1549, during the reign of King Edward VI, Tyndale’s name could be attached without fear, so this edition contains the inscription, “Unto the Reader W.T.”

THE GREAT BIBLE (1541, TANDY BIBLE COLLECTION)

So-called because of its size, the Great Bible was first published in 1539 and was more a revision of the Matthew’s Bible than a new translation. The authorities of England, including Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, encouraged that a copy of this Bible be secured and displayed by each church in the land. The Tandy Collection, 1541 edition, is the sixth version and is sometimes called the sixth Great Bible. This copy lacks the general title page, which is replaced with a facsimile of the 1539 title page. The New Testament title page displays a woodcut showing Henry VIII handing out Bibles to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, who in turn give them to the people (Figure 5 and 6). In the collection’s copy, Henry’s face has been scratched out and Cromwell’s arms erased (Figure 6). The original woodblock for the title page showed a coat of arms for both Cranmer and Cromwell but was altered after Cromwell was executed for treason in 1540. The Tandy Bible has a blank circle of almost two inches in diameter, marking the place where Cromwell’s coat of arms had been.

GENEVA BIBLE, FIRST EDITION (1560, TANDY BIBLE COLLECTION)

Queen Mary’s reign precipitated an exodus of many Protestants from Britain to the Continent where William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, Thomas Sampson, and perhaps others translated a new English Bible at Geneva. The Geneva Bible was an improvement over its predecessors, appearing in compact form with roman type and verse divisions. It was extremely popular and contained copious notes often distinctly Calvinistic in tone, which endeared it especially to the Puritans. It is the Bible quoted by both Shakespeare and Bunyan. It is also known as the

“Breeches” Bible due to the rendering of “breeches” in Genesis 3:7 (Figure 7).

THE BISHOPS’ BIBLE (1602, KELLEY BIBLE COLLECTION)

Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, became the initiator and editor of the Bishops’ Bible. First published in 1568, the Bishops’ Bible became the new official, authorized version in an attempt to replace the popular Geneva Bible, though it never gained such acceptance (Figure 8). Later editions, including the one that is held by HSU (1602), were used by the King James translators. The Kelley Bible is leather bound with metal furniture; an Armorial crest in gilt appears on the front cover (Figure 9).

THE KING JAMES VERSION BIBLE, FIRST EDITION (1611 AND 1611/1613, TANDY AND KELLEY BIBLE COLLECTIONS)

Hardin-Simmons University owns four ancient King James Version Bibles, two in each collection. The Tandy Bible Collection contains a first edition, 1611, “Great He Bible” based on the Ruth 3:15 passage that is translated, “. . . and he went into the city,” referring to Boaz (Figure 10); and a 1611/1613, “Great She Bible” based on the Ruth 3:15 passage that is translated, “. . . and she went into the city,” referring to Ruth (Figure 11).

The “Great He Bible” is an excellent, complete first folio edition 1611 King James Version (Figure 12). It was beautifully rebound in 1986 by Robert Middleton of London.

“Great She Bibles” are typically dated 1611/1613, since they are generally considered to be comprised of significant sections that were printed in 1611, but were not actually compiled and published until 1613. This edition is designated either as the “first edition, second issue, without reprints” or the “second folio edition, 1613, 1611.”⁶ The Tandy edition is an imperfect copy lacking New Testament leaves after 2 Corinthians.

The Kelley Bible Collection contains two 1611/1613 folio edition of the “Great She Bible.” Again, the “Great She Bible” label comes from the passage found in Ruth 3:15. The Kelley “Great She Bibles” are complete editions (Figure 13).



Figure 7: 1560 First Edition Geneva Bible, Genesis 1

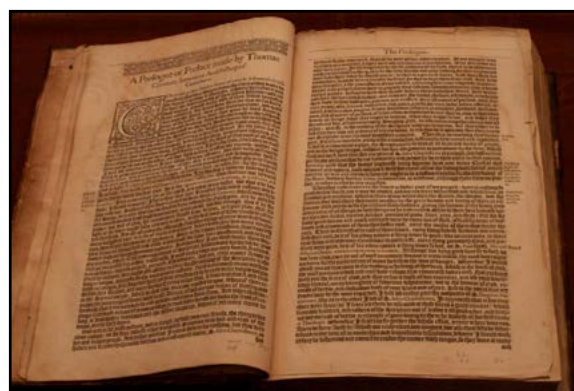


Figure 8: 1602 Bishops’ Bible, Thomas Cranmer’s Preface



Figure 9: Cover of 1602 Bishops’ Bible

⁶A. S. Herbert, *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible 1525-1961*, rev. ed. (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1968), 136.

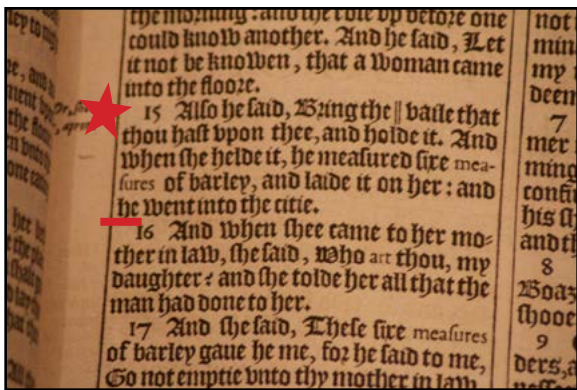


Figure 10: 1611 KJV, “Great He Bible,” Ruth 3:15

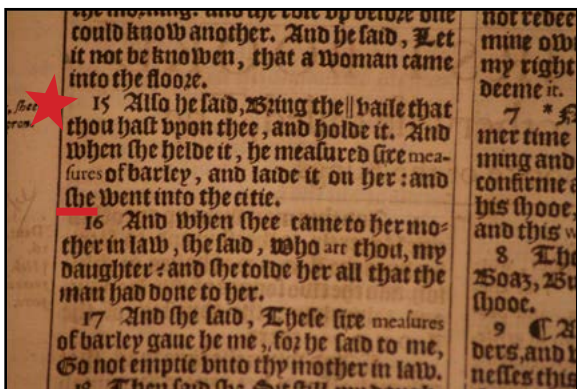


Figure 11: 1611/1613 KJV, “Great She Bible,” Ruth 3:15

day conference entitled “The King James Version @ 400: A Celebration.” The four KJV Bibles in the Tandy and Kelley Collections were displayed throughout the conference along with the English Bibles that preceded that translation. The pamphlet “The Making of a Milestone: In Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version,” featuring the text and photographs of the 1611 KJV, was produced for the occasion.⁷ Additionally, a digital presentation using the two Bible collections was given by a Logsdon Seminary faculty member during a break-out session at the annual conference of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in November 2010, and an article by Joel Drinkard featuring photographs of the Bible collections appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of *Review & Expositor*. This article is available through the *ATLASerials*®.

The “Great She Bibles” in both the Tandy and Kelley Collections contain a misprint in Matthew 26:36 where “Judas” is substituted for “Jesus.” Interestingly, in all three copies “Judas” has been corrected in old manuscript style to read “Jesus” (Figure 14).

USES OF THE COLLECTIONS

The express wish of both the Tandys and the Kelleys was that the Sefer Torah and the Bible collections be used as educational tools for students, faculty, and other constituencies of HSU’s library, to help bring to life the history of the English Bible. In keeping with this desire, as the theological librarian, I use many of the Bibles and the Torah scroll in presentations to a number of classes each semester in the areas of the Old and New Testament, biblical languages, and church history. In addition, the academic provost, who is a biblical archaeologist, and I have used a number of the Bibles in presentations to various church groups from around the state and university-related organizations, including the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, which held its annual conference on the HSU campus in June 2011. In September 2011, Logsdon Seminary, a part of Hardin-Simmons University, commemorated the 400th anniversary of the King James Version with a two-



Figure 12: The 1611 KJV “Great He Bible,” New Testament title page with woodcut illustration

⁷ A link to resources from the conference and a PDF of the pamphlet are available at <http://www.logsdonseminary.org/index.php/currentstudents/events-and-conferences/kjv400-a-celebration>.

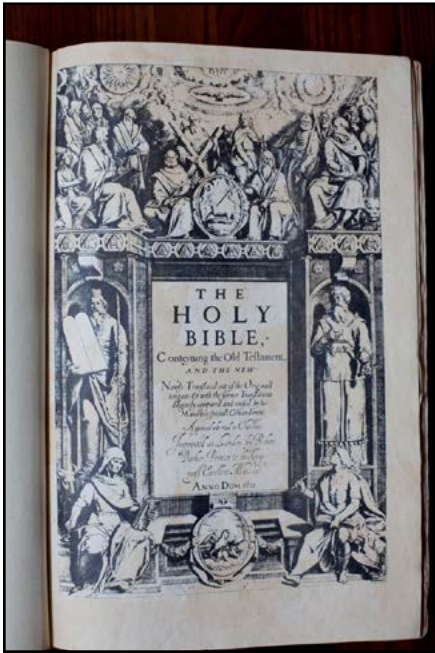


Figure 13: The KJV “Great She Bible,” general title page, with copper plate illustration engraved by Cornelius Boel

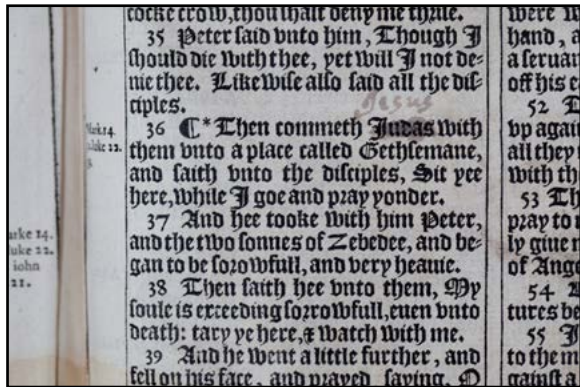


Figure 14: 1611/1613 KJV “Great She Bible,” Matthew 26:36 (Kelley Bible Collection)

Hardin-Simmons University is a member of the Abilene Library Consortium which received a grant in 2009 to buy and build digital resources. The Torah scroll was digitized as part of this program and made available through the West Texas Digital Archives, available at <http://wtda.alc.org/handle/123456789/52086>. Through this process the library hopes to both preserve and provide access to this rare document.

In addition to the above-mentioned usages of the Torah scroll and the Bible collections, these manuscripts are also regularly displayed in two climate-controlled cases inside Richardson Library. Three to four Bibles are routinely displayed and are on a scheduled rotation overseen by the theological librarian. The scroll is on permanent display alongside the library’s theological collection, though the case alternates between being open for view and covered in order to limit the damage from area fluorescent lighting.

PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION AND RESOURCES UTILIZED

As a small, private university without a trained archivist or preservationist, we utilize many resources in the attempt to care for and maintain the Tandy and Kelley Bible Collections along with the Torah scroll, while attempting to honor the donors’ wishes to use these collections in various educational venues. Within our context we implemented a number of changes

in the environment through the use of climate-controlled display cases, the use of Rhapsid Pak Silica Gel to mediate the humidity in the storage cabinets, and the use of thermohygrometers to record temperature and humidity statistics. The Bibles that are not on display are stored in oak cabinetry with glass door fronts. Due to the constitution of the shelving, the Bibles are placed either in custom-built archival storage boxes or flat on Mylar-covered shelving. In addition to the materials used to help preserve the collections, we have utilized trained personnel from a variety of sources, such as the West Texas Digital Archives and Abilene’s

Grace Museum. ATLA colleagues have also been great resources. Vasare Rastonis, Conservator for Special Collections, Columbia University, led a session at the 2011 ATLA annual conference on

“Restorative Conservation of Rare Books: Approaches to the Care and Handling of Original Bindings” that was very informative. A presentation at the 2009 SWATLA meeting in Dallas given by Eric White, Bridwell Library’s curator, and followed by a tour of “The Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Bible Collection” was also valuable. In the spring of 2013, I had the opportunity to tour Dunham Bible Museum on the Houston Baptist University campus and talk with the director, Diana Severance, about their facilities.

DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

The usage of the collections proves to be very significant, especially for theology students. I want to expand this exposure to other disciplines on our campus such as literature, history, and art. I believe there is much within these volumes that could serve as an educational tool to the wider university population.

A long-term dream is to have a distinct space for the exhibition of the Tandy and Kelley Bible Collections. In addition, a storage area is needed where the collections can be housed when not on display that is both climate controlled and equipped with archival quality storage furniture. The exhibition facility would provide better access to these ancient scriptures through a more permanent venue. Such a facility would allow the library to display more of the collection at one time and thereby provide a better representation of the history of the English Bible, as well as the display of other selections in the two collections. Until this dream is realized, we will continue to work within the context in which we find ourselves as we attempt to preserve and pass along these treasured ancient words.

