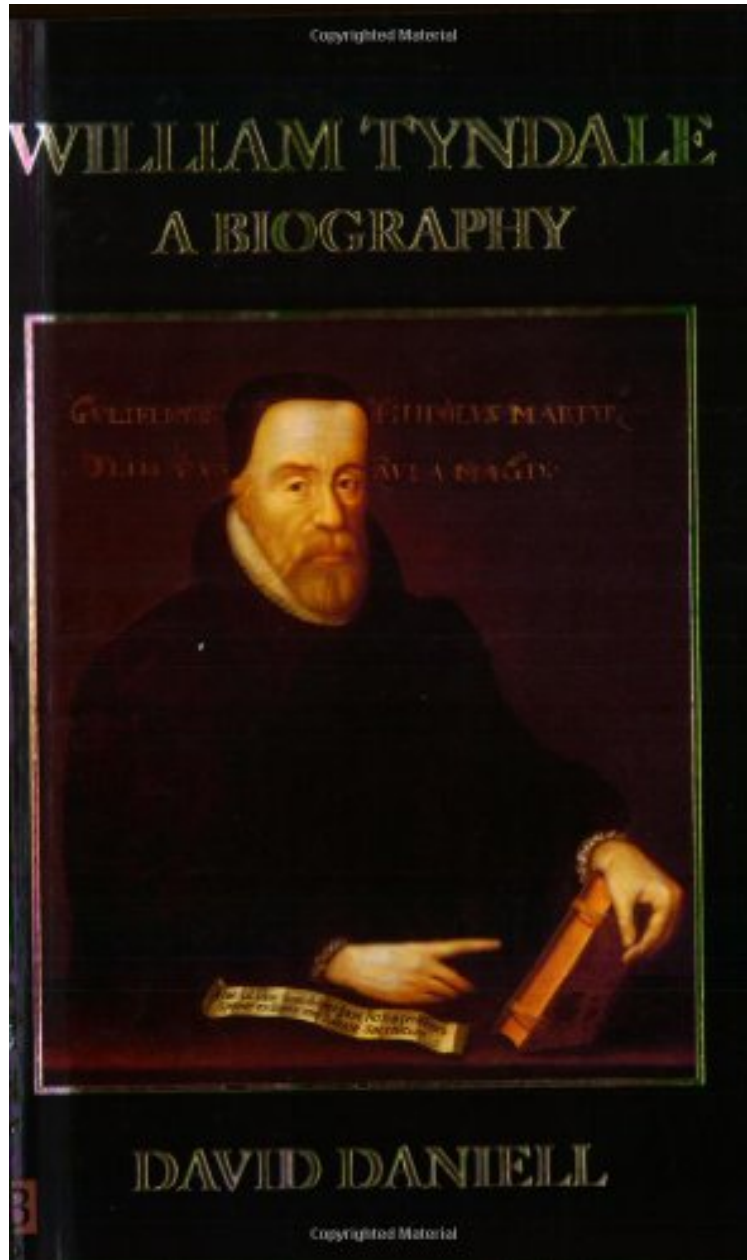


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## William Tyndale: A Biography

*David Daniell*

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**David Daniell : William Tyndale: A Biography** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised William Tyndale: A Biography:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Tyndale was an extraordinary man who died a martyr's death ...By

Greg Wilson Tyndale was an extraordinary man who died a martyr's death. He was an English reformer whose goal was for the ploughboy to know more scripture than the learned men of the Catholic church. When he died at the stake, his final words were "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes." Much of the King James Bible was a direct result of his Greek and Hebrew translation work. Very detailed biography of over 400 pages, but worth the time invested. 22 of 22 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Biography By Tim Challies William Tyndale is a hero of mine. Just a few weeks ago I reviewed a DVD that featured an interview with David Daniell, a prominent Tyndale expert. Having watched this DVD presentation, and being intrigued by Daniell's knowledge of his subject, I knew I would have to read his biography of William Tyndale. Considering the importance of his contribution, both to Christianity and to the English language, there are surprisingly few biographies written about William Tyndale. In the introduction to this biography, Daniell claims that "there has not been a full-scale study of him for nearly sixty years, since J.F. Mozley's biography of 1937." This leads him to conclude that "there is need for something more modern, especially as the quincentenary of Tyndale's birth in 1494 is widely celebrated." Of course this date passed some twelve years ago, for this volume was printed in 1994. Daniell fills this need with William Tyndale: A Biography. The outline of Tyndale's life is well-known. He was, as you may know, a brilliant man who was the first to make and print a translation of the Scriptures from the Greek into English. His translation formed much of the basis for what was to become the King James version. In that way, his work continues to be in use today and is still precious to many believers. Of lesser significance, many of the words and phrases he coined, such as my brother's keeper, passover and scapegoat are still in use, even five centuries later. He dedicated his life to the great work of translation which eventually totalled all of the New Testament and the first two sections of the Old. He gave his life for the privilege of translating Scripture and was eventually martyred for the "sin" of giving the Scriptures to the common man in a common language. It is a great tragedy that his life was taken before he was able to complete the remaining books of the Old Testament and, in particular Proverbs, Psalms and other books of poetry. Surprisingly, for a man of his stature, relatively little is known about Tyndale, for he spent many years of his life toiling in secrecy and obscurity. This book represents a compilation and analysis of most of the important facts available to historians. Many gaps remain, but it seems unlikely that we will ever know significantly more than we do today. Perhaps the best way of describing this biography is "thorough." This is not a book for the feint-of-heart. While it is only slightly over 400 pages, it is, nonetheless, very thorough and sometimes tough-going. Thankfully, Daniell is a capable writer and he does a very satisfying job of making relevant even what may seem, at first glance, to be mundane. Beyond merely relaying the facts of his subject's life, the author expends great effort in understanding the sources Tyndale used for his translation and the results of his dependence upon particular texts. He examines particular words and phrases Tyndale chose to use, showing him to be a master communicator with a gift for expressing himself with great clarity. He describes even the religious and social implications that arose because of Tyndale's work. Truly Tyndale's influence extended far beyond a simple translation of the Bible. I was particularly glad to see that Daniell endeavoured to present Tyndale as something more than merely the opponent of Sir Thomas More. Tragically, More has gone down in history as a noble and just man, but the reality is that he was anything but. He proved his lack of character time and again through his bitter hatred of William Tyndale. There is much more to the life of Tyndale than his ongoing confrontations with More and Daniell is careful to document this. William Tyndale: A Biography was as thorough and interesting a biography as I could hope to read. It was not always easy to read, but it was well worth the effort. I would not hesitate to recommend it. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Worth it By JC Davenport I can't image there existing a better modern biography of William Tyndale. It was not easy for me to read. But its importance and the importance of William Tyndale in the universe is now in my mind undeniable. William Tyndale is the smart guy who lived in poverty and risked his life not once but every day for years . . . to translate the Bible into spoken English. For that he was exiled, hunted down and burned. In history, his opponent - Sir Thomas More - gets to be a hero and a "Saint." Tyndale . . . gets to have a printing company named after him . But in Heaven . . . I image it might be a little different . . .

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the first person to translate the Bible into English from its original Greek and Hebrew and the first to print the Bible in English, which he did in exile. Giving the laity access to the word of God outraged the clerical establishment in England: he was condemned, hunted, and eventually murdered. However, his masterly translation formed the basis of all English bibles--including the "King James Bible," many of whose finest passages were taken unchanged, though unacknowledged, from Tyndale's work. This important book, published in the quincentenary year of his birth, is the first major biography of Tyndale in sixty years. It sets the story of his life in the intellectual and literary contexts of his immense achievement and explores his influence on the theology, literature, and humanism of Renaissance and Reformation Europe. David Daniell, editor of Tyndale's New Testament and Tyndale's Old Testament, eloquently describes the dramatic turns in Tyndale's life. Born in England and educated at Oxford, Tyndale was ordained as a priest. When he decided to translate the Bible into English, he realized that it was impossible to do that work in England and moved to Germany, living in exile there and in the Low Countries while he translated and printed first the New Testament and then half of the Old Testament. These were widely circulated and

denounced in England. Yet Tyndale continued to write from abroad, publishing polemics in defense of the principles of the English reformation. He was seized in Antwerp, imprisoned in Vilvoorde Castle near Brussels, and burnt at the stake for heresy in 1536. Daniell discusses Tyndale's achievement as biblical translator and expositor, analyzes his writing, examines his stylistic influence on writers from Shakespeare to those of the twentieth century, and explores the reasons why he has not been more highly regarded. His book brings to life one of the great geniuses of the age.

.com Several popular histories of the King James Bible are available to interested readers, including works that concentrate on the book's political influence (*Wide as the Waters*) and its theological import (*In the Beginning*). Perhaps the most readable survey of the language of the King James Version, however, comes in the form of a biography of its primary translator. *William Tyndale: A Biography* by David Daniell (a University of London scholar and chairman of the William Tyndale Society) reveals all that is known of Tyndale's life, but its primary interest is in Tyndale's rhetorical style. Daniell asserts, convincingly, that Tyndale "made a language for England," in the same way that Martin Luther is acknowledged having united Germany's dialects in his German translation of the New Testament. The biography recites many widely known facts (Tyndale wrote nine-tenths of the King James Version's New Testament (the gospel Christmas stories--"there were shepherds abiding in the fields"--are Tyndale's), and half of its Old Testament ("Let there be light" is another of Tyndale's phrases). More importantly, Daniell's biography describes the development of Tyndale's skills as a linguist (he commanded eight languages, including Hebrew, at a time when Hebrew was virtually unknown in England) and parses Tyndale's adaptation of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin syntax into English. In the first sentence of his introduction to this book, Daniell states that "William Tyndale gave us our English Bible." The verb in that sentence is the key to this biography: it is a work of gratitude. --Michael Joseph Gross  
From *Library Journal* This biography of the first translator to render the Hebrew and Greek biblical texts directly into English is twice timely: the last definitive biography is over 50 years old, and 1994 is the quincentenary of Tyndale's birth (as far as that date can be established). Daniell (English, Univ. of London), the editor of Tyndale's *Old and New Testaments*, is well suited to his present task. This work is simultaneously an intellectual biography and a history of Tyndale's life and times. Daniell effectively sets the historical stage, anticipating the Church of Rome's hostility to Tyndale's efforts, and also clearly prepares the reader for Tyndale's translation decisions. A special strength of this study is the revelation that Tyndale's childhood in Gloucestershire, as much as his Oxford education, prepared him for the task of translation and, by extension, of uniting the disparate dialects of 16th-century England. In addition, Daniell prudently refuses easy speculation where previous biographers have succumbed. Thoroughly researched by one who knows Tyndale the person as well as Tyndale the translator, this book supersedes previous biographies and is strongly recommended for biography and religion collections. W. Alan Froggatt, *Bridgewater, Conn.* Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Daniell has given us the first substantial book on Tyndale in over fifty years." Patrick Collinson, *Times Literary Supplement* "A massive contribution to the history of the Reformation in England. It is novel and important in its focus upon the language of the English scriptures in the formative period and in its long-range perspective." J. Enoch Powell, *Times Higher Education Supplement* "An important work for all those interested in the history of Biblical translation." *International of Biblical Studies* "If you read one biography in the next six months, read this one. It stresses not so much the individual as his times and the impact he had upon them and yet never lessens its grip upon the reader. In the end one comes to admire Daniell as well as Tyndale." *Chronique* "Daniell's work is no mere biography; rather, it is a masterly edition of the scant details of Tyndale's life and an important critique of his numerous literary achievements. Enriched by appendices, chapter notes, an excellent bibliography, and a number of black-and-white illustrations, the book should occupy a very special place on the scholar's bookshelf for many years to come." Larry W. Usilton, *History* "Daniell [is] the world's most prominent authority on the life and labors of William Tyndale. . . . Certain to take a significant place in the biographical literature of Bible translators." *Bible Collector's World* "Stunning both in presentation and content. . . . Daniell carves away the popular myths and reveals an individual of heroic proportions." Donald Dean Smeeton, *Sixteenth Century Journal* "The first full-scale life of Tyndale to appear in 60 years. . . . [Daniell] cares about his subject. . . . [He] makes a compelling case that when we think of the triumphs of the Tudor age . . . we should also recall the achievement of the great literary figure who emerged at the beginning of that splendid era." Mark Galli, *Christianity Today* "An authoritative, compelling, impassioned apologia of William Tyndale, a figure long lost amidst the emphasis on the political and marital maneuverings of the English Reformation. . . . A valuable, brilliant book." *Choice* "This is an excellent publication and an invaluable and indispensable contribution to Tyndale scholarship." Arthur Long, *Faith and Freedom* "A superb book about this important and neglected figure. . . . The book is extremely readable, using analogies especially clear and apt for a modern audience. . . . Reformation scholars will welcome this book and learn from it, as will those interested in translation and the English language, even those who know little about the controversies but can appreciate dramatic events, an appealing hero, and a vividly presented journey in faith." Stephanie Martin, *Wilson Library Bulletin* "Daniell's work is the first comprehensive biography of Tyndale written in sixty years. . . . This is an invaluable resource for teachers and serious students of Church history." Thomas J. Marinello, *The Emmaus Journal* "Concise and clear, a strong introduction for upper-level undergraduates in history and religious studies and also a

useful synthesis for scholars."The Historian "A good book to read about translation style."Charles Peck, Notes on Translation "This biography is to be welcomed as a beautifully written and insightful study of this seminal figure in the English Reformation."John A. R. Dick, Albion "A superb book about this important and neglected figure. . . . What gives the book its special power is the passion with which Daniell writes about Tyndale the man and his cause. . . . Reformation scholars will welcome this book and learn from it, as will those interested in translation and the English language."Stephanie Martin, Snell Library, Northeastern University