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U.S. WILHELMVS MARTYR

XX AVLA MAG D:

Hac ut luce tuas dispergam Roma tenebras  
Sponte ex lorris ero Sponte sacrificium

QVOD SOLVM POTVIT ARS GVILHELMI TYNDAIL, HVIVS OLIM AVLÆ ALVNI,  
ST FÆLICES PVRIORIS THEOLOGÆ PRIMITIAS HIC DEPOSITAS ANTVEPIÆ IN  
ION PENTATEVCHO IN VERNAGVLAM TRANFERENDO OPERAM NAVAVIT A

## Meet William Tyndale

**D**uring the early spring of 1524, a young priest slipped away from London and made his way to the continent. He was never to see his homeland again, and for the next eleven years his life was an elaborate hide and seek pursued by government agents. His ambition, and therefore his crime, was to translate the Bible into English from the original Hebrew and Greek so that even the ploughboy could understand God's word.

Born in Gloucestershire, England, William Tyndale studied at Oxford and later Cambridge, and spent two years as tutor to the children of Sir John and Lady Walsh at Little Sodbury Manor. It was here that he began to translate the New Testament, and by the time he arrived on the continent that work was almost complete. The first printed New Testaments in English were smuggled into the country early in 1526.

Tyndale's Bible was a masterpiece of translation, and all early copies of the Bible relied heavily on the work of Tyndale: Coverdale's (the first complete

English Bible to be printed), Matthew's (officially licensed by the king to be distributed across the land), the Great Bible (displayed in every parish church by the king's order), the Geneva Bible (the Bible of the Pilgrim Fathers and Shakespeare) and even the King James' Authorised Version. Tyndale's translation moulded the English language as we know it.

After eleven years of avoiding government agents, writing long letters and tracts for the suffering church in England, refining and revising his translations, William Tyndale was betrayed and burnt. However, his legacy continues within the pages of every English Bible.



*Facing page: No portrait of Tyndale was made in his lifetime, and even Thomas More ordered the king's agents to find out what he looked like. The inscription on this portrait in Hertford College, Oxford, admits that it represents only as far as possible the translator. Under his right hand, which points to the Bible, are the words, though not Tyndale's own: 'To scatter Roman darkness by this light, the loss of land and life I'll reckon slight.'*