

# William Tyndale, Henry VIII and 'The obedience of a Christian man'

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## Abstract

William Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man* has been credited with influencing the Henrician regime's thinking and propaganda on the subject of obedience to royal authority. According to an anecdote first recorded by the Archdeacon of Nottingham, John Louthe, Henry was so delighted by Tyndale's tract that he called it 'a book for me and all kings to read', and historians have argued that Henry sought to recruit Tyndale as a royal propagandist or diplomat in 1531. This article argues that Louthe's anecdote was probably a later invention, that Henry disapproved of the *Obedience* and its author, and that the evidence that Henry sought to recruit Tyndale rather than simply to force him to abjure his heresies is slim. The *Obedience* contained very little that would have pleased Henry, presenting him as a mere 'shadow' of a King, manipulated by evil prelates. While Tyndale rejected rebellion against even tyrannical rulers, this should not be confused with advocacy of obedience of the kind that Henry might approve of, and his *Obedience* sanctioned disobedience of various kinds. From the outset, remarkably radical ideas were contained within an apparently 'conservative' tradition of English evangelical political thought.


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William Tyndale: From the Publisher. How pleased we are to devote an issue to William Tyndale! His name is vaguely familiar to many modern Christians, but the majority of details about his fascinating life are familiar only to church history and literary scholars. That in their efforts to suppress circulation of Tyndale's first edition of an English New Testament, the English Catholic authorities wasted the equivalent of several thousand dollars trying to buy up and burn all the copies he'd had printed? And they did this twice! The second book argues that Christians always have the duty of obedience to civil authority, except where loyalty to God is concerned. Tyndale is also famous for his literary battles with Sir Thomas More. The First Wives Club of Henry VIII by Paulla Hunter Schreiner. Pat Getz Second Entry. Mary Gives Up Henry by Michelle Simmons. On 2nd October 1528 English reformer and Bible translator William Tyndale published his most influential book, *The Obedience of the Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern*. This book features in a story about Anne Boleyn, which is told by both George Wyatt, grandson of Thomas Wyatt the Poet, and the 17th century clergyman and historian John Strype, who used the papers of martyrologist John Foxe. Strype commented that the event of the story "hastened the Overthrow of Abbies, and forwarded those Beginnings of Reformation in Religion, that happened under this King." *The Obedience of a Christen man, and how Christen rulers ought to govern, wherein also (if thou mark diligently) thou shalt find eyes to percieve the crafty convience of all iugglers.* Set forth by William Tyndall. 1528. Octob. 2. INTRODUCTORY NOTICE. IN the last paragraph of his *Practice of Prelates*, dated 1530, and published some time before the end of that year, Tyndale says: 'Let them remember, that I well toward three years agone sent forth the True Obedience of a Christian Man. This gives probability to what Ames mentions in an irregular way, namely, that there is an edition of the Obedie... *The Obedience of a Christen man, and how Christen rulers ought to govern, wherein also (if thou mark diligently) thou shalt find eyes to perceive the crafty convience of all iugglers.* is a 1528 book by the English Protestant author William Tyndale. The spelling of this title is now commonly modernized and abbreviated to *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. It was first published by Merten de Keyser in Antwerp, and is best known for advocating that the king of a country was the head of that country's Most folks know of William Tyndale as the man who translated the first English Bible, which - with certain royal guidelines, was used to transcribe the 1611 edition authorized by King James. The "Obedience of a Christian Man" was a primer on Christian living that was used to spark what is called the English Reformation. It is a practical book on how we are to live as believers. Children are to obey their parents, servants are to obey their mas *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. By William Tyndale. Most folks know of William Tyndale as the man who translated the first English Bible, which - with