

Fundamental Baptist Institute

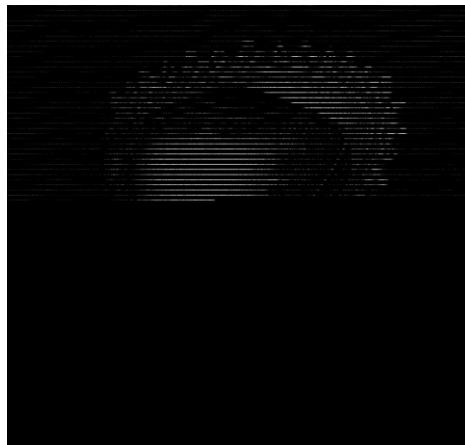


Facts From History About Our King James Bible.

Written and Published by

by Rev. Ronald D. Lesley, Th. M., D.D.

Chapter IX



Mary I Reigns In England

Darkness falls on the Reformation in England.

Mary was an ardent Catholic. The Pope is reaching back to England. Mary was daughter of Henry VII by Catherine of Arragon. Mary was bigoted by her popish superstitions. Living in continual restraint she was reserve and gloomy. Mary was surround by Roman Catholic clergy with whom she was very attached. She continually refused to comply with Henry's new institutions. Her zeal for the Roman faith had rendered her furious.

Mary's only rival to the throne was Lady Jane Grey. Lady Grey refused the title she held and refused position of heir to the throne. Jane Grey retired to her home with her husband Lord Gilford Dudley.

Mary called parliament to session soon in her reign. She struck down all statutes with regard to religion. This opened the return of the former Roman Catholic religion. The primitive abuses returned as well.

Discontents created an insurrection against Mary after she had put to death men of faith. Thomas Wyatt headed the revolt which quickly failed. He was condemned and executed. Two days after Wyatt was executed Lady Jane Grey and her husband were ordered put to death. They played no part in the revolt, but they were condemned as though they were guilty.

On the day of the execution of lady Grey, she was led to the place where she was to die. In route to her execution she was faced with the officers of the tower carrying to burial Lord Dudley's headless body. His body was still steaming with the fresh warm blood of his awful death. She looked on the headless body for some time without any emotion, and then, with sigh, desired them to proceed. On the scaffold she made her speech, in which she stated that her offense was not in having laid her hand on the crown, but not rejecting it with sufficient constancy. She willingly accepted death. After speaking she caused herself to be disrobed by her women and with serene steadiness submitted to her executioner.

Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and cardinal Pole, who recently returned from Italy, were those behind these violent measures. Pole always in alliance with Rome had found displeasure from Henry. This was very pleasing to the Pope who brought him to Rome.

Persecution began in 1554 AD with the martyrdom of Hooper bishop of Gloucester, and Rogers mentioned at length in the next section on the Matthew Bible. Saunders and Taylor, men distinguished for their zeal in carrying on the reformation, were next to suffer.

Bonne, bishop of London, with rage let loose his vengeance without restraint. It seemed that he had pleasure in the pains and suffering of his victims. The queen exhorted him to pursue his "pious" work without pity or interruption.

Latimer, bishop of London, and Ridley, bishop of Worcester, were condemned together. Ridley had been one of the champions of great esteem for the reformation. his piety, learning, and good judgement were admired by his friends and dreaded by his enemies. It was a clear fact that this great man was supported inwardly during his ordeal with death. When Ridley was brought to be burned he found his old friend Latimer there before him. Latimer was a man of the simplest of manners. He had never learned to flatter the courts. He was respected as a man of Christ. Latimer being comforted of his friend Ridley, stopped him saying, "Be of good cheer my brother, we shall this day

kindle such a torch in England, as, I trust in God, shall never be extinguished." Latimer quickly was out of his pain, but Ridley suffered much longer, his legs being consumed before the fire reached his vital organs.

Cramner's death followed soon after, and struck a whole nation with horror. In a weaker moment Cramner was induced to sign a paper condemning the reformation. His enemies rendered him a wretch and resolved to destroy him. Being led to the stake, and the fire being kindled round him, he stretched forth his right hand holding it in the fire till it was consumed. In the midst of his suffering he cried, "That unworthy hand."

During this persecution two hundred and seventy-seven persons suffered by fire, besides those punished by imprisonment, fines, and confiscation's. Five bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, eighty-four tradesmen, one hundred husbandmen, fifty-five women, and four children! The suffering of these men, women, and children, should never be forgotten. Nor should we forget at whose hands they met their fate. We should be reminded to read Revelation chapter 17 recognizing the Roman Catholic Church as that harlot.

THE MATTHEW BIBLE 1537 AD

It appears that while Tyndale was in prison he labored at his chosen task of translating the Bible. Before he died he had advanced as far as II. Chronicles. His manuscripts were given into the hands of his friend, John Rogers, who resolved to complete the work. Rogers was aided by Thomas Matthew who had assisted Tyndale. The work of Rogers and Tyndale honored Matthew in whose name the book was published. It was printed somewhere on the continent in 1537 at the expense of two citizens of London, Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch.

It was principally made up of the Tyndale translations. Rogers used Tyndale's Pentateuch, Joshua, through 2 Chronicles, and Tyndale's New Testament. Cromwell said of the Matthew Bible, "Better than any translation heretofore made."

Through Grafton's influence with Cranmer, the king's license was obtained, and in less than a year after Tyndale's martyrdom the Matthews Bible was distributed in England by royal authority.

This was the first Bible printed on English soil. Between the Old Testament and the New there was a page which held only two letters, W T which gave recognition to William Tyndale.

Believing marriage to be lawful for the clergy as well as for other men, Rogers had married a wife in Antwerp, and continued to live there until Edward ascended the throne of England. He then returned to his native country and was promoted by bishop Ridley

to be an assistant at St. Paul's, London. He also kept his place as vicar of St. Sepulcher's in Snow Hill, London. Rogers continued to hold these places until the death of king Edward.

In the second year of queen Mary's reign he preached a sermon against the growing power of the Pope in England, and enlarged on the virtues of the late king. He urged the people to remain true to the reformed religion. For this sermon he was summoned before the council, but he defended himself so ably that he was dismissed with a warning.

This displeased the queen, as she considered Rogers a heretic, so he was arrested a second time. Yet there was such respect felt for him that he was again let go. Rogers was however placed in house arrest and was told not to leave his own home. This order he obeyed, although he might have made his escape if he would. He knew he could have a church in Germany if he applied for it. He had a wife and eleven children to support, but all these things did not move him to disobey the order. Rogers did not court death, but he was willing to meet it fearlessly when it came.

Rogers remained confined in his own house for several weeks, until Bonner, bishop of London, had him committed to Newgate prison. The great preacher of faith and virtue was shut in with thieves and murderers. The queen's politics were at work and he was afterward brought a third time before the council. Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, presided with no intention of showing mercy to the prisoner. There was no intention of giving a trial to convince Rogers of error. He was brought there for his death. After he had been examined before the council, he was turned over to Bonner, bishop of London, who declared him to be an obstinate heretic. A report of this was sent to the court, and a writ was issued for his execution.

On February 4, 1555, in the morning, the prisoner was warned suddenly by the keeper's wife to prepare himself for the fire. He being sound asleep could hardly be wakened. He was told to make haste. The great man said, "Is then this the day? If it be so, I need not be careful of my dressing."

Rogers was taken first to Bonner to be degraded. At this time he begged of Bonner one favor. And Bonner asking what that should be, he said, " Only that I might talk a few words with my wife before burning." This request Bonner refused to grant. The prisoner was brought from Newgate to Smithfield, the place of his execution. As Rogers was brought toward Smithfield he repeated the fifty-first psalm by the way

Psalms 51

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my
transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin [is] ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden [part] thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit.

13 [Then] will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: [and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

All the people greatly wondered at his peaceful countenance. Rogers' wife and eleven children, ten of whom were able to walk and one in arms, met him by the way as he went toward Smithfield. The sight of his own flesh and blood did not move him from his determination to give a good account of his faith. The noble Rogers constantly and cheerfully took his death with wonderful patience in the defense of Christ's gospel.

A little before his burning at the stake, his pardon was brought if he would have recanted, but he utterly refused it. Here Woodroofe, one of the sheriffs, asked him if he would change his religion to save his life. Rogers answered, "That which I have preached I will seal with my blood."

Then said Woodroofe, "thou art a heretic."

"That shall be known," replied Rogers, "at the day of judgment."

"Well," said Woodroofe, "I will never pray for thee."

"But I will pray for thee," replied Rogers.

John Roger gave the world a great testimony for the Gospel and Truth. He died for the testimony of the authority of the Bible. His Saviour remained faithful to him unto the end.

THE GREAT BIBLE 1539 A D.

The authorities of England were not satisfied with either Tyndale's or Coverdale's version. The former was burdened with notes and comments. while the latter was imperfect in its conception. Cromwell and others therefore resolved to have a new English translation. Some say Rogers had a leading part in it. However, it seems that Coverdale was selected editor and Grafton publisher. The Matthew Bible was adopted as the basis, but the text was carefully though not very judiciously, revised. The printing of the Bible was begun in Paris about the close of the year 1538 by royal license. Before it was completed the license was withdrawn and the sheets were seized by the Inquisition and condemned to the flames. Some of this work was saved, brought by Grafton to England. He afterward succeeded in bringing over to London, England the workmen, presses, typed and paper. The Great Bible was published in 1539.

1539 AD. TAVERNER'S BIBLE.

During this year, while The Great Bible of Coverdale was passing through the press, Richard Taverner, a lawyer and a good Greek scholar edited another Bible, which was printed in London by John Bydell for Thomas Barthelet. It was based on the Matthew Bible. The Bible and New Testament were each reprinted once and his Old Testament was adopted in a Bible of 1551. With these exceptions this version seems to have fallen into complete neglect.

From the year 1525, when the first New Testament was printed, until 1542, thirty-nine editions of the New Testament and fourteen of the whole Bible were published.

The effect of the circulation of God's Word upon people of every age and class was wonderful. Boys and old men, girls and matrons flocked to the church, where ponderous Bibles chained to massive pillars lay open upon stands for the use of the public.

Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, who had been one of Tyndale's greatest enemies and who was one of the prime movers in burning his Testament, was ordered by the king to edit a new edition of the Bible for use in every church in England, and he did so in 1540.

1560 A. D. THE GENEVA BIBLE.

Queen Mary ascended the throne and reigned five years. This terrible reign of this loyal Catholic forever expelled the Pope from the shores of England. During her murderous reign neither Bible or Testament was printed in England. Rogers, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley and others who had aided in giving the scriptures to the English people in their own language were burned at the stake. Some of the noblest of England's worthies were driven from their country and forced to seek asylum in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Geneva Bible was far superior to all that preceded it. The Geneva, with exception of the King James Bible, is acknowledged to be the best in the English language.

In 1557, William Whittingham translated the New Testament in what would become known as the Geneva Bible. Whittingham had four English Bibles to compare as he translated and revised the New Testament and the Old. He had the Greek text of Stephanus and the new Latin of Beza. There were some great men of the language in Geneva with whom he could converse.

The Geneva Bible was the first Bible to contain both the Old and New Testaments with chapter and verse divisions. This was a result of the work of Stephanus who had divided his Greek into chapter and verses. It was the first printed in rich Roman letters.

The Geneva Bible also contained a cross reference, and commentary notation on each verse. Each chapter and book contained a summary.

Elizabeth came to the throne and many Puritans returned to England from their exile in Geneva. William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson, remained in

Geneva to continue their work on the revision and final version of the Geneva Bible of 1560.

Many of these Bibles can be seen today. They are very common. The Geneva Bible reigned supreme for nearly a century. The last edition was in 1644. This was the Bible of Bunyon and the first settlers of America.

Elizabeth The First Reigns in England

1558 - 1603AD

The Bishops Bible

The Great Bible in England was vastly inferior to the Geneva Bible. The church in England could not allow their work to fall to the wayside in their own church. Archbishop Matthew Parker commissioned the revision that would be the Bishops Bible. This work was finished in 1558.

The Bishops Bible was the first Bible to contain the phrase, "set forth by authority," therefore, it was the first of the authorized versions of the Bible. Later versions read, "authorized and appointed to be read in the churches."

Elizabeth was very reluctant to take the life of Mary. There are many speculations as to why, yet, none really can say for certain. Mary was finally brought to justice in 1559

The reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) was filled with great events. In the religious sphere we have:

The appearance (1560) of the Geneva Bible that soon attained large popularity and use;

The publication (1568) of the Bishops Bible that immediately replaced the Great Bible as the Bible to be read and used in the churches;

The tolerance enjoyed by the reform party in England, securing for it practically unrestricted growth.

The execution of Mary Stuart (1587)

The overwhelming defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588

The Elizabethan period in England's history gave us an English language of purity, style, and beauty that has never been surpassed by any subsequent period. Among these worthies may be mentioned Shakespeare, Spenser, Bacon, Hooker, Tonson, and Richard Hakluyt.