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Luther: A Blessing to the English

V. The First English Lutherans and the First English Lutheran Theological Seminary

"Martin Luther" is written over the page with the names of Gardiner, Cranmer, Thirlby, and Bilney, the degree list of Cambridge in 1521.

A committee was sent to London to have Luther's books examined and to get an order from Cardinal Wolsey to burn them—Drs. Humfrey; Robert Ridley, uncle of the martyr; John Watson, praised by Erasmus; and Henry Bullock, a pupil of Erasmus, "most learned Bovillus," now professor of Greek and vice-chancellor.

The books were burned on Market Hill about the Easter term, and the grand spectacle was graced by the august presence of the magnificent cardinal, Chancellor John Fisher of Rochester, and Vice-chancellor Bullock. Can we not see gown and town assisting at this act of faith?

Proctors John Denne and William Medew	
Paid Peter the bedel sent to the Lord Cardinal and the Chancellor with letters respecting Luther's works ..	20s.
For writing the statutes sent to the Lord Cardinal	12½d.
Paid Dr. Bulloke for expenses to London concerning the examination of Luther at the command of the Lord Cardinal	53s. 4d.
To Dr. Umphrey for his expenses in the like business	53s. 4d.
To Drs. Watson and Ridley	£5 6s. 8d.
To Dr. Nyocalas, deputy Vicechancellor, for drink and other expenses about the burning of the books of Martin Luther	2s.
[Peter the bedel is the father of Sir John Cheke, the great Greek scholar]	

What good did that burning do? Erasmus grinned: "By burning you can remove Luther's books from the shelves, but whether you can thereby remove them from men's hearts, I know not." By the way, how did Luther's books get to Cambridge? So far no one has been able to answer our question, but we think we have stumbled upon a clue. John Siberch, or Siburg, a German printer, the first to use Greek letters in England, settled in Cambridge in 1521. Next! At Christmas, 1525, Erasmus asked Robert Aldrige to greet John Siburg "the bookseller." Have we found the missing link?

Thomas Forman, or Farman, fellow and later president of Queens' College, where Erasmus had lived and taught, smuggled Luther's books into his college and hid them from the inquisitors, and they found eager readers.

Thomas Bilney wrote Bishop Tunstal: "There are those physicians upon whom that woman which was twelve years vexed had consumed all that she had and felt no help but was still worse and worse until such time as at the last she came unto Christ, and after she had once touched the hem of his garment through faith, she was so healed that presently she felt the same in her body. Oh, mighty power of the Most Highest! which I also, miserable sinner, have often tasted and felt. Who before that I could come unto Christ, had even likewise spent all that I had upon those ignorant physicians, that is to say, unlearned hearers of confession, so that there was but small force of strength left in me, which of nature was but weak, small store of money, and very little knowledge or understanding; for they appointed me fastings, watchings, buying of pardons, and masses: in all which things, as I now understand, they sought rather their own gain than the salvation of my sick and perishing soul." He heard two friends whisper about a new book, the Greek New Testament. He stole into the house where the forbidden book was secretly sold and got a copy. "He was soon known as a student and admirer of the writings of Luther." As Luther had been converted by Rom. 1:16, 17, so Bilney was converted by 1 Tim. 1:15. "Immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch as my bruised bones leapt for joy." Cooper, the old historian of Cambridge, says the reading of the New Testament "and the works of Luther taught him other views of religion." John Fox says Bilney was "the first framer of the University in the knowledge of Christ." Sir Thomas More calls him "a thorough Lutheran." If he is right, Bilney was the first English Lutheran.

The Lutheran faith produced a Lutheran life. John Fox "with surpassing beauty" describes him "preaching at the lazar cots, wrapping them in sheets, helping them of what they wanted, if they would convert to Christ; laborious and painful to the desperates; a preacher to the prisoners and comfortless; a great doer in Cambridge."

Thomas Thirlby had a room below Bilney's, and when he played on "the recorder," Bilney betook himself to prayer, as if to resist the Evil One. He disliked music as much as Andrew Fair-service hated the "kists of whistles." Bilney believed; therefore he spoke. He converted others.

William Paget read and spread Luther's works and lectured on the *Rhetoric* of Melancthon. He will visit Luther in August, 1532, on the "king's business" and become the powerful Lord Paget.

John Thixtill was "a warm supporter of the Reformation," and his retainer Remige will visit Luther and tell him of the progress of the Reformation in England.

Richard Smith will become a Doctor of the Canon Law and go to prison for heresy.

John Frith will be burned for heresy.

Simon Heynes will baptize Edward VI and oppose the savage Six Articles in 1539.

Nicholas Shaxton "boldly advocated Lutheran doctrines," and he will oppose the Six Articles.

Richard Taverner will translate Lutheran works and the New Testament and preach, though a lawyer.

Matthew Parker will become the famous archbishop of Canterbury under Elizabeth.

John Rogers will become pastor near Wittenberg, get out Matthew's Bible, be an able preacher and the first martyr under Bloody Mary.

Thomas Forman will become rector of Allhallows in Honey Lane, a D. D. in 1524, go to prison, and die in 1528.

Edward Crome, already D. D., will suffer in prison for years and die there.

John Skip will be "a warm friend of the Reformers" and almoner to Queen Anne.

John Mallory was another "early Lutheran."

William Warner was a "Gospeller," that is, he lectured on the Bible instead of the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard.

Simon Smith, "an early Lutheran," will become curate of Thomas Patmore, marry, and be punished.

Bilney converted Thomas Arthur, and the two converted John Nichols, or Lambert, who will be burned.

Hugh Latimer preached "An Examination of the Theological Opinions of Melanchthon." Bilney hastened to Latimer's room and begged him "for God's sake to hear my confession." What was the result?

"I was as obstinate a papist as any was in England, insomuch that when I should be made a Bachelor of Divinity, my whole oration was against Philip Melanchthon and against his opinions. Then having met Master Bilney, or rather St. Bilney, that suffered death for Christ's sake, I learned more by his confession than before in many years, so that from that time forward I began to smell the word of God and forsook the school doctors and such fooleries," said Bishop Latimer in his first sermon on the "Lord's Prayer."

Bishop West of Ely, the ordinary of Cambridge, asked Latimer "that you will preach me one sermon against Martin Luther and his doctrine."

"My lord . . . we are not permitted here to read his works. . . . If Luther do none otherwise than I have done, preaches no man's

doctrine, but only the doctrine of God out of the Scriptures, there needeth no confutation of his doctrine."

Bilney was forbidden to preach "Luther's doctrines." "I will not preach Luther's doctrines, if there are any peculiar to him, but I must preach the doctrine of Jesus Christ, although Luther should preach it too."

Robert Barnes became an Augustinian friar in 1514, and, being a lad of parts, was sent to the University of Louvain, a rival of Paris. On his return with his pupil Thomas Paynell he was made prior. "Putting aside Duns and Dorbel," scholasticism and Byzantine logic, he lectured on Terence, Plautus, Cicero, and the letters of St. Paul, and "caused the house shortly to flourish with good letters, and made a great part of the house learned who before were drowned in barbarous ignorance." He was "lucid and effective and had no equal." He was helped by Thomas Paynell, who will be sent on important embassies to the Lutheran princes.

All of these were accounted converts of Bilney.

Then there was William Tyndale, who will register at Wittenberg on May 27, 1524, as Guillelmus Daltici ex Anglia and translate the New Testament.

William Roy will register on June 10, 1525, as Guilhelmus Roy ex Londino and help Tyndale get out "Luther's New Testament in English."

Thomas Dugate will go to Luther for advice and be advised to marry if he cannot contain. He will do so, call himself Benet, and be burned for a Protestant.

Edward Fox will be at Wittenberg from January 1, 1536, till April and be an influential Lutheran.

Nicholas Heath will be with Fox at Wittenberg and become a violent persecutor of the Lutherans.

Stephen Gardiner will be a very bloody persecutor of the Lutherans; a Doctor of the Canon Law in 1524.

Nicholas Ridley will be burned with Latimer.

Thomas Thirlby will be the first and the last bishop of Windsor.

Richard Sampson will become bishop of Chichester.

Miles Coverdale will get out the first complete English Bible and the first English hymnal, translated from Luther and other Lutherans.

Simon Matthew will preach against the Pope.

Rodolph Bradford will go to prison for spreading the English New Testament.

John Taylor will go to prison for attacking the savage Six Articles.

Thomas Swinerton "embraced the doctrines of Luther" and fled under Bloody Mary.

Robert Ferrar will buy Lutheran books and be burned.

John Ponet, or Poynet, will become a Lutheran, an able preacher, bishop of Rochester, flee to Strassburg under Mary, and defend Luther against lies.

Richard Bayfield, a priest, converted by Barnes, in prison for nine months, freed by Barnes, will flee to the continent, import Protestant books, burned in 1531.

Thomas Allen, son of the Lord Mayor, will comfort Saint Bilney at his fiery death.

John Bale will send to England the account of Luther's death and call him "a saint" and become bishop of Ossory.

Nicholas Drumm will go to prison for being a Lutheran.

John Rickes will translate Otto Brunfelsing's "Pronosticacion" for 1536.

Robert Aldrich, who was with Erasmus in his famous pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham in 1511.

"Richard Croke is the great man at Leipzig," wrote Erasmus, and taught Greek to Camerarius and Mosellanus about 1514 for fifteen guilders a year. He went to Dresden and returned to Cambridge in 1517 and became an A. M.

Peter Valence, a Norman, "who held Lutheran opinions" and attacked Pope Leo's indulgence, will comfort the heretics William Wolsey and Robert Pygot in 1555.

John Stokys will promise Cromwell to reform and preach sincerely God's Word.

John Leland will become famous as a linguist, orator, poet, and historian.

William Butts will be knighted, the physician of King Henry, and yet belong to the "Lutheran party."

John Clarke will go to Oxford and die in prison for Lutheranism.

George Joy will be persecuted for heresy and flee to Strassburg.

George Constantine will be jailed for his Protestant opinions and spreading Protestant books.

John Fryer will go to prison for his Lutheran opinions.

Richard Harman will go to prison for heresy.

Sygar Nicholson will go to prison for his Lutheran opinions and Lutheran books. The cost "For faggots for burning books, 4d."

Others were John Bradford and George Day.

Thomas Cranmer came "to be nursed in the grossest kind of sophistry, logic, philosophy, moral and natural (not in the text of the old philosophers, but chiefly in the dark riddles of Duns and other subtle questionists) to his age of 22 years." Strype says he studied other writers "unto the time that Luther began to write. And then he bent himself to try out the truth therein." He said he

prayed heartily God would destroy the power of the bishop of Rome.

William Gace will print some of Luther's works.

Richard Argentine, alias Sexten, will become a physician.

William Barlow will fall off from the true religion but repent and return.

Robert Drury will marry and die March 2, 1535, and his epitaph reads—

"Suche as we are suche schall ye be,
Suche as ye be sometyme were we.
Miserere nostri."

William Turner will become a scholarly clergyman, critic of the New Testament text, translator, botanist, ornithologist, mineralogist, member of Parliament, prolific author of both religious and scientific books and physician to Lord Protector Somerset, the first Protestant ruler of England.

George Stafford, "a man of very perfect life, and approvedly learned in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues," "like Luther at Wittenberg" would be a "Doctor Biblicus" and lecture on the Bible and not on the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard.

Thomas Becon in "The Jewel of Joy" says of his teacher: "George Stafford lectured on Paul which before had so many years been foiled with the foolish fantasies and elvish expositions of certain doting doctors, and, as it were, drowned in the dirty dregs of the drowsy duncers by his industry, labor, pain, and diligence, he seemed of a dead man to make him alive again, and putting away all unseemliness to set him forth in his native colours; so that now he is both seen, read, and heard not without great and singular pleasures of them that travail in the studies of his most godly epistles. And as he beautified the letters of blessed Paul with his godly expositions, so likewise did he learnedly set forth in his lectures the native sense and true understanding of the four evangelists, vively restoring unto us the apostle's mind, and the mind of those holy writers, which so many years before had lien unknown and obscured through the darkness and mists of the Pharisees and papists." He had large audiences. He visited Sir [Rev.] Henry, the conjurer, sick of the plague, brought him to repentance, had all his books burned before his face, caught the infection, and died thereof in 1529. Prior Robert Barnes of the Augustinians was the head of the society, though Shaxton and Forman also presided, but Bilney was the soul of this Cambridge movement.

Styrype writes of "those days, when learning and religion began to dawn there; when divers godly men resorted together for conference sake; who also oftentimes flocked together in open

sight, both in the schools, and at the sermons in St. Mary's and at St. Augustine's, where Dr. Barnes was prior, and at other disputations. . . . Their meetings to confer and discourse together for edification and Christian knowledge, were chiefly at an house called 'The White Horse,' which was, therefore, afterwards named 'Germany' by their enemies. . . . They were in mockery called 'Germans,' because they conversed much in the books of the divines of Germany brouth thence."

On their way there they were jeered, "There are the Germans going to Germany!" Where they took their walks was known as "Heretics' Hill." The inn "At the Sign of the White Horse" in St. Benedict's stood on university ground belonging to Catherine Hall between Bull Hotel and King's College with a narrow frontage on Hight street and a rear entrance on Mill street or Plute's lane—"detestable and filthy. This house was chosen because they of King's College, Queens' College and St. John's might come in with the more privacy at the back door." Benet, Pembroke, Gonwell, Peterhouse, and the Augustinian cloister must be added to this roll of honor. The sign of the White Horse remains.

George Herbert Curteis in the Bampton Lectures of 1871, p. 56, writes of Cambridge: "There . . . had been seen a little society of religious men, who . . . encouraged each other in reading the Scriptures, in mutual confession, and similar prescribed acts of personal piety. They visited the prisoners at jails; they preached anew the vital spiritual truths—formerly enshrined, but now obscured, by the ritual and ceremonies of their Church; and were, in short, engaged in reviving religion in England under its ancient forms. The names of twenty-seven of these men have been preserved to us; they obtained the honors of ridicule and social persecution, the house where these first English Lutherans met was nicknamed 'Germany.' And worse things than ridicule were not long in following."

As has been shown above, we have dug up many more than twenty-seven names out of Cooper's "Athenae."

John Bass Mullinger writes in his *History of Cambridge*: "In the old-fashioned inn, as at the meetings of the primitive Christians, were heard again—freed from the sophistries and misconstructions of mediaeval theology—the glowing utterances of the great apostle of the Gentiles. There also, for the first time, the noble thoughts of Luther sank deeply into many a heart; while his doctrines, if not invariably accepted, were tested by honest and devout enquiry and by the sole standard of Scriptural truth. To men who had known many a weary vigil over the fanciful and avid subtleties of Aquinas or Nicholas de Lyra, this grand but simple teaching came home with power. . . . The wranglings of

the theologians and the clamor of the schools died away and were forgotten in the rapture of a more perfect knowledge. Said Becon, one of the youngest, as in after years he looked back: 'So oft as I was in the company of these brethren, methought I was quietly placed in the new glorious Jerusalem.'

Mullinger calls this "the theological school of the university"; we like to think of it as the first English Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Cardinal Wolsey's "contempt of the clergy was looked on as that which gave encouragement to the heretics. When reports were brought to court of a company that were at Cambridge, Bilney, Latimer, and others that read and propagated Luther's books and opinions, some bishops moved in the year 1523 "that there might be a visitation appointed to go to Cambridge for trying who were the fautors of heresy there. But he, as legate, did inhibit it." He forbade Fisher of Rochester and West of Ely, two bitter enemies of the Lutherans, but he sent Dr. Robert Shorton of Pembroke Hall, a well-known favorer of Lutheranism.

This was made the 43rd charge against the cardinal, not punishing "the Lutheran sect. He had hindered the true and direct correction of heresies."

And his acts as to the abbeyes "may be weighed to the worst act or article of Martyn Luthers."

Oak Park, Ill.

(To be continued)

WM. DALLMANN

Conscience

Lectures Delivered at the River Forest Summer School, 1941

I

Etymology. — The English word *conscience* is derived from the Latin *conscientia*, which, in turn, is a literal translation of the Greek *συνείδησις*, *syneidesis*, and which in German is rendered with *Gewissen*. The component parts of these words have the same meaning: *eidesis*, *scientia*, *science*, *wissen* mean *knowing*, *knowledge*, and the prefixes *syn*, *con*, *ge* mean *together with*, *in conjunction with*. The difficulty in determining the etymological concept of the term lies in fixing the relation of the prefix. With what does the prefix *syn*, or *con*, connect the noun *eidesis*, or *scientia*?

The Modern Eclectic Dictionary, defines *conscience* thus: "As the etymology indicates, it signifies *knowledge along with* — but whether with a thing or a person or being, it is difficult to determine." Young's Analytical Concordance defines *syneidesis* as a *knowing with one's self*. Vincent, in *Word Studies in the New*