

## LESSON-13

# BIBLE - Through Fiery Trials

**Reference** : *Psalms. 119 : 161- 176*

**Memory verse** : *Psalms. 119 : 105,106*

**Objective:** To learn about the wonderful survival of the Bible inspite of severest oppositions from Kings and Emperors. Martyrdom and sacrifices and the prices paid by saints for the existence and wide circulation of the Bible, should inspire us.

**Introduction:** Who completed the first English version of the Bible? (John Wycliffe) His translation did not get wide circulation because of the opposition of the Roman Catholics and of the lack of printing press. Yet his work was helpful to open the eyes of the general public. Do you know why the Roman Church opposed the work of translating and publishing the Bible? It was because of the following reason. The Roman Catholic church held many beliefs and practised many rituals against the teaching of the Bible for their own profit. The Bible was a sealed book to the common people (laity) who did not know Greek or Latin. If the Bible was translated into vernaculars, they knew for sure, that their heresies and evil practices would be found at variance with the Bible by the public and they would lose popularity. So they craftily branded any one attempting to make the Bible accessible to the public as heretic and tried to do away with them. For several years the Bible had to go through fiery trials. Too many powerful people like the Roman church leaders, kings emperors, and atheists namely Ingersol and Voltaire, opposed the Bible and tried to prevent its circulation. But all such antagonisms disappeared like shadow and the Bible emerged victorious sending forth its light. We are going to study about the sacrificial service of some unforgettable man in the history of the Bible.

### WILLIAM TYNDALE;

William Tyndale was born in 1490 in England. He was the first

Bible Martyr: who earned the title of the father of the English Bible. He came into contact with Erasmus after his education at Oxford and Cambridge. He came to experience the salvation personally by contact with Erasmus and became an evangelist. He had an earnest ambition to find an English translation printed and published. His zeal for the task is clear from his words to a clergyman: "If God spares my life, before many years pass, I will cause a boy that drives the plough, know more of the scriptures than you do." Tyndale had to leave England because of the strong opposition from the Church and the state. He went to Germany and carried on his task. He obtained the support of the Great Reformer Martin Luther. In 1525 he completed the translation of the **New Testaments** and printed 3000 copies. By 1530, he had managed to publish 15000 copies. He had been sending large quantities of Bibles hidden in the merchandise of ships to England. The State authorities in England burned all the Bibles that they found and arrested the custodians of the Bible.

After publishing the new Testament, Tyndale was busy involved in the work of the Old Testament. He translated parts the Old Testament. He was unable to complete the Old Testament because he was betrayed and arrested. Being accused as a 'heretic', Tyndale was sentenced to death. In October 1536 he was strangled and burnt. His last words were; "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." Though Tyndale was killed, his work didn't fail. In spite of the Government's order to search all the Tyndale New Testament and burn them, the public grew more and more interested in reading it. Because of this increased interest of the people Government had to relax the order of ban for some time.

### **MILES COVERDALE:**

William Tyndale was arrested before he completed his task Miles Coverdale, an associate of Tyndale took over the task and completed the translation of the Old Testament in 1535. As he was not learned in Hebrew and Greek his translation was based on the Latin and Dutch versions. By the unfavorable circumstances in England, he too had gone to Europe and published his translation in 1535 at Zurich. But in 1537 he was able to print the next impression in England itself. His translation was very commendable.

### **JOHN ROGERS (Another Martyr):**

In 1535 John Rogers another associate of William Tyndale

undertook the publishing of an English Bible based on the versions of Tyndale and Coverdale with the title, "With the royal permission". It is known as Matthews Bible.

It was the King and the Church leaders who were responsible for the death of Tyndale who gave permission to this Bible. But Mary the Queen who succeeded the king was an opponent of the Bible and the reformation views. The Queen had Rogers arrested and burnt.

### **THE GREAT BIBLE:**

Published in 1539, this Bible was an amalgamation of all the preceding translations of Tyndale, Coverdale and Rogers. It was so called after its large size. It was the first English Authorised Version, being published by order of the King Henry -VIII.

### **THE GENEVEA BIBLE:**

In the reign of Mary the Queen (also known as Bloody Mary) hundreds of Christian reformers were killed. Most of them were killed on account of translation of the Bible. Miles Coverdale fled for life. At that time a group of scholarly reformers fled to Geneva in Switzerland and published a new translation known as Geneva Bible. After the cruel rule of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth succeeded to the throne. The Queen permitted those scholars to return to England from exile. With the help of Queen Elizabeth Geneva Bible was widely published in England. They dedicated it to the Queen. Being prepared on the basis of Tyndale's version, the Geneva Bible soon gained popularity. This was the first Bible with the verse and chapter wise division. So this Bible is also known as Breeches Bible. This Bible was printed and published 160 times of which 60 impressions were done during the time of Queen Elizabeth.

### **THE BISHOP'S BIBLE:**

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Bible again found its place in worship centres. In 1568, under the leadership of Centerburry Arch Bishop Mathew Parker, the Great Bible was revised in comparison with the Geneva Bible. It was published under the title of 'Bishop's Bible'. This was accepted as the Authorised Version of the Anglican Church. Yet, this didn't earn great popularity.

**EXERCISE 13****Answer the following questions**

- 1 Who is known as the father of the English Bible?
- 2 In which year did Tyndale publish 15000 copies of N.T.?
- 3 What were the last words of Tyndale?
- 4 Who took over the work of Tyndale?
- 5 Which was the first English Authorised version?
- 6 Which Bible is known as the 'Breeches Bible' & Why?
- 7 Who revised the Great Bible and When?
- 8 When was Geneva Bible published and by Whom?
- 9 What do you know of the Queen known as 'Bloody Mary'?

**Do You Know?**

- 1) Total Chapters in the Bible - 1189
  - 2) Total verses in the Bible - 31173
  - 3) The longest Chapter - Psalms 119
  - 4) The shortest Chapter - Psalms 117
  - 5) The biggest verse - Esther 8:9
  - 6) The smallest verse - Jn 11:35
  - 7) The middle verse - Psalms 118:18
  - 8) Total writers - 40
  - 9) Period of writing - 1600 yrs.
  - 10) Expanded form of A.D. - Anno Domini  
(In the year of Lord)
- B.C. - Before Christ

