

February 27th

Memory Verse:

Gather my saints together unto me;
those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Psalm 50:5

This verse explains to us who it is that are God's saints. Jesus Christ is our sacrifice if we are Christians and so we are saints! There are more details about this verse in the lesson for 1st March. God has had His people, his “saints”, in all ages. Today's lesson includes some epic events that happened to them in the sixteenth century.

Something to read from history

The Schmalkaldic League was established on 27th February 1531. I have put H E Marshall's retelling of this event in today's Optional Resources files. Schmalkaldic is quite a mouthful to say. Break it up: Schmal-*kal*-dic. The stress goes on kal.

Here is how E H Broadbent explains what happened to some of the “saints” after the Protestant defeat at Mühlberg which you will read of in H E Marshall's retelling. “Brethren” or “brothers” is another word sometimes used to describe God's people. Whereas “saints” is a term that emphasises that Christians are covered by the righteousness of Christ, “brethren” is a term that emphasises Christians' relationship with each other.

Using your atlas you can follow this epic journey by looking up the places highlighted in green. No wonder it took six months! Can you calculate roughly how far it was? Do you know what **extirpation** means? I have highlighted some words you might like to look up throughout today's lesson.



At the Battle of Mühlberg (1547) the Protestants were defeated, Ferdinand I returned to Prague victorious, and began the intended **extirpation** of the Brethren – those Protestants who were not members of the Utraquist church. The Utraquists had compromised and fought on the side of the Catholics.

Four of the nobles were publicly executed in **Prague**, the possessions of others were confiscated, meetings were closed, and an order was issued that any who refused to

join the Roman Catholic or Utraquist Church must leave the country within six weeks.

Then began a great emigration. From all sides the exiles, with their long trails of wagons, followed the roads leading towards **Poland**. The people on the way sympathized with the wanderers, let them pass toll-free, fed and entertained them. They were refused permission to settle in Poland or Polish Prussia, and only after six months' travelling were they given a resting place in the city of Königsberg (modern **Kaliningrad**), in East Prussia, which was Lutheran.

A young blacksmith among them, George Israel,¹ a man of extraordinary vigour both of faith and of physical strength, overcame all obstacles and obtained for the Brethren a place in Poland, in the town of **Ostroróg**. Settling in Ostroróg, they made it a centre from which their work spread over the country. They not only preached the Gospel there, but did much to draw together the different sections of Protestants in the country.

¹ For the full story of Georg Israel, see the lesson for 24th August (yet to come).

In 1556, Ferdinand becoming Emperor, the throne of Bohemia passed to his son, Maximilian, and under his rule the Brethren were allowed to return, to rebuild their meeting-places, and resume their meetings. They had by no means all been rooted out of Bohemia, and soon their churches were re-established in Bohemia and Moravia, with Poland now added.²

Henry VIII and the Pope – from an old chronicle³

Not long before all these events happened in Europe an old chronicler in London recorded:



Paulus Crosse.

The Sunday of Quinquagesima, being the 27th day of February and Leap year, preached at Paul's Cross the Bishop of Durham, named Dr. Tunstall, sometime Bishop of London, and afore that, being Master of the Rolls; and their were present at his sermon the Archbishop of Canterbury with eight other bishops, sitting at the cross before the preacher; and the Lord Chancellor of England, the Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Suffolk, with six Earls and divers other lords, stood behind the preacher within the pulpit, and also four monks of the Charterhouse of London which denied the King to be supreme

head of the Church of England were brought to the said sermon... And there the said preacher declared... every pope... hath usurped his power and authority over all Christendom...

The Chronicle of Charles Wriothesley (1508-1562) for 1536

Can you understand this old chronicle entry? Most of the words are not difficult. I have highlighted three that you might need to look up in your dictionary. If “divers” (and this does not have anything to do with the deep sea!) is not in your dictionary, you can make a modern word that has a slightly similar meaning by putting an “e” on the end of it. The difficulty of reading this old chronicle is more that the word order is not always what we expect. We would say “...the Bishop of London, named Dr. Tunstall... preached at St Paul's...” and then say when he did it. The Chronicler starts with the date (perhaps because this *is* a chronicle) and then goes straight in with the main verb. To us also, it looks like one very long sentence. We are used to much shorter sentences. You can make the chronicle easier to read by finding the “ands” removing them and putting in capital letters and full stops as we would do today.

Paul's Cross was an open air pulpit outside St Paul's cathedral, you can see it in the old picture above. You can see what the chronicler means when he says that other lords stood behind the preacher *within* the pulpit. What was the point of this sermon preached with such important people surrounding the preacher? Notice what the sermon was about. Why was it about such a subject?

Charles Wriothesley, who wrote this Chronicle, worked for king Henry VIII at the College of Arms which dealt with heraldic matters. He jotted down daily events as they occurred in his chronicle. His job as Windsor Herald of Arms in Ordinary meant he was often present at official functions, such as banquets, and his chronicle gives much valuable information about Tudor life.

² Adapted from H E Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (1931) p.124.

³ Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 1 available from <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation>

Like Ferdinand I, Henry VIII was a persecuting monarch. The ideas of Martin Luther⁴ began to reach England during his reign. Those who had been faithful to the Bible such as the Lollards⁵ rejoiced to see this new wave of Biblical teaching. Luther's ideas were debated in Oxford and Cambridge.

Henry VIII hated Luther's teachings. He put to death anyone who accepted them. He wrote a book against Luther which pleased the pope so much that he gave Henry the title *Fidei Defensor* – Defender of the Faith.⁶

In England those who had already been influenced by the New Learning of the Renaissance reacted in different ways to the truth of the gospel that Luther proclaimed. Some, like Hugh Latimer and William Tyndale⁷ eagerly accepted the truth that the Bible, rather than the teaching of the church, shows the way of salvation. Others, like Thomas More,⁸ opposed the truth, and clung to the Roman church.

Henry VIII became tired of his wife Catherine of Aragon and wanted to marry a lady-in-waiting at the court named Anne Boleyn. Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII had had five children. All except their daughter Mary had died. Henry thought Anne Boleyn would be able to bear him the son he wanted to succeed him.

Catherine of Aragon had been the wife of Henry's elder brother Arthur. Special permission had been needed from the pope for Henry to marry her. Henry used this as an excuse for getting rid of Catherine. On behalf of Henry, Cardinal Wolsey asked the pope to say that Henry and Catherine's marriage was unlawful and Henry was free to marry Anne. Popes often made such pronouncements when it suited them. In this case, the pope was not willing to rid Henry of Catherine for political reasons. Catherine was the aunt of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V who was very powerful. Charles would not hear of a declaration which said that his aunt had been unlawfully married for twenty years. The pope deliberately delayed giving an answer and recalled the matter to his own court at Rome. He wanted to drag things out forever without giving an answer. Henry lost patience and punished Wolsey. He was accused of breaking the law by becoming the Papal Legate even though this had happened twelve years before and nothing had been said about it at the time.

The king called parliament. Wolsey was summoned to London from York to answer charges of high treason. He died on the way to London. Sir Thomas More, one of the king's circle of scholars at court, succeeded him as Lord Chancellor. Henry also took advice from Thomas Cranmer. The king made Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 without asking the pope's permission. Henry did this because he knew Cranmer was willing to accept his claim that he had never really been married to Catherine. Cranmer suggested that the question should be put to the two universities and the Archbishop of Canterbury should then act on their advice. Henry also took advice from Thomas Cromwell who became his chief minister. Cromwell suggested that the king should take steps to make himself supreme in the church and state.

4 See the lessons for April 8th, May 4th, July 16th, and October 31st.

5 See the lesson for June 10th.

6 Monarchs of England continue to bear this title. You will see it on coins bearing the head of our present Queen. Nowadays it refers to the Church of England and is a title granted by Parliament to the monarch.

7 See the lesson for 5th October.

8 See Lesson for April 17th.

Henry was not a Protestant.⁹ In his doctrine he was as convinced a Romanist as Ferdinand I. In spite of this he now began to see that to separate from Rome would be to his advantage. If the pope would not grant him his divorce, he would do without the pope.

The power of the pope and the clergy was resented in England. Henry decided to use Parliament as a way to break with the pope. In 1531 Parliament declared Henry to be “Supreme Head of the Church, as far as the law of Christ will allow.” Henry had Cranmer made Archbishop of Canterbury. The pope approved his choice because Henry hinted that if he did so, some of Henry’s anti-papal acts of Parliament would not be enforced.

Cranmer received the replies from the universities on the question of the king’s divorce. He chose those that favoured the divorce and declared the king’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon invalid. The king could now marry Anne Boleyn and any children they had would be heirs to the throne. This was what Henry wanted but many people sympathised with Catherine of Aragon who died three years later.

Parliament passed a series of acts which separated England from the pope's power. The *Act of Appeals* forbade anyone from appealing from English Church courts to the court of Rome. The *Annates Act* stated that instead of paying their first year’s revenue to the pope, the clergy should pay it to the king. The *Act of Supremacy* of 1534 completed Henry’s break with Rome. It stated that “...the king, our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England.” By this act the power of the pope in England was abolished. The king was put in the pope’s place. Those who refused to take the oath of supremacy acknowledging Henry as head of the Church of England when required to do so were put to death.

Tunstall, as the chronicle entry above notes, had been bishop of London. It was he who burned Tyndale's Bibles and persecuted those who read them. Now he was Bishop of Durham. He had been one of Catherine of Aragon's supporters. However, he changed his tune when Henry got rid of Catherine. The charterhouse monks mentioned in the chronicle entry were about to be punished (unless they changed their minds) for not submitting to Henry. Henry punished everyone who disagreed with his religious policy whatever their views and these monks were no exception.

Something to write

Do you keep a diary? It is a good idea to do so. Perhaps you started one after doing the lesson for 24th January. You can add a chronicle element to your diary by including events from current affairs i.e. “the news” especially with your own comments on them. This will be very interesting reading for yourself and others in years to come. If Charles Wriothsley had not jotted down the events that were going on around him we would have missed out on a very interesting source of information.

⁹ In Germany some princes, following the ideas of Martin Luther, had broken away from the Roman church. The name protestant was applied to them and spread to include all who separated from the Roman church. See today's Optional Resources file.

Something to listen to



One of Britain's best loved composers, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918) was born on **27th February**. Find a recording of his “I was Glad” to listen to.¹⁰ This anthem, written for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902, has words taken from Psalm 122. It skilfully brings in the traditional acclamation of *Vivat Rex/Regina* by the King's Scholars of Westminster School on the entrance of the sovereign. Listen out for it in the recording. These Latin words mean “May the King/Queen Live” or “Long live the King/Queen.”

Sir John Frederick Bridge (1844 – 1924) was in overall charge of the music for the coronation in 1902 when this piece was first performed. He managed a difficult job very well. There was no muddle like that which happened in the coronation we will read about in the lesson for October 10th. His only real mistake was misjudging the timing of Parry's *I Was Glad*. The anthem was over before the king arrived! The organist, Sir Walter Galpin Alcock (1861 – 1947), saved the day by **improvising** until the right moment: then the anthem was repeated. You can see what the coronation looked like in the picture below.



¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeQYpsYTNoc> for instance.