



Preaching in the Gate.

George Wishart.

See page 38.

GEORGE WISHART.

BY

MRS. JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "ALMOST A NUN," ETC. ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE,
1334 CHESTNUT STREET.
A. D. F. RANDOLPH & CO., 770 BROADWAY, N. Y.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year
1870, by
WM. L. HILDEBURN, TREASURER,
in trust for the
PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania.

~~~~~  
WESTCOTT & THOMSON,  
Stereotypers, Philada.  
~~~~~

GEORGE WISHART.

ALMOST any child knows what it is to "make over" anything. Mary knows what her mother means when she says she will make over her hat or her coat, and Mary herself has often made over her doll's dress into such a dear little tunic or its sacque.

into a cunning little jacket. Did you know that the Church often needed making over as much as coats or dresses need it? And the word for making over the Church is REFORM. Reform—that is the word. If your father says, “John Brown is reformed,” you know that from being a bad boy John Brown has become good; so when we speak of a CHURCH being reformed, we mean that

that Church, from being far from God, has come to know and love him more and try to serve him better.

When we talk of the Church in this way we do not mean the building where we go to worship, but the people—the men, women and children that go there to serve God. God has always had a Church in this world, and as that Church has grown cold and out of

the way, as it too often has done, God has sent good and wise-headed men to lead the Church to duty again. These good men we call REFORMERS. It is about these Reformers that I want to write some little books, so that the children of the Church which they have lived and died to make better shall know and love them. How nice it will be when you get to heaven to see and speak

with those noble Reformers of whom you have read!

The first of these men that I shall tell you of is GEORGE WISHART. He was born about three hundred and fifty years ago, in Scotland.

Three hundred and fifty years is a longer time than any little child can think. It is very, very long; and through all these years George Wishart has been remembered for his

goodness. Some men have been remembered for their riches, some for their wars, some for their wickedness. It is a very beautiful thing to be remembered for goodness. In those days he was called GEORGE WISE-HART, and he had indeed a wise heart—a heart that was wise to choose the love and service of God before anything else.

George Wishart had good

parents, who taught him the fear of the Lord. As a child he was gentle and obedient, loving to do right and hating to do wrong, and very fond of study.

In those old times there were fewer schools and fewer learned people than now. The parents of George Wishart were not very poor, for they sent him to the best schools and made him a good scholar.

When he grew up he gave his time to two things—teaching and preaching.

These two things he did in Scotland, first. The fame of his teaching spread beyond that country, and he was asked to go to a great college in England to teach. This college was at Cambridge. He went there, and the people after that called him Master George, of Benet College.

Among his pupils was a young boy named Emery Tylney. This boy loved his teacher dearly, and when he grew up wrote many things about him, which tell us nearly all we know of good George Wishart. He says of him, "He was polite, lowly, lovely, glad to teach, fond of learning, and had traveled much."

The countries where George Wishart traveled were Scot-

land; England and France, and very likely he went to Germany and Italy. He noticed many strange things while he was making his journeys, and he was willing to tell what he saw to others. This made him a very pleasant friend, especially when, as we are told, he was "polite and lowly."

"Polite, lowly, lovely," says Emery Tylney; so in these

things George Wishart was like Jesus, the Master he served.

Do you want to know how he looked?

Emery Tylney tells us that also. He says he was tall, with a pleasant face and voice; had a dark complexion, black beard and hair, and that the top of his head was very bald.

Now let me tell you some

odd things about his clothes. To begin at his head, he wore a round black cap of French make—the best that could be bought. This was the most costly article of his clothes, and he wore it one year. He wore a black robe or gown that came down to his ankles. It was of very coarse cloth, called frieze. He wore also a coarse black cloak and long black woolen stockings, and

low shoes tied with black ribbon. His shirt was of coarse white linen, and had broad collar and cuffs.

Now for the queer part. Every week he gave his shirt to a poor man, and got a new one, which he gave away the next week. And so every week he gave away his long black hose; every month he gave away his shoes; every three months he gave away

his gown and cloak, and his cap he wore one year.

Nor did he stop his giving at clothes. Emery Tylney says, "His charity had never end, night, noon nor day." Ah, how beautiful is this!—a charity like God's great charity, that knows no end!

Every day he gave away one meal to the poor—two meals he ate and one he gave away. Every fourth day he

ate only a piece of bread and drank some water, and gave all the rest of that day's food to the poor. Thus he gave what cost him self-denial.

In those days most people thought they must have great feather-beds to sleep on, but George Wishart slept on a bed of straw. Every week he put on this bed a pair of coarse white sheets, and every week he took off the pair that had

been on the seven days before and gave them away.

“By his bed,” says Emery Tylney, “stood a great tub of fresh water, and, every one being in bed and the candle out, he would bathe in this water.”

So, you see, simple food, cold water, plain clothes and constant work made up his life and kept him strong and healthy.

Emery Tylney slept in the room with his dear teacher. He loved him well, and he cries out,

“ Oh that the Lord had left him to me, his poor boy! I should find no words to tell his good deeds—his love to me, to the poor; his wisdom, his labor, his desire to do good to all and harm to none.”

When we read these things

we wish we could see such a man as George Wishart.

“He was modest, temperate, prudent, fearing God and hating covetousness,” Tylney goes on to say, and this makes us love George Wishart yet more.

When Wishart preached he was grave and earnest. He said what was right even when people got angry at his plain speaking. He *dared to*

tell the truth, and in this I wish every boy and girl were like him, but I am afraid a great many are not.

There were many wicked people among Wishart's hearers — men who fought and swore and even got drunk. There were men also who broke the Sabbath in work or in play; men who did not read the Bible, and men who prayed to images and the Vir-

gin Mary instead of to God and Christ.

The Church of that day had got very far from the truth—far from God's law—and George Wishart stood up as a Reformer to reform, or make over, the Church, so that it would be a Church in which God would have pleasure.

George Wishart was not afraid. He cried out daily against sin and daily his holy

life set an example to the Church he wished to reform. Wicked men got very angry at him. They said he was hard and stern, and set himself up as better than other people. They wanted to kill him, but God was his defence.

Wishart told the people that it was wicked to pray to saints—that the Bible said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt

thou serve." He told them they must not ask the Virgin Mary to save them, for there is only one way for the soul to get to God, and that way is Christ Jesus.

These truths he preached first publicly in the town of Ross. From Ross he went to Dundee. Here he bade men turn from the error of their ways, fly to Jesus as their only Saviour, and, as the Bible says,

“Be converted,” and God would “heal them.” He warned them to escape the wrath to come—the wrath of God that falls upon the sinner and from which he can be safe only in Jesus, the Son of God.

This was the living truth that should reform the Church, bring it back to the pure faith and life of the gospel. But wicked men hate the truth: they hated it when George

Wishart preached it, and they would not hear it. They ordered Wishart to leave Dundee — nearly all the townspeople bade him begone. The officers of the city said he must go away: they said they did not like his preaching, it hurt them and made them unhappy; and besides, the bishops and Cardinal Beaton, a great Roman Catholic, who had much power in those

days, would persecute them if they heard Wishart.

How badly George Wishart felt, not over their treatment of him, but at their treatment of the truth of God! Tears ran down his kind face as he cried out,

“God is my witness that I never meant your hurt, only your good and your comfort. To refuse to hear God’s word and drive away me, his mes-

senger, whom he has sent to tell you the truth, will not save you trouble. Oh no; it will bring on you the great wrath of God, who is higher than all cardinals or bishops. I have offered you the truth of God. At the risk of my life I would stay here and preach to you, but now you chase me away and I must leave my case with God. You shall not long prosper. God



The Priest Defeated.

George Wishart.

See page 42.

will send sharp trouble here. When he sends it, repent at once, I pray you, and turn to him, or he will visit you with fire and sword."

The town officers would not listen; they still ordered him to go. Then he started from Dundee, and out of the gate of the town the few who loved him and loved the truth followed him, weeping.

"Fear not, weep not," he

said ; “ God will bring me back to Dundee.”

Then he went to Ayrshire. The town officers and great men were like those of Dundee.

“ We will not hear you,” they said. “ Away ! you cannot preach in our city.”

“ Then I will preach in the fields without the wall,” said Wishart.

So he stood in the fields and

preached; and the honest and the sorrowful and the poor came out of the wicked town to hear him tell of Jesus, as in Judea the publicans and sinners came out of the towns to hear Jesus preach when he was on earth.

Four days George Wishart preached in the fields about Ayrshire.

And now came news from Dundee. God had sent a ter-

rible disease there called the "Plague." One who lived there writes,

"Unless you had seen you could not believe so many people could die in twenty-four hours. Never has the plague raged anywhere as it has in Dundee."

The sick people and the dying were put out of the city on the ground beyond the walls. No one would take

care of them—no one would bury the dead. The well fled away from their sick friends. Truly, as the Bible tells us, “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”

When this news came to George Wishart, he said,

“Now they will receive me ; now they will repent and hear the word of the Lord.”

So, for all his friends said he would get the plague, he

hurried back to Dundee. He was neither afraid of death, of disease nor of bad men, if he might preach Christ Jesus.

When George Wishart came back to Dundee hundreds cried aloud for joy. All day he went about nursing the sick, persuading the well to do their duty, and telling all of Christ, the only Saviour.

“Preach to us—preach to us!” said the people.

So next day he stood in the east gate of the city—the sick and dying being outside of the gate, the well inside—and he preached from this text, “He sent his word and healed them.”

This sermon had a wonderful effect. The wicked were not afraid to die when they saw how lovely a Saviour is Jesus. The well were not afraid of getting sick, and they hasten-

ed to nurse and comfort those that were ill.

Day and night holy George Wishart stood by the sick and dying, caring for body and soul; and at last God, who in anger had sent the plague, in mercy caused it to stop, and the people crowded to the churches to hear their true friend tell the story of the Cross.

Could any one hate this

good man? Yes; the wicked hate Jesus, and they hate his servants too.

Cardinal Beaton, the bad man I told you of, even now wanted to kill George Wishart. He gave a priest named John Weightman a dagger, and told him to go to church, holding it under his gown, and stand at the foot of the pulpit stairs, and when Wishart came down from the pulpit the

priest was to reach out and thrust the dagger into his side. The priest took the dagger and went to church. There was a great crowd in the house, and he got near the pulpit stairs and stood during all the sermon. When it was over, Wishart sat down in the pulpit, and the people began to go away. Still the priest stood still, saying in his heart, "Soon they will all be gone,

and he will come down, and I can kill him."

But George Wishart had sharp eyes and very quick thoughts. He understood what this priest meant to do. He rose and began to go down the pulpit stairs.

"Now is my time," thought the priest.

But George Wishart bent quickly forward and got hold of the dagger, saying,

“My friend, what will you have?”

He spoke so quietly and kindly that the priest was frightened and sorry. He fell on his knees, and said,

“I came to kill you. I am sorry. I am glad you stopped me. Forgive me, pray forgive me!”

Some of the people near the church door had looked back and had seen the man and

the dagger. They cried out, "Murder! murder!" and ran back.

The people felt so angry that any one should try to harm their dear friend that they rushed up, saying,

"Give us this vile fellow, and we will put him in the prison. Give him to us, or we will take him by force and kill him."

Then George Wishart took

the man in his arms, and said,

“Who will hurt him will hurt me! He has done me no harm, but good, by teaching me to be more careful. My life for his.”

This was like Jesus Christ, who on his cross prayed for those who killed him.

Even this beautiful spirit of love and forgiveness did not make his enemies ashamed.

This priest, it is true, would not again try to harm the man who had forgiven him and held him in his arms to save him, but Cardinal Beaton, the wicked man who had sent him to do the bad deed, was as full of hate and evil as ever.

The Bible says, "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath." The cardinal let a good many suns go down upon

his wrath to the good Reformer. Day after day, for three years, he tried to kill George Wishart — secretly at first, for he was afraid and ashamed openly to kill a man just for preaching the truth and reading the Bible.

At last the cardinal would wait no longer. George Wishart was doing so much good that the cardinal wanted to kill him at once. He grew

bold in his badness, and sent some soldiers to bring Wishart to him.

Wishart was staying in the house of a friend. After having family worship with the household, he went to his chamber and to bed. Before midnight one of the great men of Scotland, the earl of Bothwell, with his men, beset the house. He told the master of the house that it was useless

to resist, for there were more men near by and they would have Wishart. But Bothwell said that if he would give up Wishart he would promise, "on his honor," that he should be safe, and that the cardinal would not hurt him.

"Open the gate," cried the brave Wishart: "the will of God be done!"

The earl then again pledged his honor that he would pro-

tect Wishart, and either set him free or bring him safely back to the castle of his friend.

But alas for the honor of bad men! In a few days the earl gave Wishart up to the cardinal. The queen promised him favors, and the cardinal said he would pay him well if he would do so.

Some of the great men cried out against this. They told

the queen and the cardinal and the earl that God would be against them if they should slay a good man for preaching the gospel.

But the wicked enemies of Wishart did not fear God, and they hated him; so they set about contriving to have him tried and condemned and put to death.

It was the month of February, and the cardinal went to

a public room to have Wishart appear before him. The cardinal was so afraid that Wishart's friends would rescue him that he brought a great many armed soldiers to the place. But Wishart was not going to make any quarrel or have a fight. He went quietly along to the appointed place, and with him went a man that loved him—John Knox, another great Reformer, of whose

life I am going some day to write you.

On their way a beggar came up, crying,

“Give me some help, I am so poor!”

And Wishart threw him his purse, saying,

“I shall never more need money!”

He knew the cardinal meant to kill him.

Then he said to John Knox,

“Go no farther with me.”

“I cannot let you go alone,”
said Knox.

“I am not alone,” said Wishart. “Go back to your dear scholars and teach them the truth. Do not come with me; one is enough to die at this time.”

Then Wishart went alone into the room full of soldiers and people who hated him, and stood before Cardinal Bea-

ton, who sat on a high seat, in great state.

A priest named Lawder came out with a paper full of curses, which he read against Wishart, saying the ground would open and swallow him up, for he was a heretic and a traitor, a preacher, a liar and a Bible-reader. But Wishart stood calmly listening to the end, and his mild face was like that of the good martyr

Stephen before the council—
“like the face of an angel.”

Then Lawder spit in his
face, and said,

“Thou runagate, traitor,
thief, what answer hast thou?”

And Wishart thought how
Jews had spit in Jesus' face,
and mildly answered that he
did nothing but preach the
truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
After this he lifted his arms
and preached.

“Be silent,” said the cardinal; “I order you to hold your peace.”

And then he gave order that next morning George Wishart should be burned to death on the public square before the palace door. He told the captain of the castle to keep him safely. The captain dared not let Wishart go, but he took him to his room, treated him kindly, listened to his good

talk of Jesus and the cross, and let his friends come to see him.

While Wishart was bidding his friends "Good-bye," the bad cardinal went out on the square and had a strong stake driven, and chains brought to fasten Wishart to it. He helped pile up straw, wood and tar about the stake, and gave orders to put on Wishart a long black linen gown and

to tie bags of gunpowder to his body.

Then the cardinal had velvet curtains hung in a window and a velvet lounge put in it where he could lie and look at Wishart burning.

At breakfast Wishart broke bread and tasted wine with his friends in memory of the death of Jesus, holding thus in his last hour a Lord's Supper with those he loved.

They led him out to the stake. The gunners and the cannon were on hand, so that his friends could not get Wishart away.

Wishart knelt and prayed; then he preached, and so well that the executioner fell weeping at his feet and begged to be forgiven for the deed the cardinal made him do, saying that he did not want to kill him.

Wishart kissed his cheek, saying, "Lo, I forgive thee. Do thy office."

They lit the fire. The powder exploded, but did not kill him. The captain rushed up, seeing him alive in the fire, and cried out,

"Be of good courage—be strong in the Lord."

"The fire," cried Wishart, "hurts my body, but nothing can hurt my soul."

Then he looked at the cardinal in the velvet-hung window, and said,

“Out of that same window that cardinal’s body shall soon be hung, when God has suddenly cut him off to answer for this day’s bad work.”

In a moment more he died, and these his last words were like a prophecy and were soon fulfilled, for the people before long rose against the cruel

man and killed him, and hung his body out of the very window where he had sat to see Wishart burned. Thus punishment sometimes overtakes the wicked even on this earth.

From George Wishart we can learn to fear nothing but sin, to return good for evil, and to be faithful to truth even unto death, when we shall have a crown of everlasting life.

He died in the year 1546, loved and respected by all his friends, hated and feared by all his enemies.