

Saved from Execution



Bernard Gilpin (1517 – 1583) was an Oxford theologian and an influential clergyman in the emerging Church of England during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Jane, Mary and Elizabeth I. He was known as the *Apostle of the North* because of his work in the wilds of northern England.

In the book *Life Verses*, Frank Boreham tells about Gilpin's trouble with Queen Mary.

Upon Queen Mary's accession in 1553, Gilpin went abroad to pursue his theological investigations at Leuven, Antwerp and Paris. Returning to England toward the close of Queen Mary's reign, he was invested in 1556 by his mother's uncle, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, with the archdeaconry of Durham.

The freedom of his attacks on the vices, and especially the clerical vices, of his times excited hostility against Gilpin, and he was formally brought before the bishop on a charge of 13 articles. Tunstall, however, in 1557 not only dismissed the case, but presented the offender with the rich living of Houghton-le-Spring, and when the accusation was again brought forward, Tunstall again protected Gilpin.

Enraged at this defeat, Gilpin's enemies laid their complaint before Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, who secured a royal warrant for Gilpin's apprehension. Queen Mary sentenced Gilpin to die for his faith.

During his imprisonment, Gilpin cast all his hope on the truth of Romans 8:28: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose.*

Gilpin quoted that verse throughout the day.

On his way to execution, he fell and broke his leg. He was ordered back to prison and – while moaning in pain – the jailer mocked Gilpin's trust in this text.

"Ah," Gilpin replied. "It's true all the same. It's all working together for good."

And surely enough, it was. While he recovered, Queen Mary died and Bernard Gilpin was released.

God is working for the good of His children. And He is using everything to accomplish it.

Are you facing some difficulty, maybe some heart-wrenching circumstance – and perhaps even mocked for your faith?

Be assured by the same text that comforted Bernard Gilpin.

– Beecher Hunter