

= Henry Martyn =

Henry Martyn (18 February 1781 ? 16 October 1812) was an Anglican priest and missionary to the peoples of India and Persia . Born in Truro , Cornwall , he was educated at Truro Grammar School and St John 's College , Cambridge . A chance encounter with Charles Simeon led him to become a missionary . He was ordained a priest in the Church of England and became a chaplain for the British East India Company .

Martyn arrived in India in April 1806 , where he preached and occupied himself in the study of linguistics . He translated the whole of the New Testament into Urdu , Persian and Judaeo @-@ Persic . He also translated the Psalms into Persian and the Book of Common Prayer into Urdu . From India , he set out for Bushire , Shiraz , Isfahan , and Tabriz .

Martyn was seized with fever , and , though the plague was raging at Tokat , he was forced to stop there , unable to continue . On 16 October 1812 he died . He was remembered for his courage , selflessness and his religious devotion . In parts of the Anglican Communion he is celebrated with a Lesser Festival on 19 October .

= = Early life = =

Martyn was born in Truro , Cornwall . His father , John Martyn , was a " captain " or mine @-@ agent at Gwennap . As a boy , he was educated at Truro grammar school under Dr. Cardew and he entered St John 's College , Cambridge , in the autumn of 1797 , and was senior wrangler and first Smith 's prizeman in 1801 . In 1802 , he was chosen as a fellow of his college .

He had intended to go to the bar , but in the October term of 1802 he chanced to hear Charles Simeon speaking of the good done in India by a single missionary , William Carey , and some time afterwards he read the life of David Brainerd , a missionary to the Native Americans . He resolved , accordingly , to become a missionary himself . On 22 October 1803 , he was ordained deacon at Ely , and afterwards priest , and served as Simeon 's curate at the Church of Holy Trinity , taking charge of the neighbouring parish of Lolworth .

= = Missionary work = =

Martyn wanted to offer his services to the Church Missionary Society , when a financial disaster in Cornwall deprived him and his unmarried sister of the income their father had left for them . It was necessary for Martyn to earn an income that would support his sister as well as himself . He accordingly obtained a chaplaincy under the British East India Company and left for India on 5 July 1805 . On his voyage to the East , Martyn happened to be present at the British conquest of the Cape Colony on 8 January 1806 . He spent that day tending to the dying soldiers and was distressed by seeing the horrors of war . He would come away feeling that it was Britain 's destiny to convert , not colonize , the world . He wrote in his diary :

I prayed that ? England whilst she sent the thunder of her arms to distant regions of the globe , might not remain proud and ungodly at home ; but might show herself great indeed , by sending forth the ministers of her church to diffuse the gospel of peace .

= = = India = = =

Martyn arrived in India in April 1806 , and for some months he was stationed at Aldeen , near Serampur . In October 1806 , he proceeded to Dinapur , where he was soon able to conduct worship among the locals in the vernacular , and established schools . In April 1809 , he was transferred to Cawnpore , where he preached to British and Indians in his own compound , in spite of interruptions and threats from local non @-@ Christians .

He occupied himself in linguistic study , and had already , during his residence at Dinapur , been engaged in revising the sheets of his Hindustani version of the New Testament . He now translated the whole of the New Testament into Urdu also , and into Persian twice . He translated the Psalms

into Persian , the Gospels into Judaeo @-@ Persic , and the Book of Common Prayer into Urdu , in spite of ill @-@ health and " the pride , pedantry and fury of his chief munshi Sabat . " Ordered by the doctors to take a sea voyage , he obtained leave to go to Persia and correct his Persian New Testament . From there , he wanted to go to Arabia , and there compose an Arabic version . On 1 October 1810 , having seen his work at Cawnpore rewarded on the previous day by the opening of a church , he left for Calcutta , from where he sailed on 7 January 1811 for Bombay . The ship reached port on his thirtieth birthday .

= = Final voyage and death = =

From Bombay he set out for Bushire , bearing letters from Sir John Malcolm to men of position there , as also at Shiraz and Isfahan . After an exhausting journey from the coast he reached Shiraz , and was soon plunged into discussion with the disputants of all classes , " Sufi , Muslim , Jew , and Jewish Muslim , even Armenian , all anxious to test their powers of argument with the first English priest who had visited them . " He next traveled to Tabriz to attempt to present the Shah with his translation of the New Testament , which proved unsuccessful . Sir Gore Ouseley , the British ambassador to the Shah , was unable to bring about a meeting , but did deliver the manuscript . Although Martyn could not present the Bible in person , the Shah later wrote him a letter :

In truth (said the royal letter of thanks to the ambassador) through the learned and unremitting exertions of the Reverend Henry Martyn it has been translated in a style most befitting sacred books , that is in an easy and simple diction ... The whole of the New Testament is completed in a most excellent manner , a source of pleasure to our enlightened and august mind .

At this time , he was seized with fever , and after a temporary recovery , had to seek a change of climate . He set off for Constantinople , where he intended to return on furlough to England to regain his strength and recruit help for the missions in India . On 12 September 1812 , he started with two Armenian servants and crossed the Aras River . Urged on from place to place by their Tatar guide , they rode from Tabriz to Erivan , from Erivan to Kars , and from Kars to Erzurum . They departed Erzurum and though the plague was raging at Tokat , he was forced to stop there , unable to continue . He wrote his final journal entry on 6 October . It read , in part :

Oh ! when shall time give place to eternity ? When shall appear that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness ? There , there shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth : none of that wickedness which has made men worse than wild beasts , none of those corruptions which add still more to the miseries of mortality , shall be seen or heard of any more .

On 16 October 1812 he died and was given a Christian burial by Armenian clergy .

He was heard to say , " Let me burn out for God " . An indication of his zeal for the things of God .

= = Legacy = =

His devotion to his tasks won him much admiration in Great Britain and he was the hero of a number of literary publications . Thomas Babington Macaulay 's Epitaph , composed early in 1813 , testified to the impression made by his career :

An institution was established in his name in India , called the Henry Martyn Institute : An Interfaith Centre for Reconciliation and Research , Hyderabad , India . John McManners wrote in his Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity that Martyn was a man remembered for his courage , selflessness and his religious devotion . In parts of the Anglican Communion he is celebrated with a Lesser Festival on 19 October .

The Henry Martyn Trust based in Cambridge , England can trace its history back to 1897 , at a time of great enthusiasm in Cambridge for overseas missions , when an appeal was launched for a ' Proposed Missionary Library for Cambridge University ' , to be housed in the Henry Martyn Hall , erected ten years previously .

The Henry Martyn Library opened in the Hall in 1898 , and there it remained as a small collection of missionary biographies and other books until 1995 . The evolution of the Henry Martyn Library into the present Henry Martyn Centre began in 1992 , when Canon Graham Kings , now Bishop of

Sherborne , was appointed as the first Henry Martyn Lecturer in Missiology in the Cambridge Theological Federation .

In 1999 the Centre became an Associate Institute of the Cambridge Theological Federation , one of the largest providers of theological education in the United Kingdom .

Today , the Centre continues to seek to promote the study of mission and world Christianity , developing strong links with mission study centres around the world and fulfilling the same aim that was stated by the founders of the Library in 1897 .