



July 1

Commemoration: Catherine Winkworth, 1878, hymn translator

Catherine Winkworth was born in London at 20 Ely Place, Holborn. She was the fourth daughter of Henry Winkworth, a silk merchant. Winkworth lived most of her life in Manchester. She studied also under the Unitarian minister, Rev. William Gaskell and with the English philosopher Dr. James Martineau. Her sister Susanna Winkworth (1820–1884) was also a translator, mainly of German devotional works.

She spent a year in Dresden, during which time she took an interest in German hymnody. Around 1854, she published her book *Lyra Germanica*, a collection of German hymns which she had chosen and translated into English. A further collection followed in 1858. During 1863, she published *The Chorale Book for England* which was coedited by the composers William Sterndale Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt, and in 1869 she followed this with *Christian Singers of Germany*. According to *The Harvard University Hymn Book*, Winkworth "did more than any other single individual to make the rich heritage of German hymnody available to the English-speaking world." Four examples of translations by her hand are published in *The Church Hymn Book 1872* (Nos 344, 431, 664 and 807).

In addition to translating hymns, Winkworth was deeply involved in promoting women's rights, and was the secretary of the Clifton Association for Higher Education for Women, a supporter of the Clifton High School for Girls, where a house is named after her, and a member of the Cheltenham Ladies' College. She was likewise governor of the Red Maids' School in Westbury-on-Trym in the city of Bristol, England .

According to the *Encyclopedia of Britain* by Bamber Gascoigne (1993), it was she who, learning of General Charles James Napier's ruthless, unauthorized, and successful campaign to conquer the Indian province of Sind, "...remarked to her teacher that Napier's despatch to the governor general of India, after capturing Sind, should have been *Peccavi* (Latin for 'I have sinned'). She sent her joke to the new humorous magazine *Punch*, which printed it as a factual report under Foreign Affairs. As a result the pun has usually been credited to Napier."

Catherine Winkworth died suddenly of heart disease near Geneva on 1 July 1878 and was buried in Monnetier, in Upper Savoy. A monument to her memory was erected in Bristol Cathedral. She is commemorated as a hymnwriter with John Mason Neale on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church (USA) on August 7 and on the Calendar of Saints of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on July 1.