

## Reformation Heroes

### Faithful Sardis Saints<sup>1</sup>

**“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy”** Revelation 3:4.

This overview reveals how much is owed to faithful Sardis saints 1000-1500 A.D. with respect to the preservation of **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21. You are unlikely to hear it preached on.

As Bro. Pete Dickens said back in March 2015 when we visited his church in Poole, Dorset “If you believe the King James Bible then you’re with us and those Waldensian believers are our scriptural kinfolk.”

If not of course then you are *de facto* with those who persecuted them, even though you are in **“...the body of Christ, and members in particular”** 1 Corinthians 12:27.

This writer’s explanatory remarks have been inserted, **in blue text in blue braces []** as appropriate.

Wilkinson cites Dr Frederick Nolan who spent twenty-eight years tracing the Received Text back to its apostolic origin. Nolan concluded that the Waldensian Church, with its pre-1611 Latin Bibles furnished *“unequivocal testimony of a truly apostolical branch of the primitive church, that the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses\* was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate.”*

\*1 John 5:7. [Waldensian believers died, murdered in their droves by Rome, to preserve that scripture for you and I<sup>2</sup>. Fundamentalist modern versionists and ‘originals-onlyists’ have revealed that they don’t care whether 1 John 5:7 is scripture or not. *What do you think will happen when before the Lord Jesus Christ we are face-to-face with those Waldensian Sardis saints at “the judgment seat of Christ”* Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10?]



Of the transmission of the Received Text to the Waldensian Church and the preservation of the true scriptures during the Dark Ages, Wilkinson states, *In the silent watches of the night, along the lonely paths of Asia Minor where robbers and wild beasts lurked, might have been seen the noble missionaries carrying manuscripts, and verifying documents from the churches of Judea to encourage their struggling brethren under the iron heel of the Papacy...*

*The Scriptures of the apostle John and his associates, the traditional text – the Textus Receptus, if you please – arose from the place of humiliation forced on it by Origen’s Bible in the hands of Constantine and became the Received Text of Greek Christianity. And when the Greek East for one thousand years was completely shut off from the Latin West, the noble Waldenses in northern Italy still possessed in Latin the Received Text.*

*To Christians such as these, preserving apostolic Christianity, the world owes gratitude for the true text of the Bible. It is not true, as the Roman Church claims, that she gave the Bible to the world. What she gave was an impure text, a text with thousands of verses so changed as to make way for her unscriptural doctrines. While upon those who possessed the veritable Word of God, she poured out through long centuries her stream of cruel persecution. Or in the words of [Nolan]:*

*“The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation, they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution...Here for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient*

*faith...In a most wonderful manner it (the Word of Truth) was preserved uncorrupted through all the ages of darkness."*

*Throughout the centuries, the Waldenses and other faithful evangelicals had sown the seed. The fog was rolling away from the plains and hills of Europe. The pure Bible which long had sustained the faith of the Vaudois, was soon to be adopted by others so mighty that they would shake Europe from the Alps to the North Sea. "The light had begun spreading unobserved, and the Reformation was on the point of being anticipated. The demon Innocent III was the first to descry the streaks of day on the crest of the Alps. Horror-stricken, he started up, and began to thunder for his pandemonium against a faith which...was threatening to dissolve the power of Rome" [Wylie, The Papacy p 92]...*

For examples of key scriptures corrupted by Rome note the following:

Consider these examples of Rome's *impure text*, from the beginning, middle and end of the New Testament - found in the RV, JB, NJB, 1984, 2013 NWTs, 1984, 2011 NIVs, ESV<sup>3</sup>. [The NKJV condones the following Catholic corruptions of scripture in its footnotes.]

### ***Corrupted Texts***

Matthew 1:25, "***firstborn***" omitted to make Mary a perpetual virgin.

Matthew 5:44, "***bless them that curse you***" omitted to allow for Papal anathemas, i.e. anyone who disobeys the pope effectively 'curses' him.

Matthew 6:13, "***For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen***" the doxology removed to strengthen the pope's pretence to global temporal power.

Matthew 16:3, "***O ye hypocrites***" the Lord's rebuke to religious hypocrites deleted.

Matthew 23:14 i.e. whole verse, "***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation***" the Lord's rebuke to religious hypocrites deleted.

Acts 8:37 i.e. whole verse, "***And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God***" explicit reading on individual salvation deleted.

Acts 9:5, 6, "***the Lord***" and "***it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?***" explicit reading on individual salvation deleted.

These deletions enable Rome to say, as Halley<sup>4</sup> shows, that obedience to the Pope is necessary for salvation. Rome's influence during the Dark Ages was such that these readings from Acts 8:37, 9:5, 6 are missing from most extant Greek manuscripts. But the Waldenses preserved them, as does the AV1611.

Colossians 1:14, "***through his blood***" omitted to equate redemption with priestly absolution. This is a prime example of unbridled papal power.

James 5:16, "***faults***" changed to "*sins*" to encourage the abomination of the Confessional – even the 'conservative' NKJV has "*trespasses*." Yet, while exhibiting serious omissions/alterations, Catholic bibles contain the Apocrypha. 2 Maccabees 12:43-46 justifies purgatory<sup>5</sup>.

**"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** John 8:32.

A succession of Reformation Heroes came on the scene to preserve and to progress that truth.

## Archbishop Stephen Langton – Charter Framer, Chapter Divider and English Reformation Hero

### Archbishop Stephen Langton - “*a chosen vessel unto me*” Acts 9:15

The Christian Institute<sup>6</sup> has compiled a most informative synopsis of Magna Carta<sup>7</sup>. June 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 was the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Magna Carta. We should note that Archbishop Stephen Langton circa 1150-1228<sup>8</sup> was not only the prime mover in framing Magna Carta but God used him to create the chapter divisions in the scripture that we have today. As “*a chosen vessel unto me*” Acts 9:15 Bro. Langton did a good job before *two* kings, as Charter Framer before an earthly king and Chapter Divider before “*the King of kings and Lord of Lords*” 1 Timothy 6:15 thereby meriting King Solomon’s commendation *and bar*<sup>9</sup>. See below. Note that the man may be a tyrant – no later English or British king has been named or taken the name John for the purpose of reigning – but still not a mean man, rather one with great power, even if like John he misuses it.

***“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men”*** Proverbs 22:29.

Today’s believer should aim for the *same* diligence, as Paul exhorts.

***“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end”*** Hebrews 6:10-11.

### A Secular Evaluation

One secular but fairly well-balanced source<sup>10</sup> has this to say about Bro. Langton.

*Who Divided the Bible into Chapters?* by Fred Sanders, July 9<sup>th</sup> 2009

At some point late in [Langton’s] teaching career (the date usually given is 1205)...Langton had the great, simple idea of breaking the text of the Latin translation of the Bible into manageable sections about the size of long paragraphs... Langton broke the uniform text of Scripture into a series of chapters. He did this for the entire Vulgate, and his system of chapter division was immediately recognized as a great help for Bible study. Bro. Langton completed the work of chapter divisions in 1227<sup>11</sup>, not long before his home call. He could testify with the Lord Jesus Christ as every believer should aim to “***I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do***” John 17:4. Fred Sanders continues. Chapter-division was apparently the right idea at the right time, and one of the remarkable things about the Langtonian chapter divisions is how they were adopted and propagated by different scholarly communities. Jewish scholars (who had worked with other methods of division previously) soon began observing Langtonian chapter divisions, and the churches of the Christian East took the same divisions over in their biblical studies...



Stephen Langton  
Archbishop of Canterbury 1207-1228



Since Langton established the chapter system at the very beginning of the thirteenth century, his influence also spread into all the vernacular translations of the Bible that began appearing in the next centuries. In fact, the chapter system became increasingly important with the proliferation of translations, enabling scholars to move quickly and precisely between versions. And with the advent of printing, Langton's chapters became still more important... As Mordecai said to Queen Esther ***"and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*** Esther 4:14.

### A System Superior to the Critics

While voicing some criticism of Bro. Langton's system, stemming for example from Bible rejecters like Dr A. T. Robertson, Fred Sanders nevertheless states the following. The vast majority of Langton's chapter breaks are more organic than artificial; they are not arbitrary, but are based on good insight into the flow of the text. Above all, they are handy and universally used. Even if we were to make a list of 250 places\* where the Langtonian chapters could be improved by better break points, it would be madness to try to impose a new, improved re-chaptering of Scripture on a global community of Bible readers who have used a standardized system for centuries [2017 Update: *'If it ain't broke don't fix it!'*]. \*from 1189 for the total number of chapters in the Old and New Testaments. Fred Sanders concludes leave the old system in place. Likewise, the Lord's invitation remains. ***"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..."*** Jeremiah 6:16.

### Facing Down the Tyrant

Fred Sanders says this about Bro. Langton, Magna Carta and facing down the tyrant John. Langton has an important place in the history of political thought, as he was involved in negotiating the famous dispute between the despotic King John...and his aggrieved noblemen. The deal they finally brokered, securing the rights of the noblemen and limiting the powers of the King, was sealed by the drafting and signing of the Magna Carta. Between this and his biography of Richard the Lion-Hearted, Langton was not popular with King John, and even found himself under a ban from Pope Innocent III\* for several years. But his office and reputation were restored late in his life. \****"that man of sin"*** 2 Thessalonians 2:3<sup>12</sup>.



Key to facing down the tyrant John was Bro. Langton's vision for the English Church though it would take centuries to fulfill it. The Christian Institute states [Magna Carta's] **first and last clauses guarantee the freedom of the English church.** The first one states, "we have granted to God, and by this present Charter have confirmed for us and our heirs in perpetuity, that the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired." Amen.

### Finishing the Course

In sum, though part of the Roman Church, as most folk were back then Bro. Langton could testify along with Paul and as all true believers would hope to do: ***"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"*** 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

### 2017 Postscript<sup>13</sup>

The chapter divisions commonly used today were developed by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury...around A.D. 1227. The Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 was the first Bible to use this chapter pattern...The Hebrew Old Testament was divided into verses by a Jewish rabbi by the name of Nathan in A.D. 1448. Robert Estienne, who was also known as Stephanus, was the first to divide the New Testament into standard numbered verses, in 1555. Stephanus essentially used Nathan's verse divisions for the Old Testament. Since that time, beginning with the Geneva Bible, the chapter and verse divisions employed by Stephanus have been accepted into nearly all the Bible versions.

After Bro. Langton arose another English Reformation Hero.

## John Wycliffe – Morning Star of the Reformation and Reformation Hero<sup>14</sup>

### 3

#### The Men Behind The English Bible

“Go now ye that are men and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire” Exodus 10:11.

As the Greek New Testaments were being published on the Continent, God was at work preparing the English Bible, before and during the Reformation. These were the Englishmen whom He used for this purpose.

#### 3.1 John Wycliffe, 1320-1384

1. John Wycliffe has been called *The Morning Star of the Reformation*, Revelation 2:28, “*the father of the English Reformation*” and the founder of English Non-conformity<sup>15</sup>. [2017 Update: Wycliffe<sup>16</sup> was born in the village of [Hipswell](#) in the [North Riding of Yorkshire](#), England in the mid-1320s...His family was long settled in Yorkshire. The family was quite large, covering considerable territory, principally centred on [Wycliffe-on-Tees](#), about ten miles to the north of Hipswell]
2. He was also called “*The flower of Oxford*”<sup>17</sup>. He was converted about the time of the Black Death, 1348, to become *the ‘Evangelical Doctor.’*
3. Of the Pope, he said “*Anti-Christ, the proud, worldly priest of Rome and the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers (bag snatchers).*”
4. He compiled the first complete Bible in English, 1382<sup>\*2012</sup>. See **Figure 2a Manuscript Dichotomy**... Wycliffe’s Bible was later revised by Nicholas of Hereford and John Purvey, in order to match the Vulgate of Jerome more closely<sup>18\*2012</sup>.

<sup>\*2012</sup>Wycliffe’s is the best known of the early, pre-16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation bibles. Almost all of the scriptures had been translated into English before the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Wycliffe’s Bible served as a bridge for these early English translations to the 16<sup>th</sup> century English Protestant Reformation. See Gail Riplinger’s<sup>19</sup> works with respect to pre-Wycliffe English scriptures and Purvey and Hereford.

Of the Bible Wycliffe<sup>20</sup> said:

*“As the doctrines of our faith are in the Scriptures, believers should have the Scriptures in a language familiar to the people...It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scriptures to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another.”*

5. In 1415, Wycliffe’s body was exhumed and burnt and the ashes cast into the River Swift<sup>21</sup>:

*The little river conveyed Wycliffe’s remains into the Avon, Avon into the Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispensed all the world over.*

Serving to boost God’s line of Bibles:

## The Manuscript Dichotomy – Two Lines of Bibles<sup>22</sup>

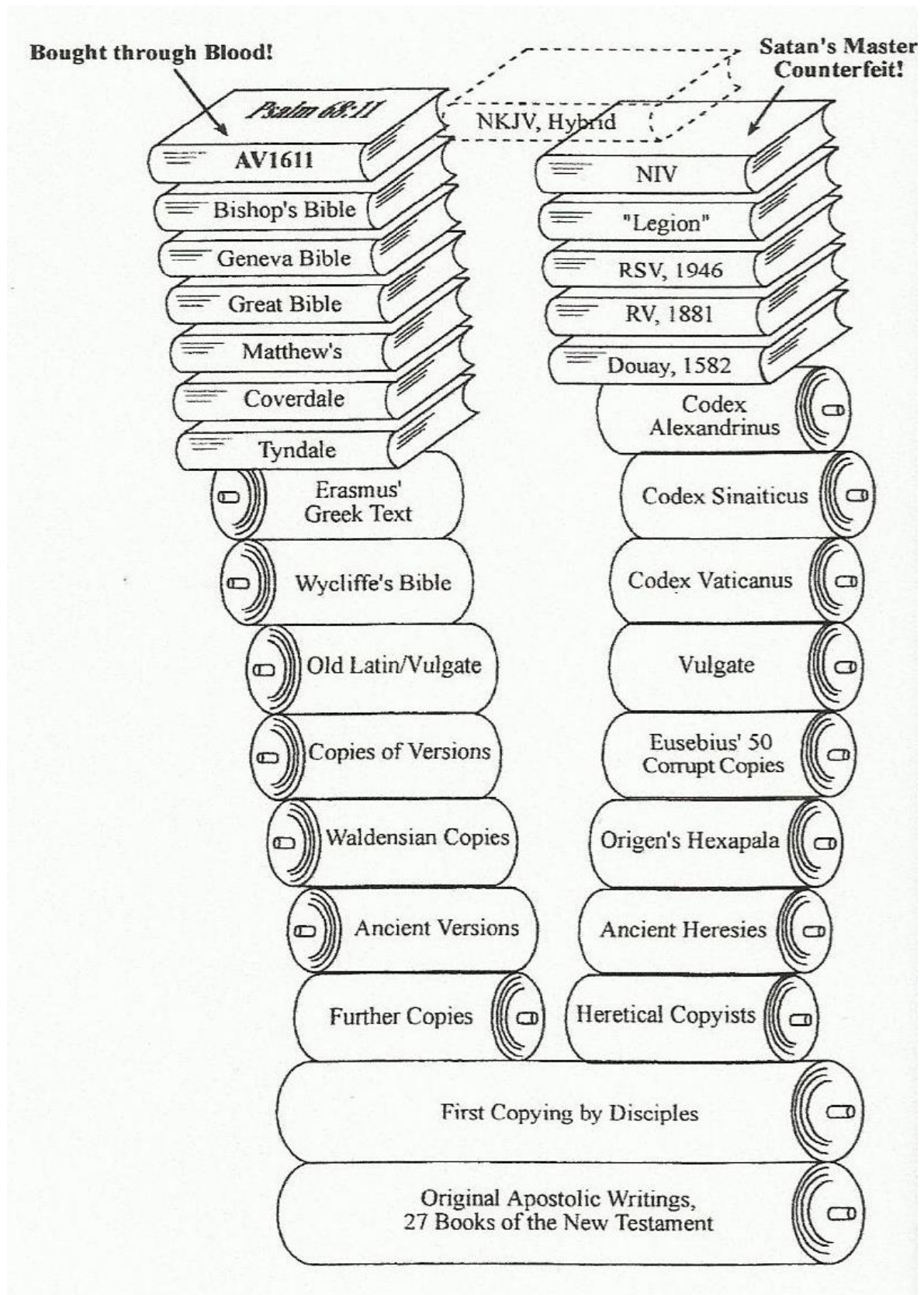


Figure 2a Manuscript Dichotomy in Outline

**TWO DISTINCT LINES OF BIBLES from TWO DISTINCT SOURCES, God's and the Devil's!**



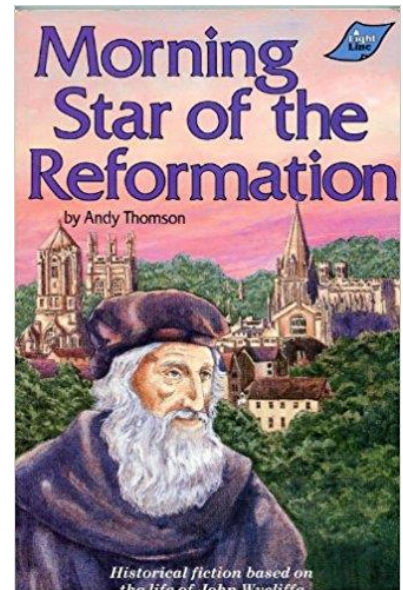
## John Wycliffe – Morning Star of the Reformation and Reformation Hero, Continued

### John Wycliffe Quotes<sup>23</sup>

Added text in blue text in blue braces []

John Wycliffe is considered to be Morningstar of the Protestant Reformation. He was one of the first to openly oppose the Catholic church and boldly declare his convictions. We have accumulated a collection of John Wycliffe quotes here. While he is not cited nearly as often as some of the more well-known reformers like Luther and Calvin, the John Wycliffe quotes listed below were instrumental in guiding later reformers in their stand against apostasy.

- All Christian life is to be measured by Scripture; by every word thereof.
- Englishmen learn Christ's law best in English. Moses heard God's law in his own tongue; so did Christ's apostles.
- Every righteous man is lord over the whole sensible world.
- God gives His grace to whomever He wishes, and has predestined each individual, an eternity before birth, to be lost or saved through all eternity [Note however 1 Timothy 2:4-5 with respect to "...God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"]. Good works do not win salvation, but they indicate that he who does them has received divine grace and is one of the elect. We act according to the disposition that God has allotted to us; to invert Hericlitus, our fare is our character.
- God is sovereign\* lord of us all. The allegiance that we owe Him is direct, as is the oath of every Englishman to the king, not indirect through allegiance to a subordinate lord, as in feudal France. Hence the relationship of man to God is direct, and requires no intermediary; any claim of Church or priest to be a necessary medium must be repelled. \*With all due respect to Dr Wycliffe see this writer's work<sup>24</sup>.
- I am ready to defend my convictions even unto death....I have followed the Sacred Scriptures and the holy doctors.
- I believe that in the end truth will conquer.
- In order to the existence of such a ministry in the Church, there is requisite an authority received from God, and consequently power and knowledge imparted from God for the exercise of such ministry; and where a man possesses these, although [the bishop has not laid hands upon him according to his traditions, God has Himself appointed him]<sup>25</sup>.
- It is plain to me that our prelates in granting indulgences do commonly blaspheme the wisdom of God. Our clerics neither evangelize like the apostles, nor go to war like the secular lords, nor toil like laborers.
- Private confession was not ordered by Christ and was not used by the apostles.
- Sacred Scripture, which is the law of Christ, contains in itself all truth. Since all law is truth it therefore contains in itself all law.
- Since all charity begins at home, it would be the work not of charity but of fatuity to direct the alms of the Realm abroad when the Realm itself is in need of them.
- The bread while becoming by virtue of Christ's words the body of Christ does not cease to be bread. The gospel alone is sufficient to rule the lives of Christians everywhere...any additional



rules made to govern men's conduct added nothing to the perfection already found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- The higher the hill, the stronger the wind: so the loftier the life, the stronger the enemy's temptations.
- There was good reason for the silence of the Holy Spirit as to how, when, in what form Christ ordained the apostles, the reason being to show the indifferency of all forms of words [suggesting that no strict form of words need be followed with respect to ordination of church leaders].
- This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people<sup>26</sup>.
- Trust wholly in Christ; rely [wholly] on his sufferings; beware of seeking to be justified in any other way than by his righteousness.
- You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign<sup>27</sup> of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins.

In sum John Wycliffe eminently encouraged and exemplified Proverbs 22:17, Ecclesiastes 12:11 **"Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge...The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd."**

Another Reformation Hero followed Wycliffe, instrumental in kick-starting the Reformation itself.



## Reformation Hero Martin's Hymn – “Ein feste Burg” A Mighty Fortress

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.*



Martin Luther  
1483-1546

*“...I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.*

*“I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.”*

### Wartburg Castle<sup>28</sup>, Eisenach, Germany – “A Mighty Fortress”

#### Introduction – “A good company of Lutherans”

This writer first met this hymn *A Mighty Fortress* over forty years ago at a church service in Sydney. After the hymn had been sung, the pastor said, “*That was one of the great hymns of the Reformation and you sang it like a good company of Lutherans.*” The hymn has remained special ever since to this writer, who always thinks of it as “*Martin’s hymn.*” Who was Martin?

#### Miner’s Son

Martin Luther was a miner’s son from Saxony. He was brought up as a strict Catholic and entered Erfurt University in 1501 at the age of 19 because his dad wanted him to become a lawyer. Luther gained his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees by 1505 but that year it is said that he was almost killed by a lightning bolt. Terrified of God’s judgement, Luther became an Augustinian monk.

#### Despairing Monk

In spite of his academic achievements and his dedication as a monk, Luther was miserable. While in the monastery, he endured long hours of [fasting](#) and ritual [prayer](#), [pilgrimages](#) to saints’ shrines, repeated scourging i.e. self-harm and frequent [confessions](#). He later said of that time, “*I lost touch with Christ the Saviour and Comforter, and made of him the jailor and hangman of my poor soul.*”

## Saved Man

No doubt in despair about his soul, Luther turned to the scriptures. He had at the time the old Tepl Bible, named after Tepl in Bohemia. The Tepl Bible had been translated into German in 1389<sup>29</sup> from the Old Latin Bibles of the Waldenses, who were the faithful Bible believers of northern Italy.

Henry Halley<sup>30</sup> says that *One day, in 1508, while reading Romans, [Luther's] enlightenment and peace came suddenly: [he read] "the just shall live by faith" [Romans 1:17]. He saw, at last, that salvation was to be gained by Trust in God through Christ, and not by rituals and sacraments and penances of the Church. It changed his whole life, and the WHOLE COURSE OF HISTORY.* Martin's conversion would make history as the Reformation.

## World Shaker, **"These that have turned the world upside down" Acts 17:6**

In 1517, the pope wanted to build what is now St Peter's Basilica. He raised money for the project by selling what were called *"indulgences,"* to have your sins forgiven. Luther was outraged. He wrote a list of 95 arguments, called the 95 Theses, against indulgences and nailed them to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1517. That date became known as Reformation Day. It's now Halloween, so **"the god of this world"** 2 Corinthians 4:4 got a stroke in later on.

James 3:5 says **"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"** and from Luther's 95 theses, the Lord fanned the flames of revival into a revolution against Rome and the Reformation spread like wildfire. Large sections of the Catholic Church broke away to form their own national churches, such as the Lutheran Churches, and the Church in England became the Church of England. They sought to follow the scripture, instead of the pope, by means of the basic Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, by scripture alone<sup>31</sup>. Amen.

## Papal Enemy No. 1

Rome reacted typically against Luther. In April 1521, he was summoned before an imperial assembly or Diet by Emperor Charles V in the German town of Worms. The emperor tried to get Luther to recant. He refused. See figure. Again, Rome reacted typically, like Caiaphas' crew in John 11:53 **"Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."**

## Bible Translator and Hymn Writer<sup>32</sup>

However, just as **"the Lord hid"** Jeremiah and Baruch, Jeremiah 36:26, He hid Luther. [Frederick III, Elector of Saxony](#), transported Luther to [Wartburg Castle](#) and Rome never did get him. Luther was in Wartburg from May 1521 to March 1522. In that time he translated the New Testament into German with the help of the Greek Text first published in 1516 by Erasmus of Rotterdam. Luther translated the whole Bible by 1534. It should be noted that Luther's Bible, Erasmus' Greek Text, the 1389 Tepl Bible and the pure Old Latin Waldensen Bibles from as far back as 157 A.D. closely match the 1611 Authorized Holy Bible and they were all used by the King James translators.

Wartburg Castle may in part have inspired the hymn *A Mighty Fortress*. Luther composed it from Psalm 46:1 **"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."** Psalm 46:1 is a great verse that is special to this writer and in turn therefore so is Martin's hymn composed from it.

## Home Call, the Devil's Backlash and God's Providence

Luther died peacefully in 1546 aged 62. Henry Halley says that Martin was *next to Jesus and Paul, the Greatest Man of all the ages*. Satan, though, was determined to crush the Reformation and almost did so in Europe through Rome's 100-year religious wars of the Counter-Reformation.

God had nevertheless sustained **"the time of reformation"** Hebrews 9:10 in another nation that would take the fruits of the Reformation **"to the uttermost part of the earth"** Acts 1:8 because it was a seafaring nation. That nation was England. From England, a century after Luther, another hymn and hymn-writer emerge, that are special to this writer - but that's another story.

This work continues with the English Reformation Heroes who followed Luther.



## Philadelphian English Reformation Heroes<sup>33</sup>

### 3

#### The Men Behind The English Bible

“Go now ye that are men and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire” Exodus 10:11.

As the Greek New Testaments were being published on the Continent, God was at work preparing the English Bible, before and during the Reformation. These were the Englishmen whom He used for this purpose [during the 16<sup>th</sup> century English Protestant Reformation]...

#### 3.2 William Tyndale, 1495 (1484?)-1536<sup>34</sup>

1. He was a student of Erasmus, at Cambridge. He was probably converted there under the ministry of Latimer, Bilney and Cranmer.
2. He was “*so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whatever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue*”, citing Herman Buschius.
3. He is said to have *stamped his genius upon English thought and English language*.
4. He produced two editions of the New Testament, in 1526 and 1534. This was the first English New Testament translated from the Greek Received Text. He was actively engaged in translating the Old Testament certainly up until the time of his arrest in 1534.

To the mitred Abbots of Winchcombe and Tewkesbury he had said<sup>35</sup>:

*“I defy the pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than thou doest.”*

5. He was betrayed, strangled and burnt at the stake at Vilvorde on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1536. His last words were: “*Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.*”

In 1538 King Henry VIII decreed that the Great Bible be set up in every Parish church, in answer to Tyndale’s prayer.

6. The AV1611 New Testament is 90% that of Tyndale<sup>36</sup>.

*“I perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text”*

#### 3.3 Miles Coverdale, 1488-1569<sup>37</sup>

1. He graduated as a Bachelor in Canon Law at Cambridge in 1531 and later received a Doctorate from Tübingen and Cambridge.
2. He was an Augustinian friar but when drawn to the Protestant faith, he had to flee to the Continent, where, with John Rogers, he became a disciple of Tyndale’s.
3. He published the first complete printed English Bible in 1535, mainly from Luther’s German and dedicated it to King Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn.
4. Coverdale’s dedicatory epistle *denounces the errors of “the blind bishop of Rome.”*

#### 3.4 John Rogers, 1500-1555<sup>38</sup>

1. He was educated at Cambridge and converted by the scriptures and the witness of Tyndale, 1534.
2. He was responsible for the printing of the Matthew’s Bible, in which Tyndale’s work is reproduced as far as possible, supplemented where necessary by that of Miles Coverdale, taken largely from Luther’s German.



3. Matthew's Bible is the English foundation of the Great Bible 1539, the Geneva Bible 1560, the Bishop's Bible 1568 and the Authorised King James Bible of 1611, the AV1611.
4. John Rogers was burnt at the stake, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1555, the first to suffer thus during the short and tyrannical reign of Mary Tudor.

### 2017 Update: Geneva and Bishops' Bibles - Summary<sup>39</sup>

The **Geneva Bible** is one of the most historically significant [translations](#) of the [Bible](#) into English, preceding the [King James Version](#) by 51 years...It was the primary Bible of 16th-century English [Protestantism](#)...The Geneva Bible was used by many [English Dissenters](#), and it was still respected by [Oliver Cromwell](#)'s soldiers at the time of the [English Civil War](#), in the booklet "[Cromwell's Soldiers' Pocket Bible](#)"...The Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to use verse numbers based on the work of Stephanus ([Robert Estienne](#) of Paris)...

During the reign of Queen [Mary I of England](#) (1553–58), a number of Protestant scholars fled from England to [Geneva, Switzerland](#)...Among these scholars was [William Whittingham](#), who supervised the translation now known as the Geneva Bible...

The **Bishops' Bible** is an English [translation](#) of the [Bible](#) which was produced under the authority of the established [Church of England](#) in 1568. It was substantially revised in 1572, and the 1602 edition was prescribed as the base text for the [King James Bible](#) that was completed in 1611...

It failed to displace the Geneva Bible as a domestic Bible to be read at home, but that was not its intended purpose. The intention was for it to be used in church as what would today be termed a "pulpit Bible"...

**Writer's Note:** The widespread use of the Geneva Bible notwithstanding the last edition was published in 1644. The 1602 Edition of the Bishops' Bible was its last edition. Both bibles had been eclipsed before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the AV1611, 1611 Holy Bible. That said, both bibles like the AV1611 were compiled by *"a band of men, whose hearts God had touched"* 1 Samuel 10:26 and embodied the true text of scripture that the AV1611 has carried forward to the present day.

### 3.5 God's Englishmen

The men who produced the early English Bibles had these things in common:

1. They were genuine scholars who approached the scriptures believing them to be the true words of God.
2. They had a God-given desire to impart the pure words of God to the ordinary people, NOT keep it locked up in the original languages.
3. They rejected the RC church and suffered as a result. It follows that Bible believers are anti-Catholic and Bible-reading countries are NOT Catholic countries.

See also this wonderful sister's testimony. This writer can't wait to meet her<sup>40</sup>:



**Joan Bocher of Kent, Martyred May 2 1550**

*"You lie like a rogue. Go read the scriptures"* – last words of Sister Joan, to a Catholic bishop

## Heroic Reformation Achievements<sup>41</sup>

### 3. List some of the amazing things done by faithful people in past ages (Hebrews 11:33-35a).

These things may be summed up in one word – victory:

- Victory over mortal foes, whether royal or rank-and-file; **“subdued kingdoms”** Hebrews 11:33, **“waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens”** Hebrews 11:34
- Victory over sinful ways; **“wrought righteousness”** Hebrews 11:33
- Victory over fainting hearts; **“obtained promises”** Hebrews 11:33
- Victory over ravenous beasts; **“stopped the mouths of lions”** Hebrews 11:33
- Victory over fiery trials; **“Quenched the violence of fire”** Hebrews 11:34
- Victory over “unreasonable and wicked men” 2 Thessalonians 3:2; **“escaped the edge of the sword”** Hebrews 11:34
- Victory over physical weakness; **“out of weakness were made strong”** Hebrews 11:34
- Victory over death itself; **“Women received their dead raised to life again”** Hebrews 11:35

Today’s believer can have victory in that **“Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”** Galatians 2:20. As Paul states for today’s believers: **“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”** 1 Corinthians 15:57. See the example of arguably England’s best-known martyrs, Latimer and Ridley<sup>42</sup>, murdered by Rome but certain to be manifest in glory.

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”** Colossians 3:4.



#### **“Quenched the violence of fire”**

Hebrews 11:34, being undaunted in devotion to **“the Lord of glory”** 1 Corinthians 2:8, James 2:1 despite the flames ‘Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out’ –

Hugh Latimer to his fellow martyr Nicholas Ridley, October 16<sup>th</sup> 1555.

Their faith was vindicated, especially in the year 1611

Luther, Tyndale, Coverdale, Rogers, Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer – see **Follow-Up Comment** over-page – were front-runners in the Philadelphian Church Age 1500-1900+ A.D. Revelation 3:7-13<sup>43</sup>. It is the Philadelphian Church *not* the Apostolic Church 33-200 A.D. Revelation 2:1-7 with the original writings of scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ commends for keeping His word as in Revelation 3:8 **“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”**



## Follow-Up Comment<sup>44</sup>

See graphic with respect to the Oxford martyrs Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer burnt at the stake near the spot of the memorial on October 16<sup>th</sup> 1555, Latimer and Ridley, and March 21<sup>st</sup> 1556, Cranmer.

The first photo shows the statue of Thomas Cranmer holding the Holy Bible. The inscription on the plaque underneath his statue refers to the errors of the Church of Rome. Statues of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley occupy two other sides of the memorial. On the Memorial<sup>45</sup>, Cranmer faces north holding a Bible; Ridley faces east; and Latimer looks to the west, with his arms folded across his chest. Latimer is the figure on Cranmer's left.

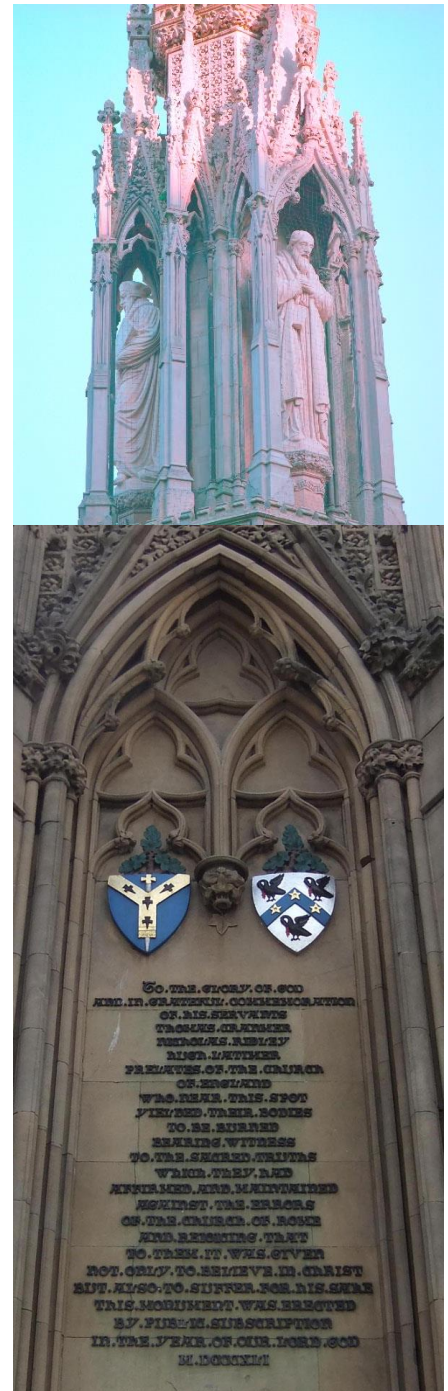
A closer view<sup>46</sup> shows the inscription on the plaque underneath Cranmer's statue. The words *the errors of the Church of Rome* can be discerned about two-thirds of the way down on the plaque. The inscription reads in full:

To the Glory of God, and in grateful commemoration of His servants, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned, bearing witness to the sacred truths which they had affirmed and maintained against the errors of the Church of Rome, and rejoicing that to them it was given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake; this monument was erected by public subscription in the year of our Lord God, MDCCCXLI\*. \*1841, the memorial was actually completed in 1843.

A strange incident occurred near the memorial on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2014. This writer and his family were in Oxford on that date. On the morning of June 14<sup>th</sup> this writer went to view the memorial. While this writer waited at the stoplights just across the street from the memorial, an individual quickly walked past behind. The individual was alone, not speaking into a mobile phone, male, bald, Caucasian, of average build and height and in a dark coat. No-one else was in the vicinity. As this individual went past, he spoke an obscenity quite distinctly but which only he and this writer could have heard. The obscenity was a demand to *Go away, now, and never come back*. It may well be that the enemy was so incensed to see someone else close by the place where he had brought about the deaths of those martyrs and who held to their Bible belief almost 500 years on that he prompted one of his minions to cast a fiery dart, Ephesians 6:16, even if of small calibre.

Psalm 27:1 therefore comes to mind. ***“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”***

Note that Rome tried to flood England with the Jesuit Rheims New Testament of 1582 but the English people rejected it<sup>47</sup>. She sent the Spanish Armada of 1588 to Catholicise England by force but in answer to prayer *“God blew and they were scattered”*<sup>48</sup>. See this note to martyrologist, John Foxe<sup>49</sup>.

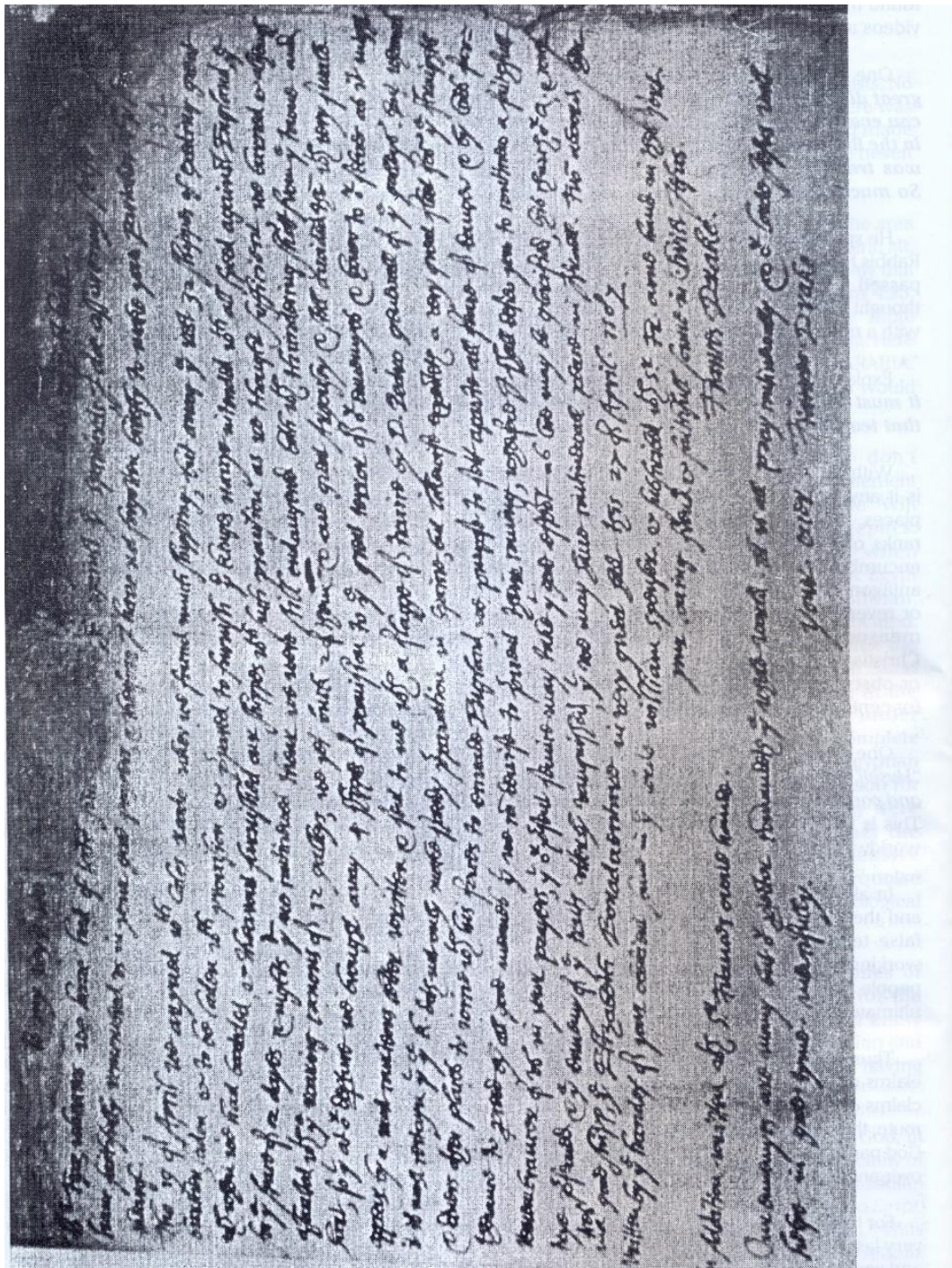




To my very loving friend John Foxe...continue a faithful remembrance of us in your prayers that our present service may take that good effect as God may be glorified, His Church, our Queen and country preserved and the enemy of truth ["**thy word is truth**" John 17:17] utterly vanquished, that we may have continued peace in Israel\* - our enemies are many, but our Protector commandeth the whole world, let us pray continually, and our Lord Jesus will help in good time mercifully - Francis Drake. \*England. See scan below of the letter to Foxe<sup>50</sup>.

### COPY OF A LETTER TO JOHN FOXE

By Francis Drake



of the letter dated 27 April, 1587, sent by Sir Francis Drake to John Foxe, the martyrologist in which Drake refers to and as Israel. A prayer starts about five lines above the first signature at mid-page, with the words "...that God may be glorified, His church, our Queen and country preserved; the enemies of truth vanquished, and that we may have continual peace in Israel". Signed "Your loving friend and faithful son in Christ Jesus", the letter ends with a postscript: "enemies are many, but our Protector commandeth the whole world...".

This work continues with the Great Company of 1611 English Reformation Heroes.

## The Great Company of 1611 English Reformation Heroes<sup>51</sup>

### 4

#### The Company of 1611

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it”

Psalms 68:11.

To complete the work of Tyndale and the other pioneers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Lord raised up [2017 Update: yet again] “a band of men, whose hearts God had touched” 1 Samuel 10:26, “valiant for the truth upon the earth” Jeremiah 9:3\*<sup>2012</sup>. \*<sup>2012</sup>See [References for these detailed works](#)<sup>52</sup>:

#### 4.1 King James 1, The British Solomon<sup>53</sup>

1. James was the first man to unite the feuding tribes of Scotland into one nation.
2. James united Scotland and England, laying the groundwork for the British Empire, birthplace of the greatest missionary movement of the modern age.
3. James founded the Province of Ulster, by far the most Bible believing, prosperous and Christian sector of Ireland.
4. James was the first earthly monarch on record to encourage the propagation of God’s word in the language of the people.
5. James believed in salvation by grace and in the word of God, never wavering from his personal adherence to Protestant belief.
6. James broke the back of witchcraft in Scotland.
7. James was an accomplished scholar. He knew Latin, Greek and French perfectly, Italian and Spanish adequately and wrote poetry, theology and a tract against the use of tobacco!
8. He has been called *The most hated character in English history for Greek and Hebrew scholars in the Protestant church, especially the modern fundamentalist branch*. This distinction appears to have been bestowed by fundamental scholars for the reason given in point 4 above.
9. James gave Royal Assent to the Puritan proposal for a new Bible translation, 1604.

*To fulfil Acts 1:8...All the Lord needed was a Bible in line with what He had already written and preserved; since He had already decreed (in 1000 BC) that there had to be present “the word of a King” Ecclesiastes 8:4 before there could be any spiritual “power” in that word (Romans 13:1-4), and since His king was a JEW (John 18:34)...God needed a king with a Jewish name; He got one...this time it was JAMES. James is the English word for JACOB.*

#### 4.2 Scholars of 1611

See additional [References](#)<sup>54</sup>.

#### 4.3 Materials used for the AV1611<sup>55</sup>

The following list shows that the translators of 1611 had more than sufficient material for their vital task.

1. All preceding printed English and foreign language Bibles. These included the Jesuit Rheims Version.
2. The printed Greek texts of Erasmus, Stephanus and Beza.
3. The Complutensian Polyglot with the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Old Testament. The translators also had the Antwerp Polyglot of 1569-1572.
4. Several important uncial manuscripts and a great mass of cursive manuscripts.
5. The Old Latin.



6. The Italic, Gallic and Celtic versions [and the Syrian New Testament and the Gothic Bible of Bishop Ulfilas](#).
7. Jerome's Vulgate.
8. Variant readings from Codices A and B.
9. Many quotations from the early church 'Fathers,' including Eusebius, Augustine, Jerome, Cyril of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr, Basil, Theodotian, Theodorit, Tertullian, Origen etc. One of the King's men, Dr John Overall, *was celebrated for the appropriateness of his quotations from the Fathers*.

As Norman Ward states *The translators of 1611 had substantially the same selection of readings from which to choose as did the revisers of 1881, 1952, 1973 and 1979*.

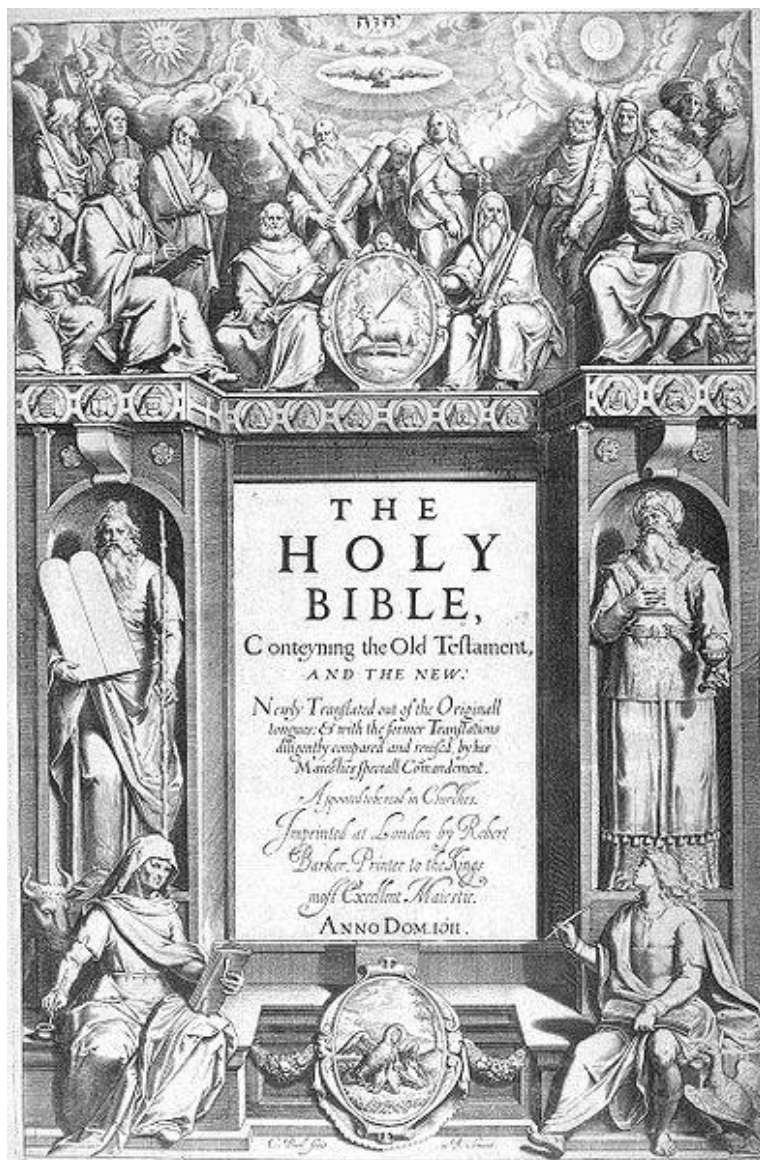
#### 4.4 The Original Title Page for the AV1611<sup>56</sup>

An exact reprint of the 1611 Authorized Version<sup>\*2012</sup> is available from the Oxford University Press and online. Inspection of the title page tends to dispel some of the myths about the AV1611, which have often been propagated by apostate fundamentalists. <sup>\*2012</sup>[Except that for ease of reading, the text is in Roman, not Black Letter Gothic like the first printings of the 1611 Holy Bible](#).

1. The title is THE HOLY BIBLE.
2. The title is NOT 'The Authorised Version.' Its 'authorisation' came from its AUTHOR<sup>57</sup>.
3. The title is NOT 'The King James Version', although this term is commonly used even by Bible believers. The term was first applied long after the publication of the AV1611, originally to avoid the word 'authority'<sup>\*2012</sup>.

<sup>\*2012</sup>[Nevertheless "Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" Ecclesiastes 8:4.](#)

4. The title does NOT include the Apocrypha as part of the scriptures. Note the following description from this site<sup>58</sup>.



## Summary

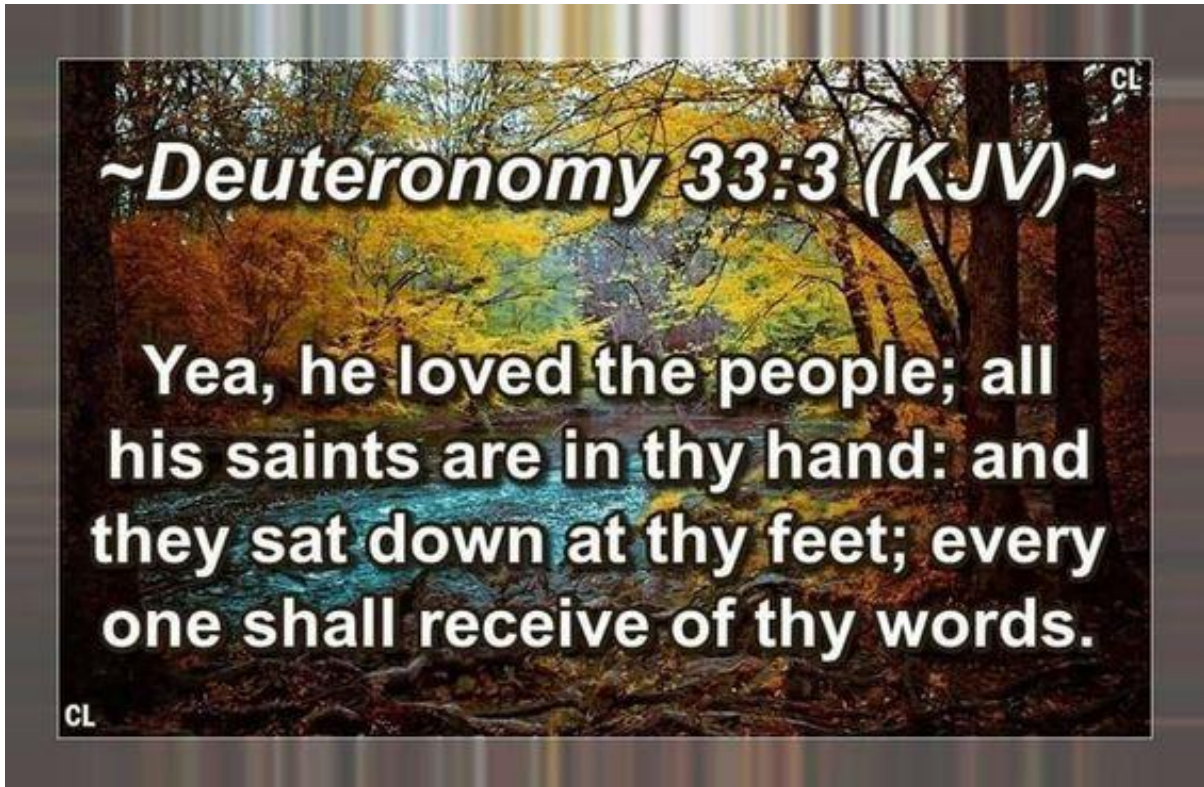
**English:** Frontispiece to the King James' Bible, 1611, shows the Twelve Apostles at the top. Moses and Aaron flank the central text. In the four corners sit Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, authors of the four gospels, with their symbolic animals. At the top, over the Holy Spirit in a form of a [dove](#), is the [Tetragrammaton](#) "יהוה" ("YHWH") [2017 Update: The actual term is JHVH<sup>59</sup>]

The title page text reads:  
 THE HOLY BIBLE,  
 Conteyning the Old Testament,  
 AND THE NEW:  
*Newly Tranllated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Tranflations diligently compared and reuifed, by his Maiesties speciall Comandement.*  
*Appointed to be read in Churches.*  
*Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie.*  
 ANNO DOM. 1611.  
 At bottom is "C. Boel fecit in Richmont."

**Date** 1611

**Source** [sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/printedbooksNew/index.cfm?TextID=kjbible](http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/printedbooksNew/index.cfm?TextID=kjbible)

**Author** Church of England



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