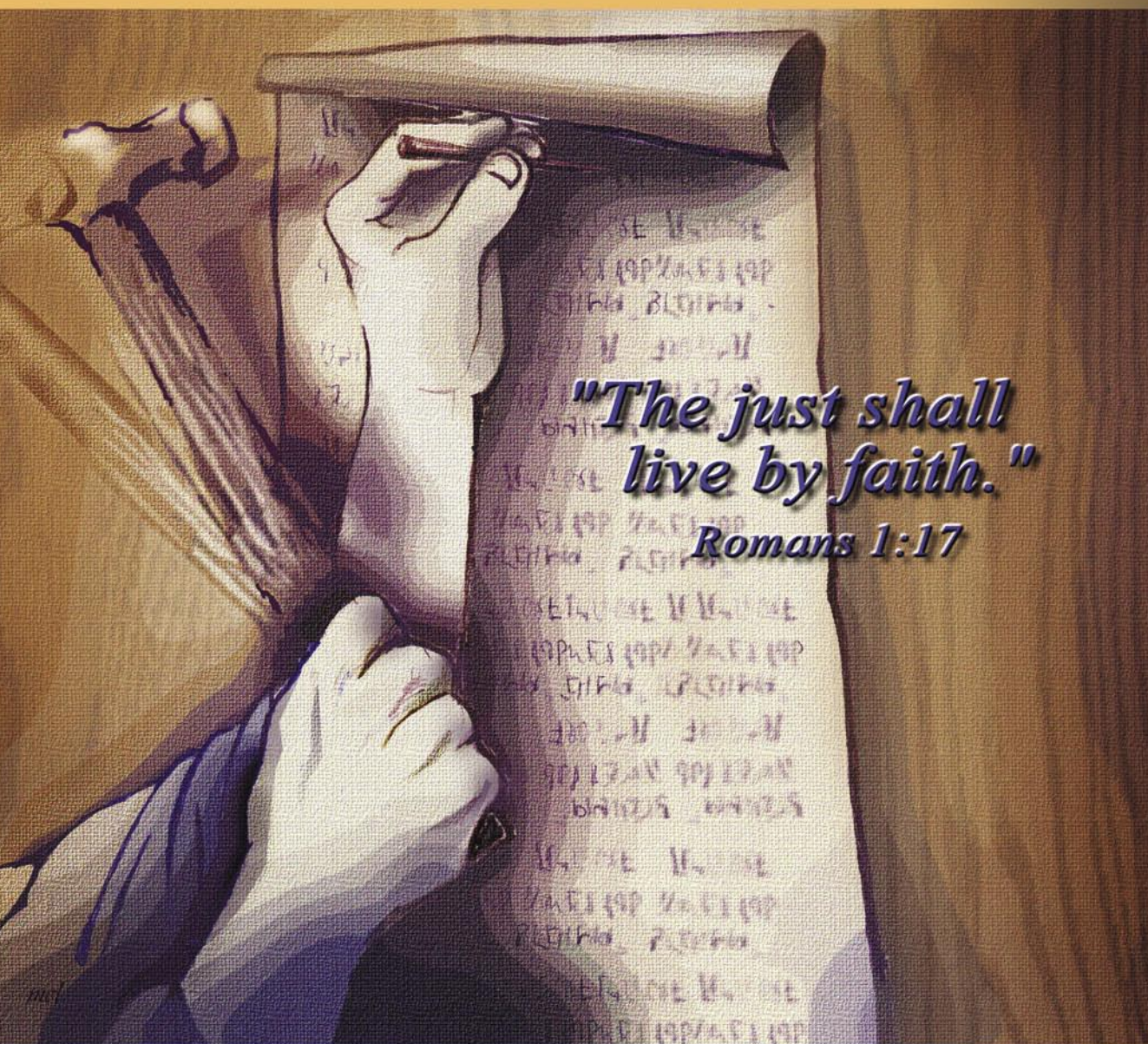


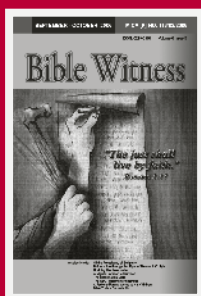
Bible Witness



***"The just shall
live by faith."***

Romans 1:17

Articles Inside: Of the Perspicuity of Scripture
Reformation through the Eyes of Bishop J. C. Ryle
Undoing the Reformation
A Mighty Fortress is Our God
The Reformation Bible
The New Testament Priesthood
A Father's Parting Words to His Children
Bible Trivia - Genesis 23



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OF THE PERSPICUITY OF SCRIPTURE

Martin Luther

This article by Martin Luther, the great leader of the Reformation, is taken from his book, "The Bondage of the Will". Here, he answered the Roman Catholic Sophists who claimed that the Bible is a book of mystery which cannot be understood by the readers.

Vocabulary

perspicuity: clarity

recondite: obscure, hidden

Sophists: a class of philosophers who argue intentionally, but fallaciously

Corycian Cavern: a deep hollow in rocks

You divide Christian doctrines into two classes, and make out that we need to know the one but not the other. "Some," you say, "are recondite whereas others are quite plain." Surely at this point you are either playing tricks with someone else's words, or practising a literary effect! However, you quote in your support Paul's words in Romans 11, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (v. 33); and also Isaiah 40: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (v. 13). It was all very easily said, either because you knew that you were writing, not just to Luther, but for the world at large, or else because you failed to consider that it was against Luther that you were writing! I hope you credit Luther with some little scholarship and judgment where the sacred text is concerned. . . .

God and His Scripture are two things, just as the Creator and His creation are two things. Now, nobody questions that there is a great

deal hid in God of which we know nothing. Christ himself says of the last day. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36); and in Acts 1, he says: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons" (v. 7) and again he says: "I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18); and Paul says: "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19); and the like. But the notion that in Scripture some things are recondite and all is not plain was spread by the godless Sophists (whom now you echo, Erasmus) - who have never yet cited a single item to prove their crazy view; nor can they. And Satan has used these unsubstantial spectres to scare men off reading the sacred text, and to destroy all sense of its value, so as to ensure that his own brand of poisonous philosophy reigns supreme in the church. I certainly grant that many passages in the Scriptures are obscure and hard to elucidate, but that is due, not to the exalted nature of their subject, but to our own linguistic and grammatical ignorance; and it does not in any way prevent our knowing all the contents of Scripture. For what solemn truth can the Scriptures still be concealing, now that the seals are broken, the stone rolled away from the door of the tomb, and that greatest of the mysteries brought to light - that Christ, God's Son, became man, that God is Three in One, that Christ suffered for us, and will reign for ever? And are not these things known, and sung in our streets? Take Christ from the Scriptures - and what more will you find in them? You see, then, that the entire content of the Scriptures has now been brought to light, even though some passages which

contain unknown words remain obscure. Thus it is unintelligent, and ungodly too, when you know that the contents of Scripture are as clear as can be, to pronounce them obscure on account of those few obscure words. If words are obscure in one place, they are clear in another. What God has so plainly declared to the world is in some parts of the Scripture stated in plain words, while in other parts it still lies hidden under obscure words. But when something stands in broad daylight, and a mass of evidence for it is in broad daylight also, it does not matter whether there is any evidence for it in the dark. Who will maintain that the town fountain does not stand in the light because the people down some alley cannot see it, while everyone in the square can see it?



many people a great deal remains obscure; but that is due, not to any lack of clarity in Scripture, but to their own blindness and dullness, in that they make no effort to see truth which, in itself, could not be plainer. As Paul said of the Jews "The vail is upon their heart" (2 Corinthians 3:15) and again, "If

our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). They are like men who cover their eyes, or go from daylight into darkness, and hide there, and then blame the sun, or the darkness of the day, for their inability to see. So let the wretched men abjure

that blasphemous perversity which would blame the darkness of their own heart on to the plain Scripture of God!

There is nothing, then, in your remark about the "Corycian cavern"; matters are not so in the Scriptures. The profoundest mysteries of the supreme Majesty are no more hidden away, but are now brought out of doors and displayed to public view. Christ has opened our understanding, that we might understand the Scriptures, and the Gospel is preached to every creature. "Their line is gone out through all the earth" (Psalm 19:4). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Come forward then, you, and all the Sophists with you, and cite a single mystery which is still obscure in the Scriptures. I know that to

When you quote Paul's statement, "how unsearchable are his judgments", you seem to take the pronoun "his" to refer to Scripture; whereas the judgments which Paul there affirms to be incomprehensible are not those of Scripture, but those of God. And Romans 11:34 does not say: "who has known the mind of the Scripture?" but: "who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (Paul, indeed, asserts that Christians do know the mind of the Lord; but only with reference to those things that are given to us by God, as he there says in 1 Corinthians 2:12). You see, then, how sleepily you examined those passages, and how apt is your citation of them - as apt as are almost all your citations for "free-will"! So, too, the

examples of obscurity which you allege in that rather sarcastic passage are quite irrelevant - the distinction of persons in the Godhead, the union of the Divine and human natures of Christ, and the unpardonable sin. Here, you say, are problems which have been solved. If you mean this of the enquires which the Sophists pursue when they discuss these subjects, what has the inoffensive Scripture done to you, that you should blame such criminal misuse of it on to its own purity? Scripture makes the straightforward affirmation that the Trinity, the Incarnation and the unpardonable sin are facts. There is nothing obscure or ambiguous about that. You imagine that Scripture tells us how they are what they are; but it does not, nor we need to know. It is here that the Sophists discuss their dreams; keep your criticism and condemnation for them, but acquit the Scriptures! If, on the other hand, you mean it of the fact themselves, I say again: blame, not the Scriptures, but the Arians and those to whom the Gospel is hid, who, by reason of the working of Satan, their god,

cannot see the plainest proofs of the Trinity in the Godhead and of the humanity of Christ.

In a word: The perspicuity of Scripture is twofold, just as there is a double lack of light. The first is external, and relates to the ministry of the Word; the second concerns the knowledge of the heart. If you speak of internal perspicuity, the truth is that nobody who has not the Spirit of God sees a jot of what is in the Scripture; they do not understand or really know any of it. They do not believe in God, nor do they believe that they are God's creatures, nor anything else - as Psalm 14:1 puts it, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The Spirit is needed for the understanding of all Scripture and every part of Scripture. If, on the other hand, you speak of external perspicuity, the position is that nothing whatsoever is left obscure or ambiguous, but all that is in the Scripture is through the Word brought forth into the clearest light and proclaimed to the whole world. 🐦



Philip Schaff, a Church Historian, on the Reformation:

"The Reformation was a grand act of emancipation from spiritual tyranny, and a vindication of the sacred rights of conscience in matters of religious belief.

*Luther's bold stand at the Diet of Worms,
in the face of the pope and the emperor,*

*is one of the sublimest events in the history of liberty,
and the eloquence of his testimony rings through the centuries.*

*To break the force of the pope, who called himself and was believed to be,
the visible vicar of God on earth,*

*and who held in his hands the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
required more moral courage than to fight a hundred battles,
and it was done by an humble monk in the might of faith."*



REFORMATION THROUGH THE EYES OF BISHOP J. C. RYLE

Errol D. Stone

Bishop J. C. Ryle wrote an article, *Why Were Our Reformers Burned?*, in which he first recorded the cruelty that the Reformers suffered, and then made a passionate plea to the post-Reformation believers not to despise the cause of Reformation, considering the great price that the Reformers have paid for the defence and declaration of biblical truths.

Ryle wrote, "It is fashionable in some quarters to deny that there is any such thing as certainty about religious truth, or any opinions for which it is worthwhile to be burned. Yet, 300 years ago, there were men who were certain they had found the truth, and were content to die for their opinions. It is fashionable in other quarters to leave out all the unpleasant things in history, and to paint everything a rose-coloured hue." He then went on to describe how the events have turned men of God who were gripped by the truths of God's Word.

King Edward VI, on the 6th July 1553, said in his last prayer before death, "O Lord God, defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion." But his sister Mary (Catherine of Aragon), the daughter of Henry VIII, succeeded him. She was best known in English History by the ill-omened name of "Bloody Mary". Ryle said, "Mary had been brought up from infancy as a rigid adherent of the Romish Church... conscientious, zealous, bigoted and narrow-minded in the extreme."

Ryle said, "A very popular history of our English Queens hardly mentions the martyrdoms of Queen Mary's days! Yet Mary was not called "Bloody Mary" without reason, and scores of Protestants were burned in her reign. Last but not least, it is thought very bad taste in many quarters to say anything which throws discredit on the Church of Rome." "Bloody Mary" destroyed all her brother's work, restored the Mass, and banned the works of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Tyndale,



Bucer, Latimer, Hooper and Cranmer. The English Reformers were imprisoned or burned alive if they did not recant and receive Popery.

“Bloody Mary” burnt 288 at the stake in Canterbury: one was an Archbishop, four were Bishops, twenty-one were Clergymen, fifty-five were women and four were children. Ryle said, “They were not rebels against the Queen’s authority...not thieves, or murderers, or drunkards, or unbelievers, or men and women of immoral lives. On the contrary, they were some of the holiest, purest, and the best Christians in England, and several of them the most learned men of their day.”

In his book titled *What Do We Owe to the Reformation?*, Ryle wrote, “I cannot agree with those who say the Reformation was a blunder, that the Reformers are overpraised, that Protestantism has done this country no good, and that it would matter little if England placed her neck once more under the foot of the Pope of Rome.” He concluded by saying, “Shall we entertain for a moment the idea of forsaking Reformation principles and going back to Rome? Once more I say God forbid! The man who counsels such base apostasy and suicidal folly must be judicially blind. The iron collar has been broken; let us not put it on again. The prison has been thrown open; let us not resume the yoke and return to our chains.” 🐦

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UNDOING THE REFORMATION

Prabhudas Koshy

For more than a decade, certain sons of the Reformation, known as “the Evangelicals”, have been undoing the cause of the great Reformation. On March 29, 1994, wire services around the world broadcast the declaration signed by 40 leading Evangelicals and Catholics entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the third Millennium.” The signatories from the Protestant or Evangelical camp included well-known men like J. I. Packer, Bill Bright, Chuck Colson, and Os Guinness. Para church organizations, which are led by Chuck Colson (Prison Fellowship), Bill Bright (Campus Crusade) have also been contributing much impetus to their leaders’ undoing of the Protestant biblical convictions by the signing of that document.

Report on ECT begins with the statement:

“We are Evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics who have been led thru’ prayer, study and discussion to common convictions about Christian faith and mission.”

It continues:

“Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ ... We recognise that we are called by God to a fuller realisation of our unity in the body of Christ.”

This new unity is said to lead to joint action by Catholics and Evangelicals:

“We are called and we therefore resolved to explore patterns of working and witnessing

together in order to advance the one mission of Christ. We promise one another that we will work to deepen, build upon, and expand this pattern of convergence and cooperation.”

And:

“We are bound together in contending against all that opposes Christ and his cause.”

Finally:

“The mission that we embrace together is the necessary consequence of the faith that we affirm together.”

Why Evangelicals Get Together with Catholics?

Why do the “Evangelicals” and Catholics come

together on an unprecedented scale? In his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Pope John Paul II stated, “Although the Catholic Church knows it has received the fullness of



CHUCK COLSON WITH POPE JOHN PAUL II

the means of salvation, it rejoices when other Christian communities join her in preaching the Gospel The Church wants to preach the gospel together with all who believe in Christ.”

But what ‘gospel’ are we expected to preach together with the Catholics? Do the Pope and Catholic theologians permit us to preach that

“Salvation is only by faith, and that faith must be placed in Christ alone and none else”? Such a Gospel message is not the Catholic Gospel. It has been their teaching that salvation is by faith plus works (e.g. participation in their Mass).

Have the Basic Catholic Doctrines Changed?

There is a general notion among many Protestants that Roman Catholic doctrines have changed. This idea is enhanced by the charismatic experience, an erroneous phenomenon increasingly found in both Evangelical and Catholic churches. A lot of Catholic priests hold special charismatic miracle rallies all around the world. Therefore, people are led to believe that they are closer to the mainstream Protestant churches, which experience the same kind of charismatic phenomenon.

But those, who look into the official creeds of the Roman Catholic Church, will find that Catholic doctrines have not changed at all. Anyone who attempts to evaluate modern Romanism can do so only by evaluating what is on her books – the Council of Trent, Vatican I and II, papal decrees, etc., because these tell us what the Catholics officially believe and teach.

The Catholic Church still believes in the very doctrines that the Reformers protested against. According to the documents of Vatican II, the Catholic Church continues to maintain that it is the only true church and it alone offers the fullness of salvation:

Nevertheless our separated brethren [the Protestants], whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity

which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those whom He has regenerated and vivified into one body and newness of life – that unity which the holy Scriptures and the revered tradition of the Church proclaim.

For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.

It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who already belong in any way to God's people.

Catholic apologist and theologian Karl Keating confesses, “The Catholic Church did not change any of its doctrines at Trent and did not change any at Vatican II” and “there has been no alternation at all in basic doctrines ... The Catholic Church is still the sole true Church.”

A former Carmelite priest observed, “Vatican II made no doctrinal changes ... There was a change of image, but no change of substance.” (James G. McCarthy, *Catholicism: Crisis of Faith*, video documentary (annotated transcript), Lumen Productions, Cupertino, p. 37). The Roman Catholic Church remains Roman, both in rule and in doctrinal definition.

Betrayal of Truth

Should the Protestants or Evangelicals presume Catholic doctrines and practices as spiritually accurate and edifying? Have the doctrinal differences that sparked 500 years

ago now become moot? Should Protestants now vie Roman Catholic doctrines as truly biblical?

What have become blurred in the new ecumenical efforts are the critical issues raised during the Reformation regarding the essential points of the Gospel. The reality of the past five centuries of theological debate is now being obscured. All these years, both sides have viewed the essentials of the Gospel which divided them as a matter of eternal significance. The Reformers' conviction of "Justification by faith alone" is now being betrayed by those who closed ranks with the Catholics. Catholics' conclusion that the Reformation doctrine of justification was worthy of the anathema (curse) of the church has never been annulled.

The issue and division of the Reformation were real and lasting. The ensuing years brought only further division. In fact, the issues which cause greater division between Rome and Protestantism have only been exacerbated since then. It was much after the Reformation, in 1870, that the decree of papal infallibility occurred. It was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the crucial dogmas of Mariology appeared as *de fide* by Rome.

All these idolatrous creeds and practices of Rome are still very much alive. And yet those professing "Evangelicals" state that "Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ ... We recognise that we are called by God to a fuller realization of our unity in the body of Christ." What else can this be, but betrayal of the truth?


Would God call men to compromise the true Gospel of Jesus Christ with a 'gospel' of idolatry? Would God lead men to submit their will to extra-biblical and anti-biblical authorities such as traditions and papal creeds? No, never!

Spiritual ignorance and negligence have left many Protestant church leaders and members ill-equipped to answer those questions. A great many have little understanding of the doctrinal differences that divide both groups which are far more important than mere convictions we share. We are separated by things which are of eternal significance. There can be no spiritual alliance between the Catholics and Protestants that will have the approval of God's Word. Let us pray that this new subtle movement will not take us back to idolatrous Roman Catholicism. 🕊



Bishop J. C. Ryle's Prayer

*"From the liberality which says that everybody is right;
From the charity which forbids to say anybody is wrong;
From the peace which is bough at the expense of Truth;
May the good Lord deliver us."*



A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

Tan Kian Sing

“A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing...The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still, His Kingdom is forever.”

This hymn, written by the great Reformer of the 16th century, Martin Luther, has become a great hymn of the Christian church. This hymn is a reflection of the heart of that man of God. The following is a brief story of the man, whose biblical conviction led to the writing of this great hymn.

Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk and a professor of theology. But when he was awoken by biblical truths, he courageously and boldly staged a protest against the false teachings and unbiblical practices of the medieval Roman Church with his renowned 95 theses.

The years of living a monastic life in strict asceticism did not help him achieve his goal. He said, “I was a good monk, and kept the rules of my order so strictly that I can claim: if ever man got to heaven through monasticism, I was indeed that man. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me can testify to this. I would have become a martyr through fasting, prayer, spiritual reading and other good works if I had remained a monk much longer!” Luther literally tortured himself to obtain peace and merit salvation by human effort. But he found no peace and rest in his soul.

It was only after fourteen years as a monk that Luther finally found true peace and release from the burden of doing good works for salvation. Through his long hours of earnest

searching and deep meditation on the Holy Scriptures, he wonderfully came across the teaching of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:17 that “the just shall live by faith”. Until then he had tried in his own efforts to live a righteous life. But with the new divine revelation, he realised, with a great relief and gladness, that one was saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. Salvation was a gift from God and not gained by works of righteousness which one had done. For the first time, he saw the light of truth shining deep right into his soul lost in sin and struggling in self-righteousness. Life was never the same again for Luther. As the truth dawned upon him, he testified that he felt born again, and the words of the Apostle Paul, “The just shall live by faith”, were the very gates of paradise to him.

Luther found new light in the Holy Bible which became a source of comfort and wisdom. He went on to develop his theology through systematic searching and study of the precious Word of God. He contended against the errors and deceitful tactics of the Roman Church in the diabolical teaching of remission of sins by the purchase of indulgences. Indulgences were small pieces of paper sold for a price by the Roman Church, which was supposed to guarantee forgiveness of sins. This caused Luther to be on fire for the truth and he preached vehemently against the deception. Seeing that his fervent preaching against the false teaching did not deter people from continuing to purchase the special indulgences, Luther decided to take a vigorous step by posting his 95 theses on the doors of the Cathedral of Wittenberg in

Germany to debate against the evil practice of selling indulgences to cheat the souls and savings of the people. The act ignited the 16th Century Protestant Reformation.

Luther did not only declare and defend biblical doctrines, such as justification by faith, but he also restored congregational singing. Luther was a theologian, pastor, poet and musician. He affirmed that the singing of hymns would administer God's Word to the hearts of the people. To him, music was "a divine grace and gift" from God and one needs to cultivate and use it to serve the Almighty. He considered hymns as a sort of "miniature Bible". Luther said, "After theology, there is nothing that can be placed on a level with music. It drives out the devil and makes people cheerful. It is a gift that God gave to birds and to men. Many Bible character were especially gifted in music. Now we need to remove hymn singing from the domain of monks and priests and set the laity to singing. By the singing of hymns, the laity can publicly express their love to the Almighty God." During the time of Luther, there was a saying among the Roman Catholics that "by his songs he has done more harm to the Romanists than by his sermons." It was written about him that "Luther did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible for Germany. The hymns are known by heart by every peasant; they advise, they argue, from the hymns, and every soul in the Church praises God, like a Christian, with words which are natural and yet sacred to his mind."

And so in his Reformation fight against the dark Roman Church, he wrote a battle song for the purpose – "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". This great hymn is a glorious testimony to the power of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It has been labelled as "a spiritual tonic for the discouraged and distressed", "the greatest

hymn of the greatest man in the greatest period of history", and "an imperishable hymn, not polished and artistically wrought, but rugged and strong like Luther".

The hymn is based on Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Psalm 46:1-3). It was Luther's favourite, and oftentimes when he felt a sense of despondency, he would call for his friend, Philip Melanchthon, to sing it with him. At times of weariness through his struggles and sufferings from persecution for the witness of the truth, he would tell his bosom friend, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm."

Like the great Apostle Paul, Martin Luther had fought the good fight of faith. He was bold, zealous and full of fervour in the preaching of God's saving truth. Having been brought out of darkness into light, he yearned for people to know the wonderful doctrine of justification by faith alone; salvation was by grace and not by good works. 🕊

~

Luther entered Worms on the 16th of April, 1521. Some say he sang a hymn as he approached the city, a hymn which he composed two days earlier - 'A Mighty Fortress Is Our God'. The next day, Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet.

~

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

Martin Luther, 1483-1546

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.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.



Luther's Statement at Diet of Worms

"I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the Councils, because it is clear as day they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or on plain and clear grounds of reason, so that conscience shall bind me to make acknowledgment of error, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything contrary to conscience." And then, looking round on the assembly, he said—and the words are among the sublimest in history— "HERE I STAND. I CAN DO NO OTHER. MAY GOD HELP ME. AMEN"



(The Diet of Worms was a general assembly (a Diet) of the estates of the Holy Roman Empire that took place in Worms, a small town on the Rhine river located in what is now Germany. It was conducted from January 28 to May 25, 1521, with Emperor Charles V presiding.)



THE REFORMATION BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

No Bible, no Reformation! “Faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). It is God’s Word that brought about the 16th century Protestant Reformation. The Reformation did not happen by chance or by accident. It was a special event preplanned by God and it finally happened in God’s perfect time. According to Church historian Philip Schaff, “The Reformation of the 16th Century, is next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history.” Just as the Lord Jesus Christ came miraculously in “the fullness of the time” (Galatians 4:4), so did the Reformation. In the light of biblical precedents and special providence (*providentia extraordinaria*), the Protestant Reformation was a “miracle event” from God.

The Reformation fire was lit by the Light of God’s Word. The Word of God had to be put into the hands of the common folk. The Lord used His servants like Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and finally the King James translators to put the Bible into the hands of the people in the pew so that they might know the truth, and the truth shall make them see and set them free (John 8:32).

A Good Fruit of the Reformation

The Authorised or King James Version (AV/KJV) is built upon all the Reformation versions (Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva, etc.) of the English Bible and is providentially the best of all the English versions. It has stood the test of time and blessed many millions all over the world for nearly 400 years.

There are four reasons why the KJV is superior:

It is Based on the Perfectly Preserved Text

All Christians should believe in the inspiration and preservation of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 12:6-7). Jesus used the Old Testament Scripture during His earthly ministry, and considered every word of it to be inspired. In Matthew 5:18, He said, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” This surely implies that the Hebrew Scriptures have been preserved through the centuries, to the extent that every bit of it has been left intact. If God has so preserved the words of the Old Testament Scriptures so that none of them is lost, will He not also preserve the New Testament Scriptures? Based on God’s promises and power, we can say with confidence that we have the very Word of God today in the divinely preserved Hebrew and Greek texts (or words) on which the KJV is based.

It is Translated by Godly and Able Scholars

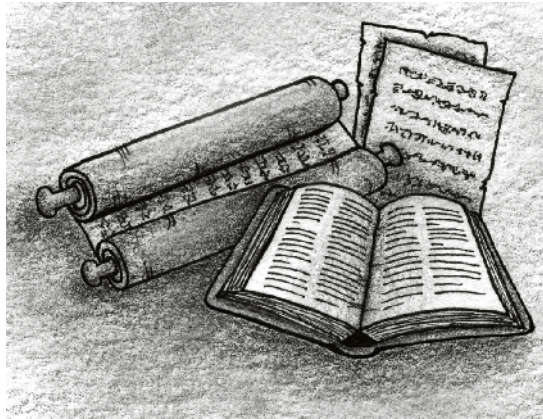
The King James Version is an excellent translation of the Holy Scriptures. It is a good fruit. It is a good fruit because it comes from a good tree (Matthew 7:15-20). The KJV is a good translation because of good translators; in terms of their intellect and learning, they were brilliant; and in their faith and devotion towards God, they were vibrant. There were a total of 54 scholars of the highest rank who

translated the KJV. They were not only men of great learning but also of great piety. They were skilled in the biblical languages, and lived in a period when the English language was at its glorious height. It was a most providentially opportune time to translate the Scriptures into the English tongue. They began their work in 1604 and completed it in 1611—a total of seven years. Without doubt, the KJV is a result of God's special providence.

Consider Alexander McClure's "Evaluation of the KJ Translators and Translation". He wrote, "As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that by the good Providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues, ... had then be carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... it is confidently expected that the reader of these pages will yield to the conviction, that all the colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking. Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with those mighty men. It would be impossible to convene out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence" (*Translators Revived*, 63-4).

It is Accurately Translated Word for Word

The KJV employs a superior method of translation. The KJV uses the verbal/formal over against the dynamic equivalence method of translation. The verbal/formal equivalence method is the only acceptable method for the translation of the Holy Scriptures. Why? Simply because the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God!



God issued a very serious warning in Revelation 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." In any attempt to translate the Scriptures, it is paramount that there should be no addition to, subtraction from, and changing of God's Word. It must be translated word for word without any alteration of its divine sense or intent.

The dynamic equivalence method is a subjective and interpretive thought-for-thought method. Such a method may be applied to human literature, but certainly not Holy Scripture. The Bible's divine origin and its verbal inerrancy forbid it. "Virgin" must be translated "virgin", and not "young woman" (as in the RSV), and "blood" must be translated "blood", and not "death" (as in the

TEV), and “only begotten” must be translated “only begotten”, and not just “one and only” (as in the NIV).

It is Faithful to Historic Protestant Theology

The KJV preserves all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith like the: (1) Inspiration of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16), (2) Preservation of Scripture (Psalm 12:6-7), (3) Virgin Birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14), (4) Eternal Generation of Christ (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9), (5) the Holy Trinity (1 John 5:7-8), (6) the Deity and Humanity of Christ (1 Timothy 3:16), and many others. The modernistic 20th century versions on the other hand have unfaithfully manipulated these biblical texts to change or corrupt these and other fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

One fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith that is undermined or attacked by the modern versions is the doctrine of the Trinity. They attack this important doctrine by scissoring out the clearest proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity which is 1 John 5:7, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” Some will argue that the absence of 1 John 5:7 does not affect the doctrine of the Trinity because there are many other biblical passages that teach it. The doctrine to them is thus not lost. While the doctrine may not be lost, a very strong testimony for it has surely been. Which other scriptural passage is as crystal clear as 1 John 5:7 in expressing the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead? We lose a very valuable proof-text by such flippant statements against the traditional preserved text in favour of the critical cut-up text. This is not a small matter as some would like to think. Paul warned, “a little leaven leaveneth

the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9). By faith in God’s promise of perfect preservation of not just His doctrines but also His words to the last iota (Matthew 5:18; 24:35), we believe 1 John 5:7 to be the inspired words of God as given in the original.

A Return to the Reformation

In an age when the pressure to be popular, to compromise, and to backslide is so great, there is a real need to remember and to return to the old-time faith of the Protestant Reformation as expressed in the biblical dicta of Grace alone, Faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, and to the Glory of God alone. In this post-modern and apostate age of uncertainty and unbelief, the temptation is great to denounce the forever infallible and inerrant Word of God as found in the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words of the Reformation Bible and the KJV, and to renounce the Protestant Reformation as a mistake in the history of the church.

But true Protestant sons and Bible-loving Christians should resist the seduction of ecumenical unity at the expense of truth, and the temptations of a neo-deistic worldview that denies the present perfection of the Holy Scriptures.

What of the many new and modern versions of the Bible today? Albert Einstein once said, “A man with one watch knows what time it is, a man with two watches is never sure.” Allow me to apply Einstein’s words to the Bible, **“A Christian with one Bible knows what the Truth is, a Christian with two Bibles is never sure.”** Let us be sure of God’s Truth by returning to the good old Bible, the one Bible of the great Protestant Reformation, which we have in our hands today! 🐦

THE NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

Prabhudas Koshy

The Reformers' main goal was to repudiate the errors of Roman Catholic doctrines. One of those crucial errors, which the Reformers refuted, was the doctrine of "New Testament Priesthood".

The Roman Catholic Teaching of New Testament Priesthood

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Christ instituted the New Testament priesthood in order to mediate salvation to men. It advocates that priests can dispense the forgiveness of sins through the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass, confession and penance.

The Roman church even pronounces curse on those who deny their doctrine of Priesthood. The Council of Trent states: "If anyone says that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood – or, that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins, but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel let him be anathema (*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Baker Book House (1919 ed)).

The second part of their error with reference to the priesthood is the infallibility of the priests. Rome claims that infallible authority is passed undiminished down through the hierarchy to her clergy.

Here, we are confronted with the Vatican's doctrine of Ordination and Succession. Rome claims that her priests can trace their descent, in unbroken continuity, back to the Apostles – that they stand in the line of the true Apostolic Succession. Supreme emphasis is accordingly laid on the question of Orders. Ordination in the Church of Rome is a sacrament. The grace and power which enable a man to be a priest are received through the ordaining bishop. Without such ordination, no man can be regarded as duly qualified to administer the sacraments or to preach the Word.

The New Testament Teaching on Priesthood

Christ is the only priest who can dispense forgiveness

In the Old Testament, there was a priesthood ordained by the Lord. But the New Testament teaches that the old system of priesthood and sacrifices have been abolished by Jesus Christ, as He fulfilled them in His death on the cross. Today, there is no priesthood of the Old Testament kind. Neither is there any more sacrifice for sin, for Christ has done all to atone for our sins. Christ has become the fulfilment of the Old Testament priesthood and He is now the only mediator between God and man. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:5-6). According to Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7:14-

17, Jesus' priesthood continues forever. Since He holds His priesthood permanently, there is neither need nor place for any kind of priestly succession in His case. Because He lives forever, there is no question of succession of His priesthood. Christ, our High Priest, has an office which is uniquely and uninterruptedly His.

Jesus Christ could not have instituted a new order of human priesthood through the disciples because the Scripture teaches that His priesthood has displaced the old order. He now exercises an exclusive and eternal priesthood, the prerogatives which cannot be transferred.

Furthermore, the Scripture teaches that men now have direct access to God through Jesus Christ. They no longer need a human priesthood or sacrifices, for He has become our sacrifice and our priest. It is not that men do not need a priest to come to God. We do! But we do not need a human priest when we have a Divine priest, Jesus Christ, to whom we can go at any time because He has made the perfect sacrifice and given us direct access into the presence of God.

Hebrews 10:19-22 says: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

There is no priestly office in the New Testament church

The New Testament does not use the Greek term for priest, *hiereus*, to mention that priestly ministry is one of the offices of the church. There is no mention in the New Testament of priests in the early church. Neither is there any mention of a priesthood in the writings of the church fathers of the first two centuries.

The two major offices mentioned in the New Testament for the oversight of the church are that of elders (pastors) and deacons. An overseer or elder is designated as one who is called of God to teach and rule, and a deacon to minister in a practical serving capacity.

There are two terms used for overseer in the New Testament – *presbuteros* and *episcopos* – which are translated elder and bishop respectively, but are used interchangeably. Paul and Peter both use the terms 'elder' and 'bishop' to describe the same office. Therefore, in the New Testament, 'bishop' and 'elder' are interchangeable terms used for the same office (responsible for ruling and teaching). The word *presbuteros* describes the position, while *episcopos* describes the function, as one who rules or oversees.

It is clear from the New Testament that there is a concept of ordination for Christian ministers – the public recognition and setting aside of an individual specifically called by God to assume the role of a pastor or elder. Laying hands on men during ordination is a token of the public recognition by the church of the gift sovereignly given by God.

The idea that laying hands during ordination warrants the infallibility of the priests is totally absent in the Bible. It is nothing but

an erroneous myth. If the Roman Catholic doctrine that priests are infallible through the church's ordination and succession is true, then all the priests must be living perfectly holy lives. But this is far from the truth.

The claims of apostolic succession are made in order to seduce people into believing the priests' authenticity and authority. But what apostolic succession is there when the apostles' teachings are twisted or ignored? It is not the claim of succession that makes a church authentic, but its conformity to all the Apostolic teachings.

The foundational principle of the sacerdotal system which makes the clergy a distinct class is the concept of succession. They are separated from their fellow Christians by infallible and supernatural gifts conveyed through the Sacrament of Orders. According to this theory, John Calvin, or Luther, or Spurgeon cannot be true ministers of Christ, because a bishop's hand was never laid upon their heads. If the priests are infallible by virtue of their ordination and succession, what would one think of the paedophile priests of whom we have heard recently? If they are infallible and sound ministers of Christ in the exercise of their priestly duties, why do such things happen? God forbid!

All believers are priests in God's kingdom

There is no exclusive priesthood, for the New Testament teaches that all Christians have been set apart as a spiritual priesthood in the kingdom of God.

Peter says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

The Apostle John tells us that all believers are washed by the blood of Christ and made kings and priests in His kingdom. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

Believers are those who are consecrated to and habitually engaged in divine service. Christ would not have instituted a special class of individuals to a new priesthood because that function of mediation had been abrogated since He Himself had made a perfect sacrifice for sin, becoming the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

The idea of a New Testament human mediating priesthood is not biblical. It undermines the biblical teaching of the exclusive nature of the person of Christ as priest and mediator between God and man. 🐦



Luther's message had as its centre the all-sufficient, all-final, all-atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross:

"Stand back, let Him be seen today alone, mighty to save to the uttermost all who come. Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Look unto Him, sinner, and be saved. Contemplate Him, holy brethren, and grow like Him. Not church, nor priest, nor ritual; not Bible, nor baptism, nor supper; nothing but Christ, the loving, almighty Son of God - Thou art the Saviour of the sinner, the sanctifier of the saint, the satisfaction of the saved forever!"



A FATHER'S PARTING WORDS TO HIS CHILDREN

John Rogers was a minister of the Gospel in London and was the first martyr in Queen Mary's reign. He was burnt at Smithfield on February 4, 1554.

It has been said of Rogers that he had done more for the cause of Protestantism in England than any of his fellow-sufferers. He had assisted Tyndale and Coverdale in bringing out an important version of the English Bible, commonly known as Matthew's Bible.



So he was condemned as "Rogers, alias Matthew". His involvement in the publishing of the Bible made him a marked man, and finally it brought him to the stake.

When Rogers was put on trial, he silenced and abashed his examiners even more than most of the martyrs did. He was a bold, thorough Protestant, who had fully made up his mind on all points of the Romish controversy.



But all his arguments, of course, went for nothing. If he had the Word, his enemies had the sword.

On the morning of his martyrdom, he was roused hastily in his cell in Newgate, and hardly given time to dress himself. The Sheriff showed Rogers a document promising pardon if he would recant.



"That which I have preached with my lips will I seal with my blood". was the answer. Soon he was led forth to Smithfield on foot, within sight of the Church of St Sepulchre, where he had preached. He was led through the streets of the parish where he had done the work of a pastor:

He walked calmly to the stake, repeating the 51st Psalm. A large crowd had gathered and filled every available spot in Smithfield. Up to that day, men could not tell how English Reformers would behave in the face of death, and could hardly believe that prebendaries and dignitaries would actually give their bodies to be burned for their religion.



But when they saw John Rogers, the first martyr of England, walking steadily and unflinchingly into a fiery grave, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. They rent the air with thunders of applause. Noailles, the French Ambassador, wrote home a description of the scene, in which he noted that Rogers went to his death "as if he was walking to his wedding". By God's great mercy, he died with comparative ease.

In the crowd that followed Rogers to the stake was his wife with nine small children, and one at her breast. Though he was not given time to stop and talk to his dear ones, he saw them. He was not in the least daunted by the saddened faces of his family; and he went courageously to his death for Christ and His truth.



John Rogers, that great servant of the LORD, was also a loving family man. A few days before his martyrdom, he wrote a poem for his children, which we publish below.

GIVE ear my children to my words
Whom God hath dearly bought,
Lay up his laws within your heart,
and print them in your thoughts.

I leave you here a little book
for you to look upon,
That you may see your father's face
when he is dead and gone:

Who for the hope of heavenly things,
While he did here remain,
Gave over all his golden years
to prison and to pain.

Where I, among my iron bands,
enclosed in the dark,
Not many days before my death,
I did compose this work:

And for example for your youth,
to whom I wish all good,
I send you here God's perfect truth,
and seal it with my blood.

To you my heirs of earthly things:
which I do leave behind,
That you may read and understand
and keep it in your mind.

That as you have been heirs of that
that once shall wear away,
You also may possess that part,
which never shall decay.

Keep always God before your eyes,
with all your whole intent,
Commit no sin in any wise,
keep his commandment.

Abhor that arrant whore ROME,
and all her blasphemies,
And drink not of her cursed cup,
obey not her degrees.

Give honour to your mother dear,
remember well her pain,

And recompense her in her age,
with the like love again.

Be always ready for her help,
and let her not decay,
Remember well your father all,
who would have been your stay.

Give of your portion to the poor,
as riches do arise,
And from the needy naked soul,
turn not away your eyes:

For he that doth not hear the cry
of those that stand in need,
Shall cry himself and not be heard,
when he does hope to speed.

If GOD hath given you increase,
and blessed well your store,
Remember you are put in truth,
and should relieve the poor.

Beware of foul and filthy lust,
let such things have no place,
Keep clean your vessels in the LORD,
that he may you embrace.

Ye are the temples of the LORD,
for you are dearly bought,
And they that do defile the same,
shall surely come to nought.

Be never proud by any means,
build not your house too high,
But always have before your eyes,
that you are born to die.

Defraud not him that hired is,
your labour to sustain,
But pay him still without delay,
his wages for his pain.

And as ye would that other men
against you should proceed,
Do you the same to them again,
when they do stand in need.

Impart your portion to the poor,
in money and in meat.
And send the feeble fainting soul,
of that which you do eat.

Ask counsel always of the wise,
give ear unto the end,
And ne'er refuse the sweet rebuke,
of him that is your friend.

Be always thankful to the LORD,
with prayer and with praise,
Begging of him to bless your work,
and to direct your ways.

Seek first, I say, the living GOD,
and always him adore,
And then be sure that he will bless,
your basket and your store.

And I beseech Almighty GOD,
replenish you with grace,
That I may meet you in the heavens,
and see you face to face.

And though the fire my body burns,
contrary to my kind,
That I cannot enjoy your love
according to my mind:

Yet I do hope that when the heavens
shall vanish like a scroll,
I shall see you in perfect shape,
in body and in soul.

And that I may enjoy your love,
and you enjoy the land,
I do beseech the living LORD,
to hold you in his hand.

Though here my body be adjudg'd
in flaming fire to fry,
My soul I trust, will straight ascend
to live with GOD on high.

What though this carcass smart awhile
what though this life decay,
My soul I hope will be with GOD,
and live with him for aye [forever].

I know I am a sinner born,
from the original,
And that I do deserve to die
by my fore-father's fall:

But by my SAVIOUR'S precious blood,
which on the cross was spilt,
Who freely offer'd up his life,
to save our souls from guilt:

I hope redemption I shall have,
and all who in him trust,
When I shall see him face to face,
and live among the just.

Why then should I fear death's grim look
since CHRIST for me did die,
For King and Caesar, rich and poor,
the force of death must try.

When I am chained to the stake,
and fagots girt me round,
Then pray the LORD my soul in heaven
may be with glory crown'd.

Come welcome death the end of fears,
I am prepared to die:
Those earthly flames will send my soul
up to the LORD on high.

Farewell my children to the world,
where you must yet remain;
The LORD of host be your defence,
'till we do meet again.

Farewell my true and loving wife,
my children and my friends,
I hope in heaven to see you all,
when all things have their end.

If you go on to serve the LORD,
as you have now begun,
You shall walk safely all your days,
until your life be done.

GOD grant you so to end your days,
as He shall think best,
That I may meet you in the heavens,
where I do hope to rest.

BIBLE TRIVIA - GENESIS 23

Sarah Yong

READ THE PASSAGE FROM YOUR BIBLE, THEN FILL IN EACH BLANK WITH A SUITABLE WORD FROM THE BOX BELOW.

Abraham	Canaan	Heth	127
Hittite	Kirjatharba	Machpelah	400

Sarah was _____ years old when she died in _____, also called Hebron. Abraham spoke to the sons of _____, seeking a land to bury his wife. They responded by calling _____ 'a mighty prince', and told him to choose any place. He entreated Ephron the _____ for his land, which was worth _____ shekels of silver. Abraham purchased the field and the cave of _____. So Sarah was buried in the land of _____.

Hidden Message

USE THE CODE GIVEN BELOW TO REVEAL THE HIDDEN MESSAGE.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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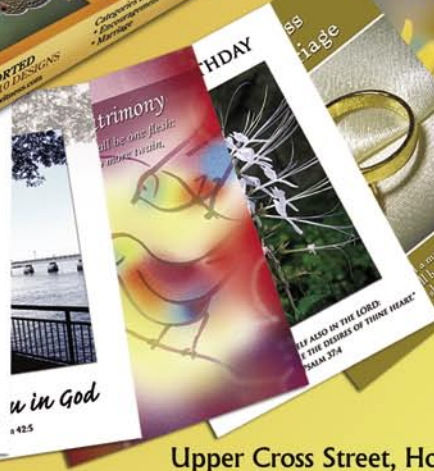
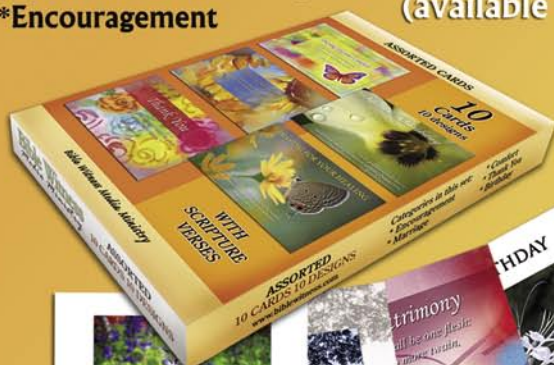
Answer to Vol. 6, Issue 4 - Bible Trivia - Genesis 22.
Pg. 20 - In this order: 11, 8, 2, 5, 1, 6, 3, 7, 9, 4, 10, 12

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