



# The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

*Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word*

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The Ryburn Christian Clarion, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552, U. S. A.; (937) 275-3316; (general) [theclarion@godslivingroom.com](mailto:theclarion@godslivingroom.com); (submissions) [kejamison.rd@gmail.com](mailto:kejamison.rd@gmail.com); [www.godslivingroom.com](http://www.godslivingroom.com)

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [ ].

## “HE WHO SEES THE SPARROW FALL”

**W**HETHER YOU THINK OF HIM as Jehovah, El Shaddai, Elohim, the Most High God, or the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, one thing is certain: the God of the Bible is widely depicted in scripture as being all-powerful and exceeding all others in might and ability, as well as the extent of His dominion. Indeed, across the pages of Holy Writ, these Divine attributes and characteristics are lavishly displayed, while the faithful of God are repeatedly called to remember them. The Scriptures continually invite us to acknowledge these strengths and virtues by extolling heartfelt expressions of praise to the One True God. To be sure, God alone, the Creator and Restorer and Preserver and Perfecter of life, is all these things, and is worthy of worship, but He is even more than all these. It is the “more” that we want to uncover.

While it is essential for His children to appreciate the awe and glory of the Almighty, this should never blind us to His “softer” side, to those characteristics that spur His involvement in the lives of men. Examining His Word, we find His righteous judgments tempered by mercy, while His holiness is mitigated by His grace and lovingkindness. It is

*continued on next page...*

### INSIDE AT A GLANCE

*WITH THIS EDITION*, we move thankfully into our eighth year of publishing the Clarion. It has been our aim, from our very first issue, to provide accurate Biblical teaching shared in love. We pledge to continue to do so.

“**HE WHO SEES THE SPARROW FALL**” is an expression that conveys the Father’s tender care and love for all His creatures. How much greater shall His lovingkindness and grace be toward His children who walk in truth?

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1*

“**GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD**”: The ability to evaluate and the freedom of will to decide are God-given faculties that aid us only when used. To move beyond our current circumstances, we must “**Decide, Act, And Thrive**”.

*by Pat Lubomski.....3*

“**FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT**”, in this issue, is concerned with the believer’s call to study God’s Word. Of course, we need not go it alone, for the Heavenly Father is quite willing to be “**Our Study Partner**”.

*by Keith J. Daniels.....5*

“**FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**”, often concerned with some detailed study of the Bible, this time merely seeks to remind the saints that we may feel “**At Home With God**”. Surely, He is the believer’s *natural* environment.

*by Keith Jamison, Columnist.....6*

“**GOD AND COUNTRY**”: Branded as heretics by The Church, John Wycliffe and the Lollards risked all for God and His Word. Known today as “**The Morning Star Of The Reformation**”, Wycliffe’s efforts still cast their benevolent effect.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....7*

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true that throughout the Bible, we see qualities of God that tend to leave Him removed from the affairs of men balanced by those that bring Him into close involvement with human beings. These seemingly opposing aspects of His nature present to us a fuller, multi-dimensional view of God. One category tends toward reverential worship, while the other calls us into intimate fellowship with our Father, as children tenderly cared for and loved.

#### **Psalms 8:3 and 4**

*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

When you think about it, the very idea of the Lord God having concourse with fallible and frail mortals is astounding. Even David, in the eighth psalm, expressed similar amazement when he asked, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him...?” When compared to the wonders of the vast universe God has created, why does He even bother to notice His human creatures, let alone seek fellowship with them? Yet, *He does*.

#### **Psalms 103:3 and 4**

*Who [God] forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*

Ever since the fall of Adam, this holy and righteous God has associated with believing men and women, in that, He condescends to humanity in order to forge relationships with His seeking people, and further His purposes. In so doing, throughout history, and even today, He has offered to all redemption, forgiveness, healing, tender mercies, lovingkindness, and a further array of beneficence. In short, God has conspicuously exhibited His love from the beginning.

#### **John 3:16**

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Of course, we now find ourselves at the heart of the matter, recalling God’s ultimate expression of love for mankind. Despite the depths of evil that men have embraced, and their ever-present rebellious nature, God has given His very best to rescue those

who will accept it. His care for His children should no longer be questioned. (I Pet. 5:7)

#### **Matthew 10:29 and 31**

*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

*Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

#### **Luke 12:6 and 7b**

*Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten [epilanthanomai, in Greek] before God?*

*...Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

Whether a person, during the Gospel Period, purchased two sparrows for one farthing or five sparrows for two farthings (apparently to save money), the point Jesus was making is that the believer is “...of more value than many sparrows.” This exact expression is stated twice in God’s Word, once in Matthew and once in Luke, and is done so for emphasis. The question then is, “If the saint is of more value than many sparrows, how valuable were the sparrows?”

The English “farthing,” spoken of in the King James Version (KJV), was only worth about one-tenth of a Roman penny, so in monetary terms, the sparrows cost very little. The true value of the birds is the one placed upon them by the Father, for “...not one of them is forgotten before God...” (Luke 12:6) Now, just what does that mean?

*Epilanthanomai*, the Greek word rendered as “forgotten,” is used only eight times in the New Testament. It generally means, to fail to remember. In Matthew 16:5 and Mark 8:14, we have differing events except for one thing: in both records, Christ’s disciples “...had forgotten [*epilanthanomai*] to take bread...” with them. They had simply failed to remember something. If, as Luke 12:6 says, not a single sparrow is forgotten before God, if He will NOT fail to remember even one of them that falls to the ground, how much more will He keep in remembrance His children who are “...of more value than many sparrows...”?

#### **Hebrews 6:10**

*For God is not unrighteous to forget [“to fail to remember,” epilanthanomai] your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

How much will God remember about you, now and at the judgment seat of Christ? (Rom. 14:10) Have you taught the Word of God with authority, or made time to help a friend? Maybe you've lent financial support to saints in need, or contributed food when the people of God have gotten together to break bread. Perhaps you've shown patience and the love of Christ toward those who've wronged you, or simply prayed unseen for the benefit of another. If the life or death of a small bird does not occur without God's loving awareness, what will He not fail to remember about you? What in your life will He NOT fail to care about?

*Ev'ry moment of the day, my Father cares for me,  
Ev'ry moment of the day, my heart from fear is free.  
He Who sees the sparrow fall*

*Will hear my call,  
Ev'ry moment of the day God watches over me.*

The simple words of the preceding hymn, *Ev'ry Moment Of The Day*, aptly declare the Father's loving, watchful care for His children. The same God Who calls every star in the heavens by its own name has numbered the very hairs of your head. There is not a single aspect of your life that escapes His notice. He Who is aware whenever a solitary sparrow falls to the ground, Who is the searcher of hearts (Rom. 8:27), is also aware of your smallest need, and desires to remedy it, for you are "...of more value than many sparrows."

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

## **GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:**

*A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life*

*(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)*

### **“Decide, Act, And Thrive”**

*by Pat Lubomski*

**H**AVE YOU EVER GIVEN any thought to the consequences of decisions you have made, especially in the spiritual part of life? As believers, we have the opportunity and responsibility to decide what we do, where we go, and how we minister the things of God. We choose to participate or to “spectate”; one is to act, the other is to be acted upon. We can be involved, actively pursuing what it is God has called us to do, or we can simply take what the world sends our way. When we embrace God, He can direct our steps. We decide.

I have a friend who is always waiting for God to work in his heart concerning what it is he needs to do with his life. This really boils down to the fact that he is always waiting. The ability to make decisions is that element within us that gives us control over our lives. We have the freedom of will to make decisions, even whether to live or die. When we hold up our end of the contract, of the covenant God has made with us, by acting on His Word, we will partake of the promises God has made to us. If we want to see change in our lives, we need to make decisions, and act on them. We choose!

Many homes in the United States that go into foreclosure do so simply because their owners did

NOTHING when they had the opportunity to make change happen. It could be that the situation seemed overwhelming, but to do nothing *also* brings results. Now, consider the lepers from II Kings 7.

#### **II Kings 7:3 and 4**

*And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?*

*If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.*

In reading the rest of the record in II Kings 7, we will see that the lepers lived. They had choices, and chose, perhaps, the most dangerous course, but they decided they had to face the enemy. Of course, God had worked things out, and they not only survived, they thrived. Doing God's will may seem scary at times, but a decision is required in order to move ahead. Do we sit, or do we DO?

What would God have us do in life's varied situations? He wants us to survive, and thrive, and

helps us do just that. Almighty God Himself set the pattern of being involved and taking action. In the beginning, after He created the heavens and the Earth, the Scriptures declare, according to the Hebrew texts, that, "...the earth became [*hayah*] without form, and void...." (Gen. 1:2a) It fell into ruin. What if, at that point, God just quit and gave up?

### **Genesis 1:2 and 3a**

*And the earth was [hayah, in Hebrew, which means, "became"] without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved [or "brooded"] upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light:...*

The fall of Lucifer was destructive, however, our God, out of love, decided to DO. He did not accept this outcome, but "brooded" like a hen over the situation, and hatched the action that started in verse 3. We, too, can decide; we can act, as well, for The Word says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13)

It is the introduction of light that dispels darkness. If we find ourselves in darkness, we must let in the light. We can do this through prayer, studying the Scriptures, sharing God's Word with others, and in fellowshiping with believing people. Darkness cannot survive when we let God's light shine in, and by, our lives. When we decide and when we choose to act, things happen. We can make up our minds to think the thoughts of The Word and succeed, or the words of the world and suffer defeat. A decision and action are required. Nothing gets accomplished unless we decide and DO.

### **Romans 12:1 and 2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*And be not conformed to ["fashioned according to"] this world: but be ye transformed [or "transfigured" or "changed"] by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Let's embrace God by taking action, by learning His Word. As we do, we shall be changed. We will be new men and women who are not "conformed," but "transformed." When we decide to take action based upon the Word of God, the results can be monumental.

### **Romans 10:9 and 10**

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [or "Jesus as Lord"], and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

The hearing, confessing, and believing of The Word all include *deciding* and *doing*. The results can be powerful. If you don't like the way things are, make the decision to change, then take appropriate action. If you want to cast out the fear in your life, make a decision to do so; if you want health or wealth, make a decision. Deciding and doing are fundamental elements in receiving anything from God.

Reflect for a moment upon all the men and women recorded in the Bible, who involved themselves in the spiritual realities of life. They accomplished great things, and without their decisions and efforts for God, our lives today would be greatly altered. Where would we be if Abraham or David had quit, or even the Lord Jesus Himself?

We can decide and take action, or be acted upon; we can embrace God and His Word, or the world's words. Don't just sit on the sidelines, where you see it all going by. Be pre-emptive. Decide, take action, and thrive. \*

*(Mr. Pat Lubomski has been a student of God's Word for many years. He, along with his wife, Laurie, and son, Jason, presently sponsors **Christianity 101**, a cross-denominational group. Active in their community, the Lubomskis focus largely on veterans' causes. Pat and Laurie also host a home Bible fellowship in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Please feel free to contact Pat by e-mail at [patandlaurie82@sbcglobal.net](mailto:patandlaurie82@sbcglobal.net).)*

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## *The Ryburn Christian Clarion: Biblical Studies Resource*

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# FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

## Essay

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this “grab-bag,” you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, compositions, letters, music reviews, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God’s people.)

### “Our Study Partner”

by Keith J. Daniels

**I**T SEEMS THE LONGER I HAVE been in the ministry, the wiser I have to be in order to walk circumspectly. (Eph. 5:15) It is too easy to become conformed to the comments and attitudes of others. We should never get to the point where smugness, arrogance, or the accumulation of knowledge take us away from real fellowship with our Father. When we come to God’s Word, we need to come in meekness, and with “coach-ability,” (James 1:21) and not with our preconceived ideas. We should let it speak to us. We should never come to The Word with the attitude that our study habits, our mental abilities, and/or our methodology are an end in themselves. After all, do we not have the spirit of the Lord in us?

#### **John 14:26**

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [pneuma hagion, in Greek],...shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

When we come to the Scriptures, we have to realize that God’s words “...are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63b) In order to understand spiritual matters, we must utilize God’s gift (I Cor. 2:14 and 15a), the anointing of holy spirit (*pneuma hagion*) that each of us received when we became born again. (Acts 2:38b) Each time we come to the Word of God, our attitude should be, “Father, teach me; open my eyes, and show me Your truth.” Our intellectual abilities, many times, lead us astray, for various reasons. The truth is that God will never contradict His Word, however, He surely may contradict our understanding of it.

In John 14:26, the word “teach” is from the Greek word *didasko*, meaning, “to teach or instruct to the point of understanding.” Here, Jesus Christ was instructing His disciples that the gift of holy spirit would teach them, and bring back His words to their remembrance. This often happens to me when I am studying The Word. God will bring back to my mind

other scriptures that fit with what I’m studying, to help me understand more clearly.

#### **I John 2:27**

*But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

In this administration, this era, God gave holy spirit to guide every believer, and He is no respecter of persons. (Eph. 6:9b) This does not mean that God does not place teaching leadership in The Church as He sees fit. (Eph. 4:11 and 12) Neither does it mean that we are to forsake the assembling together of the saints. (Heb. 10:25) Every believer, however, has the spirit of Christ in them (Col. 1:27), and has been called to specific functions in the Body of Christ, with specific “longsuits.” Moreover, each one of us has been called individually and jointly, to do particular works, and to receive eternal glory after the Gathering Together, where we all meet the Lord in the air. (I Thes. 4:13-18)

In I John 2:27, forms of the word “teach” are used three times. They, too, are from the Greek word *didasko*: to instruct to the point of understanding. When we study God’s Word, we are not simply completing a religious mental exercise. Instead, we must also allow the spirit of God to teach us. We seek more than an intellectual understanding. Since our minds are finite, we know only in part, and from a limited perspective. Our minds need help in seeing things from a higher level; they cannot truly understand spirituality on their own. Men from many centuries ago could only theorize that the Earth was round, but once man was able to leave the confines of this planet and reach a higher perspective, he was able to see that the Earth is truly round. Likewise, there is more to learn from God’s higher perspective.

#### **Luke 10:27**

*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

True worship involves complete communion with our Father, in every facet of our lives, including the study of His Word. Spiritually, we have more today than Adam ever had before the fall. We should, therefore, never allow anything to supersede our relationship with our Heavenly Father, for that would be idolatry. No person, religious practice, or

scientific methodology should ever come between us and our God.\*

*(Mr. Keith J. Daniels is a teacher and the author of two books: **Worshipping The One True God** (2007), and **As For Me And My House, We Will Serve The Lord** (2008). Keith is also a student with **Akribos Theological Seminary**. In addition, he hosts a multi-page Christian website called **The Household Bazaar**, located at [www.childofgod.biz](http://www.childofgod.biz). He and his wife, Diana, and twelve-year-old triplets, William, Stuart, and Elena, live in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. Contact Keith by e-mail at [kedtec@aol.com](mailto:kedtec@aol.com).)*

## **FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**

*(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)*

### **“At Home With God”**

**H**OW CLOSE ARE YOU to Almighty God? How comfortable are you in your walk with Him? God wants to have an intimate relationship with you, and desires that you learn to trust Him in everything. He is your Father, and wants to become someone you can come to in times of need, or times of joy. Shall we consider our relationship with Him, and try to grasp the possibilities?

God is love (I John 4:8), and is “...plenteous in mercy.” (Ps. 103:8b) Even though this is true, the magnitude of Almighty God may overwhelm some. He is so big that words often fail us. I used to have a bumper sticker that read, “Never underestimate the power of God.” This statement is a joke, because, when it comes to God, man can do little else. We are wholly incapable of imagining everything God is, and what He is willing and able to do for us. Because of this, we sometimes feel like He is unapproachable. This, however, is not true.

Often, when we are visiting someone, they say, “Make yourself at home.” This is an invitation to be comfortable. They don't leave you in the entryway, but bring you into the living room. This room is the heart of every home; it is literally the room we “live” in. We may seek privacy and sleep in our bedrooms, take our meals in the kitchen or dining room, but the living room is where we gather to spend time with family and friends. As a guest, this is where we are made welcome and comfortable, and where we are made to feel at home.

**Ephesians 2:19**

*Now therefore ye are no more [or “longer”] strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

God has invited us into His home, to be part of His very “household.” We enter not as guests, but as His children. As children, we have not come in for a visit, but to stay, to stay *forever*. In our fellowship with our Father, we can feel welcome in every room in His house, but in the midst of His love, that is, in the living room, is where He desires us to be. The more closely we walk in fellowship with Him, the more we will dwell in the living room of God's loving household. We will be at home with God.

**Romans 8:15**

*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

God is our Heavenly Father and, as such, seeks a personal and intimate relationship with each of us. The word *abba*, in Romans 8:15, is Aramaic for “father.” More specifically, it is less formal, and, instead, is the most intimate form used within a family. It is more accurately equated to “papa” or “daddy.” (Please see the article “**‘Abba, Father’**”: Winter, 2007; Vol. IV, No. 2.) This conveys the kind of closeness we may experience with God, our Father. God will be as close to us as we allow. The closer we approach Him, the closer He will be to us. (James 4:8a)

Just consider this for a moment: God, Who created the universe and everything in it, is your

Papa. He wants to help you in times of need. He seeks to share in your joys and sorrows. He desires to raise you right, and wants to be proud of you. He wants you to be yourself, an individual who is a good and decent person. God wants all this because He loves you. (John 3:16) This is a “white-hot” and very personal love that you can truly experience the more you walk with Him.

**Galatians 6:10**

*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Besides our relationship with God, there are our relationships with our brethren to consider. With God as our Father, other believers are our spiritual siblings. Within God’s household, we are to be a loving family. (John 13:34 and 35) A loving family accepts differences. It is this acceptance that conveys welcoming comfort. There may be those in your earthly family who hold opinions with which you disagree, or who conduct their lives differently than you, but if you love them, you accept their differences or faults, as they in love accept yours. This, and not simply being blood relations, is what truly makes a family.

God has placed His children in a loving, spiritual family and household, but our relationships with one another are in the physical realm. We see each other, talk to one another, and touch one another, and it’s this interaction with others walking in love that comforts us, and helps us recognize God’s love for us. This comfort allows us to help and support one another, teaching and learning from each other. As we do, God provides a safe harbor, a nurturing, homey environment, in which all may blossom and draw nearer to their Father.

Here, by way of a reminder, we have simply talked about God’s love for you, and the atmosphere of nurturing care to which He calls us all. Maybe the idea of taking your shoes off and being at ease in God’s living room is a new perspective for you, or one you haven’t thought of lately, but each saint has been tenderly invited into the Father’s presence. As God’s kids, may we ever grow closer to our Daddy.\*

*(Mr. Keith Jamison is the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion’s Research Department, as well as the Clarion’s production assistant. Furthermore, he also serves as a columnist, regularly developing material for the “From The Research Department” and “Investigating Creation Science” columns. Feel free to send your comments and article submissions to Keith at [kejamison.rd@gmail.com](mailto:kejamison.rd@gmail.com).)*

Call the Clarion at.....(937) 275-3316.



*(In this column, our editor-in-chief, Rick Heeter, will explore the Judeo-Christian heritage of America and her social and political institutions. Through this running commentary, we will discover where we came from as a people, and how we can preserve our unique, cultural identity and the liberties it fosters.)*

**“ ‘The Morning Star Of The Reformation’ ”**

*by Rick Heeter*

**W**HEN IT COMES TO individuals who’ve impacted the lives of people yet unborn, the name John Wycliffe surely stands out as significant. Although not a household name to most people, Wycliffe’s efforts for God in the face of repudiation by The Church, as well as charges of heresy, still cast their benevolent influences upon modern societies. Not widely appreciated during his lifetime, his endeavors, nevertheless, stand at the vanguard of the

current concepts of individual liberty and self-determination. It is little wonder, therefore, that men living during generations subsequent to his own have tagged him with the sobriquet “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” \*\*

Living in England a century after the signing of the Magna Charta, Wycliffe grew up in a culture that had begun to loosen its restraints upon the individual. Introspection and the questioning of popular norms

slowly fostered an atmosphere of seeking answers, rather than blindly observing traditions long handed down. This was especially true in matters of theology and spirituality, and Wycliffe found himself exposed to such fresh ideas when he attended Oxford in 1345.

As a scholar, Wycliffe's studies eventually led him to believe that much of what The Church taught was contrary to scripture. Repelled by the financial abuses of the clergy and The Church's intrusions into purely civil matters, he soon became disillusioned, declaring that the Scriptures are the sole authority in the practice of Christianity. Eventually, serving as a professor at Oxford, his public oratory and published tracts concerning the clergy's deviations from the Word of God, earned for him both renown and infamy across Europe.

Wycliffe later began to assert that in civil matters, only temporal authorities have jurisdiction. He further railed against The Church's ban on rendering the Scriptures in any language other than Latin. Ever since 600 A.D., the institutionalized Church had promoted Jerome's Latin Vulgate text (382 A.D.) as the only appropriate source for study and scripture readings, imposing the death penalty on those who published, distributed, or owned copies of God's Word in any other tongue. Wycliffe, on the other hand, believed that the Word of God should be accessible to all, and in their own native languages.

In February, 1377, therefore, he was summoned to an audience with the Bishop of London, William Courtenay, where he gave an accounting of his positions. The meeting was inconclusive, however, Wycliffe went on to believe that the Church of God is entirely a spiritual organism, and not an earthly, hierarchical institution. Additionally, he espoused the idea that only Christ is its head, and not any man upon Earth. This earned him the ire and disdain of Church leadership, while others were drawn to his causes.

In the latter part of his life, Wycliffe gathered about him adherents to his scriptural positions who came to be known as the Lollards. There are five or six popular conjectures concerning the origin of this name, but none of them have been definitively proved. Suffice it to say that their support made his labors for God easier, as he embarked on the task of translating the Latin scriptures into English. At the risk of his own life, due to the prohibition against rendering the Latin text into other languages, he managed to complete his work in 1382.

Wycliffe, with his assistant, John Purvey, the Lollards, and a number of faithful scribes, set about producing dozens of copies of the Bible in English, which became available in 1384, the last year of his life. Still some seventy years before the invention of Gutenberg's printing press and moveable type, Wycliffe's copies of God's Word were all completely hand-written, a truly monumental undertaking.

On December 28, 1384, while attending church services in his local parish, John Wycliffe succumbed to an attack of apoplexy, and died on New Year's Eve. His vision and personal exertions on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nevertheless, inspired the growing Hussite movement that invigorated many in central Europe who opposed the tyrannical practices of the errant Church. In addition to that, John Purvey continued the work of his mentor by producing upgraded versions of the English translation in 1388 and, again, in 1395.

Although his efforts were harshly criticized and rigorously opposed by the leadership of the medieval Church, Wycliffe had ignited a spark that would sputter for a bit, but would not go out. Men like John of Gaunt and John Hus would draw inspiration and courage from his defiant stand for God and His true Word, resulting in a spiritual and social upheaval that would change the way men thought of themselves in relation to the Almighty. Changes that appeared inadvertent to men, but not to God, thus began to usher in our modern age, and the personal liberties that accompany it.\*

*(Look for "GOD And Country" in every other issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion. Join us as Rick Heeter, the Clarion's editor-in-chief, examines the Biblical foundations of America.)*

*(Mr. Rick Heeter is the editor-in-chief of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, serving also as a columnist, and the book and music reviewer. Please e-mail your comments and inquiries to him at [theclarion@godslivingroom.com](mailto:theclarion@godslivingroom.com).)*

*\*Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression. Furthermore, no article or column herein should be construed to be a comprehensive study of the subject under consideration.*

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