

CONTENDING
FOR THE

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THE STORY OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

Joel R. Beeke and William Boekestein



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Contending for the Faith

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Scripture taken from the King James Version. In the public domain.

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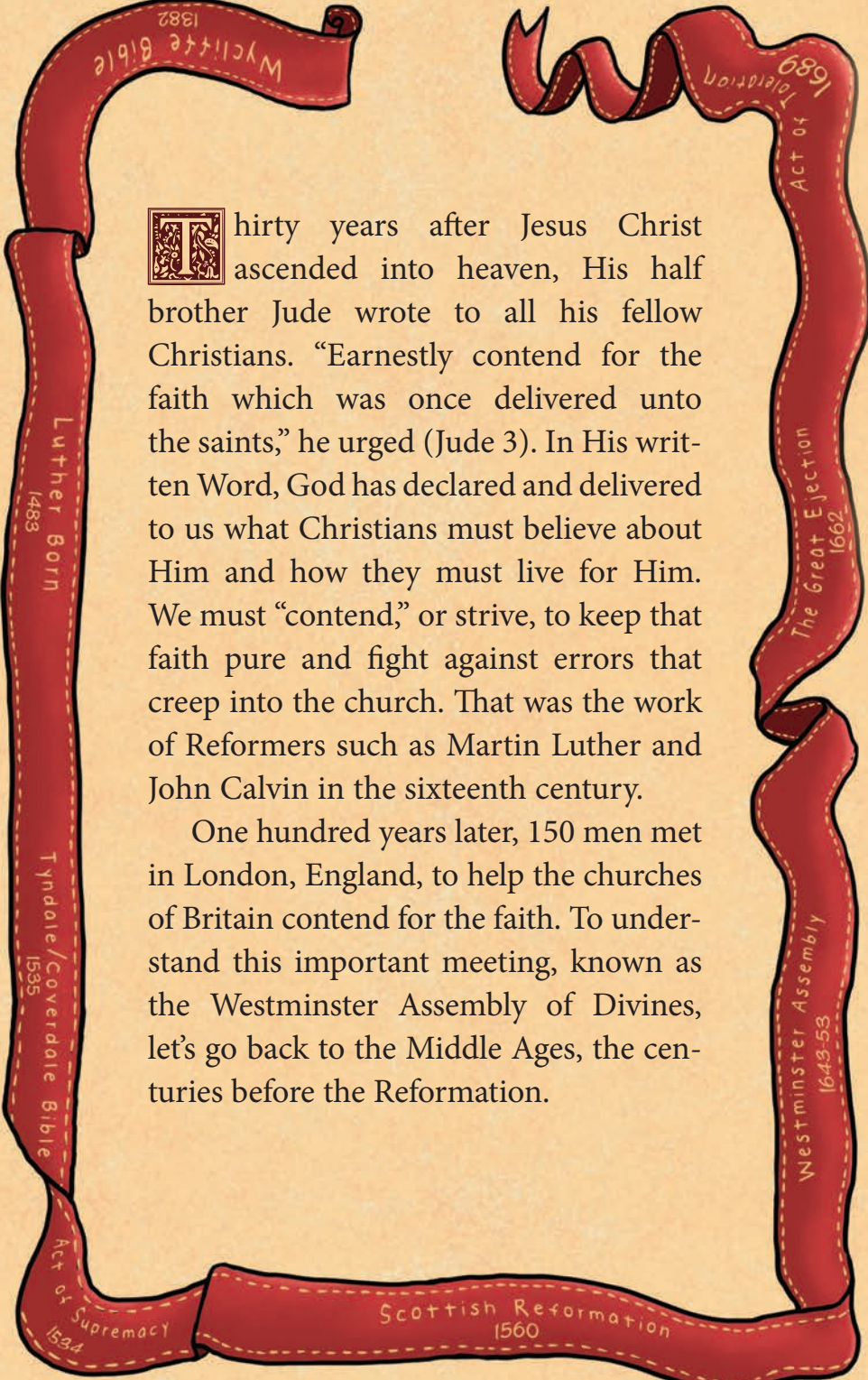
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Thirty years after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, His half brother Jude wrote to all his fellow Christians. “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” he urged (Jude 3). In His written Word, God has declared and delivered to us what Christians must believe about Him and how they must live for Him. We must “contend,” or strive, to keep that faith pure and fight against errors that creep into the church. That was the work of Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin in the sixteenth century.

One hundred years later, 150 men met in London, England, to help the churches of Britain contend for the faith. To understand this important meeting, known as the Westminster Assembly of Divines, let’s go back to the Middle Ages, the centuries before the Reformation.

Wycliffe Bible
1382

Luther Born
1483


Tyndale/Coverdale Bible
1535

Act of Supremacy
1534

Scottish Reformation
1560

The Great Ejection
1662

Act of Toleration
1689

wo hundred years before the Reformation, John Wycliffe worked hard to make it possible for English Christians to read God's Word in their own language. Toward that end, he published the first English translation of the Holy Scriptures, which he and his helpers translated from the Latin Bible.

By the time the ideas of the Reformation came to England, Wycliffe's Bible had given place to other translations. In 1525 William Tyndale published an English translation of the Greek New Testament. Though Tyndale was put to death for his faith, Myles Coverdale published a complete English Bible in 1535, using much of Tyndale's work. Englishmen could read the Bible in their own language and began to question the teachings and worship of the Roman Catholic Church, which everyone belonged to in those days.



and the lyght shyneth in
the darckness but the
darckness
comprehended it not.

There was a man
sent from God
whose name was
Iohn.