HEROES OF REFORMATION
(JOHN WYCLIFFE)

WYCLIFFE’S EDUCATION: Wycliffe received a liberal education, and with him the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. He was noted at college for his fervent piety as well as for his remarkable talents and sound scholarship. In his thirst for knowledge he sought to become acquainted with every branch of learning. He was educated in the scholastic philosophy, in the canons of the church, and in the civil law, especially that of his own country. In his after-labors the value of this early training was apparent. A thorough acquaintance with the speculative philosophy of his time enabled him to expose its errors; and by his study of national and ecclesiastical law he was prepared to engage in the great struggle for civil and religious liberty. While he could wield the weapons drawn from the Word of God, he had acquired the intellectual discipline of the schools, and he understood the tactics of the schoolmen. The power of his genius and the extent and thoroughness of his knowledge commanded the respect of both friends and foes. His adherents saw with satisfaction that their champion stood foremost among the leading minds of the nation; and his enemies were prevented from casting contempt upon the cause of reform by exposing the ignorance or weakness of its supporter.

THE BIBLE PREPARED WYCLIFFE FOR THE REFORMATION: While Wycliffe was still at college, he entered upon the study of the Scriptures. In those early times, when the Bible existed only in the ancient languages, scholars were enabled to find their way to the fountain of truth, which was closed to the uneducated classes. Thus already the way had been prepared for Wycliffe’s future work as a reformer. Men of learning had studied the Word of God, and had found the great truth of his free grace there revealed. In their teachings they had spread a knowledge of this truth, and had led others to turn to the Living Oracles.

When Wycliffe's attention was directed to the Scriptures, he entered upon their investigation with the same thoroughness which had enabled him to master the learning of the schools. Heretofore he had felt a great want, which neither his scholastic studies nor the teaching of the church could satisfy. In the Word of God he found that which he had before sought in vain. Here he saw the plan of salvation revealed, and Christ set forth as the only advocate for man. He gave himself to the service of Christ, and determined to proclaim the truths he had discovered. The Great Controversy, 1888, p. 80.