



HAMMER OF THE HUGUENOTS

HEROES &
HISTORY

SERIES

DOUGLAS BOND

AUTHOR OF THE CROWN & COVENANT SERIES

In this precious book, authenticity oozes on every page, with a clever use of French colloquial expressions, thanks to Douglas's great literary abilities. In *Hammer of the Huguenots*, readers will discover and learn more about the tragedy that divided French people a few centuries ago. Thank you, Douglas, for your wonderful work!

—**Gérard Mignard**, former professor, University of Paris

Hammer of the Huguenots demonstrates the great advantage of a historical novel. Bond captures all of the emotions, fears, and struggles in such detail that the reader is gripped with the true reality of the brave suffering and the faithful affection for Christ of the 16th-century Reformed Protestants in France.

—**Tom Ertl**, president, the Pierre Viret Association

A gripping story about life in 16th-century France. Bond's skillful blend of fact and fiction draws the reader into the religious wars of that era, and at the same time exposes the theological and ethical issues faced by the Huguenots in their response to the brutality of those who were determined to destroy all who were committed to the Reformed faith. This book provides insight into a little-known but important time in the history of the church.

—**J. Robert Vannoy**, emeritus professor and Allan A. MacRae Chair of Biblical Studies, Biblical Theological Seminary

The story is both well written and informative on several levels. In addition to the well-seasoned references to historical characters, whom Bond sets rightfully in their historical roles, the obviously well-researched story includes enlightening observations of 16th-century French life, from the social and gastronomical customs right down to the chirping of the cicadas in the southern French countryside. But it's the political and religious intrigue that

retains the reader's attention, as we learn about the effective preaching of the likes of Calvin's contemporary Viret and the opportunistic political maneuverings of the wily Catherine de Medici.

Pitted against this murderous zeal is the longsuffering Huguenot faction headed by the Prince de Condé and Admiral Coligny. The relentless persecution and heroic resistance of the Huguenots is reflected in the novel's title, taken from a Huguenot saying: "*Tant plus à me frapper on s'amuse, tant plus de marteaux on y use*" ("The more one strikes me, the more hammers he wears out").

Bond's narrative contains all these historical elements *en filigrane*, woven, as it were, through the lives of several characters who live the events. Bond's story captures one's attention and makes the reader eager to know more about the historical characters in question and their tragic circumstances.

—**Marc Mailloux**, missionary to the French-speaking world, author of *Does God Still Love the French?*

**HAMMER OF
THE HUGUENOTS**

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HAMMER OF
THE HUGUENOTS

DOUGLAS BOND



P U B L I S H I N G

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For
Gillian, Giles, and Desmond;
Cedric and Ashley;
Rhodric, Tori, Gwenna, and Amelia;
Brittany and Jesse

With gratitude to
Lionel, Monica, Dania, and Rubin Jauvert

Dedicated to persecuted Christians
throughout the world today

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”

1 Peter 4:12–13

“Truth under attack is strengthened.”

Pierre Viret

“Sire, it is the peculiarity of the Church of God to endure blows, not to inflict them; but yet you will be pleased to remember, that it is an anvil on which many a hammer has been broken.”

Theodore Beza to the King of Navarre, 1562

“The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation.”

C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*



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DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Shuffling his feet on the polished flagstones of the kitchen floor, Philippe studied the boy and girl sitting across the table from him. Why did Sophie and Maurice always have to do this? His stomach felt like a kettledrum on which a drummer was rumbling out the signal to advance into battle. To his ears it sounded like the groaning of the door of a dungeon turning ominously on its hinges.

Philippe knew what was coming. And it didn't matter that an urgent need at the shipyard had called their father away just before the meal, or that the sickness of an elderly neighbor had called their mother from the midday meal. Parents or no parents at the table, he knew what was coming. There would be no stopping them. Heaving a sigh, he ran his calloused fingers through his hair, bowed his head, and clenched his eyes shut. Perhaps this time it would work.

“*Notre Père*,” Maurice’s voice was low and reverent. “*Donne-nous aujourd’hui notre pain*,” he continued, his voice rising and falling with feeling.

Determined to keep his head bowed and his eyes tightly shut—their kind of praying must work better that way—Philippe hoped his friends might hear the hunger growling in his insides and cut short their praying.

His nose only inches from his bowl of soup, the savory aromas of broth and onions and melted cheese tormented his senses. After what seemed like forever, Philippe heard Maurice’s voice winding down, each word becoming more ponderous, like the chiming of a horologe in a cathedral at year-end. And then it was silent.

Philippe peeked, eyeing his friends hopefully. Involuntarily his right hand moved, readying itself to make the sign of the cross; try as he might, it seemed to be ingrained in him like bone structure. He halted. Swallowing hard, he licked his lips. Their faces were lowered as if pondering minutely the contents of their bowls, but neither of them moved. He nearly moaned out loud. They were not finished.

Their praying was one of many things that mystified Philippe. In the convent near Arles where he had his first memories, vague though they were, the sisters had led them in a hastily murmured *Ave Maria* and they ate. No amount of praying would thicken the soup, so keep it short. Such as it was, eat it while it’s hot; that’s what made sense to Philippe.

Tormented by the salivary juices spurting in his mouth and swirling on his tongue, Philippe wondered if death by starvation was possible within such close proximity to perfectly edible food. For an instant he even considered crossing himself. Crossing himself came at the end of praying, so if he crossed himself—again and again, if necessary—and made as much noise doing it as he could manage, maybe the crossings would work, the praying would halt, and he could eat. Just when he thought he could bear it no longer,

on the verge of snatching up the wooden spoon and falling to, Sophie commenced her praying.

The soup looked perfectly good to him—ininitely better than the thin slop the nuns used to ladle up for him to eat. Through narrow slits in his eyelids, he studied a thick crust of bread adrift in the broth; it looked like a small boat hove-to in a sheltered harbor. He leaned closer to his bowl and drew in another deep breath; an elongated growl contorted his stomach, and steam rising from the soup brought the water to his eyes. Afloat in rich broth and the nutty creaminess of the melting cheese, the bread now swollen and sippy with the beefy broth—he felt he might die if Sophie laid on one more adoring phrase.

Yet it was Sophie more than Maurice who seemed to think the meal required more praying over. Maddened as he was by his hunger, Philippe hesitated, his hand poised above his spoon. On further consideration, he re-clasped his hands.

Sophie's voice always had this effect on him. Mostly to his frustration, her voice sparkled with an arresting charm, like the autumn breezes caressing the leaves of the sweet chestnut tree. Or was it more like the merry humming of bees or the clicking anthems of cicadas? Philippe had never been fully able to explain it, but when she spoke it was as if she was on the verge of singing. She alone seemed wholly unaware of the enchanting aura that emanated from within her. This too perplexed him. But at one and the same time it was the most endearing thing about her. She was one of the few people Philippe had ever met who lived as if for no audience—or was it that she lived for an audience of whom he knew nothing? *Je ne sais pas*—he did not know.

Ever a mystery to Philippe, Sophie was completely without affectation. He felt certain that she was the same in her private chamber, when she was alone where no one could observe her, as she was just now. What you saw, what you heard from her lips, was entirely who she was. Compared

to every other girl Philippe had seen—maddening as it was—Sophie was like *fleur de lis* to choke weed.

“*O Seigneur, Délivre-la de tout mal.*” He could detect it in her tone; she was almost finished.

Oui, oui, thought Philippe. Deliver your church from all evil, but if all Huguenots prayed like this there wouldn’t be anything left to deliver; the Huguenots, the chosen ones—without sword or pike—would all hack over dead by starvation.

“*Maranatha, Amen!*” At last she was done. Her brother Maurice joined in the Amen, and so did Philippe—but with a gusto borne more of relief and appetite than of piety.

Philippe crossed himself. At last he could eat.

“*We do not answer to tyrants.*”

Philippe must decide once and for all where his loyalties lie. Will believing the truth of the gospel bring death or liberation?

Full-scale warfare is breaking out as intense religious conflict rages throughout sixteenth-century France. Philippe, a quiet and hard-working shipwright apprentice, is entangled in the trouble whether he likes it or not. Defying the state church’s vicious persecution, Philippe’s closest friends have embraced the gospel proclaimed by church Reformers—whom will Philippe follow?

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“A gripping story about life in sixteenth-century France. Bond’s skillful blend of fact and fiction draws the reader into the religious wars of that era. . . . This book provides insight into a little-known but important time.”
—J. ROBERT VANNOY, Emeritus Professor, Biblical Theological Seminary

“A compelling historical novel. . . . Well written and informative. . . . Bond’s story captures the attention and makes the reader eager to know more about the historical characters in question.”
—MARC MAILLOUX, Author, *Does God Still Love the French?*

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