"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." * * *

"The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. * * * But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 20, 21, 23, 24.)
V.—LECHLER'S WICLIF.

Johann von Wiclif und die Vorgeschichte der Reformation.


The increasing attention that has of late years been paid to Wiclif and his writings is a most hopeful sign of a genuine desire to understand more fully the Reformation movement, and obtain a clearer idea of its real meaning and importance. The Reformation summed up and expressed so many different impulses and so many different aims, that the first object of an inquirer into its history must be to separate its various parts, and consider them, so far as is possible, in their separate spheres, before he can hope to represent them collectively in their full significance. Hence the importance of the special study of the English Reformation, which was a natural consequence of the previous national history, and was determined in its character and extent by political and national, rather than by speculative and universal considerations: hence, though it might be illogical, it was self-developed, and was free from the influences of violent antagonisms and forcible reactions.

If this is true of England generally, as contrasted with the Continent, it is especially true of Wiclif in his relation to the Reformation movement in England itself. He was entirely unaffected by any external influences, by any theories of the Waldenses, or other mystics; he was urged on by no personal motives, or by the pressure of strong political necessities; he was no mere dreamer, but a man profoundly versed in all the learning of his time; "in theology most eminent, in philosophy second to none, in scholastic exercises incomparable:" he was led to his opinions solely by his own mental development, and was maintained in them by the national feeling of England; he spoke simply as he thought, and met with no opposition sufficiently strong to deter him or compel him to throw his opinions into a purely defensive form. Wiclif is pre-eminently the embodiment of strong common sense, great earnestness and integrity of purpose, clear insight and unswerving honesty in the expression of what he held to be true. In this lies the
importance of his life and opinions to the historical and to the theological student who is desirous of discovering the real meaning of the Reformation, and is not merely anxious to find in it a confirmation of his own opinions. To the sectary and to the disputant, Wiclif is still merely a name, or is known only by a few passages of his invective, and is confused with the general mass of those who strove against the Pope and identified him with Antichrist. Recently, however, greater interest has been felt in Wiclif and as a consequence more accurate knowledge has been obtained, and his works have for the first time been made public. Especially have the labours of the late Dr. Shirley contributed to this result: his edition of the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," a polemic against Lollardism, attributed to Thomas Netter, of Walden, contains most valuable criticism on Wiclif and his teaching. Moreover, Dr. Shirley was deeply impressed with the desirability of making the works of Wiclif more widely known; he devoted much valuable labour to a critical examination of the immense mass of manuscripts existing in the public libraries of Europe which were attributed to Wiclif; and, as a result of this examination, he published a Catalogue of Wiclif's writings, which might serve as a basis for further research. He also prevailed on the delegates of the University Press at Oxford to undertake the publication of some of the writings of one of the greatest sons of that University, one who expresses the noblest period of her intellectual supremacy, and shews her in her grandest aspect as a genuine seeker after truth,—one in whose mouth the learning of the Middle Ages still rings with the deepest significance for the ear of modern times. Hence Dr. Lechler edited for the University, from a collation of four Vienna MSS., Wiclif's Trialogus,* the most learned of his works, and the one which gives us the greatest insight into the speculative ideas on which his teaching was founded; and more recently, Mr. Thomas Arnold has edited with conscientious care a selection from Wiclif's more popular and practical writings in English,† consisting of his sermons and a number of his shorter treatises.

The results, therefore, of this fuller knowledge and more accurate investigation, Dr. Lechler puts before us in two bulky volumes, which deal with the subject in a most comprehensive way. He sketches first the early attempts at reformation on the Continent, then the signs of a reforming spirit in England before the times of Wiclif. Having thus reached his main subject, he gives in detail what is known of the life of Wiclif, and a summary of his teaching arranged systematically. The second volume is devoted to an endeavour to trace the influence of Wiclif on the progress and development of the Reformation movement, and contains also in the Appendix a number of important quotations from the store of Wiclif's MSS. contained in the library at Vienna.

These various divisions of Dr. Lechler's labours are of unequal value and importance. The introductory sketch of the beginning of the Reformation is as unsatisfactory as such sketches generally are, and labours under the want of definition and clearness which hampers almost universally those who deal with the subject. Reformers are claimed at random, and no criterion is given to enable us to estimate their results; practical and speculative questions are put side by side without any examination of their connection; a good deal of information is given us, valuable as a commonplace-book, but failing to put forward any history of the development of human thought.

In fact, Dr. Lechler obviously possesses the qualities of a philosophic theologian rather than of a historian; his interest lies in Wiclif's opinions rather than in his life; he can trace the chain of reasoning in Wiclif's mind more clearly than he can exhibit Wiclif's relation to the politics and national feeling of his time. Hence his account of Wiclif's doctrines is by far the best part of his book; he draws out with careful detail, and illustrates by a comparison of passages from his various writings, the various points of his teaching. So much of the material here used is contained in unpublished manuscripts, that Dr. Lechler's labour has on this point done much to increase our knowledge, and his quotations, of which we have only to regret the brevity, contain much that is new and valuable. The English reader would not, however, always agree with Dr. Lechler's criticisms, which are, naturally enough.
for a German, founded upon the point of view of Luther, which is appealed to as ultimate.

But though Dr. Lechler has exhibited Wyclif's teaching more fully, more accurately and more systematically, than had been done before, he has failed to grasp the whole significance of the period in which Wyclif lived, or to bring out in full relief the greatness of his position in our national history: even in the solution of the disputed questions in Wyclif's life, his industry has not succeeded in finding any new or conclusive evidence. He is tedious as a biographer, and so careful of small points that he loses his conception of his subject as a whole: he gives us too much criticism of his predecessors, examines everything that has ever been said about Wyclif, and delights so much in the labour of the workshop, that he is more careful to preserve for us all the chips and filings than to attract us by the force or beauty of his handiwork.

Wyclif has suffered so much from being regarded purely as a Reformer, and his position in relation to English history and English thought has been so much misstated, that it is perhaps still worth while to attempt to sketch its significance, in its more general bearing.

Born near the little village of Spreswell, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about the year 1324, he went at an early age to Oxford, with which his fame and his teaching were ever afterwards associated. Oxford cannot have been in a very flourishing condition during his student years: the Black Death was desolating England, and before its ravages the number of scholars had greatly diminished, and other thoughts than those of study had taken possession of men's minds. Still, in spite of this terrible drawback, intellectual life beat vigorously in Oxford: the strife between the followers of Scotus and Ockham added the warmth of philosophic controversy to the immemorial feud between North and South: the questions raised by Ockham about the relations of the spiritual to the temporal power, his fervid writings in defence of the Emperor Lewis against Pope John XXII., must have stirred men's minds at Oxford as elsewhere. Wyclif may have listened to the lectures of Thomas Bradwardine, "Doctor profundus," as his contemporaries called him, who explored in his treatise, "De Causa Dei," the question of Free-will and Necessity, and
vindicated God's goodness even in the evil of the world around,—a follower of Augustine, as of one who "gave glory to the grace of God, and was a grand and sturdy champion of God's grace." Whether Wyclif heard him or not, he must have discussed these opinions, which, though within the pale of the Church's teaching, differed little from those which Luther afterwards used as the basis of his Protestant system. Thomas Fitzralph also, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, deeply impressed Wyclif, both speculatively by his learned refutation of the errors of the Arminians, and practically by his endeavours to check the Franciscans in the exercise of their privileges, and secure against them the position of the parish priest as well as the discipline of the University. Wyclif, we know, was an eager student, well versed in logic and metaphysics, deeply learned in theology, and delighting in the mathematical and natural sciences; from which he never weary of drawing illustrations both in his books and sermons.

Wyclif's personal history at the University has been rendered complicated by a doubt about his identity, owing to the existence of a person with a similar name,—a doubt which has been increased by a desire to clear him from any personal motives in his breach with the Papacy and the established ecclesiastical system. It is hopeless here to discuss the arguments or do more than indicate the general bearings of a question which belongs to the antiquary rather than the historian.* In Wyclif's time, only a few privileged scholars could find shelter in the walls of a College; whether Wyclif did so or not cannot be said with certainty: if he did, his connection with the north would naturally lead him to Balliol; but Balliol was a very poor College at that time, and could not maintain scholars longer than was necessary for them to proceed to their Master's degree. By the disputations held to qualify for that degree, an aspiring scholar's reputation was made; and whether Wyclif had been a member of Balliol Hall or not, it cannot excite any surprise if Merton College, the mother of nearly all Oxford's great names in the fourteenth century, received a man of Wyclif's distinction and reputation as a member of her

---

* I have to acknowledge the great assistance I have received in forming an opinion on this subject from a paper read to the Oxford Ashmolean Society by the Rev. Prebendary Wilkinson, a paper which I hope will soon be printed.
society; at all events the name of John de Wyclif is found in the list of Fellows of Merton in the year 1356. At this time also Colleges were few, and College feeling was not yet powerful enough to absorb a wider patriotism or engender local and petty jealousies. So, on a vacancy in the Mastership of Balliol Hall in 1361, Wyclif was called to preside over the fortunes of that still struggling society; he did not, however, long retain his office, for in the same year he was presented by Balliol to the living of Filingham, in Lincolnshire. He still, however, resided a good deal in Oxford, and continued to teach; and is mentioned more than once in the books of Queen's College as tenant of a room there.

But in the year 1365, Wyclif was called to a new office in the University. Archbishop Simon Islip was desirous of raising the reputation for learning of the secular clergy, who had suffered greatly from the ravages of the "Black Death," and whose ranks had been hastily filled up; he had therefore founded a new Hall at Oxford, in which regular and secular clergy were to study together. According to the original statutes, the Warden was to be one of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury; but Archbishop Islip was dissatisfied with his first nominee, John Woodgate, and using a founder's privileges altered his first statutes and nominated John de Wyclif as Warden in his stead. Soon after making this appointment, Islip died, and was succeeded by Simon Langham, who, being himself a monk, took a different view of the question of Canterbury Hall; the expelled Warden raised a complaint; the matter was investigated by the Archbishop, and a decision given in his favour; Wyclif and his party of seculars had to retire in their turn, and Woodgate triumphantly returned. It was now Wyclif's turn to appeal, and the case was argued before the Papal Court, where it was finally given against Wyclif, and the Pope's decision confirmed by an order from the King in 1366.

So far there is nothing inconsistent in this account of Wyclif's life, and there is no reason for distrusting contemporary evidence on the matter; but it has been pointed out that there was another John Wyecleve, or Whitecliffe, who was vicar of Mayfield, and apparently well known to Archbishop Islip, to whom the Wardenship of Canterbury Hall
more fitly applies. Dr. Shirley has produced considerable evidence in favour of this view, and discredits the value of the testimony of the contemporary controversialist, William Woodford, who states that Wyclif "per religiosos possessionatos et prelatos expulsus fuerat de aula monachorum Cantuaries." These arguments of Dr. Shirley, which seemed at first sight very strong, are on further investigation not so convincing, and are, as Dr. Lechler points out, not enough to counterbalance Woodford's testimony, of whom Wyclif himself makes honourable mention, and to whom he acknowledges his obligations.

Really the desire to clear Wyclif from any suspicion of personal motives in his after-life, and an exaggerated conception of the importance of the Canterbury Hall episode, are perhaps at the bottom of the wish to make two John Wyclifs, and so exempt the Reformer from any grudge against either monks or Pope. There is, however, no reason for viewing the question of the Wardenship of Canterbury Hall as one of great importance, or as likely to arouse bitter personal feelings; it was merely a part of the standing quarrel between the regular and secular clergy: Archbishop Islip tried to moderate between the two; Archbishop Langham, being a monk, could not desert his order, and almost as a matter of course gave his decision in its favour. Wyclif appealed to the Pope, who confirmed Langham's decision, as did also the King, who did not however neglect to take a good fine from the monks as the price of his compliance. Meanwhile Wyclif was living peaceably in his rooms at Queen's College; no extraordinary fate had befallen him; no slur had been cast either upon his character or his orthodoxy; it was merely an incident in the fight of parties, and the monks had won the day. It was not a question of much importance; the position of Warden of Canterbury Hall must have been a very slight honour to a man of Wyclif's reputation; nor is it wonderful that he was appointed a royal chaplain, probably by the same Archbishop Langham who dispossessed him of an office which he considered only fit for a monk. The King also would have no hesitation in confirming, especially when his exchequer benefited in the process, the Pope's decision on a purely technical point, although it concerned a person of considerable reputation in his own court. The question was a legal question, and
was considered without any personal feeling; Wyclif alludes to it once in passing, and calls it a "familiaris exemplum" of what he regarded as an abuse; with the exception of Woodford's slight mention, it is never brought forward against him, simply because it contained no ground for personal attack.

Wyclif continued to teach at Oxford and discharge the duties of royal chaplain, when, still in the year 1366, he was called upon by the King to answer the untimely demand made by Pope Urban VI. for the homage of England. His answer is especially interesting, as he gives the arguments which he had heard used in Parliament, recapitulating the speeches of seven Lords, and thus supplying us with probably the earliest record of a Parliamentary debate. It was the commencement of the most vigorous crisis of the reaction against the Papacy which had begun in the reign of Henry III., and which was gathering strength in England during the whole of the fourteenth century.

Already had the shadows of misfortune begun to close over the last years of Edward III.: France was almost lost: the Black Prince was stricken by a mortal illness: a stream of turbulent spirits, trained in the wars, was setting homewards and adding to the disquiet of men's minds. A bitter ant Clerical feeling prompted Parliament in 1371 to petition the King that secular men only might be employed in his court and household: William of Wykeham resigned the seals, and a lay ministry, in which the chief mover was the Duke of Lancaster, came into power. Hence sprung the alliance between the Duke and Wyclif, an alliance prompted by political interest on one side, by national and patriotic feeling on the other. But Wyclif was soon disappointed by the timidity of the new government: the Papal collector appeared as usual in England, and the government was content to administer to him an oath that he would do nothing contrary to the laws or liberties of the kingdom. In a remarkable pamphlet, printed by Dr. Lechler in his Appendix, Wyclif indignantly asks, Can it be otherwise than pernicious to the laws and liberties of the realm that a foreign potentate should plunder it at will?

It was Wyclif's first disappointment, but he was soon to meet with still harder ones. Parliament clamoured for redress of the wrongs which patrons of benefices were con-
tinually suffering at the hands of the Pope and his provisors, and it was agreed that the matter should be discussed at Bruges with Papal commissioners, at the same time as the Congress was being held to arrange peace with France (1374). Gilbert, Bishop of Bangor, was head of the commission, and Wiclif, we may suppose, its leading member. The conference ended, and all waited for its results. The peace with France was another instance of the failures of English diplomacy; and when, in September, 1375, six lengthy Bulls arrived from the Pope, full of arrangements for past informalities, but with no promise of amendment for the future, popular indignation began to wax high. The promotion of the Bishop of Bangor to the see of Hereford seemed a recompense for his traitorous betrayal of England's interests: peace had been made with France to further the intrigues of the Duke of Lancaster: had he truckled to the Pope as well to suit his own ends? The first "lay Ministry" had belied all its promises of ecclesiastical reform: a reaction set in, and the "Good Parliament" left (1376) a deep impress of its zeal on English history: the long list of grievances against the Pope which it drew up bears the strongest marks of Wiclif's influence.

Wiclif was still merely a parish priest: in 1368 he exchanged the living of Filingham for that of Ludgershall, in Buckinghamshire; and in 1374 was presented by the King to the living of Lutterworth, which he held till his death. Yet he was an important person in England, and his adherence to the Duke of Lancaster involved him in the struggles of political parties. The Good Parliament was not to repeat its triumphs, for the death of the Black Prince again threw power into the hands of Lancaster, and enabled him again to assert his influence over the now imbecile King. He was determined to rid himself of his chief political foes, and accusations were brought against William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, the chief of his opponents; in consequence of which Wykeham's temporalities were forfeited, and he was banished the Court. But the clergy, under the leadership of Courtenay, the popular and aristocratic Bishop of London (he was of the noble family of the Earls of Devon), made Wykeham's cause their own, and refused to proceed with the business of Convocation till Wykeham had received a summons to
attend (Feb. 1377). This was Courtenay’s first triumph, and he was determined to follow it up: he compelled the reluctant Archbishop Sudbury to summon Lancaster’s clerical champion, Wiclif, to answer to his Ordinary for his opinions. The story of his success need not be repeated: Lancaster’s insolent bearing and unbridled tongue roused the feelings of the Londoners in defence of their Bishop; Lancaster had to flee, and the inquiry ended in confusion almost before it had begun. The Duke, blind with rage, hastened to Parliament, and proposed to deprive the City of its municipal rights and privileges; the Londoners rose and sacked the Duke’s palace of the Savoy; nor would they desist till Bishop Courtenay interposed to save what still remained. Courtenay had gained his object: Lancaster was overcome, and had to permit Wykeham’s return. No further measures were taken against Wiclif; we do not even know what were the charges preferred against him: this trial was no effort of the English hierarchy to repress heresy, but rather a political movement on the part of the clerical ministerial party to discredit the chief of the opposition.

Dr. Lechler throughout his work attributes an amount of ecclesiastical intolerance to the English bishops which they do not at this time seem to have possessed. Sudbury and Courtenay were both of them politicians rather than ecclesiastics, and behaved accordingly. Dr. Lechler assumes that Wiclif was summoned before Convocation, but Foxe’s language, though vague, seems to make it more probable that he was summoned before the Archbishop as his Ordinary. Similarly, Dr. Lechler, forcing Foxe’s expressions, asserts that the English bishops lost no time in applying to the Pope, whose bulls against Wiclif are dated May 22, 1377. Dr. Lechler is too exclusively employed in writing the life of a Reformer, who as such, he assumes, must necessarily have been persecuted, and does not sufficiently consider the national attitude towards the Papacy, or the character of the English bishops. Pope Gregory XI. had reasons enough for wishing to interfere in English affairs, without requiring the instigation of English prelates: in his bull addressed to Archbishop Sudbury and Bishop Courtenay he reproves them as “slothfully negligent, inso-much that latent motions and open attempts of the enemy are perceived at Rome before they are opposed in England:”
he orders them to inquire at once into Wiclif's opinions, and send him the result; and, as if foreseeing opposition and desirous of providing against it, he issues a bull to the King, praying him to grant the Papal commissioners his favour and protection in the discharge of their duty. At the same time, also, to strike terror into the minds of Wiclif's followers in their stronghold, a bull was sent to the University of Oxford, reproving its members for suffering "tares to spring up among the pure wheat of the glorious field of the University," and bidding them give up Wiclif to the Papal commissioners.

Although the commission is dated May 22, no action was taken by the commissioners till Dec. 18; they were not in a hurry to proceed on such an unpopular business. Walsingham, the monkish historian, complains bitterly of their dilatoriness and half-heartedness. Edward III. died on June 21, and the first parliament of Richard II. shewed itself strongly opposed to Rome,—nay, even submitted for Wiclif's opinion the question of the constitutional legality of prohibiting the export of English money to the Pope. Wiclif gives his judgment in favour of the legality of such a prohibition: he bases his opinion on the natural law of self-preservation, and the gospel precept that almsgiving (for he regarded Church property as alms) ceases to be a duty to those who are themselves in want.

It is not, under these circumstances, surprising to find that the Archbishop wished to act cautiously, and to discharge the duty which the Papal injunctions had laid upon him with all possible circumspection. The Council of the University of Oxford doubted whether they should receive the Papal bull or not; the Archbishop's summons to Wiclif was couched in very courteous terms, and made no mention of the imprisonment which the Pope had enjoined, if necessary. Wiclif appeared before the commissioners early in 1378, but their sittings soon came to an end; the Princess Dowager of Wales sent them a message to desist, and the clamours of the Londoners left them no option: they seem to have been only too glad to rid themselves of a somewhat ignominious office, and the monkish writers are loud in denouncing their cowardice. The matter went no further for the present, for on March 27, Gregory XI. died; and the schism in the Papacy that ensued supplied it with other occupation than that of investigating heresy in England.
The Pope had submitted to his commissioners nineteen points on which he had been informed that Wiclif was heretical, and on which he wished him to be further examined: they are questions concerning (1) the denial of the right of private property and of right of inheritance; (2), the assertion of the right, and in some cases the duty, of secularizing Church property; (3), the assertion that Church discipline of absolution or excommunication is necessarily limited by its conformity to the law of Christ. These conclusions are obscurely expressed in the Pope's bull, and are technically defended by Wiclif; they are only useful as indicating the source from which his opinions grew, and the side from which he approached the question of reform. Wiclif was emphatically an Englishman, and developed his opinions round the national grievances: as one called in to counsel the Parliament smarting under Papal exactions and awakened fully to their ignominy, he had passed on to find in Scripture and in natural right a firm basis for national remonstrance and resistance.

The outbreak of the Papal schism was watched by Wiclif with the deepest interest: at first he expected great things from Urban VI., whose character stood high before his election to the Papacy; he was, however, soon disappointed by the cruel and perfidious character of Urban's acts: he ceased to be an adherent of Urban, and became neutral. Gradually, as the miserable schism went on, and the high office of successor to St. Peter was made an object of every possible intrigue and trickery, the heart of Wiclif waxed hot within him, and his indignation found quick expression: each of these pretenders was equally antichrist; the institution of the Papacy itself was mischievous and destructive. If any good were to be done for the poor sheep wandering without a shepherd, every serious man must give himself to the work and do what he can, whether helped or hindered by those in power. The years between 1378 and 1382 seem to have been years of untiring labour on Wiclif's part,—years consumed in efforts at reform. He organized and sent out preachers throughout the land; he translated the Scriptures into English; he preached and wrote continually, and his utterances were carried far and wide through England.

First, Lutterworth became a centre for itinerant preachers, who went forth, as the disciples of St. Francis had done before, to labour amongst the poor and the neglected;
perhaps these preachers consisted first of those who had gathered round Wiclif as their master in Oxford, and had been impressed by his zeal. The reform of preaching was one of Wiclif's great objects, and many of his sermons and addresses are directed to that object. Too often, he complains, not God's word, but other matters, are the subjects of preaching; barren speculations, legends, tales and fables, take the place of Scripture teaching; even when God's word is preached, it is not preached rightly,—not in simplicity and purity, but with self-assertion on the preacher's part, with elaborate ornament and turgid rhetoric. But the "trewe preestis" (fideles or simplices sacerdotes) who go forth under Wiclif's influence, go forth to preach God's word, and that only,—to preach it "where, when, and to whom they could." So vigorous were they, that in 1382, Archbishop Courtenay writes, that "heretical doctrines are spread on every side, not only in churches, but in public places and other profane spots." Wiclif had set on foot a great spiritual revival in the Church; and (as Dr. Shirley has remarked) if his mental acuteness had not led him to examine the intellectual basis of his belief, and so involved him in a criticism of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, he might have come down to us canonized as St. John de Wiclif, founder of a new order of preaching friars.

Even, however, within the limits of this institution, Wiclif seems to have advanced to a point where collision with the hierarchy was inevitable. These "pore preestis" were at first all duly ordained, but soon we find the Lollard preachers are laymen, and this change seems to have been made with Wiclif's knowledge and approbation: in his later writings the preachers are no longer called "simplices sacerdotes," but "viri apostolici" or "evangelici."

It was for these preachers that Wiclif wrote many of his smaller English tractates, and perhaps some of his sermons were intended as models for them; but his great work was his translation of the Bible into English,—a work completed under his direction, and marking an epoch not only in the ecclesiastical but also in the literary history of England.

Under these circumstances we cannot wonder that a man of Wiclif's keen, penetrating intellect rapidly developed his opinions when once he had the goal clearly before him: moreover, what he clearly saw, he lost no time in clearly
expressing; thought and utterance were to him almost identical: he strove onward towards the highest truth he perceived, and was not hindered by the traditions or prejudices of his earlier years from accepting honestly the conclusions of his thought: "many things that once I thought strange, now seem to me to be catholic: when I by God's power became a man, I put away by God's grace childish things." Wiclif has, indeed, a proper claim to the title of "Doctor Evangelicus," for no one could take his stand more resolutely upon the plain basis of Scripture. The constitutional struggles of England's past history had already stamped deeply a feeling of legality and order on the English mind, and coloured its view of all things else. "What claim can we have to Christian privileges," exclaims Wiclif, "if we abandon our Great Charter, written and given to us by God, on which alone can we found our claims to His kingdom?" Every action of the individual's life is only so far legitimate as it is in accordance with the law of the gospel, —nay, "the whole body of human law ought to depend on the law of the gospel as on a rule essentially divine." We seem to hear the principles of Savonarola, and to see foreshadowed the workings of Puritan theocracy.

But how was Scripture to be interpreted? At first Wiclif admitted two sources—reason and the "exposition of holy doctors approved of by the Church." But he soon advanced beyond a position which would have re-established authority and have robbed him of all that he had won. In his later writings he insists that the Holy Ghost alone can expound to the individual Christian the Scriptures, even as Christ taught his apostles; he only can hope to understand aright who leads a holy life and seeks the truth in humility of mind. Moreover, he lays down some modern canons of interpretation: "Scripture contains but one Word of God;" "One part of Scripture is best expounded by another." In one passage he calls attention to the necessity of noticing carefully St. Paul's use of prepositions and adverbs. He insists with the utmost emphasis on the right of all Christian men to the Scriptures. "If the worde of Christ is the lyfe of the worlde, howe maye any antechriste for dreade of God take it awaie frome us that be christen men, and thus to suffer the people to dye for hunger?"

Noticeable also is Wiclif's strong desire to set forth Christ,
under the forms of political phraseology, as the supreme Head of the human race: he calls him "Conquestor optimus," "Caesar noster," "Caesar semper augustus;" "God made him Prior of all his religion, and he was Abbot of the best order that may be." He is our Bishop; he is our Pope. Hence Wiclif objects to the limitation of the term "Church" to the clergy; the Church consists of the whole number of the elect; it is "moder to eche man that shal be saved, and conteyneth no membre but owuly men that shalen be saved;" yet of this salvation can no man be sure either in his own case or that of another. Thus Wiclif is opposed to all hierarchical pretensions, and objects to the elevation of an office into the basis of a class distinction: there is no difference of class between layman and clerk; every Christian ought to be a theologian; a good layman is higher than a negligent priest; if priests do not do their duty, the laity should deprive them of their possessions as being enemies of God's Church.

In the early part of his life Wiclif was on friendly terms with the Friars: he recognizes them as established by the Holy Ghost for the edification of the Church. They on their part seem to have stood by him; and many of his biographers, who failed to follow his gradual development, have been puzzled by the presence of four Friars as his advisers when he appeared before the Archbishop. His spiritual earnestness led him early to rebuke the indolence of the wealthy monastic orders (religiosi possessionati); but it was not till the year 1381, when first he attacked the doctrine of Transubstantiation, that he became embroiled with the Friars. On this question, as on all others, he is led by a rational study of the Scriptures to controvert the prevalent materialism. In a sermon on the text, "I am come not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me," he observes that the two wills are not alternatives, but co-existed in Christ. This principle of interpretation he applies to the words of consecration: the bread remains bread, but is also "principaliter," the body of Christ; he who holds the materialist view "destroys grammar, logic and natural science, and, what is more lamentable, does away with the meaning of the gospel." As Christ's godhead and manhood co-exist in one person, so does Christ's body co-exist with the bread. Consequently the adoration of the
Host is mere idolatry. Wiclif, as Dr. Lechler remarks, overthrew transubstantiation; and it is perhaps his greatest contribution to the theology of the Reformation. The Hussites took up the question where he left it, and attacked the denial of the cup to the laity; it remained for Luther to overthrow the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

It was on this question of Transubstantiation that Wiclif was brought into his last collision with the hierarchy. He published in Oxford twelve theses on the subject which he was prepared to maintain. The Chancellor, William of Berton, took counsel with twelve Doctors of Divinity, and forbade unorthodox teaching on pain of expulsion from the University: there was great excitement in Oxford, and Wiclif appealed, not to his Ordinary, the Bishop of Lincoln, but to the King; the question was a national question, to be settled by King and Parliament alone.

But before Wiclif's appeal could proceed before the King, the rising of the villeins under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw had terrified the barons and the middle class, which was rapidly rising in wealth and importance: a reaction had set in against Wiclif, against innovation generally: he was looked upon as a dangerous person, and instead of being powerful enough to make an attack, had to stand upon his defence. There can be no doubt that Wiclif himself was entirely without any share in the disturbances of the eventful year 1381. The cessation of the French wars had brought back to England a number of villeins who had served in their campaigns, and who found it hard to submit to their former serfage: land had been changing hands, the commercial classes had become large proprietors, the sentimental side of the relations between lord and vassal had now fallen away: at the very time that the iniquity of villeinage was most clearly seen, its oppressive character was making itself more harshly felt. The demands of the villeins shew how entirely their rising was the result of their social misery, though they seem to have had amongst their leaders some who contemplated schemes of political or social revolution. True, they put the Archbishop mercilessly to death, but it was as Chancellor, not as Archbishop, that he suffered. True, they plundered monasteries, but it was for the same reason that they sacked lawyers' offices and destroyed all parchments,—they wished
Lechler's Wiclif.

to abolish all those title-deeds by which they were transferred like cattle from one owner to another. The clergy were wealthy, and had no sympathy with the people; the mendicants were poor, and so had a fellow-feeling with them; the poor were all welcome, their hatred was only against the rich. The attempt to implicate Wiclif in their rising has no foundation whatever in the facts of the case. But still we can see how Wiclif was looked upon by the affrighted burghers, when they began to recover from their shock, as a man whose principles were dangerous, one with whom it was not well to agree too far. Certainly socialistic and communistic principles had been spread among the rebels; and Wiclif had been accused by the Pope of denying the rights of ownership and hereditary succession. No doubt Wiclif in his teaching had been led on by the necessity of combating the Pope's claims to suzerainty over England to consider the whole question of lordship and ownership (dominium). The claims of the Pope and the claims of the hierarchy were to him equally untenable; the canon law had adopted the term "dominium" to express the position of the clergy towards the laity, and it expressed also the Pope's position towards the Church: Wiclif was compelled to examine its real meaning. The metaphysical basis of Wiclif's system was consistently realistic; the "universal" and the "idea" are used by him as interchangeable terms: the idea is the thought of the Divine Mind expressed in the created thing; the Divine Intelligence is actually and completely reproduced in the created world, and in every part of it (omne ens est realiter ipse Deus). God, therefore, is the sole Lord of the world; He became its Lord by the creation: all lordship of men is a lordship founded on force: only so far as it is in accordance with God's law is it a rightful lordship. Wiclif advanced his realism consistently to the furthest point, and we cannot doubt that opinions such as these produced some impression on the social theories of an oppressed yet not degraded people. Wiclif's theories on this point are full of interest, and merit greater explanation. Dr. Lechler, however, passes over very rapidly Wiclif's work "de Dominio Divino," and from the part of it that contains his opinions on civil ownership he gives no quotations at all. Surely the publication of it might be the next step of those interested in Wiclif's writings.
Lechler's Wiclif.

We cannot, however, wonder that the man excited some suspicion who taught the people, "Whanne men geve not almes to pore nedy men, but to dede ymagis, either riche clerkis, thei robbyn pore men of her due porcoun, and needful sustinance, assinged to hem of God himself; and whanne thei robben pore men, thei robben Jhesu Crist, as he seith in xxv. ch. of Math. &c."

It is not therefore surprising to find that when the tumult had subsided, a violent reaction against all new opinions set in. Henry le Spencer, the fighting Bishop of Norwich, girt on his armour, and ruthlessly massacred the villeins on their way home. The middle class, as represented by the Commons, compelled the young King to revoke the charters which he had granted to the villeins, who too trustingly believed a king's word. Courtenay, Bishop of London, Wiclif's old antagonist, succeeded to the Archbishopric rendered vacant by Sudbury's murder, and we cannot wonder that he wished to put down opinions which had brought his predecessor to an ignominious death. Some inquiry was necessary, but the one which the Archbishop set on foot was conducted with all possible moderation: an assembly of bishops, doctors of theology and doctors of law, was held in London to decide on certain opinions which the Archbishop laid before them: of these, ten were pronounced heretical, fourteen erroneous. No mention was made of persons, nor were the condemned opinions attributed to any particular party: a more moderate course would scarcely have been possible, consistently with the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline.

Such facts may at present, it is to be hoped, be admitted without hesitation and judged with calmness. But Dr. Lechler unfortunately has advanced very little beyond the unreasoning and uncritical judgments of Protestant apologists. In his eyes, Wiclif was right and the Bishops were wrong; consequently their assertion of their own opinions, which happened also to be those of the majority of Christendom, was iniquitous persecution: the fact that the opinions were first condemned and then the persons is only an additional proof of the subtle malice of Wiclif's foes, who proceeded in this insidious way to undermine his prestige. Such a view as this robs a character like Wiclif of its real interest: a reformer with a large party to support
him, committed to a desperate contest with a resolute body of opponents, is not really so grand and noble a sight as is the earnest seeker after truth who has advanced step by step, saying out the utmost that he saw, with no deliberate system, with no settled plan of antagonism,—but still with such a hatred for saying "Peace" when there is no peace, that even the most considerate demeanour of those in authority, who are themselves perplexed and would gladly keep silence so long as they could, cannot lead him for a moment to gainsay his beliefs or fall back on the old system, though that still suffices for so many, and though he knows that he has no system to set up against it or offer in its stead. Wiclif remained within the Church, though his opinions were condemned by the Church to which he still clung: and he was left undisturbed in his quiet parish of Lutterworth.

The opinions of Wiclif which were condemned as heretical concerned Transubstantiation and the priestly office: those condemned as erroneous dealt chiefly with matters of Church discipline. An attempt was made to pass a statute empowering the civil officers to assist the ecclesiastical in inquiring into the condemned opinions in the different counties. The Commons, however, refused their consent: as yet their terror had not advanced so far as to make them lay aside their natural and healthy prejudice against investigations into men's opinions. Oxford, however, stood out against the ecclesiastical decree: the orthodox and heterodox parties were very evenly balanced; Wiclitte opinions were publicly preached, and ecclesiastical feeling ran high among the excitable students. The royal power, however, was invoked, and the Archbishop as Metropolitan held his court of inquiry: three of the chief leaders of Wiclif's party in Oxford, Hereford, Repington and Aston, were examined, condemned and excommunicated. Their opinions, however, were not strong enough to stand this test: two of them recanted; of Hereford we have only uncertain accounts. Apparently, Wiclif himself was also summoned, though this is uncertain: if so, the Archbishop must have been contented with a very slight explanation of his opinions. Perhaps he was already shewing signs of infirmity, and had given up teaching in the University, so that he no longer came under the scope of the Archbishop's
intention, which was to maintain the orthodox opinions amongst the lecturers there.

Anyhow, the last two years of Wiclif's life were spent in peace at Lutterworth, and his utterances are not those of a man whose moral force had been checked by persecution. The iniquitous plundering expedition to Flanders made by Henry le Spencer, the Bishop of Norwich, in 1383, under the name of a Crusade against the Clementists, on behalf of the rival Pope Urban VI., raised Wiclif's disgust: he wrote a tract in which he expressed his contempt for the two men, calling themselves vicars of Christ, who are snarling like two dogs for a bone; it is time for the princes of Europe to arouse themselves, and take away from both this bone of contention, the temporal power: nay, Wiclif even addresses a letter to the Archbishop, remonstrating against his sanction being given to a crusade of one Pope against another. Urban VI. is said to have summoned Wiclif to answer for his opinions before him; but Wiclif's health prevented him. He published, however, a letter to "alle trewe men," explaining his reasons for not going,—a letter couched in terms of biting irony and unconcealed contempt for the Papal authority. "I take as holesome counseile," he exclaims, "that the Pope levee his worldly lordship to worldly lords, as Christ gaf him, and move speedily all his clerks to do so: for thus did Christ, and taught thus his disciples, till the fende had blynded this world."

Wiclif died at Lutterworth on Dec. 31, 1384, in consequence of a paralytic seizure which had come upon him three days before, as he was attending mass in his own parish church.

Wiclif was, in an emphatic sense, the first of the Reformers,—the first man who examined not merely some one part of the existing system, but who ventured to expose its very foundations,—one who was not content merely with speculative utterances, but who set himself, and drew others with him, to lead a life in accordance with the gospel. He was no mere popular teacher, appealing to the emotions of his hearers, and setting up a simple moral standard which touched the hearts of men made callous by immoral, because unmeaning, dogma and ceremonial: deeply learned himself in all the wisdom of the schoolmen, and throwing his teaching very frequently into a formal and scholastic mould,
he argues out his opinions with clearness and force, and uses an almost modern power of criticism in his attacks on current doctrines. He is in all things eminently rational and critical; never appeals for his basis to purely emotional or even purely moral considerations; yet his formal method is profoundly penetrated by an earnestness, a sincerity, a fervent desire for truth, which leave no place for coldness. It was this fervour of earnestness, joined with clearness and precision of thought, that made him so great a master of the English tongue, and enabled him to stamp his mark so definitely upon it.

In truth, standing as he does so near the source of English literature, Wiclif is no unapt symbol of some of the most characteristic qualities of English thought: deep moral earnestness; an abhorrence of semblances; an entire self-forgetfulness in the pursuit of truth; sincerity that refused to be hardened by conceit into consistency; clearness that would not be led further than was needful for immediate purposes; honesty that did not shrink from negation if negation was all that was possible; a thorough desire to bring all opinions to the test of practice and judge them by their results; a feeling of the moral duty of spreading knowledge, of popularizing the results of study, and making them known to all. Nor is Wiclif less remarkable in his historical position and the development of his views: here, too, he is a type of later English movements. Commencing from the national dislike to the Pope, as being England's national foe, he was a constitutional patriot before he passed into the region of ecclesiastical reform. His views developed in the midst of great national commotions and excitement, but, though stimulated by passing politics, received from them no tinge of insincerity or distortion from complete integrity. The true spirit of the gospel sent him to the poor and needy, and he never let go their cause.

Even in the faint outlines in which we see him across the gulf of five centuries, he attracts us to him as one who yet has a living message for us; even in the faint outlines—for he still wanders, in spite of Dr. Lechler's efforts, a spectral form in the region of antiquarianism and archaeology. Not till we know more of scholastic theology—not till the details of contemporary history have been more carefully worked out—and not till Wiclif's works have been
still more thoroughly explored and edited—can we hope
that he will stand out to us a breathing figure with a mes-
sage to us that we can fully understand.

M. CREIGHTON.

VI.—THE LIFE AFTER DEATH.—II.

*Contemporary Review.* May, 1873.
*Fraser's Magazine.* May, 1873.

The immense growth which has taken place in the moral
consciousness of mankind within historical times may be
estimated by a simple observation. The Future Life, which
was once altogether uncoloured by moral hues, has for ages
been painted as if it were a Moral Life only; all its hap-
piness Reward, and all its suffering either Retribution or
Purification. In a preceding paper on this subject, it was
remarked in passing that the consciousness of Immortality
and the expectation of Justice are totally distinct things, and,
though confluent at last, arise in remote sources. It is at
a comparatively late historical era that the expectation of
Justice projects itself beyond the horizon of this world; and
equally late when the consciousness of Immortality takes
shape as an ideal state of rewards and punishments beyond
the grave. But having once passed into this phase, it is aston-
ishing how rapidly the Moral aspect of the future world
begins to occupy the minds of men, almost to the exclusion of
every other. The analogies of our present existence (if they
might be accounted in any measure as guides) would lead us
to infer that hereafter, as here, the moral life will be only one
of the elements of existence; and though the most impor-
tant of all (and therefore more discernible at a higher eleva-
tion), yet never absolutely bare and alone, but rather, like
the granite foundations of the eternal hills, clothed with
forests of usefulness and flowery meads of beauty and affec-
tion. Instead of this, the popular idea for millenniums has
been, that the moment a man dies, he goes, not into a higher