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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Old Lutheran Doctrine of Free-Will in the Augsburg Confession	1
Dr. Martin Luther's Treatise of Confession, Whether the Pope Have Power to Enjoin Same.....	17
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary....	31
John Wiclif	41
Book Review	50
Evidence of the Resurrection of the Lord.....	65
The Consciousness of Sin	78
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary....	85
John Wiclif	97
In Behalf of Paul Gerhardt and the Elenchus.....	107
Wartburg Letters of Luther.....	122
Evidence of the Resurrection of the Lord	129
The Consciousness of Sin	155
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary....	163
John Wiclif	172
Wartburg Letters of Luther.....	185
Book Review	189
Cordatus' Controversy with Melanchthon.....	193
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary....	208
Faith	219
Wartburg Letters of Luther.....	229
Book Review	233

JOHN WICLIF.¹⁾

AUTHORITIES: — Lorimer's *Lechler's Wiclif*; Buddensieg's *Wiclif*; Buddensieg's *Johann Wiclif u. s. Zeit*; Sergeant's *Wiclif*; Holt's *Wiclif*; Matthew's *Wiclif*; Loserth's *Wiclif and Hus*; Poole's *Wiclif and Movements for Reform*; Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wiclif*; Capes' *English Church in the 14th Century*; Brougham's *Wiclif in Old England's Worthies*; Green's *History of the English People*; Burrow's *Wiclif's Place in History*; Tulloch's *Leaders of the Reformation*; Sample's *Beacon Lights of the Reformation*; Lord's *Beacon Lights of History*; Storrs' *Oration on Wiclif*; *Dictionary of National Biography*; Wiclif's Bible, ed. Forshall and Madden; Pattison's *History of the English Bible*; Smyth's *How We Got Our Bible*; *British Quarterly Review*, October, 1858; *The Academy*, June 28, 1884; *London Quarterly Review*, July, 1902; *English Historical Review*, 1900; *International Cyclopaedia*; *Encyclopedia Americana*; Patrick's *Lutterworth and Lach-Szyrma's Wiclif in the Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1901; Shirley's *Catalogue of the Original Works of Wiclif*; Thompson's *Wiclif Exhibition in the British Museum*; Leeds' *Wiclif's Anti-War Views*; Wilson's *Wiclif*; Bishop Hurst's *Church History*.

I. THE SCHOLAR.

John Wiclif was born between 1320 and 1330 in the parish of Wycliffe on the river Tees near Richmond in Yorkshire, England, in the beautiful country made famous by Sir Walter Scott in his *Rokeby*.

He sprang from an old and honored family of the lower nobility, and it is possible that he was the legal lord of the manor of Wycliffe and patron of the rectory. He came of Saxon stock which retained many of the German traits; to this very day the people of Yorkshire "speak an ancient dialect, which bears an unmistakable German impress." As late as 1884 Wiclif's Testament was read to an old lady there, and she understood every word, saying everybody spoke that way when she was a young girl, "before folk got so fine."

Egglestone Abbey, not far away, was then in a flourishing state, and likely the lad went to school there. Later he went to

1) There are about sixty ways of spelling the name; this form was adopted by the writer, 1. because it is the simplest; 2. because the best biographers of Germany and England use it; 3. because in the first public and in the first official documents this form is found.

Oxford and likely entered Balliol College, founded by the Balliols of Barnard Castle, not far from Wiclif's home.

Coming from the North, he joined the "Nation" of the "Boreales," a student society upholding Saxondom over against the Normans, the rights of the people over against the king, the rights of England over against the Pope, Realism over against Nominalism: in everything opposed to the "Australes" of Merton College.

For four years he studied the "Trivium" — Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, and became a Bachelor of Arts; for three more years he studied the "Quadrivium" — Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy, and became a Master of Arts. Having served seven years for the Leah of the seven liberal arts, he served seven more years for the Rachel of theology and became a Bachelor of Theology and lectured on the Sentences of Peter of Novara the Lombard; after three more years of the study of the Latin Bible he became a Licentiate and lectured on one of the canonical books.

Aside from his regular studies he read in Optics, Acoustics, Physics, Chemistry, Roman Civil Law, Papal Canon Law, the old Saxon Law, and English History. He was a student of the writings of Augustine, Jerome, Aristotle, and made large use of the sermons of Chrysostom. From Thomas Bradwardine, the Doctor Profundus, he drew his doctrine of grace and predestination; from Fitz Ralph Armachanus he learned his views of Dominion; from William of Occam he derived his doctrine of the Lord's Supper; from Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln he found how to attack pluralities and the abuse of papal power; from Marsiglio of Padua, "of damned memory," he learned to demand that the Church be confined to her spiritual province, as Dante had done fifty years before, and to attack "the Caesarean clergy" and "the imperialized church," as Wiclif calls them. In addition to all this he held his idea of man's direct relation to God.

Wiclif never learned Greek, but he was a close student of the Latin Bible.

About 1360 the Fellows honored Wiclif by electing him Master of Balliol, and on May 16, 1361, his college presented him with the living of Fyllingham in Lincolnshire, about ten miles from London, worth thirty marks a year. He resigned his position as the head of the College and became a country parson, but much of his time was spent at the University, a vicar doing the parish work. From 1363 to 1365 he was at Oxford, living in rented rooms in the new Queen's College; in 1368 he got leave from his bishop to study at Oxford for two years. About 1366 (?) he received the crown of academic honors, the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and he was known as the "Doctor Evangelicus," the Gospel Doctor, as Luther loved to call himself a Doctor of the Scripture.

In order to train good men to reform the abuses in the Church, Archbishop Simon Islip, in 1361, founded Canterbury Hall for twelve students, and after removing the first Warden, Woodhall, made Wiclif the head on December 9, 1365, and in the following words: "Simon Islip to his dear son, Master John de Wycliffe: Having regard to your praiseworthy life, honorable conversation, and the literary acquirement in arts, and being assured of your truth, prudence, and carefulness, we commit to you the Wardenship."

On March 31, 1367, the new Archbishop Langham, himself a monk, ousted Wiclif and filled Canterbury Hall with monks from Christ Church, and thus overturned the will of the founder.

With splendid courage Wiclif protested against the crying injustice to the founder of Canterbury Hall, and he appealed to the Pope against the powerful head of the English Church. Archbishop Langham, now Cardinal, went to Rome, and as a monk got the monk Urban V to side with the monks against Wiclif and the dead Archbishop Islip. For a heavy bribe of 200 marks the King, in 1372, sustained the Pope, and the whole scandalous proceedings filled Wiclif with great indignation. Canterbury Hall was later merged with Cardinal Wol-

sey's Christ Church College, the most magnificent and wealthy of all colleges at Oxford.

In order to be nearer his beloved University, Wiclif, in November, 1368, resigned Fyllingham and became rector of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire, twenty miles from Oxford, although it gave him a smaller income.

About 1365 the country parson was made "a peculiar cleric of the king," likely a Royal Chaplain, and he gained influence at court. He also preached in the London pulpits and made a deep impression on the nobles and on the citizens.

On April 7, 1374, the crown gave to Wiclif the parish of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, seven miles from Rugby. The place was a small market town on a gentle rise in a flat district of rich pasture land. It boasted of a petrifying spring, a cage for evildoers, a cucking-stool for scolds, and a parish cat-o'-nine-tails. During this period Wiclif wrote his works on philosophy and logic, he preached often before the University, and engaged in many academic disputations. As a Bachelor of Divinity he lectured on Biblical Theology, as Master of Balliol on Philosophy, as Warden of Canterbury Hall on Scholastic Divinity.

Owing to the disastrous wars of France, the leading place once held by the University of Paris passed to Oxford, and in the golden age of Oxford Wiclif was the shining light, the "Flower of Oxford scholarship," and Oxford basked in the glory of the latest and greatest of her sons, and his fame spread far and wide, and students from all parts of Great Britain and even from the continent flocked to Oxford. Before the Plague there came as many as 30,000 students "to learn bad Latin and worse Logic," as Hume sneers. Most of them begged their bread, and many slept in the holes of the city walls.

Writing to Pope Martin V the learned Netter of Walden, confessor of Henry V, a bitter opponent of Wiclif, was "wonderfully astonished at his most strong arguments, with the authorities which he had assembled, and with the vehemence and force of his reasons." Henry Knyghton, Canon of Leices-

ter, though vehemently opposed to Wiclif, yet says, "He was the most eminent doctor of theology in those days; in philosophy he was second to none; in scholastics incomparable; transcending all in subtlety of mind and depth of thought; by the great mass of theologians he was considered almost like a god."

II. THE PATRIOT.

Hard pressed by his subjects, King John Lackland on May 15, 1213, at Dover formally resigned the crowns of England and Ireland into the hands of Pandulf, and received them again as the Pope's feudatory, as if England had been the property of Innocent III, and, in return, promised a yearly rent of 1000 marks. Since the death of Pope John XXII, in 1334, no tribute was paid; Benedict XII indeed demanded it, but it was refused. In June, 1357, three cardinals came to England and asked for Pope Urban V the 1000 marks tribute, 700 for England and 300 for Ireland, and also the arrears for about thirty years, or else that Edward III present himself in person before the Pope as feudal superior and answer for his doings.

This was not a good time to make such demands on England. In 1346 Edward III won the glorious victory at Crécy in which his sixteen year old son, the Black Prince, killed the King of Bohemia, and, in 1356, the dazzling courage of the same Black Prince won the brilliant victory of Poitiers, in which King John of France was captured, and after the utter collapse of the French arms the Peace of Bretigny, in 1360, gave to England the fairest provinces of France, about one third of the whole kingdom. In addition Edward's old enemy, King David Bruce of Scotland, was a prisoner in England, and King Peter of Cyprus and the King of Denmark were in England imploring Edward's help in a crusade against the victorious Turk who had captured Adrianople. England was in the height of glory and power.

The popes were living in the "Babylonian Captivity" at Avignon and were the creatures of the French king, and France

had been vanquished in two glorious victories, and now to pay tribute as vassals of the Pope, who was a vassal of France, was more than English pride could endure about this time.

The Pope threatened to bring suit against the King, and in May, 1366, Edward III turned the Pope's demands over to Parliament. Parliament held that John had violated his coronation oath in receiving England from the Pope without consent of the English people; payment of tribute was refused; resistance was threatened, if need be, with all the might of England.

At this time Wiclif was Warden of Canterbury Hall and likely one of the six Masters of Arts called to Parliament by royal order, perhaps as a special royal commissioner, and as such he seems to have taken a leading part in the discussion and decision of Parliament. At any rate, an unknown monkish doctor of theology passionately defends the papal claims and calls upon Wiclif by name to disprove the monk's arguments.

In 1366 Wiclif replied to this "Mixtim Theologus" in the "Determination on Dominion," edited by Dr. R. L. Poole of Oxford, and held, 1. that the King rightly took away church endowments if the clergy abused their trust; 2. that clerical criminals were subject to the law of the land; 3. that the King rightly, for various reasons, refused tribute to the Pope, who emptied the pockets of the English people, even for the benefit of their French foes. By this spirited defense of England against the arrogant papal demands Wiclif became a national character and a popular man, the leader of a national movement against the Pope's political plans; clearly he must have been a man of affairs and a man of address. This work reminds us of Luther's writing "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation."

In the Parliament of February, 1371, the King needed 50,000 marks to carry on the war. Though the clergy had hitherto gone free, they were now taxed to help carry on the war; probably a result of Wiclif's writing. A Benedictine preached against this measure, and Wiclif defended it in his

"Civil Dominion," about 1372, edited by R. L. Poole. In this same Parliament the Commons asked that the clergy be dismissed from the high political offices, and that these be filled with laymen; the people wanted to be rid of papal government and have responsible ministers. This was also in line with Wiclif's teaching.

In sheer self-defense Parliament had to pass statutes of Mortmain, whereby the clergy were prohibited from grabbing any more land from dying Englishmen. In 1350 the statute of Provisors forbade the "Bishop of Rome" to give English church offices to "aliens who never dwell in England, and to cardinals who might not dwell there," and in general to interfere with the rights of those who had the giving of these livings and the election of bishops. In 1360 a man unable to read was made a bishop.

In 1353 another forward step in the fight against Rome's grasping greed was taken in the statute of Praemunire, which punished all those pleading in the court of the Roman bishop with forfeiture, outlawry, and imprisonment. The Pope's greed for English gold was not curbed by these laws, and, in 1374, on Lancaster's recommendation Wiclif was sent as one of the ambassadors to Bruges, the great and wealthy city of 200,000 inhabitants in Flanders, to treat with the delegates of Pope Gregory XI about the great grievances England had against the Pope for taking heavy bribes for appointing foreigners to the fat places in the English churches and letting absentees do nothing at all to earn their large salaries. Wiclif was gone from July 27 till September 14; his allowance was 20 shillings a day and expenses. For his labors at Bruges he was rewarded by the crown in November, 1375, with the sinecure Prebend of Aust in the Cathedral of Westbury in Worcester, but he declined it; his bitterest enemies never accused him of grasping worldly goods. William of Wykeham, Wiclif's opponent, was the King's private secretary and had twelve church livings and, of course, attended to none, although Pope Martin V, in the bull of May, 1365, had censured pluralities.

Heedless of English protests, the Pope went on merrily with his simony, selling good places for good money. He even had a collector traveling about with servants and six horses sending him about 20,000 good English marks every year; as if to add insult to injury, this collector of papal money was a hated and despised Frenchman, Arnold Garnier. The Pope's income from England was about five times that of the King. England's gorge rose, and, in 1376, the "Good" Parliament, of which Wiclif was probably a member, voiced the rising indignation in tones of thunder. "The brokers of the sinful city of Avignon promote for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices of the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So decays sound learning. They present aliens who neither see nor care to see their parishioners, despise God's services, convey away the treasure of the realm, and are worse than Jews or Saracens. The Pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom. God gave His sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn."

The Pope's grasping greed for gold, everywhere seen, kindled the Reformer's keenest indignation. "Though our realm had a huge hill of gold," he said, "and never another man took therefrom but only this proud worldly priest-collector, in process of time the hill would be spent; for he is ever taking money out of our land, and rendering nothing back but God's curse for his simony, and some accursed clerk of Antichrist to rob the land more for wrongful privilege, or else leave to do God's will, which men should do without his leave." The Roman bishop who accepted the endowed protection of Constantine he considered to have introduced corruption into the church, and he boldly and passionately called upon King and Parliament to withdraw the temporal property of the church, and restore it to the early condition of Gospel purity and usefulness; for "by reducing the clergy to meekness and useful piety and ghostly travail, as lived Christ and His apostles, sin should be destroyed and holiness of life brought in and secular law

strengthened and the poor communion aided and good government, both spiritual and temporal, come again; and, what is best of all, as Christ's word would run to and fro freely everywhere, many men would wing their way to heaven."

It was Wiclif that, in 1377, attacked Arnold Garnier for violating all the oaths he took on coming to England to collect for the Pope, and thus again championed the cause of England against the Pope's corruption and tyranny, and he grew in importance and prominence as the dispute wore on.

What the journey to Rome was to do for Luther, the brief trip to Bruges did for Wiclif: it opened his eyes more widely to the corruption of the papacy. Ere this Wiclif had looked upon the Pope as a person who was only capable of wrongdoing, — a very bold saying in those days, — but now he looked upon the Pope as one actually guilty of wrongdoing.

The monk of St. Albans in his "Chronicon Angliae" says Wiclif "was an eloquent man" and preached "with great success," going from church to church, seducing many great lords of the land and many citizens of London. Some of his "crazy lies" were that the Pope had no right to excommunicate, and that no one had a right to present the church with anything in perpetuity, for God is the real owner of all things in Church and State, and all officers are not for lordship but for service.

Needless to say, sentiments like these could not for long pass without notice. At last the bishops goaded the unwilling Archbishop Sudbury to summon Wiclif to be examined as to his opinions, for "barking against the Church."

Milwaukee, Wis.

W. DALLMANN.

(To be continued.)

JOHN WICLIF.

II. THE PATRIOT.

(Continued.)

On February 19, 1377, Wiclif came from Fleet Street by St. Paul's Cross to Ludgate Hill — but he did not come alone. With him came "old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster," as Shakespeare calls him, the fourth son of Edward III and father of Henry IV, the patron of Geoffrey Chaucer, for thirteen years the practical ruler of England; with him came Lord Henry Percy, later the first Earl of Northumberland and the hero of Chevy Chase, who was the Earl Marshall of England with the sword of state; with him came other powerful supporters, even four Doctors of Divinity, representing the four orders of monks, to help him. The crowd before St. Paul's Cathedral was so dense and excited that an entrance for Wiclif had to be forced. "Dread not the bishops, for they be all unlearned in respect of you," they cheered Wiclif, as George Frundsberg cheered Luther at Worms. "A tall, thin figure, covered with a long light gown of black color, with a girdle about the body; the head, adorned with a full, flowing beard, exhibiting features keen and sharply cut; the eye clear and penetrating; the lips firmly closed in token of resolution — the whole man wearing an aspect of lofty earnestness, and replete with dignity and character," such is Lechler's word painting of England's intellectual guide at this time.

William Courtenay, the Bishop of London, on his mother's side a great grandson of Edward I, protested against this assumption of authority within the walls of his own cathedral, and quarreled with the Marshall. When they at last got into Our Lady's Chapel and all were seated, Lord Percy invited Wiclif to sit down also; but the Bishop of London insisted on Wiclif's standing. "Hereupon very contumelious wordes did ryse betwene Syr Henrye Percy and the bishoppe, and the whoole multitude began to be troubled." John of Gaunt threatened to drag the bishop out of the church by the hair of his

head, and the court broke up in confusion; no sentence was passed, and no official record of the proceedings was kept.

Foiled in this attempt, the help of the Pope was sought: fifty of Wiclif's opinions were sent to Avignon, and their condemnation was asked for.

On the advice of the holy nuns Catherine of Siena and the Swedish St. Bridget, but against the earnest wish of his cardinals, Gregory XI ended the seventy years' Babylonish captivity of the popes at Avignon in France, and sailed from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, and on January 17, 1377, solemnly entered Rome amid great popular rejoicing, and on May 22, in the splendid Cathedral of San Maria Maggiore, issued five bulls, one to the King, one to the University of Oxford, and three to the Archbishop and Bishop of London, demanding the trial and imprisonment of Wiclif.

Edward III died on June 21, and the son of his gallant Black Prince became King Richard II — eleven years old.

Spite of the Pope's bulls, Parliament at Gloucester, in October, formally consulted Wiclif in the grave matter, whether it might lawfully keep English money from going out to absentee holders of English church offices. Wiclif in his "Responsio" boldly argued that Parliament had the legal right to do so; he even spoke of the "asinine folly" of paying Peter's pence. His friends protested against his imprisonment "at the command of the Pope, lest they should seem to give the Pope dominion and royal power in England," and the Vice-chancellor of Oxford had to content himself with requiring Wiclif to remain in the Black Hall. Even for this he was later driven from office by the King. Sturdy John of Northampton boasted that no bull of the Pope should harm John Wiclif in the limits of London. Sergeant holds him "the most important religious factor in England" at that time.

Even the theologians were in favor of Wiclif; the Chancellor and doctors all affirmed his conclusions to be true, "although they were ill-sounding propositions."

When, at last, Wiclif appeared before the two prelates in

the Archbishop's chapel at Lambeth, March, 1378, to answer to the nineteen condemned conclusions, Princess Joan, widow of the Black Prince and mother of the young King Richard II, sent Sir John Clifford, forbidding the prelates to interfere with Wiclif, and the citizens of London burst into the chapel and broke up the trial, so that it came to nothing, as the first had done. Wiclif was upheld by his prince and by his people, as was Luther later in Saxony.

It seems Wiclif's trial at Lambeth passed off without any formal sentence, though he was more or less formally requested not to teach these doctrines in the schools or the pulpit "on account of the scandals [against the clergy] which they excited among the laity." Apparently he paid not the slightest attention to these precepts of the prelates; on the contrary, he used his triumph to publish his great "Summa in Theologia" in thirty-three articles, in twelve books, both in Latin and in English. A part of this work is the "De Ecclesia," edited by Loserth, and Hus' "De Ecclesia" is but a meager abridgment of Wiclif's work. If the work of Hus produced such a powerful impression on the men of his day, what would the work of Wiclif have done?

In 1520 Luther at Wittenberg printed Hus' "De Ecclesia," and, in 1521, the Bohemian Utraquists presented Luther with a copy of Hus' "De Ecclesia." Buddensieg says that the ideas of Hus, and of course of Wiclif, can be traced through long portions of Luther's "Papsttum zu Rom;" the same holds good, though in less degree, of Luther's "An den christlichen Adel" and "Von der Babylonischen Gefangenschaft." He also says that the Wiclif Codex No. 1387 in Vienna bears the name Doctor Martinus Luter in a hand of the sixteenth century. Wiclif's "De Christo et Adversario suo" seems to have suggested Hus' "De Anatomia Christi," which again seems to have suggested Luther's and Cranach's "Passional Christi und Antichristi" of 1527.

There was very little in Wiclif's "conclusions" which could not boast a very respectable churchly authority: as yet

no point of doctrine was attacked; so far only principles of church property and practice were touched. What was new was that here for the first time a bold and revered university professor called on the State to reform a corrupt and unwilling Church.

In the Parliament of October, 1378, the bishops petitioned against Lancaster's killing of two squires and a cleric in violently resisting legal arrest, and Wiclif's tongue and pen were used to defend the layman against the clerics, and the reply of the Lords to the Bishops is most likely the language of Wiclif and really the sum of a part of his work on the Church, "De Ecclesia."

III. THE THEOLOGIAN.

On March 27, 1378, fourteen months after his festive entry into Rome, Gregory XI died. Twelve days after Bartholomaeus of Prignano, Archbishop of Bari, became Pope Urban VI. In the middle of May the French cardinals withdrew to Anagni, and at the end of July sent a letter to the Pope asking him to resign, saying his election was illegal, owing to the violence of the Roman mobs. On September 20, at Fondi, in Neapolitan territory, they elected Cardinal Bishop Robert of Cambray, Count of Geneva, known as Clement VII, and the great scandalous schism of thirty years was begun. At first Wiclif thought well of Urban VI and trusted he would at last begin the sorely needed reform of the Church, but when the two rival popes hurled the most terrible curses at one another and drove the nations of Europe to take sides and embroiled them in bloody wars, they appeared to Wiclif as "false popes," "whose office was without warrant in the Bible," apostates, members of Antichrist and not of Christ, "the two halves of Antichrist," "praise God, who split the head of the serpent, let the two parts destroy each other." He renounces the pope and denounces him as Antichrist, "the head vicar of the fiend," "glowing with satanic pride and simoniacal greed," "a sinful idiot who might be a damned devil in hell."

In order to get the sinews of war for his crusade against

his French rival pope, Urban VI sold indulgences in England. One of the hucksters said at his command angels came from heaven to free souls in purgatory and lead them straight to heaven if the people paid well into the war chest of this holy crusade. Evidently Tetzal later took a leaf out of this man's book. Henry Spencer, the bloody bishop of Norwich, who had cruelly butchered peasants in 1381, in person led an army of ruffians to Flanders against "the Clementines," the followers of Clement VII. Here was a grand exhibition of every papal abuse Wiclif had complained of, and in 1382 he for the last time used his pen for political pamphlets. In the "Cruciata," his most powerful polemic, Wiclif denounces the crusade and calls the indulgences the "abomination of desolation in the holy place," and says "the pope has left the path of Christ and is walking in the path of Satan," and that this is the cause of the misery of the Church.

As Wiclif studied the Bible, he began to see that the corruption of the Roman church came from the false doctrine of the Roman church, and he began the great appeal to the Bible. His summons to the State to reform the Church gave the first distinct keynote which the great reforming Councils of Baale and Constance took up in the next century.

The more he studies the Bible, the clearer becomes his judgments, the firmer his language: "In a single word of the Bible there is more wholesome teaching than in all the decretals and bulls" of the pope; "if you do not know the Bible, you will become the slave of the Antichrist;" "not to know the Bible is not to know Christ, to be contrary to the Bible is to be a heretic;" "the Bible alone is infallible, true in all its parts, the only authority for the faith of the Church;" "a book for everybody;" "if we had a hundred popes and all the friars of the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we more trust the Gospel than all this multitude."—To tradition he gave a lower place, the consensus of Christendom deserved respect, but the decrees of councils were of no authority if against the Bible. He did not reject reason, but held that it

alone could not discover truth. The light of nature had its place, and he would accept its helpful offices, but the Bible is the last and infallible basis of belief and supreme judge of doctrine and practice. And this Bible every Christian must interpret for himself. "Christ hath made His servants free, but Antichrist hath made them bond again." "To say that laymen are not entitled to sit in judgment upon the life and official conduct of their spiritual superiors, is as much as to say that it is not competent for the laity to concern themselves about their own salvation." Everyone able to read has the right to get his religion direct from the Bible.

In addition to translating the Bible, Wiclif wrote his great Bible apology, "On the Truth of the Holy Scripture," to the editing of which Prof. Buddensieg gave twenty years of his life. In it he says: "No Christian dare admit the Bible teaches anything wrong. He that has a false understanding of the Bible dare not admit error to be in the Bible, for the error is not in the Bible, but in him that explains it erroneously. God's Word is the basis for every article of faith, the example and mirror in which the Christian may detect every error. The Holy Scripture is the faith of the Church, and the clearer we know its true meaning, the better. Spite all hindrances the French have translated the Bible from Latin into French, why not the English? And if English lords have French Bibles, it is not unreasonable to have them in English also." "Christen men and women, olde and young, shulden study fast in the New Testament, and no simple man of wit shulde be aferde unmeasurably to study in the text of Holy Writ. Pride and covetise of clerks is cause of their blyndnesse and heresie, and priveth them fro verie understanding of Holy Writ. The New Testament is of ful autoritie, and open to understanding of simple men, as to the poynts that ben most needful to salvation. The texte of Holy Writ ben wordes of everlasting life, and he that kepeth mekeness and charitie hath the trewe understanding and perfection of all Holy Writ. It seemeth open heresy to say that the Gospel with his truth and freedom suf-

fieth not to salvation of Christen men without keypyng of ceremonies and statutes of sinful men and unkynginge, that ben made in the tyme of Sathanas and Antichriste."

The Church is the communion of saints, the whole number of those that shall be saved, the mystical body of Christ; the Pope cannot be head of this Church, that is Christ only; it is impossible to excommunicate anyone from this church unless he have first done it himself.

By ordinance of Christ priests and bishops are all one, and all pastors are of equal grade, and all Christians are spiritual priests; Church and State are to be separate; the seat of all power and authority, in Church and State, is in the people.

The two sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not empty signs, but real means of grace, even if the priest is an unworthy man, though faith is needed to get the benefit; he hinted very strongly that the other five were no more sacraments than preaching.

Any slight good work done the living is far better than any amount of treasure for the soul of a dead man. The treasury of the merits of the saints in heaven from which the Pope sells indulgences is a swindle to cheat Christians and pick their pockets, and the people who let themselves be cheated are fools.

The worship of saints and images he rejected; saints he honored, and images he tolerated. For confirmation and extreme unction he finds no warrant in the Bible. Private confession is good in itself; public confession is better; enforced auricular confession is a "sacrament of the devil," an invention introduced after Satan had been loosed, and confessors are "idolatrours, leproous, and simoniacal heretics." Enforced celibacy is unscriptural and immoral. Indulgences are "blasphemy, lewdest heresy." He was earnestly opposed to all wars, and would have made a good member of a Peace Congress at The Hague. Relics, pilgrimages, purgatory, papal bulls, priestly absolution he rejected. The hierarchy of Rome are "the twelve daughters of the diabolical leech;" the cardinals are "incarnate devils;" the monks "gluttonous idolaters."

In earlier years Wiclif had thought well of the begging monks over against the wealthy secular clergy, but in time he saw their corruption, and about 1378 he began his vigorous assaults on them as the supports of the Pope. When it was said the Bible does not know monks, Wiclif with mild sarcasm answered: "But it does; in this text: 'I know you not.'" He bitterly assailed them for their share in carrying on this war, for their indulgences and sale of prayers, for their cupidity, luxury, extravagance, and fight against the English Bible. William of Wykeham, the political opponent of Wiclif, the founder of New College, declared with grief, that upon "a diligent examination of the various rules of the religious orders and comparison with the lives of their several professors, he could not anywhere find that the ordinances of their founders, according to their true design and intention, were at present observed by any of them."

Twenty years before Wiclif began his protest against the flagrant abuses in the Church, Bishop Fitz Ralph of Armagh laid his famous indictment of the four orders of the monks before the Pope at Avignon. He said, "I have in my diocese of Armagh two thousand persons a year (as I think) who are excommunicated for willful homicide, public robbery, arson, and similar acts; of whom scarcely forty in a year come to me or my parish priests for confession. For commonly, if there be any cursed swearer, extortioner, or adulterer, he will not be shriven at his own curate, but go to a flattering friar, that will assoil him falsely for a little money by year." The rich were forgiven for a window in the cloister, the poor for a pair of shoes or a dinner. Some of the monks even gave it out that any man or woman who put on a friar's dress at the hour of death could not be damned.

Owing to the scarcity of clergymen after the plague, Archbishop Islip ordained laymen, and he "did ordain that more should not be given to priests for their yearly stipend than three pounds six shillings and eight pence, which caused many of them to steal," Stow naively tells us.

In 1379 Wiclif was very ill, but when four monks came to convert him, he called his servant to prop him up in bed and said, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the friars."

As early as 1362 Wiclif had doubts about Transubstantiation, and in 1367 he taught the "sacramental presence" of Christ's body. In the spring of 1381 he put forth his powerful Twelve Theses on the Eucharist, in which he denies that the bread is destroyed after consecration; it does not cease to be bread, though Christ's body is present, really, not locally, but sacramentally, as really as the bread, in "a sacramental coexistence," "as Christ is at once God and man, so the Sacrament is at once Christ's body and bread, bread in a natural manner, Christ's body in a sacramental manner." He insists that Transubstantiation was neither taught in the Word of God nor supported by tradition in the first thousand years of the Church, and calls it the most dangerous heresy ever smuggled into the Church by cunning hypocrites; it denies the truth of Scripture, robs the people, is a cause of idolatry, the people making the wafer their God, the priest having "made the body of Christ." Lord Brougham, Dr. Storrs, and the *Encyclopedia Americana* say Wiclif taught practically and substantially the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and Lechler says he was nearer to Luther than to Zwingli and Calvin. "Wiclif's doctrine is an echo of the Apostles and a prelude to the Reformation." — "From the eleventh century the dogma of the Church has been perverted. The popes have been wrong, the councils have been wrong, the decretals are full of heresy. If Rome will not unsay her false doctrine, the national churches must repudiate her claim to lead them. She has built up a crazy superstructure on the true foundation; we must sweep it away, and get back to the life and words of Christ." "We have but to preach constantly the Law of Christ, even before the prelates of Caesar, and a blooming martyrdom will promptly come, if we abide in faith and patience." (*Triologus* III, ch. 15.)

This attack on the very foundation of the papacy created a sensation and consternation, as did the famous theses of Luther in 1517. Lancaster and other powerful friends told him they could not follow him in his heresy. But Wiclif was nothing daunted. Sure of the truth of his position, he deliberately sacrificed the protection of the court. If need be, he could die for the truth, but he would not deny the truth.

Still more friends were estranged from Wiclif's cause by the rising of the peasants in this same year.

The awful plague of the "Black Death," in 1349, cut down the population of England one half, London alone losing 100,000. Many left their property to the Church, so that she owned one third of the soil of England, and her dues amounted to twice the royal revenue. The wars with France were a heavy drain on the country, and the burden of taxation fell heaviest on the peasants, the Church being untaxed.

In 1379 a poll tax was levied, unheard of till then; it was paid "with great grudging and many a bitter curse," Hollinshed chronicles. In 1381 it was ruthlessly collected, and under the "mad priest" John Ball, Jack Straw, and Wat Tyler the peasants revolted, as they had done in France in the Jacquerie for the same reason. They were willing to pay the fifteenth, as their fathers had done, but they could not possibly pay this tax.

The peasants rose against their oppressors in Essex, Kent, Suffolk, and elsewhere; they marched on London and sacked the city, they burned Gaunt's palace in the Savoy, on June 13, 1381, they in the Tower beheaded Archbishop Sudbury, the responsible Chancellor since July 4, 1379. The young King rode out and made them satisfactory promises. The promises were not kept. As in the Peasants' War in Luther's time, the peasants were forcibly put down and cruelly slaughtered, seven thousand were burned, beheaded, disemboweled. This went on till January, 1382, when the fifteen year old King Richard II married Anna of Luxemburg, sister of King Wenzel of Bohemia and daughter of the German Emperor Charles IV. It is worthy

of mention that she brought with her a Bible in Latin, German, and Bohemian.

Though Wiclif was not responsible for the rising of the peasants, still Wiclif's enemies heaped the blame on him and on his teaching, and with the timid and prudent Wiclif's cause was much damaged, as was Luther's cause in his day.

Milwaukee, Wis.

W. DALLMANN.

(To be continued.)

IN BEHALF OF PAUL GERHARDT AND THE ELENCHUS.

Six weeks before his sixtieth birthday, at an age when the judgment of men is matured and their actions are taken deliberately, Paul Gerhardt, poet-confessor of the Lutheran Church, resigned his office of second *Diakonus* at St. Nicolai in Berlin (January 27, 1667). The reasons for this painful step appear to pass the comprehension of not a few of his less scrupulous epigones in the land over which the resolute house of Hohenzollern holds sway. Palmer confesses that he is "puzzled" at Gerhardt's action. He is at a loss to understand "why a poet of so rich and pure a mind, and a theologian whose religion and Christianity was not riveted to dogmatic formulas,—as has been the case with many before and after him,—not only failed to keep aloof from the wrangles of his day, but is even seen to have been the most uncompromising opponent of the Reformed theologians." He has scanned critically the features of Gerhardt in the portraits which Langbecker and Schulz have added to their biographies of Gerhardt, and he declares: There is not a trace of bigotry, of the *odium theologicum*, discernible in this benevolent countenance; it reminds one much more of Herrnhut than of Wittenberg portraits. He concludes, accordingly, that in Gerhardt's resignation "we have before us a psychological problem to which our modern theological consciousness furnishes no key, because we

field, that is, in your flesh and blood, where he seeks when he may reach you, and surprise you when you are unguarded, and tries now this artifice, and then that, when he cannot overthrow you with one; now with false confidence, with doubt; then with anger, impatience, avarice, evil lusts, etc., as he sees his opportunity, and finds you weak. — Therefore think not that it is a jest, and that he is playing with you, for he is furious and more hungry than any hungry lion, and aims not only at inflicting wounds upon you, nor giving you a thrust, but at devouring you wholly and entirely, so that there remain not anything of you, either as to the soul or the body.” (Ep. for III. p. Trin. New Market Ed., p. 45.)

The dangers which encompass the Christians are great indeed, hence the apostle exhorts them: “Be sober, be vigilant!” “Resist steadfast in the faith.” Resist *steadfast*, *στερεοί*, as *firm* people. How are they such? Through *faith*. Faith relies upon God, upon Christ, and God is stronger than the devil. Faith is the victory that overcometh the world and the devil. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” James 4, 7; Matt. 4, 1—11.

Springfield, Ill.

LOUIS WESSEL.

(To be continued.)

JOHN WICLIF.

III. THE THEOLOGIAN.

(Continued.)

As the time seemed favorable, the Chancellor of Oxford, William de Berton, an enemy of Wiclif, in 1381 gathered twelve of the “most expert” doctors of theology and canon law and condemned Wiclif’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, and forbade its teaching at Oxford under pain of excommunication. Wiclif was lecturing on the subject in the beautiful Augustinian cloister, where now Wadham College stands, when the sentence

of condemnation was handed to him. He was taken aback, it is said, though no sign of confusion is mentioned, but firmly replied, "You put force in place of reasons. Prove me wrong and I'll be silent." But neither the Chancellor nor his colleagues had been able to break his arguments from the Bible. "As a stubborn heretic he appealed not to the Pope, nor to the bishops, but to the King," writes Netter of Walden. Lancaster himself rode down to Oxford and "prohibits the said John from saying another word on the subject." But "the said John" did say another word, and a big one at that. On May 10 he promptly put forth his great "Confessio de Sacramento Altaris," defending his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. (Edited by Dr. Johann Loserth, Professor of History in the University of Czernowitz.) He defies his enemies: "Woe to the adulterous generation that believes an Innocent and Raimund rather than the plain words of the Gospel! Woe to the apostates that bury the Bible truth under the rubbish of later traditions! But I trust that in the end the Truth will conquer!" He appeals from the King to his Oxonians and to the English people, and in the "Wicket" he makes plain to the English people his doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

On May 6, 1382, Wiclif replied to the Council that had condemned his teaching in his "Complainte to King and Parliament," and asked to defend himself. "I appeal to the Church of the first thousand years since our Lord's time. I challenge the existing Church to dispute these questions with me. You reply that the Church has settled the matter; and have, in fact, condemned me beforehand. I cannot expect at your hands anything else but to be silenced, and, what is more, according to your new Ordinance, imprisoned. I know what that means. I demand, therefore, that the lay voice be heard . . . the English people, who have now the Bible in their hands, will speedily perceive that I am no heretic, but the truest Churchman in the land." He makes a stirring appeal to Parliament to maintain the simple faith of Christ "as they are bound on pain of damnation, since it is openly taught in Holy Writ, and by reason

and wit; and damn we this cursed heresy of Antichrist, and his hypocrites, and worldly priests."

After the death of Sudbury, the energetic and powerful William Courtenay, an old enemy of Wiclif, was made Archbishop. On May 6, 1382, he received his pallium from Rome, and on the 17th he called a court to try Wiclif's doctrine. He formed a union with the monks for this purpose, and Wiclif grimly remarks, "On that day Pilate and Herod became friends. If those two made out Christ a heretic, it will be easy for these to brand true Christians as heretics."

The court of ten bishops, sixteen Doctors, and eight Bachelors of Theology, thirteen Doctors of the Canon and Civil Law and two Bachelors of Law, and others, sixty in all, met in the Dominican monastery of the Black Friars in Holborn, where the *Times* and the Bible House now stand. But at two o'clock in the afternoon all London is shaken by a violent earthquake, and the judges grow pale with superstitious awe. Twice before Wiclif's trial has been strangely broken off; are the very elements, now at the third time, in league with the Reformer? Shall the trial be given up? "No!" thunders the resolute Courtenay, rising in his place and with rare presence of mind saying, "We shall not give up the trial. This earthquake but portends the purging of the kingdom; for as there are in the bowels of the earth noxious vapors which only by a violent earthquake can be purged away, so are these evils brought by such men upon this land which only by a very earthquake can ever be removed. Let the trial go forward!"

Wiclif's explanation was, that this earthquake was God's condemnation of His enemies, as the earthquake at Christ's crucifixion had been God's condemnation of Christ's enemies. Wiclif was not present at this "Earthquake Council," as he calls it, likely owing to his first stroke of paralysis.

Twenty-four articles were brought against the Reformer, and after a debate of three days ten were condemned as heretical, the rest as erroneous. His chief heresy was his denial of transubstantiation, which overthrew the very foundation on which the vast power of the priesthood was built up. If the

priest did not have the power of working the daily miracle of "making the body of Christ," of what use was he?

On May 28, Friar Peter Stokes, the Carmelite Doctor of Theology in Oxford and the Primate's Commissary at the University, received the mandate to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's teaching at Oxford, although the heretic's name was not mentioned. Three days later the Bishop of London was ordered to tell all the other bishops to publish the condemnation and to forbid the preaching of these heresies.

On Whitsun-Friday, May 30, the Synod and large numbers of the clergy and laity moved in a barefoot procession through the streets of London to St. Paul's where John Cuninghame, a Carmelite Doctor of Theology and one of the most celebrated divines of the day, preached the sermon on the condemned doctrines and at the close read the Archbishop's mandate of Wiclif's condemnation.

At Oxford Wiclif was still the "Evangelical Doctor," the "Flower of Oxford," the greatest living teacher of philosophy and theology, the representative of views shared by at least one half of the university, whose influence was especially great among the younger Masters of Art. On Ascension Day, May 15, 1382, Nicholas Hereford, Wiclif's most prominent disciple, preached a violent sermon against Wiclif's opponents in the cemetery of St. Frideswide, and they appealed to Gaunt. Friar Stokes could not get the new Wiclifite chancellor Robert Rygge to act against the heretic, and the friar did not dare publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrine "for fear of death." Spite a threatening letter from the Archbishop, Rygge permitted Philip Repington to preach before the university a strong defense of Wiclif on Corpus Christi, June 5, 1382. The excitement was so great that the Chancellor had secured from the mayor a guard of a hundred armed men, while twenty others with weapons under their gowns escorted the preacher.

Henry Crompton, a monk and a Doctor of Divinity in Oxford, called Wiclif a Lollard, a term of recent origin and now for the first time applied publicly to Wiclif. Chancellor Rygge

promptly suspended the offender. The Archbishop called the Chancellor sharply to account at the adjourned Synod on June 12, and Rygge said it would "cost his life to enforce the condemnation of Wiclif at Oxford," but he promised to submit.

On May 26, 1382, King Richard II admitted a "Statute of the Kingdom" with the pretended consent of Parliament, which made every county officer of the king a policeman of the bishops to imprison every preacher pointed out by a bishop. In October the Commons objected to this forgery, and the king had to withdraw it; the Commons refused "to bind over themselves or their descendants to the prelates."

Fearing that the forged "Statute" of May 26 might not serve his purpose, Courtenay on June 26 got the boy-king to issue a "Royal Ordinance" giving power to the bishops themselves to imprison defenders of Wiclif's doctrines until they recanted, or other action should be taken by the king. This was practically the Inquisition; in fact, Courtenay calls himself "the Chief Inquisitor" and says the other bishops were to be each an inquisitor in his own diocese. Armed with this big stick, Courtenay proceeded to win for himself the shameful distinction of being, according to Hook, the first English churchman to use force in matters of religion. He set about resolutely to hunt down Wiclif's disciples one by one, and forced them to flee, recant, or go to prison. But Wiclif never backed down; without helmet or miter, alone and to the very last, he went on fighting the Antichrist. In his latest writings, such as the "Trialogus" and "Wicket," he is just as vigorous and unconcerned as if there never had been a powerful hostile Archbishop and a powerful faithless John O'Gaunt.

At last, on July 13, King Richard commanded Chancellor Rygge to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrines and banish Wiclif, Hereford, Repyngton, and Aston from the University and town of Oxford within seven days. Wiclif left, and Oxford was dark and dead for a hundred years.

It is held by many that in November, 1382, he was called on once more to answer for doctrines to the Convocation of

Canterbury at Oxford, but he defended himself with freedom, faithfulness, and unflinching courage that no recantation could be extorted and no condemnation passed. He retired in peace to his rectory at Lutterworth.

IV. THE REFORMER.

It is a strong proof of the astonishing hold which Wiclif had gained over large sections of the English people that spite the condemnation of bishop and pope he yet escaped all personal violence. Though hating him with the deepest hatred, the clergy did not dare lay hands on his person; public opinion was too strong for the champion of England, and the Commons seemed to be too much under his influence. In 1382 the bishops and barons voted to silence and suppress Wiclif's poor priests, but the Commons objected, and it never became a law. In 1385 the Commons even voted the church endowments to secular uses, but the Lords objected.

Wiclif left Oxford and retired to his parish at Lutterworth, translating the Bible, preaching sermons, writing tracts, and training his "poor priests" to preach the Gospel.

A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a poore PERSOUN of a toun;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient. . . .
 Wyd was his parisshes, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In sikness nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreate in his parisshes, muche and lyte,
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte, . . .
 And though he holy were and vertuouus,
 He was to sinful man nat despitous . . .
 To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse:
 But if evere any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones. . . .
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

Many think that in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer drew the picture of Wiclif; at any rate, the description fits him perfectly.

Having found the truth in the Bible, Wiclif soon saw the need of spreading the Bible. "To be ignorant of the Bible is to be ignorant of Christ," he said; again, "The Sacred Scriptures are the property of the people, and one which no one should be allowed to wrest from them. . . . Christ and His apostles converted the world by making known the Scriptures to men in a form familiar to them . . . and I pray with all my heart that through doing the things contained in this book we may all together come to the everlasting life." In his treatise on the "Meaning and Truth of Scripture" he argues that, "though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the Gospel than we should from all that multitude." Elsewhere he says, "Since secular men should understand the faith, it should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them."

Wiclif was the first to give to Englishmen the whole Bible in their "modir tonge," and he spent many years on the work. He turned into English the Gospels and likely the rest of the New Testament; his disciple Nicholas de Hereford worked on most of the Old Testament; the rest was finished by another, possibly Wiclif himself, about 1382.

As soon as the work of translation was done, Wiclif set about to improve it. The whole was revised by his attendant and secretary, John Purvey, whose own manuscript is still in the library of Trinity College, Dublin; the work was finished about 1388, certainly before 1400. Spite all Bible burnings a hundred and seventy copies remain, and several of these very New Testaments may be seen in the Lenox Branch of the New York Library, especially a very fine one presented by Mr. William Waldorf Astor. One of the remaining copies belonged to Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester; another to King Henry VI, who gave it to the Charter House; another appar-

ently to Richard III; another likely to Edward VI; another to Henry VII; another was given to Queen Elizabeth for a birthday present.

Tyndale's printed Bible cost 3 s. 6 d., or about \$10.00 in our money, but Wiclif's hand-written Bible cost £2, 16 s. 8 d., or nearly \$200.00 in our money. The great cost of the Bible of course prevented a very wide sale, yet it was spread. Where there is a will, there is a way: a large sum was paid for even a few sheets; a load of hay was given for permission to read it one hour a day for a certain period; those unable to read clubbed together to pay some one to read to them; at little gatherings one Alice Collins was sent for "to recite the ten commandments and parts of the Epistles of SS. Paul and Peter, which she knew by heart." "Certes, the zeal of those Christian days seems much superior to this of our day, and to see the travail of them may well shame our careless times," says old John Fox in his famous *Book of Martyrs*. "God grant to us all grace to ken well and to kepe well Holie Writ, and to suffer joiefulli some paine for it at the laste," prays Richard Purvey in the preface to his Bible.

The monumental work was splendidly printed in four quarto volumes at Oxford in 1850, and the accomplished editors Forshall and Madden spent twenty-two laborious years in editing it.

Lechler says, Wiclif's English Bible "marks an epoch in the development of the English language, almost as much as Luther's translation does in the history of the German tongues. The Luther Bible opens the period of the new High German. Wiclif's Bible stands at the head of the Middle English."

John Wiclif is not only the greatest figure in Oxford history, but, along with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, one of the four men who have produced the greatest effect on the English language and literature. Wiclif's Bible gave form and richness to the English language. Dr. Vaughan says, "His writings contributed, far more than those of any other man, to form and invigorate the dialect of his country."

"If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry,

Wiclif is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts . . . is, in its literary use, as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip," says Green, *Hist. Eng. People I*, p. 489.

"Wiclif's Bible and prose writings were the creators of our modern English. As Luther opened the period of the new High German, so Wiclif laid the foundations among the common people for the present English speech. Chaucer wrote more for the higher classes," says Bishop Hurst, *History I*, p. 24.

Wiclif's translation was looked upon as an act of sacrilege, worthy of punishment. So furious was the outcry against him, as an audacious violator who had dared touch the holy ark with unholy hands, that even a bill was brought into the House of Lords, in 1391, forbidding the people to read the Bible, and it would have become law but for sturdy John of Gaunt. "The Duke of Lancaster answered right sharply: 'We will not be the refuse of other nations; for since they have God's law, which is the law of our belief, in their own language, we will have ours in English, whoever say nay.' And this he affirmed with a great oath."

To the storm of indignation against himself Wiclif replied very simply: "The clergy cry aloud that it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English, and so they would condemn the Holy Ghost, who gave tongues to the Apostles of Christ to speak the Word of God in all languages under heaven."

Knyghton, the old chronicler, voices the general sentiment of the papacy in the following lament: "This Master John Wiclif translated it out of Latin into the Anglican, not the angelic tongue, and thus laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, or even to those of them that had the best understanding. And in this way the Gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine; that which was before precious both to clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common jest

of both. The jewel of the Church is turned into the common sport of the people, and what was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made forever common to the laity."

Archbishop Arundel, more zealous than learned, complained to the Pope of "that pestilent wretch, John Wiclif, the son of the old Serpent, the forerunner of Antichrist, who had completed his iniquity by inventing a new translation of the Scriptures," and in 1408 the Convocation of Canterbury in St. Paul's, London, said, "It is a dangerous thing . . . to translate the text of the Scripture out of one tongue into another. . . . We therefore decree and ordain . . . that no man read any such book . . . under pain of the major excommunication, until the said translation be approved." Under the influence of this same Arundel, the law of England was so changed as to make heresy punishable with death. But when John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1431 threatened with excommunication any who translated the Bible or copied such translation, he made no reserve in favor of any accepted version. Why should he? "The decrees of the bishops in the church are of greater weight and dignity than the authority of Scripture," was the opinion of Thomas Netter of Walden, the confessor of King Henry V. The air was filled with curses, fagots were gathered, fires were lighted, Bible readers were burned with the Bible tied around their necks.

The Latin schoolman now turned English pamphleteer, and for his "Oxford Movement" wrote a flood of "tracts for the times" in strong, nervous English, of which the best known is "The Wicket," a defense of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper; others are, "The Church and her members," "The Great Sentence of Curse," "The Schism of the Roman Pontiffs," etc.

In those days the pulpit was in a bad way. The preaching monks regaled their hearers with tales of Troy or silly stories of the saints in order to catch the penny collection, and "penny preachers" is the term Brother Berthold of Regensburg applies to them as early as the 13th century. Even Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, took an old French

dancing song for the text of a sermon, applying "the Fair Alice" and all that is said of her to the Holy Virgin. Even the Dominican Jacob Eckard pronounced such things "stale and absurd."

Wiclif not only translated the Bible into the language of the people, he also preached and enforced it in the plain language of the people. He sought to reform the pulpit, he avoided the dry scholasticism on the one hand and the silly sensationalism on the other. In humble speech the pastor of Lutterworth sought to impart a spiritual knowledge to souls that would die without it. He declared, "In every preaching of the Gospel the true teacher must address himself to the heart, so as to flash the light into the spirit of the hearer and to bend his will into obedience to the truth." "The highest service that man may attain to on earth is to preach God's Word," said Wiclif. The Word is "the life-seed, begetting regeneration and spiritual life." "O marvelous power of the Divine seed, which overpowers the strong man armed, softens obdurate hearts, and changes into Divine men those who were brutalized in sin, and removed to an infinite distance from God." When he portrays Christ, Wiclif is sweet and tender; as a loving brother he directs his hearers to Christ. A classic saying is traced to Wiclif's pulpit: "This I have suffered for thee; what dost thou suffer for Me?"

As Luther would have sermons in Latin for the learned and in German for the plain people, so Wiclif would have the faith preached in Latin and in English. "If Christ and His apostles converted many through sermons in the language of the people, why should not the modern disciples of Christ deal out crumbs from the same bread?" Four volumes of Wiclif's Latin sermons have been edited by Prof. Loserth, and three volumes of his English ones by Thomas Arnold. "The Sonedai Gospelis, Expowned in Partie," written about 1382, is a collection of sermon skeletons, likely for the use of his "poor priests." In 1362 Edward III ordered all legal pleadings to be done in English, "on the ground that French was not much known." And Wiclif was probably the first man to introduce English preaching in

the universities and churches. This is certainly a turning point of the English language and literature.

Luther, "when a tyro at Erfurt," came across a volume of Hus's sermons in the library, and, "burning with curiosity," read one "so skilled in expounding Scripture;" in reading Hus, Luther was reading the ideas of Wiclif.

The next step was to preach and spread the Bible more widely. Accordingly, Wiclif gathered around him his "poor priests," university men most of them, clad in long gowns of undressed wool, rough and brown as russet apples, going bare-foot or on sandals, carrying staves, and preaching the simple Gospel in plain speech to the common people and spreading parts of the Bible. The common people heard them gladly and neglected the monks; many of the middle class helped Wiclif in this work; even at Court Lord Salisbury was their public patron.

In May, 1382, we hear for the first time of these "preachers of God's law" in a mandate of Archbishop Courtenay complaining of "certain uncalled traveling preachers, seemingly very holy, but without episcopal authority, spreading erroneous, nay, heretical assertions in holy and unholy places;" but his complaint does not seem to have done much good. An Oxford commission complains to the Archbishop in the same year that "within a few years" these preachers had arisen.

Wiclif's pure character, his fervent faith, the spiritual energy of his life, had made a deep impression. His disciples, known as Lollards, were found everywhere. Wiclif himself asserted that a whole third of all the clergy had adopted his teaching, and Knyghton, the chronicler, regretfully writes that "of two persons met on the road, one of them was sure to be a Wiclifite." The widow of the Black Prince was favorable to them, and King Richard's "good Queen Anne" was almost an active partisan.

It is held by some that in his last years Wiclif was cited to Rome by Pope Urban, but the frailty of age alone simply made such a trip impossible, and he refused.

While attending service in his own church on Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, 1384, a second stroke of paralysis ended the labors of the veteran; his tongue was lamed, and he never spoke again; he died three days later and was buried in the chancel of the church at Lutterworth, the town he made immortal.

Here is a choice specimen from Walsingham, one of the monkish writers of the time, describing Wiclif's death:—"John Wiclif, the organ of the devil, the enemy of the Church, the idol of heretics, the image of hypocrites, the restorer of schism, the storehouse of lies, the sink of flattery, being struck by the horrible judgment of God, was seized with the palsy throughout his whole body, and that mouth which was to have spoken huge things against God and His saints, and holy Church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to beholders; his tongue was speechless and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse which God had thundered forth against Cain was also inflicted on him."

The *Chronicon Angliæ* says, "This fellow was called John, but he did not deserve to be. For he had cast away the grace which God had given him, turning from the truth which is in God, and giving himself to fables." The St. Albans monk calls him the "lying glutton, Dr. Wickedbelieve," and Adam of Usk calls him "Mahomet who preached incontinence to the young and confiscation to the rich."

It is a curious fact that spite the hate of the clergy, Wiclif in life was never judicially declared to be a heretic and never formally threatened with the ban of excommunication; he died in the possession of his office and dignity as Rector of Lutterworth.

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7

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Cordatus' Controversy with Melanchthon.....	1
Christ's Descent into Hell and the Possibility of Conversion after Death	20
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary.....	35
John Wiclif	43
Dr. Martin Luther's Treatise of Confession, Whether the Pope Have Power to Enjoin Same	48
The Arminian Argument in Rom. 7, 14—25.....	65
Can Man Understand the Bible by His Own Natural Powers?.....	94
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary.....	106
Wartburg Letters of Luther	111
Miscellany	118
Book Review	124
Balaam	120
Cordatus' Controversy with Melanchthon	143
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary.....	169
Miscellany	178
Book Review	189
The Analogy of Faith and Rom. 12, 6.....	193
Balaam	218
The Proof Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary.....	243
Book Review	251

JOHN WICLIF.

V. THOUGH DEAD, YET SPEAKING.

F. D. Matthew says, "Wiclif was no religious genius like Luther," and, "He lacked that strong personal stamp which wins our regard for Luther." Yet he was the scourge of imposture, the ponderous hammer which smote the brazen idolatry of his age. The grand old man, the illustrious pioneer of reform in England, stands out in solitary and mysterious loneliness, and through the haze of six long centuries his dim image looks down like the portrait of the first of a long line of kings, without personality or expression, yet from the quarries of history we can gather enough stones to make a mosaic of him.

Wiclif had a tall, spare figure, sharply-cut features, firm-set lips, a piercing eye, a flowing, grizzled beard, a thoughtful, earnest, dignified presence, a charming manner; he was a bright and pleasant companion in everyday life and at table, and the highest ranks delighted in his society, owing to his wit, humor, and sarcasm; he had fervent and unfeigned piety, moral energy, and intellectual fearlessness, and led a blameless life; never very strong in body, he yet wrote about ninety-six works in Latin and about sixty-five in English.

Wiclif was a brilliant Oxford professor and a humble parish priest; a theologian and a philosopher; a religious reformer and a political economist; a translator of the Bible and a practical trainer of priests; a caustic critic and a successful organizer; an orator and an author; a hard-hitting polemic and a gentle Gospel preacher; a man of the court and a man of the people; a master of books and a leader of men; a Latin scholastic and an English pamphleteer; the last of the Schoolmen and the first of the Reformers; a student of the past and a builder for the future; a vigorous assailant of abuses and an unerring searcher for the seat of trouble; a man of fierce invective and of deep sympathy; a dry logic chopper and the master of picturesque, idiomatic, strong, nervous, and racy English; a polished man of the world and a humble and sin-

cere Christian, who lost in his life and triumphed after his death.

Wm. Thorpe, examined for heresy before Archbishop Arundel, said, "Master John Wiclif was considered by many to be the most holy of all men in his age. He was of emaciated frame, spare, and well-nigh destitute of strength; and he was absolutely blameless in his conduct. Wherefore many of the chief men of this kingdom, who frequently held counsel with him, kept a record of what he said, and guided themselves after his manner of life."

Twenty-two years after his death, Wiclif's Alma Mater bore him testimony as follows:—"With one heart, voice, and testimony we witness all his conduct throughout his whole life to have been praiseworthy; whose honest manners, profound scholarship, and redolent fame and sweetness we earnestly desire to be known to all the faithful; for we hold his ripe conversation and assiduous labors to tend to the praise of God, the salvation of others, and the benefit of the Church. We therefore signify unto you by these presents that his conversation, from tender years up to the time of his death, was so excellent and honest, that never was there any annoyance or sinister suspicion or infamy reported of him; but in answering, reading, preaching, he behaved himself laudably, as a strong champion of the faith, vanquishing those who by voluntary beggary blasphemed Christ's religion, by Catholic sentences out of Holy Scripture. Nor was the aforesaid doctor convicted of heresy, nor burned of our prelates after burial. God forbid that by our prelates a man of such probity should be condemned for a heretic, who wrote in logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative sciences without his peer, as we believe, in all our University."

Carping critics find fault with Wiclif's rude speech. To be sure, he handled the pope and the corruptions of the church without gloves. His denunciations are indeed fearful. But sledge-hammers, battering-rams, and earthquakes were needed to rouse men out of their stupor. Men like Wiclif and Luther

knew what they were talking about, likewise they knew how to talk; their critics living four and five hundred years later know neither the one nor the other.

Matthew says: "One of Wiclif's most marked characteristics is his essential moderation." Wiclif prayed for grace to avoid harsh language. Dr. James says: "Wiclif notes abuses in general, he never names any one of his adversaries, monk or friar." Wiclif's violence of language against the corrupt clergy is matched by the poet Gower and even Bishop Brunton of Rochester. The worldly-wise Chaucer and the enthusiastic Catholic Langland hated indulgences with intellectual scorn and moral indignation as well as the serious and spiritual Wiclif.

His austere exemplary life has defied even calumny: his vigorous, incessant efforts to reduce the whole clergy to primitive poverty have provoked no retort as to his own pride, self-interest, indulgence, inconsistent with his earnest severity, says Milman (*Latin Christ.*, Bk. 13, chap. 6).

Dr. Shirley says, "Wiclif possessed, as few ever did, the qualities, which give men power over their fellows. His enemies ascribed this power to the magic of an ascetic habit; the fact remains engraven upon every line of his face." Other enemies attributed his alleged errors to his subtlety of mind and extraordinary learning, pride of intellect and desire for distinction. Still others say that the corruptions of Rome had much to do with Wiclif's success.

After Wiclif's death the Pope was petitioned to order the heretic's body to be taken out of consecrated ground and buried in a dunghill. It is a pleasure to say to the Pope's honor that he refused to do so, as later on Charles V honorably refused to have Luther's bones disturbed, nobly saying, "I war with the living, not with the dead." In 1397, Archbishop Arundel presided over a Synod that condemned eighteen of Wiclif's conclusions; in 1409, an Oxford committee condemned two hundred and sixty-seven of his errors and burned his books at Carfax; in 1410, a papal bull against Wiclif was published in Bohemia, seventeen of his works were condemned and two

hundred copies burned; in 1413, Wiclif's books were burned by the Council of Rome; in 1415, the Council of Constance, which burned John Hus and Jerome of Prague, formally condemned Wiclif's writings, and ordered his books and bones burned; in 1423, the Council of Pavia condemned Wiclif; in 1428, Richard Flemmyng, a former disciple of Wiclif and now Bishop of Lincoln, carried out the decree of Pope Martin V and threw Wiclif's ashes into the little river Swift, "which runneth hard by his church at Lutterworth," saying, "That is the end of him!"

But that was *not* the last of him; for old Thomas Fuller says truly: "The Swift did convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wiclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea,
And Wiclif's dust shall spread abroad
Wide as the waters be.

Wordsworth in his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets XVII* expands the thought:—

Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wiclif disinhumed:
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed,
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith that ancient voice that streams can hear
Thus speaks (that voice that walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind):
As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear
Into the Avon—Avon to the tide
Of Severn—Severn to the narrow seas—
Into the main ocean they,—this deed accurst,
An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
How the bold teacher's doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.

It was easy to burn the bones and the books of Wiclif; it was not so easy to destroy his doctrine. Flemmyng himself founded Lincoln College for the express purpose of opposing Wiclifism. William of Wykeham, Wiclif's opponent, on

April 13, 1386, consecrated "St. Mary's College of Winchester in Oxford," now New College, and not long after he was reproached by the courtiers with having raised up "a seminary of heresy." Archbishop Arundel in a letter to the Chancellor of Oxford complained "that almost the whole University was affected by heretical pravity."

The truth could not be crushed to earth by building colleges, so force was tried. In 1401 they passed the notorious statute "De Haeretico Comburendo," to burn heretics, and William Sawtre was the first victim, and the good Lord Cobham the most illustrious.

The marriage of King Richard II with Anne of Luxemburg, daughter of the German Emperor Charles IV, and sister of King Wenceslaus of Bohemia, brought the two countries close together, and students from both studied at Oxford and Prague. We know that Nicholas Faulfisch carried Wiclif's works to Bohemia. Jerome, a young knight of Prague, the friend of Hus, studied at Oxford and became an enthusiastic disciple of Wiclif. "Until now," he said, "we had nothing but the shell of science: Wiclif first laid open the kernel." Thus the philosophical and theological works of Wiclif came under the eyes of John Hus and mastered him wholly: "I am drawn to them," he said, "by the manner in which they strive to lead all men back to Christ." Hus himself declares, in a paper written about 1411, that for thirty years writings of Wiclif were read at Prague, and that he himself had been in the habit of reading them for more than twenty years. (*Neander Hist. Ch.* V, p. 242.)

For many decades in Bohemia Wiclif was "the fifth evangelist," says Loserth. Refusing to condemn Wiclif, heroic Hus said, "I am content that my soul should be where his soul is."

"Hus was not merely much influenced, but absolutely dominated by these ideas. Recent investigations have furnished incontestable evidence that, in the matter of doctrine, Hus owed everything to Wiclif." So says Prof. Ludwig Pastor in his "History of the Popes," recommended by Leo XIII.

As late as the middle of the fifteenth century Chancellor Gascoigne of Oxford still cursed Wiclif "of thrice-damned memory." Wiclif's doctrines lived here and there until their faint streaks were swallowed up in the dawning glory of Luther's reformation, until the pale morning star was displaced by the dazzling sun.

In 1530 Henry VIII sent to Oxford for Wiclif's "thrice-damned" "Articles;" the University solemnly sent them, and the King warmly thanked it for doing so, and with Wiclif's articles King Henry went on "to vex the Pope . . . by promoting Wycleve's doctrine and ejecting Papacy out of his kingdom."

Fuller is right when he says of Wiclif's followers: "These men were sentinels against an army of enemies till God sent Luther to relieve them." "I am assured that the truth of the Gospel may indeed for a time be cast down in particular places, and may for a while abide in silence; but extinguished it never can be. For the Truth itself has said: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall never pass away.'"

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S TREATISE OF CONFESSION,
WHETHER THE POPE HAVE POWER
TO ENJOIN SAME.

PART THIRD.

69. I. I regard secret confession, as well as virginity and celibacy, as a very precious and salutary thing. Truly, all Christians ought to regret it very much if there were no secret confession, and they ought to thank God with all their heart that it is permitted and given us. But here lies the fault: the pope makes a corral of it and hedges it about with laws, treating it just as he does chastity. It is his nature invariably to despise and disregard everything that God has commanded. On the other hand, he frames laws concerning things which God has not commanded or merely advised us to do. Thus he exalts himself above God and demands more than God, true to his