

WAS JOHN WYCLIFFE A NEGLIGENT PLURALIST?

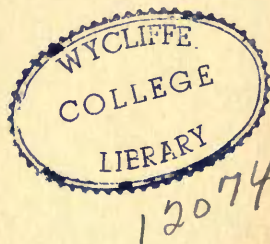
ALSO

JOHN DE TREVISA HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY

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REDLAND CHAPEL, BRISTOL



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PREFACE

IN getting together material for an adequate history of the Church of Westbury on Trym, the history of which "is, in fact, an epitome of the history of the Church of England,"¹ one of the chief difficulties has been the inaccurate and confused statements already published. I have felt inclined to echo Shirley's statement²: "Were it not that with antiquarians of this class the authority of the first assertor is too often the only authority of the whole series, we might quietly acquiesce in their decision."

Some idea of the absorbing interest of Westbury on Trym may be gained from the following *memorabilia*, which appear month by month in our parish magazine, in order to create and stimulate the interest of the parishioners:

THE PARISH CHURCH MEMORABILIA

The Church was in existence as a Monastic Church,	A.D.
having been built upon land bestowed upon	
Eanulf by King Æthelbald, <i>about</i>	715-17
King Offa restores to Worcester Cathedral land at	
Westbury given to Eanulf by King Æthelbald .	791-96

¹ Rev. C. S. Taylor, M.A., in the *Clifton Antiquarian Club*, vol. iv. p. 20.

² *Fasc. Ziz.*, p. lxx.

- The Synod of Acle confirmed to Æthelric, son of Æthelmund, his hereditary possessions and the declaration of his intended disposal of his estate of "Westmynster" and Stoc to his mother, Coilburga, for her life, with reversion to Worcester Cathedral—the first *historical* notice of a Church at Westbury. Freothmund was probably Abbot of Westbury. 804
- The Council of Clovesho, at which the claim of Heaberht, Bishop of Worcester, to Westbury Monastery against the "*Familia*" at Berkeley was upheld by King Beornulf and confirmed by Archbishop Wulfred with the Synod assenting. At the completion of the settlement at Westbury, "*post xxx noctes illud juramentum to Westmynstre deductum est,*" two hundred and ten priests and ten deacons were present, and so constituted the largest recorded gathering of Clergy in Anglo-Saxon times 824
- The Church probably plundered and despoiled by the Danes 877-910
- Benedictine Monks under Eadnoth and Germanus brought to Westbury by St. Oswald, Bishop of Worcester. Thus it was the first Benedictine Monastery in England 961
- Benedictine Monks, whose experimental settlement at Westbury proved so successful that King Edgar ordered more than forty monasteries to be founded on that model, transferred to the newly-founded monastery at Ramsey 974
- Westbury Monastery, "through the Iniquity of Times, negligence of the Priors and Ravages of Pyrates, Wasted and Ruined," fell into the hands of William the Conqueror: "There was no more than a single priest and he seldom sang mass there" 1066
- St. Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, "studied to repair" the Monastery and restored the Monks: "as to the lands taken away, and then in possession of laymen, some of them he recovered by law, others he redeemed

with his own money and restored them to the Church"	A.D. 1093
Sampson, Bishop of Worcester, took from the Monks at Worcester the Monastery of Westbury and placed there the Seculars, "such a crime as not to be pardoned; and because he happened to die there, they gave it out that it was a judgment upon him for what he had done" . . .	1096-1112
Simon, Bishop of Worcester, restored to the Monks "the right they formerly had to the Church of Westbury, in Salso Marisco, with its appurtenances, to wit, the Chapel of St. Wareburge, situated upon Hembirie Hill, and the Chapel of Cumptune: and he the more readily gave them the Investiture of the same, for as much as he knew the Monks of Worcester had served God there in the times of Blessed Oswald and Wulfstan, and had been impudently put out by Bishop Sampson"	1125-50
John de Kirkeby, subsequently Bishop of Ely (1296), Canon and Prebendary of Westbury, before . . .	1286
Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, enlarged the Church. After much dispute with the Papal See and his monks at Worcester about Prebends at Westbury, the foundation still consisted of a Dean and five Prebendaries, as formerly . . .	1288-1301
William de Mellon, subsequently Chancellor of England and Archbishop of York (1317), Canon and Prebendary of Westbury, before . . .	1308
William of Edington, subsequently Bishop of Winchester and offered the Archbishopric of Canterbury: the traditional patron of William of Wykeham, the founder of New College, Oxford: Dean	1336
John de Trillek, subsequently Bishop of Hereford, Canon and Prebendary of Aust	1329
Richard de Bury, subsequently Bishop of Durham, 1333, and Chancellor of England, 1334, Canon and Prebendary of Laurence Weston . . .	1331
Reginald de Briane, subsequently Bishop of Worcester, Canon and Prebendary of Goderynghill	1347

	A.D.
John Wycliffe, Canon and Prebendary of Aust	1362-1384
John de Trevisa, "One of the Fathers of English Prose," Canon and Prebend	c. 1390-1402
John Carpenter, a native of Westbury, Bishop of Worcester, and sometime Provost of Oriel College, and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, refounded the College on a new site. On this foundation there were a Dean and Sub- Dean, eight Canons, Deacons, twelve Chorister boys, a Chaplain and a Schoolmaster	1447
Henry Sampson, Provost of Oriel College, Oxford : Dean	1458
Dispute between the Dean and Chapter and the Vicar of Henbury—"the Parish Church of Henbury in Salt Marsh, together with the Chapels annexed to the same being canonically united and appropriated to the Dean and Chap- ter of the Collegiate Church of Westbury"— settled by Bishop Carpenter, who was steadily aiming, as his predecessor Bishop Giffard had endeavoured, to secure Westbury as his Cath- edral Church adjacent to the growing City of Bristol	1463
The Parish Church of Clifton appropriated on terms to the College by Bishop Carpenter	1463
King Edward IV granted to Henry Sampson, Dean and the Chapter :	
(1) The Manor of Elmystree, that they may pray for the good estate of the King and Cicely his mother and for their souls after death	1464
(2) The Lepers' Hospital of St. Lawrence (near Lawford's Gate), that they may pray for the good estate of the King and Elizabeth his Consort, and Cicely his mother and Richard, Earl of Warwick and Anne his Consort, and for their souls after death and the souls of the King's father Richard, Duke of York, the King's brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland and Richard, Earl of Salisbury and Alice his Consort	1465

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William Canynges, who was five times Mayor and twice M.P. for Bristol, and re-edified St. Mary Redcliffe Church, Dean	A.D. 1469-1474
The Church rebuilt and enlarged by Bishop Carpenter, who made it his Cathedral Church, and officially styled himself Bishop of Worcester and Westbury, Bristol at that time being in the Diocese of Worcester and Bristol Cathedral being St. Augustine's Abbey	1473
Bishop Carpenter buried in the Crypt Chapel, which he had prepared for that purpose, on the south side of the High Altar	1476
The College, Church, and estates surrendered to King Henry VIII Feb. 8	1544
The College, Church, and estates granted by Henry VIII to Sir Ralph Sadlier, thus leaving Westbury absolutely without any endowments and dependent upon the good-will of Sir Ralph Sadlier March 24	1544
The College fired and partially burned by Prince Rupert	1643
Westbury Church held by the Vicar of Almondsbury	1679
Edward Colston, the great philanthropist, with other persons, bought fourteen acres of land to endow the living of Westbury	1720
Redland Chapel and Minister's House, built (A.D. 1740-3), by John Cousins, of Redland Court (who died April 19th, 1759), and endowed with a munificent endowment, which has steadily increased, joined to the advowson of Westbury on certain terms	1790
The Church partially restored internally	1851
The College Tower and some scanty remains purchased (A.D. 1894), chiefly through the generosity of the late Alfred Shipley, a Quaker, and conveyed to the National Trust for places of Historic Interest	1907
The Church further restored internally and externally	1907-1908

Dedications of the Church.

- (a) From about A.D. 715 till A.D. 961 to St. Peter and St. Paul.
- (b) To St. Mary about A.D. 961 by St. Oswald. In A.D. 1093 St. Wulfstan called this Church "*Ecclesiam sanctæ genetricis Mariæ omniumque Apostolorum.*"
- (c) Now dedicated to the Holy Trinity, having been thus dedicated in A.D. 1288 by Bishop Giffard, and re-dedicated in A.D. 1473 by Bishop Carpenter.

"The CHURCH of Westbury on Trym is not only one of the most beautiful in the shire as regards its fabric, but also the most interesting of our Gloucestershire Parish Churches . . . it is rich in an inheritance of noble memories, such as no Parish Church in our shire and very few places in all England can claim."—Rev. C. S. Taylor, F.S.A., in the *Proceedings of the Clifton Antiquarian Club*, vol. iv. p. 20. "In A.D. 1904, Westbury on Trym was incorporated into Bristol, where without doubt the first of all the Bristol Churches, whether we had regard to age or interest, stood that venerable minster which now serves as the Parish Church of Westbury on Trym."—Rev. C. S. Taylor at the seventh Winter Session of Bristol Members of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society.

"As early as the ninth century, when the outlying hollow which afterwards became Bristol was for the most part an uninhabitable swamp, Westbury was an important ecclesiastical district."—The late John Taylor, City Librarian, Bristol, in his *Antiquarian Essays*, page 115.

PARISHES originally forming part of Westbury Parish:—Shirehampton with Avonmouth, Stoke Bishop, St. Matthew (part), St. Nathanael, Bishopston St. Catharine (part), St. John (part), St. Mary, St. Saviour and St. Alban.

Vexed and worried for a long time past by conflicting statements, my resolve to have original records investigated was brought to a climax by two inquiries of me: one in reference to Wycliffe and the prebend of Aust, the other in reference to Trevisa and his canonry at Westbury.

I was fortunate in being able to secure the

valued assistance of the Rev. J. H. Bloom, M.A., who undertook and most carefully performed the difficult work of transcribing every reference to Westbury in the remaining unpublished Worcester Episcopal Registers: thus I obtained my knowledge of the Wittlesey documents, given within, in reference to Wycliffe, and which have hitherto remained unpublished.

I also secured the assistance of Mr. J. Nelson at the Record Office. Mr. Nelson (sometime a resident in this parish and a pupil of the late Rev. J. Turner, for many years Curate, in charge of Aust) threw himself heartily into the work, and by following up a reference I had discovered concerning Wycliffe and Chancellor Knyvet (see within), brought to light the long-lost ratification of Wycliffe's prebend: also the document relating to Trevisa's raid on the Dean of Westbury, &c.

Some account of the progress of the work and some tentative opinions appeared in the Westbury magazines, June, 1913: June, July, and August, 1914. The results of a portion of these researches are now given more fully and critically.

Mr. Bloom has now finished his exacting work, and Mr. Nelson (or the friend to whom he has delegated the work, as he himself is working, during the war, at the War Office) will shortly have finished the examination of all the unpublished Patent Rolls till the Dissolution. Then, I hope to be able to write some notes on Westbury

Church and College and their life and dignitaries from c. 1194 to 1544: also to give some account of Bishop Giffard's unsuccessful effort from 1288 to 1301 and of Bishop Carpenter's successful effort to make Westbury the Cathedral Church for the Bristol side of the Worcester diocese, together with some notes on the lives of Bishop Carpenter, Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, and of Henry Sampson, also Provost of Oriel and Dean of Westbury.

I am deeply grateful to the above-mentioned helpers: also to Canon Fowler of Durham Cathedral, Professor How of Durham University and Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Bristol, and Mr. Cuthbert Atchley, M.R.C.S., for help with the almost unreadable and untranslatable Wittlesey documents: also to the librarians and their assistants of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and of the Bristol Central Reference Library, for valued and patient help.

It is not affectation to bespeak the indulgence of my readers for my shortcomings, and of which I am very conscious, but the somewhat exacting care of a large parish with three churches, and some voluntary ministrations to our wounded and sick soldiers here, bring many demands and make research work somewhat intermittent and so more difficult.

H. J. WILKINS.

REDLAND GREEN, BRISTOL,
February 25, 1915.

JOHN WYCLIFFE

Was John Wycliffe, the Reformer, a negligent pluralist?

To answer this question it will be necessary to consider :

- (a) How long Wycliffe held the prebend of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury on Trym? and
- (b) Did Wycliffe neglect the performance of the duties of his prebend?

Recently discovered documents, which will be considered in the course of this paper, compel the discussion of this question in reference to "The Morning Star of the Reformation," even though the task may appear an unthankful one.

Till 1900, when Mr. J. A. Twemlow discovered two entries in the Vatican registers—and which are given below—the following statements represent the opinions, generally adopted by writers upon Wycliffe, in reference to his tenure of his prebend :

1. Lewis stated : " Whilst he [Wycliffe] was employed by the King in the embassy before mentioned [*i.e.* to Bruges in 1374] to meet the Pope's ambassadors, he had given him by the

King the prebend of Aust, in the Collegiate Church of Westbury, in the diocese of Worcester ; the King's letters patent of ratification being dated November 6, 1375. About the same time the Doctor seems to have been presented by the King to the rectory of Lutterworth." ¹

2. Dr. Vaughan stated : " Wycliffe was not forgotten by his sovereign, while employed as one of the royal commissioners. In November 1375 he was presented by the King to the prebend of Aust, in the Collegiate Church of Westbury, in the diocese of Worcester. About the same time, the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire became vacant. Lord Henry de Ferrars, the patron, was then a minor, and it in consequence devolved on the crown to appoint the next incumbent. In this instance, the patronage of the King was again exercised in the favour of Wycliffe." ²

3. Shirley, quoting from the preface to the *Wycliffe Versions of the Bible*,³ stated : " On the 6th of November, 1375, he [Wycliffe] was confirmed by the crown in the prebend of Aust, in the church of Westbury (Rot. Pat., 49 Edw. III, p. 2 [*sic*, but read 1, see below], m. 8). There is no evidence to show the date of his appointment, nor from whom he received it ; but he must have voided the preferment immediately after these letters of confirmation, as the patent rolls record a grant of it on the 18th of the month of November to Robert de Faryngton] (*ibid.*, [m. 11)."⁴

4. Lyte stated : " About six years later [than

¹ Lewis' *Life of Wycliffe*, edition 1820, based on that of 1719, pp. 43 and 44. Seyer, relying upon Lewis, adopts this position—Seyer's *Bristol*, ed. 1823, vol. ii, p. 164.

² Vaughan's *John de Wycliffe*, ed. 1853, p. 180.

³ By Madden and Forshall, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1850, p. vii.

⁴ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, Rolls Series, 1858, p. xxxix.

1368], Wycliffe received from the Crown two pieces of preferment, the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, and the prebend of Aust, which latter, however, he held for a few months only.”¹

5. Professor Lechler stated: “In 1375 he obtained a prebend at Aust, a place romantically situated on the south bank of the Severn, and connected with the endowed church of Westbury, near Bristol, where in 1288 a foundation [*sic*, but the foundation was considerably earlier] in honour of the Holy Trinity had been instituted for a dean and several canons. It was not a parish, but a chapel; the prebend was evidently regarded merely as a sinecure and place of honour, the holder being at liberty to appoint a substitute to read the masses required by the terms of the foundation. [This is “special pleading” and incorrect, but see below.] Wycliffe, however, seems to have resigned the prebend immediately after obtaining it, for in November of the same year, 1375, as appears from an entry in the rolls of Chancery, the prebend was bestowed upon a certain Robert of Farrington.”²

In 1900 Mr. J. A. Twemlow threw new light upon this question. His article appeared in *The English Historical Review* of July, 1900,³ and ran:

“The following two documents are the only ones yet found in the Vatican archives which throw light on Wycliffe’s preferments, and especially on the chronology of his university degrees.

¹ *History of the University of Oxford*, by H. C. Maxwell Lyte, M.A., Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, ed. 1886, p. 252.

² Lechler’s *John Wycliffe*, translated by Dr. Lorimer and revised by Dr. Green, ed. 1904, pp. 169-170.

³ Vol. xv, p. 529.

The yet unexplored series of Avignon registers may also in turn be expected to yield its contribution.

I

³⁶
 “ 1632, 24 November, Avignon. Petitions to Urban V from the University of Oxford for provision to be made to John de Wyclif, priest, M.A., of a canonry and prebend and a dignity of York, notwithstanding that he holds the church of Filingham,¹ value thirty marks. Granted in Westbury,² Reg. Supplic. (Urban V), xxxiv, f. 207.

“ f. 207. Rotulus Magistrorum Universitatis Oxonie. Sanctitati vestre supplicant filii vestri humiles et devoti cancellarius et ceteri unanimis magistrorum universitatis Oxonie quatenus gracias infra—scriptas eis de begninitate [*sic*] solita concedere dignemini et signare cum reservacione, inhibicione, et decreto, acceptacione, et anteferri, ac aliis clausulis consuetis et eciam oportunis, et eciam executoribus, ut est moris.”

“ The fifth petition on the roll occurs on f. 207*d*: Item. Supplicant sanctitati vestre quatenus Johanni de Wychif [*sic*] Eboracensis diocesis, clerico et presbytero ac magistro in artibus, de canonicatu et prebenda cum dignitate in ecclesia cathedrali Eboracensi dignemini providere, non obstante quod ecclesiam parochialem de Filingham Lincolniensis diocesis, taxe xxx marcharum sterlingorum, optinere noscantur. Fiat in ecclesia de Westbury diocesis Vigorniensis, B’.”³

¹ Filingham, co. Lincoln.

² Westbury on Trim, co. Gloucester.

³ The capital letter added after the word *Fiat* is, in the case of Boniface IX (1389–1404) and his successors of Roman obedience, and so down to the present Pope, invariably the initial letter of their Christian name. For the Popes of Avignon period, however, and their successors of obedience of Avignon, it is not clear what determined the choice of the particular letter used in their signature, &c.”

“In margin W. (*i.e.* Wigorniensis).”

“The date, viii Kalendas [corrected from Idus] Decembris anno primo, occurs as usual at the end of the roll.”¹

[Wycliffe, who had been Master of Balliol College in 1360, accepted in 1361 the college living of Fillingham.]

So, then, Wycliffe, whose name is miswritten *Wyichif* by the Vatican scribe,² is “provided” with a canonry and prebend in Westbury on Trym Collegiate Church in 1362, *but the name of the prebend is not stated.*

It will be convenient now to give Mr. Twemlow’s second statement in reference to the year 1373, and to return presently to the years intervening between 1362 and 1373.

II

“1373, 26 December, Avignon. Grant by Gregory XI to John Wiclif, M.A., S.T.M., rector of Lugdgersale,³ that he may retain his canonry and prebend of [Aust in] Westburi, even after he obtains possession of a canonry and prebend of Lincoln; notwithstanding the clause to the contrary in the provision lately made by the pope of a canonry of Lincoln, with expectation of a prebend, soon after which provision he became

¹ This information is now given in the *Petitions* (Rolls Series) to the Pope, vol i, A.D. 1342–1419, p. 390.

² There is an interesting statement on the various spellings of Wycliffe’s name in contemporary documents by Mr. F. D. Matthew in *The Academy*, 7th June, 1884, No. 631, p. 404.

³ Ludgershall, co. Bucks.

licenciate and then master of theology. Reg. Vat. (Greg. XI) cclxxxiv, f. 183.¹

"[Gregorius etc.] dilecto filio Johanni Wiclif, canonico Lincolniensi, magistro in theologia, salutem etc. Litterarum sciencia vite ac morum honestas, alique probitatis et virtutum merita quibus personam tuam fide dignorum testimonio juvari precepimus, nos inducant ut te dono specialis favoris et gracie prosequamur. Dudum siquidem tibi de canonicatu cum reservacione prebende ecclesie Lincolniensis tunc in ea vacantis vel vacature per nostras litteras providimus, volentes inter cetera quod quam primum vigore litterarum ipsarum canonicatus et prebende predictorum possessionem fores pacificam assecutus, canonicatum et prebendam ecclesie de Westburi Wigorniensis diocesis, quos tunc temporis obtinebas prout adhuc obtines, quosque ex tunc vacare decernimus [*sic*], omnino dimittere tenereris, prout in eisdem litteris plenius continetur. Nos igitur, volentes te qui eciam ut asseris in artibus magister existis, et cito post datam dictarum litterarum in theologia licenciatus et demum magister fuisti premissorum meritorum tuorum intuitu prerogativa prosequi favoris et gracie pocionis, tuis in hac parte supplicacionibus inclinati volumus et tibi parochialem ecclesiam de Ludgersale Lincolniensis diocesis obtinenti apostolica auctoritate concedimus quod, voluntate et decreto nostris superadictis nequaquam obstantibus, predictos canonicatum et prebendam dicte ecclesie de Westburi, eciam post vigore dictarum litterarum predictos canonicatum et prebendam dicte ecclesie Lincolniensis, quos nondum adeptus es, fueris pacifice assecutus possis licite retinere.

¹ "*Calendar of Papal Letters*, iv, 193, in the press," but now published.

Nulli ergo etc nostre voluntatis et concessionis infringere etc. Datum Avincorie vii Kalendas Januarii anno tercio."

[In November, 1368, Wycliffe (who had been instituted to Fylingham on Nov. 12, 1361)¹ vacated it on his presentation by Sir John Paveley, prior of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, to the living of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire.²]

Thus Wycliffe is given permission to retain his prebend [name of prebend not stated in original document] in Westbury, after he should have obtained possession of a prebend in Lincoln, but of which he never got possession.

Dr. Rashdall has stated :³ " Wycliffe also appears to have had confirmed by the crown the prebend of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury, to which he had already been ' provided ' by the pope (but Shirley's reference to Rot. Pat., 49 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 8, cannot be verified). There is no trace in the Worcester register of his institution, and it appears to have been conferred on another shortly afterwards (*ib.*, 49 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 11). It is probable that Wycliffe objected to pluralities, while the prebend by itself was insufficient for his support. Dr. Loserth has called attention (introduction to *Op. Evang.*, p. xxx) to the fact that Gregory XI provided Wycliffe with a prebend in Lincoln Cathedral, but it would appear that on his refusing or delaying to pay the first fruits (*facta solitudine ad colligendum sibi*

¹ Reg. Bokyngham, f. 419.

² Shirley's *F. Z.*, p. xxxvii.

³ *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, edition 1900.

primos fructus xlv librarum) the pope conferred it upon a young foreigner. This appears from a passage in the unprinted third book of *De Civili Dominio*. In January 1373 Wycliffe, spoken of as a canon (not yet a prebendary) of Lincoln, is licensed by the pope to keep the Westbury prebend even after he should have obtained possession of a prebend at Lincoln (*Cal. Papal Letters*, ed. Bliss and Twemlow, iv, 193, a reference kindly communicated before publication by Mr. Twemlow)."

[This article Dr. Rashdall vigorously defended in 1907,¹ and it is repeated in the issue of 1909 of the *Dictionary of National Biography*.]

But most writers (including the present one) and speakers on Wycliffe either failed to see Mr. Twemlow's article or, at any rate, not till some considerable time after its publication, or maintained a position similar to that of Dr. Rashdall. Two instances will illustrate this :

The Rev. J. C. Garrick, B.D., stated : ² " In recognition of his [Wycliffe's] services at Bruges in defending English national rights and privileges, as against Roman claims, the King presented him to the prebend of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury in the diocese of Worcester. A further honour was conferred upon him when he was appointed rector of the sweet parish of Lutterworth."

Dr. G. F. Browne (lately Bishop of Bristol) is

¹ *The Guardian*, 22 May, 1907.

² *Wycliffe and the Lollards: World's Epoch Makers*, ed. 1908, p. 99.

reported in the local press¹ to have stated at the Tercentenary Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Bristol on the 27th March 1911 :

“ They had been reminded of Tyndale, and before him there was Wycliffe, who was a Bristol man. When he said he was a Bristol man, he meant that he was a Canon of a place, which was now actually in the borough of Bristol—Westbury on Trym. He was also a prebendary for a short time of a parish [Aust] on the banks of the Severn, which had most interesting historical associations.”

Now, owing to documents recently brought to light and given below, the position can be clearly defined as far as 1375, and with somewhat less certainty till 1384—*i.e.* to the time of Wycliffe's death.

[Let us recall that we have found that in 1362 the pope “ provided ” Wycliffe with a prebend in Westbury, and that in 1373 permission is given to retain it : the *name* of the prebend is not given in the original documents.]

In the register of William Wittlesey, Bishop of Worcester, 1364–68, is to be found the following account of his visitation of Westbury Collegiate Church in 1366, and the report of the Dean of Westbury on the neglect of the five canons and prebendaries there.

[It will be convenient to give the document

See *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 28 March, 1911.

as a whole, and then to examine it in detail later on.]

Wittlesey's Register, f. 1 and d. (Westbury and Hembury.)

William, by divine permission bishop of Worcester [1364-1368] to our son, beloved in Christ, the Dean [Richard de Cornwaill, 1362-1386] of the Collegiate Church of Westbury, in our diocese, greeting etc. We have received your letters certificatory recently directed to us, in this form :—

To the reverend Father in Christ, and Lord, the Lord William, by the grace of God bishop of Worcester, his humble and devoted son the Dean of the Collegiate Church of Westbury in our [your] patronage and diocese [renders] the obedience, reverence, and honour due to so eminent a Father. I have recently received your reverend mandate, in this form :—William, by divine permission bishop of Worcester, to [our] beloved son the Dean of the Collegiate Church of Westbury in our patronage and diocese, greeting etc. We have inspected the Register of the Lord Goddefred, of happy memory, formerly bishop of Worcester [1268-1301-2], our predecessor, in which we find, amongst other matters, a copy of certain of his letters, directed to the Dean and Chapter of the said Collegiate Church, then dwelling and living in community there, containing the following form :

G, by divine permission bishop of Worcester, to [our] beloved sons the Dean and Chapter of the Church of Westbury, greeting, grace and benediction. We most earnestly endeavour that the service of divine worship should not

be diminished in our days, but increased. Wherefore we have given titles in your Church, belonging to our patronage and right, to as many clergy as possible,¹ in order that they might serve Jesus, the Christ and the Lord, according to the customs and statutes of that Church ; some of whom, although they receive in full, and peaceably, the revenues of their prebends, neither visit the Church once at least in a year, nor provide their vicars to serve the Church for them, but, so far as in them lies, leave the same destitute of the due services, although we commanded and gave warning that in these and other matters they should recognise the burdens incumbent on them.

Whereas we have found them in all things hitherto negligent and remiss : inasmuch as we suppose that for various reasons their coercion, as well as our future absence from you, will be most difficult to you, the Dean :— for we are compelled to tarry in the remoter parts of our diocese through concern for the cure [of souls] which is incumbent on us :— therefore, upon consideration we have arranged that the carrying out by right of this [mandate] shall provide for the common difficulty of coercion.

Wherefore, in the name of God, we command and appoint that all and singular canons shall provide their vicars dwelling continually at Westbury, as they are bound, that they may be present at Mass and the other ecclesiastical services without fail, unless an unavoidable accident affords a reason for a short

¹ Seven, in addition to the already existing five canons and prebendaries.

absence: and if any vicar has to be away for a longer time, a substitute shall be found by his lord or in conjunction with others,¹ who shall fulfil in all things his requisite duties. Moreover all vicars shall, in the beginning of the year, promise afresh, under an oath that they will obediently perform these things, before the Dean, and him who chiefly has charge of the quire after him; before whom or either of them the aforesaid cause of absence shall be approved, or if it be right, disapproved. But if a canon shall not have thus provided a vicar after the lapse of a moiety of a year reckoned from Michaelmas, he shall incur suspension from office and benefice: and after the lapse of a whole year [the sentence] of the greater excommunication. And nevertheless he, who [ought to provide] a presbyterial vicar, shall be bound to pay four marks within the year to the common fund of the canons in residence, and for a deacon three marks, and a sub-deacon two marks: and so parts of these sums *pro rata* for the time of absence.

And when [anyone] has become a debtor in that way, he shall be suspended from office and benefice for such time until he has paid what he thus owes. This same we will to be observed in the case of marks owed for the non-residence of canons, according to the statute of Walter [de Cantilupe], our predecessor [1237-1265-6], of happy memory, if residence be not kept for at least one month, either discontinuously or continuously: saving our power of dispensing both from residence and from the penalty for non-residence, should

¹ "Vel cum aliis" is obscure: it probably means that two or more "domini" might employ one vicar to do duty for them.

we deem it for the benefit of the canons and of the Church.

Let those, moreover, who have recently been added to your community, provide their vicars, according to the tenor of the said ordinance, within a year : and thereafter let them be assessed under the regulations of other canons, *i.e.* such regulations as have been just laid down for others ; otherwise, after a year let them be excluded *ipso iure* for ever from your society and communion.

We ordain, moreover, that the vicars shall be diligent to aid each other according to the arrangement of the ruler of the quire for the time being, so that, in regard to this, the contumacious shall be severely punished by the Dean.

Moreover we forbid to assign for profane uses the chapels of SS. Peter and George and All Saints¹ in the cemetery of your church, or to hold them as private houses for providing dwellings or lodgings for any persons under pain of the greater excommunication which we ordain that the recalcitrant incur : and we ordain that they be had in due honour and that free access be open to the faithful of Christ at reasonable times.

But, since the church of Hembury pertains altogether to the canons of Westbury, the vicar's portion only excepted, in order peaceably and effectually to secure your right and that of the parishioners and of the Church, which stands called in question by some persons, we ordain and declare that the same vicar shall remain subject to the correction of and obedience to the Dean of Westbury, and

¹ No traces of these chapels are now in existence.

that the causes and business of the parishioners of Hembury shall fall canonically, by appeal and negligence, under the scrutiny of the Dean of Westbury : the same we will to be observed as regards the causes of the presbyter of the parish of Aust and the business of the parishioners of that place.

These things we have ordained and appointed, citing the canons and those whom it concerns and those to whom¹ the divine presence supplies the absence of others,² saving the rest of the laudable customs and statutes of that Church throughout in all things, and saving the pontifical dignity in all things for us and our successors. For the perpetual remembrance, thereof, of these things our seal is appended to these presents. Given at Wythindon Friday next after the Feast of St. Luke, the Evangelist, 1393³ A.D. and 26th year of our consecration.

We have inspected, moreover, the letters of Lord Thomas [Cobham], of happy memory, formerly bishop of Worcester [1317-1327], our predecessor, signed with his seal : and in our visitation which we held recently in the aforesaid collegiate church, amongst the other places in our diocese of Worcester, setting forth in our presence the whole series or copy of the said letters, containing in full, word for word, the clause, which follows, added at the end of the same letters :

Moreover we, Thomas, by Divine permission bishop of Worcester, have set our seal to this copy in proof and witness of the foregoing. Given at Hembury III Id. Sept. (11 Sept.) 1321 A.D.

¹ *i.e.* while being present.

² *i.e.* the place of others, who are absent.

³ *Sic*, but read 1293.

And since we understood that some of the canons of the said collegiate church are, and for some years continually have been absent from the same church and not resident at all, as the statute or precept requires and demands ; also that some of the same canons have for some years entirely withdrawn their vicars, who ought to be provided continuously according to the form and effect of the same statute or precept, leaving that church quite destitute of Divine service and miserably deprived of its due ministers : we, strictly enjoining you in virtue of your obedience, command and order you most carefully to enquire concerning the names of the canons, who, as is reported, absent themselves and do not provide their vicars : also how long each one of them has thus withdrawn himself : also if the canons aforesaid have taken the oath to keep the aforesaid statutes and regulations of the said church, or have withdrawn their vicars.

Ye shall take care to acquaint us distinctly and clearly by your letters patent in regard to all and singular what ye have found in the foregoing matters on the morrow of the Feast of the Lord's Ascension. Given at Hembury aforesaid, xvi Kal. May (16 April) 1366 A.D. and the 4th year of our translation.

And by the authority of this mandate I have diligently enquired into all and each of the matters enjoined me in the same, and I have found the things that follow :

First : Master John Drayn,¹ canon and prebendary in the same [church] has held the benefice there for the last five years ; and he ought to have provided a deacon to minister continually in the same : whom he has not pro-

¹ *Sic*, but read Bryan.

vided for the four years last past, nor has he kept any residence in the same from the time of his obtaining that prebend, for the whole time above-mentioned, nor has he taken the trouble to reside.

Also : Master Richard Michel, canon and prebendary in the same, is bound to provide a chaplain in the same to minister continually there ; whom he has withdrawn for the whole year last past, nor has he kept any residence in the same from the time of his obtaining that prebend : and I, the Dean, inducted him into corporal possession of his said prebend, through John de Boys, clerk, of the diocese of Lincoln, his true proctor ; which proctor took corporal oath in the name of his lord to keep the statutes and customs of the said collegiate church in all matters according to his ability.

Also : William de Hyndeley, clerk, canon and prebendary in the same [church] duly provided a chaplain for his time, *i.e.* six months, to minister continually in the same ; and also took corporal oath to keep the statutes and customs of the said church by his proctor, Lord John de Wadyngton, chaplain ; and I, the Dean, inducted him ; but he has kept no residence for the aforesaid time.

Also : Master John Wynkele,¹ canon and prebendary in the same [church], whom I, the Dean, inducted into corporal possession of the same prebend, who also [took] corporal oath to observe the statutes and customs and regulations of the same collegiate church : and he ought to have provided a chaplain in the same according to the manner set forth above and has provided none at all but has entirely with-

¹ *Sic*, but read Wycliffe.

drawn him for the whole year last past, neither has he kept any residence from the time of his obtaining [the prebend].

Also : Master Roger Ottery, canon and prebendary of the said collegiate church, ought to provide a sub-deacon to minister continually in the same, and to reside personally ; and he has not provided one for the five years last past, but he has withdrawn him and not kept any residence for the time above-mentioned.

But whether Masters John Bryan and Roger Ottery took the oath to keep the statutes and customs of the said church, I do not know, for the reason that they obtained their prebends, as it is stated, before my time.

Thus I have effectually and diligently executed your mandate : all of which things afore-mentioned I notify to your Paternity by [these] presents : whom may the Virgin's son preserve for the health of his church, and the rule and honour of the flock committed unto you.

Given at Westbury V. Kal. July (27 June) A.D. above-mentioned.

To you, therefore, we commit and command, strictly enjoining you, in virtue of your obedience, to cite or cause to be cited peremptorily all and each of the canons and prebendaries in the same collegiate church, who are non-residents, and do not (as is set forth above) provide their vicars, to appear before us on the 20th day after your citation canonically made to them and each of them, if [that day] be one on which causes are heard, otherwise on the next day for hearing causes then following, wheresoever we may be in our city or diocese, that they or he may show whatever reasonable excuse they or any one of

them may have, why we should not pronounce that they or any one of them have incurred the aforesaid penalty.

Also, meanwhile, ye shall, by our authority, sequesterate all fruits, rents and produce whatsoever belonging to the said prebends of the said canons, as is aforesaid, who do not reside, or are absent, or not abiding in the same prebends, and ye shall keep them under strict sequestration, as ye wish to answer for the same at your peril, or otherwise [as] ye shall receive from us in [our] mandates.

And what ye shall have done in regard to the foregoing, ye shall testify to us on this wise concerning the mode and form of your citation, and the names and surnames of those cited, by your letters patent having this tenor.

Given at Alvechirch IIII Kal. July (28 June) A.D. as above and the 4th [year] of our translation.

Query below xii¹ folio following.²

Wittlesey's Register, 1 and 1d. (Westbury and Hembury.)

Willelmus permissione Divina Wygornensis Episcopus dilecto in Christo filio Decano Ecclesie Collegiate de Westbury nostre diocesis salutem etc. Litteras tuas certificatorias nuper nobis directas recepimus hujus forme Reverendo in Christo patri ac domino domino Willelmo Dei gratia Wygornensis episcopo suus humilis et devotus filius Decanus Ecclesie Collegiate de Westbury nostre³

¹ *Sic*, but read xi.

² In margin on blank part below: with the same ink and in the same handwriting as the main document.

³ Scribe's error for *vestri*.

patronatus et diocesis obedientiam reverentiam et honorem debitum tanto patri Mandatum vestrum reverendum nuper in hac forma recepi Willelmus permissione Divina Wygornensis episcopus dilecto filio Decano ecclesie collegiate de Westbury nostri patronatus et diocesis Salutem etc. Inspeximus registrum bone memorie Goddefredi quondam Wygornensis episcopi predecessoris nostri in quo inter alia comperimus transumptum ¹ quarundum litterarum suarum Decano et capitulo dicte ecclesie collegiate tunc ibidem degentibus et consistentibus directarum formam continens subsequentem G: permissione Divina Wygornensis episcopus dilectis filiis Decano et capitulo ecclesie de Westbury salutem gratiam et benedictionem Obsequium divina ² cultus non minui nostris temporibus sed augeri summis desideriis affectamus Propter quod in vestra ecclesia nostri patronatus et juris clericorum quamplures intitulavimus ut secundum illius ecclesie consuetudines et statuta Jhu Christo et Domino deservirent quorum aliqui licet prebendarum suarum proventus integre percipiant et pacifice nec ecclesiam visitant semel saltem in anno nec suos vicarios exhibent pro se ecclesie servituros sed quantum in eis est derelinquunt eandem serviciis debitis destitutam quas ³ quamvis preceperimus ac fecerimus commoniri quod in hiis et aliis sibi incumbencia onera agnoscerent negligentes ⁴ Cum per omnia cognoverimus hactenus ⁵ et remissos estimamus siquidem ob causas varias cohertionem ipsorum vobis Decano fore

¹ Probably scribe's error for *transcriptum*.

² Scribe's error for *divini*.

³ Scribe's error for *quae*.

⁴ Scribe's error for *negligunt*.

⁵ Word omitted: the scribe has omitted *negligentes*, having already written it wrongly for *negligunt*. In these lines the scribe's Latin has gone to pieces.

quam difficilem et nostram a nobis ¹ futuram absenciam qui ob cure solitudinem que nobis incumbit in remotioribus nostre diocesis partibus cogimur inmorari deliberato igitur consilio communem cohercionis difficultatem hujus jure executionem supplere disposuimus Unde in Dei nomine statuendo precepimus quod omnes et singuli canonici suos vicarios apud Westbury continue commorantes exhibent ut tenentur qui horis missis ceterisque serviciis ecclesiasticis intersint sine defectu nisi casus necessarius causam absencie modice prebuerit et si diutius aliquando vicarius abesse oporteat per dominum suum vel cum aliis subrogetur qui in omnibus suppleat idoneis ² vices ejus Omnes vero vicarii in anni principio sub jurejurando hec se facturos cum obedientia repromittant coram Decano ac eo qui post eum chori principaliter curam habet coram quibus vel eorum altero predicta causa absencie approbetur vel si justum fuerit reprobetur Quod si canonicus sic vicarium non exhibuerit elapsa anni medietate a festo Sancti Michaelis numeranda suspensionem ab officio et beneficio et elapso anno integro excommunicationis majoris ³ Et nihilominus qui vicarium presbyterum quatuor qui diaconum tres et subdiaconum duas marcas et si ⁴ ex his summis partes pro rata temporis absencie infra annum communitati canonicorum residenciam exsolvere teneantur Et cum sic debitor fuerit tam diu donec solverit quod sic debet ab officio et beneficio sit suspensus Hoc idem de marcis pro canonicorum non residencia debita ⁵ secundum

¹ Scribe's error for *vobis*.

² For *idoneas*.

³ Supply *sententiam*.

⁴ Scribe's error for *sic*.

⁵ Scribe's error for *debitis*.

statutum felicitis memorie Walteri nostri predecessoris si saltem per unum mensem interpellatim vel continue non fiat residentia volumus observari salva nobis potestate tam super residentia quam pena non residence dispensanda sic et¹ ecclesie viderimus expediri Qui vero vestre communitati novissime sunt additi secundum dicte ordinationis modum suos vicarios exhibeant infra annum et deinde jure aliorum quo ad hoc in omnibus censeantur alioquin post annum a vestra societate et communione ipso jure sint perpetuo exclusi Precipimus insuper quod secundum dispositionem ejus qui pro tempore eorum regit vicarii in suis serviciis studeant se mutue juvare Ita quod super hoc per Decanum puniantur graviter contumaces ad hec Sanctorum Petri et Georgii et omnium Sanctorum capellas ab olim consecratas in cimiterio vestre ecclesie ad usus prophanos committere vel adinhabitandos² aliquos vel hospitandos ut domos privatas teneri³ sub pena excommunicationis majoris quam incontra-venientes incurrere volumus prohibemus et precipimus quod in honore debito habeantur et Christi fidelibus pateat liber ingressus ad eas temporibus opportunis Ceterum cum ecclesia de Hembury ad canonicos ecclesie de Westbury totaliter pertineat portione Vicarii dumtaxat excepta⁴ ad vestram et parochianorum suorum et suam pacifice ferimus obtinendam quod ab aliquibus indubium

¹ Probably scribe's error for *si*, or perhaps *si c[anonicis]*.

² Scribe's error for *ad inhabitandos*.

³ Scribe's error: probably *tenere*.

⁴ The translation of the actual text is impossible; a possible emendation would be "ad vestram et parochianorum et suam pacifice et firmiter obtinendam." This assumes the accusative "portionem," understood from the previous "portione." But "quod . . . in dubium exstitit provocatum" would have to be changed to "quæ . . . provocata."

exstitit provocatum declarando statuimus quod idem Vicarius sub correctione et obedientia Decani de Westbury permaneat causeque et negotia parochianorum de Hembury per appellationem et negligenciam ad Decani de Westbury canonice devolvatur examen Idem de presbitero¹ de Aust parochie causis et negotiis parochianorum loci ipsius volumus observari Hec ordinamus et statuimus canonicis et his quorum interest citatis et eis quibuscunque presentibus absenciam aliorum divini repleta presencia² ceteris laudabilibus illius ecclesie consuetudinibus et statutis salvis per omnia et salva nobis et successoribus nostris pontificali in omnibus dignitate. Ad perpetuam igitur horum memoriam nostrum sigillum presentibus est appensum Datum apud Wythindon die Veneris proximo ante festum Luce Evangeliste anno Domini millesimo ccc^o³ et nonagesimo tertio et consecrationis nostre anno xxvi^{to} Inspeximus insuper litteras bone memorie Domini Thome quondam Wygornensis episcopi predecessoris nostri sigillo suo signatas et in visitatione nostra quam inter cetera loca nostre diocesis Wigornensis dudum in prefata ecclesia collegiata peregrimus coram nobis exhibentes totam seriem siue copiam dictarum litterarum de verbo ad verbum plenarie continentem clausa⁴ que sequitur in fine earundem litterarum adjecta Nos vero Thomas permissione Divina Wygornensis episcopus sigillum nostrum huic copie apposuimus in fidem et testimonium premissorum Datum apud Hembury tertio Idu Septembris anno Domini millesimo ccc^oxxi^o Cunque intellexerimus quod nonnulli canonicorum

¹ Scribe's error for *presbiteri*.

² The scribe has muddled this : suggested amendment *divina replet*.

³ Scribe's error for *cc^o*.

⁴ Scribe's error for *clausam*.

dicte collegiate ecclesie sunt et ab aliquot annis continue ab ecclesia ipsa absentes ac nullo modo residentes ibidem prout statutum sive preceptum exigit et requirit nonnulli etiam eorundem canonicorum vicarios suos juxta formam et officium ejusdem statuti sive precepti continue exhibendos ibidem per aliquot annos penitus subtraxerunt reliquentes ipsam ecclesiam officiis divinis penitus destitutam et ministeriis debitis miserabiliter desolatam Vobis in virtute obedientie firmiter injungendo precipimus et mandamus quatinus de nominibus canonicorum sic ut prefertur se absentantium seu vicarios suos minime exhibendum necnon et quanto tempore unusquisque ipsorum se sic abstentaverit necnon an canonici predicti de observando predicta statuta et ordinationes dicte ecclesie sint jurati seu vicarium suum subtraxerint sollicitissime investigat.¹ Nos de omnibus et singulis quid in premisis inveneritis in crastino festi Ascensionis Dominice proximi jam futuri distincte et aperte curetis reddere sub litteris vestris patentibus certiores Datum apud Hembury predictum xvi Kalendis Maii anno Domini millesimo ccc^olxvi^o et translationis nostre quarto Cujus auctoritate mandati omnia et singula in eodem mihi injuncta diligenter investigavi et ea que sequuntur inveni Inprimis Magister Johannes Drayn² canonicus et prebendarius in eadem stetit ibidem per quinquennium et ultimum qui debuit exhibuisse unum diaconum in eadem continue ministrantem quem non exhibuit per istos quatuor annos ultimo elapsos nec ullam fecit residenciam in eadem a tempore assecutionis illius prebende toto tempore supradicto nec curavit residere Item Magister Richardus Michel canonicus

¹ Scribe's error for *investigetis*.

² *Sic*, but scribe's error for *Bryan*.

et prebendarius in eadem tenetur exhibere unum capellanum in eadem continue ministrantem quem per unum annum integrum ultimo elapsum subtraxit nec aliquam fecit residenciam in eadem a tempore assecutionis illius prebende quem ego Decanus induxi in corporalem possessionem dicte prebende sue per Johannem de Boys clericum Lincolnensis diocesis verum procuratorem suum quiquidem procurator prestitit juramentum corporale nomine domini sui de observando statuta et consuetudines dicte ecclesie collegiate in omnibus secundum posse suum Item Willelmus de Hyndeley clericus canonicus et prebendarius in eadem debite exhibuit unum capellanum pro tempore suo ad dimidium anni continue ministrantem in eadem et etiam prestitit juramentum corporale de observando statuta et consuetudinem [*sic*] ecclesie prelibate per procuratorem suum dominum Johannem de Wadyngton capellanum quem ego Decanus induxi sed nullam fecit residenciam pro tempore superadicto Item Magister Johannes Wynkele¹ canonicus et prebendarius in eadem quem ego Decanus induxi in corporalem possessionem ejusdem prebende qui eciam juramentum corporale de observando statuta et consuetudines ac observationes ejusdem ecclesie collegiate qui debuit exhibuisse unum capellanum in eadem juxta formam superius expressatam et nullum penitus exhibuit sed omnino subtraxit per unum annum integrum ultimo elapsum nec aliquam fecit residenciam a tempore assecutionis sue Item Magister Rogerus Ottery canonicus et prebendarius dicte ecclesie collegiate debet exhibere unum subdiaconum continue in eadem ministrantem et personaliter residentem quem non exhibuit per quinquennium ultimo effluxum sed subtraxit

¹ *Sic*, but scribe's error for Wycliffe.

nec aliquam fecit residenciam tempore supradicto an vero Magistri Johannes Bryan et Rogerus Ottery prestiterint juramentum de observando statuta et consuetudines dicte ecclesie ignoro eo quod ante tempus meum fuerunt ut dicitur suas prebendas assecuti et sic mandatum vestrum cum effectu sum diligenter executus que omnia premissa vestre innotesco paternitati per presentes quam conservet Filius Virginis ad salubre ecclesie sue et gregis vobis commisse regimen et honorem Datum apud Westbury v^{to} Kalendas Julii anno Domini supradicto Vobis igitur committimus et mandamus in virtute obedientie firmiter injungendo quatinus citetis seu citari faciatis peremptorie omnes et singulos canonicos ac prebendarios in eadem ecclesia collegiata non residentes et vicarios suos ut prefertur sic non exhibentes quod compareant coram nobis xx^{mo} die post citationem vestram eis et eorum cuilibet canonice factam si iuridicus sit alioquin proximo die iuridico tunc se sequente ubicunque in nostra civitate seu diocesi tunc fuerimus causam rationabilem si quam habeant seu aliquis eorum habeat proposituri seu propositurus quare in poenam predictam eos et eorum quemlibet incidisse minime pronuntiare debeamus fructus quoque redditus et proventus quoscunque [pertinentes] ad dictas prebendas dictorum canonicorum sic ut premittitur non residencium seu absencium sive in eisdem prebendis existencium interim auctoritate nostra sequestretis et sub arto custodiatis sequestro sicut de eisdem vestro periculo volueritis respondere aliud ve a nobis receperitis in mandatis Et quid feceritis in premissis nos de modo et forma citationis vestre ac de nominibus et cognominibus citatorum hujusmodi certificetis letteris vestris patentibus habentibus hunc tenorem Datum apud Alvechirch iiij^{to}

Kalendas Julii Anno Domini supradicto et translationis nostre iiiij^{to}.¹

Quere infra xij² sequ. folio.

The neglectful conduct, disclosed in this register, shall be considered later on.

The names of the five canons are given as :

1. John *Drayn* [*sic*] : but in a later portion of the document it is correctly stated as *Bryan*.

2. Richard Michel.

3. William de Hyndeley.

4. John *Wynkele*. [*Sic*, but a miswriting for Wycliffe, see later.]

5. Roger Ottery.

A study of the original entry proves the scribe to have been both careless and ignorant. [We recall that the Vatican scribe in 1362 entered Wycliffe's name as *Wychif*.] His Latin in parts cannot be translated, as will be seen from the Latin transcription given above. The extract, quoted from Bishop Godfrey Giffard's register, is entered " millessimo ccc^o et nonagesimo tertio et consecrationis nostre anno xxvi^{to}," *i.e.* 1393 and

¹ In Worcester Diocesan Registry there exists a register, known as II Bryan. It is a book of "precedents," commenced most probably by the order of Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester 1375-1394-5. The initial letter of most of the documents in II Bryan is changed to "H." So, we find Wittlesey, f. 1 and 1d. given in II Bryan, f. x. d.-xi with the initial letter "W" changed to "H." No attempt has been made in the extract to remedy the errors of the original scribe. These remarks also apply to Wittlesey f. xi and d. given below, and which are transcribed in II Bryan, f. 18. The "Bryan" documents are of no independent value.

² *Sic*, but read xi.

the twenty-sixth year of our consecration. Giffard was consecrated, as Bishop of Worcester, in 1268 and the twenty-sixth year of his consecration would be 1293: but the careless scribe, writing in the fourteenth century and accustomed to write millesimo ccc^o, inserts, without thinking, the accustomed third "c" and so gives 1393 instead of 1293. He first enters the name of one of the canons as *Drayn*, but subsequently gets it correct as *Bryan*, yet he does not correct his former error. Not to dwell upon other mistakes made by this scribe, and which are pointed out in the Latin transcription, given above, when he comes to the name of Wycliffe—a regular pitfall to scribes—he blunders again: unable to decipher it and having just above written *Hyndele* (the name of the third delated canon), he follows the sound of that name and so writes *Wynkele* for Wycliffe.¹ This will appear, as we proceed, to have been undoubtedly the case.

The document is dated "iiiij Kalendas July [28 June] anno Domini millesimo ccc^olxvi^o [1366]. The Dean was Richard de Cornwaill, who was granted the deanery of Westbury on 12th June 1362 [Pat. Roll, 36 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 44] and instituted on the 20th July following [Reg.

¹ The carelessness or laziness of the mediæval scribes comes out clearly in an extract, kindly sent to me by the Rev. J. H. Bloom on February 18, 1915, where the name having escaped the scribe's memory, he inserts another name, and so John de *Trevisa* appears in 1391 as John de *Coneley*. See p. 71, in this volume.

Barnet, f. 2]. Four of the five canons, delated, can be thus placed : (1) *John Bryan* was granted by the King the prebend of Godreyngnull on 20th Feb. 1353 [Pat. Roll, 27 Edw. III, pt. i, m. 24] and was admitted on the 4th April following [Sede Vacante Register, *Worc. Hist. Soc.*, pt. iii, p. 200]. He was succeeded by Thomas Buttlier about 1387 [Pat. Roll, 11 Richard II, pt. i, m. 14]. (2) *Richard Michel*, canon of St. Paul's, London, and prebendary of Cadynton Minor, exchanged with William de Navesby, prebendary of St. Wereburgh, alias Holley of Westbury, and made canonical obedience 17 Nov. 1362 [Reg. Barnet, f. 16]. He died in 1374 [Sede Vacante Reg.—*Worc. Hist. Soc.*—pt. iv, p. 317]. (3) *William de Hyndeley* was Prebendary of Hembury. Dean Cornwaill, in his delation (27th June 1366) stated that Hyndeley had provided his chaplain for his time, *i.e.* for six months, and that he had inducted him by proxy ; so Hyndeley was in possession late in 1365. He is described on 3rd November 1367 as “prebendary of a prebend in the collegiate church of Westbury” [Pat. Roll, 41 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 16]. He exchanged before 1368 with William de la Dale [Reg. Wittlesey, f. 26]. (5) *Roger Ottery* was collated 10th November 1360 “to the prebend which Master Richard de Thormerton held” [Bryan I, f. 41] and which the ratification, obtained by Thormerton on 13th July 1350, states to be “Hembury” [Pat. Roll,

24 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 22]. But this was evidently a misdescription, by no means the only recorded case, for, on 28th September 1387, John Barrell obtained a ratification as "prebendary of the prebend called 'Weston St. Lawrence,' lately held by Roger Ottery, deceased" [Pat. Roll, 11 Richard II, pt. i, m. 14]. That this was the case is further established from the fact that John Swynleigh was granted by the King, on 23rd December 1361, the "prebend which Master Richard de Thormerton had" [Pat. Roll, 35 Edw. III, pt. iii, m. 10], and that on 11th February following we find: "Institution of John Swynley, priest, presented by the King, to the prebend which Master Richard Somerton had" [Sede Vacante Reg.—*Worc. Hist. Soc.*—pt. iii, p. 207]. So it is highly improbable that Ottery held at Westbury any other prebend than that of Weston St. Lawrence: if he did hold the prebend of Hembury, it could only have been for a very short time.¹ He died in 1387. Thus are placed:

(1) John Bryan, as prebendary of Goderynghull.

(2) Richard Michel, as prebendary of Holley.

(3) William de Hyndeley, as prebendary of Hembury.

¹ Strange irony! A sequestration order against Roger de Ottery who in 1361 appears as sequestrator-general of Reginald, Bishop of Worcester. See will of John Horncastle, proved Oct. 9, 1361, among the muniments of All Saints Church, Bristol.

(5) Roger Ottery, as prebendary of Weston St. Lawrence.

(4) So John *Wynkele* [Wycliffe] must be placed as prebendary of Aust.

John Wycliffe, who had been "provided" with a prebend at Westbury in 1362, obtained a ratification of his prebend of Aust (as we shall presently see) in 1375. The inference is obvious.

Further : in the document under examination and dated 1366, the Dean of Westbury states that he did not induct Bryan and Ottery, as they were before his time and that they had been in default four and five years respectively. On the 12th of June 1362 Richard Cornwaill was granted the deanery [Pat. Roll, 36 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 44], a fact which harmonises with the statements in the document under examination. The Dean also states that he inducted Michel and Hyndeale through their proctors, but John Wynkele (Wycliffe) personally, when he took personal oath to observe the statutes, customs, and regulations of the Church. John Wycliffe was "provided" by the Pope in December 1362. So Dean Cornwaill was in position to induct all three canons.

It will be convenient to deal here with the misstatement that the Rectory of Lutterworth (and also the Prebend of Aust) were given to Wycliffe as a reward for his services at Bruges. It also bears upon the "pluralism" of Wycliffe.

Shirley has stated that Wycliffe vacated "the

living of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire in 1374 (*April* 7) [Rot. Pat., 49 Edw. III, pt. i, m. 23] on the presentation of the Crown, for that of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, which he retained till his death," and adds, "It is worthy of remark that he did not continue to hold the two livings together."¹ We have seen that Wycliffe was provided with his prebend (which will shortly be proved to be that of Aust) in 1362. The deed appointing Wycliffe as one of the Commissioners to the "Bruges" Conference is dated 26 July 1374:

[Patent Roll, No. 290,
48 Edward III, part i, m. 7.]

De potestate tractandi etc.	}	Rex universis ad quorum noticiam presentes litere pervenerint salutem.
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Sciatis quod [nos]² de fidelitate et circumspectione venerabilis patris [Johannis]² Episcopi Bangorensis ac dilectorum et fidelium nostrorum Magistri Johannis de Wiclif sacre theologie professoris Magistri Johannis Guteri decani Segobiensis Magistri Simonis de Multon legum doctoris Willelmi de Burton militis Roberti Beal-knap et Johannis de Honington plenam fiduciam reportantes ipsos ad partes transmarinas ambassatores nuncios et procuratores nostros speciales destinamus Dantes eisdem Ambassatoribus nunciis et procuratoribus sex vel quinque eorum quorum prefatum Episcopum unum esse volumus auctoritatem et potestatem ac mandatum speciale

¹ *Fasc. Ziz.*, pp. xxxvii-ix.

² Interlined.

tractandi benigne ac caritative consulendi cum nunciis et ambassatoribus domini Summi Pontificis super dictis negociis pro quibus prefatos Episcopum et Willelmum ac fratrem Vghtredum monachum Dunolmensem et Magistrum Johannem de Shepeye ad sedem Apostolicam nuper miseramus et relacionem plenariam super hiis que inter eos tractata et consulta fuerint nobis et consilio nostro faciendi Vt ea que honorem sancte ecclesie et conservacionem jurium Corone nostre et regni nostri Anglie concernere poterunt in ea [26 July 1374.] parte intuitu Dei et Sancte Sedis Apostolice feliciter expediantur et debitum capiant complementum. In cujus, etc. Data London', xxvj die Julij.

[This document helps to fix the date of Wycliffe's taking the degree of Doctor of Divinity. It was before 26 July, 1374.]

The fact, clearly standing out, is that, while Wycliffe's leader at the conference at Bruges—John Gilbert, Bishop of Bangor—was rewarded by translation to the richer see of Hereford by papal bull, dated ii Id. Sept. (12th Sept.) 1375,¹ *Wycliffe obtained absolutely nothing after his return.* He received Lutterworth three months before his appointment as a Commissioner to Bruges.

On 6 November, 1375, the King directs his chancellor, John Knyvet, to give Wycliffe a ratification of the prebend of Aust. This is the first

¹ Reg. Sudbur, but Gilbert's own register (fol. 1a) makes it 1374: "Johannes Gilbert episcopus translatus in Herefordensem ecclesiam A.D. 1374 post Willielmum Courtney."—Hardy's *Le Neve's Fasti*, vol. i, p. 463.

time we get the name stated of the prebend held by Wycliffe since 1362.

Edwardus dei gratia Rex Angliæ et Franciæ et dominus Hiberniæ dilecto et fideli nostro Johanni Knyvet cancellario nostro salutem Cum nos volentes securitati dilecti nobis Magistri Johannis de Wyclif prebendarii prebende daust in ecclesia Collegiata de Westbury Wygorniensis diocesis providere statum et possessionem quos idem Johannes habet in prebenda predicta pro nobis et heredibus nostris quantum in nobis est acceptaverimus approbaverimus ratificaverimus et confirmaverimus Nolentes quod ipse super possessione sua eiusdem prebende ratione alicuius iuris vel tituli quod vel qui nobis competit seu nobis aut heredibus nostris in futuro competere poterit per nos vel heredes nostros seu ministros nostros quoscunque futuris temporibus impetatur, occasionetur, molestetur, in aliquo seu gravetur vobis mandamus quod literas inde sub magno sigillo nostro in forma debita fieri faciatis datum sub privato sigillo nostro apud Westmonasterium vi die Novembris Anno regni nostri Angliæ quadragesimo nono et Franciæ tricesimo sexto.—[*Chancery Warrants*. Series I, file 443, No. 30755.]

This ratification was made out the same day.¹

¹ Madden and Forshall gave incorrectly the reference to this ratification, and it is so quoted by Shirley as given above. Its identification escaped many seekers, till a reference, sent by the present writer to Mr. J. Nelson at the Record Office, led to the discovery of the order to Chancellor Knyvet, and, following that up, of this long-lost ratification. Mr. Nelson wrote (20/6/14): "I account thus for an entry of 6 Nov. being found with those of June and July, especially with case of a Ratification. It is evident that the same 'form,' '*Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem Voluntas securitati &c.*,' was always used in a ratification. The first ratification was at length, and a blank space then left on the membrane of about 6 inches. When other

[Patent Roll, 49 Edw. III, pt. i, m. 8.]

Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem Volentes securitati Magr̃ Johannis de Wyclif prebendarius [*sic*] prebende daust in ecclesia Collegiata de Westbury Wygorniensis diocesis providere statum et possessionem quos idem Johannes habet in prebenda predicta pro nobis et heredibus nostris quantum in nobis est acceptamus approbamus et confirmamus Nolentes quod idem Johannes super possessione sua prebende predictæ ratione alicuius iuris vel tituli quod vel qui nobis competit seu nobis aut heredibus nostris decetero competere poterit per nos vel heredes nostros seu ministros nostros quoscunque futuris temporibus impetatur, molestetur, in aliquo seu gravetur In cuius testimonium Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium *vi die Novembris*.

per brevem de privato sigillo.

Therefore, on the 6th November, 1375, Wycliffe obtained from the King a ratification of the prebend of Aust, to which he had been "provided" by the Pope in December, 1362, and to which he was personally inducted by the Dean of Westbury, and which prebend the Pope gave him permission to retain in 1373.

[Why Wycliffe found it necessary to obtain this ratification of the possession of this prebend,

ratifications (in the same year) were entered, only the material parts (name, prebend, &c., and diocese) were entered. Wycliffe's ratification comes *last*, and is in different coloured ink (slightly browner) than the two previous ratifications. After all, it is certainly puzzling : in this case the Privy Seal was dated 6 *Nov.*, and the ratification was found amongst *June and July* entries—four months before the Privy Seal was drawn up !"

opens up a very interesting question, but which is foreign to the purpose of this paper.]

But it is stated by writers, without exception, that Wycliffe resigned his prebend very shortly after obtaining the ratification, because of a grant of it to Robert de Faryngton.

[Pat. Roll, 49 Edw. III, part ii, m. 11.]

De
prebenda } Rex dedit et concessit dilecto
data, } clerico suo Roberto de Faryngton
prebendam de Aust in ecclesia col-
legiata de Westbury vacantem et ad Regis dona-
cionem spectantem ratione Episcopatus Wygor-
niensis nuper vacantis et in manu Regis existentis
Habendum cum suis iuribus et pertinenciis quibus-
cumque. In cuius etc. Teste Rege apud Langele
[18 Nov. 1375.] xvij die Nouembris, per breve de
privato sigillo.

Et mandatum est venerabili in Christo patri Henrico¹ Episcopo Wygorniensi quod ipsum Robertum ad prebendam illam admittat et ei stallum in choro et locum in capitulo ratione prebende illius prout moris est assignari faciat. Teste ut supra.

Et mandatum est Decano et capitulo ecclesie predicte quod eidem Roberto stallum in choro et locum in capitulo ratione prebende illius prout moris est assignent. Teste ut supra.

There is no mention of Robert de Faryngton in Worcester Episcopal Registers.

But this grant to Robert de Faryngton was

¹ Henry Wakefield.

revoked on the 22nd December, 1376 [Pat. Roll, 50 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 7]. The King, "believing the prebend of Aust to have been vacant . . . as it seemed to us from the inspection of the rolls of our chancery (*credentes prebendam de Aust in ecclesia collegiata de Westbury vacasse . . . sicut per inspectionem rotulorum cancellariæ nostræ nobis constat*) had, on the 18th of November, 1375, conferred it on Robert de Faryngton, but on the 22nd December of the following year" for certain reasons stated before us and our council had deemed that his letters in reference to the collation of Robert to the said prebend, made according to the tenor of the presents, ought to be revoked (*quibusdam tamen certis de causis coram nobis et consilio nostro propositis literas nostras de collatione prefato Roberto de prebenda predicta factas tenore presentium duximus revocandas*).

[Patent Roll, 50 Edw. III, pt. ii, m. 7.]

De revocatione collationis prebendæ.

Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem licet decimo octavo die Novembris Anno regni nostri Angliæ quadragesimo nono credentes prebendam de Aust in ecclesia collegiata de Westbury vacasse et ad nostram donationem spectasse ratione Episcopatus Wygorniensis nuper vacantis et in manu nostra existentis dederimus et concesserimus dilecto clerico nostro Roberto de Faryngton prebendam predictam habendum cum suis juribus et pertinentiis quibuscunque sicut per inspectionem rotulorum cancellariæ nostræ nobis constat qui-

busdam tamen certis de causis coram nobis et consilio nostro propositis literas nostras de collatione prefato Roberto de prebenda predicta factas tenore presentium duximus revocandas Et hoc omnibus quorum interest innotescimus per presentes jure nostro in omnibus semper salvo. In cujus rei testimonium Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium xxii die Decembri. Per ipsum Regem nunciante Johanne Rege Castellæ et Legionis.

[On the same day, 22 December, 1376, Robert de Faryngton is offered the *solatium* of the living of Ivynggho in Lincolnshire [Pat. Roll, 50 Edw. iii, pt. ii, m. 7], but he evidently declined it, as on the 27th following the King conferred it on John Searle [*ibid.*, m. 6]. Robert de Faryngton had been collated in the October previous to the prebend of Carton Paynel in Lincoln [Hardy's *Le Neve's Fasti*, vol. ii, p. 123] and obtained a ratification of his possession on 29 November, 1376.] [Pat. Roll, 50 Edw. iii, pt. ii, m. 8.]

From the 6th November, 1375 (the day on which Wycliffe secured the ratification of his prebend of Aust) till the 31st December, 1384 (the day of Wycliffe's death), there are but two recorded changes among the five canons and prebendaries of Westbury, and those are in connection with the prebend of Hembury—viz. Hulton succeeded Hunt on 15 November, 1375 [Reg: Wakefield, f. 2], and Baddeby succeeds Hunt on 22 June, 1380 [*ibid.*, f. 21d].

On 31 May, 1384, Richard de la Felde received a nomination to the first vacant canonry, prebend, or other dignity in the Collegiate Church of Westbury on Trym :

[Patent Roll, No. 317, m. 6,
7 Rich. II, pt. ii, m. 6.]

Rex venerabili in Christo patri Williamo eadem gratia Archiepiscopo Cantuariæ totius Angliæ primati salutem. Cum sanctissimus in Christo pater dominus Urbanus papa sextus volens inter ceteros principes catholicos nostram honorare personam vobis providendi auctoritate apostolica in singulis tam cathedralibus et metropolitanis quam collegiatis ecclesiis secularibus regni nostri Angliæ ac terrarumstrarum Hiberniæ et Walliæ duabus personis idoneis per nos nominandis singulis videlicet de canonicatu ipsarum ecclesiarum sub expectatione prebendæ dignitatis personatus seu officii cum cura vel sine cura per suas literas apostolicas potestatem commiserit dilectum clericum nostrum Ricardum de la Felde ad Canonikatam et prebendam ac dignitatem personatum vel officium cum cura vel sine cura in ecclesia collegiata de Westbury Wygorniensis diocesis si qui si que vel si quod vacant seu vacat ad presens vel cum vacaverint seu vacaverit quos quas vel quod idem Ricardus per se vel procuratores suos duxerit acceptandum primum videlicet de duabus personis prædictis ex facultate nobis in hac parte concessa vobis nominamus ut vos ulterius quod vobis ut præmittitur est commissum in personam præfati clerici nostri virtute nominationis prædictæ iuxta vim et effectum literarum apostolicarum vobis in hac parte directarum debite exequanimi.

Id cuius &c. Teste Rege apud manerium suum de Claryngdon xxxi die maii.¹

Wycliffe died, it will be remembered, on 31st December, 1384, and so his death caused this first vacancy of a prebend at Westbury, and to which Feld must have succeeded, according to the terms of the above-given nomination, for on 28th September, 1387, Feld secured the following *ratification* :

[Patent Roll, No. 324, m. 14,
11 Rich. II, pt. i, m. 14.]

Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem. Volentes securitati dilecti clerici nostri Ricardi ffeld prebendarii prebendæ vocate Aust ecclesia collegiata de Westbury providere statum et possessionem quos idem Ricardus habet in prebenda predicta pro nobis et heredibus nostris quantum in nobis est acceptamus approbamus ratificamus et confirmamus Nolentes quod idem Ricardus super possessione sua prebende predictæ ratione alicuius iuris vel tituli quod vel qui nobis competit seu nobis aut heredibus nostris infuturo competere poterit per nos vel heredes nostros seu ministros nostros quoscunque futuris temporibus impetatur inquietetur occasionetur molestetur in aliquo seu gravetur. In cuius &c. Teste Rege apud Wode-stok xxviii die Septembri.

per breve de privato sigillo.²

Ratifications were granted at the same time to

¹ See also *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (Rolls Series), p. 408, 7 Richard II, pt. ii, m. 6.

² See also *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (Rolls Series), p. 361, 11 Richard II, pt. i, m. 14.

Thomas Butiller of the prebend of Goderynghull : to Richard Wyche of the prebend of Holley, and to John Barrell of Weston, St. Lawrence : while on 10 Aug. 1386, Beverley had succeeded Baddeby in the prebend of Hembury [Pat. Roll, 10 Richard II, pt. i, m. 35]. Thus the occupants of all five of the prebends can be traced.

The inference seems to be obvious, and so the claim is made for Westbury on Trym Church that Wycliffe held the prebend of Aust there from 1362 to 1384. It was the only church dignity he obtained.

Several points, arising out of the above-given statements, shall be considered, when the question as to "How Wycliffe performed the duties of his prebend?" has been dealt with.

This outstanding fact is clear : that Wycliffe *was* a pluralist. His record is :

1361. Incumbent of Filling-		
ham	Prebendary of Aust .	1362
[1365. Warden of Canterbury		
Hall, Oxford]		
1368. Incumbent of Ludgers-		
hall	Held it undoubtedly till	1375
1374. Rector of Lutterworth }	And most probably till	
1384. Died at Lutterworth }	his death in . . .	1384

(b) *Was Wycliffe a negligent pluralist?* The reply depends upon the way in which Wycliffe kept the oath, which he swore in person on his induction to his prebend, to observe the statutes, customs, and regulations of the Collegiate Church

of Westbury on Trym, and so take care of the souls of his prebend of Aust.

From *Wittlesey*, f. 1 and *d* (given above), it is seen that there was serious neglect of duty by the canons as far back as 1293, when Bishop Giffard [1268-1301] dealt with it, (and thus we get the record of the statutory obligations of the canons at Westbury). Bishop Giffard required those canons to provide their vicars to dwell continually at Westbury, saving any short or unavoidable absence or saving a dispensation, and to share the services; also to take oath year by year to do so. The canons, not providing their vicars, were to be fined: also to be fined themselves for non-residence. All was to be done, according to the statutes of Walter [de Cantilupe], Bishop of Worcester [1237-1265]: the residence required of the canons was one month each year, unless they were dispensed: the vicar of Aust, appointed by the prebendary of Aust, was to be subject to the correction of the Dean of Westbury, and the business of the parishioners of Aust to be under the Dean's scrutiny, either on the ground of appeal or neglect. Thomas [de Cobham], Bishop of Worcester [1317-1327], also had trouble in 1321 with the defaulting canons at Westbury of his time.

William Wittlesey, Bishop of Worcester [1364-1368], visiting Westbury Collegiate Church in 1366, found it miserably neglected by the canons, and

so he commanded Dean Cornwaill to institute an inquiry and to report to him.

That report stated that *all* the canons had been non-resident, from the very commencement of the time they obtained their prebends. Only one of the five canons had complied with the statutes and provided his vicar, viz. *Hyndeley* : the four others were in default—*Bryan* had provided no deacon for the past four years ; *Michel* had provided no chaplain for a whole year ; *Ottery* had provided no sub-deacon for five years past, while as regards John Wynkele [Wycliffe] the Dean reported :

“ Master John Wynkele, Canon and Prebendary in the same [church], whom I, the Dean, inducted into corporal possession of the same prebend, who also [took] corporal oath to observe the statutes and customs and regulations of the same collegiate church : and he ought to have provided a chaplain in the same according to the manner set forth and has provided none at all, but has entirely withdrawn him for the whole year last past, neither has he kept any residence from the time of his obtaining [the prebend].”

Upon receipt of the Dean's report, the Bishop acted with the greatest promptitude and ordered the Dean to cite the defaulting canons and their vicars to appear before him, [Wittlesey was a trained lawyer, and had been Judge of the Court of Arches], and to sequestrate forthwith the fruits, &c., of the prebends.

Wittlesey Reg: f. 11 and d.

“Commission to sequester } W. &c., to the dean
all the fruits of the } of our collegiate church of
Prebends of Westbury. } Westbury, in our diocese,
greeting &c.

Though it is meet that the ministry of divine worship should be carefully increased and not diminished to the affronting of the divine majesty, nevertheless recently, while in the course of visiting our diocese, in our right as ordinary, and among the other places in it the said collegiate church, founded in pious devotion by our predecessors for the increase of divine worship, under a certain number of canons and other ministers, we found the said church not as it were collegiate but divorced from and defrauded of the due services of its ministers. For whereas in the foundation of the same college there were ordained and established three prebends for priests, one for a deacon, and another for a subdeacon, nevertheless the canons of the same church, though holding the prebends in question, are not careful and for a long time have not been careful, as regards the more part of them, to keep residence there either in person or through vicars according to the form and tenor of the oath subscribed by each of them severally on his admission, conformably to the statute of the said church, or to serve the said church in things divine, as is acknowledged to be incumbent upon them, but leave the church utterly destitute of divine service. The chancels, moreover, of the churches appropriated to them and the buildings belonging to the churches, the repair of which notoriously is and ought to be incumbent upon them, [they leave] on the contrary to fall into ruin

to the grave peril of their own souls and the open scandal of the people. The five canons and prebendaries live in strange dioceses; nor do we in any wise perceive a way in law by which they can be compelled to a due and requisite reformation of the said abuses, which call for no little promptitude, save by sequestration of the fruits of their prebends, which [fruits] according to the foregoing they unduly hold and consume.

We strictly charge and require you in virtue of your obedience to sequester by our authority the fruits, rents and produce of the prebends in question, at least up to an amount due and sufficient for the support of the aforesaid burdens and for the remedy of defects, and to safeguard them under close sequestration until such time as each of the persons in question shall either have kept due residence or have put competent vicars there in his stead [and] shall duly remedy the defects aforesaid, so far as concerns him, and further [until] in regard to the portion due from non-residents to residents in the same church satisfaction shall have been made in full.

For the execution of which commands, all and sundry, as is set forth, we delegate our functions to you with power to exercise any canonical coercion whatsoever. Given &c."

W: etc. decano ecclesie
 " Commissio ad sequestran- } nostre collegiate de West-
 dos omnes fructus preben- } bury nostre diocesis salu-
 darum de Westbury. } tem etc. Licet cultus divini
 famulatus augeri deceat sollicite et non minui in
 offensam majestatis divine Nuper tamen nostram
 diocesem et inter cetera ipsius dictam ecclesiam
 collegiatam in augmentum cultus divini per pre-
 decessores nostros sub certo canonicorum et ali-

orum ministrorum numero pio affectu fundatum jure¹ nostre ordinarii actualiter visitantes ipsam ecclesiam non tanquam collegiatam sed potius repudiatam et debitis ministrorum officiis compereimus defraudatam Cum enim in dicti collegii fundatione iij prebende sacertotales una diaconalis et alia subdiaconalis ordinate fuerant et statute canonici tamen ejusdem ecclesie prebendas ipsas ocupantes nec per se nec per vicarios ibidem juxta formam et effectum juramenti per singulos ipsorum in sua admissione de statuto dicte ecclesie prestiti residere seu eidem ecclesie in divinis prout ad unumquemque eorum ipsorum pertinere dinoscitur officiare non curant nec a diu pro majori parte ipsorum curaverunt sed ipsam ecclesiam relinquunt divinis officiis penitus destitutam cancellos insuper ecclesiarum eis appropriatarum et edificia ad eas spectantia quorum reparacio ad eos notorie pertinet et pertinere debet permutatim vergere in ruinam in suarum animarum grave periculum et scandalum populi manifestum Quinque canonici et prebendarii predicti omnes et singuli in alienis diocesibus conversantur nec viam jure aliqua² conspicimus per quam ad debitam et requisitam dictorum excessuum reformationem que non modica celeritate indigent compelli valeant nisi per sequestrationem fructuum prebendarum suarum quos juxta premissa indebite occupant et consumunt. Vobis in virtute obedencie firmiter injungendo mandamus quatenus fructus redditus et proventus prebendarum ipsarum saltem usque ad quantitatem debitam et sufficientem predictis supportandis oneribus et reparandis defectibus auctoritate nostra sequestretis et tam diu sub arto custodiatis sequestro donec unusquisque ip-

¹ Scribe has probably omitted "visitationis."

² Read "aliquā."

sorum vel residenciam debitam fecerit seu vicarios competentes ibidem loco suo posuerit defectus predictos quatenus ad se attinet debite reparet necnon et de portione residentibus in eadem ecclesia per non residentes de statuto ejusdem ecclesie debito fuerit plenarie satisfactum ad que omnia et singula sic ut prefertur facienda vobis vices nostras committimus cum cujuslibet coercionis canonice potestate. Dat: etc."

This order is undated. To try and fix the date a further careful examination was made of the *Wittlesey Register*, but with no positive result.¹

¹ It will be remembered that at the end of *Wittlesey*, 1d (see p. 18), occurred the words: "Query below xi folio following," in the same ink and handwriting as the main documents. The dates of the contents of this register are as follows:

F. 1 and *d* have been given above.

F. 2 is a letter of Pope Urban, 16 Kal. March, 3rd year, and a blank. On the same dorse two entries 1364, the last dated 5 Kal. July.

F. 3, from 10 July to 16 Kal. Aug.

F. 3d, from 13 July to 31 July.

F. 4, from 1 Aug. to 6 Aug.

F. 4d, from 6 Aug. to 17 Sept.

F. 5, from 17 Sept. to 19 Sept.

F. 5d, from 30 Nov. to 14 March.

F. 6, from 14 March to 28 March 1365.

F. 6d, from 28 March to 30 April.

F. 7. Presumably May "etc."

F. 7d, "etc."

F. 8, "etc."

F. 8d, from 21 July and "etc."

F. 9. Last entry, 11 May 1365, installation of Bishop [Wittlesey].

F. 9d. 16 Kal. March 1364: 1 May 1365: 15 May 1365.

F. 10. 1 Ides June 1365: 3 Kal. June 1365: 5 Ides June 1365: 2 July 1365: 12 Sept.: 8 July 1365.

F. 10d. 4 Kal. Oct. 1365: 24 Oct.: 4 Ides, Oct.

F. 11. 4 Nones Nov., 22 Oct., Nones Nov. Entry preceding document [relating to the sequestration at] Westbury undated. Westbury follows at the bottom of the page in

It is clear that there was an accumulation of entries waiting to be made in the register, as was so often the case. The scribe enters a document, dated *iiij* Kal. July, 1366, before those of 1364, and corrects it by a query. The other entries are not in their proper order. The last dated document *before* the sequestration order is Nov: 1365, and the *succeeding* one is dated 4 Ides Dec: 1366.

There is no record of the appearance of the defaulters before the Bishop. The order for sequestration is probably of the same date as the Bishop's letter *iiij* Kal. July, 1366; since the usual course was to sequester and at the same time to cite the defaulters to appear.¹

The charges made against Wycliffe were :

(a) In the Dean's delation to the Bishop :

1. Failure to reside for a month each year, since he became Prebendary of Aust in 1362.
2. Failure to provide a chaplain to act for him : " he ought to have provided a chaplain in the same [church] according to the manner set forth, and has provided none at all, but has entirely withdrawn him for the whole year last past."

same ink and handwriting, and is obviously taken in order, but like the previous entry is undated, ending with "etc."

F. 11d. 4 Ides Dec., 12 Dec., 20 Dec., 10 Kal. Jan., 14 Kal. Feb.

¹ Cf. Sequestration, Peccham Reg., f. 60a, as given in Gibson's *Codex Juris Ecc. Angl.*, ed. 1713, appendix, sec. x, p. 48.

(b) General additional charges in the order of sequestration of the Bishop, based either upon verbal information, or more probably upon observation during his visitation.

3. "The chancels . . . of the churches appropriated to them and the buildings belonging to the churches, the repair of which notoriously is and ought to be incumbent upon them [they leave] on the contrary to fall into ruins to the grave peril of their own soul and the open scandal of the people."

To deal with these charges in their order :

1. It has been shown that Wycliffe was a pluralist. According to the standard of those times it was no crime to be a pluralist. William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, 1367-1404, was a great pluralist.¹

But Wycliffe held a prebend, which involved a cure of souls (as is apparent from the above-mentioned *Wittlesey*, f. 1 and d, and in spite of Lechler's plea) together with a living, involving a second cure of souls.

¹ The Warden of New College, Oxford, has stated: "In 1361 Wykeham was presented to no fewer than nine prebends, and in 1363 to four more, together with the archdeaconry of Northampton, afterwards exchanged by him for that of Lincoln . . ." Wykeham "in his return, presented to Sudbury, Bishop of London, in 1366, states that he has one benefice with the cure of souls—the archdeaconry of Lincoln—that he has eleven benefices without a cure of souls, and that he has the Cornish living of Menhenicot, which he had previously held by the dispensation of the Pope."—*Typical English Churchmen*, Series II, pp. 55 and 56—William of Wykeham—by W. A. Spooner, D.D.

Bishop Wittlesey does not complain of non-residence in itself: [according to Hook,¹ Wittlesey himself “does not appear to have resided at his new see” (Worcester), to which he had been translated from Rochester]; but that these canons had been non-resident and had not kept their vicars to supply their duty: “who are non-resident and do not supply their vicars”: and “the canons of the same church, though holding the prebends in question, are not careful and for a long time have not been careful, as regards the most part of them, to keep residence there either in person or through vicars according to the form and tenor of the oath subscribed by each of them,” are the terms of the Bishop’s complaint.

Custom had changed the original statutes (as it has to-day those of almost every capitular and collegiate body), and allowed vicars to be substituted for personal residence. Men can only be judged fairly by the standard of their own times; but it is the fact that Wycliffe denounced abuses, that make so many anxious to clear his fair fame of the charge of pluralism. Waddington wrote:² Wycliffe “objected to the possession of any fixed property by the clergy and maintained” [but erroneously] “that the ecclesiastical endowments were in their origin, eleemosynary and that they remained at the disposal of the secular

¹ *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, ed. 1865, vol. iv, p. 227.

² *History of the Church*, ed. 1833, p. 584.

government" . . . yet "Wyclif held the Divinity Professorship at Oxford,¹ a prebendal stall, and the Rectory of Lutterworth. He thought it was excusable, no doubt, to conform to the system, which he found established, and his enemies at the time thought it no crime in him that he did so; yet he would have stood higher with posterity had he disdained the plausible excuse and placed the unequivocal seal of private disinterestedness and generosity upon his public principles."

This claims more for Wycliffe than he would have claimed for himself, and is a "non-sequitur." It might have been "heroic," according to the standard of to-day, but at that time it would have been voted "folly." It would have crippled means and opportunity of service, and would have been an ineffective contribution towards the solution of a "national problem."

That some reason, other than that of neglect, must be sought for to account for Wycliffe's default, comes out from his care in 1368 to obtain the necessary permission for non-residence—to read for his divinity degree at Oxford—involving, as it would, provision for the performance of his duties during absence. Dr. Poole² writes: "On

¹ There is no evidence for this. It arose probably from a misunderstanding of the Latin title for a Doctor of Divinity (D.D.), *i.e.* S[anctæ] T[heologiæ] P[rofessor]—S.T.P.—which carried with it the right to teach theology, which Wycliffe exercised.

² Article on Wycliffe in *Ency. Brit.*, ix ed.

the 13th of April, 1378,¹ he [Wycliffe] obtained from his bishop leave of absence '*insistendo literarum studio in Universitate Oxon per biennium.*' " Wycliffe's performance of his duty at Lutterworth, with the assistance of his curate, John Purvey, seems to be beyond dispute ; although it has been urged that it must have been greatly interfered with by his literary and other activities.

2. The second charge against Wycliffe ran : " he ought to have provided a chaplain in the same [church] according to the manner set forth, and has provided none at all—'*nullum penitus exhibuit*'—but has entirely withdrawn him for the whole year last past." It seems that the charge means that Wycliffe had kept no chaplain in *regular* residence at all, and that this intermittent performance of duty since 1362, had failed completely during the past year, prior to the delation.

What apology can be offered for this neglect ? They were times of the greatest difficulty, before, during, and after Wycliffe's tenure of his prebend, for it was during this time that the plague, called the Black Death, ravaged England—successive visitations occurring before the countries had recovered from the last one—causing great confusion in Church and State, and in that condition of affairs lies almost certainly the explanation of the apparent neglect of the canons at Westbury at this time.

¹ *Sic*, but read 1368.

Concerning the visitation of 1349, Dr. Hecker has thus summed up his conclusions: "Thus did the plague spread over England with unexampled rapidity, after it had first broken out in the county of Dorset, whence it advanced through the counties of Devon and Somerset to Bristol, and thence to Gloucester,¹ Oxford and London. Probably few places escaped,² perhaps not any; for the annals of contemporaries report that throughout the land only a tenth part of the inhabitants remained alive."³

Seyer states: "One of our Calendars has the following words, '1348. The plague raged to such a degree in Bristol, that the living were scarcely able to bury the dead. The Gloucestershire men would not suffer the Bristow men to have any access to them. At last it reached Gloucester, Oxford and London: scarce the tenth person was left alive male or female. The churchyards were not large enough to bury the dead and other places were appointed. At this period the grass grew several inches high in High-street and Broad-street.'"⁴

¹ Westbury, now a part of the city and county of Bristol, and Aust lie off the main road to Gloucester.

² The following records make it more than probable that Westbury did not escape these visitations: "These following were bap: at Sherehampton [a tything of Westbury] by on Mr. Peeter mynister there in the tyme of the plague at Westbury Anno 1575," and the record of the burial of "Thomas Haines, Gent. ye xxiiii day of April, 1604," and his death having taken place on the 23rd at Southmead (a hamlet of Westbury) Manor House. See The Church Register (A.D. 1559-1713) of the Ancient Parish of Westbury on Trym.

³ *The Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, translated by Dr. Babington, ed. 1844, p. 7.

⁴ Seyer's *Bristol*, ed. 1823, vol. ii, p. 143.

Seyer goes on to quote the historian Knyghton, who stated: "This previous plague entered the maritime parts of the country by Southampton and came to Bristol, and there died in a manner the whole strength of the town [*quasi tota valitudo villæ*], seized as it were by a sudden death."¹ Seyer gives a pathetic picture of agriculture: "In the same year [1348] was a great murrain of sheep in every part of the kingdom, so that in one place there died in one pasture more than 5000 sheep," &c.; and he goes on to write of the scarcity of labour in the country, adding: "At the same time there was a great want of priests everywhere, so that many churches were without them, having no divine duties, as masses, vespers, sacraments and sacramentals. A man could scarce have a chaplain for less than 10*li.* or 10 mares to serve any church. And whereas before the pestilence, when there was plenty of priests, a man might have a chaplain for 5 or 4 marks or for 2 marks with his board, at this time there was scarce any one who would accept a vicarage at 20*li.* or 20 mares. But after a short time a great multitude flocked into Holy Orders, whose wives had died in the pestilence, of whom many being illiterate, and as it were mere laymen, knew only so far as to read the services in some way, although not to understand them."²

¹ Seyer's *Bristol*, ed. 1823, vol. ii, p. 144.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 146.

There were other dire visitations of the plague in 1361 and 1368; so the country had no time to recover from one ravage before another followed.

"The fresh outbreak," writes Dr. Spooner, "of the Black Death in 1361 had fallen with exceptional severity upon the clergy. In many parts of the country church offices had become vacant, and there were often no suitable candidates to fill the places of those who died."¹

In the Diocesan Histories' series² it is stated: "In 1361 Bishop Bryan died of the plague at Alvechurch. Famine trod on the heels of pestilence. The diocese was reduced to great straits. Even the priory of Worcester, usually so prosperous, had to complain by reason of the conflux of pilgrims, demanding hospitality from the monks."

It would be a reasonable assumption that the common distress of the plague in 1361 fell heavily on the canons of Westbury. Wycliffe became Prebendary of Aust in 1362; the delation in question is dated June, 1366, when the distress and difficulties of the plague had not yet passed away.

The value of the prebend of Aust, when Thomas de Askeby held it in 1329, is given as 10 marks;³ but that must have been after paying the necessary expenses of his vicar, and paying his

¹ *Typical English Churchmen*, Series II, ed. 1909, p. 55.

² By the Rev. J. Gregory Smith, M.A., and the Rev. Philip Onslow, M.A., ed. 1883, p. 93—Worcester.

³ *Papal Letters*, Rolls Series, p. 225.

share of the common expenses of the college. In 1332 a pension of £20 sterling was granted out of the prebendal income to Thomas de Orleton, "weary with age and disease,"¹ the prebend being held in plurality for this purpose by John de Trillek. But its value must have been affected by the desolation caused by the Black Death.

Cardinal Gasquet has pointed out in his careful study of the Black Death that the diocesan records of the deaths, exchanges, and resignations of the incumbents and other clergy would prove how hardly the Black Death had pressed upon the clergy.

The Worcester Diocesan Records, as far as they are published, bear this out.²

In the "*Sede Vacante*" register there are the following striking facts, and the more so because they extend only over *three months* :

Pt. iii, p. 202, f. 111d.

Register of those things which were done in the bishopric of Worcester, the See being vacant after the death [owing to the Black Death] of the lord Reginald Bryan, the late bishop, from 10 December, 1361, to 10 March, 1361(-2) :

¹ *Worc. Liber Albus*, f. cli.

² When the painfully slow publication of the *Worc. Epis. Registers* by the Worc. Hist. Soc. has progressed further—only the registers of Bishop Giffard [1268-1301-2], "*Sede Vacante*," and Bishop Guisborough [1303-1307] have been undertaken during the past twenty-five years, the work being prevented by the publication of other records, which are undoubtedly of less value and interest—it will be possible to estimate the full effect of the Black Death upon the diocese of Worcester, in which Bristol was at that time situated.

Pt. iii, p. 203.

1361. 12 Dec. William Houtelow, priest, prebend of the church of Intebarwe.
 9 „ William Wyot, priest, incumbent of the free chapel of Doynton.
 15 „ William Bysschelin, priest, presented to the hospital of St. Oswald, Worcester.
 10 Kal. Dec. John Smult, priest, presented to the church of Kekyngwych.
 18 Dec. Robert Baunebur, priest, presented to the church of Ottebrege.
 10 „ John Smyth, priest, presented to the church of Estlech.
 17 „ John Ward, priest, presented to the vicarage of Croul.

Ibid., p. 204.

- 17 „ John Herwykes, priest, presented to the vicarage of Clinel.
 13 „ William de Braddeway, priest, presented to the vicarage of Brayles.
 22 „ Thomas Drysdon, priest, presented to the church of Roudecombe.
 20 „ Thomas Boghes, priest, presented to the church of Otyndon.
 18 Dec. Thomas Tchuffeleye, priest, presented to the church of Torkod.
 20 „ Thomas Andrew, priest, presented to the chapel of Tokynton.*
 22 „ Roger Lacke, priest, presented to the vicarage of Erlynham.

Ibid., p. 205.

- 20 „ Robert atte Church, priest, presented to the church of Cotes.
 5 Jan. Henry de Kynewarton, priest, presented to the church of Morton.
 9 „ Robert Hals, priest, presented to the vicarage of Eldersfeld.
 10 „ Robert atte sloo, priest, presented to the church of Pokelchurch.*

- 15 Jan. Alan de Vyse, priest, presented to the church of Billesleye.
- 8 „ John Notte, priest, presented to the church of Lench Rooulf.
- 2 „ Robert Wattes, priest, presented to the church of Hembury Saltmarsh.*
[Hembury adjoins Westbury on Trym, and Aust is a chapelry, now within the parish of Henbury.]
- 8 „ William de Whyte, deacon, admitted to the church of Cromb Symond.
- 3 „ William de Browthton, priest, admitted to the church of SS. Philip and James, Bristol.*

Pt. iii, p. 206.

- 24 „ Robert Bolde, priest, admitted to the church of Nafford.
- 20 „ John Delyng, priest, admitted to the vicarage of Byshampton.
- 19 „ Richard de Evenlod, priest, admitted to the church of Evenlod.
- 20 „ John Lovekok, priest, admitted to the church of St. John, Bristol.*
- 18 „ Henry Wodeward, priest, admitted to the chapel of Clynl.
- 15 „ Henry de Copenhall, priest, admitted to the church of Morton Bagot.
- 6 „ Simon de Pylardynton, priest, admitted to the church of Atheston.
- 7 „ Reginald Dodd, priest, admitted to the house of the hospital of St. Michael of Warwick.
- 3 „ Geoffrey Herbert, priest, admitted to the church of Morton Brut.
- 25 Feb. Peter de Bradeway, priest, admitted to the rectory of Pynnuche.

Ibid., p. 207.

- 5 Feb. Richard Batyn, priest, admitted to the church of Condicote.
- 5 „ Philip Reome, priest, admitted to the church of Fulton next Bristol.*

- 6 Feb. Thomas Proud, priest, admitted to the church of Tokyngton.*
 [Vacant on 20 Dec. previously.]
- 2 „ Thomas de Montgomery, priest, admitted to the chapel of Mattesden.
- 4 „ John Lawerns, priest, admitted to the chapel of Schelne.
- 11 „ John Swynley, priest, admitted to the prebend held by Richard Somerton at Westbury.
- 4 „ William Harper, priest, admitted to the chapel of Dodyngton.
- 8 „ Henry Torald, priest, admitted to the church of Southrop.
- 6 „ Richard de Elyndon, priest, admitted to the church of Lapworth.
- 15 „ Simon de Collewell, priest, admitted to the church of St. Michael, Bristol.*
- 23 „ John Wykengeston, priest, admitted to the church of Sutton.
- 15 „ John Kynesham, priest, admitted to the church of Litelton.
- 12 „ John Ball, priest, admitted to the chapel of Compton.*
- 15 „ Stephen Sloughthre, priest, admitted to the chapel of Cambrugge.*
- 19 „ William in the Lane, priest, admitted to the vicarage of Great Compton.
- 26 „ William Marchal, priest, admitted to the church of Coumbe Baskervyle.
- 3 „ William de Atrio, monk, admitted to the Priory of Asteley.

Pt. iii, p. 209.

- 9 March. John Gardiner, priest, admitted to the church of Eggesworth.
- 15 Feb. Philip de Cestr', priest, admitted to the church of St. Andrew, Bristol.*
- 10 „ Nicholas Wynband, priest, admitted to the church of Osleworth.

- 15 Feb. John Goffeld, priest, admitted to the church of Nyndesfeld.
- 6 „ William Lodlowe, priest, admitted to the church of Rowell.
- 20 „ William de Steford, priest, admitted to the church of Blonebrokton.
- 5 March. William de Wotton, priest, admitted to the church of Churchull.
- 5 „ Adam, son of John de Tresul, priest, admitted to the church of Churchull.
- 13 Feb. Provision by the Prior of Worcester of brother Thomas Doul, as prior of Dodeford [under special circumstances], the late prior, brother William de Aston, having died on 9 Feb. 1361-2, and being buried on 10 Feb. [undoubtedly a victim of the Black Death].
- 14 Jan. Maurice de Munstreworth elected abbot of the Monastery of Alyncestr', *vice* Robert de Adbriton, deceased.

[The dates are the sequence given in the register. The mark * denotes adjacent to Westbury.]

Resignations

Pt. iii, p. 210.

1361. 10 Jan. Resignation by Robert Wattes, vicar of the parish church of Hembury, of the parish church of Nafford.
- 17 „ Resignation by Robert Att. Church, rector of the parish church of Cotes, of the vicarage of the church of St. Peter de Sodynton.
- 19 „ Resignation of Robert de Bannebury, vicar of the parish church of Stodeleye, of the vicarage of the church of Stodeleye.
- 2 „ Resignation of Henry de Kenewarton, rector of the church of Morton Abbas, of the vicarage of the church of Byshampton.
- 10 Feb. Resignation by Simon de Colewell, rector of the church of St. Audeon [Andrew] of Bristol of the same church.

Pt. iii, p. 211.

- 10 Feb. Resignation by Peter de Wodmoncot, rector of the church of St. Michael of Bristol, of the same church.
- 5 March. Resignation by Thomas Proud, rector of the church of Kynton, of the chapel of Morton upon the Hill.
- 2 Jan. Resignation by Will. Bornthon, rector of the church of Eselworth, of the same church.
- 1 March. Resignation of Adam de Castel of the vicarage of Inteberye.

Ibid., p. 212.

- 25 Feb. Resignation of John Lovcock of Aston upon Carent', warden or rector of the chantry or chapel of Harescomb with the chapel of Pynechenecomb to the same annexed.
- 26 „ Resignation of John Alewy, priest and master or warden of the hospital of the Blessed Mary next Wyche to the wardenship of the said hospital.

Shortage of Supply

[The urgency of the times did not admit of waiting for the new bishop.]

Pt. iii, p. 211.

- 27 Jan. Commission by the Prior of Worcester to Robert, bishop of Sens, to celebrate orders and consecrate parish churches and altars [many gifts and offerings for such purposes were made in these sorrowful times] in the parish churches within the diocese of Worcester, the See being vacant.

Such is the record for three months only—10 Dec. to 10 March, 1361—proving how much the Church shared this awful visitation. If full records were forthcoming, the picture would be intensified without a doubt.

Another record in the "*Sede Vacante*" register of Worcester, and strangely enough also for three months, in 1364, gives some material towards the formation of an estimation of the burden and poverty [as testified to by the resignations below] of the church in Worcester diocese :

"*Sede Vacante*" Register, pt. iii, p. 216.

Register of those things which were done, the see of Worcester being vacant . . . from the first day of April 1364 to the second of July in the same year.

1364. 23 April. Robert de Caldewell, clerk, to Brodebrook, *vice* Nicholas Andrew, resigned.

29 May. William Warde, priest, to Haseley, *vice* Sir William de Nayleston, resigned.

21 June. Robert Jones, priest, to Welneford, *vice* Sir William de Scameby, resigned.

19 „ Master Trouel, priest, to the preceptory of the hospital of St. Wolstan of Worcester, *vice* Sir Robert de Dychesdon, resigned.

22 April. Edmund Morteyn, prebend of Mordon and Wadden, in exchange for the prebend of Thokerniton.

Ibid., p. 218.

6 May. William Lude, priest, to Durham [Derham], *vice* Master John, deceased.

19 June. John Brani, to the chantry of "Spagard" in the church of St. Ellen, Worcester.

19 „ John Gorwry, priest, to Begworth, *vice* Master William Semes, resigned.

26 „ Nicholas Jeffrey, priest, warden of the hospital of Holy Trinity of Langebrugg near Berkeley, *vice* Walter Launce, resigned.

An impartial estimate of the above-mentioned facts seems to point to the conclusion that Wycliffe had done what he could. As far as the income of

his prebend—and it must have been considerably affected—allowed during this period of desolation, he had provided from time to time clerical assistance, although not a resident chaplain. For one year he had been in complete default: the facts seem to point to the conclusion that he was unable to get a curate—not an unknown difficulty to some incumbents even to-day. Hyndeley, Prebendary of Henbury—the most favourably situated of the Westbury prebends—had secured one for his six months, but that may be that he was more fortunate than his fellow-canons, as are some incumbents to-day.

3. The “general” charge—not mentioned in the Dean’s delation—appears in the formal order of sequestration: that the canons had neglected “the chancels of the churches appropriated to them and the buildings belonging to the churches, the repair of which notoriously is and ought to be incumbent upon them, [but they leave them] on the contrary to fall into ruins.”

Does Wycliffe fall under this general charge? It will be remembered that the date of his appointment as Prebendary of Aust is 24 Nov. 1362; the date of the sequestration is 28 June, 1366, and so he had been personally responsible for these repairs but fifty-five months only. Is so short a tenure consistent with such a sweeping charge? If the charge applied to the prebend of Aust, then the blame falls on Wycliffe’s predecessors.

The recovery of dilapidations from past holders of benefices, and particularly from those of slender means, has, even to the present day, been a very difficult and unpleasant work.¹

How widespread and long continued were the baleful effects of the Black Death the following record proves: "In 1385"—there had been a third visitation of the plague in 1368—"Bishop Henry de Wakefield found at Worcester the Carnary Chapel and house 'in ruins,' owing to the plague and other unwonted burdens. So he placed the burden of maintaining it *for a single chaplain only* on the sacrist of the monastery."² Therefore it does not appear that this sweeping general charge can be applied to Wycliffe, or at any rate in any great measure, and that must give way because of the circumstances of the times.

Bishop Wittlesey was enthroned 11 May, 1365,³ and soon after made his first visitation. He was prompt in action, and so, finding apparent neglect, issued, as the custom was, his formal order of sequestration in reference to the prebends of Westbury, having directed the Dean of Westbury to cite the defaulting prebendaries to appear

¹ In 1349 Ralph de Daventre, who had succeeded Thomas Mury-mouth in the prebend of Holley, *alias* St. Werburga—the prebend held by Richard Michel, one of the defaulting canons in 1366, from 1362—complained to the Prior of Worcester "that there are many defects in the manse of the said prebend, the repair whereof the late Master Thomas was bound to make while he lived."—"Sede Vacante" *Reg.* (Worc. Hist. Soc.), pt. iv, p. 225.

² *Early Education in Worcester* (Worc. Hist. Soc.), ed. 1913, p. xix.

³ *Wittlesey Reg.*, f. 9.

before him. No record of that appearance exists ; but Wycliffe was not the man to refuse a challenge, and especially where his " word of honour " was concerned, unless he suspected, as shown by his action later in life, that his personal safety was aimed at. At that appearance he would be able to prove—a fair presumption is that he did prove—the injustice of the charges, as far as he was concerned, having regard to all the difficulties of the times.

It is a significant fact that there is no other record of any sequestration in the whole of Bishop Wittlesey's register. He probably grasped more clearly the difficulties of those times, and perhaps from Wycliffe himself.

Doubtless things gradually improved at Westbury, if we may judge from William Lynne's [Bishop of Worcester, 1369-73] care in 1370 to provide for the spiritual needs of the hamlets of Northwyke, Redewyke, and Bylscham—lying between Westbury and Aust ;¹ for it is highly im-

¹ " William, by divine compassion bishop of Worcester, to his beloved sons, the indwellers and inhabitants of the hamlets of Northwyke, Redewyke and Bylscham with the parish of the parish church of Hembury in Salt-marsh, situate in our diocese, salvation, grace and benediction. On your part to us it is now set forth in what manner you are placed in the said marsh : how on account of the distance of these places, as also on account of the floods and evil character of the ways, which in spring time are frequently under water, so that, from this cause, between the said places and your parish church aforesaid a certain flood may intervene : that, on account of the ebb and flow of the sea coming in, frequent and secure access to the said church is denied to you : and, if any one cross in a punt(?) on account of the said tides of the sea in great flood,

probable that he would have taken such thought for these hamlets and allowed Westbury (through which he must pass to the residence of the bishops of Worcester at Henbury) and its prebendal churches to be neglected.

It is almost beyond dispute that Wycliffe himself in after years spent some time at Westbury and so gathered around him his many followers in Bristol and the West, as Mr. G. M. Trevelyan has shown.¹ This comes out from *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk* [1377-1421],² which records: "Among all other misfortunes, nay, amongst the most wicked of all wicked things, even errors and

thence it frequently happens weightier perils threaten those, who visit the said church to hear the Divine office in the church on Sundays and Feast Days, so that you cannot go without great peril on your part: supplication was humbly made to us, that it should seem good to us to provide for you some remedy, especially, as in the same hamlet of Northwyke there is a certain chapel in ruins [probably owing to the Black Death] but honestly built in old days and in which you might be able to keep, at your own proper charges, a suitable priest, who might celebrate for you in it the Divine office and minister the Holy Sacraments. We, therefore, considering the above-mentioned dangers, willingly graciously so to do that in the said chapel you shall keep at your own charges a suitable priest, by whom at the Feast of Pentecost following you shall be allowed licence to cause him to celebrate low mass and to hear the divine offices, have granted spiritual licence to you and this priest by these presents, saving, nevertheless, that in tithes, oblations and other ecclesiastical rights the aforesaid parish church be in no way defrauded, and that on Sundays and feasts ye attend the said parish church for the Divine office there, excepting only when prevented by the aforesaid and other lawful hindrances, as truly given by these presents: further we shall take care in God as your ordinary. Given at Hembury etc."—[*Reg. Lynn*, f. xliid].

¹ *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, ed. 1909.

² Translated, &c., by Sir E. M. Thompson, K.C.B., ed. 1904, pp. 140, 141.

heresies in the Catholic faith, England, and above all London and Bristol, stood corrupted," . . . "whence, in many parts of the land, and above all in London and in Bristol, they, like the Jews at Mount Horeb on account of the molten calf (Exodus xxxii), turning against each other, righteously had to grieve for three-and-twenty thousand of their fellows who suffered a miserable fate."

This was the opinion of Seyer, who states: "Wycliffe himself no doubt often visited this town" [Bristol, for he was] "Prebendary of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury on Trim: in which situation and with his zeal he surely took the opportunity of recommending his opinion from the pulpits of Bristol. John Purney was Wickliff's curate or assistant, and we are distinctly informed that he preached in Bristol."¹

It does not seem, in spite of first impressions to the contrary, that the "valet" of Wycliffe is affected by the Wittlesey records, considered in this paper. Few characters have suffered so much from the unhistorical detractions of his opponents and the adulations of his followers.

If the *apologia* offered above seems to fail, and Wycliffe's record appears blotted with *avoidable* non-performance of duty, then the quaint words of Fuller apply: "I intend neither to deny, dissemble, or excuse any of his faults. *We have this treasure (saith the apostle) in earthen*

¹ Seyer's *Bristol*, vol. ii, p. 164.

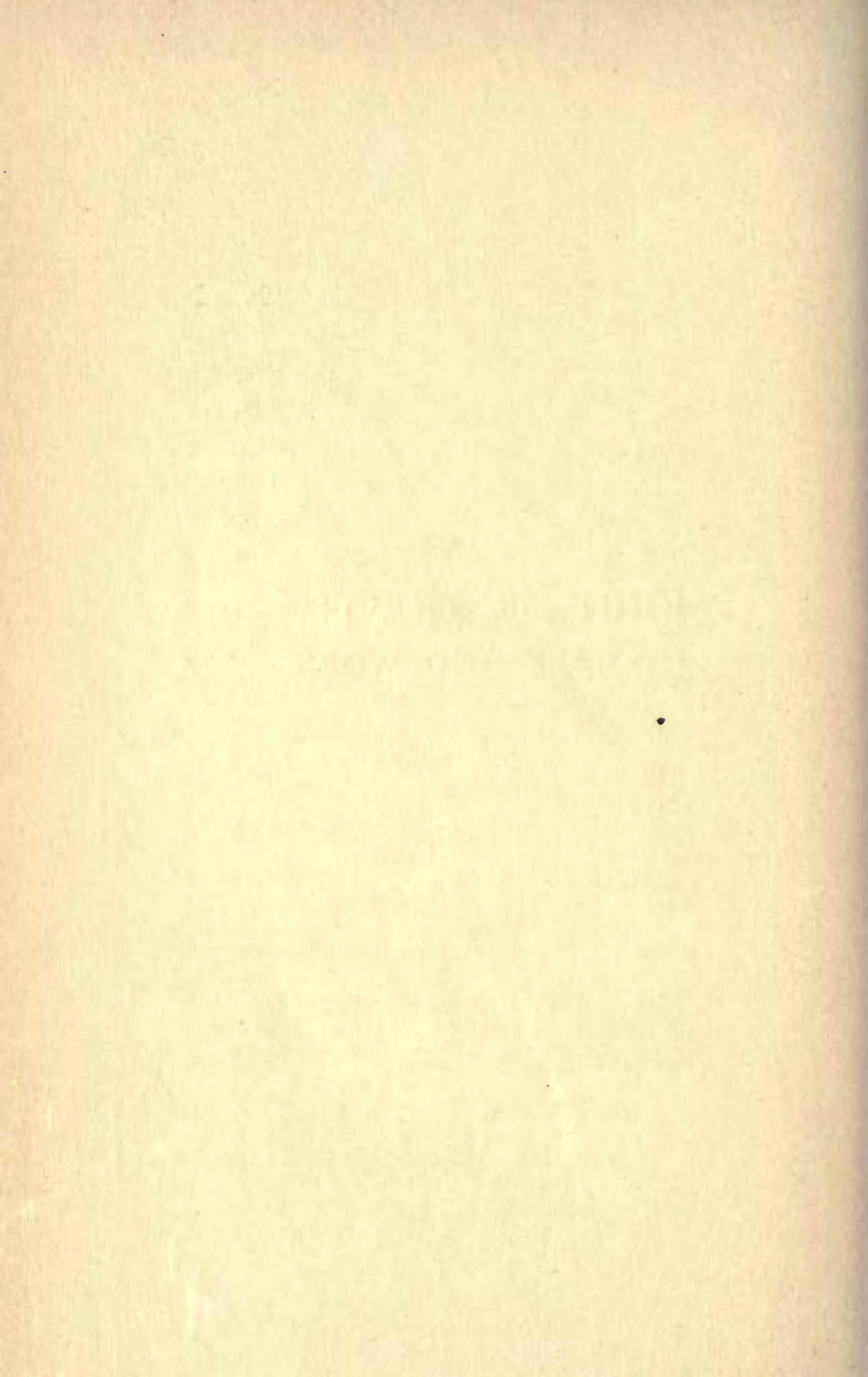
vessels ; and he that shall endeavour to prove a pitcher of clay to be a pot of gold, will take great pains to small purpose. Yea, should I be over-officious to retain myself to plead for Wickliffe's faults, that glorious saint would sooner chide than thank me, unwilling that in favour of him truth should suffer prejudice." ¹

Whatever estimate is formed of the life and work—beneficial or otherwise—of Wycliffe, without a doubt he was one of the foremost Englishmen of his time, exercising an all-pervading influence, and which to-day remains a great power in the land. Nothing in former times could prevent his influence. It was idle to dig up in 1428, at the command of the Council of Constance, his remains, which "had been sleeping beneath the pavement of the quiet chancel of Lutterworth church," to burn them, and to cast them in the river Swift, a neighbouring brook. His influence, whatever view may be taken of it, remained and still remains a great power throughout the world, or as Fuller has quaintly summed up : "Thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean ; and thus the ashes of Wicliffe are the emblems of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." ²

¹ *Church History*, ed. 1845, vol. ii, p. 316.

² *Ibid.*, p. 424.

JOHN DE TREVISA
HIS LIFE AND WORK



JOHN DE TREVISA

JOHN DE TREVISA¹ was born at "Crocadon," in the parish of St. Mellion, near Saltash, Cornwall.²

The date of Trevisa's birth has been variously

¹ Mr. J. A. Cooke, F.S.A., in the *Bristol and Gloucester Arch. Trans.* for 1876, vol. i, p. 138, &c., dogmatically states "there is no authority for the 'de' often prefixed, the name being the old Cornish 'Tre, Pol and Pen' names"; but on the other side are the following writers, who use the "de"—viz. Manley, Wharton, Shirley, Mr. Kingsford (*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, 1909), Provost Magrath of Queen's College, Oxford, and many others. An extract from the Worcester Episcopal Register almost settles this question: "2 Aug. 1391. An Inquisition was ordered to inquire into the vacant chantry of Bradeston in Berkeley. The names of the inquisitors are thus given, John Dawts of Wotton sub Edge, John de Wynterbourne, Thos. de Odyngton, Richard de Slymbrugge, Nicholas de Oselworth, Rectores; *John de Coneley* [*sic*, but an obvious miswriting for Trevisa, as will appear later on in this paper; being a lazy substitution for a name, which had escaped the memory of the scribe], Step. de Cambragge, Wm. Sowy, St. Mary de Berkeley, John, Priest de Cantuar' de Berkeley, John Byrch and Wm. de Cromhale, perpetual priests of the chantries. *John de Coneley* [Trevisa] and the following names were Berkeley clerics." How easily the "de" is dropped most students know—it appears clearly from the documents of 3 Ric. II quoted below—to be resumed by "pretentious nobodies," anxious for a pedigree, in modern times.

² Carew [1602] in his *Survey of Cornwall*, ed. 1811, p. 269, has the following interesting note: "Upon the top of a creek hereby lieth Crocadon, the mansion of Mr. Trevisa, a gentleman deriving himself from ancient and well-deserving character of that name: he beareth g. a garb o.," and adds in a note: "Crocadon is the mansion of Charles Trevisa, Esq., descended from John Trevisa (born in this place, as I am informed)," etc.

given by different writers. The most probable date seems to be about A.D. 1322, or before.¹

Trevisa proceeded to Oxford, and is mentioned as a member of Exeter College from Lent 1362 to the winter of 1365.²

In 1369 Trevisa became a Fellow of Queen's College.³

In 1379 the following record is to be found :

[*Calendar of Pat. Rolls* (Rolls Series, p. 420),
3 Ric. II, pt. i, m. 20.]

1379. } "Commission of oyer and terminer
Oct. 20, } to the Chancellor of the University of
Westminster. } Oxford for the time being, Master John
de Bloxham, Master Thomas Walleworth, Master

¹ Mr. Boase, in his *Register of Exeter College*, Oxford, p. 11, gives "about 1342," basing it, doubtless, upon the time Trevisa appears as a member of his college; but this date makes Trevisa but sixty years of age when he died, and he is spoken of as a very old man at that time [1402, as will appear later]. It also assumes the usual age of entrance at Oxford. But Mr. Boase gives wrongly the date of Trevisa's death—1412—which makes him seventy years of age at that time. Mr. Cooke gives the date 1322. Mr. C. L. Kingsford gives 1326. These dates make Trevisa forty to forty-four years of age when his name is first mentioned as a member [and so probably a Fellow] of Exeter College; and eighty or seventy-six years of age at the time of his death.

² Hist. MSS. Com., Appendix to Second Report, p. 128: "In one of the *Computi* of the same Robert de Clist for 1362, mention is made of John Trevysa, afterwards a fellow of Queen's College. The Rector [of Exeter College] among other things renders an account for the allowances (*dietis*) of John Trevysa, who came into commons on Sunday in the same week." Also Boase's *Reg. of Exeter College*, p. 12: "Lent 1362, pro dietis Johannis Trevyse qui venit ad comunas die dominica viii. d. ob.; autumn 1362, xl. d. J. Trevysa ad visitandum amicos: autumn 1363 xii. d. pro conductione duorum equorum quando Rector et Johannes Trewyse fuerunt apud West Wyttenham ad componendum cum firmariis pro horreo faciendo: autumn 1364 (pensiones sociorum) vii. s. v. d. ob. q. Johanni Trevisa."

³ Boase's *Reg. of Exeter College*, p. 10.

John de Colton and Master Robert Dix, after enquiry at Oxford into the complaint of Master Thomas de Karlell, provost of 'Quenehalle' and the scholars of that college, that Master Henry Whitfeld, late provost and Master William Fraunk, Master Robert Lydeford, and *Master John Trevisa*, late scholars and fellows thereof, who have been excluded therefrom for their unworthiness (*exegentibus demeritis*) refuse to account for certain moneys of the college that came to their hands as well as before the cession of the said Henry and the exclusion of the other three as after, and have taken away charters, books, jewels and muniments, besides goods belonging to the college."

[*Ibid.* (p. 470), 3 Ric. II, pt. ii, m. 12*d.*]

1380.
Feb. 7,
Westminster. } "Commission of oyer and terminer
to Master William Breton, chancellor
of the university of Oxford, Master
John Shirburn, Master Thomas Swyn-
don and Master Robert Bix, on complaint of Master
Thomas Karlell, the provost and the scholars of
the college, called 'Le Quenshall,' Oxford, that
Master Henry Whitfeld, the late provost, Master
William Fraunk, Master Robert Lideford and
Master John Trevisa, late scholars and fellows of the
college, now excluded therefrom refuse to account
for money which came to their hands, as well
before the resignation of the said William, Robert
and John as afterward, and also took away
charters, books, jewels and other muniments be-
longing to the college and pledged the same. The
commissioners are to proceed by sworn examina-
tion of both parties and other scholars of the uni-
versity and to compel restitution."

The dispute evidently commenced with the

new Provost, soon after his accession on 6 Jan. 1376.

The alleged defaulters are: (1) Master Henry Whitfield, late provost; (2) Master William Fraunk; (3) Master Robert Lydeford; and (4) Master John Trevisa.

Their records were:

(1) *Henry Whitefield*, Dev. 1355—called “Exon. M.A., B.D.,” in petition to the Pope: managed some [Exeter] College business (as well as for Queen’s) at Avignon in the winter 1363 (another instance occurs in 1376), for which £3 was paid him: Fellow of Queen’s, 1353; Provost, 1363; Archdeacon of Barnstaple, 1374–84 [Boase’s *Reg. of Exeter College*, pp. 7, 8]. Commissioner for the Bishop of Exeter: “Commission for a Visitation, 26 Oct. 1371, Thomas (Brantingham), bishop of Exeter to our beloved Masters in Arts, Henry Whytefeld, D.D., Archdeacon of Barum, and Thomas Carey: We have been informed that Master William Fraunke, *senior* fellow of our College of Stapledon Hall [Exeter College] unjustly hinders his brother fellows in the election of a Rector. We therefore authorize you to visit the College and make them elect a Rector and punish any who resist and any offence of the fellows. At Esthorslegk.” [*Ibid.*, p. lv.]

(2) *William Fraunk*, Sar. 1370, vac. 27 Mch. 1372. Rector [of Exeter College] 1370–71. Senior fellow by 26 Oct. 1371 (? therefore fellow before 1362); Fellow of Queen’s, 1371. [*Ibid.*, p. 14.]

(3) *Robert de Lydeford*, Dev. autumn 1365 (perhaps 1362) to autumn 1375, M.A., Rector [of Exeter College] 1373–74. Fellow of Queen’s, 1375. . . . Rector of Lockyng, Berks, 1399–1400, pres.

by monastery of Abingdon; *d.* Oct. 1412. [*Ibid.*, p. 13.]

(4) *John Trevisa* has been already given.

The record of Thomas de Karlell, provost of Queen's, who makes the complaint was :

"Sometime (as it seems) of University College : succeeded Henry Whitfelde as Provost of Queen's 6 Jan: 1376 [Parker's *Oxford Men and their Colleges*, p. 166], notwithstanding it appears elsewhere that one William Frank was Provost an: 1377. The said Carlile was a great Benefactor to the College. (Tho. de Karlele, S.T.B., confirmed Provost, vacant by the removal of Mr. Henry de Whatefeld, 6 Jan. 1376. So in Reg. Nevile, Archiep. Ebor.)" [Wood's *Hist. and Antiquities of Oxford*, by Gutch, ed. 1792, vol. iii, p. 146.]

Wood [*ibid.*, vol. i, p. 496] makes the following statement in reference to this dispute :

"An: Dom: 1379. 2, 3 Rich: II. About this time he [the King] proceeds to take cognisance of the affairs of Queen's College, the Members thereof being this year and some time before engaged in controversies : for so great was the enmity between the Provost and Fellows of the same three years hence (whether upon account of heresy or election of a Provost I know not) that they not only brought a scandal but a visitation on the College. Alexander Nevile, Archbishop of York, receiving divers appeals and complaints from them, sent his Commission to visit the College, and coming there at the appointed time, was by the Members entertained uncivilly, so that, fearing to proceed to his visitation, procured the King's

Breve (in Cartophyl. Civ. Ox.) to command the Chancellor and Mayor to assist him in his work by guarding him from any violence that should happen to him by the Scholars, or any Laics that might be their abettors. After he had performed justice and settled the college in order, the discord fell out more afterwards than before, and to so great height did it reach that another visitation, or at least a special order coming this year to the College, Mr. Henry Whytefeld, the Provost, Mr. Will Franke, Mr. Robert Lydeford and Mr. John Trevisa, Fellows, were expelled. But they, conspiring at that time together, carried along with them divers charters, books, jewels, money and goods belonging to the College; all which they reposing in divers places within the Town of Oxon were at length sought after (through the command of the King)—C. L. 3 Ric. II, m. 40 [Harus de Priv., f. 105*b*—by the Chancellor and Proctors of the University, and being at length by them found, were at their persuasions voluntarily restored by Mr. Whytefeld to Mr. Thomas Karleil, Provost of the said College, as it appears by a certain instrument (*In Thes. Coll. Reginæ*), containing a catalogue of the said charters, goods &c., which were restored. What else I find of the affairs belonging to the said College, as relating to the present controversies, is this: That forasmuch as Scholars thereof, especially the persons ejected, did continue turbulent and discontented to the disturbance of the Peace, a Commission was granted (3 Ric. II, p. ii, m. 12, Hari. Mem., f. 81*a*) by the King (dated Feb. 7, an. reg. 3, but see above) to Mr. Will. Beeton, Chancellor of Oxon, Mr. John Sherbourne, Mr. Thomas Swyndon and Mr. Robert Bix to enquire further into the debates and bring them to a final

peace : also that another Commission (*In ead. thes. ut supra in pix. Ox.*) was granted this year to John Bloxham, Thomas Walworth, and John Cotton to examine Mr. Whytefield's business in St. Mary's Church, and the King's Breve (*ibid.*) to the Sheriff, 1 Rich. II, to take Richard Thorpe and William Middleworth, and to force them to deliver up the College seal to the Provost and Fellows."

[These were very violent and lawless times at Oxford and elsewhere, as Wood records under the year 1380.]

Mr. Lyte¹ gives the following account of this dispute: "The Colleges, steadily increasing in popularity and influence, were not without their share of domestic feuds in the period embraced in this chapter [c. xi, A.D. 1378-41]. In 1376 the Archbishop of York, as Visitor of Queen's Hall, sent commissioners thither to oust the Provost, Henry Whitfield, and several of the scholars, among whom was John Trevisa, well known to posterity as the translator of Higden's *Polychronicon* and other works. Whitfield seems to have gone through the form of resigning his office, and the ejected scholars received an offer of re-admission. They decided, however, to go away, taking with them the common seal of the College, and various muniments, books, jewels and keys. Those of them who were cited to appear in Chancery neglected

¹ *History of the University of Oxford*, by H. C. Lyte, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, ed. 1886, p. 31.

to do so, and even, after a warrant had been issued for their arrest, the College was unable to recover this missing property."¹

Whatever were the merits of this dispute, it is clear that the Provost, Thomas of Carlisle, who held office till his death in 1404, bore no animosity against John of Trevisa, for Trevisa appears as paying 13s. 4d. for rooms at Queen's College in 1395-6, and 1398-9.²

So far, no direct evidence as to the date of Trevisa's appointment as Vicar of Berkeley seems

¹ "Rymer's *Foedera*, vol. vii, p. 125; Close Roll, 1 Ric. II, m. 18; Patent Roll, 1 Ric. II, p. 3, m. 24; p. 5, m. 26b; *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. iii, p. 69; Pat. Roll, 3 Ric. II, p. 2, m. 12b. Mr. Boase, following Wood, states that the Provost of Queen's and five others 'were expelled as Wickliffites in 1379' (*Reg. of Exeter College*, p. xiv). There is, however, no evidence as to the cause of their expulsion, and the persecution of John Wyclif and his followers had not yet begun (W. Thomson, *An Open College*, pp. 27, 28, 30)." But the present Provost of Queen's College, the Rev. J. H. Magrath, D.D., has written in *The Oxford Colleges—Queen's College*—p. 147: "Whatever affected the history of the country affected the history of the University, and whatever affected the history of the University affected the history of the College. Wycliffe stayed within the College, and Nicholas of Hereford, who translated for him the Old Testament, was a Fellow. Henry Whitfield, Provost, and three Fellows, one of them John of Trevisa, all four west-countrymen, were expelled for Wycliffism."

"It has been suggested that the seceding scholars were an anti-northern party, who objected to the reservation of half the places in the College for natives of Cumberland and Westmorland. By a petition addressed to Richard II by his wife, the official patroness of Queen's College, it appears that the revenue was insufficient to maintain the proper number of members. There were but six scholars instead of twelve, two chaplains instead of four, one master instead of two, and six poor boys instead of twelve."—*Antiquarian Repertory*, vol. i, pp. 126, 127.

² Hist. MSS. Com., Second Report, pp. 140-141.

to be forthcoming. Smyth¹ writes of Trevisa holding that position in 1351; but here Smyth proves to be inaccurate, as in several other places.

The Rev. J. H. Bloom (in a letter, dated 18 Feb. 1915, in response to a letter from the present writer, asking him to make a further search in the Worc. Epis. Registers for Trevisa's appointment as Vicar of Berkeley) writes: "I cannot find any other mention [*i.e.* other than the mention in 1402 given below] of Trevisa at all, though I have been through the ordination lists and all documents." Mr. Bloom goes on to refer to a Master David, whom he had previously found to be a Vicar of Berkeley, and states: "The document, in which Master David is named, is a list of surrogates, appointed by Bishop John Barnet on 7 Feb. 1361-2 to prove wills and hear confessions, &c., *Mag. David vicarī ecclię de Berkeley.*"

So Trevisa's appointment as Vicar of Berkeley must have been subsequent to 7 Feb. 1361-2.

In 1387 "on the morrow of the feast of Holy Trinity, the eleventh year of our lord the king" [Ric. II, 1377-99], and in 1388 on "the Monday, February 12th, the 12th year of our said lord the king," Trevisa joined in a discreditable raid (recalling the raid on Queen's College) from Berkeley upon the Dean of Westbury. The Record² is

¹ Berkeley MSS., *Lives of the Berkeleys*, by John Smyth, edited by Sir John Maclean, ed. 1883, vol. i, p. 19.

Hitherto unpublished, and for which the writer is indebted to Mr. J. Nelson at the Record Office.

evidently but an abstract from the original petition—written in Norman-French—of the Dean for protection, &c., and is thus given :

ANCIENT PETITION, 7355 [Record Office]

To our very dread lord the King and to his very wise Council complains Robert Dean of the Collegiate Church of Westbury in the County of Gloucester of John Poleyne, squire of Thomas Berkeley of Berkeley, knight,¹ of this that the said John with a great number of men armed and arrayed with habergeons, swords, bucklers, daggers, sticks, bows and arrows, riotously assembled in manner of war against the peace of our said lord the King, the Statute of Northampton and other statutes and ordinances in such cases provided, came to Westbury aforesaid the morrow of the feast of Holy Trinity the eleventh year of our said lord the King by night and besieged him there and broke open the doors and entered by force into his chamber and took the said Dean lying in his bed and dragged him out of his house into the street tearing his clothes and there assaulted, beat, wounded, and maltreated him so that he was in despair of his life and then imprisoned him and threatened to kill him so that for fear of death he promised to make a fine with him and to give all his goods to suffer him to have his life.

And then the *said* John Trevysa, John Breton, Richard Curteys and John Smyth of Westbury of whom he complains in the same manner followed

¹ *Chivaler*. Smyth, in his *Lives of the Lords of Berkeley*, vol. ii, p. 1, states : "Thomas lord Berkeley, the fourth of that name, styled in writings, Thomas de Berkeley, *Chivaler*, and Thomas *dñs de Berkele, miles*."

by a great number of men riotously assembled armed and arrayed in warlike fashion in manner of an insurrection the Monday February 12th, the 12th year of our said lord the King came to Westbury aforesaid and there broke into and forcibly entered the house of the said Dean and his doors, against the peace and the aforesaid statutes in order to kill him, and assaulted, beat, wounded and maltreated his servants and took and carried away his goods and chattels to the value of 40 pounds and committed other great oppressions to his cost and damage in contempt of our lord the King to the oppression, terror and bad example of the whole country and to the damage of the said suppliant to the amount of £100 for which he prays that a remedy may be ordained by our lord the King and his said Council for God and as a work of charity, because the said suppliant cannot have justice nor recover against them by the common law because the said John Poleyn is so great a maintainer of quarrels and so much encouraged by the great lords (*seigneurie*) in the aforesaid country (*pais*).

The petitioner was "Robert, Dean of the Collegiate Church of Westbury, in the County of Gloucester." This dean was Robert Wattes, who became dean in 1386 [*Wakefield's Reg.*, f. 45], and who exchanged benefices on 14 Oct. 1390 with Sir John Menhyr, rector of the parish church of Staplebrugge, in the diocese of Sarum [*ibid.*, f. 66], probably because he would not endure the indignity of the presence of John de Trevisa, who had so grossly insulted and injured him in the above-mentioned raids, and who had been ap-

pointed, as we shall see later, to a canonry in Westbury on Trym Collegiate Church.

To pass to the vexed question of the church in which John de Trevisa held a canonry and the date of his appointment.

The Worcester Episcopal Registers apparently contain no entry in reference to John de Trevisa's appointments, other than the reference to his vicariate of Berkeley in the record of the appointment of his successor ; but that also applies to many other of the canons of the Collegiate Church of Westbury on Trym.

Dugdale¹ stated : " John [de Trevisa], moreover, was a Canon (Rot. Franc., 14 R. 2, m. 10) of the collegiate church of Westbury in Com. Wilts, he translated into English the Old and New Testament etc."

Tanner,² quoting Dugdale as above, but evidently having doubts in his own mind, wrote : " Postea vicarius de Berkeley in Comitie Gloucester Thomæ baronis de Berkeley capellanus et canonicus ecclesiæ Collegiatæ de Westbury in Comit: Wilts sive Gloucest."

Babington³ wrote of John de Trevisa, " and in fine canon of the Collegiate Church of Westbury on *Severn* in Gloucestershire " ; or, according to Dugdale, *Baronage*, vol. ii, p. 360, " of Westbury in *Wiltshire*." Not to labour the repetition of these

¹ *Baronage of England*, ed. 1675, vol. i, p. 360.

² *Bibl. Brit. Hib.*, p. 720.

³ Higden's *Polychronicon* (Rolls Series), vol. i, p. liv, *note*.

errors, lastly, Mr. C. L. Kingsford¹ wrote that Trevisa "was also a Canon of Westbury on Severn."

There is no evidence that Westbury, Wilts and Westbury on Severn, Glos., were ever collegiate churches. On the contrary, Westbury, Wilts, was "canonically annexed to the dignity of the precentorship of Sarum." (See copy of the original endowment of the Vicarage of Westbury, in the Bishop's Palace at Salisbury, A.D. 1377, 1 Ric. II—Hoare's *Wiltshire*, vol. iii, p. 19: also *Fasti Ecclesiæ Sarisberiensis*, by the Rev. W. H. Jones.)

An examination of the *Sarum Episcopal Registers* by the present writer failed to disclose any mention of Trevisa.

But Westbury on Trym was a well-known church, collegiate for more than 200 before Trevisa's appointment as one of the canons, and with a varied history going back to c. A.D. 715 [see Introduction, p. v].

So, if only by the process of exclusion, we arrive at Westbury on Trym, as the place of Trevisa's canonry.

In the reference given by Dugdale (Rot. Franc., 14 R. 2, m. 10, but now catalogued at the Record Office as Treaty Roll, No. 75, m. 10) Trevisa is described simply as "*canonicus ecclesie Collegiate de Westbury*." That this was often the official description of Westbury on Trym Collegiate Church, can be seen from even a casual

¹ *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, ed. 1909, vol. xix, pp. 1139-40.

examination of the Pat. Rolls, Papal Letters, and Registers in the Rolls Series, and also of the Worcester Episcopal Registers. Both Westbury on Severn and Westbury on Trym were "in the diocese of Worcester," but there was no danger of confusion as to which Westbury was meant. This comes out clearly from the papal documents of 1362 and 1373, quoted on pp. 4 and 6 in this volume.

What was the date of Trevisa's appointment to his canonry in Westbury on Trym Collegiate Church?

From the document concerning the raids in 1387 and 1388, it is clear that Trevisa had not in 1388 obtained his canonry. But in 1390 he had been appointed, as the following record proves:

[Treaty Roll, No. 75, m. 10, 14 Rich. II.]

Master John Trevysa vicar of the church of Berkele and canon of the Collegiate church of Westbury [who by the King's leave is about to depart to the parts beyond the sea has the King's letters of general attorney] under the names of Master Robert de Hodersale, clerk, and Master William [*sic*, but read Robert] de Faryngton, clerk. Witness the King at Westminster the 5th day of November.

Robert de Faryngton clerk received attorney as far as the rent of the aforesaid John in England [is concerned].

Magister Johannes Trevysa vicarius ecclesie de Berkele et canonicus ecclesie collegiate de Westbury [qui de licencia Regis ad partes transmarinas profecturus est habet literas Regis de

generali attornatu] sub nominibus magistri Roberti de Hodersale clerici et magistri Williami [*sic*, but ? Robert] de Faryngton, clerici. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium quinto die Novembris.

Robertus de Faryngton, clericus, recepit attornatum usque redditum predicti Johannis in Anglia.

[Trevisa tells us in his translation of the *Polychronicon* (finished in 1387, but see later on) that he had visited "Akon in Almayne and Egges in Savoye." Now, in 1390, he again indulges in his love for foreign travel.]

The date of the death of John de Trevisa has been variously given :

Fuller [1608-1661] stated :¹ " This Trevisa died a thorough old man, about the year 1400."

Bigland stated :² " John Trevisa, who translated the Bible . . . died in the year 1409."

Smyth stated :³ " Reg. Wigorn. This Trevisa dyed the 13th year of King Henry the fourth [1411], whom John Bone-John succeeded in that vicarage."

Babington, following *Tanner*, stated :⁴ " Trevisa was alive most probably as late as 1408, when the translation of Vegetius was concluded ; for it would appear that Trevisa is the author of that work. According to *Tanner*, he died in 1412."

Mr. Boase states :⁵ " Trevisa died about 1412."

¹ *The Worthies of England*, ed. 1811, vol. i, p. 217.

² *Gloucestershire*, A.D. 1741, p. 158.

³ *Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. ii, p. 22.

⁴ Higden's *Polychronicon* (Rolls Series), ed. 1865, vol. i, pp. liii-lv.

⁵ *Register of Exeter College*, ed. 1894, pp. 11-12.

Mr. J. H. Jeayes states : ¹ " John Trevisa . . . died in 1411."

Mr. Kingsford states : ² " He [Trevisa] died at Berkeley in 1412."

But the following entry ³ in Bishop Clifford's [1401-7] register decides this question. Under the year 1402 appears : " Berkelegh vicaria. Vicesimo primo die mensis Maii dictus vicarius in spiritualibus apud London ad vicariam ecclesie parochialis de Berkelegh Wygornensis diocesis *per mortem Magistri Johannis Trevisa ultimi vicarii ejusdem vacantem* ; dominum Johannem Bonjon Presbyterum ad presentationem Religiosorum virorum Abbatis et Conventus Sancti Augustini juxta Bristoll admisit ad vicarium perpetuum etc."

[*Reg. Clifford*, f. 14d.]

Trevisa therefore died in 1402, and was buried in Berkeley Church.⁴ The ending of a letter, quoted later on, by the Rev. John Hughes from Berkeley Castle, on Nov. 7, 1805, is full of pathos : " No one certain vestige of him [Trevisa] remains here, nor is even his grave in the [parish] church known, though he is said to have been buried in the chancel."

Trevisa's literary work consisted for the most part of translations from Latin into English, earning for himself the title of a " Father of

¹ *Catalogue of the Muniments at Berkeley Castle*, p. ii.

² *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, ed. 1909, vol. xix, pp. 1139-40.

³ For this extract the writer is indebted to the Rev. J. H. Bloom, who sent it to him on Feb. 11, 1915.

⁴ *Smyth's Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. i, p. 338.

English Prose." He produced very little original work, and frequently his scholarship is at fault in his translations. Still the great value of his work remains in the preservation of specimens of the English language of his day.

Among the works of Trevisa are :

1. *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk* (his patron and himself), prefixed to his translation of the *Polychronicon*, and printed by Caxton in 1482.

2. *Translation of Higden's "Polychronicon"*—but more of this later. A portion of this *Polychronicon*, entitled "The Descrypton of Englonde," was printed separately in 1497 and onwards.

3. *Dialogue inter Militem et Clericum*, from the Latin of William of Occam [see original by Goldestus, *Mon. S. Rom. Imp.*, vol. i, pp. 13-18], and treats *De Potestate Ecclesiastica et Seculari*.

4. *Translation of Sermon by Richard Fitzralph*, Archbishop of Armagh, preached at Oxford, in 1357, against the Mendicant Friars.

5. *Translation of Bartholomew de Glanville's "De Proprietatibus Rerum,"* finished, as Trevisa tells us, in 1398.

6. *Ancient Roll*, cf. entry in *Catalogue of the Muniments at Berkeley Castle*, by J. H. Jeayes, ed. 1892, p. 293, No. 101 : "Copy made by W. F. Shrapnell, F.S.A.," on Jan. 18, 1808, of the "Ancient Vellum Roll written by Abbott Newland" in 1489, "part of which he translated from

a more ancient roll written in Latin by John Trevysa, Vicar of Berkeley," in 1398. Mr. S. adds that "both these Rolls are at Berkeley Castle; Abbot Newland's in good preservation, but Trevysa's much injured by time."

Two works, usually attributed to Trevisa, are:

(a) *Translation of Vegetius' "De Re Militari,"* and (b) *Translation of Ægidius Romanus' "De Regimine Principum."*


Babington states:¹ "In the Bodleian Library (Digby MSS.) is a translation of Vegetius' *De Re Militari*, composed at Lord Berkeley's request, and finished in 1408. This is reasonably presumed to be executed by Trevisa, as well as a translation of Ægidius Romanus' *De Regimine Principum*, contained in the same volume."

Cooke states:² "His [Trevisa's] last work was a translation of Vegetius' *De re Militari*, finished in 1408 and dedicated to Thomas 10th Lord Berkeley, four years after which [1412] he died in his 90th (!) year, and was buried in the chancel of Berkeley of Berkeley Church. The translation of Vegetius has been attributed to Hoccleve, from a MS. copy of it in the Bodleian Library bound up with *Hoccleves' De Regimine Principis* [sic, but read *Principum*]. The characteristic dedication, however, at its conclusion, sufficiently proves its true authorship: '*To us alle God graunt grace of our offendynge, space to our amendynge, and his face to be seen at our endyng. Amen.*'"

¹ Higden's *Polychronicon* (Rolls Series), ed. 1865, vol. i, pp. liii-lv.

² *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Trans.* for 1876, vol. i, p. 138, &c.

But the above-given evidence of the death of Trevisa in 1402 now proves that the translator in 1408 could not have been Trevisa, and it also confirms a portion of the following note in the Bodleian Catalogue in reference to a statement at the end of the translation of Vegetius' *De Re Militari* [Digby MSS. 233]:

" This is his name that turned this
book fro latyn in to Engliche
worschepful  toun."

viz. " The name of the translator was evidently *Clef* or *Clif-ton*. Another copy, with the same enigmatical colophon, is in Magd. Coll. MSS. 30, *comp.* Mr. Coxe's *Catalogue*. Tanner supposed from the connection of the translator with Sir Thomas Berkeley that the version was made by John Trevisa, who was Vicar of Berkeley at that time "¹ [*sic*, but Trevisa was dead]. A careful examination of the Digby MSS. 233 goes to prove that both the translation of *De Regimine Principum* and of *De Re Militari* are the work of the same translator.

Other works attributed to Trevisa are :

(c) Translation of Nicodemus' *De Passione Christi*. See MSS. 16165 at British Museum.

(d) Genealogy of David, King of Scotland, from MSS. by Usher ; see Tanner.

(e) *Gesta Regis Arthuri*, and some others, according to Bale.

¹ *Catal. Codd. MSS. Bibl. Bodl. Codices Digbeiani*, ed. 1883, p. 244.

But they were probably only portions of the *Polychronicon*.

The *Polychronicon* ("The Chronicle of Many Ages") was the standard work on general history during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹

To pass to the consideration of this *Polychronicon* with the Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk, together with the delightful questions, arising out of them, and going on to the reputed translation of the whole Bible by Trevisa.

Ames,² in dealing with the work of Caxton, who *added* to and *printed* Trevisa's translation, wrote :

"2 July 1482, *The Polychronicon of Ranulph Higden Monk of Chester*. This book [printed by Caxton in 1482] begins with Caxton's Prohemye, wherein he asserts, 'Ranulphus monke of Chestre' to be the author, and that Trevisa 'Atte request of lord barkley translated this sayd book/the byble and bartylmew de proprietatibus rerū out of latyn into englissh/' . . .

"Ranulph Higden was a benedictine of St. Werbury's monastery, now the cathedral, in Chester; and is said to have pillaged most of his chronicle from the *Polycraticon* of one Roger, a contemporary monk of the same house.³ How far he has been a plagiarist will appear by comparing their books together. Indeed, both are but

¹ Dr. Goss (Harvard Univ.) in *The Sources of Literature of English History*, ed. 1900, p. 289.

² *Typographical Antiquities*, considerably augmented by William Herbert, ed. 1785.

³ See *Hist. Libr.*, p. 65, and *Catal. of the Harleian MSS.*, No. 655.

collectors, and Higden has affixed the names of his authors. He also continued the chronicle from 1329 to 1357, if not to the end of the seventh book.¹

"These seven books were translated by John de Trevisa, a Cornish man, vicar of Berkley, in Gloucestershire, at the request of Thomas Lord Berkley, whose chaplain he was; but the time when it was finished has been a knot that has puzzled some very learned men to untie, owing to the discordancy and inaccuracy of the MSS. copies, compared with the following conclusion of the seventh book: 'God be thanked of al his dedes / This translacion is ended on a thursdaye the eyghtenthe daye of Apryll the yere of our lord a thousand three hondred and /lvii / The xxxj yere of kyng Edward the thyrd after the Conquest of Englund / the yere of my lordes age Syr thomas lord of berkley that made me make this translacion fyve and thyrtty /'

"The year 1357 is indeed the last date expressly mentioned in this *Polycronycon*, but the history is continued [by Trevisa] for some years after, viz. to the peace between England and France; but without any date."

Ames goes on to discuss the date of Trevisa's translation, and concludes: "So that the true reading or time when Trevisa finished the translation of the *Polycronycon* will be according to the Cottonian MSS: 'Thys translacycon ys yended in a thorsday the eyzetnthe day of Aueryl the zer of vr lord a thousend thre hondred vour score

¹ This ending was probably Trevisa's addition, but see Babington's, Higden's *Polychronicon*, Rolls Series.

& seuene the tenethe (tenthe) zer of kyng Rychard the second,'” &c. Here follow other authorities.¹

The explanation now generally accepted seems to be that Caxton printed 1357 for 1387, as the date when Trevisa finished his translation and additions.

This also appears from the following statements :

Smyth in *Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. ii, p. 2, states : “ The birth of this lord was at Berkeley Castle in the vigill of the Epiphany, the fifth of January, called the twelfth Eve in the 26th of Edward the third, anno 1352. And now, at the death of his father, aged fifteen years, five months and three days.”

Collins states :² “ Thomas, his eldest son, Fourth Lord Berkeley, was fifteen years of age at the death of his father ” [Maurice].

Maurice, the ninth Lord Berkeley, was buried in the north choir aisle of Bristol Cathedral, and the spot is marked by an altar tomb, but the

¹ Babington has very carefully gone into this question and arrived at 1387 as the date when Trevisa finished his translations. J. H. Cooke (in *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, vol. i, 1876, p. 138 *sqq.*) misrepresents Babington, when he states : “ Professor Babington, on the authority of a MS. in the Bodleian Library, makes the date 1387. It is probable, however, that this is a clerical error, or perhaps a later copy in which the scribe has altered the date to correspond with Thomas IV, 10th Lord Berkeley,” and goes on to quote Smyth’s extract from Caxton’s printed work of 1382. A diligent search at the Bodleian Library on Feb. 8 and 9, 1915, failed to discover such a MS. Caxton’s printed work is there.

² Collins’ *Peerage by Bridges*, vol. iii, p. 606.

original legend cannot now be deciphered. There is a brass plate put up on the tomb—as the original inscription was worn off—by the late Archdeacon Norris (particulars for which he probably gathered from Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys*); the legend runs: "This tomb was erected to the memory of Maurice, Lord Berkeley, ninth Baron of Berkeley Castle, who died the 8th day of June, 1368."

The fact that Trevisa was not at Berkeley till after 1361 points to the same conclusion.

William Caxton continued Trevisa's translation down to 1460, but wrote Ames: "As to the liberty he took in changing the obsolete language, for which he was afterwards censured, see his preface to the *Eneidos of Virgil*, printed by him in 1490."¹

Caxton (at the end of book seven of his edition of the *Polychronicon*, and printed in 1482), after mentioning his own additions, wrote: "Therefore I William Caxton a symple persone haue endeuyored me to Wryte fyrst ouer/all the sayd book of proloconycon/and somewhat haue chaunged the rude & old englyssh, / that is to Wete certayn Wordes/Which in these dayes be neither usyd nr understanden/"

Of the value of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, Babington, giving Trevisa's text, states: "As one of the earliest specimens of English prose (A.D. 1387), containing many rare words and curious expressions, the version of

¹ Ames's *History of Printing*, vol. i, p. 41.

Trevisa will be gladly welcomed by philologists, who will not be over-severe upon his errors.”¹

As already stated, Caxton prefixed to his edition of the *Polychronicon*, printed in 1482, Trevisa's *Dialogue between a lord and a clerke* (his patron and himself). It runs :

“ *The Lorde*. . . . And yet for to make a sermone of holy Wrytte al in latyn to men that can Englysshe and no latyn, it Were a lewde dede, for they be neuer the Wyser. For the latyn but it be told hem in Englysshe what it is to mene. And it maye not be told in englysshe What the latyn is to mene without translacion out of latyn in to englysshe. Thenne it nedeth to haue an englysshe translacion, and for to kepe it in mynde that it be not forgeten it is better that suche a translacion be made & Wryten than sayd and not Wryten, & for this forsayd lewd reason shold meue noman that hath any Wytte to leue the makynge of Englysshe translacion.

The Clerke. A greet dele of these bokes stondeth moche by holy Wrytte, by holy doctours and by philosophye, thenne these bookes shold not be translated in to Englysshe.

The Lorde. It is Wonder that thou makest so febel argumentes & hast goon soo longe to scole. Aristotle's bookes and other bookes also of logyk and of philosophye were translated out of grue [Greek] in to latyn. Also at prayeng of kynge Charles Johan Scot translated denys bookes out of grue in to latyn and thenne out of latyn in to ffrensshe, thenne What hath Englysshe trespaced that it myght not be translated in to Englysshe. Also kynge Alurede that founded the unyuersyte

¹ Higden's *Polychronicon* (Rolls Series), vol. i, p. lxi.

of Oxenford translated the best lawes in to Englysshe tonge. And a greet dele of the Sawter out of latyn in to Englysshe. And caused Wyre-frith bysshop of Wyncetre to trāslate seynt gregories bookes, the dialogues out of latyn into Saxons. Also Cedmon of Whylky was enspyred of the holy goste and made wonder Poysyes in englysshe nyghe of alle the storyes of holy Wrytte. Also the holy man beda trāslated seynt Johns gospel out of latyn in to Englysshe. Also thou wotest where the Apocalips is Wryten in the walles and roof of a chappell bothe in latyn and in ffrensshe. Also the gospel and prophecye & the right feyth of holy chirche must be taught and preched to Englysshe men that conne no latyn. Thenne the gospel and prophecye and the right feyth of holy Chirche must be told hem in englysshe, and that is not don but by Englysshe translacon, for such englysshe prechyng is very translacon, and such englyssh prechyng is good and nedefull, thene englyssh translacon is good and nedefull.

The Clerke. Yf a translacon were made that myght be amended in ony poynt somme men it wold blame.

The Lord. Yf men blame that is not Worthy to be blamed, thenne they ben to blame. Clerkes knowe wel ynough that no synfull man doth so well that it ne myght doo better, ne make so good a translacon yt he ne myght be better. Therefore Origenes made two translacions and Jerome translated thryes the sawter. I desire not translacion of these the best that myght be for that Were an ydle desire for ony man that is now alyve. But I wold have a skylfull translacion that myght be knowe and understonden.

The Clerke. Whether is you leuer haue a translacion of these Cronykes in Ryme or in prose.

The Lord. In prose, For commonly prose is moore cleere than ryme, more easy and more playne to knowe and understande.

The Clerke. Thene god grante us grace grathly to gynne, Witte and Wysedome wysely to worche, Myghte and mynde of ryght menyng to make translacion trusty and trewe, plesyng to the Trynyte thre persones and one god in mageste that euer Was and euer shall be."¹

The "worldly wisdom" of the clerk (Trevisa) in bringing forward objections, so easily demolished by the lord (his patron), almost unconsciously creates a smile. But they were really at one about the wisdom of translations.

Some interesting points arise out of this dialogue in which "the lord" states: "*Also thou wotest where the Apocalips is wryten in the walle and roof of a chappell bothe in latyn and in ffrenshe.*"

The language of these inscriptions was Latin and French.²

Fuller [1608-1661] makes the following quaint statement: "Which lord (as the said Trevysa observeth) had the Apocalypse in Latin and French (then generally understood by the better sort as

¹ Copied from the Caxton, 1482, in the Bodleian Library.

² Cardinal Gasquet has written: "Only in 1363, for the first time, was the sitting of Parliament opened by an English speech and in the previous year only had it been granted that the pleadings in the courts of law might be in English in the place of French. . . . Before the era of Wycliffe, consequently, the reading public, that is to say, the higher classes or the clergy, found in the Latin versions of the Holy Scriptures [and these inscriptions at Berkeley were from the Vulgate], or in such French versions as existed in England, what they required."—*The Old English Bible*, p. 93.

well as English) written on the roof and walls of his chapel at Berkeley ; and which not long since (viz. anno 1622) so remained, as not so much defaced. Whereby we may observe that midnight being past, some early risers even then began to strike fire and enlighten themselves from the Scriptures.”¹

Smyth states that these inscriptions “in the year 1622, so remaineth, but not so much defaced.”²

Dibdin³ gives a letter, written by the Rev. John Hughes, chaplain at Berkeley Castle. The part of the letter relating to these inscriptions—the other part relating to the reputed translation of the Bible by Trevisa shall be given later—ran :

BERKELEY CASTLE,
Nov. 7, 1805.

. . . The only vestige of Trevisa remaining here now, are a few fragments of board, with nearly obliterated words of Latin, not sufficient to make out what was meant ; the roof of the chapel⁴ was said by him to have had the Apocalypse written upon it, and I suspect these fragments to be the remains of it. The beams and wall-plates

¹ *The Church History of Britain*, ed. 1845, vol. ii, p. 381.

² *Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. i, p. 343.

³ *Typographical Antiquities*, ed. 1810, vol. i, p. 141, note.

⁴ Professor Babington is wrong in supposing these inscriptions were in the parish church of Berkeley (Higden's *Polychronicon*, Rolls Series, vol. i, p. liv): they were in the chapel of Berkeley Castle. Another error is found recorded in Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys* (Fosbroke), p. 49. “In the MSS. of Dr. Parsons at Oxford, it is said, that there was an antient church, dedicated to our Saviour and his Saints, upon whose walls was written the Apocalypse in Latin. It was joined to the Old Tower” (Bigland's *Glos.*, i, 153).

of the chapel are still remaining, and after removing several coats of lamp black, &c., four lines were discovered upon each, written in the old English character, which are alternately Norman French and Latin. By removing also several coats of whitewash from a part of the chapel wall, a great deal of writing in the old English character was discovered : it was in a great state of decay, but I could make out that part was in Norman French and part in Latin : this is also thought to be of Trevisa's day : but no one certain vestige of him remains here. . . .

Mr. J. H. Cooke, F.S.A., writing in 1876,¹ gives the following more detailed and interesting estimate of these inscriptions : " On the walls and roof of the chapel in Berkeley Castle are the remains of some ancient black-letter inscriptions, now almost illegible from age and dilapidations. They are not mentioned in any of the county histories [but see Bigland's, above], and almost all local knowledge or tradition of their nature or origin seems to have passed away. They are portions of the Book of Revelations [*sic*], translated into Norman French by the venerable Trevisa. . . . They are interesting, not only archæologically, as specimens of early decorative religious art, but they possess a high historical value and significance, as being one of the earliest attempts to render any part of the Holy Scripture into the language of Englishmen. . . .

¹ *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Transactions*, vol. i, p. 138.

“The Chapel, dedicated to St. John, is situated in the south-east angle of the minor courtyard, and is generally considered to be of the fourteenth century. It is 36 feet long by 18 feet wide, not including an arched passage or cloister 3 feet 4 inches wide, which extends along the southern side. The roof is nearly flat and covered with lead. It is supported by heavy tie-beams, the spaces between which are divided by purlins and ridge-pieces into many square panels. On the flat part of the sides of all these roof-timbers the inscriptions may be traced. The writing, of which there are generally one or two, but sometimes three or four lines on each beam, is in black on a white ground, the initials in red, the lettering is the kind most in use in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The beams and timbers seem to have been originally painted white, the spandrils being picked out with red, but the whole has been at some subsequent period painted over black and white. Five centuries of gradual decay and the scarcely less destructive process of ignorant or careless repair have, however, left the inscriptions legible in very few places. On the stone-work, inside the arched passage I have mentioned, a good deal of similar black-letter writing may also be traced, but having been repeatedly white-washed over it has become totally illegible. Except here the walls have all been plastered, so that it is now impossible to ascertain whether the

inscriptions originally extended to them, but it is very probable that they did.

“The specimens here shown are taken from careful tracings [two are annexed] of all that remains legible. Two of the lines are parts of the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the eighth chapter. In the Authorised Version in this place we read ‘an angel flying,’ which is here rendered ‘un egle volant.’ The Vulgate, however, from which Trevisa most probably made his translation, has ‘aquila,’ and this reading, supported by many other versions, is received as genuine by most Biblical critics. Trevisa himself tells us that the Apocalypse was here written in Latin as well as French; but the Latin version, probably in another part of the chapel, has now disappeared.”

The present writer visited, by the kind permission of Lord Fitzhardinge, the chapel at Berkeley Castle on March 9, 1915, when he saw the only remaining inscription, in part legible, on one of the roof beams: and also traces of inscriptions on the wall, but nothing can now be made of them.

It cannot be proved that these inscriptions (interesting though their history is, as far as it is known) are for a certainty the work of or owe their origin to Trevisa.

The question of the reputed translation of the Bible by John de Trevisa must now be considered.

It seems that no date as to the time of this translation has been given by any writer.

Caxton in his *Prohemye* to his edition [printed in July 1482] of Trevisa's translation [1387] of Higden's [c. 1299-1363] *Polychronicon*, asserts: "Ranulphus monke of Chestre" to be the original author of the *Polychronicon* and that Trevisa "atte request of lord barkley translated this sayd book | *the byble* and bartylmew de proprietaribus rerū out of latyn into englissh |."

From Caxton's time till the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was generally accepted by most writers, including Bale [1495-1563], Pits [1663-1735], Usher [1580-1656], Carew [1602], Fuller [1608-1661], that Trevisa did translate the Bible.

Bale [1495-1563]¹ delivers the learned labours of Trevisa more largely thus: "John Trevisa, a gentleman of Cornwall, was a priest and vicar of Berkeley, a man most famous for learning and eloquence, who especially above others laboured to adorn the English tongue, and to remove the old harshness thereof, whereby he became very dear unto many nobles of the land, but especially to his excellent Lord Thomas of Berkeley, and amongst other studies, which much delight the minds of men, histories and antiquities best pleased him, as from whence the best councils and examples of life might be drawn; wherein he studiously laboured, he shewed himself harsh and biting

¹ *Balæus de Scriptor. Angl. Centur.* 7, No. 18.

towards monks and their professions, taxing their pride, riot and hypocrisy : as he saith, ' We read that Christ instituted Apostles and Priests, but never ordained Monks and begging Friars,' with many other like taunts. Into the English tongue he likewise, at the request of the said Lord, translated the whole Bible, as well as the Old and the New Testament."¹

In 1602 Carew stated :² Trevisa " bred in Oxford, afterwards became a secular priest, and Chaplain to Thomas Lord Berkeley, by whom he was made Vicar of Berkeley, co. Gloucestershire : at whose request he translated the Bible into the English tongue," and adds the following inaccurate but quaint statement, " though the same was done by John Wycliffe fifty years before : but not with that perfection of language that Trevisa did it, although Trevisa's translation is altogether so far short of Tyndall's in Henry the Eighth's days, by reason the English tongue was still improving to a higher pitch, for they all agree in the original sense and meaning of the text."

Fuller [1608-1661]³ makes the following quaint but somewhat inaccurate statement : " He [Trevisa] translated the Bible into English : a daring work for a private person in that age, without particular command from Pope or Publique Council.

" Some much admire he would enter on this work, so lately performed (about *fifty years* before), by John Wickliffe. What was this, but *actum agere*, to do what was done before ? Besides, Wickliffe and Trevisa agreeing so well in

¹ Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. i, p. 334.

² *Survey of Cornwall*, ed. 1811, p. 269.

³ *The Worthies of England*, ed. 1811, vol. i, p. 217.

their judgments, it was much he would make a *Retranslation*. Such consider not, that in that age it was almost the same pains for a scholar to *translate* as *transcribe* the Bible.

“ Secondly, the time betwixt Wicklife and Trevisa was the *crisis* of the English tongue, which began to be improved in *fifty*, more than in 300 years formerly. Many *coarse words* (to say no more) used before are refined by Trevisa, whose translation is as much *better* than Wicklife’s, as *worse* than Tyndal’s. Thus, though the *fountain* of the *original* hath always clearness alike therein, *channels* of *Translation* will partake of more or less purity, according to the Translator’s age, industry and ability.”

In the preface of “ The Trauislatours to the Reader ” of James 1st Bible [1607–10] appears the following statement :

“ Much about that time, even in our King Richard the Seconds dayes, John Trevisa translated them [the Scriptures] into English, and many English Bibles in written hand are yet to be seen with divers, translated, as it is very probable, in that age.” ¹

In 1808 the editor of the Harleian MSS.² in writing upon the Higden’s *Polychronicon*, stated : “ As to the Bible being wholly translated by our author, Trevisa, I perceive it mentioned by Caxton ; from him by Bale and Pits, who give the beginning of the Preface thereunto ; from Bale,

¹ Ed. printed at Cambridge, 1637.

² *Cat. Lib. MSS. Bibl. Harleianæ*, vol. ii, p. 330, No. 1900.

Primate Usher takes the notion: and at length Mr. Wharton (*App. ad Cav. Hist. Litt.*, p. 29),¹ believes it may still be extant: it relating not to the book in hand, I shall say no more but this; I shall be very glad to see one of them."

Dibdin [*c.* 1810],² after stating: "Trevisa is among our earliest prose writers. He was a sedulous cultivator of his native tongue"—added: "It has been a received opinion by some learned English antiquaries, which, however, has been strenuously combated by others, that Trevisa *translated the Bible* at the particular entreaty of his patron. This opinion was first taken up by Bale and Pits, from a loose assertion by Caxton, in the prohome of the above work [Caxton's edition, 1482]; but upon what authority our printer asserted it, or if he *saw* such a translation, why he did not think it at least as deserving of publication as the *Polychronicon*, are questions which may be thought to press hard upon the probability of its existence. The learned Wanley, the compiler of the Harleian MSS. has the following pithy observations." [Given above.] . . .

"It happened that in the second course on Ancient English Literature, which I delivered at

¹ "Ut id etiam obiter notem, Joannes Trevisæ versionem Bibliorum Anglicam, quam Domini sui Thomæ de Barkeley mandato confecit, etiamnum MS. extare veri non est absimile."

² Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, ed. 1810, vol. i, pp. 140 and 141 note.

the Royal Institution, having occasion to examine the literary work of Trevisa, and being very solicitous to obtain the minutest information relating to *this Bible*, I wrote to my friend the Rev. Mr. Hughes, who was resident in the Earl of Berkeley's family, at Berkeley Castle. His reply to my quæres, with his permission, I lay before the reader, from a conviction that it may afford him some satisfaction on so interesting a subject :—

BERKELEY CASTLE,
Nov. 7, 1805.

I take the earliest opportunity of answering yours, having been here but a few days. I have made every enquiry and search respecting the information you want, and am sorry to say it is not in my power to remove the uncertainty you labour under respecting Trevisa's translation of the Bible ; notwithstanding, I have the strongest reason to suppose, from circumstances I have met with, that such a translation was made, and was even made in the English language, and that it existed in this family so late as the time of James 2nd. The book, translated by Trevisa, was given, *as a very precious gift*, by the Lord of Berkeley to the Prince (I suppose) of Wales. The prince's letter, thanking the Lord B. for his gift, I have read : he does not say *positively* that it was the Bible, but as he hopes (so far as I can recollect) to be able to make good use of so valuable a gift, there is reason to suspect that he meant the Bible. The letter is still extant among the archives of the Castle. [On 9th March 1915 a very careful and prolonged search, in which the present writer had the valuable assistance of Mr.

Peter, steward, and Mr. Clark of Berkeley Estate Office, in the Evidence Room at Berkeley Castle, was made, but this letter, which the above-mentioned gentlemen had already noted as "missing," could not be found. Nor was any evidence of Trevisa's stay at Berkeley forthcoming from the examination of many documents and accounts there.]

Lord Berkeley (of whom I have made enquiries in order to ascertain what you wanted if possible) has informed me that the book, given by his ancestor, is at present, as he has reason to believe, in the Vatican at Rome: when he was there, several persons had mentioned their seeing such a book written by Trevisa, but he had not an opportunity to go and examine it himself, *therefore cannot ascertain that it was the Bible*. [The next portion of the letter, already given above, deals with the inscriptions in Berkeley Castle chapel.] I suspect all his translations, both from French and Latin, were into English, but suspicions won't do for you."

Dr. Vaughan stated [1830]:¹ "It has been pretended that there was nothing really novel in the idea of Wycliffe, when he contemplated a translation of the whole Bible into English, that simple laymen might read it—that there were good Catholics who had done the same thing before him. Even so ingenious a man as Sir Thomas More took this ground. He is bold enough to declare that the whole Bible had been translated into English before the days of Wycliffe and that

¹ *John de Wycliffe*, ed. 1853, pp. 333-4.

he had himself seen such translations.¹ We do not think Sir Thomas More capable of uttering a falsehood—and the positiveness with which he speaks on this point has disposed more than one English scholar in the seventeenth century to think that there must be truth in this statement. But the explanation is easy. The copies which Sir Thomas More saw were no doubt copies of the translation made by Wycliffe and his followers, some of which, it is well known, were in possession of the prelates, and others in the sixteenth century. Had a translation prior to their own been in existence, the Wycliffites would surely have appealed to it in defence of their own policy [but see later]. But nothing can be more clear than that they regarded their proceedings in this matter as a novelty; as a proceeding that would be so regarded by the ruling clergy; and that great opposition would be made to it, as most contrary to Catholic usage, and fraught with great mischief.²

¹ “*Dyalogues*, cvii, cxi, cxx, ed. 1530; Usher *de sacris vernaculis*, 155; *Treatise of the Corruptions of Scripture*, by Thomas James, 30, 74, ed. 1612. Henry Conaston early corrected Usher’s mistake on this point. Specimens of errors in the *History of the Reformation*, ed. 1693; Wycliffe’s Bible, xxi.”

² It is no longer necessary to labour the vexed question as to the translation of portions of the Scripture into the vernacular prior to the time of Wycliffe and his helpers, or to credit Wycliffe himself with the translation of the whole Bible. Most students accept the conservative and well-grounded conclusions of Sir Frederick Madden and the Rev. Josiah Forshall, who edited the “Wycliffe Versions of the Bible” for the University of Oxford in 1850. The conclusion they arrived at, and stated in their Preface, as regards the Anglo-Saxon

In 1865 Babington stated : " Of his [Trevisa's] other translations, that of the Bible, *said* by Caxton, Bale and others, to have been made by Trevisa, *and possibly still extant at Rome*, is the most important on all accounts. It is not however certain, though at the same time by no means

period, was : " The writings which are still extant show the Anglo-Saxon Church must have had in its own tongue a considerable amount of Scriptural instruction."

Before the end of the thirteenth century (Introduction, p. iii), the whole Psalter had been translated into French and English [see above].

Already opinions have been given in reference to Trevisa's reputed translation of the whole Bible.

But the rapidly changing English language made another translation of the Bible in Wycliffe's time necessary [the language of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, finished only in 1387, was changed by Caxton in 1482]. What part Wycliffe took in this noble translation has been much disputed. One thing is certain, that the Old Testament was not his work. The conclusion of Madden and Forshall was—"There can be no doubt that" Wycliffe "took a part in the labour of producing it [the Bible], and that the accomplishment of the work must be attributed to his zeal, encouragement and direction . . . but whatever part he might take in its origin, it is certain that he did not live to witness its completion. It was not published until some time after his death" [1384] (Introduction, p. xxi). "Probably while the New Testament was in progress, or within a short time of its completion, the Old Testament was taken in hand by one of Wickliffe's coadjutors. The original copy of the Translation is still extant in the Bodleian Library" [Bodl. 959]. "It is corrected throughout by a contemporary hand. A second copy, also in the Bodleian Library" [Douce, 369], "and transcribed from the former previously to its correction, has a note at the end assigning the translation to Nicholas de Hereford. This note was evidently made not long after the MS. was written, and there need be no hesitation in giving full credence to this statement" (Introduction, p. xvii).

This joint production of Wycliffe and his coadjutors was superseded, in about five years, by another version. The former is extremely scarce, while a hundred and fifty copies of the latter are known to be in existence in various conditions.

improbable, that Trevisa ever translated the Scriptures at all (see Mr. Hughes' letter above)."¹

In 1876 Mr. J. H. Cooke came to the conclusion: "There is in the catalogue of the Vatican Library a manuscript of Trevisa's, and if it is not the missing translation of the Bible, it will probably be found at Frascati, as the collection of James II descended to Cardinal York, by whom they were bequeathed to the monastery there."²

With a view of bringing the above-given opinions to the test, the present writer asked the Lord Bishop of Clifton, Dr. Burton, if he had any competent friend at Rome, who would make a search at the Vatican and also at Frascati, where, as Dr. Burton subsequently wrote, "the Seminary Library was that of the Cardinal of York and is (as he had read) just as he had left it."

Dr. Burton asked the assistance of His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet (who was at Rome as head of the Commission for restoring, as far as is possible, the text of the Vulgate). Cardinal Gasquet, writing from Rome on the 17th February 1915, to the Bishop, stated that the present writer could be quite sure that there was no English Bible by Trevisa in the Vatican. Many years ago he had made a long and careful search in the Vatican Library without any success. Personally he be-

¹ Higden's *Polychronicon*, Rolls Series, ed. 1865, vol. i, pp. liii-lv, note.

² *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, vol. i, pp. 138 *et seq.*, 1876.

lieved in the Trevisa tradition, and some day or other the required proofs might be forthcoming. Certainly there was a good sound consensus of opinion, and the writer of the Preface for the Bible of James II certainly believed the tradition to be true. He felt tolerably sure that there was nothing at Frascati; he tried there also a long time ago, but did not make such a thorough search, but added that he would try and make one this spring. Cardinal Gasquet went on to state that the present enquiry reminded him that one day in the Vatican he thought that he had really come upon the book he wanted. It was catalogued as an MS. English Bible, but on examination of the MS. he found that it was not English at all but Bohemian!¹

When did Trevisa break away from his support of Wycliffe? The answer may probably be thus given: At the time Wycliffe fell into heresy, generally supposed to be shortly after he proceeded to the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Oxford.

Therein probably lurks the solution of the question as to the lack of knowledge of, or at any rate as to the failure to mention Trevisa's translation of the Bible by Wycliffe or Hereford.

It is also quite certain that so devout and liberal a supporter of the Church—as proved by

¹ It remains for the present writer to tender his grateful thanks to His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet, and to the Lord Bishop of Clifton, Dr. Burton, who has kindly promised to let the present writer know in the event of any further results reaching him.

his benefactions recorded by Smyth—as Thomas, Lord Berkeley, would be little inclined to aid in the unauthorized circulation of the Scriptures, and especially considering the purpose they were, in part, put to: although he was glad to have a translation for pious use within Berkeley Castle.

Therein, too, lies probably the answer to Dibdin's question (p. 104): "If he [Caxton] *saw* such a translation [by Trevisa], why did he not think it at least as deserving of publication as the *Polychronicon*?" The unauthorized publication of the Scriptures at that time was fraught with great danger, arising, not from under-valuation of the Scriptures—for portions of them were undoubtedly in circulation in the vernacular from the earliest times—but from the "practical politics" of those times: and Caxton (even if Trevisa and his Patron had been willing, which admits of very little doubt was not the case, for him to print Trevisa's translation) would have no wish to become involved in the hostility and odium shown to the heretical Wycliffe and his followers.

"There is abundant proof that the new art [of printing] was regarded with dislike by the Church, when employed for any purpose but the multiplication and cheapening of Latin books required for the use of the clergy themselves. To this same cause we are to ascribe the fact, often noticed as a singular one, that Caxton printed very few religious books. Sir Thomas More expressly

declares that Caxton refrained from printing the Bible in English, because he feared that the penalties ordained by Archbishop Arundel for copying or using Wycliffe's Bible would be corruptly and illegally enforced against any English translation of the sacred volume."¹

There is a strange similarity between the lives, and in some measure of the work of Wycliffe and Trevisa. Both were members of the University of Oxford, Wycliffe becoming Master of Balliol College and, as now generally accepted, Warden of Canterbury Hall, while Trevisa became a Fellow of Exeter College,² and then of Queen's College, where he and Nicholas Hereford, also a Fellow, were two of Wycliffe's warmest supporters.³ Both vigorously and unsparingly attacked the Friars: both occupied, later in their lives, rooms at Queen's College. Both were secular priests, holding livings: both were Canons of the same church, Westbury on Trym, Wycliffe holding the prebend of Aust from 1362 to 1384, *i.e.* till his death, while Trevisa was a Canon from *c.* 1390 till his death in 1402. Both occupied themselves in the translation of

¹ *Lectures on the English Language*, by G. P. Marsh, edited by W. Smith, LL.D., ed. 1868, pp. 325-6.

² "The Wicliffe movement largely influenced Exeter College. . . . William Serche, the chaplain of the college, was removed in 1384 by the Archbishop . . . and several Fellows of Exeter became Fellows of Queen's, Henry Whitfield, the provost, . . . John Trevisa, William Fraunke, Robert Lydeford, and these were expelled in 1379 by the Archbishop of York, the visitor" (Boase's *Reg. of Exeter College*, p. lxiv).

³ Shirley's *Fasc. Ziz.*, p. 517.

the Bible, and both retained their livings, Lutterworth and Berkeley respectively, till their deaths.

To the general reader "anything tending to show the inner working of the mind of these remarkable men is interesting even at this late date": while to those who have the care of the glorious and historic church of Westbury on Trym, or who worship there, comes additional interest through the knowledge that these two great men were Canons of that church.

